

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

OCTOBER 2018
NUMBER 547



Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre celebrates 40 years—see page 9

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AF

Next Issue November 3rd 2018
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Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller
See top of page 14 for current prices.

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AF when ringing. Email: af@thenet.uk.net

Editorial

Just as we think autumn has really arrived and winter cannot be far behind the weather springs another surprise and we have a few more days of true blue skies, warm, not to say hot, sunshine and summer is back. These sort of days always give me itchy feet – it is too good to stay indoors much better to be outside enjoying the warmth whilst it lasts. We have of course experienced our fair share of storms blowing in from the Atlantic in the last few weeks. Although most outdoor events have finished by this time of year, one that can only take place when the fruit is ripe is 'Pick Your Own Apples' from the Community Orchard. The first picking weekend, this year, was glorious sunshine but the second was ruined by periods of heavy rain. Nevertheless over £1400 was raised for Kent Wildlife Trust from the sale of apples and juice.

October seems to be the in between month, too early for Christmas events, too soon after the long holidays for time to rehearse concerts or performances so many fundraisers jump on the same idea a Quiz Night! At a quick count we have at least seven listed in the Diary this month. However if you are an addict don't get too excited as they are mostly on just two Saturdays in October so you will have to choose your favourites I am afraid.

As I am sure you know Action Forum is posted through your letterbox each month by one of our loyal volunteer distributors. Recently for a variety of reasons several long standing helpers have had to retire so we have several areas in need of volunteers. If you like a walk with a purpose, are recently retired, need some stimulus to make you get out and exercise more or are just a very helpful person who is willing to distribute Action Forum from door to door for about an hour or so each month we would love to hear from you. A list of rounds where help is needed is on page 3, if they look too intimidating we can always break them down into smaller sections – every little helps. Equally valuable are volunteers who are willing to cover different areas each month as the need arises, I look forward to your email to af@thenet.uk.net or call to 01634 310011 (this is The Net office so please mention it is Action Forum that you are calling about) volunteering!

Have a great month, we will be with you again in November – surely it will be winter by then.

Correspondence

HARVEST TEAS

Dear Editor,

Sundays 7th and 21st October are this year's Harvest Tea dates at the Millennium Centre, Rainham from 3.30 – 6.00pm, so if you, a friend or a neighbour are elderly and would like an invitation to an enjoyable afternoon of tea and entertainment, apply to either of the following: Mrs Brenda Woodrow, Flat 1 Macklands House, Station Road, Rainham ME8 7QX 01634 379062 or Mrs Yvonne Iles 311 Hempstead Road, Hempstead ME7 3QJ 01634 373840. Transport to and from the centre can be arranged, so apply now – we would love to see you there.

Beryl Brenton

On behalf of The Lions Club of Gillingham

HEMPSTEAD VILLAGE FAYRE

Dear Editor,

Hempstead Village Fayre Group Christmas Fayre in association with All Saints' Church will be held in Hempstead Village Hall and All Saints' Church in Hempstead Road, on Saturday, 17th November from 11.30am to 3.30pm with free Entry for all. The Fayre will include Father Christmas in his Grotto, lunches, cakes, grand raffle, children's crafts, games and many lovely Christmas gift stalls.

A chance to buy that unique gift.

Yours sincerely

Val Gorf

PANTOMIME

Dear Editor,

We, at the Centre, Mind, Body, Spirit, M2 services, are holding a Pantomime called 'Cast-in A Spell Panto land' on December 1st. We are doing two performances, 3pm and 6pm, £7 adult, £5 child. The Centre is run by a wonderful band of volunteers and every year we pass forward our good fortune to a local charitable concern. During the harsh winter that we had last year, we sent socks and gloves to The Medway Street Angels a local organisation who care for the homeless. We want to provide camp beds, sleeping bags, socks and gloves this year and as they are quite expensive we are fundraising with a fun panto for all the family. Book your tickets now on 01634 376507 or www.thecentremindbodyspirit.co.uk

Yours sincerely

Jane Marvel

MID-KENT ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY.

We have fortnightly talks on the second and last Friday of each Month, except August, at Bredhurst Village Hall ME7 3JZ.

We have an observatory located in Canterbury, the James Irwin Observatory which we try to open every other Friday. We also have a large Scientific grade telescope, the GP20, donated from Edinburgh University, which is currently being renovated. We are looking for a new observatory as the James Irwin

Observatory has become much less viable to use with new building locally. The GP20 telescope has been a labour of love as damage occurred during removal and a large renovation project with the addition of go-to automation planned. We are looking for patronage for a new home with a new observatory and a wider audience to assist with the Fundraising... The telescope was made by one the great manufacturers from the 19th and 20th centuries from Newcastle UK. They manufactured optical instruments for some of the great telescopes of our time some of which are still in use. For details see www.midkentastro.org.uk

PLAY AND CHAT

For parents/carers and their pre-school children and babies. Lots of toys. Refreshments provided. £1.50 per family. Meets Wednesday afternoon 1.30 to 3.00pm and Thursday morning 10.15 to 11.45am. Term time only. St Paul's Church, Parkwood, Rainham, ME8 9PN. Telephone 01634 364388 (Wednesdays) or 01634 365932 (Thursdays).

PRINCE ARTHUR INDOOR BOWLS CLUB

A friendly club that offers social, friendly and competitive games for all age groups. Why not come and try this challenging game and make new friends Tuition is available from our coaches and we have bowls available for you to borrow while you are learning. For further information:

Tel: 01634 281243 or check our website paribc.co.uk We are situated in Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham opposite the Royal Engineers Museum.

We also run BOCCIA a game of bowls designed for the disabled most Saturday mornings 10.30am - 1pm

NEWINGTON CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR

Saturday 15th December, 10.00am – 2.00pm
Newington Village Hall, High Street, Newington, ME9 7JJ Handmade Crafts and Refreshments
To book a stall, or for more information please call Jayne on 07799 137548

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OAST HOUSE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Following the huge success of the Beer and Music Festival in the Summer, we are putting on a season of autumn concerts to raise money for The Oasthouse Community Centre. It'd be great to see as many people there as possible to help support such a great cause. The details are:

Saturday 27th October, 7.30pm, Suggested Friends and These Guilty Men
Sat 24th November - Fightmilk and Punching Swans
Saturday 15th December - Chorusgirl & Support
The events will be in the Granary Bar at the Oasthouse, which is right next to Rainham station, admission £5 in advance or £7 on the door.
Full details at facebook.com/carefulnowpromotions

DISTRIBUTION

Volunteer distributors are needed for:

Rainham

Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, The Mailyens, Camellia Cl Bayswater, Sandgate, top Meresborough Road Tilbury & Finwell Road, Wivenhoe, Cooden, Twyford Bramling Way, Minstrel Close (Manor Park estate)

Wigmore

Durham Road, Springvale, Lancaster & Zillah Closes

Parkwood

Lyall Way
Culpepper Road, Part Long Catlis, Conrad, Crispe, Beke Road, Brett, Chute Close,
Readcroft Road, Craddock Way, Conyers, Chislet Cl

Hempstead

Hinton Crescent
Lombardy Close and Pippin Croft
Wildwood, Black Rock, Stalham, Coppice Court

Upchurch

Wallbridge Lane, part of Oak Lane, Jubilee Terrace
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Diary 2018

No charge is made for Diary entries
Copy should be in writing either by email to
af@thenet.uk.net or 5 Meresborough Cottages,
Meresborough, Gillingham, Kent ME8 8PP

Diary Copy Date: October 23rd 2018

All October - Art Exhibition, Rainham Library, original
paintings for sale in a variety of media and styles by
local artists from the Rainham Art Group. Details about
the group please email: rainhamartgroup@gmail.com
October 6th - Explore Your Streets - Hempstead.

Medway Archives Centre 32 Bryant Road, Strood,
11.00am - 3.00pm, 01634 332714 for more information

October 6th - 'Creation' Photography Exhibition with
Parkwood Camera Club, St Paul's Church, Parkwood
Green, 10am - 3pm. All welcome - light refreshments,
details 07538 817566 or cdlmedway@gmail.com

October 6th - RiverVoice Community Choir, Free Taster
Session, 10am - 1pm St Luke's Methodist Church, City
Way, Rochester, call Karen Shannon 01634 309515

October 6th - Rainham Ladies Choir, Diamond
Anniversary gala performance, The Woodlands Centre,
Gillingham. Everyone is welcome, tickets £5

October 6th - Quiz Night, Lower Halstow Memorial Hall,
7.30pm, Teams of Six, £6 pp includes Ploughman's
Supper. Ring 01795 844408 for details

October 6th - Quiz Night, Medway Asthma Self-Help
(MASH), 7.30pm start Roko Health Club, ME8 6BY.
Tickets £5 each, teams up to eight. All drinks from bar,
bring snacks. Free parking, book 01634 855844

October 6th - Friends of St Mary's, Upchurch Wine and
Wisdom, 7.00pm start, Holywell School, Forge Lane,
ME9 7AE. Tickets £5 pp, bring your own wine and
nibbles. 01634 366113 or lewing135@btinternet.com

October 6th - Quiz Night, Hospital Radio Medway, starts
7.30pm, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall. Tables of
6 - 8, £5 pp, Eunice Norman 01634 365300 to book

October 7th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,
Leisurely circular walk 5.6 miles / 9km, finish 1.00pm
Meet St Martin Church C of E, Station Road, Eynsford,
park in car park or considerably in the village DA4
0EH, TQ540654 Walk Darenth Valley Path, woodland,
riverside and field paths. Some gentle hills. Contact:
Tony/Ann, 01634 406634, faulknera075@gmail.com

October 7th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Roger Norman 01634 232404, 07941 965272
Marden Village Library Car Park 745447 TN12 9DP or
on nearby road for 5 mile very flat walk no slopes &
only muddy if wet, 2 stiles, No Dogs

October 8th - Medway Scrabble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St
Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new
members welcome, details 01634 230500

October 8th - Rainham Flower Club, St Matthews Church
Hall, Wigmore ME8 0NX, 7.30pm, Practical Evening -
'By Candlelight' friendly, encouraging club, delighted
to welcome both experienced and novice arrangers.
Details website www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring
01634 863034 / 01634 373928 / 01795 843180

October 8th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,
Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, ME8 9PN,
7.30pm, Organist - Brett Wales, details ring Brian
Leonard 01634 234694

October 8th - Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship
Group, Millennium Centre, 2nd Monday each month
for those in employment who have lost a loved one.
Join us for a cuppa and chat, ring Julie 01634 364309.

October 9th - Caring for Carers - Pop-In, 10.00am -
12noon. Are you caring for someone old or young? We
would like to welcome you to St. Paul's Church,
Parkwood Come, chat over tea/coffee & cake, details
Maureen Cannon 01634 235723

October 9th - Gillingham and District Fuchsia and
Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm start Rainham School for
Girls, Derwent Way, ME8 0BX. Talk - 'A Funny Thing
Happened on the Way to the Potting Shed'. All
Welcome. Details 01634 852519.

October 10th - East Medway U3A Smallholders Club,
Springvale ME8 0JG, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Mike Grillo -
Two Kinds of Teardrops (the Roy Orbison and Del
Shannon Story). New members welcome, no waiting
list. Free to members, £2 for visitors. Ring 07816 159
668 or see www.eastmedwayu3a

October 10th - Bredhurst WI, Village Hall, 7.30pm,
Katherine Hook talk on Sloe Seduction! Details
ring Pam Ormiston 01634 365789

October 10th - All Saints Women's Fellowship,
Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, U3A - Wendy Back,
for details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

October 11th - Wigmore Thursdays Club, St Matthew's
Community Centre, 2.00pm, Canterbury Cathedral -
Lenny Clark, for over 50s, details ring 01634 234712

October 11th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Talk 'Looking
after your Feet' by Grace Hughes. All Saints Church,
Hempstead Road, 2.00 - 4.00pm New members always
welcome, phone 07583 343782

October 12th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group,
Millennium Centre, Rainham every Friday 9.45am, to
help those who have lost a loved one. Join us for a
cuppa and chat, ring Julie 01634 364309.

October 12th - Rainham & Gillingham Local History
Society, Twydall Evangelical Church, 56/58 Goudhurst
Road ME8 6LQ second Friday each month 2.30 -
4.30pm. Memories of the Forties and Fifties.
Memorabilia with Betty Cole. Tea/coffee available
before meetings. Visitors £3 per meeting. Details Val
Barrand 07947 583327 email lupusrufus@sky.com

October 12th - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club,
Darland Avenue, Gillingham, 8.00pm, The Derek Nash
Funk Group, Admission £12, enquiries 07544 312743
Derek is an excellent communicator and loves playing
to a full house. Let us make sure it is!

October 13th - Craft Market Millennium Centre, Rainham
9.00am - 12.30pm, Free entry, Refreshments, Stalls
£10 each 07779 366054 cjdcraftmarkets@yahoo.com

October 13th - Open Day - Bredhurst Village Hall,
11.00am - 3.00pm, Regular activities include, art
groups, whist, short mat bowls, dancing, aerobics, Kent
Astronomical Society, W.I and much more, interesting

groups why not join us and learn more. Just turn up on
the day. Tea, coffee and licensed bar will be available.

October 13th - Charity Quiz Night: Medway Sunlight
Rotary in aid of Medway Dementia charities, 7.30pm
start, Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, ME8
7NA Tickets £5 per person. Teams of 6 to 8. Bring your
own nibbles, pay bar. Free Parking. To book a table
register at sunlightcharityquiz.eventbrite.com/

October 13th - All Music Quiz Night, Holy Trinity
Church, Twydall, 7.30pm, Teams up to eight, £5 each,
Bring own drinks and nibbles, Ring 01634 377671

October 13th - An evening with Duncan Norvelle, Oast
House Theatre, Rainham, Curtain up 8.00pm, Box
Office 0844 8793224 or www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

October 14th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,
Leisurely circular walk 5 miles / 8.1km finish 12.45pm,
please park considerably round Horsmonden village
green. TN12 8HT, TQ700405 Bring snack for midway
break. Pubs at end. Undulating pleasant countryside.

October 14th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet Lindsay Floyd / Andy Boorman 07743
702049, 07881 933358 Meopham Green. Cricketers PH
Park around the green GR 640652 DA13 0QA for 4
mile walk through woods, quiet lanes, hills and valleys
on top of the North Downs. Dogs Allowed

October 15th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, St
Paul's Church, Parkwood, 7.30pm, Chomp and Chat,
All welcome, ring Kate Archer 01634 360797.

October 15th - Wigmore WI, 7.30 - 9.30pm, St Matthews
Community Centre, Drewery Drive, speakers & events.
Visitors Welcome, interested contact Chris Ellison
01634 372976 or Barbara Strachan 01634 268611

October 16th - GHS Floral Art Group, 7.30 - 9.00pm,
United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road,
Gillingham, AGM + Programme planning for 2019,
New members welcome, first visit free, no experience
needed. Just come for a friendly welcome. Parking on
site or public parking nearby. For details contact Kaye
Buss 01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com

October 16th - RSPB Medway Local Group Illustrated
Talk, Parkwood Community Centre, Gillingham, ME8
9PN. 7.30 - 9.45pm, £4.00. Africa, 100 not out - Mike
Mockler Field Trips: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

October 17th - Wigmore Ladies Club, Howard Hall,
Woodside, Wigmore 2 - 4pm, new members welcome
to this cheerful group, just come or ring 01634 388912

Continued on Page 11

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RAINHAM ART GROUP EXHIBITION
Monday 1st — Wednesday 31st October

An exhibition at Rainham Library of original
paintings for sale in a variety of media and styles by
local artists from the Rainham Art Group a friendly,
supportive group of artists who meet weekly.

For more information about the group please email:
rainhamartgroup@gmail.com

OPEN DAY - BREDHURST VILLAGE HALL
Saturday 13th October, 11.00am — 3.00pm,

Regular activities: art groups, whist, short mat
bowls, dancing, aerobics, Kent Astronomical Soc
W.I and much more, interesting groups why not join
us and learn more. Just Turn Up On The Day
Tea, coffee and licensed bar will be available.

MAKING MIRACLES - THE BIG KNIT
Rochester Cathedral

Saturday 13th October, 10.00am — 1.00pm

Please help us knit or crochet 6 x 6 inch squares in
pink, blue, cream & white in our BIG charity knit as
part of Baby Loss Awareness Week!

email **sally@makingmiracles.org.uk** to attend.

CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT
Medway Sunlight Rotary

in aid of Medway Dementia charities

Saturday 13th October, 7pm for 7.30pm start
Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane ME8 7NA

Tickets £5 per person. Teams of 6 to 8.
Bring your own nibbles, pay bar. Free Parking.
Book at **sunlightcharityquiz.eventbrite.com/**

ALL MUSIC QUIZ NIGHT
Holy Trinity Church, Twydall

Saturday 13th October, 7.30pm

Teams of up to eight, £5 each
Bring your own drinks and nibbles
Ring 01634 377671 to book.

AN EVENING WITH DUNCAN NORVELLE
Oast House Theatre, Rainham

Saturday 13th October, Curtain up 8.00pm

Duncan Norvelle shot to fame in the 80s with
comedy impressions and catchphrase 'Chase Me'. In
2012 he suffered a massive stroke and was told he
would never walk or talk again. However, he has
fought back and is now on stage making people
laugh. Duncan will be in conversation with
Dean Caston about his career in showbusiness.
Box Office on 0844 8793224 or on-line
www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

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CRAFT FAYRE Rainham Evening WI
St Paul's Church, Parkwood

Saturday 20th October, 10.00am — 2.00pm

Cakes, plants, preserves, books, kids crafts,
wood turners, jewellery, tombola, refreshments.
Free parking, free entry, friendly welcome.
Any queries contact Annette 01634 365303

KNOWLEDGE & NIBBLES EVENING
The Friends of St Margaret's Church, Rainham
The Millennium Centre

Saturday 20th October, 7.30pm (prompt start).

Nibbles provided, please bring your own drinks &
glasses. Tables of 8 - £6 per person - Advance
booking essential. Kay 230430 or Lesley 379796.

APPLAUSE RURAL TOURING THEATRE
Bredhurst Village Hall ME7 3JZ

Sunday 21st October, start 7.30pm

We welcome back Bowjangles.

The intrepid string quartet present their most
magical show so far, a theatrical, musical journey
through myths, folklore and legends.

Licensed bar, raffle, tea, coffee and biscuits.
Tickets £10 from Ann Keeble 01634 361263

THE TAKEOVER 3 Towns Theatre New Show
The Brook Theatre, Chatham

Friday 26th & Saturday 27th October

7.30pm nightly with a matinee 27th, 2.30pm.

Especially written for the company by Samantha
Grace, features fantastic musical theatre songs.
A group of people have saved a disused theatre.
Tickets £12 from box office 01634 338338

AUTUMN BAZAAR

Saturday 27th October, 10.00am — 2.00pm

St. Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham

Home-made cakes, Chocolate Tombola
Prize Every Time, Our beautiful stall of jewellery,
scarves and lovely smellies, Books, CD's & DVD's
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER

In September we revisited one of our favourite gardens, those at Goodnestone House, which is between Canterbury and Dover. It lies in a landscape of parkland, surrounded by the large, open fields of corn and the sheep pastures of east Kent. We approached the house and its gardens along Goodnestone's only street. The village's houses are mainly of the early 19th century, of red brick, with peg tiled roofs and round headed, diamond paned windows of the type also seen at Pluckley. There is a Church of England Primary School ('Small is Beautiful'), a village hall, a church of Saxon origin which houses a part-time Post Office, a row of almshouses, a village cricket pitch and a public house named The Fitzwalter Arms. It is a typical estate village with an air of coherence and timelessness. Having parked our car and paid the entrance fee we made for the entrance to the gardens. The magazine 'Country Life' once stated that they were one of the loveliest secret gardens in the country. The inspiration for the resurrection of the gardens, after the last war, came from the late Lady Fitzwalter. Her Head Gardener, John Wellow, who worked for her from the age of 16, was there for 50 years. Upon her death in 2015, at the age of 92, her eldest son Julian took over the running of the estate. Following a multi-million-pound restoration, the one-time family home is now available for celebratory groups, corporate events and weddings. Mrs Ennis and I hoped that the gardens were being looked after as well as they were in Lady Fitzwalter's time. Margaret Fitzwalter was a sister of Lord ('Bill') Deedes, one-time editor of the Daily Telegraph. She opened the gardens to the public in the 1970s and right up to a few weeks before her death, she could be found selling tickets at the gate. For many years she baked the cakes that were on sale to visitors, in the Old Coach House. Her life at Goodnestone revolved around her family, the estate and the village. A member of the local Women's Institute, she was playing 'Jerusalem', on the piano, at the ending of meetings, until after her 90th birthday.

The first part of the gardens we visited was the terrace, in front of the Georgian house, on which there was a parterre of low box bushes. It was no longer infilled with lavender plants, which were a great favourite of bees, and it was not clear why they had been removed. From the terrace we had a view of the village cricket field and pavilion. The club now plays only friendly games, on Sundays, which are followed by retiring to The Fitzwalter Arms. The pavilion was in poor shape. The estate once had plans to help in the building of another one. But no longer, I fear. Beyond the pitch was gently rising parkland dotted with oak and lime trees. Rooks and jackdaws were probing for worms and leather jackets among the grass that had recently been cut for hay. I walked slowly around an ancient sweet chestnut trees by the side of the house. It is this tree, above all, that I come to see, to admire and to be moved by its immensity and beauty. We also stopped to admire a Cedar of Lebanon which is still magnificent, despite having lost many branches due to winds, heavy accumulation of snow or disease. It still sports large and attractive cones of the kind that children like to pick up and take away. Twittering notes in the air above me drew my attention to a number of house martins.

In due course of our perambulation we arrived at the three adjoining walled gardens with walls of mellow red brick of the 17th century. A rich variety of plants and climbers grow up the walls. It is claimed that the renowned view though the succession of the three enclosures, to the tower of Holy Cross Church, is one of the best in any English garden. The first enclosure contains an old-fashioned rose garden, under-planted with hardy geraniums and other perennials. Here we saw and heard a flock of long tailed tits looking for insects as they moved through the bushes. The second one now contains a long rectangular body of water which reflects the tower of the village church when the sun shines on it. The third is a kitchen garden where flower borders meet vegetables and raspberries in bird-proof cages. There are yew trees in column form on the corners of the beds. The two seats that we used to enjoy sitting on in the vegetable garden were unusable because of overgrown, overhanging

vegetation. We noted that there were fewer vegetables and soft fruit now being grown but this was not surprising, bearing in mind the work involved in trying to stop wood pigeons, pheasants, squirrels, rabbits and blackbirds helping themselves to whatever they fancy. Shades of Mr MacGregor and Peter Rabbit! We have always been relaxed about the existence of weeds in the walled gardens at Goodnestone and did not expect or want them to be as weed less as those at Sissinghurst. Nevertheless, we felt that the gardens were not as well tended as they used to be. We do however need to bear in mind that the current gardener has the help, at present, of only one part time volunteer and is probably missing the guiding hand and encouragement of Lady Fitzwalter. In due course we headed for the Old Coach House for tea and cakes. As always, we were served with odd plates, cups and saucers which appear to have been obtained from jumble sales and charity shops. Never mind! For us, the quaint crockery is part of the charm of Goodnestone Park Gardens and a reminder of the endearing Lady Fitzwalter.

Joe Ennis

HEMPSTEAD VALLEY 1978 - 2018

After many years of planning Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre opened on 17th October 1978. As the centre turns 40 we will be marking this milestone by celebrating the past, present and future. When Hempstead Valley opened, it was the first out of town shopping centre in the south east and was modelled on successful complexes in North America and Europe. It was home to SavaCentre, (a large hypermarket, now Sainsbury's) and its innovative approach to retailing won it many commercial awards, including the 1980 European Award from the International Council for Shopping Centres. The award recognised 'outstanding and creative shopping centre accomplishments'. This unique shopping experience, attracted huge numbers of customers not only from Medway and Kent, but further afield from London and the continent. Day trippers from France travelled on the Olau line for lunch and shopping at SavaCentre, combined with a tour to Canterbury. The centre was built close to junction 4 of the M2 with easy access to the Medway Towns, Sittingbourne and Maidstone. In 1979, Centre Director David Peek, said 'We offer a new dimension in shopping with convenient free parking, reasonable prices, plenty of

natural daylight and the novelty atmosphere of a market'. Late opening hours, cut price petrol and varied events supported the slogan 'there is always something going on at Hempstead Valley'. Over 800 local people were employed, including mums who for the first time were able to find work that fitting in with school hours.

Su Button Marketing Manager, manages the archives for the centre. Living locally she says we regularly shop and dine at Hempstead Valley. When I was younger I enjoyed having Mr Wimpy birthday parties in the Food Court. I fondly remember the water features and fish pond. I have worked at Hempstead Valley for nearly a third of my life; our longest serving employee has 35 years under his belt. Our loyal staff take great pride in their work and the centre has a strong, positive reputation. It is known as Happy Valley to many, testament to the popularity to the millions of customers that have visited. We will be celebrating Hempstead Valley's 40th birthday during October with displays of vintage fashion, toys, cars and music. Medway Council's Archive Team will display their archive photos with those from the centre. Our customers enjoy reminiscing about Hempstead Valley, particularly with regards to the fish pond! We then look at the present and future - local schoolchildren will be showcasing their ideas for the shopping centre of the future. On Saturday 20th October families can take part in our retro games and competitions from 12pm. Guests, including the Mayor and Mayoress of Medway will be treated to an afternoon tea party. We will be raising funds for One Great Day, donations will be split between Great Ormond Street and Demelza Hospice for Children. Many people still affectionately refer to Hempstead Valley as the SavaCentre, but the large hypermarket was re-branded to Sainsbury's in 2004. The centre has undergone a series of redevelopments including the M&S mall which was completed in 1992. In 2015 The Venue development was built and is home to the restaurant quarter. TK Maxx and New Look opened in 2016 and JD Sports moved to a new, larger purpose built unit last month. In April 2018, planning permission was granted for 80,000 sqft extension, to include five large new units and decked car park. If you would like to share your memories or photos of Hempstead Valley, please email Su Button marketing@hempsteadvalley.co.uk

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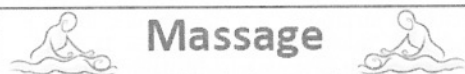
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Diary 2018

October 17th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Village Hall,
7.30pm, June Cox Title: The Royal British Legion.

New members always welcome ring 07791 781 910

October 18th - Rainham Women's Institute, 1.45 - 4.00pm

Speaker 'Silks & Cottons from India' Wakeley Hall,

Oast House Community Centre, Granary Close,

Visitors welcome, small charge. Ring 01634 366276

October 18th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board
games, tea and chat (see 11th Oct)

October 18th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Kingfisher
Singers - Davinia Brisley. (see 11th Oct)

October 20th - Rainham South Councillors surgery at
Cafe 3:16 Parkwood. 10am - 12 noon, no appointments

October 20th - Craft Fayre, Rainham Evening WI, St
Paul's Church, Parkwood, 10am - 2pm, Cakes, raffle,

plants, preserves, books, kids crafts, wood turners,

jewellery, tombola refreshments. Free parking, free

entry, friendly welcome, queries Annette 01634 365303

October 20th - Upchurch Horticultural Society, October
Show in the Barn to the rear of 97 Chaffes Lane. Open

to the public at 2.00pm. Ample parking, refreshments,

plant stall, auction of exhibits and raffle

October 20th - Medway Folk Dance Club, United
Reformed Church hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham,

7.30 - 9.30pm. New and experienced dancers welcome,

with or without a partner, details ring 366189 / 388546.

October 20th - Knowledge & Nibbles Evening, Friends of
St Margaret's Church Rainham The Millennium Centre,

7.30pm (prompt). Nibbles provided, bring your own

drinks & glasses. Tables of 8 - £6 per person - Advance
booking essential. Kay 01634 230430, Lesley 379796.

October 20th - Charity Concert, Chatham Unitarian
Church, New Road Avenue, corner of Hamond Hill,

ME4 6AP, 3pm, Tickets £5 at the door, All Proceeds to

Church Building Fund, mivandooren@hotmail.com

October 21st - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,

10.00am, meet John Trebill 01634 244045 Lenham

Church, Old Ashford Road, car park in Maidstone Road
behind Pub GR 898521 ME17 2PJ 6 mile fairly flat

walk along paths, country lanes and fields. 6 Stiles (one
slightly high and rickety). Dogs Allowed

October 21st - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,

Leisurely circular walk 5 miles / 8.1km finish 12.45pm

Meet Chilham Car Park off Taylor's Hill, Chilham.
Parking free, toilets. CT4 8BZ. TR067536 gentle,
undemanding circuit including farmland, lanes and
meadows. Pubs and coffee shops in Chilham. Contact:
Heather, 07887 750881

October 21st - Applause Rural Touring Theatre, Village
Hall, Bredhurst ME7 3JZ, start 7.30pm. Bowjangles,

string quartet, licensed bar, raffle, tea, coffee and

biscuits. Tickets £10 Ann Keeble 01634 361263

October 22nd - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 8th Oct)

October 24th - Rainham Historical Society, 7.30pm start,
Millennium Centre, 'Curiosities of the City of London'

- Stuart Robinson, Visitors welcome £2 per visit,

Contact Mrs Olwen O'Dowd 01634 263622 for details

October 24th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, 'Life
Upon the Wicked Stage' - Wilf Lower. (see 10th Oct)

October 25th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social (11th Oct)

October 25th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Story Time with

author Julie Wassmer (see 11th Oct)

October 26th - Medway Geographical Society, 7.30 -
9.00pm 'Last of the Great Terrestrial Crossings' (1977

- 82) - George Meegan, Holy Trinity Church, Twydall

Lane, ME8 6TN, Everyone Welcome. Come along on

the evening or contact Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

October 26th & 27th - The Takeover, 3 Towns Theatre
New Show, Brook Theatre, Chatham, 7.30pm nightly,

matinee 27th, 2.30pm. Tickets £12 from 01634 338338

October 27th - Autumn Bazaar, St Margaret's Rainham,
10.00am - 2.00pm Millennium Centre, Admission 50p,

ring Kate 01634 632023 with any queries.

October 27th - Craft/ Gift Fayre in aid of Great Ormond
Street Hospital, St Matthews Church Hall, Drewery

Drive, 10.30am - 12.30pm, £10 table. To book or for

more information contact Paula 07930 595856

October 28th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,
Leisurely circular walk 5 miles / 8.1km finish 12.45pm

Meet and park in Common Road (not in Pub car park)

Blue Bell Hill ME5 9RH, TQ733627 Along the North

Downs Way. Some good views of the Medway Valley

Contact: Ade, 01634 306405, adeballard@yahoo.co.uk

October 28th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet John Williams 01622 764821, 07977

614033 Wateringbury Station 692528 ME18 5EA for

6.5 mile hilly walk with one long climb using roads,

tracks, woodland and riverside. 8 stiles and 39 steps,

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Diary 2018

October 31st - Gillingham Horticultural Society, 7.00 for
7.15pm, Halloween Party and Carved Pumpkin
Competition United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral
Road, Gillingham ME7 4PU, £2 Members £3 Non
Members, details Call Sandie 07962 277330
November 1st - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board
games, tea and chat (see 11th Oct)
November 1st - Wigmore Thursday Club, The story of
charity - Maureen Clayton, (see 11th Oct)
November 2nd - Ladies Pamper Evening Medway
Asthma Self-Help (MASH), 6.00pm Gillingham Golf
Club. Tickets £3 advance, £4 on the door. Book 01634
855844, email medwayasthmahelp@btconnect.com
or www.medwayasthmahelp.co.uk.
November 3rd - Upchurch Wives and WI Silent Auction,
10.00am - 12.30pm, Village Hall, proceeds to Hall
Fund, £2.50 entry including Tea/ coffee and cake.
November 3rd - Medway Folk Dance Club, (20th Oct)
November 4th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am
Moderate circular walk 7 miles / 11.3km finish 2.00pm,
Westminster Field car park off The Street, Horton
Kirby, DA4 9GR, TQ559684 walk across farmland to
Eynsford, return to Horton Kirby via the Darent
Valley Path, steady climb outward, largely flat return,
visit Eynsford Castle (free). Pub at end of walk.
Contact: Geoff, geoff.rambler@me.com
November 4th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am, meet Roger Norman 01634 232404 07941
965272 GR 936746 ME12 2BE Sheerness Barton's
Point Coastal Park Car Park for 5 mile Sheerness canal,
river and sea wall flat walk using paths, minor roads
and tracks, not expected to be muddy. No Dogs
November 5th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 8th Oct)
November 6th - Breast Cancer Support Group, 7 - 9pm,
Medway Hospital, Level 2, Area 7. A talk on 'WW1' by
Brenda a member of the group, details contact Angela
Blackwell 01634 861802 or Mobile 07761 853750
November 6th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm,
Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, Nigel Gibson 'Late

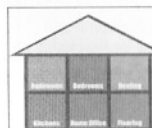
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Perennials'. New members welcome, 01634 366276.
November 6th - GHs Floral Art Group, Workshop 4 -
'Diwali' a Crescent arrangement, (see 16th Oct)
November 7th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,
Moderate circular walk 7 miles / 11.3km estimated
finish 2.00pm meet and park at the commuter car park
just north of Bredhurst. ME8 0LU, TQ799629 walk to
Queensdown Warren for picnic lunch. Return to
Bredhurst for pub, fields, woods and some lanes. Walk
is undulating. Contact: Mike, cycling39@aol.com
November 8th - Wigmore Thursday Club, 'The Zbrugge
Ferry Disaster' - Colin Breed, (see 11th Oct)
November 8th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Talk 'Crossing
America in a covered Wagon' Anne Catoor (11th Oct)
November 9th - Rainham & Gillingham Local History
Society, Friends of Chatham Traction. Richard Bourne
and Richard Ratcliffe. (see 12th Oct)
November 9th - 11th - Battles' Over, A Village's Tribute,
Lower Halstow, see thesix.org.uk for full programme
November 10th - Craft Market, 9.00am - 12.30pm,
Millennium Centre, (see 13th Oct)
November 10th - Flower Festival, St Michael and All
Angels, Hartlip, 11.00am - 4.00pm, refreshments
November 10th - Flower Festival, St Michael and All
Angels, Hartlip, Remembrance Weekend, 11.00am -
4.00pm, refreshments provided.
November 10th - Concert, Rainham Ladies Choir and
Vocal Chords, to celebrate the ending of WW1, St
Margaret's Church, Rainham, 7.00pm. Entrance free,
Optional 1918 dress, details ring 01634 233866
November 11th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am meet Doreen Maguire 01634 376230 GR
801651 ME8 0JJ Park in Durham Road, Wigmore near
East Hoath woods entrance for 5.5 mile winters day
walk undulating terrain. No stiles, No steps, No Dogs
November 14th - Wigmore Community & Residents
Association 'Drop-In Evening' - 7.30 - 9.00pm,
Wigmore Library, ME8 0PX. Discuss local issues that
matter to you with Local MP, Councillors, Council
Officers, Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator and local
Community Police. Open to all Wigmore residents
(WCRA members and non-members). Refreshments

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