

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

MAY  
2021

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Hempstead - in the 1920's? If any readers are able to date it more accurately or tell us about the history of the buildings please email [editor@actionforum.co.uk](mailto:editor@actionforum.co.uk). It would also be interesting to learn more about the car.

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## Editorial

As I write April so far has been mostly dry with plenty of sun but, with winds from the east and north, much colder than we expect with no change forecast for the last week of the month. Not good for gardeners wanting to get planting but wild flowers and fruit trees have been glorious. Plums and their relatives in the hedgerows came first, now pears are at their best and soon apples will be out. This would be a good time to go and walk round the Rainham Community Orchard on the junction of Bloors Lane and the Lower Rainham Road. It is open to the public Tuesday and Thursday mornings 10.00 to 12.00. They have their wonderful apple juice for sale at £3.00 a litre bottle. A good time too to go walking in the countryside as many of you are doing. There are carpets of wood anemones to be found and these will soon be followed by the bluebells.

If the current trend in Covid infections falling continues we could have most limits on social gatherings lifted by the end of June. A combination of most people observing the lockdown rules and the success of the vaccination programme is starting to bring life back to normal in this country. Unfortunately the same is not the case in much of the world so there remains a risk that it could flare up again in this country making it very difficult for anybody to organise big events with confidence. Copy date for our June issue is 24th May. If you are planning to hold an event in June or July please email the details to [diary@actionforum.co.uk](mailto:diary@actionforum.co.uk) and we will print them in the next issue. There is no charge for charities and voluntary organisations. If in normal times you were holding regular meetings and now plan to resume please send us the details and we will print them. Are you open to new members? Again let us know so we can tell our readers.

Elizabeth Poynter and Alan Stockey both responded to my appeal last month for assistant editors. Both are long term residents of Rainham and readers of AF. I will be handing this column over to

them next month so they can tell you something of themselves and anything else they want to talk about. If anybody else would like to join the editorial team they would be welcome. Or perhaps you see yourself as a roving reporter ferreting out local groups who would benefit from some publicity in AF or looking for old photographs and interesting snippets about Rainham in the past.

We also had a good response to the appeal for distributors. The list this month, on page 14, is shorter.

## A Rainham Spectacular in 2022?

Next May will see the 50th anniversary of the first Rainham Spectacular in Cozenton Park. A number of people have said to me they would like to see it revived. A well planned event suitably publicised could attract 10,000 people and raise a lot of money for good causes. Planning for it should probably start no later than September. Are there enough people in Rainham to take on such a large task? If you would consider joining the team please email your contact details to [hamish@actionforum.co.uk](mailto:hamish@actionforum.co.uk)

## Garden Pesticides

This month I received a glossy catalogue from a company trading as **Garden Bird** claiming to be "UK's No 1 Quality Bird Food Supplier" with a slogan on the front cover "Saving Britain's Wildlife Together". In the back it contained four pages of garden chemicals and bags of compost. One of the products is "Bug Clear" which kills "all major pests", listing a number of insects and caterpillars in general. They do not mention bees, ladybirds and butterflies because many people would not use a spray if they realised it killed them. We have lost at least 50% of our insects since 1970 including bees and other pollinators for our food crops. Insects are important as food for our garden birds, especially at this time of year when many seed eating birds feed insects to their chicks.

I believe a large number of the gardeners who use pesticides do so without realising the damage they are doing to the environment. To help educate them I am planning to start a national campaign to have warning messages printed on all pesticide packaging. The tobacco industry has had such a measure forced upon them. It needs to be carefully planned and will need people experienced in all kinds of media campaigning. If you would like to volunteer to be part of it please email me on [hamish@actionforum.co.uk](mailto:hamish@actionforum.co.uk)

## The Rainham Spectacular

In the late 1960s The Rainham and Wigmore Community Association held their activities in the Old School at the top of Station Road which was scheduled for demolition to make way for the new Rainham Shopping Centre. New premises were urgently needed. In late 1969 a 'For Sale' board appeared on Wakeley's old Oast House and granary alongside the station. With support and assistance from Gillingham Council, KCC and others, the Rainham and Wigmore Community Association (RaWCA) purchased the old industrial, agricultural building in 1970. Over the next few years it was transformed by many volunteers into the Community Centre. This was an expensive project so much fundraising was required.

For twenty years the core of this was the Rainham Spectacular held in Cozenton Park on the last Saturday in May. The first was held in 1972 and despite rain and a force eight gale was attended by 8000 people. The main attractions over the years included sky divers, hot air balloons, different army marching bands, large numbers of vintage cars and traction engines, rides on a miniature railway a funfair and much more.

The emphasis was on people enjoying themselves and supporting the whole of the local community, not just RaWCA. Local artists had a large exhibition of their work and many local clubs and societies took stalls to publicise what they did, attract new members or ran sideshows to raise funds for themselves.

One feature at the Spectacular for several years was a Miss Rainham competition

In 1976 the programme for the Rainham Spectacular reported "Following last years highly successful contest we are again running the Miss Rainham Spectacular Beauty Contest with help and sponsorship from the Evening Post and Debenhams".

Entry was for anyone between the ages of 16 and 26. The competitors were to be in daywear and would be

judged on looks, poise, deportment and grooming. Vouchers to the value of £50, £20 and £10 were the prizes presented by Debenhams to the winner and runners-up.

The Miss Rainham contest was still featured in 1981 when Kim Unger was crowned Miss Rainham in that year. Kim said: "I was in two minds whether to enter, but my mum talked me into it. I really enjoyed my year as Miss Rainham and recall being asked to attend a number of events and meetings representing the Town. I remember very little of the day other than we were held in a Vintage bus, prior to the competition".

Runners up to 22 year old Kim, were Sarah March (17) who came 2nd and Jane Kerr (19) who was 3rd.



Fun times at the Rainham Spectacular



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## Memories of Rainham Past

by John Austin

To my way of thinking Rainham has never been the same since the old C. of E. School with its flint walls, outside staircase and turret bell-tower at the top of Station Road (once White Horse Lane) was pulled down. Fortunately the Church still dominates the skyline.

During 2020 Action Forum featured memories of growing up in Rainham from several widely-spread correspondents. I was born in a cottage still standing at the lower end of Maidstone Road, for many years known as Bredhurst Lane. My birth certificate records the district as 'Gillingham' but six years earlier it would have been stamped 'Milton Regis'. Regis means royal: Milton had been owned by Kentish Kings as far back as William the Conqueror. Why the change? Prior to 1929 Rainham had its own Water Board, and a Fire Service dating back to 1901 – but no main drainage. In that time the population of Rainham had almost doubled, and as growth continued it was feared that current methods of emptying privies were contaminating the subsoil in some areas. Milton Rural Council considered that extending their own drainage system as far as Rainham would cost over £20,000, far too expensive for Rainham to afford.

There had already been suggestions from Rainham's Parish Council that the small town should amalgamate with the neighbouring Borough of Gillingham, which had a population of 57,000. Gillingham Council agreed. Although this would mean an increase in rates for Rainham's citizens, the proposal also offered other advantages including widening the High Street and building a Town Hall, so the deal was settled.

In 1939 my parents had just completed the purchase of a house at what was then the lower end of Hawthorne Avenue; there were then only fields of cabbages and potatoes beyond. So when I started school at the beginning of 1940 it was at

Twydall Infants. Frank, a couple of years older, attended Byron Road School. Though it was only about half a mile from our home as the crow flies, there was no direct path; I had to walk up to the A2, turn right as far as Twydall Lane, then north down to Romany Road - about 1½ miles. Frank's journey was even longer, and we had to make the journey four times a day. A campaign begun by my mother and her neighbour for a more direct route eventually led to a proper footpath across the allotments to Romany Road.

The period between September 1939 and May 1940 became known as the 'phony war'. No bombs fell, but gas masks were issued, ration books introduced, air raid shelters were erected and sandbags piled up round important buildings. Early in 1940 Andersen shelters, in the form of corrugated iron sheets, were delivered by the council to Hawthorne Avenue. There was no charge for families where the husband or father, like ours, was in the Forces. But how was Mum to dig the hole, which needed to be three feet deep? Fortunately the two teenage sons of the Howland family from Pump Lane came to the rescue. Mum herself, after a brief lesson in brick-laying from Mr Howland, built the blast wall in front of the entrance.

The phony war ended abruptly at the end of May with the mass evacuation of troops from Dunkirk. I can just remember standing near the viaduct in Pump Lane watching the Red Cross trains go by, but of course did not appreciate their significance. As the Battle of Britain raged over East Kent in late summer most people were not expecting air raids on London or beyond – they still thought the war would be over by Christmas. With Dad away, Mother and the two of us were left on our own in Hawthorne Avenue. Her sister Ethel, who lived in Ealing, thought we might feel lonely, so invited us to join her family there. The house in Hawthorne Avenue could be let.

Aunt Ethel's house, one of a pair of semi-detached houses, was already fairly full. As well as her

*Continued on page 5*

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husband, who was something in the city, going off each morning with a rolled-up umbrella and a bowler hat, but medically unfit for active service, there were also their daughter Joy (14), Cousin Renée (18) and Grandad, in his mid-70s. Mum was fitted in somewhere, but Frank and I slept next door. This half of the pair was occupied by Mrs Gardiner and her son Derek: her husband too was away in the Forces.

Frank and I had just a short spell at school in Ealing. We were sometimes escorted by Joy and her friend Honor Blackman, who would later become famous for her roles as Cathy Gale in 'The Avengers' and as Pussy Galore in 'Goldfinger'. Soon we were taking shelter under the stairs as raids reached Ealing, and it was during one raid that the doorbell rang, and Aunt Ethel opened it, expecting an ARP Warden saying we were showing a chink of light. But it was my father, in his Chief Petty Officer's uniform, on a very brief leave. The four of us were able to have a photograph taken in a local park, but what I really remember about his visit was the clockwork train set he had brought with him from Hamleys. Not long afterwards a landmine blew the roof off the two houses, though none of the residents were hurt. Mum temporarily rented a nearby house – but then the school was also hit.

Before he left Dad had told Mum to ensure our safety by taking advantage of the evacuation plans for school children which came into action in October 1940. Frank and I were sent to Cornwall where we were billeted at a farm. The place had hardly changed since the end of the previous century – no piped water, electricity or main drainage. The privy was at the bottom of the garden. Very occasionally my mother was able to manage a visit, for she was now working at home back in Hawthorne Avenue (she had been warned by a neighbour in Kent that the

tenants there had done a moonlight flit, leaving it in rather a mess) for the Royal Navy. Her job was attaching collars to naval uniforms, delivering them to the Dockyard when a batch was complete. But following a visit in Spring 1942 she realised that we were not being adequately fed or schooled, and immediately took us back to Hawthorne Avenue. But now Twydall schools were full, and we were allotted places at the Council School [later Meredale] in Solomon Road. Those of us who went there remember affectionately our caretaker, Mr Barratt, who would ladle our morning milk ration from a churn into our tin mugs. His wife was the redoubtable Ma Barratt.

We boys were able to have our dinner at the only school canteen in the area which was actually sited in our playground. Dinners cost 3d each, but were well worth the price because it meant more rations for mums struggling to feed children at home. At that time it was not overwhelmed by numbers, but as more and more children sought places restrictions had to be brought in. Only pupils living more than a mile away from the canteen were eligible for the meals, and those from the senior school who lived in Upchurch or Lower Halstow had priority. Because our mother was working, and the length of our daily trek the two of us were still allowed to have our mid-day meal there when we moved to the Senior School in Orchard Street at about the age of ten. Here our morning milk came in one-third pint bottles, issued by the caretaker Mr Dunn. At the end of morning and afternoon school he would exchange his boiler suit for his police uniform and become Special Constable P.C. Dunn. Stationed at the junction with the High Street, he made sure children crossed the main road safely. En route to the canteen we straggled down past the blacksmith where we might catch sight of a shire horse being shooed or a red hot metal rim being fitted on to a cart wheel, then crossed the main road to Station Road. (The barbers at No. 47 charged

*Continued on page 7*

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only 4d. for a boy's haircut as opposed to 9d. in the High Street.) Opposite Webster Road, by the terminus of the No. 2 buses of the Chatham and District Motor Company in their brown and cream livery, we passed the ironmonger's shop where pots and pans dangled in the doorway. As we turned into Solomon Road the whiff of our dinner became gradually more pungent as we approached the canteen. This was a long wooden hut in the playground, very close to the railway, and it shook with every passing train. The smoke from the engines, mixed with steam from the kitchen, could make the room quite foggy.

In charge of the band of cooks, all ladies who had served there since it had opened, was Mrs. Barratt, more often known as 'Sergeant Major' or 'Ma' Barratt. She was not very tall, but had a voice that could be heard across the playground when telling us to get into our two lines, boys and girls separately. When I wrote about her in Action Forum in May 2001 (AF 356) I had many phone calls and personal visits from others who remembered her with mixed feelings.

At the door we had to extend our hands, which had to be clean enough to pass her inspection, before being allowed inside. If they showed signs of ink or paint, we were sent to scrub them before rejoining the queue at the back. (It was rumoured that even teachers had to show theirs.) Once into the hall her voice level dropped dramatically as she commanded us 'Now say your grace, dears' and we dutifully mumbled 'For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful'. But then it was back to her usual pitch - 'Elbows off the table'. 'Sit up straight'. 'No talking'. We sat on forms, twelve to a table, and a boy at the end might be deposited on the floor if all his neighbours stood up at once while he was still seated. Teachers sat at a separate table which was covered by a white tablecloth.]

The operation was run like clockwork. We were allotted only half an hour to eat, and of course had to finish everything on our plates. The food was filling if not exciting. We might have shepherds pie made with mince, stew, well-boiled cabbage and swede, followed by milk pudding with a dollop of jam, chocolate pudding or, our favourite, jam

roly-poly and custard. These were boiled in long cloths. The meat in the stew wasn't top quality, and one cheeky pupil offered to Mrs Barratt a dead cat he'd seen on his way to school. This earned him a telling off and a cuff round the ear. There were two varieties of milk pudding, semolina or tapioca. Supplies of the latter, made from cassava root imported from South America, were apparently limitless even after the war ended. I have avoided milk puddings ever since.

## Letter

### **Shops in Station Road**

I am writing to say how much I enjoyed Dick Grice's recollections of shops in Station Road in the November edition of AF. It brought back many memories of the people and smells associated with the shops after so many years. I was born in 1940 in The Mackland Arms. My Mum and Dad, Norah and Joe Gillman, ran the pub for over 20 years. My husband and I now live in Dorset but Rainham will always be "home" to me.

Dick finished his account by suggesting that others may have fond memories of other shops that he omitted. Between Henry street and William Street was a little general shop run by Mrs Files. I can picture her cutting out coupons from customers' ration books with scissors secured to the counter with string. I was told my sister once took me in my pram to Mrs Briggs sweetshop. She was enjoying her purchases so much she forgot to bring me home.

At 97, just above Briggs, Celia O'Brien ran a betting shop from her front room where she sat at a high desk. I was often tasked with dropping off a bet on the horses written on a piece of paper wrapped round a two shilling coin. At the top of Station Road just down from the Co-op was another fish shop run by Mr and Mrs Cracknell. Coming back down that side was an off licence and next door a corn merchants run by Mr Clout where I collected meal to add to cooked potato peelings to feed our chickens. Another shop I recall is boiling beetroot in Arnolds the greengrocers. On the corner of Station Road and Hothfield, opposite Arnolds, was Miles Bros Lemonade factory. Just down from there was Dennis the butcher and another shop on the corner with Solomon road but I cannot remember what they sold.

Margaret Jordan


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## *Nature Notes*

GARDEN NATURE NOTES FOR APRIL  
“That’s the wise thrush; he sings each song  
twice over// Lest you should think he never  
could recapture// The first fine careless  
rapture!”

From “Thoughts from Abroad” by Robert  
Browning 1812 – 1889

During the fifteen years or so that my wife  
and I have lived in our present house in  
Wigmore, we have noted nineteen species of  
birds in our garden, which is not a big one.  
The species and numbers within the species  
vary according to the time of day, the weather  
and the season of the year. In persistent rain  
or high winds, we may see no birds at all.  
Our regular customers throughout most of the  
year are a pair of blackbirds, a robin and  
dunnock, two wood pigeons, and a number of  
house sparrows and starlings and one long  
tailed field mouse. We hang up containers of  
mixed wild bird seed, sunflower seed, black  
niger seeds, suet pieces and fat balls. We  
place dried meal worms and suet pieces on the  
ground and cover them with an RSPB cage,  
which lets in birds up to the size of a  
blackbird but keeps out wood pigeons, cats  
and sparrow hawks. The blackbirds and the  
robin respond to our rattling of the bags of  
food as we put it out. Unfortunately, the  
male blackbird considers that the food is in his  
territory and drives off the robin and house  
sparrows and any other blackbirds. He puts  
up a good fight against any single starling, but  
can eventually be overwhelmed by a number  
of them. He is particularly defensive when  
he has a mate on her nest. However, the  
female exerts dominance over the male when  
she is feeding herself or collecting crushed  
meal worms or suet pieces for her young.  
The two wood pigeons keep out of trouble by  
picking up spilt seeds from the hanging  
containers.

Our long- tailed field mouse (or wood mouse)  
is light brown in colour, has large round ears  
and large black eye balls. Wood mice,  
mostly of the countryside, are not be to be

confused with house mice. The species was  
seen on a BBCTV programme Autumn Watch  
of some time ago where they had to find  
peanuts or pieces of chocolate in a wooden  
maze. They are normally nocturnal but our  
mouse is quite relaxed in the light of day. It  
is quite cheeky and will sit on its haunches in  
the middle of the cage eating suet pieces with  
its forepaws. It is a long time since we had a  
very harsh winter, thank goodness: in recent  
years our winters have been mild and so that  
birds we may have expected to be attracted to  
our gardens have remained in the countryside,  
mainly feeding on seeds, fruits and berries.  
Goldfinches, for example, will seek out the  
seeds of thistles and burdock. By March,  
however, much natural feed would have dried  
up and woodland birds will appear, some  
perhaps already paired up.

During the months up to and including April  
this year we saw two pairs of goldfinch, and  
one pair each of blue tit, great tit, long tailed  
tit, coal tit, blackbird and greenfinch. It was  
particularly pleasing to see the greenfinches,  
which are now rare, due to a disease caught at  
unclean bird tables. Sole appearances have  
been made by dunnock, blackcap, wren,  
carrion crow, magpie, jackdaw and sparrow  
hawk. The dunnock is a shy bird that  
normally creeps around in the undergrowth,  
but our visitor has copied the house sparrows  
in feeding on the mixed wild bird seed. The  
blackcap may have been one of his species  
that has over-wintered in this country. The  
wren was regularly seen searching for insects  
on pansies in a pot. The carrion crow and  
magpie were attracted by the food under the  
cage. The jackdaw came down on a number  
of occasions to collect sheep’s wool from a  
container hanging on a wall. The wool came  
wrapped around our pre-cooked, frozen

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Christmas Dinner and would have been used to line the jackdaw's nest down somebody's chimney. In the countryside, jackdaws will collect wool caught in barbed wire but will also attempt to pluck nesting material directly from a sheep's back. During the spring of 2020, much to our delight and surprise, a song thrush appeared out of the blue. We assumed that it was a female because we had heard no male singing in the near vicinity. It turned up on most days but the male blackbird had a particularly aggressive attitude towards the newcomer. This aggression of the blackbird is well known, and it is almost certainly because the main natural food of both species is worms. Then, one day, two thrushes appeared, but soon disappeared for good. I did however hear and see a song thrush singing, not long after, on the ridge of a house just down the road, which or may not have been one of our birds. Additionally, I both heard and saw one which was once singing from the top of a tall sycamore sapling overlooking both the car park at the former Skoda Garage in Hoath Lane and the adjoining, busy Gillingham Link Road. I stood there watching and listening to the thrush for about ten minutes. Birds Britannica describes the bird's song as being delivered with a bold, loud, bell-like clarity. It is said that the song thrush loves repetition. As Browning had observed, the bird's musical phrases are repeated at least twice over. It will also try a phrase two or three times and then discard it and try another. Any song thrush able to sing well and with imagination, and produce a number of variations, has the best chance of impressing a potential mate. I hope that, last Spring, not so far away, there was a female song thrush, listening attentively, which was duly impressed.

Joe Ennis

## May in the wilder garden

As Spring moves on and we start to see more signs of life in the garden, it is time to reconsider our attitude to insects. We have very ingrained ideas of what are "good" insects, like bees and colourful butterflies, compared with "bad" insects, such as aphids, caterpillars and wasps. If we want our gardens to support nature, as we do with our bird feeders, we have to look at the bigger picture. The implication of this is that there are no bad insects. We live within a very complex system where all of us are interdependent. If one element is missing, then another will take its place, or other elements will disappear altogether. So, this May, cherish all insects, take your poisons to the recycling centres and let the balance return to your green spaces. Take scale insects. I have been plagued with them for several years, but now they are disappearing from my garden. There are two reasons for this that I can see. One is that I am making sure my shrubs and trees get a regular mulch and organic feed. The second reason is that the sparrow population is bigger than it has been for forty years, aided by the feeding stations and the cover near them. Sparrows hide in bushes and peck at the insects that they find there, which has led to healthier plants in the garden.

### Plant of the month

As gardeners, we are always looking forward, so towards the end of May I will be planting the seeds for next year's wallflowers. I find them tricky to grow, but conversely, can never have too many. The smell takes me back to my childhood, when I walked through the war memorial gardens next to my school. The triggering of memory through scent is a great life-affirming joy for us.

### Job of the month

Despite it being a cold spring, we have had very little rain. Look at your downpipes to plan more water butts. If the trend continues to wet winters and dry summers, you will find them invaluable. <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-make-your-garden-chemical-free-zone>

Happy Gardening, Victoria Golding, Kent Wildlife Trust, Voluntary Advisor

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## Rainham Eco-Hub

The concept of a Rainham Eco-Hub started in May 2020 after two local mums Liz and Kayleigh decided to set up a community, via a Facebook page, to connect locals that wanted to do their bit for the environment.

Very quickly it was realised there was more interest than originally envisaged and things snowballed from being an online chat group about local environmental issues to actually taking action. The group is now the umbrella community organisation for all things environmental in Rainham and can help connect you to wider groups with similar aims of making Rainham greener and more sustainable.



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Local residents, schools, business's, and related interest groups have since come forward to get involved and have a direct positive impact on our town and its environment. It has grown far bigger than we could ever have imagined and currently there are 6 other Eco-Hubs across Kent working and learning from each other.

Some of the groups helping transform our town include: Rainham Litter hero's, run by some lovely volunteers encouraging and celebrating people keeping our town tidy, and a community group called Friends of Rainham Recreational Ground that have been able to install Medway's first willow den in the park. They have also created a fairy trail through the town, encouraging families to connect with nature and get them out exploring our wonderful town. A business sponsored, rent-a-cup scheme, is being trialled in Nutmegs, that is helping say "No!" to the use of disposal cups.

Schools are also signing up to becoming an Eco School through the national scheme, as well as St Margaret's church working towards an Arocha award, as an Eco Church, for the part they play.

This year Liz and Kayleigh hope to be able to hold many face-to-face events and festivals in Rainham, where those that want to get involved can meet, and take part in action locally. It is planned to offer more support, training and networking conferences for those that want to take further steps and it is planned to launch a local awards ceremony later in the year.

<https://www.facebook.com/theecohubrainham/>  
 Kayleigh Ward. St Margaret's Church Rainham

## Rainham Community Orchard

Apple Juice at £3.00 per litre bottle is available from Sunburst Books, 21 Station Road, Rainham, ME8 7RS  
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## The Co-op Treats

**As told to Maggie Francis by the late Alan Major**

The Kent Co-operative Societies had branches in Rainham, Chatham, Rochester and Gillingham and held their annual 'Treat', or 'Fete' for the local population in local parks in each of the towns.

The late Alan Major recalled the Rainham Co-op 'Treat' or 'Fete'. He lived locally and his father was employed as a shop assistant and roundsman at the local Co-op Branch in Rainham.

He recalled tales in the December 1986 issue of Bygone Kent, some of which are shared here. 'At least as far back as 1910/11 up to 1915 a Co-op 'Treat' had been held in Rainham Recreation ground, with ordinary sports, races etc. Mr Henry Samsen the Co-op's baker from 1896 to 1915, made bread, swiss rolls and 15 inch long slab cakes at Rainham's Co-op bakehouse for these 'Treats'.

In the 1920s the 'Treat' was also preceded by a Carnival Procession through Rainham. Rainham's Co-op Carnival Procession started at Longley Road, up Station Road, along the High Street and Broad Walk to the 'Men of Kent' and back again but continuing down Station Road to the Recreation Ground. Children of Co-op members would gather in Station Road and climb aboard the horse-drawn carts and Motor vehicles to take part in the Carnival. Local farmers and other Rainham businessmen loaned their horses and carts and lorries for the purpose. These vehicles were suitably gaily adorned with streamers and similar. In addition there were floats advertising C.W.S. (Co-op brand) goods. Prizes were received for the best floats and best fancy dress costumes in a variety of classes and the vehicles gradually dispersed for the fun to continue on the Recreation ground. The Co-op used to provide the coloured crepe paper etc for anyone intending to enter in fancy dress as either Co-op or non Co-op subjects or characters. The last 'Treat' that had a preceding carnival was held about 1931 after which the police refused permission for it to be held on the High Street route. After that the Co-op 'Treat' continued with the help and support of those who had previously been involved from the the Co-op employees and families. Floats and Fancy Dress on the Rec and the 'Treats' teatime party for the children continued.

Only the children of co-op employees and members were entitled to the tea-time treat.

## Kent Wildlife Trust Events

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[www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/events](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/events)

### Reptile Ecology and Survey Techniques

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