

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

SEPT
2021

NUMBER 571

First published
March 1969

Messing about on the River!



Toe Rags - do you know what they are, or where the term originated from? Whatever the case, when you have them, wrap them tightly round each toe to fill out your boots. It might just make all the difference!

(see page 4 for more)

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 Copy date : Sept 20th, 2021
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Editorial

After commenting that summer had arrived we then seemed to have weeks of unsettled weather so I'll avoid meteorological observations this month.

Hopefully you have been able to take part in activities, and socialise, since the remaining Covid restrictions were removed. It's good to see events start taking place again so please check out the diary for things to do locally. Following its use as a Covid testing centre, one of the buildings hosting events again is the Oast Community Centre. Three bands are performing there on 10th September. The closure of music venues such as Beacon Court has limited the places for live music so it's good to see a venue for bands to perform locally.

There were some great responses to the photo of Marshall Road in July. We have received fascinating photos of Edwin Road that will feature in a future edition along with some earlier history. We've also had a letter asking about a missing bridleway that used to exist between houses on Spekes Road and would have joined the existing bridleway that leads towards Hempstead Valley, past the Fairview Road junction. If you have any recollections of when it disappeared or how to trace missing bridleways please contact the editor.

Over recent months there seem to have been a continuous stream of roadworks around the area, from the highway works in Otterham Quay Lane to City Fibre laying new cables along the A2 and some residential streets. With more people needing faster broadband it will be beneficial but getting there is always disruptive.

In Otterham Quay Lane the new Leigh Academy appears to be finished ready to

welcome the first pupils so I'm sure in September many memories will be made for the future, by both pupils and teachers from being the first cohort to attend a brand new school. If you have memories of your time at school there are a number of Facebook groups for local schools that are quite active, with a wide range of year groups keeping in touch. Over the last few months you may have spotted various colourful bikes decorated with flowers around Rainham. It's been lovely seeing these "Flower Power" bikes appear in different locations and really brightens up the area to have them around. The team behind them seem to be kept busy as the locations keep changing. Hopefully it might be a nice challenge for the kids to spot them when they are out and about too!

Letters to the Editor

Further to our recent correspondence regarding the motor car pictured on the cover of the **May 2021 issue**, I attach a picture of that model recently taken at our A7OC Rally at Bewl Water, where we had eighty cars attending. The picture shows a 1929 example which has been restored to a very high standard, and clearly shows the distinctive circular ventilation disc on the scuttle in front of the door, along with the calorimeter on the radiator. The pram hood irons on this example were not on the car in the previous picture, but were purely decorative and probably optional.



The open tourer pictured on the front of the **July edition** is harder to identify as the picture is dark and doesn't show any

distinctive features that I can see. Several car manufacturers were producing cars of this size and style in the mid twenties, though there were very few saloons. The artillery wheels and scuttle mounted lamps are typical of the period. Interestingly, there is no rear door for access to the back seats, but there appears to be a step behind the rear mudguard. There may have been a rear door on the opposite side, but in the interests of body rigidity this may also have been omitted. If I was a betting man I would guess that the car was again an Austin - this time a 12 horsepower model. Out of interest, the engine in this car was very reliable, and was also employed in Austin London taxis up until the late 1940s!

Hope this is of interest.

Regards

Brian Austin

Rainham Prefabs

How exciting to be on the front page of a prestigious magazine, albeit 68 years after the photo was taken. Thank you for putting the picture of Wigmore Prefabs on the map. It evoked many happy memories of my childhood as it was a close knit community. It is a very interesting magazine.

Yours sincerely

Anne Pearce (nee Black)



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Toe Rags in Rainham

(recollected to Maggie Francis)

Horace Moore is a Rainham boy through and through. He was born in 1933, lived at 205 Station Road and has shared memories and some of the many stories of his life and time growing up in Rainham.

The Oast House next to the Station was the main Office for Wakeley Brothers' many businesses. Horace remembers horses and carts going up Station Road taking wheat to the Oast, where the sacks of grain were hoisted up from the back of the carts into the building, but Horace was more aware that the wheat came in on the barges.

That was where he was happiest, down by the water, with everything associated with the river.

When Horace was a lad, Rainham was just a small community with the majority of the population involved working in various ways on the river, in the brickfields or in the agricultural community.

Along with the rest of the local children, he went to Solomon Road School from the age of 5. No fancy introductions to school in those days. As he says, 'You just got left at the door on the first day and was left to get on with it'. By the grand age of six and half, Horace was doing his first job. George (Cully) Carter had young Horace picking up winkles with him and running up and down Station Road selling them from door to door. Young Horace would sell the catch from an old cart, calling on the locals to buy a basin of whatever it was that he and Cully had caught that day.

Horace loved the river and would go shrimping and winkling in the winter on the mud flats. Spring found him trawling for pink shrimps and brown shrimps and fluing (catching flounders). People would buy them

off the boats.

At the age of 13 Horace was taken on as an Apprentice to Jack Carter (Cully's grandson) to become a Freeman of the River Medway.

Four years later Horace was called up for National Service. His love of the river made him want to go into The Naval Reserve, but he couldn't because he was colour blind.

Instead he went into the Army and served in Suez. He earned 36 shillings a week in the Army and, apart from 5 shillings which he kept for himself, sent all the rest home to his dear old mum. He found out later that his mum had saved up all his for him.

Once out of the Army and home in Rainham, he did all kinds of jobs associated with the river. He worked on various barges, moving timber, cement and ballast. He was on one, 'Kentish Hoy', a 120-ton motor barge, which had been built originally in 1904.

Horace belonged to the river and it was obviously 'in his blood', but he realised the need to get himself established. He was good at catching the fish and had a natural talent for selling the fish door to door. His opportunity to allow his love of sharing 'the catch' with the local population of Rainham came in 1984 when he established Hales and Moore fishmongers in Station Road to build a business with his family.

Horace loves to tell wonderful tales of old Rainham, one of which he has shared. When talking about old friends, he related tales of how they ensured they managed safely across the mud flats. Apparently, the boots had to be a very tight fit so that the feet were secure and you could get a better, more solid grip on the mud! What better way than to get some old bits of rag and wrap them tightly round each toe to fill out the boots?

Who knew that was where the term 'toe rag'

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originated?

The best bit is his description of walking into the kitchen of his little terraced house to find all these 'toe rags', hanging up to dry over the fire on washday)

The Hales and Moore Fishmongers is still thriving and is one of local businesses which has carried on serving the local population during these recent months.

Until relatively recently Horace was still the delivery boy, driving the van with orders to local customers and restaurants, but still never happier than when he was on a boat on some water, some where.

The Mud

A flat comfort this quagmire
of pitted brown gloss
Washed by the ebb tide's
last flurries of retreat.

Mud pickled hours for snug shrimps
capsuled like waterless spacemen
in gelid plains;

Tins upturned too glinting defiance
as if new art;

This wild jetsam of morning waters
spat emetics from a green sea.

by Graham James

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Location: meeting outside St Dunstan's Church, church Road, West Peckham, ME18 5JH (please park considerately in the village).

Start time: 10.00

The walk: a moderate circular walk of 7 miles/11.3 km firstly heading along the Greensands Way then heading South towards Hadlow via Oxen Hoath Park. On the return we follow the Wealdway. Bring some nibbles for enroute and enjoy a pub lunch at the end.

Mostly fairly flat footpaths, and farmland.

Estimated finish time: 14.00

Contact: John - 07749 760788 or
billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk

Rainham Ladies Choir

We continue to meet weekly via Zoom, in a desire to keep our repertoire and friendship alive.

We are hoping to be able to resume meeting together in person from **6th Sept** with the same purpose that has been with us for the last 63 years, namely to have fun singing together as part of an award-winning choir. We are always keen to welcome new members, so if you want to try something new and you love to sing, please consider joining us. We perform a variety of music (many in three part harmony arrangements) from pop classics through to the Hallelujah Chorus, and all styles in between.

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Nature Notes

(Joe Ennis)

NATURE NOTES FOR JULY/AUGUST

I paid a visit to a river, only four miles long, but which played an extremely important role in the development of the coastal town through which it still flows.

I drove, passing the spires of Canterbury Cathedral on the horizon, and continued along the A2, as it keeps to the general direction of the old Roman Road across the high, flat ridge of the North Downs. Approaching Dover, I left the by-pass and turned back onto the old A2 to Lydden Hill, at the head of the long valley that leads to Dover Docks, some five miles away. I arrived at the village of Temple Ewell, nearby to which the River Dour begins as a spring. This is one of Kent's very few chalk streams. It has had a chequered history and bears little resemblance to the idyllic chalk streams of Hampshire and elsewhere which we see on the television. When the use of running water to power machinery was at its height, the Dour was lined with eight corn mills, five paper mills, sawmills, a tannery and an iron foundry. It was not until 1993, after 92 years of petitioning of the Environment Agency and its predecessors, that the Dour was given back its age-old recognition as a river, to recover its dignity and importance. It now receives the protection in law afforded to all rivers and the mill buildings have gradually been demolished or converted for other uses. Even so, the Dour still suffers from the legacies of its industrial use. Firstly, there are many obstructions to the passage of fish and eels, particularly in the weirs that have been left behind. Secondly, the natural course of the river is fragmented by, for example, former millponds. That said, it is now clean and supports a significant colony of native brown trout which spawn in the gravel beds, in the winter, in the river's lower reaches. I planned to follow as much of the course of the river as was possible by car. Just after Temple Ewell, I came to Kearsney Abbey, where a total of five interconnected ornamental lakes feed back into the Dour.

The lakes, Abbey and surrounding parkland are owned by Dover District Council and very popular with local people. I found myself following the river through a maze of streets, where I stopped occasionally to look, with a sense of curiosity and expectation. I saw no trout but the water was clear and there was floral evidence that the Dour was a chalk stream; floating rafts of water crowfoot were anchored to the gravel bed of the river. Sadly, the display of hundreds of its white flowers on the surface of the river had finished blooming but I also noted yellow flags, purple loosestrife and water mint.

I eventually arrived at the Crabble Corn Mill which is one of the most complete and working 18th century corn mills in Europe. It is a tall building covered in white painted clapboard. There was a notice about guided walks on the River Dour Path Trail from Wellington Docks to Temple Ewell, organised by the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership. I would have liked to be able to follow the Dour by foot, as it runs besides roads and footpaths, behind railings, at the bottom of domestic gardens, between buildings and under bridges. It would have been intriguing to follow all of the, sometimes unpredictable, course of the river. As I moved further into Dover, the traffic was getting denser, so I made a return to Temple Ewell.

My exploration of the village's narrow streets and lanes revealed such names as Brookside, Riverside, Watersend and Mill Street, showing the proximity and importance of the Dour. The old corn mill in Mill Street has been converted. The Dour itself, just off the High Street, is little more than a brook during a hot August yet not far from its source. I crossed over it via a small bridge, from under which flew a male grey wagtail with a splendid yellow breast. It may have had a late brood, in

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a space created by a dislodged brick. Hart's tongue fern, which favours chalk soil, was growing at the base of the bridge and a walk upstream revealed typical waterside plants such as great willow herb, water mint, water parsnips, fool's watercress and purple loosestrife. As I sat, children of Temple Ewell Church of England primary School, which stands next to the church of St Peter and St Paul, were having games on the nearby village playing field. I could hear their squeals, the babbling of the nascent chalk stream as it flowed over the weir of the old mill, the calling of jackdaws in nearby trees and the occasional rumbling of a passenger train travelling slowly as it approached Kearsney Station. These sounds did, I think, sum up nicely an afternoon in the life of present-day Temple Ewell.

September in the Wilder Garden (Victoria Golding)

This is a month of renewal. It is a long time since I've had a new pencil case and new school shoes, but I still feel the excitement a new school year brings.

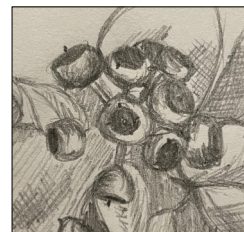
We are told to be mindful and "live in the moment", but for me planning brings freedom. This autumn we will complete our large wildlife pond! It has been a long time in the making but next month I hope to give you a progress report. The pond plants we bought for it last year have happily grown and seeded in their watery containers, but they need to be in their permanent homes. A frog is living in one of them already!

If you want to introduce a pond to your garden, autumn is a good time to make a start and get it ready for spring. There is lots of advice on how to do this on the Wildlife Trust's website, for

example.

Plant of the month

There are still many autumn flowers to provide nectar and pollen, like nerines, hesperantha and Japanese anemones, but my favourite at this time of year is ivy, full of ivy bees and providing nectar for the last brood of holly blue butterflies. Ivy only flowers when it climbs upwards, so do allow it to cover an old shed or wall or unsightly fence.



Job of the month

Remove the last of your rotted leaf mould, sieve and bag it up to use as seed sowing compost, then start your bin with the first leaves that drop. In dry weather they drop early, but we won't be seeing that so much this year! Add plenty of twigs and paper to your compost heap, water well, mix and cover. Gather your windfalls and cut the fruit for the bird table. If you have other wildlife visiting, leave some cut pieces on the ground - round objects are difficult for hedgehogs to deal with.

For days out and wilder gardening advice go to our website: <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-gardens>

Remember to keep taking pictures of your garden to identify areas you want to improve with more homes, food and water in a poison-free garden, to make it truly 'wilder'. That way, in the darker days of winter you can be planning for spring. Best wishes,

(Gardening for a Wilder Kent - Garden Advisor)

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Gillingham Lions Harvest Teas

Dear Friends
“We Serve” is the motto of Lions Clubs International and we look forward to serving you once again at our annual Harvest Tea Parties at the Millennium Centre,

Sunday 3rd October or Sunday 17th October
from 3.30 until 6.00pm.

If you are elderly or lonely you would be very welcome so to apply for an invitation simply ring:

Brenda on 379062 or Yvonne on 373840

Transport to and from the venue can be arranged - Covid restrictions permitting!

Barnardo's Charity Quiz Night

Saturday 2nd October

Time: 7pm for a 7.30pm start

Venue: Twydall Church Hall, Twydall Lane, ME8 6JU

Price: Tickets are £5 per person with tables of 6-8 available.

Bring your own Drink and Nibbles
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Plenty of free parking

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01634 233405 or 01634 375486

Looking forward to seeing you - thanks for your support!

Oast Community Centre Gigs

Careful Now Promotions are delighted to be hosting live music at The Oast Community Centre from September.
The events planned so far are:

Friday 10th September – Catenary Wires/Pete Astor and European Sun

Saturday 9th October – Tugboat Captain and Pastel Waves

Friday 15th October – Fightmilk

Friday 12th November – Broken Chanter

All gigs start around 7.30

Tickets are £7 on the door or £5 for Early Bird and Student tickets, which can be bought online.

Further details are available at:

www.facebook.com/carefulnowpromotions

or carefulnowpromotions@gmail.com

Rainham Community Orchard

Delicious Apple Juice only £3.00 per litre bottle is available from:

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Wigmore Ladies Club

We are pleased to announce that we will be
restarting meetings from the

15th September, 2021 and would love you
to come along and join us.

We are a cheerful group of ladies who meet
the third Wednesday of each month at the

Howard Hall, Woodside

between 2 and 4pm.

We have various speakers and other
activities, as well as a lovely cuppa!

You can either just pop along, or
call **01634 388912** for further details.

Dates for the Autumn 2021 are as follows:

15th September, 20th October,

17th November and 15th December

Dates for the Diary

Any organisation can request an entry in the diary (free of charge) by contacting: diary@actionforum.co.uk

2nd-11th Sept - Oasthouse Theatre - 'Flushed & Flushed Again' - a comedy by Ron Nicol. Curtain up at 8pm
www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk or phone 08448 793224

5th Sept - Wealdway 40 - Medway Ramblers 10am start
call Geoff 07525 161766/Geoff.rambler@me.com

6th Sept - Green Drinks (environmental networking)
Contact therainhamecohub@gmail.com

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 & European Sun at Community Oast - carefulnowpromtions@gmail.com

10th Sept - Upchurch Choral Society - 8pm weekly at St Mary's, Upchurch. Contact suerossiter@waitrose.com or 01634 234780

11th Sept - Upchurch Horticultural Society Show
97 Chaffes Lane Upchurch from 2pm
Parking, toilets, auction of exhibits, refreshments and raffle, plant sale

12th Sept - Riverside Country Park volunteer Sunday

12th Sept - KM Big Bike Ride starting at Betteshanger Park, Deal. www.KmCharityTeam.co.uk/booking

14th Sept - Parentalk the Primary Years, St Paul's, Parkwood Book at: hdlmedway@gmail.com

16th Sept - Women's Institute 1.45-4pm
Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane
Contact Lynne—01634 23499

17th Sept - Upchurch Choral Society - 8pm weekly at St Mary's, Upchurch. Contact suerossiter@waitrose.com or 01634 234780

24th Sept - Medway Geographical Society
'My favourite hotspots of the world' - Elizabeth Mooney
Holy Trinity Church, Twydall - 2-3.30pm
Contact Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

24th and 25th Sept - Oasthouse Theatre - 2.30pm
Story and Music of Rodgers and Hammerstein
www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk or phone 08448 793224

29th Sept - Wealdway 40 - Medway Ramblers 10am start
call John 07749 760788/billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk

2nd Oct - Barnardo's Charity Quiz Night - 7.30pm
Twydall Church Hall, £5pp, Phone 01634 233405/375486

3rd Oct - Gillingham Lions Harvest Tea
contact Brenda on 379062 or Yvonne on 373840

4th Oct - Green Drinks (environmental networking)
Contact therainhamecohub@gmail.com

9th Oct - Tugboat Captain and Pastel Wives 7.30pm
Community Oast - carefulnowpromotions@gmail.com

Check out the Net online for up-to-the-minute events!

14th September-10th October

The Parish of South Gillingham is running a free Parenting Course from "Care for the Family." **Parentalk the Primary Years** is a 6 week DVD-based course for parents of children up to the early teenage years, giving you the opportunity to share experiences and talk about the day-to-day challenges faced, as well as sharing things that are going well and providing ideas.

Suitable for parents from all backgrounds and family structures.

Venue: St. Paul's Church, Parkwood, ME8 9PN

Date: Tues evenings 14th Sept - 19th Oct

Time: 7.45pm for 8pm start

For more information or to book email:
Helen at hdlmedway@gmail.com

Word on the Streets

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 volunteers for the following roads (the number in brackets is the number of houses in those roads):

**Rainham - Lower Station Rd (36),
Bloomfields estate, off Station Rd (82),**

**Upchurch - Wallbridge Lane (54),
Bishop Lane (18),
Church Farm Rd/Forge Lane (56)**

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

If you are a volunteer distributor tell us your story by emailing the editorial team,

Profits from Action Forum are always distributed between a number of charities. More recent recipients have been St Margaret's, St Matthews, as well as Tools with A Mission

Small Ads

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Box Ads: £30.00 per month
£84.00 3 months paid in advance

Please email wording & your address.
See p2 for contact details & copy dates

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VOLUNTEER BOOKSELLERS

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