

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

APRIL 2019
NUMBER 552



The Queens Head, Wigmore. Main picture soon after it opened in the 1930s showing the front view with car park for more than 100 cars. Small pictures (from the left) the original Lounge Bar with a small curved bar and panelled walls, the rear view Rose Garden with folding metal chairs, and the Lounge Bar after the 1978 refit. See page 9.

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Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller
See top of page 14 for current prices.
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Editorial

Fifty years ago in the 1970s we as a nation were finally recovering from the Second World War. Life with modern appliances was much easier, we had more money in our pockets and as Rainham grew into a small town realisation came of the isolation and loneliness young mothers, often recently moved from their homes and families in London, were experiencing. So local churches and other community organisations started the 'Mother and Toddler Groups' that became so popular. Run by volunteers on a shoestring these were a life line for lonely mums and often started a chain reaction of other clubs and societies many still running today. Some are purely social gatherings but others are based on particular interests or a desire to help the community and provide a place for like-minded people to meet. By the 2000s the young parents of the 1970s were reaching retirement age but still young at heart and active and wanting to fill their newly acquired leisure time. Universities of the Third Age and Active Retirement Groups sprang up and were as oversubscribed initially as the Toddler Groups had been when they started. Alongside these associations and of great benefit for local charities was the tremendous interest and increase in 'volunteering'. Now as we approach the 2020s this same generation is reaching old age and as they become increasingly frail and housebound a new initiative is needed to overcome the inevitable loneliness. Age Concern recruits volunteers as home visitors and other groups are opening where the elderly and their carers can socialise and enjoy companionship. Equally their carers are often limited by the demands of helping an older relative and need somewhere to meet and relax for a few hours, so Carers Coffee Mornings, Afternoon Tea Dances and lunch clubs such as those run by 'Hands' are very relevant today. Volunteering, reputedly, helps the person who volunteers just as much as they help the community, a win/win situation. If you have recently retired and are wanting something to do have a look around, visit the Net Exhibition of Volunteer Groups on Tuesday 16th April at Fulston Manor School in Sittingbourne (see p15 for details) for inspiration and approach any you think will suit you. Even if they are not actually recruiting they may well have a role ideal for your

talents. Get involved and brighten up your life. (Don't forget distributing AF is a good way to get out of the house and do something useful.) As the days lengthen and become warmer we can all enjoy the wonderful display of spring flowers in gardens and woodland. Do make the most of the sunny days and enjoy April until we see you again next month.

Correspondence

MAIDSTONE ROAD PRACTICE inc Upchurch
Dear Editor

The following points were raised at the last patient Participation Group meeting for publication:-

A. Missed appointments - 34 patients missed appointments in December 2018. A total of 536 patients missed their appointments during the last 12 months of which 273 were with the nurse. (51%)

If you cannot keep an appointment please let the surgery know ring 01634 231423 this will allow your slot to be reallocated. Missed appointments cost your practice money and is a waste of public funds.

B. Smear Testing - A forth coming programme is smear testing for females between 25 and 70 years old. If you have not had one before or cannot remember the last time you had please contact the surgery to make an appointment. You may automatically receive a letter. If in doubt please contact either surgery to enquire. Your health is most important so please do not waste this opportunity.

MAST BOARD of DIRECTORS

Dear Editor,

The Board of Directors of Medway Anglican Schools Trust (MAST) is looking for additional Directors. MAST is a Multi-Academy Trust responsible for four local Church of England Schools including St Margaret's CE Junior School in Rainham. The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the clarity of the vision and ethos of the schools under its umbrella as well as holding school leaders to account and ensuring financial propriety. You would need to attend around six meetings per year, plus any committees, which are usually held in the evening. The role is voluntary but incredibly rewarding. We are particularly looking for people with an HR or legal background. If you'd like to know more, please contact Gill Mond at mondg006@sflt.org.uk

CRAFT DAY

Dear Editor,

Rainham Evening WI are holding a Craft Day on Saturday 11th May from 10.00am until 12 noon in St Paul's Church, Parkwood.

There will be a variety of crafts to try, and a craft table with items for sale as well as refreshments. Parking and entry is free.

For further information please contact Annette 01634 365303

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS.

Dear Editor,

I am writing to inform your readers about Three Towns Theatre Company's upcoming production - The Wind in the Willows.

This new musical, fresh from the West End, is based upon the much loved children's classic. Join Rat, Mole and Mr Toad on their adventures in this riotous comedy following the impulsive Mr Toad whose insatiable need for speed lands him in serious trouble. The greatest great escape can be seen at The Brook Theatre, Chatham from the 12th to 14th April, matinees are at 2.00pm each day and evening performances are at 7.30pm on 12th and 13th. Tickets are £14 or £12 for concessions; Box Office number 01634 338338

Many thanks.

Gwyneth Loft

SUMMER QUIZ AND CONCERT

Dear Editor,

The Kingfisher Singers and Quiz Master will provide a memorable evening to raise money for the Brain Tumour Charity and Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund (PCRF) on Saturday 1st June, 7.15pm at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall.

The ticket price is £7.50 with a maximum of 8 to a table, (singles and pairs welcome to make up tables). Bring your own refreshments. Tea/coffee and biscuits are provided, also a Raffle.

Free parking at Twydall Green and the Church Hall. For tickets or more information contact Geraldine 01634 232665 or Olwen 01634 263622

AFTERNOON TEA DANCE of Sequence Dancing. Every Friday - United Services Social Club High Street, Rainham (opp Mierscourt Road) Friday April 12th, 2.00 - 4.30pm Member contributory raffle, Refreshments and periodic buffet all for £1. New members welcome ring 01634 310251

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MORE GIGS AT THE OASTS

Oasthouse Community Centre, Rainham
Saturday April 20th, 7.30pm

Rainbow Reservoir and The Love Family
Tickets £7 on the door

Friday May 3rd, 7.30pm

Calvin Johnson, Freschard and Stanley Brinks

This will be an acoustic evening

Tickets £10 on the door

Both events are suitable for all ages.

See Facebook.com/carefulnowpromotions

AFTERNOON TEA

St Michael and all Angels Church, Hartlip.

Our famous afternoon teas will be held on the first Sunday of the month, May to September 3.00 - 5pm. Please join us for a relaxing afternoon of tea and homemade cakes whilst enjoying the peace and tranquillity of our lovely church yard with beautiful views across the orchards to Rainham and help us to keep our beautiful church alive.

OASTHOUSE BADMINTON GROUP

Players required, sorry no beginners.

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Please contact Rita 07752 106363

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Diary 2019

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Copy should be in writing either by email to
af@thenet.uk.net or 5 Meresborough Cottages,
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Diary Copy Date: April 23rd 2019

April 6th - Spring Craft Fair, 2.00 - 4.00pm, St Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow handmade crafts and home baked produce. Refreshments available.

April 6th - Quiz Night, Lower Halstow Memorial Hall, 7.30pm - 10.00pm, Tables of 6, £6 per person, Ploughman's Supper included, bring 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 IRR Leeds Church Car Park off Lower Street for 5 mile easy flat walk using quiet lanes, tracks, woodland and grassland. Route via Broomfield, Kingswood & Leeds Castle Grounds. George Pub available for lunch but prebook at 01622 861314. No Dogs

April 7th - Sunday Service, 6.30pm with guest medium Phil Towler, The Centre Mind Body Spirit, next to Travelodge, M2 Services ME8 8PQ. Intuitive card readings available from 5.30pm, tea, coffee biscuits and healing available afterwards (donations appreciated) All welcome £2.50 entrance including a raffle ticket.

April 8th - 20th - Free Easter Family Fun, Hempstead, 11.00am - 3.00pm, no need to book, supervision is required at all times, www.hempsteadvalley.com

April 8th, Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm, St Matthews Church hall, Wigmore ME8 0NX, Practical Evening 'Easter Bonnets', see www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring 01634 863034 / 01634 373928 / 01795 843180

April 8th - Concert, Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, 50th Anniversary year, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, ME8 9PN, 7.30pm, Organist - Pete Shaw, details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694

April 9th - Carer's Coffee Morning, 10.00am - 12noon, Dobbies Restaurant - Garden Centre, Buy a cup of coffee, pull up a seat and have a chat, meet with others information Maureen Cannon 01634 235723

April 9th - Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society Gillingham and District, side doors open 7pm for 7.30pm start, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall Lane, ME8 6JU, 'Flowers of the Cornfields' - Richard Moyle from Ranscombe Farm and its wild flowers/Field Project. All welcome, Ring 01634852519 for details

April 10th - East Medway U3A, Smallholders Club ME8 0JG, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Melanie Gibson-Barton - 'Bruges', see eastmedwayu3a website or ring 07733 554719

April 10th - Bredhurst WI meets in the Village Hall, 7.30pm, Sue Hollings demonstration in Greek Cookery, information Pam Ormiston 01634 365789

April 10th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Rochester Bridge Trust - Andrew Freeman, details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

April 11th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, Tony Mitchell, for over 50s ring 01634 234712 for details.

April 11th - Hempstead Leisure Club, (see 7th March)

April 12th - Afternoon Tea Dance of Sequence Dancing, every Friday United Services Social Club, High Street, Rainham (opp Mierscourt Rd) 2.00 - 4.30pm Member contributory raffle, Refreshments, periodic buffet all for £1. New members welcome 01634 310251 for details.

April 12th - 14th - The Wind in the Willows. Three Towns Theatre Company, The Brook Theatre, Chatham, Matinees 2.00pm each day and 7.30pm on 12th & 13th. Tickets £14 (£12 for concessions) from Box Office 01634 338338

April 12th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History Society, Twydall Evangelical Church, Goudhurst Road ME8 6LQ second Friday each month 2.30 - 4.30pm. Medway's Remarkable Women - Elaine Gardner. Tea/coffee available before meetings, subscription £20, Visitors £3 per meeting. Details Val Barrard 07947 583327 email lupusrufus@sky.com or website grlhs.org

April 13th - 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 07779 366054

April 13th - Barnardo's Charity Quiz Night, 7.30pm start, Twydall Church Hall, Gillingham, Tickets £5, Tables of 6 - 8, Book in advance 01634 233405 or 01634 375486

April 13th - Medway Folk Dance Club, United Reformed Church hall, Balmoral Road, Gill, 7.30 - 9.30pm. New and experienced dancers welcome, with or without a partner, for more information ring 366189 or 388546.

April 14th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Patricia Daniels 07960 295164 Text Only GR953496 TN27 0JN, Charing, School Road, (Car Park off School Road or School Road Itself) for 6 mile walk from Charing via Glider Field & return along North Downs Way. Hilly climb, on roads, tracks, fields woods and grass possibly muddy if wet. Some stiles and a few steps. No Dogs

April 14th - Newington Easter Craft Fair, 10.00am - 1.00pm, Newington Village Hall ME9 7JJ Free Easter crafts for children, free entry, handmade crafts and refreshments. To book a stall, or for more information please call Jayne 07799 137548

April 15th - Medway Scrabble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, details 07523 124668

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

April 16th - GHS Floral Art Group, 7.30 - 9.00pm, United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 'Happy Easter' - arrangement of own choice to include egg(s), New members welcome, first visit free, no experience needed. Just come along and receive a friendly welcome. Parking available on site or public parking nearby. For details contact Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com

April 16th - Medway RSPB Local Talk, 7.30 - 9.45pm, Parkwood Community Centre, Admission £4 'Eh? What? Pardon? Identifying Birds by Sound' - David Darrell-Lambert see www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway

April 17th - Wigmore Ladies, Howard Hall, Woodside, Wigmore 2.00 - 4.00pm, new members welcome to this cheerful group, just come along or ring 01634 388912.

April 17th - Bredhurst Garden Club, 7.30pm, Village Hall, Jackie Aviolet - Botanically Speaking, Bring and Buy Produce Stall, Details John Fridd 01634 388028

April 18th - Rainham Women's Institute 1.45 - 4.00pm, Wakeley Hall, Oast House Community Centre, Granary Close, Rainham. Visitors welcome for a small entry charge per visit. Details contact Lynne 01634 234997

April 18th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Easter Bonnet Competition, (see 11th April)

April 19th - Games Afternoons, Lower Halstow Memorial Hall, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Games include Euchre, Whist, RummiKub, Domino's and more £1.50 includes tea/coffee, biscuits and a warm welcome (no joining fee).

April 19th - Upchurch Choral Society, 7.00pm, St Mary's Church, Upchurch, 'Laudate Dominum' A concert of music and readings appropriate for Good Friday. Tickets £5 on the door or contact Sue Rossiter 01634 234780 for more details

April 20th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Stephen Manning 07444 229721 GR685398 CT10 1DP, Eastern Esplanade, Broadstairs for 6 mile Cliff & Coastal path walk to Margate. Return by bus to Broadstairs. Remember to bring Bus Pass. No Dogs

April 20th - Gig at The Oasts, Oasthouse Community Centre, Rainham, 7.30pm, Rainbow Reservoir and The Love Family. Tickets £7 on the door, suitable for all ages. More details are available at: Facebook.com/carefulnowpromotions

April 24th - AGM Wigmore Community & Residents Association 7.30 - 9.00pm at Wigmore Library, 208 Fairview Road, ME8 0PX meet and discuss local issues on a one-to-one basis with our invited guests. Open to all Wigmore residents (WCRA members and non-members). Refreshments will be available.

April 24th - Rainham Historical Society, 7.30pm start, Millennium Centre, Rainham, Donation to Historical Charity followed by AGM, Visitors welcome £2 per visit, Contact Mrs Olwen O'Dowd 01634 263622 for more information

Continued on Page 11

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EASTER SERVICES

ST MARGARET'S Parish Church, Rainham

Sunday 14th April — Palm Sunday Service,
10.15am at Rainham Precinct with Dave the Donkey
processing into Church for Holy Communion
Monday 15th - Wed 17th April 7.30pm, Services
'A Journey Through Holy Week'.

Thurs 18th April - Passover Meal 6.30pm in
church followed by Maundy Thursday Communion,
7.30pm 'foot washing' and stripping of the altar.
Good Friday 19th April 10am - Messy Church
Experience Easter for families with children starting
at The Millennium Centre and finishing with lunch.
Please let us know if you are coming for numbers.
2pm Meditations at the Cross in church
6.30pm Special Service - Olivet to Calvary.

Easter Saturday - Church open from 9am - 1pm
for silent reflection

Easter Sunday 6am - Sunrise Service & Breakfast
8am Holy Communion service
10.30am - Family Communion and Easter Egg Hunt
4.00pm - Family Service with lots of fun
6.30pm - Evening Service

For more information please contact Church Office
01634 362023 email: office@rainhamchurch.co.uk
— look on our facebook page for information as well.

SOUTH GILLINGHAM PARISH offers a range
of services and events to mark the Easter Story, all
are welcome to our churches to celebrate the
momentous events which changed history.

ST MATTHEW'S Church Wigmore, ME8 0NX
Good Friday 10am - **Easter Experience** short
outdoor service for all ages and Hot Cross Buns
12noon - **'Three Hours at the Cross'** a meditative
service divided into half-hour sections, come when
you can and go when you must.

Easter Day 8am - **Holy Communion** in the chapel
10am - celebratory **All Age Holy Communion**
'I have seen the Lord'

ST PAUL'S Church, Parkwood Green ME8 9PN
Good Friday 9.15am - Walk of Witness

10.30am - Joint Good Friday Service at Parkwood
Christian Fellowship, followed by Hot Cross Buns
Easter Day 10.30am - **SPACE** (A relaxed, all-age,
accessible, family-friendly service including
activities for children) with Holy Communion
ALL SAINTS 169 Hempstead Road, ME7 3QG
Good Friday 10am - Good Friday Reflection ... a
thoughtful service focusing on the cross of Christ.

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Easter Day 10am - All Age Holy Communion to
celebrate the risen Lord.

ST PETER, Hurstwood Rd, Bredhurst ME7 3JZ
Good Friday 10am - Good Friday Reflection,
followed by Hot Cross Buns in the Village Hall.
Easter Day 9.30am - Easter Story & Egg Hunt
10.30am - Eggsplorers - Explorers Easter Egg Hunt
11.00am - 'I have seen the Lord' - Holy Communion
For the first time this Easter we will be holding an
Easter Day Sunrise Service in Bredhurst, please
join us. Further details of this service, all services
and events throughout the Parish of South
Gillingham on parishofsouthgillingham.co.uk or
notice boards outside the churches.

UPCHURCH CHORAL SOCIETY

Friday 19th April, 7.00pm

St Mary's Church, Upchurch

'Laudate Dominum' A concert of music and
readings appropriate for Good Friday. Tickets £5
on the door or contact Sue Rossiter 01634 234780

CHARITY QUIZ - BLOODWISE

Saturday 27th April, starting at 7.30pm
New Venue - Bredhurst Village Hall
Tickets £5 each (tables of 6) Bring your own drinks/
food. Contact Dot 01634 864642

WINE AND WISDOM

Saturday 27th April, 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start.
St Matthew's Community Centre, Wigmore.,
Teams max of 6 to 8 people, Tickets £5 each.
Please bring your own drink, snacks and glasses.
All monies raised will go to Church funds.
Phone 01634 370492 or 01634 387425 for tickets.

'ANOTHER OP'NIN, ANOTHER SHOW'

Wigmore Voices present an evening of popular
songs from films and musicals
Saturday 18th May 8.00pm
St Matthews Community Centre, Wigmore,
Tickets £7.50 available from Sue 01634 370639.

HEMPSTEAD VILLAGE FAYRE

10th Anniversary Fayre
Sunday, 19th May, 11.30am - 4.30pm
Hempstead Playing Fields, Harrow Road
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR MARCH

The numbers of some of our farmland birds have fallen dramatically over recent years. Summer visiting species include turtle dove, cuckoo and yellow wagtail. Resident species include grey partridge, skylark, corn bunting, tree sparrow, yellow hammer and barn owl. These birds have suffered as a result of various causes, but the main ones can be summed up as changes brought about by the intensity of modern farming. These changes include the widespread use of insecticides and herbicides; the removal of hedgerows and hedgerow trees; and the practice of ploughing in the cereal stubble and sowing the next crop very soon after harvesting the current one. These Notes are about the month of March, which can bring some bitterly cold winds and rapidly decreasing sources of food for wild birds. In particular, they are about three farms in adjoining Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, all of which are run on a commercial basis whilst, at the same time, providing habitats for farmland birds. During the winter, the farmers supply supplementary food for the birds.

The first one is at the village of Barton, in the catchment area of the River Cam or Granta, which passes through Grantchester and Cambridge. In the summer, the river is alive with punts. The farm has been owned by The Countryside Restoration Trust for the past 25 years. The chairman of the Trust is Robin Page, a one-time natural history columnist for the Daily Telegraph. The farmer of the 400 acres of arable land is Tim Scott. The fields contain a mosaic of crops and habitats. Hedges that were grubbed out by the previous owner have been restored. Those hedges are now due to be laid in the traditional manner and hedging teams from all over the country bring their billhooks and compete in the National Hedge Laying Championships. A properly laid hedge will grow thick at the base and create a safe nesting habitat for blackbirds, robins, hedge sparrows (dunnocks), bullfinches and wrens, among other birds. The new hedges, which are mainly of hawthorn, are also attracting small mammals such as wood mice (or long tailed field mice). Beetle banks and other wildlife strips are created among the arable crops. Corn stubble is retained over the winter. The birds are also fed during the winter. As a result, farmland birds are

increasing, including grey partridges, skylarks, yellow hammers and barn owls.

The second farm, Hope Farm, is in the village of Haddenham which is situated on what was once an island in the watery fens of Cambridgeshire. It is within sight of the magnificent Norman cathedral at Ely, one of the most splendid in England. Its Great West Tower and early 14th century octagonal Lantern dominate the flat fenland for miles around. Hope Farm, of some 450 acres, is owned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and farmed by a local farmer. (Hope Farm should not be confused with Good Hope Farm, also at Haddenham and which is owned by D and N Hagland). Only 10% of the land of the RSPB farm is managed for wildlife, the rest is used for commercial crops such as wheat, barley and oil seed rape. Modern farming coexists with the conservation of wildlife. The Society aims to provide, for its farmland birds, safe nesting places; insect food in spring and summer for the growing chicks of birds such as skylarks and grey partridges; and food and shelter over winter. The RSPB lays its hedges, by hand, in the traditional way and mechanically trims them, in rotation, every three years, in order to ensure that there are always plenty of hawthorn and other berries for the birds. The Society provides patches of low grass for nesting skylarks and both grass and flower-rich field margins. Over-winter cover crops and wild bird seed mixtures are provided for the birds. The RSPB has reported a steady rise in the numbers of arable farmland birds, including linnet, skylarks, yellow wagtails, grey partridges, corn buntings, reed buntings and yellow hammers.

The third farm is Vine House Farm which is situated at Deeping St Nicholas near to Spalding, through which runs the River Welland, on its way to The Wash and which is the centre of flower and spring bulb growing in the surrounding fenland fields. The farmer, Nicholas Watts, has had a long-time interest in birds. He owns 2,500 acres of land which is used mainly for the growing of wheat, potatoes, sugar beet and oil seed rape. His fields are lined with ditches and dykes, rather than hedges. Four hundred acres are devoted to the growing of seeds for birds, some of which is set aside for birds on the farm but most is harvested and sold to retail outlets. He has constructed a bank of 100 bird boxes for tree sparrows and, all around the large farm, boxes on tall posts for barn owls. One thousand

trees sparrow chicks have been ringed over past years and there are currently 14 breeding pairs of barn owls. Reed and sedge warblers breed in the vegetation of the ditches and dykes. Goldfinches and green finches are attracted by the seeds in sunflowers. Other birds to be seen there are skylarks, corn buntings, lapwings and grey partridges and, in the spring and summer, whitethroats and yellow wagtails. It is a very encouraging picture, for most farmland birds, at all three farms.

Joe Ennis

THE QUEEN'S HEAD

The Queen's Head at Wigmore has had a refit since Christmas, and there had been a proposal by its owners, based in Birmingham, to call it The Medway Arms. The proposal attracted considerable publicity, but in view of local opposition, was NOT adopted. The news prompted me to some research into the pub's history, and over in the Medway Archives at Strood discovered accounts of how it looked after refits in 1971 and 1978.

It probably opened in 1935, although its first appearance in Kelly's Directory was in 1937, when the proprietor was Mr A.H. Clark, and the postal address of the Queen's Head Hotel was Wigmore, Chatham. It boasted a spacious car park with room for over 100 cars, seating accommodation for up to 70 in the saloon bar, a panelled lounge bar with a potted palm, and a children's playground. At the rear was a rose garden, with folding metal chairs and tables (no parasols or outdoor heaters then). In both the bars carpet squares softened the floors, though the flowered carpets in the saloon were somewhat at odds with the chequered linoleum. In this bar the wooden chairs had curved backs, and may well have been more comfortable than the upholstered seating in the lounge. There were certainly no comfy settees, but all the tables were furnished with a vase of flowers, an ashtray and a soda syphon. What is missing from any of the early photos I have seen is the name of a brewery - no sign outside the building, nor any legible labels on the pumps or the bottles behind the bars.

During the war The Queen's Head probably welcomed customers from the numerous local service encampments, but perhaps some readers may have memories of visiting what had by now become a Public House rather than a Hotel.

Prior to 1971 it had apparently been known locally as a pub where 'music was played for the guests every

night, and many were the cheery sing-songs round the piano'. In that year new hosts Mr and Mrs Tony Huxley took over the licence and carried out alterations including extending the kitchens. With their chef Bob Post they wanted instead to concentrate on providing good food served in a comfortable environment. The change to decimal coinage had taken place in February so the daily 3-course business lunch, formerly priced at 17/6d, then cost 83 pence. Braised oxtail and steak and kidney pudding featured on the menu. In the evening options included fillet steak or Dover sole. One happy diner reported that her steak was deliciously tender, cooked just as she liked it, while the mixed salad was a good accompaniment. There was a further refit in 1978 which took four months and cost £92,000. It was intended to convey a 'Chaucerian atmosphere' (the pub was a Chaucer Inn at this point). The most obvious new feature was a large 'medieval' fireplace, which dominated the dining room, and numerous pictures and small figures representing Chaucer's pilgrims were dotted round on shelves or sills. The daily business meals now cost £2.75, and an evening meal £4.00. Courage Directors' Bitter was advertised at the bar. More recently the pub lost its sign showing the Virgin Queen, and became one of Courage's Harvester houses, with a fairly predictable menu. The extensive salad bar made it popular with young families, but I believe this has disappeared following the latest refurbishment. Now there are trees, plants, chairs and tables at the front.

RAD

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Diary 2019

April 24th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Charity
Presentation, (see 10th April)

April 25th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social Meeting -
Film, (see 11th April)

April 25th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board
games, tea and (see 11th April)

April 25th - Free Films at St. Mary's, Parish Church,
Gillingham Green, 2.00pm, Free entry & refreshments;
No need to book. Enquiries: 01634 324783

April 26th - Medway Geographical Society, 7.30 -
9.00pm, 'The Silk Road - Uzbekistan' - Tony Mitchell,
Holy Trinity Church, Twydall Lane, ME8 6TN, all
welcome, details Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

April 27th - Rochester and North Kent Music and Drama
Festival, Rainham Mark Grammar School, ME8
7AJ, 9.15am - 5.00pm, Small entrance fee for audience
details mhargkent@gmail.com or 01634 400578

April 27th - Rainham South Councillors Surgery 3:16

café Parkwood 10am - 12noon. No appointment needed

April 27th - Charity Quiz - Bloodwise, Doors open 7pm,
start 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Tickets £5 each
(tables of 6), Bring your own drinks/food, Contact Dot
01634 864642

April 27th - Wine and Wisdom, St Matthew's Community
Centre, Drewery Drive. 7.30 start. Teams of maximum
6 to 8. Tickets £5 each, please bring your own drink
snacks and glasses. All monies raised to Church funds.
Ring 01634 370492 or 387425 for tickets.

April 27th - 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, information 366189 or 388546.

April 28th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,
meet David Gaul 07719382284 GR013647 ME13 0QA
Oare Marshes Nature Reserve Car Park, located at end
of Church Road, park in road if busy for 5 mile flat
walk along Saxon Shore Way & up Oare Creek back to
start. Passing Villages, over some rough ground and
through fields. Good views but can be very windy and
marshy. No Stiles, No Dogs

April 29th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 15th April)

May 1st - Upchurch Horticultural Society open to
villagers and those living nearby, experienced

gardeners and novices 'Medway Food bank' see
upchurchhortsoc@gmail.com

May 2nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, In Harmony -
Doreen Hulm, (see 11th April)

May 3rd - Gig at The Oasts, Oasthouse Community
Centre, Rainham, 7.30pm, Calvin Johnson, Freschard
and Stanley Brinks, an acoustic evening. Tickets £10 on
the door, suitable for all ages. More details
Facebook.com/carefulnowpromotions

May 4th - Upchurch Horticultural Society, Annual Spring
Plant Sale, The Paddock, Upchurch ME9 7AT. 9.00am
- 1.00pm. Get your annuals, perennials, shrubs and
vegetable seedlings. Good selection of plants available
at reasonable prices, 50p stall for bargains. Free
admission. Bring your gardening questions too: UHS
members will be happy to advise. Contact:
upchurchhortsoc@gmail.com

May 7th - Breast Cancer Support Group, 7.00 - 9.00pm,
Medway Maritime Hospital, Area 7, Level 2, meet Mr
El Gammal, a new consultant for Breast Cancer. New
members welcome. For details contact Angela
Blackwell: 01634 861802, Mobile: 07761853750

May 7th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Up in Arms' - a
parallel arrangement, (see 16th April)

May 8th - East Medway U3A, Lenny Clark - 'Canterbury
City', (see 10th April)

May 8th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, AGM, (see
10th April)

May 9th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Donald Campbell -
Guy Bartlett, (see 11th April)

May 10th - 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.

May 10th - Games Afternoons, Lower Halstow Memorial
Hall (see 19th April)

May 10th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History
Society, (see 12th April)

May 10th - Afternoon Tea Dance of Sequence Dancing,
(see 12th April)

May 11th - Craft Market, 9.00am - 12.30pm, St
Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham, (13th April)

May 11th - Craft Day, Rainham Evening WI, 10.00am -
12 noon, St Paul's Church, Parkwood, crafts to try,
craft table with item for sale, refreshments. Parking and
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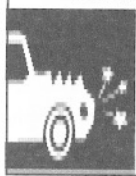


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Diary 2019

May 11th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 13th April)
May 12th - Kent Wildlife Trust, Man Orchids and
Management, Darland Banks Nature Reserve ME7
3ER, 10.00am - 12noon, Adults £6, Child £3, Book at
www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

May 13th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 15th April)
May 13th - Concert, Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,
50th Anniversary year, Organist - Ian Griffin, (8th Ap)
May 13th, Rainham Flower Club, Demonstration by
Robin White, 'The World in Green', (see 8th April)
May 14th - Fuchsia & Pelargonium Society 'Ferns' -
Jude Lawton, all there is to know about ferns. (9th Ap)
May 15th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Dave & Maria Lander
- The Benefits of Tai Chi for Gardeners, Bring and Buy
Produce Stall, (see 17th April)

May 16th - Rainham Women's Institute (see 18th April)
May 16th - Wigmore Thursday Club, 'Undercover Story
- the History of Underwear' - Lee Ault, (see 11th Ap)
May 17th - Games Afternoons, Lower Halstow (19th Ap)
May 17th - Manor of Gillingham Freemasonry Lodge no
3983. Invitation to all adults over 21, men and partners
to an Open door Evening 7.00 - 9.00pm, Howard Hall
Woodside ME8 0PN Contact Ray Smith 07881 726643
May 18th - Wigmore Voices, 'Another Op'nin, Another
Show' An evening of popular songs from films and
musicals 8.00pm St Matthews Community Centre,
Wigmore, Tickets £7.50 from Sue 01634 370639.

May 18th - May Ball for Peter's Place, 8.00pm, United
Services Club, High Street, Rainham, Music by
SouthSound Disco Kent, bar, buffet and raffle. £10 a
ticket for information ring 01634 570443 or 578879
May 19th - Spring Fair, Cats Adoption Centre Bredhurst,
11.00am - 3.00pm, Fun for all the family, Crafts stalls,
Bric-a-Brac, Raffle, Live Music, Refreshments, BBQ,
Ice cream, Kids corner with inflatable slide and
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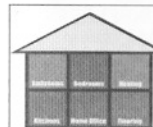
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May 19th - Hempstead Village 10th Anniversary Fayre,
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Road. All the fun of the Fayre with stalls, attractions,
games, inflatables, arena events, food, classic cars,
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valeriegorf@blucyonder.co.uk for more details.
May 21st - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Lag B'Omer' -
celebratory vertical arrangement, (see 16th April)
May 21st - RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, Parkwood
Community Centre, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.45pm £4. The
Life of a Hare - Russell Miles + the AGM. For Walks
see: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

May 23rd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Diplomatic Corp -
David Brigenshaw, (see 11th April)
May 24th - 'Frank Sinatra' Tribute Night, Bredhurst
Village Hall, 7.30pm, Licensed bar, Admission by
ticket £10, Contact Ray on 01634 268998 or
trsurrige@tiscali.co.uk

May 24th - Medway Geographical Society, AGM
followed by Presentation from Dave Meredith, (see
26th April)

May 25th - Charities Boot Fair, Holy Trinity Church Hall,
Twydall Lane ME8 6JU, 10.30am - 12.30pm, Free
Parking, £7 per stall, Contact Olwen 0164 263622
May 25th - 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, information 366189 or 388546.

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