

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

MARCH 2019

NUMBER 551



The Heather Family at the Tea Gardens in York (now Durham) Road in the 1930s

Back Row: (left to right) Frank Middleton, William Lillis, Charlie Clarke, Gertrude Clarke (nee Heather), George Heather, unknown, Vic Heather, Harry Dixon.

Middle Row: (left to right) Rose Middleton (nee Heather), Dolly Lillis (nee Heather), Elsie Lydon (nee Heather), Nellie Heather (nee Kitney), Harry Heather, May Heather (nee Nicholls), Bert Heather, Gran Heather, Lena Dixon (nee Heather), Maude Lawson (nee Heather).

Children: (left to right) Bert, Ruby, Grace (Rose & Frank) Nora (Bert & May) son (Harry & Lina) Brian, Joyce? (George & Nellie)

Not Present: Louie Grantham (nee Heather) Mabel Hall (nee Heather)

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AF

Next Issue April 6th 2019  
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Editorial: Barbara Mackay Miller  
Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller  
See top of page 14 for current prices.  
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4 Saracen Close, Gillingham Business Park  
ME8 0QN Tel: 01634 310011 please mention  
AF when ringing. Email: af@thenet.uk.net

## Editorial

Fifty years ago, in March 1969, Action Forum first landed on the door mats of Rainham. For those of my generation this seems no time at all but looking back much has changed in Rainham during this half century. The twenty four years since the Second World War had already seen major changes. The parish of Rainham following much development in previously uninhabited areas had been greatly reduced in size with Twydall to the west and Wigmore to the south each building a new church in the 1960s and becoming separate parishes (Wigmore joined with Bredhurst, Hempstead and Parkwood to become the Parish of South Gillingham). The M2 motorway had relieved some of the congestion through Rainham High Street particularly after the Hoath Way link road was completed and the electrification of the railway made commuting to London a much more viable proposition. House building continued at a pace - particularly Parkwood which crept ever further south and Mierscourt Valley. New schools provided education for these areas, Parkwood, Dean Wood and Mierscourt, whilst Wakeley and Thames View provided the extra places north of the A2, so as Action Forum produced its first four page edition of 10,000 copies we were set for rapid change. The Rainham Plan, long discussed, was finally implemented albeit in a vastly different form from that first proposed. The promised by-pass for Rainham High Street deemed unnecessary now we had the M2 was scrapped and the swathe of land just south of the A2 which had been blighted by restrictions for many years released for development. However the demolition of the old Church School at the top of Station Road and subsequent construction of Rainham Shopping Centre was completed by the 1980s. This was received with mixed feelings as it effectively killed much of the trade for shops in the eastern section of the High Street, only sustained to some extent by the Co-op household store and the post office. By the 1990s Bowaters factory at Rainham Mark was in decline. Despite its final closure 20 years ago the Bowaters Blue Ball is still fondly remembered and I noticed when remedial highways work was proposed last year the signs still proclaimed Bowaters Roundabout. Likewise we still refer to Farthing

Corner Services on the M2, much preferring the ancient name, despite them being renamed Medway Services some while ago. Some of the Bowaters site was acquired for a big new Tesco's much to the alarm of Rainham traders who feared this would mean the closure of the Rainham store with a further detrimental effect on local footfall for independent businesses. Rainham continues to evolve we had periods of Estate Agents lining the A2 when house building was at its height, followed by a glut of Florists. Service centres now dominate, hairdressers, nail bars, tattoo parlours, coffee houses and cafes, very different from 1969 when we had butchers, greengrocers, bakeries, newsagents, drapers, and ironmonger stores. What will the next 50 years bring? For some time now we have printed 20,000 copies of AF each month to cover the same area but with the recent surge in housebuilding yet again this is already being pushed and we are increasing the print run. Incidentally, if you would like a walk with a purpose each month we have several roads just waiting for your help, see page 3 for the current list where volunteers are needed. So to the next 50 years but in the meantime have a very good month and we will see you again in April ready to enjoy the spring flowers.

## Correspondence

### WIGMORE OPEN GARDENS WEEKEND

Dear Editor,

This very popular biennial event organised by St Matthew's Church will be held over the weekend of 6th & 7th July 2019. If any residents of Wigmore or South Gillingham would like to consider opening their gardens in support of the church OR their favourite charity, please could they contact me at paul@bellerby.me or on 01634 387328 for further information.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Bellerby, Gardens Co-ordinator.

### 'THE BARRACKS', IVY STREET, RAINHAM

Dear Editor,

Half way down Ivy Street is a row of terraced houses at right angle to the street. I hear that they are called 'The Barracks' but I cannot find them in the Medway or Army records. Can anyone tell us more?

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dunn  
email stationdunn3@btinternet.com

### THE MEDWAY LEAGUE OF FRIENDS & HOSPITAL RADIO MEDWAY

Dear Editor

If your Group, School or Club would like to hear about the work of The Medway League of Friends, which includes Hospital Radio Medway please get in touch. Please ring the Operations Manager 01634 830000 ext 3695.

### ALLOTMENTS AVAILABLE

There are a few plots available in Oak Lane Upchurch. For details please contact Wendy Licence 14 Trapfield Close Bearsted ME14 4HT, email clerkupe@outlook.com

### HEMPSTEAD VILLAGE FAYRE 2019

Sunday, 19th May, 11.30am - 4.30pm

on Hempstead Playing Fields

If you would like to have a stall at this year's 10th Anniversary Village Fayre, please contact Val on 01634 230214 or email valeriegorf@blueyonder.co.uk

### ART EXHIBITION

Rainham Art Group

Monday 18th February – Saturday 30th March

Lordswood Library, Kestrel Road ME5 8TH  
An exhibition of original paintings for sale in a variety of media and styles by local artists from the Rainham Art Group. Lordswood Library is a great exhibition space and new location for the group to exhibit. Members of the group pursue both individual painting projects and participate in group projects that may focus on a theme or a famous artist. For more information about the group please email: rainhamartgroup@gmail.com

### REIKI, RAHANNI, SPIRITUAL,

Crystal Healing

Given freely, donations welcome

Every Tuesday evening 7.30pm and every Wednesday 10.30am at The Centre, Mind Body Spirit, Next to Travelodge, M2 Services Rainham. ME8 8PQ

### BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY TALK 2019/2020

Mrs Olwen O'Dowd is willing to give a talk about the charity and its work to any small Group meeting in Rainham, Gillingham and Chatham area for a donation. Contact details mum144@outlook.com or 01634 263622 (answerphone)

### FOLK'S FOOTCARE MCFHP MAFHP

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The services we currently offer at Gillingham are:

Free veterinary treatment for one pet belonging to someone on council tax benefit or housing benefit and low cost treatment to any additional pets they have. Low cost veterinary treatment for pets of people on low incomes, we accept a wide range of benefits. Preventative Services; Worming, flea treatment, vaccination, neutering, microchipping, veterinary diets and nutraceuticals at competitive prices.

PDSA Vet Care range; shampoo, joint supplements, ear clearer, probiotic and skin care supplement.

Clients must live in our catchment area which includes ME1 to ME20.

### DISTRIBUTION

Volunteer distributors are needed for:

#### Rainham

Wheatcroft Grove  
Solomon Road, Old Orchard, Russells, Chichester,  
Gloucester Close  
Oastview, Sheldon, lower part Mierscourt Road  
Tilbury, Finwell, Wivenhoe, Cooden, Twyford  
Bendon Way, Stratford Avenue, Derwent Way,  
Crabtree Close, Oldfield, Highfield Rd, Highfield Cl  
Langdale Close

#### Parkwood

Peveral Green, Chipstead Road

#### Upchurch

Part of Chaffes Lane  
Wallbridge Lane, part of Oak Lane, Jubilee Terrace  
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or ring 01634 310011 (please mention Action Forum)

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# Diary 2019

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: March 26th 2019

Until March 30th - Art Exhibition, Rainham Art Group,  
Lordswood Library, Kestrel Road ME5 8TH paintings  
Rainham Art Group details rainhamartgroup@gmail.com  
February 24th - Indoor Boot Fair, Twydall Community  
Centre, 10.00am - 2.00pm, 50p entry.

February 26th - Every Tuesday 7.30 - 9pm and every  
Wed 10.00 - 11.30am Reiki, rahanni, spiritual, crystal  
and Chi healing given freely, donations welcome, at The  
Centre, Mind Body Spirit, Next to Travelodge, M2  
Services Rainham. ME8 8PQ

February 27th - Play and Chat. Each Wednesday 1.30pm  
- 3.00pm. Parents/Carers pre-school children. Lots of  
toys. £1.50 per family includes refreshments for all. St  
Paul's Church, Parkwood, ME8 9PN. 01634 364388.

February 27th - Rainham Historical Society, 7.30pm start,  
Millennium Centre, Rainham, 'Commonwealth War  
Graves Commission' Visitors welcome £2 per visit.  
Contact Mrs Olwen O'Dowd 01634 263622 for details.

February 27th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, 8.00pm  
Hempstead Village Hall, 50 More Ways to Tie a Scarf -  
Helen Kendal-Tobias, Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

February 28th - Play and Chat. Each Thursday 10.15 -  
11.45am, see details 27th Feb. Telephone 01634 365932.

February 28th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's  
Community Centre, 2.00pm, Social. Film, for over 50s  
ring 01634 234712 for details.

February 28th - Hempstead Leisure Club, All Saints  
Church, Hempstead 2.00-4.00pm Talk 'Amish

Community' Anne Catoor new members always  
welcome ring 07583 343782

February 28th - Free Films at St. Mary's!, St. Mary  
Magdalene Church, Gillingham Green, 2.00pm, Free  
entry and refreshments; All welcome, No need to book.  
Enquiries 01634 324783

March 2nd - 'Greyhounds' Applause Rural Touring  
Theatre, Bredhurst Village Hall ME7 3JZ, 7.30pm,  
raffle, tea and biscuits, all proceeds for the maintenance  
of the hall. Tickets £10 from Ann Keeble 01634 361263

March 2nd - 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, ring 366189 or 388546.

March 3rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am, Leisurely  
circular walk 6.5 miles / 10.5km finish 1.30pm, Park the  
Friars car park in Aylesford, ME20 7BX TQ722 589  
donations welcome. Contact: John/Lesley, 7801537317,  
lesley.fielding43@gmail.com

March 3rd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,  
Meet David Brown, 07815 106791 GR 526638 DA4 0JF  
Lullingstone Country Park. Castle Road (off A225)

Eynsford. (£2.50 Sunday) for 7 mile circular walk  
Shoreham / Lullingstone. Terrain hilly and undulating,  
may be muddy. 3 stiles. 13 ascending steps. No Dogs

March 3rd - Sunday Service, 6.30pm with guest medium  
The centre Mind Body Spirit, Next to Travelodge, M2  
Services ME8 8PQ healing available (donations  
welcome) All welcome £2.50 entrance.

March 4th - Medway Scrabble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St  
Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new  
members welcome, details 07523 124668

March 5th - 31st - Mother's Day Gift Fayre, Hempstead  
Valley, artisan and bespoke Mother's Day gifts from  
local companies. Free parking (for up to 6 hours).

March 5th - Tiny Tots, Capstone Farm Country Park,  
10.00am - 12noon, Art & crafts for young children,

finger painting and potato prints, please wear suitable  
cloths it could get messy. Accompanied children aged 2  
- 5 years, £3 per child, book 01634 338191.

March 5th - Breast Cancer Support Group, 7.00 - 9.00pm,  
Medway Maritime Hospital, Area 7, Level 2. Talk by  
Dee 'Lymphedema Manual Drainage' and Pain  
Management. New members welcome, contact Angela  
Blackwell: 01634 861802, Mobile: 07761853750

March 5th - GHS Floral Art Group, 7.30 - 9.00pm,  
United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road,  
Gillingham, 'St. Patrick's Day' - Petite and Miniature  
arrangements, new members welcome, just come along  
and receive a friendly welcome. Parking on site or  
nearby. Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or email  
kaye.buss@btinternet.com

March 6th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 9.40am, Moderate  
Linear walk 8 miles / 12.9km finish 2.00pm Meet  
Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre there ME7 3PD,  
TQ793633 for 130 bus leaving at 9.42am, walk back to  
Hempstead Valley. Contact: Mike, cycling39@aol.com

March 6th - Trinity Friendship Group, Holy Trinity  
Church Hall, Twydall, 1.30 - 3.30pm, join us for a chat  
with tea, coffee, biscuits and a guest speaker. Entry £1,  
contact Hands Gillingham 01634 577984.

March 7th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, Board  
Games, tea and chat. (see Feb 28th)

March 7th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's  
Community Centre, 2.00pm, SERV - Robin Alexander,  
for over 50s ring 01634 234712 for details.

March 7th - BRATS Bredhurst Receiving & Transmitting  
Society, 8.30pm. Parkwood Community Centre, Talk  
'Secret Chatham' - Dr Philip MacDougall. All welcome.  
see www.brats-qth.org or email secretary@brats-qth.org

March 8th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History  
Society, Twydall Evangelical Church, Goudhurst Road  
ME8 6LQ 2.30 - 4.30pm. Hadrian's Wall - Chris Wade.  
Tea/coffee available before meetings. Visitors £3 per  
meeting. Details Val Barrand 07947 583327 email  
lupusrufus@sky.com or website grlrs.org

March 9th - Craft Market, 9.00am - 12.30pm, St  
Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham, Free entry,  
Refreshments available, To book a stall, £10 each, email  
cjdcraftmarkets@yahoo.com or ring 07779 366054

March 9th - Friends of St Margaret's Church Rainham,  
Family Friendly Magic Show 6.00pm in Church, £5  
adult, £3 child, £12 family of four on the door.

March 10th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,

Moderate circular walk 7 miles / 11.3km finish 2.00pm,  
Ightham Mote Car park next to Cafe - charge if not NT  
member. TN15 0NT, TQ583534 Undulating walk  
through fields, woodland, tracks, paths and roads  
Contact: David, 07815106791, brown2918@gmail.com

March 10th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,  
Meet Roger Norman 01634 232404 07941 965272  
GR743621 ME5 9RH Blue Bell Hill View Point Car  
Park for 6 mile all weather walk around Nashenden  
Down. Undulating with 2 gentle ½ mile climbs 1 down  
& 1 up, no muddy stretches. No Dogs

March 10th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day, Capstone  
Farm Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, help with some  
practical tasks. Meet volunteer block. Refreshments  
provided but bring lunch, wear suitable clothing and  
footwear for outside. Ring 01634 338191 for information

March 11th - Concert, Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,  
50th Anniversary Year, Parkwood Community Centre,  
ME8 9PN, 7.30pm, Organist - Elizabeth Harrison,  
details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694

March 11th - Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm, St  
Matthews Church Hall, Wigmore ME8 0NX,  
Demonstration by Mig Kimpston 'In the Potting Shed'.  
Information see www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring  
01634 863034 / 01634 373928 / 01795 843180

March 12th - Carer's Coffee Morning, caring for someone  
old or young? We would like to welcome you, 10.00am  
- 12noon, Dobbies Restaurant - Garden Centre, Buy a  
coffee, pull up a seat and have a chat, meet with others.  
Details Maureen Cannon 01634 235723

March 12th - Technology Group with Hands &  
Gillingham Volunteer Centre, Kingsley House,  
Gillingham 11am-12.30pm. For free help with using  
your smartphone, laptop etc. Please contact Hands  
on 01634 577984 to book your place.

March 12th - Wintering Wildfowl and Waders, Riverside  
Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon classroom, 1.00 -  
3.00pm field based, No experience necessary, suitable  
for adults and enthusiastic children aged 12+, £10 per  
person, under 16 & OAPs £5 book 01634 337432

March 12th - Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society, side doors  
open 7pm for 7.30pm start, Holy Trinity Church Hall,  
Twydall Lane, ME8 6JU, Workshop Evening. All  
welcome, Ring 01634852519 for details.

March 13th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Fund  
Raising, (see Feb 27th)

Continued on Page 11

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**REVEREND CHARLES COBB - Real Life Hero and Long Serving Vicar of Rainham**  
Born in 1828 and the son of Captain Thomas Cobb of New Romney, he lived until 90 years old and became one of the oldest clergy in the country. He served as vicar of Rainham for 32 years from 1876 to 1908 and became one of the most popular and well respected clergymen to have worked in the parish.

Charles Cobb entered the holy orders in 1853 after he had obtained his MA degree at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. After this he held curacies at Halstead, St Nicholas-at-Wade, Lambeth and Minster Sheppey. In 1860 he was appointed Rector at Dymchurch where he remained for sixteen years. While serving in Dymchurch he carried out a heroic act for which he gained widespread praise and fame. 'The Sunday Pictorial' dated 29th March 1936, reported that during a fierce gale on January 5th 1867 a French lugger named 'Corrier de Dieppe' which had been blown badly off course got wrecked on Dymchurch Sands. The coastguards tried to fire a lifeline aboard to rescue the crew but it fell short. After this three of the crew were washed into the sea and drowned but one sailor remained clinging to the rigging. A coastguard named John Batist tried to battle his way to the wreck in rough sea and strong wind but failed. Reverend Cobb, a powerful swimmer, arrived and against the wishes of some parishioners who were also present, he took off his coat, dived into the sea and swam to the wreck where he reached the stranded sailor. Soon after this Batist also reached the vessel and helped Reverend Cobb haul the sailor to safety.

For his act of heroism Reverend Cobb received many awards which included a gold medal from The National Lifeboat Institution in 1867 and the Albert Medal from Napoleon III of France. He later had a photograph of himself wearing his medals with a framed certificate from the National Lifeboat Association displayed on the wall at Rainham vicarage. John Batist who had assisted in the rescue received a bronze medal.

Later in 1876 Charles Cobb became vicar of Rainham and got fully involved in the church and local activities. During the late 1870s and early 1880s he played as a successful opening batsman for Rainham Cricket Club and also made many friends in the parish.

After his wife died in 1903 Reverend Cobb continued as vicar of Rainham until 1908 then resigned. Reverend Tamplin succeeded him and married his daughter. Reverend Cobb continued to reside at the vicarage and maintained a role at the church taking services when his health allowed him to do so. He regularly presided over intercession services in the church during World War I. Held in high esteem during the time he resided in Rainham, he died in 1918 and was buried in the churchyard. After his death the parishioners of Rainham, as a mark of respect and recognition of his services, presented the church with a new communion table and a communion plate in his memory.

**David Wood.**  
**'SHOE HORN SONATA'** by John Misto  
March 14.15.16.21.22.23, Curtain up 8.00pm.  
Oast House Theatre, Rainham  
A powerful award-winning play based on the true events of two women who survived three and a half years in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in the jungles of Sumatra during World War II.  
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# Nature Notes

## NATURE NOTES FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

In late January I visited Knole Park on the outskirts of Sevenoaks. For me, the attraction was not Knole House, but the ancient oak trees in the parkland. I have been very fond of oak trees since I was a boy playing in fields lined with oaks planted in Georgian times when the remaining, mediaeval, open fields were enclosed. As large as they appeared to me, it is likely that they were not then in their prime and it is perhaps only now that that are in their maturity. By contrast, many of the oaks that I went to Knole to see are already dead or dying. The oaks growing on the heavy, red clay of my native Leicestershire are English oaks and those growing on the acidic, greensand escarpment on which Knole sits are sessile oaks. The public entry to Knole by car is from the High Street in Sevenoaks, opposite St Nicholas parish church with a fine cupola on the top of its tower. The entrance drive drops down to a dry river bed, called The Gallops, that once fed into the River Darent and then The Thames at Dartford. Adjoining The Gallops is a knoll (small rounded hill) on which sits Knole House. Scattered along the former river bank and up the side of the knoll are trees, between which are small clearings covered in bracken. I motored slowly through these trees as I zig-zagged up the knoll. I noticed that new trees had been planted in the clearings and protected from the deer by stout wooden cages. The deer eat whatever acorns and chestnuts the jays and squirrels have not hidden and will also eat the tender leaves of any young oak or sweet chestnut trees that grow from buried acorns or nuts not retrieved by the jays or squirrels. Natural England have reported that, as a result of grazing by deer, the ground cover under the trees, apart from bracken, is limited, as is the natural regeneration of tree species.

On the top of the plateau I parked the car near to Knole House, walked to the top of the knoll and sat on my portable seat overlooking the trees I had driven through. They are part of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that covers the whole 1,000 acres of the parkland. The predecessors of Natural England considered that the trees – sessile oak, beech, field maple, downy birch, ash and hawthorn – were part of

the original wildwood. Sweet chestnut and sycamore in the wood may have been planted in the 17th or 18th centuries as ornamental trees. None of the trees I had seen or could see had been pollarded. As I sat there, studying the trees through my binoculars or by naked eye, the quietness was interrupted only by the calls of jackdaws and, in the distance, pupils of Sevenoaks School enjoying their morning break in the playground. Among the mature and dying trees were ones that were clearly dead; they had either remained upright or had fallen to the ground. The dead trees had been left where they were, as were any branches that had fallen to the ground. Some of the fallen trees and branches may have been blown down during the Great Storm of October 1987. All of this dead wood is a habitat for a rich variety of invertebrates which is the finest in Kent. That is one of the reasons why the parkland has been declared an SSSI and why the National Trust is not allowed to remove the dead wood, which greatly favours the green and great spotted woodpeckers, which seek out the aforementioned rich variety of invertebrates.

As already noted, I came to Knole especially to see the sessile oaks, those at their prime being more easily observed when their leaves had fallen. A sessile oak is generally not as impressive as an English oak. Its girth is only about half the size of its cousin but it can grow much taller. A characteristic of the sessile that it is of interest to a forester is that it has a tall trunk that extends well into its crown, which is made up of straight, radiating branches. It has thus been traditionally used in the construction of ships and houses and carpentry generally. So, sessile oaks can grow tall but what is their life-span? I have a book on trees that is usually helpful but all that it states is that they are "very long lived". I did consider, knowing that Knole had supplied timber to the Royal Navy at Chatham, whether any of the clearly old trees in the wood (dead, dying or alive) had been planted by the Sackville family between the early 17th century, when they were granted the estate by Elizabeth 1st and the mid 19th century, when the bottom fell out of the market for timber for wooden warships. But that is all too speculative on my part and it is best for me to keep to the description of "very long lived". I will end these Notes by saying that there is no substitute for being in the presence of ancient trees and feeling awed and inspired by their fortitude. They may be long passed

their youth, and even their maturity, and be into their decline, as evidenced by broken and fallen limbs. Ancient trees have character and strong personalities of their own, which they acquire with age. Even when an ancient tree finally dies, it can exist for many years either as a standing or fallen tree, continuing to evoke strong emotions.

Joe Ennis

## THE YORKES TEA GARDEN

I cannot believe that there is anyone alive now who could recall The Yorkes Tea Garden, in what was then known as York Road, later renamed Durham Road, so as not to be confused with the one in Gillingham. The plot of land directly opposite the top of Edwin Road was purchased for the princely sum of £10 in the 1920s. An ex 1914-18 army timbered building was acquired which apparently had to be man-handled in sections from some distance down Edwin Road, as the top part was as yet unmade.

My father also purchased the adjoining plot and created St Margaret's Putting Green. The Yorkes became the home to my Grandmother and some of the Heather family, not all as there were 12 of them! The Tea Garden was a summer time venture, ably assisted by some of my many aunts. The timber 'hut' occupied that site until the demise of Uncle George and Aunt Nellie, residents until the 1960s or thereabouts.

I became aware many years later, that Dad had sold his holding to Uncle Bill (a Naval Officer), husband of one of his sisters, Aunt Elsie, to build a house there, for the sum of £100. Mum never forgave him for that bit of generosity!

I have fond memories of visiting Gran on summer Sunday afternoons before and after World War 2, walking from Tennyson Road, along the Darland Banks and through the woods to Wigmore. Time spent there 'running wild' through a small maze of hedges, with my cousins Eileen and Stanley who lived next door. At dusk I distinctly remember the many glow worms amongst the hedge rows. The day would end with a final bit of enjoyment for me, the dash across the road to catch the last bus home. So much has changed. Fortunately, the Darland Banks and most of the woods have survived; for how much longer is always a question with the race for more houses! One thing that is still the same though – the bus stop at the top of Edwin Road is still in the same place! The photograph (on the front page) depicts most of the

family and offspring, Gran is seated (table right), a couple of somewhat sinister looking gentlemen at the rear are unknown to me, possibly hopeful suitors to some of my then unmarried aunts!

I would very much like to hear from anyone who knew of the Tea Garden and our family of that time.

Derek H. Heather  
01634 579 830  
dheatheruk@gmail.com

## CREATION V EVOLUTION

Saturday 23rd March, 4.00pm  
Wigmore Evangelical Free Church  
Durham Road, Rainham, ME8 0JN

Two talks by Creation Ministries

4pm & 5.15pm with refreshments in between.

'The age of the earth and its relevance to the Gospel' and 'Dinosaurs and Dragons - Monsters or Myths?'

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## SPRING CONCERT Bearsted Choral Society

Saturday 30th March, 7.30pm

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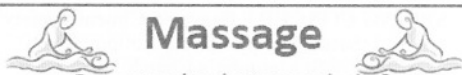
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## Diary 2019

March 13th - East Medway U3A, Smallholders

Club ME8 0JG, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Wilf Lower - 'Behind  
the Scenes of Television's Golden Years' Details see  
eastmedwayu3a website or ring 07733 554719

March 13th - Bredhurst WI, Village Hall, 7.30pm, Talk  
'My Legal Life.' - Janet Garnons-Williams details Pam  
Ormiston 01634 365789

March 14th - Hempstead Leisure Club, 'Fingertips and  
Murder' Jack Deans (see 7th March)

March 14th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Birthday Tea -  
Harmony- Wendy Back, (see March 7th)

March 14.15.16.21.22.23 - 'Shoe Horn Sonata' by John  
Misto, curtain up 8.00pm. Oast House Theatre, Rainham,  
Box Office 0844 8793224 www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

March 15th - Evening of Clairvoyance with John  
Shaw. The centre Mind Body Spirit, next to Travelodge,  
M2 Services Rainham. ME8 8PQ. £5 entrance, 7.00pm,  
tea, coffee and biscuits available for a small donation.

March 16th - Rainham South Councillors surgery 3:16  
Café, Parkwood 10am - 12 noon, No appointments.

March 16th - A Murder Mystery by Alternate Shadows,  
7.30pm start, Newington Village Hall ME9 7JJ, Tickets  
£6 pp in advance, BYO drinks and nibbles For Kent,  
Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance, contact : Mike 01634  
360906 or email mikew16@blueyonder.co.uk

March 16th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see March 2nd  
March 17th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,  
meet Frank Ewen GR700405 TN12 8HT Gun & Spit  
Inn, Horsmonden Village Green. Park village green for 5  
mile circular walk, one long hill. Several stiles. Pubs at  
the end. No Dogs

March 17th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,  
Leisurely circular walk 6 miles / 9.7km finish 1.15pm,  
Park on the road opposite La Playa pub, Minster. The  
pub are happy for you to park in their car park if you are  
having lunch there. ME12 2NL TQ948742 Contact:  
John/Lesley, 7801537317, lesley.fielding43@gmail.com

March 17th - Volunteer Conservation Task Day,  
Riverside Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm help with  
practical tasks. Refreshments provided but bring lunch  
wear suitable clothing and footwear for outside. Meet at  
visitor centre, Ring 01634 337432 for more information  
March 18th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see March 4th)

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March 18th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, third  
Monday each month, St Paul's Church Parkwood,  
7.30pm. Guest speaker talk 'Deco Delights'. For further  
details contact Chris Holder 01634 360823.

March 19th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,  
Parkwood Community Centre, ME8 9PM. 7.30 - 9.45pm  
£4 Lammeregers of the Spanish Pyrenees -Ashley  
Grove, Field Trips: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

March 19th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Mother's Day' -  
arrangement in a home-made card, (see March 5th)

March 20th - Tiny Tots, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am  
- 12noon, Art & crafts for young children, Accompanied  
children 2 - 5 years, £3 per child, book 01634 337432.

March 20th - Wigmore Ladies, Howard Hall, Woodside,  
Wigmore 2.00 - 4.00pm, new members welcome to this  
cheerful group, just come along or ring 01634 388912.

March 20th - Bredhurst Garden Club, 7.30pm, Village  
Hall, Malcolm Withnall - Wildlife Gardening, Spring  
Show Judge Alan Wainwright, Bring and Buy Produce  
Stall, Details John Fridd 01634 388028

March 21st - Rainham Women's Institute meet 1.45 -  
4.00pm, Wakeley Hall, Oast House Community Centre,  
Granary Close Rainham. Visitors welcome for a small  
entry charge Contact Lynne 01634 234997 for details.

March 21st - Wigmore Thursday Club, On stage from 13  
years old - Mark Walsh, (see March 7th)

March 21st - Technology Group with Hands &  
Gillingham Volunteer Centre, Holy Trinity Church,  
Twydall 2.00 - 3.30pm. Free help using your laptop,  
smartphone, etc. contact Hands 01634 577984 to book.

March 21st - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board  
games, tea and chat (see 7th March)

March 22nd - Ladies Pamper Evening, MASH 7.00pm  
Gillingham Golf Club, Free Parking. Tickets £3 in  
advance, £4 on the door, contact 01634 855844 or email  
medwayasthmahelp@btconnect.com

March 22nd - Medway Geographical Society, 7.30 -  
9.00pm, 'National Parks of Western USA' - Bob  
Appleton, Holy Trinity Church, Twydall Lane,  
Gillingham ME8 6TN parking available, all welcome,  
Just come or contact Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

March 23rd - Charity Coffee Morning / Cake Sale, In aid  
of The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund & 20th  
Gillingham (Hempstead) Air Scout Group, 10.00am -  
1.00pm, Scout HQ, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead,  
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March 23rd - Creation v Evolution, 4.00pm, Wigmore  
 Evangelical Free Church, Durham Road, ME8 0JN, Two  
 talks by Creation Ministries, Question & Answer session,  
 buffet meal 6.15pm. Everyone welcome, free event.  
 March 24th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am Leisurely  
 circular walk 6.5 miles / 10.5km estimated finish  
 1.30pm, Park Sevenoaks Leisure Centre / Library, meet  
 front of library. TN13 1LQ, TQ532547 walk through  
 Knole deer park Contact: Geoff, 07525161766,  
 geoff.rambler@me.com  
 March 24th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,  
 meet Andy Boorman 07881 933358 GR438443 TN8  
 5PU St Johns Church / Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's  
 Witness, Marsh Green Road, Marsh Green, Edenbridge.  
 7.5 mile circular walk undulating with one long slope.  
 May be muddy if wet. 12 stiles. Dogs Allowed  
 March 24th - Indoor Boot Fair, (see Feb 24th)  
 March 27th - Rainham Historical Society, 7.30pm start,  
 Millennium Centre, Rainham, 'A Maidstone School's  
 WWII' - Mary Smith. Visitors welcome £2 per visit.  
 Contact Mrs Olwen O'Dowd 01634 263622 for details.  
 March 27th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Dolls  
 Houses - George Wildridge, (see Feb 27th)  
 March 28th - Rainham Friendship Group, Millennium  
 Centre, 1.30 - 3.30pm. Join us for a chat with tea, coffee,  
 biscuits and a guest speaker / entertainment or a  
 quiz. Entry £2, Hands Gillingham 01634 577984.  
 March 28th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social - Bingo,  
 (see 7th March)  
 March 28th - Hempstead Leisure Club, 'Pearls and  
 Princesses' Helen Kendal-Tobias (see 7th March)  
 March 29th - Spring Show, Gillingham Horticultural  
 Society, 7.15pm, United Reformed Church Hall,  
 Balmoral Road, Gillingham  
 March 29th - Masters of the House, curtain up 8.00pm.  
 Oast House Theatre, Rainham, an evening of popular  
 songs from the shows. Box Office 0844 8793224 or  
 www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk  
 March 30th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,

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meet Stephen Manning 07444 229721 GR526442 TN11  
 8DG Penshurst Place, Tonbridge for 4 mile walk through  
 parkland, short section on a busy road. Dogs Allowed  
 March 30th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 2nd March)  
 March 30th - Spring Concert, Bearsted Choral Society,  
 7.30pm, St Margaret's Church Rainham, Tickets £10  
 Book www.bearstedchoral.org or pay at the door  
 March 31st - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,  
 Moderate circular walk 8.5 miles / 13.7km finish  
 2.45pm, Meet Linton Church Car Park (Free Parking)  
 Linton Hill ME17 4AW, TQ754501 moderate circular  
 walk, established footpaths, little road walking. Contact:  
 John, 07749 760788, billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk  
 April 1st - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 4th March)  
 April 2nd - Breast Cancer Support Group, (see 5th March)  
 April 2nd - GHS Floral Art Group, 'April Fool' - a fun  
 arrangement of own choice, (see 5th March)  
 April 4th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board games,  
 tea and chat (see 7th March)  
 April 4th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Life's like that -  
 Mel Rees, (see 7th March)  
 April 6th - Quiz Night, Lower Halstow Memorial Hall,  
 7.30pm - 10.00pm, Tables of 6, £6 per person,  
 Ploughman's Supper included, bring your own beverage  
 and nibbles, call Kay 01795 844408 for tickets  
 April 7th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,  
 meet Mo Fleisig 07976 600393 GR825533 ME17 1RR  
 Leeds Church Car Park off Lower Street for 5 mile easy  
 flat walk. George Pub available for lunch but pre-book at  
 01622 861314. No Dogs  
 April 8th, Rainham Flower Club, Practical Evening  
 'Easter Bonnets' (see 11th March)  
 April 8th - Concert, Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,  
 Organist - Pete Shaw, (see 11th March)  
 April 9th - Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society 'Flowers of  
 the Cornfields' - Richard Moyse from Ranscombe Farm  
 and its wild flowers/Field Project. (see 12th March)  
 April 10th - East Medway U3A, Melanie Gibson-Barton -  
 'Bruges', (see 13th March)  
 April 10th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Rochester  
 Bridge Trust - Andrew Freeman, (see 27th Feb)  
 April 11th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Tony Mitchell,  
 (see 7th March)  
 April 11th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker to be  
 arranged (see 7th March)  
 April 12th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History  
 Society, Medway's Remarkable Women - Elaine  
 Gardner. (see 8th March)  
 April 13th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium  
 Centre, (see 9th March)  
 April 13th - Barnardo's Charity Quiz Night, 7.30pm start,  
 Twydale Church Hall, Gillingham, Tickets £5, Tables of  
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