

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

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## *End of the Barclays era for Rainham*



*Barclays Bank has stood on the corner of Station Road since 1938 but that is all about to change (see p4 for more).*

Photo credit: Barclays Group Archives

More photos are available at [www.rainham-history.co.uk/barclays](http://www.rainham-history.co.uk/barclays)

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Street. We don't yet have a dedicated High Street refill shop here but we do have the Circle Refill Hub that is helping to reduce the amount of plastic waste generated. Action Forum is proud to sponsor the Rainham Eco-Hub Community Awards this year and you can read about the winners on page XX

## Letters to the Editor

### Editorial

October brings a milestone with the closure of Barclays Bank in Rainham, where it has stood since 1938. The building was sold in 2016 and we'll watch developments with interest - will it have shops on the ground floor again in future, as in our cover picture?

Since last month the roadworks around Rainham seem to have worsened, maybe as a result of school traffic returning after the summer holidays. When emergency works clash with planned improvements it can have a massive impact on traffic jams in the area so maybe we all need to consider which times we could walk or cycle as alternatives to our cars, helping the environment as well as stress levels.

When out in Rainham recently I noticed a garden floral display that was covered with electric fence wiring. Whilst effective at preventing theft or vandalism, it's a sad situation that someone feels it necessary in their front garden.

On a more positive note, it was great to see the recent gig at the Oast Community centre being sold out. There are similar events coming up there, and elsewhere, and I'm sure they'll appreciate your support.

Splashes leisure centre is now scheduled for demolition due to problems found with the building. Checking Action Forum for when it opened in 1990, I doubt they expected the pool's lifespan to be under 30 years but it will be good to see the new building rising from the rubble over the next few years and seeing new facilities available for the area.

Whilst on the subject of facilities, this year we've made the most of being able to travel in the UK and, in one North Yorkshire town, spotted a fully-stocked refill shop on the High

#### Toe rags

Dear Sir,

When I was young, many years ago (in Scotland), young boys who did mischief, such as stealing apples from someone's garden, knocking on doors, messing about etc. were called 'toe-rags'. Just a thought, it could be one of many explanations.

Yours sincerely,  
Jemima Simpson

#### Prefab Memories by Brian Austin

Your cover picture on the front of the August magazine certainly brought back childhood memories of living in a Rainham prefab, when we had not a care in the world, and the sun always shone!

There were some errors in the locations mentioned. We lived in Russells Avenue, which was at the top of Solomon Road, where it still is today, not the end of Scott Avenue. There were eleven "houses" there, all of which were demolished and replaced with permanent housing in the early sixties I believe.

The houses mentioned in Solomon Road, Scott Avenue and Sunderland Square were not actually prefabs; they were constructed from what was basically a steel frame with reinforced concrete panels. These houses were not intended to be temporary, as in the case of prefabs, but I believe there was an unforeseen problem with the degradation of the concrete, resulting in their premature demolition in 1997. The 38 houses in Sunderland Square were replaced by a development of over 100 houses.

The main omission on your list is Mardale Road, which, along with its neighbour Wakeley Road, formed probably the biggest concentration of prefabs in Rainham. My family left Russells Avenue in 1958 to

move to Gillingham, as the prefabs had already exceeded their intended lifespan, and, let's just say they were "past their best!" I enclose a photograph of "our gang" taken in Russells Avenue in 1957. From left to right: Mick Curness (no.9); Keith Relph (no.8); my brother Keith Austin; Brian Austin (me) (no.6); and Robert Goodwin (no.4). My brother lives in Wigmore, and I in Rainham. I haven't seen the other three for a very long time, but I believe Mick Curness went to Canada and Keith Relph to Northern Ireland.



Although prefab winters had become decidedly uncomfortable by the late fifties, most of the prefab occupants I have spoken to over the years seem to remember their time in them with affection. I certainly do.

P.S. In the background of the photograph my father, Jack, can be seen polishing his beloved motor bike and sidecar combination. He never seemed to be as fond of any of his subsequent cars as he was of his "bike."

### School Reunion

Some of us would like to organise a reunion for pupils in our class at Rainham Secondary School for Boys between 1963 and 1969/70. The group attended our first two years of secondary school at Orchard Street and were among the third stream of the newly-built school at Derwent Way - very exciting days. We were in the "A-stream" and I remember teachers named Richards (English), Rotherham (Sports), Powell (Science).

Allan Tyrer (Tug), George Meegan, Anthony Herridge (a popular local musician) and I remain good friends and have recently been put in contact with Frank Pantony. One of us is also in contact with Steve Ward and Keith Harrison. We know Kevin Pope and Brian Stepney have sadly passed away but others in our class we remember are as follows:

David Harris – joined the army as a musician  
 Richard Pay – lived on Lower Rainham Road  
 Alan Keats – lived in Eastling Close  
 Barry Young – Danson Way/went into navy  
 Brian Oliver – also Danson Way estate  
 Trevor Wilson – Tug and I stayed with him in Stratford upon Avon.  
 Chris Williams – went to South Africa but we think now lives in Biggin Hill  
 Geoff Gransden – of the local building firm  
 Martin Gower – lived on Maidstone Road  
 Of Peter Rainbow, Adrian Street, Steve Springate and John Strachan, we know nothing.

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Do any of you still live locally? Could you get in touch?  
Also if anyone else knows anything about the whereabouts of the above could they ask them to contact me?  
Thanks, Alan Crowder  
[alan.crowder@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:alan.crowder@blueyonder.co.uk)

## ***Barclays Bank, Rainham***

Following in the footsteps of HSBC and Lloyds banks, Barclays Bank is closing its doors for the last time on 15th October, leaving NatWest as the remaining clearing bank in Rainham. The building housing Barclays bank was sold in 2016 and rented back to them so it's unclear what will happen to it now.

The London and Provincial Bank Ltd opened its Rainham branch as a sub-agency to Chatham in July 1899.

The bank mainly catered for small tradesmen and private customers with limited means, and confined its attention to the London suburbs, South Wales and the Eastern Counties. It was not until 1891 that a branch was opened at a leading commercial centre outside the London area, in Bristol. In 1917 the bank amalgamated with one of its formidable rivals, the London and South Western Bank, to form The London, Provincial and South Western Bank which subsequently merged with Barclays in 1918.

It was not until 1902 that Rainham acquired its own premises, originally based in one of the shops next to the Post Office. The London and Provincial Board minutes of 14th October 1902 state that the Branch manager had written to the Board, on the 10th October 1902, suggesting the purchase of a site for the building of branch premises:

*"Rainham. Premises. With reference to Board minutes of 14th inst. Letter of 20th from Mr Long (Inspector) concurring in Branch Manager's recommendation that the freehold property at corner of High Street and Station Road be purchased for £475, but that the question of building there on, be allowed to stand for the present to be purchased."*

The changes in Rainham branch's premises are recorded in the Barclays Schedule of Title Deeds. This shows that the branch was originally located at "Myrtle Cottage", High Street opposite what is now JCB Citroen.

The London and Provincial Bank obtained the land adjacent to this building in 1902, presumably because they were occupying the building. In 1913 a tenancy was granted to the London and Provincial Bank for 14 years at a rent of £30 per annum and in 1926 this tenancy was renewed at £42 per annum.

In July 1938, Barclays Bank at Rainham moved to new purpose-built premises at 89-93 High Street on the corner of Station Road where it has remained since.

Originally 89-91 High Street was rented out to other businesses (shown in the cover photo as Mattocks Sweet shop in the 1950s) but these became part of the bank itself in the late 1960s.

The Coronation clock was attached to the wall in 1953 so the cover photo was taken prior to that happening. The church school was adjacent to the bank on Station Road before Rainham Shopping centre was built and you can just see the edge of it in the photo.

There have been other minor changes to the building over the years with the entrance being moved to the left and the cash machine that was in the wall on the corner of Station Road moved to the far left of the bank building in the mid 2000s.

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## Community

### Rainham Eco-Hub Community Awards 2021

It was a great privilege to be able to attend the first Rainham Eco-Hub Community Awards, on behalf of Action Forum, who were also a sponsor of prizes for the event.

The awards were held in St Margaret's Church on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September and prizes were awarded by John Weir, High Sheriff of Kent. Four independent judges from Plastic-Free Medway, Medway Urban Green Spaces and Kent Wildlife Trust sifted through the 39 nominations and eight winners were determined from the following categories:

Community Project of the Year had five nominees. The winner was Jo Bourne, for the Litter-Picking Heroes, with Claire Thornton's mini recycling getting a special mention.

Eco Engagement had eight nominees.

The winner was Irene Heller, with 'Entry Partnership Rivermead' (EPR) receiving a special mention.

Evolving Eco Award with five nominees. The winner was Nutmegs.

Grass Roots Group with six nominees. The winner was Sally Fawcett and St Margaret's Infant School.

Guardians of Green Spaces with four nominees. The winner was 'Against Pump Lane Development Campaign Group'.

Litter Picking Hero with six nominees. The winner was Becky McDonald, with Kobe and Freya.

The Biodiversity Award was awarded to Leon Roskilly, who established the 'Wild about Rainham' Facebook page.

Towards Plastic Free Medway also sponsored an Eco Business Award, with the winner selected from all the of the nominees and categories. The winner was Pinky's Hair and Beauty, who has gone to amazing lengths to make their salon as eco-friendly as possible.

The level of Rainham's community engagement, in response to the climate change emergency, has really developed over the last eighteen months under the inspirational stewardship of Kayleigh and Liz of Rainham

Eco-Hub. The ladies of the hour received thanks and recognition from the judges, as well as a special award from the High Sheriff of Kent.

Whilst there are only eight winners, many, many more have been volunteers and demonstrate their pride in our town.



Kayleigh and Liz would like to thank everyone for their nominations and the fantastic efforts of all involved.

Plans are already being discussed for the 2022 awards, so if you want to get involved do come along to the Green Drinks which are held the first Monday of each month, at 7.30pm in the Manor Farm, or contact Kayleigh and Liz at the Rainham Eco-Hub: rainhamecohub@gmail.com

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7.30pm - £3 per ticket

Lower Halstow Poetry Committee is organising a fundraising event, with all profits being shared amongst village causes.

The Auction of Promises is a fun way of bagging some amazing Christmas gifts. 🎁

We have already received a few pledges including an evening meal for two, a basket of logs, help with a family tree and knitting to a pattern of your choice, oh and babysitting!!

Please consider making a pledge - everyone has a talent of some kind, be it gardening, driving, decorating, dog walking etc. and the more pledges we receive the more fun the event will be!

Contact:  
carinaj65@outlook.com or 07899 951044

### **GTHS Reunion**

For all former pupils of Gillingham Technical High School (GTHS) for a reunion.

There have been reunions for different year groups previously but an 'All-Years' event has been arranged.

Rainham Cricket Club,  
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The cost is £5 and more details can be found on the GTHS Facebook group.

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### **Rainham Women's Institute**

Rainham WI has a new venue.

From September 2021 we will be meeting at Rainham Cricket Club in Berengrave Lane, Rainham.

We will meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month (except Aug) from 1.45—4pm.

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## *Nature Notes* (Joe Ennis)

### DUNGENESS NATURE NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER

In September, birds that have spent the summer in the UK are moving through Kent, and other counties, on their way to the Channel coast. Warblers such as chiff-chaffs and blackcaps can be spotted lurking in domestic gardens. They spend daylight hours feeding, unobtrusively, on the insects and berries found on shrubs and bushes. When not building up reserves for the journey onwards, they rest and keep out of the sight of predators. Some may double their weight in preparation for their long journey to Africa. At dusk, the migrants recommence their overnight journeys towards the coast. Concentrations tend to gather at ideal coastal locations such as the Sandwich Bay area, Dungeness or the Dover to Deal stretch of coastline. Here they continue to feed, rest and await the next still, clear night to cross the Channel.

Swallows, house martins and sand martins do the opposite of many other insect-eating birds. They travel south by day, feeding in flight on airborne insects. They roost in large colonies overnight, typically in reed beds. Upon waking, the birds chatter to each other, before rising into the air and circling around to get their bearings. They appear to exhibit more urgency during their northward passage in the spring as compared with their, somewhat, leisurely progress south in the autumn. Birds which migrate in large flocks, such as swallows, can probably draw on the experience of older birds but some young birds, like those of the cuckoo and the swift, travel alone and must, therefore, find their way to Africa by themselves.

It was in September a few years ago, that I was lead by one of the warden, to walk all the way around the RSPB bird reserve at Dungeness, in search of migrants on passage. The reserve is part of the wider National Nature Reserve and situated on the largest shingle formation of its kind in Europe. Not unnaturally, it consists largely of shingle but also includes fresh water pools, grassland and

reed beds. Despite its barren appearance, the reserve is home to nearly a third of Britain's plant species and is also the habitat of many species of dragonflies, butterflies, bumble bees, amphibians and mammals.

Sallows and willows grow prolifically at Dungeness and more different kinds of plant-eating insects have been found on these tree species than any other, including oak. It is not surprising that we came across many insect-eating birds, including common redstart, wheatear, whinchat and a number of warbler species.

Some birds that mainly eat insects, such as blackcap, will also take elderberries and blackberries. There were plenty of these berries growing at Dungeness so it is not surprising we saw quite a few blackcaps. Berries readily available at a time of migration can be quickly gathered and digested; they are low in fibre and rich in sugars, the latter of which convert easily to body fat.

We saw a group of yellow wagtails picking up insects disturbed by the hooves and mouths of grazing cattle. We also saw flocks of swallows, house martins and sand martins hawking for flies above the water-filled and reed-lined Burrowes Pit, which is overlooked by the observation room in the reserve's visitor centre.

In due course it was time for lunch and a visit to the more well-known part of Dungeness - the "nose" of the promontory, where it juts into the English Channel. Despite some untidiness, or perhaps because of it, the ness is a fascinating place. Fishing boats are drawn up on a shingle bank surrounded by abandoned huts, shipping containers and railway fish vans. There are former railway carriages serving as weekend cottages and purpose-built cottages for fishermen with outside stairs leading up to space in the roof for fishing

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tackle. There are two pubs and a café serving fish and chips, an old lighthouse from where one can see from Beachy Head to the White Cliffs of Dover and a terminus of the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway. All of this in a National Nature Reserve!

Inevitably, there is some thoughtlessness by visitors. Ancient shingle formations are being damaged by 4X4 vehicles and much litter is left along the shoreline.

After lunch I watched a large flock of great black-backed and herring gulls, adults and juveniles, sitting in the sunshine and out of the wind, in a trough in the shingle. This part of Dungeness may not look like a National Nature Reserve, but the gulls remind us that it is indeed part of such a reserve and deserves to be so.

## October in the Wilder Garden (Victoria Golding)

What a difference a month makes! Last issue I alluded to the amount of rain we had and almost immediately it became dry. Since then I have watered regularly to allow the autumn plants to emerge. Although it doesn't need watering, at the time of writing, my ivy is still not in flower, later than other parts of the county. As the foliage in the pond dies down, I am doing a little clearing. I will leave any cuttings by the side of the pond for a couple of days to allow any creatures to get back in, although they may need a helping hand. Some tadpoles don't continue their development to frogs and carry through from summer till next year in that form, rather than as froglets. We have some of these in our old pond that are doing this. This is the first year I have noticed this.

I promised an update on the new pond and am pleased to report that it has a liner and we have water in it. I need to replant my new pond plants in deeper pots as we have made a couple of shelves, some for marginal and some for deeper-water plants. They have all been selected for their wildlife value, which I shall explain in greater detail next year. I am going to get another flowering rush *Butomus umbellatus*, as it is good to have plants with long stems. This would aid hatching dragonflies and damselflies as the larvae crawl up out of the water to complete their metamorphosis. (We live in hope for future years!)

### Plant of the month

By deadheading your perennials, you can still have colour in the garden in October. Those that have finished blooming for the year can be divided to fill a gap, or to exchange with friends and neighbours. I will be lifting some of my tender plants, especially large-flowered salvias, to keep in the cold greenhouse over winter. I kept my *Salvia patens* "Oxford Blue" last year and it has been wonderful this year.

### Job of the month

Keeping on top of your leaves to provide plenty of leaf mould for the garden next year is a good thing, but do also earmark places where you can let natural accumulations provide shelter and food for all kinds of creatures.

Keep your eye on our website for our Open Gardens and Nature friendly Gardeners' Question time, plus loads of other things to do.

<https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/events>  
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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 17<sup>th</sup> 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!

### Rainham Ladies Choir

Hurrah! We have now resumed in-person rehearsals!

We meet every Monday at 7.30pm.

Our venue is Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, Rainham.

This is a very suitable venue for the choir, with all necessary precautions in place.

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.

Find out more at: [rlchoir@outlook.com](mailto:rlchoir@outlook.com)  
[rainhamladieschoir.com](http://rainhamladieschoir.com) 01634 262214  
FB: Rainham Ladies

### Oast Community Centre Gigs

Careful Now Promotions are delighted to be hosting live music at The Oast Community Centre.

The events planned so far are:

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October – Tugboat Captain and Pastel Waves

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October – Fightmilk

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.facebook.com/carefulnowpromotions)  
or [carefulnowpromotions@gmail.com](mailto:carefulnowpromotions@gmail.com)

Hope to see you there!"

### 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:  
20th October,  
17th November and 15th December



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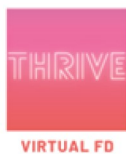
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## ***Dates for the Diary***

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

4th Oct - Green Drinks (environmental networking)  
Manor Farm 7.30pm  
Contact [therainhamecuhub@gmail.com](mailto:therainhamecuhub@gmail.com)  
(also 1st Nov)

5th Oct - Bredhurst Whist Club - 7.30pm Bredhurst Village Hall. Contact Chris (evenings) 07707 669915 (also 12th, 19th, 25th)

8th Oct - Upchurch Choral Society - 8pm at St Mary's, Upchurch. Contact [suerossiter@waitrose.com](mailto:suerossiter@waitrose.com) or 01634 234780 (also 15th, 22nd, 29th)

8th Oct - Medway Children's Clothes Swap 9.30-11.30am Oast House Rainham

9th Oct - Tugboat Captain and Pastel Wives 7.30pm Community Oast - [carefulnowpromotions@gmail.com](mailto:carefulnowpromotions@gmail.com)

10th Oct - Riverside Country Park Volunteer Sunday - 10am, booking essential

11th Oct - Medway Organ and Keyboard concert 7pm Parkwood Community Centre, refreshments/bar, £5 [phil.burton@ntlworld.com](mailto:phil.burton@ntlworld.com) or 07795 576294

13th Oct - East Medway u3a at Smallholders Club Ring 07816 159668 or visit [www.u3asites.org.uk/east-medway](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/east-medway)

15th Oct - Fightmilk 7.30pm at the Community Oast - [carefulnowpromotions@gmail.com](mailto:carefulnowpromotions@gmail.com)

16th Oct - Indoor Charity Fundraising Sale from 10am St Augustine's Church Rock Ave 01634 850288

16th Oct - Jumble Sale and Community Café 11am-2 St Luke's Church Hall ME7 1PD 01634 580433

17th Oct - Medway Ramblers Seven Bridge Walk meet at 10am, Allington car park Contact John W 01634 232668 or [flame451@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:flame451@hotmail.co.uk)

17th Oct - Gillingham Lions Harvest Tea contact Brenda on 379062 or Yvonne on 373840

17th Oct - Berengrave Lane Nature Reserve (meeting point Motney Hill Car Park) -10am, booking essential

20th Oct - Wigmore Ladies - 2pm Howard Memorial Hall - 01634 388912

21st Oct - Women's Institute 1.45-4pm Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane Contact Lynne—01634 23499

22nd Oct - Medway Geographical Society talk 'From Taj Mahal to Teepee' 2pm at Holy Trinity, Twydall - contact Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

23rd Oct - Family First Aid Course £40 per person 11.30am Blacksmiths Court, Bredhurst, includes lunch and certification book at [www.the139club.co.uk](http://www.the139club.co.uk)

30th Oct - Annual Craft Fayre fundraiser for Great Ormond St, 10.30am St Matthews Church Hall, ME8 0PD, Tables £10 each Contact Paula 07930 595856

30th Oct - Upchurch Horticultural Society Late Show 2pm at the Barn, 97 Chaffes Lane

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

### **Riverside Country Park Event Dates:**

1-day Woodland Workshop,  
Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Christmas Wreath-making,  
Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Winter Wonderland,  
Monday 20<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> December

1-day Woodland Workshop,  
Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Winter Tree ID,  
Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Booking is essential - for more details  
Contact the Visitor Centre (8am - 4pm) on  
01634337432

## ***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 - Hawthorne Ave (200),**

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

**Hempstead - Meadowdown (44),  
Tamarind (20),  
Thistledown (16)**

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, [editor@actionforum.co.uk](mailto:editor@actionforum.co.uk)

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



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