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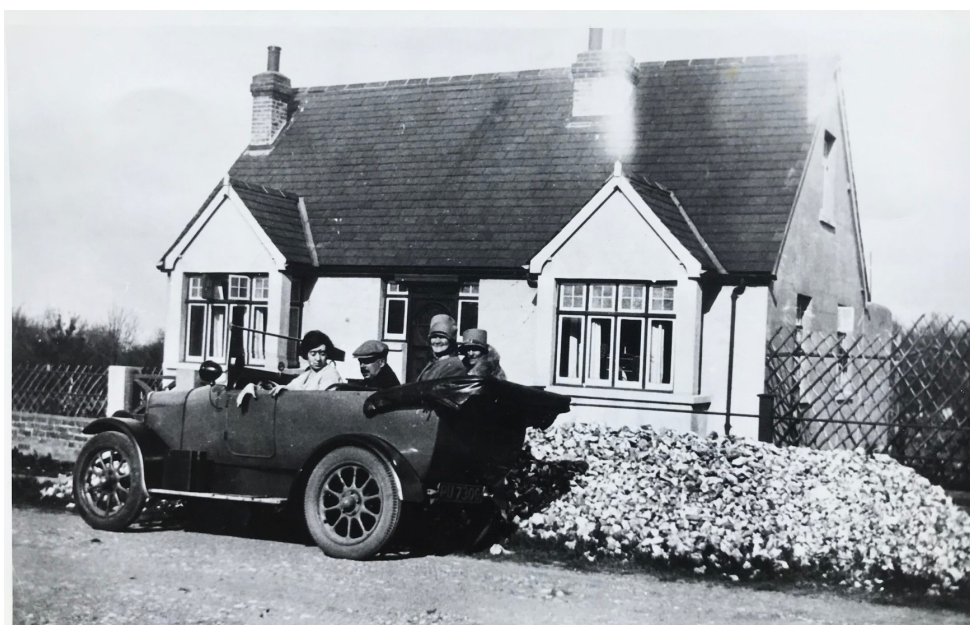
AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

JULY
2021

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Development of the Rainham Mark Building Estate



Rainham Mark Building Estate was the name given to the development of Marshall Road, Edwin Road and Sylvan Road in the early part of the twentieth Century. If you have any old photos taken on the estate that you could share it would be great to see them - please email info@rainham-history.co.uk (cont on page 4)

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Editorial

Having had the chance to read archives of early Action Forum magazines from the early 1970s, it's given a fascinating insight into how much and how little has changed in Rainham. Readers of some current news and social media posts may get the impression that vandalism is rife and children far worse behaved than they were years ago. Reading old Action Forums gives a somewhat different picture!

Back in 1973 a letter to the editor was bemoaning the state of Parkwood Shopping Centre (which would have been newly constructed at the time) with issues of vandalism, littering and cars parked inconsiderately. Other letters raised issues with getting school places and GP appointments. Roll the clock forward 50 years and many of the same themes are still being raised. Whilst out running through Gillingham Park recently, I spotted a sign marking where the bandstand used to be; demolished in the 1950s due to vandalism, which would suggest that National Service wasn't the answer either.

Fortunately many groups locally are trying to improve the local environment, highlighted in this issue. They are always looking for volunteers to assist. Friends of Rainham Rec and Riverside Forum, Friends of Cozenton Park, as well as Rainham Eco hub, are trying to make a difference and co-ordinating local activities - see about Green Drinks (p13). As I write this, the Covid19 restrictions are continuing into July but local clubs and groups are starting to plan activities again so keep an eye on the Diary section for events taking place. At least the weather has now

improved so we're more easily able to get outside and enjoy socialising in the sun.

Letters to the Editor

Please would it be possible for you to put this notice in your next issue.

We believe that Ena Stanes, my aunt, was a well-known figure in Rainham and very active, back in the day, within the local community.

Many thanks, Valerie Hogg



**Winifred Ena Stanes
1919-2021**

A familiar face to many in Rainham, Winifred Ena Stanes lived in and around Rainham for the last seventy years.

In 1950 she moved to the area to teach at Lower Halstow Primary School and retired as Head in 1979. She lived in the then School House for a number of years, before moving to Wigmore and, once retired, moved to Rainham. During her time at Lower Halstow School a former pupil recalls 'Miss Stanes', as being very strict but a pioneer in introducing new activities into the curriculum including science in the 1960s, gardening lessons and playing the recorder. She was even remembered for holding country dancing lessons with the children on her lawn at School House.

Away from School, Ena was a keen mountaineer and walker and was well-travelled. Her active lifestyle included joining a polar expedition and walking the Great Wall of China. At home Ena enjoyed gardening and had a great love of classical music.

Although completely deaf in her later years she insisted on living independently right up until her death, aged 102.

Dear Editor,
Reading articles by Denise Hazelden and Arthur Kimber in 2019 issues brought back many memories of Rainham, especially as Arthur attended Orchard St secondary school like me.

I was born in 1934 in a terraced cottage towards the lower end of Maidstone Road, originally named Bredhurst Lane. Six years prior my birth certificate would have been stamped 'Milton Regis' rather than 'Gillingham'; its correct name being the 'Royal Estate of Milton Regis', owned by Kentish Kings as far back as William I. Prior to 1929, Rainham had its own water board and fire service but no main drainage, despite Motney Hill sewage works in Lower Rainham belonging to Gillingham. I believe it was a question of economics that Rainham was incorporated into Gillingham Council. Rainham has never been the same since the old C of E school at the top of Station Road (once called Whitehorse Lane) was pulled down. The old church school was so unique to Rainham, with its flint-rendered walls, outside staircase and turret bell tower. Those of my age (86) could not forget Special Constable PC Dunn who, at the end of school, would exchange the boiler suit of caretaker and proudly don his policeman's uniform to see pupils of both local schools safely across the Station Road/High Street junction. Old Ma Barrett's canteen ran in the

council school at Solomon Road. The only wartime and post-war canteen in Rainham, it was run like clockwork by Mrs Barrett and her band of ladies, five days a week. Insisting we showed our washed and scrubbed hands before entering her domain, it was rumoured that teachers had to do the same! Although a very caring lady, she was sometimes called Sergeant Major Ma Barratt.

En-route to our daily hot meal we would pass the blacksmiths at the bottom of Orchard Street, briefly watching a shire being re-shoed or a hot metal rim being scorched onto a cart wheel. Crossing the High St, almost opposite the Royal Picture House (the Bug Hutch), we then passed Kemsley's the butchers and Rules the paper shop and an assortment of others, including the old barber (who charged 4d for a boys haircut as opposed to 9d in the High Street). Can anyone else remember the Chatham and District bus (brown and cream) terminus at Webster Rd, opposite the ironmongers with all the pots and pans hanging outside? As we headed along Solomon Rd, the whiff of our dinner became more pungent.

During the war Mr Picture was the headmaster and Mrs Barrett's husband the caretaker, who ladled the milk ration out of the churn and into our tin mugs.

I look fondly back on that simple life.

Yours,

John K Austin NDD ATD BA

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Marshall & Edwin Roads (ADJ)

The land for Marshall Road and Edwin Road was sold off in the early 1920s with houses constructed soon after. Unlike modern housing estates, developed by a single company, these were sold off as individual plots of land for the owner to build on. There was a 20ft building line specified which made sure houses weren't too close to the road.

Plots were sold off in various sizes - some 20 foot wide, some 40 foot and some combined to 60 foot thereby wider than the original sales brochures suggested. The 40 foot plots were £60 and the 60 foot wide plot for the house shown cost £90 by combining one plot and half of the next one as can be seen on maps.

The roads were named after Marshall Harvey and Edwin Jelly who owned and sold the land. From contract details seen, it would suggest that Marshall Harvey and Edwin Jelly jointly acquired the land for the 'Rainham Mark Building Estate' then parcelled it off to sell to individuals. Other land around was still owned by the War Department (now Tesco Extra/ A289 link road/Gillingham Business Park) and Lord Hothfield.

Marshall Harvey is listed as the Accountant for the Wakeley Brothers in 1888 and involved in other land deals around Rainham. Edwin Jelly owned a menswear shop on the A2 but both men were members of Rainham Cricket Club so may well have devised their plans after meeting at a cricket match.

Lord Hothfield was a major landowner linked to the cricket club so may have sold the portion of land for the estate to Harvey & Jelly through this Cricket Club connection.

The front cover photo was taken shortly after

the house was constructed on Marshall Road. In terms of dating the photo, the car has registration PU7306, issued between July 1923 and Sept 1925, so the photo must have been taken after this date. Help identifying the make and model of the car would be great! The land was sold in May 1923 so construction of the property probably took place soon afterwards. This photo is believed to have been taken in 1928, tying-in with the age of the car and the sale of the land - there is already marking on the roof so it's probably a couple of years after being built.

You can see the flints piled up that households were required to collect for making the roads as well as some already compacted in the road. After seeing a pothole on Broadview Avenue today the substructure below the tarmac remains as flints.

The original purchaser was Joseph James Cook of 208 Nelson Road Gillingham, who is believed to be pictured driving the car.

The contractual details specified in the Indenture state that 'the purchaser cannot build a house of less than £350 in value if it fronts the main road or under £200 in value for a back road. The purchaser is responsible for building a paved footpath in the front of their property within 3 months from completion and is required to maintain half of the road outside their property until it is taken over by the local council.'

It's clear from the photo that the requirement to build a paved footpath in front of the property within 3 months was ignored!

You can see the full details of the maps of the area and other photos of Marshall Road here <http://www.rainham-history.co.uk/marshall-edwin>

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Community Page

Eco-hub goes from strength to strength

Rainham Eco-hub now publishes a weekly email newsletter, setting out recent events, achievements and forthcoming events. To subscribe email the team, at the following: therainhamecohub@gmail.com.

The first edition detailed Claire's Mini Recycling facility, where cheese packets, pens, crisp packets, egg cartons and more can be left in the white bin on the drive at 26 Elmstone Road.

Also detailed are the Friends of Rainham Recreational Park, who can be contacted at friendsrainhamrec@gmail.com.

Rainham's first Green Drinks (a national scheme providing face to face contact for those wanting to get involved in local environmental initiatives) is scheduled to take place on the evening of Monday 5th July at Manor Farm. Register interest with the hub. The Green Drinks are planned to take place on the evening of the first Monday of each month, COVID restrictions permitting.

North Downs Sponsored Walk

Organised by Rotary Club of the Weald of Kent, on behalf of Cancer Research UK.

In and around Harrietsham, last year we had to cancel for the first time in 35 years but we are determined to go ahead this year.

Taking place on 8th Aug, it will be a different format to normal but still provide a choice of 4 routes (1,3,6 and 9 miles), starting and finishing at Glebe Field, Harrietsham and taking in the beautiful North Downs. Check out our website for more info:

www.wealdofkentrotary.org.uk

Oasthouse Theatre, Rainham

Found in Stratford Lane, the theatre first opened its door to the public in 1963 and has provided entertainment ever since, with drama, comedy, music and our annual panto. Due to the pandemic the theatre closed halfway through its run of 'Entertaining Angels' and it has not been financially viable for us to re-open with restrictions in place. However, providing restrictions are fully lifted, our next production 'Flushed and Flushed Again' by Ron Nicol will open Thursday 2nd September and run until 11th. Tickets can be booked online.

In the meantime, we are holding an Open Day on Saturday 24th July from 11am until 4pm. There will be an opportunity to tour this charming Grade II listed building, hearing of its history. There will also be entertainment for you to enjoy and a sneak preview of our 2022 pantomime.

This will provide a unique opportunity to find out more about the variety of ways you can become involved, either on stage, back stage or front of house. If you are interested in becoming a member or simply want to look around Rainham's own theatre then pop along. The bar will be open and refreshments available.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Oasthouse Theatre. For more details, visit our website www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk or phone Helen Caston on 07939 573967

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Rainham Historical Society

September 2021 marks the 40th Anniversary of the Society and members are able to enjoy a 'Celebration Tea' in the Millennium Centre, with entertainment provided by a Sea Shanty group 'Swinging the Lead' which plays on the 'Cutty Sark', Greenwich, amongst other venues.

The Society has been well supported from the beginning when founder members Pat and George Fryer, with Eric Cross, set up the following format which still runs to this very day.

Monthly meetings are held in the evening, in the Millennium Centre on the 4th Wednesday each month from September until April.

Speakers give talks upon a wide variety of historical subjects.

Outings and holidays are held during the summer months and open to both members and non-members.

The Society donates £1,000 per annum on behalf of the members to historical charities, such as St Margaret's Church, Rainham towards the repair of stained-glass windows and to the restoration of 'The Medway Queen' paddle steamer moored at Gillingham Pier and open to visitors.

The on-going programme, which is subject to Covid19 restrictions, begins in 2021 as follows:

Booked Talks

UNCOVERING THE V-WEAPON STORY
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RAINHAM AND THE OAST

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Membership £10.00 per annum

Associate Members £5.00 per annum

Visitors and Associate Members £2.00 per meeting.

If you are interested in joining the Society please contact one of these Committee members.

Secretary: Fay Daniels -
01634 364289

Membership: Olwen O'Dowd -
01634 263622

Chairman: Katherine Reffell -
01634 389919



Medway Music Association

MMA will soon be announcing their plans for this year's Summer Festival.

For enquiries about MMA's opportunities please contact:

info@medwaymusicassociation.co.uk

Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group

We normally meet every Friday morning at the Millennium Centre for a cuppa. We help those who have lost their spouse or partner so come and make new friends who understand how you feel.

At the moment we are keeping in contact and introducing new members to each other until we can meet again.

Contact Julie on 01634 364309 for more details.

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Nature Notes

(Joe Ennis)

Trout Nature Notes

According to the Environment Agency, there are 161 chalk rivers in England, more than in any other country. With their clear, cool water, fed from underground chalk aquifers, and their unique array of animal and plant life, they are like no other natural habitat. Great drifts of water crowfoot, whose white flowers float on the surface of the water, are a characteristic sign of chalk rivers. Fish such as trout, grayling and salmon spawn in the beds of pebbles and gravel of these waters. Nymphs of mayflies grow fat under the same pebbles. The nymphs become glistening, long-tailed, adult mayflies, living for only a few days. During this short time, they mate, in swarms, over the water, usually in the afternoon or early evening.

The Little Stour is one of Kent's chalk streams. It joins the Great Stour, which runs through Canterbury, to form the River Stour, which empties into Sandwich Bay. Before setting out for a trip to the Little Stour, I gave some thought as to what animals might have adopted the Little Stour as a habitat and what species I was likely to see. My thoughts turned to otter, water vole, water shrew, brown trout, white-clawed crayfish, European eel, bullhead and lamprey.

Otters and water voles are present in Kent but I know of no reports of sightings on the Little Stour. There is an important colony of water voles in the ditches and dykes of the Stodmarsh Nature Reserve in the valley of the Great Stour near Canterbury. The latter has dense vegetation in parts, which both water voles and water shrews need as protective cover. According to anglers, native brown trout, sea trout and European eels can be caught in the Great Stour. Since the Great Stour and Little Stour merge together on their way to the sea, there is no reason why sea trout and young eels (elvers) should not also run from the sea into the Little Stour. I myself have seen native brown trout (with characteristic black spots down their backs) in the Great Stour between Chartham and Canterbury. A report from the Kentish Stour Countryside Project states that the native white-clawed cray fish "is restricted to just one stretch of the Great Stour". It is not clear, however, whether or not the crustacean can also be found

in the Little Stour. Both bullheads and Lampreys are found in chalk rivers, but I have no information about their presence in the Little Stour.

I concluded that I ran the risk of seeing none of the nine animals in my "see" list, but I decided to go ahead on what was a sunny June day. I picked up the Little Stour at Littlebourne near Canterbury. It is fed by the Nail Bourne, which has its origin at a spring at Lyminge in the North Downs above Folkestone. The Nail Bourne is, however, a winter bourne which only flows as far as the Little Stour when the water table is high. I left Littlebourne from the northern end of the village, where there is a mill straddling the river, a long, thatched barn and an interesting group of oast houses. On the way to Wickhambreaux, the river was lined by willow trees, a dense vegetation of reeds and the flowers of plants such as meadow sweet, great willow herb and lesser parsnip. There was little room for an angler to cast a fly, even assuming there were any trout there to catch. There was plenty of cover, however, for the otter, water vole and water shrew. My arrival at Wickhambreaux was heralded by its well-known white painted, three-storey, former water mill. Children of the local Church of England Primary school were having drawing lessons among the lime trees on the village green, overlooked by the quintessentially English public house "The Rose Inn." On the Little Stour the only sign of animal life was a mother mallard leading a long line of ducklings. After leaving Wickhambreaux the Little Stour breaks out into open countryside, crossing fields and passing between two gravel pits, after which it is joined by another chalk river, the Wingham, which has its origins in a number of springs on the outskirts of Wingham village. The combined rivers then meander between the marshy, reed-filled ground of the adjoining Newnham and Deerson Valleys. I could see, above one valley, two marsh harriers circling and assumed they had a nest somewhere among the vast reed beds.

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A public footpath follows the meanders and I would have loved to have meandered downstream to chat with two anglers who appeared to be fly-fishing. But my legs will no longer carry me that far so it was not until I crossed over the Little Stour by a road bridge (the “Blue Bridge”) that I was able to obtain my next close-up views of the river. I could see shoals of fish both upstream and down but could not positively identify any native brown trout. I had my final views of the Little Stour from the Stour Bridge at Plucks Gutter, where it merges with the Great Stour. The merging water no longer consisted of the clear water of a chalk stream, as it had been when it started out near Littlebourne.

During my attempt to closely follow the course of the Little Stour, I passed through a number of attractive villages, with ancient parish churches, in the North East Kent Fruit Belt adjoining the marshes of the mouth of the River Stour. These villages included East and West Stourmouth and Preston.

It will not be a surprise that I returned from my trip well aware that I had not seen a single one of the creatures on my “see today” list. This was, I am afraid, one of those trips to the Kentish countryside which I had thoroughly enjoyed, but which I concluded that there was not a great deal to write home about.

July in the Wilder Garden

(Victoria Golding)

July is a traditional time for spending time in the garden. The simple pleasure of lying on a blanket to get an insect’s eye view of life in the grass is something that we did naturally, and need to reclaim as adults, even if we do require a helping hand up!

Long hot, sunny days can scorch leaves and flowers, so this is the time to assess the various areas of sun and shade in your outdoor space to

look where the different plants are happiest. Use your compost to mulch plants prone to drying out, especially new ones – but make sure the ground is wet first. Water butts are so useful at this time, especially for veg. In general though, try to grow those plants that are both happy in your garden and drought-tolerant. Plenty of clover and other wild flowers in the lawn will give variety, interest and a hard-wearing surface for activities without watering. Small insects at the bottom of the food chain are found on daisy-flowered plants, adding to the diversity, pollinating and being food for something else. July is the time to watch the tall plants in your pond in order to see emerging dragonflies.

Plant of the month

Perennial Salvias are wonderful and bloom through to winter. Their aromatic leaves mean they are unpopular with slugs and don’t need much water. There is a wonderful range of flower shapes and colours, great for attracting pollinators.

Job of the month

Autumn bulbs and corms are now available to add new pollen and nectar sources later in the year. Be patient, as they may not bloom the first year, but we are in this for the long term, aren’t we!

You may have seen the promotion to record insect abundance by recording bug splatters on your number plate. Thank you for doing that so please download the app and give us more data on:

<https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/news/new-bug-splatter-app-reveal-more-about-insect-populations>

Have a lovely July, with lots of wildlife in your gardens.

(Gardening for a Wilder Kent Garden Advisor)

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East Medway u3a has continued to operate throughout Covid restrictions. We can offer numerous zoom groups, including a monthly guest speaker, a monthly newsletter containing puzzles, articles and quizzes, plus WhatsApp and email interest-group meetings.

Many of our groups are now able to meet face to face and we plan to resume our face-to-face monthly meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, starting September.

We meet 2-4pm at the Smallholders Club, 2 Springvale, ME8 0JG.

Our reasonable annual membership fee is £18 or £2 admission for non-members.

You can find out more on our website:

www.u3asites.org.uk/east-medway

Or telephone our membership secretary:

07816 159668 with any questions.



Friends of Cozenton Park

We all know that one of the best parks in Rainham is Cozenton Park, a beautiful green space located between Rainham library and the

Splashes pool. Well a new group has formed to become the voice of the park users, promoting its use and working with Medway Council to make improvements. We spoke to founding members of the group, Kerry Briffitt, Lorraine Marley, and Joy Sanders to discuss plans. 'We saw the success of Rainham Recreation Ground's activities and interaction with the local community and wanted to find Guardians for Cozenton Park too,' they told us. 'So we organised a successful litter pick at the park, with the response from people only encouraging us further.'

The group didn't just stick with litter picks. They started hiding knitted bees with sunflower seeds with our logo to engage the public and to join our Facebook page. Next came Peter Rabbit characters for an Easter Trail, and little clay Earths to celebrate Earth Day. They have spoken to a wide range of people who use the park, including families, skate park users, cyclists, and dog walkers - all to find out what they like and what they would like to see put in place. Suggestions included a section for puppies and nervous dogs, more age-appropriate park equipment, access to refreshments and toilets, bigger and more secure litter bins, and a circular path. And with the exciting new Splashes development planned, they hope to be involved (cont p13).

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and work with the council to see what benefits it could bring to the park. The group are bringing much needed positivity to Rainham; future events include a summer family picnic, a community orchard in the nursery grounds, a mobile café and professional skaters visiting the skate park. To get involved contact them on their Facebook Page. (Stuart Bourne)

Dates for the Diary

Events are starting up! Don't forget, any organisation can request an entry in the diary (free of charge). Contact diary@actionforum.co.uk

4th July - Riverside Country Park volunteer Sunday

5th July - Green Drinks at Manor Farm (environmental networking) Contact therainhamcoguh@gmailcom

9th July - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group Millennium Centre, Rainham Ring Julie 01634 364309

16th July - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group Millennium Centre, Rainham Ring Julie 01634 364309

18th July - Upchurch Horticultural Soc Summer Show 97 Chaffes Lane, 2pm, refreshments available

23rd July - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group Millennium Centre, Rainham Ring Julie 01634 364309

24th July - Oasthouse Theatre Rainham Open Day 11-4pm www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk or 07939 573967

30th July - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group Millennium Centre, Rainham Ring Julie 01634 364309

1st Aug - Riverside Country Park volunteer Sunday

2nd Aug - Green Drinks at Manor Farm (environmental networking) Contact therainhamcoguh@gmailcom

6th Aug - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group Millennium Centre, Rainham Ring Julie 01634 364309

8th Aug - Cancer Research Sponsored Walk www.wealdofkentrotary.org.uk

8th Aug - Berengrave Nature Reserve volunteer Sunday

22nd Aug - St Mark's Summer Garden Party, G'ham 4pm in Old Vicarage Garden Ring 01634 570489

2nd Sept - Oasthouse Theatre - 'Flushed and Flushed Again' (running until 11th) www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk

8th Sept - East Medway u3a at Smallholders Club Ring 07816 159668 or visit www.u3asites.org.uk/east-medway

10th Sept - Catenary Wires/Pete Astor and European Sun Oasthouse Community Centre, Contact 'carefulnowpromotions@gmailcom'

Word on the Streets

Anne Neeves, Action Forum's Distribution Coordinator explained to me recently the monthly cycle of distributing the 20,500 copies of Action Forum that reach every home in Rainham, Parkwood, Hempstead, Upchurch and Lower Halstow each month. They are currently distributed by 116 volunteer distributors, who deliver between 765 and 16 copies to ensure the magazine gets out to you all within the first few days of each month, once received back from the printers. My own experience of delivering to Northumberland Avenue and Suffolk Avenue is that it takes approximately 40 minutes to distribute 100 copies, once collected from Sunburst Books in Station Road, having received a text from Anne to tell me they are ready for collection..

Anne noted that a number of volunteers have distributed for many years, enjoying the exercise that walking the manor provides as well as getting a kick out of helping the good causes that Action Forum aims to help. If you are a volunteer distributor tell us your story by emailing the editorial team, editor@actionforum.co.uk

There are always a few volunteer vacancies, some temporary due to holidays or ill health, and some permanent due to the ever expanding nature of Rainham's housing. Anne is currently looking for permanent volunteer's for the following roads (the brackets have the number of houses in those roads, so divide by 40 to get an estimate of the time commitment each month.

Rainham - Mardale Close (41), Scott Ave (87), Sutton Close (21), Wakeley Rd (Station Rd - Concorde Pub) (74), Silverspot Close (22), Brangore Close (83)

Upchurch - Wallbridge Lane (54), Poot Lane, Wetham Green, Ham Green & Susan's Lane. (75) A 2 hour+ country walk.

Contact Anne on 07791 585 998, if you can help on either a permanent or temporary basis.

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