

ACTION FORUM

JUNE
2022

NUMBER 579

First published
March 1969

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

The Queen's Jubilee



Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne in February 1952,
with her coronation taking place the following year.

Above, in 1953, Herbert Road residents celebrated Coronation Day in style!
Were any of our readers part of that day?

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Next issue : June 23rd, 2022
Copy date : June 13th, 2022
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Editorial

With the Queen's Jubilee fast approaching, it got me wondering whether perhaps there is just something about jubilees that lowers our reserves a little; creating a desire to spend social time with our neighbours in street-party mode! Whilst the practicalities of shutting off roads in our current car-obsessed world meant some streets that applied didn't get approval, others I am sure, will have a great time.

I fondly recollect the Silver Jubilee back in 1977, when my entire street (Tudor Grove, Rainham) entered into the spirit of the occasion. I certainly had my fill of the party food, as my brothers remind me! Whilst we, by no means, lived out of each other's pockets, I think I could name all of the families on both sides - around forty-four houses. Many houses had children that went to the same schools as my brothers and I, which helped with the familiarity, but parents also knew and talked to each other if they met in the street.

There was nothing as formal as neighbourhood rules and it was long before the 'Neighbourhood Watch', but behaviour was respectful and neighbourly. Bonfires, were at a reasonable time of day and rarely lit if someone already had washing out drying . Nobody parked across your driveway (though cars were likely to only be one per house) or let their dog poop in the street without clearing it up.

Memories aside, we do hope you have a joyous and safe time this Platinum Jubilee and that the neighbourly spirit created, celebrating 70 years of Her Majesty's reign, lives on for a good while after the street parties and celebrations have faded.

Enjoy the Bank Holiday weekend, and don't forget to let us know how you celebrated!

Letters to the Editor

Grammar in Action Forum

Let's start with apologies from the Editor!

In last month's letters section we replied about grammar using the frustrating example of 'focused' and 'focussed' but spelt both words the same, just to confuse everybody.

A good friend also pointed out a number of incorrections in a further article elsewhere.

We will proof-read more carefully!!

Parish of South Gillingham - change in news-sharing

Dear Editor,

The Spiral (our parish magazine) was not printed during the Covid 19 Lockdown and a decision has been taken by the Parochial Church Council to retire the publication. We would like to thank all our former readers for their many years of patronage.

If you are interested in the life of our four churches and would like to receive a free weekly newsletter by e-mail please contact: revbriansenior@gmail.com

If you have no access to e-mail and previously took Spiral, we can provide a paper copy for you. Please call the Parish Office on 01634 231736.

God bless you, Jane Sayer,
Clerical Assistant for South Gillingham PCC.

Money-Saving Advice

Dear Editor,

In your May editorial you referred to some out of date cooking oil which you had to ditch. That may not have been necessary, even with a BBF date of Sept 2017.

There are two aspects to BBF dates, one is food safety and the other is the need to keep the market moving, and you and I buying. I doubt much could go wrong with cooking oil, even almost 5 years on. In March this year, I found a bag of drumsticks in the bottom of my freezer with a BBF date of Nov

'21 but, reluctant to ditch them, I decided to try one. I suffered no ill-effects, so over the following days cooked and ate the rest. I also found some white fish (BBF 15/10/2021) bought for fishcakes. I took one piece of fish, made 2 normal size fishcakes, then a small one to eat the following day. That too was fine so I ate the other 2 before making 11 more with the rest of the fish. These are now in the freezer, to be eaten over the coming weeks/months. More dramatically, I found an unopened packet of Chargrills with a BBF of April '21 (a whole year out of date!) - they too were fine. It should be remembered that it is a Best Before date, not a 'poisonous after' date! Back in the 1970's, someone found a tin of WW2 corned beef and sent it to a food laboratory for analysis. The lab found that, although the tin was rusty on the outside, the rust had not penetrated the tin and the corned beef inside was still perfectly edible, despite being some 30 years old. It is obviously up to each individual what they do with "out of date" consumables but, as demonstrated, I don't ditch something just because it's BBF date is history. There is far too much food waste and each time it costs money, so 'wasting less' is another way of 'saving money'. Also, in your editorial you made reference to Martin Lewis' comment to "heat the human - not the home". Whilst I am a Martin Lewis fan, I believe he is not totally accurate. Some while ago, I heard a consultant in Elderly Medicine say that the elderly wrapping up in

extra layers was not, in itself, sufficient; they do need a warm environment. Cutting back on heating may not be an option for all.

Ken Collyer

P.S. If medicine is elderly, is it still in date?

**Thanks Mr Collyer, it's a good point about the difference between the terms 'Best Before' and 'Use By'. Frozen food, kept at the right temperature, should be fine to eat for a very long time though it might start to show discolouration. Nice to hear about your experiments with it!*

The Green Doctor also noted the need for a warm home for our elderly! Thanks for reinforcing the information.

A Walk along Woodside (May edition)

This article was written by June Laming and sent to the editor on her behalf.

Apologies to both ladies for the confusion and thanks for the interesting memories.

Praise for our distributors

Dear Editor

May I express my thanks to all the volunteers who, whatever the weather, deliver the Action Forum. I am always delighted to learn more about Rainham past and present, as well as information re societies, events etc.

Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely, Rozel Hadley-Wright (Miss)

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Climate Conversations

'Let It Bloom' June!!

The colours have been amazing through May. Lets see if we can keep it going through June.

Water, water everywhere...

Our water bill arrived this week with a pleasant surprise - a reduced monthly bill! I can only assume that my repeated banging on the bathroom door is beginning to get through to my young adults, but I admit we are being increasingly careful with such a precious resource.

We now have three water butts in total which has meant that we never have to turn on a hosepipe, even with our veg beds.

The tap is never left running and the sound of running water now makes me feel very 'twitchy'!

The shorter cycle on the washing machine is more than enough to clean our clothing and contrary to my daughter's opinion, it is possible to perform all manner of ablutions in the shower in under 10 mins!

I must be honest with readers - we have just one bathroom for the five of us and we do not have a bathtub anymore - something many families today could not conceive of. But, apparently, we use the same amount of water as a two person flat and the challenge now is to see if we can maintain it! All hints and tips welcome.

June Monthly Eco Challenge

'if you get a cuppa in a paper cup from your local café, consider not taking a lid in order to reduce plastic waste'

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Community Air Quality Survey

Back in April, the Rainham Eco-hub launched its first community air quality survey, as a means of increasing awareness to the health issues associated with local air pollution and the behaviour we can take to improve air quality for everyone. They also aimed to identify what the community felt should be the priorities for action during the remainder of 2022.

The chart below shows the voting results on the seven themes suggested along with the health implications associated.



A recent modelling tool, created by the Central Office of Public Interest and Imperial College London, now provides an assessment of air quality against the World Health Organisation Air Quality Index, for every postcode in the UK (www.addresspollution.org), along with the health implications associated. The tool's results for the Medway Air Quality Management Area of Rainham High Street appear broadly consistent with the worst of the nitrogen dioxide data included in the Medway Council Air Quality Status Report 2021.

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Community

How will you celebrate the Jubilee?

Send us any photos or anecdotes of your celebrations over the Bank Holiday weekend.

editor@actionforum.co.uk

Artwork in Rainham Town Centre

Some of you may have spotted the new artwork up in the precinct. For those of you who haven't, here is a taste of what is there. There are a number of other pieces of art for you to view.



Let us know your thoughts.
Should we have more of this kind of thing?

'Your Very Own Marvellous Medway!'

On Sat 11th June, Wigmore Community Hub presents an afternoon of performance, presented by 'Play on Words'.

It is free of charge - just pop into any library or go online with your library card at
medway.spydus.co.uk

Doors open at 2 for a 2.30pm start.

Oast Beer and Music - 24th and 25th June

Final preparations for the Oast Beer and Music festival are being made.

This is a fundraiser for the Oast Community centre, adjacent to Rainham Station.

Online tickets can now be bought from:
tickets.oastfestival.co.uk

We hope to see many local residents there to enjoy the event and raise money for this important community asset.

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Rainham Eco-hub

It was fantastic news that Rainham Eco-hub won the 'Green Champion Award' at the 20th 'Pride of Medway Awards', sponsored by Medway Messenger.



Come along and find out more about the work of the Eco-hub at one of their Green Drinks evenings. They are always the first Monday of each month, Manor Farm Pub, 7.30pm. All welcome and no prior 'green' knowledge needed!

Wigmore Open Gardens Weekend 2nd and 3rd July, 2022

I am delighted to let you know that fifteen gardens will be opening this year, over the weekend of 2nd & 3rd July, 2022.

Organised by St Matthew's church, there are gardens of all types and sizes to visit over the two days; three of these have never opened before.

Admission is by programme, which costs £6 (or £1 per garden if people only want to visit a few).

Refreshments & ploughman's lunches will be available, as well as plants and other items for sale. Everyone is welcome to enjoy a great value for money weekend.

Details of gardens are available:

www.facebook.com/stmattswigmore

or

[www.achurchnearyou.com/church/9899/
news/77060/wigmore-open-gardens-weekend](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/9899/news/77060/wigmore-open-gardens-weekend)

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Rainham Eco-Schools

Last month we featured a local Eco-School and the work they are doing.
This month we feature answers from another local school.

Thamesview Primary:

- We established an Eco Squad in school about three years ago, and it has been a big success. We began with small steps, making sure recycling was being done correctly throughout the school and ensuring lights and monitors were turned off. As we became more confident, we started introducing other measures.
- We introduced a litter-picking project in school that has involved all pupils from Year R to Year 6. We were fortunate enough to be able to install four litter-picking stations around the school grounds and each class has a set time when they are expected to litter-pick their immediate area. We have noticed that the children are now much more likely to throw their rubbish in the bin, and are more observant at noticing rubbish on the floor.
- We supplied food caddies into every year group to stop fruit waste getting thrown into the bin. This has led to an overall reduction in the amount of waste we are sending to landfill.
- We collect all the crisp packets from children's lunchboxes and take them to the Medway Foodbank to recycle. Hopefully by collecting these in school we are stopping them ending up in normal bins,

while also raising valuable funds for the Foodbank.

Future plans

The next big project on the horizon is to set up an Eco-Garden in school, with nature trails, habitats such as bug hotels and bird houses, a wildflower area to attract mini-beasts and planters to encourage every year group to grow their own.

The challenge with this is integrating it into the school curriculum so it is an ongoing and useful learning area.

In this day and age, it is inconceivable that a school would not want to be an Eco-School! By working through the topics listed by Eco-Schools, we are teaching the very youngest children how they can make a real difference to the world they live in. Hopefully, they will take all this forward, to become responsible and informed adults, who know how sustainability can make a huge difference to the future of our planet.

How great to hear another example showing that our school children's education includes environmental matters from the outset and that they are being encouraged to look after their environment.

With support from their respective heads these successes and future plans are truly inspirational.

If you have school stories you want to shout about, let us know by sending us an email at editor@actionforum.co.uk

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Nature Notes (Joe Ennis)

PILGRIMS NATURE NOTES

In his book “Flora Britannica”, Richard Mabey expressed the view that cow parsley is arguably the most important spring landscape flower in Britain. For nearly all of May, almost every country road is edged with its froth of white blooms. No other plant gives so much character to country roads in May, he claimed.

Some time ago, when I was still able to drive, I decided to seek out the white blooms of the cow parsley along my favourite stretch of Pilgrims Way. In the six miles (almost) of my journey between Boxley and Hollingbourne, there are four parish churches, four public houses, two village cricket club grounds and one Church of England village school. Having started from outside The King’s Arms at Boxley, I was soon on the Pilgrims Way where I was pleased to note a couple of swallows, on some overhead wires. They would undoubtedly be nesting in one of the stables at the riding school of Warren Farm. As I motored slowly along, Boxley Wood was to my left. The trees in the wood spill down the escarpment of the North Downs and I could pick out the evergreen trees of yew, holm oak and holly. On my right were serried rows of grape vines. They are in a stretch of fields at the bottom of the Downs, from Bluebell Hill in the west, through Boxley, and on to Detling Hill in the east. It seems that Kent’s climate and chalky soils mirror the conditions long enjoyed in France for the production of good wines. It has been encouraging to see Kent farmers planting new apple and pear orchards, and now vineyards. Kent is maintaining its position as the Garden of England.

I crossed over Detling Hill with extreme caution and in the shadow of Jade’s Pedestrian Crossing. Opposite The Cock Horse Public House, I regained Pilgrims Way. The Downs on the second leg of my journey, between Detling and Hollingbourne, are more rounded, less steep and less wooded than the Downs of my first leg. They are reminiscent of the

South Downs. Hedges along this stretch of Pilgrims Way, ripped out some years ago by a previous farmer, have been replanted with native species such as hawthorn, hazel, field maple and dogwood. They have grown remarkably well, are thick and bushy and have doubtless become nesting sites for the number of species that can be seen along Pilgrims Way, such as whitethroat, chaffinch, dunnock and blackcap. Cow parsley has taken a hold alongside the new hedgerows as seeds of the plants have been spread by the wind of passing cars. Sheep are grazed on the grass covered slopes at the tops of the Downs. Buzzards, rooks and jackdaws can often be seen taking advantage of the up-draughts on hot summer days.

The sign of the Black Horse Public House heralded my reaching Thurnham. The sign shows the Wife of Bath, a character in Chaucer’s “Canterbury Tales”, on a black horse. Just beyond the pub is a cross roads. To the left the road leads up a steep hill to the remains of a Norman castle. To the right, the road leads down to the well-hidden St Mary the Virgin Church, Thurnham. My route was straight on, passing Thurnham Friars, an ancient house with a parkland of sheep attached. I soon came to Broad Street, Hollingbourne, a short section of the Pilgrims Way which widens from the single track. The Street is lined with former farm houses and ancient barns, some of the latter having been turned into “barn conversions”. The street sports a handsome Victorian post box and a cast iron finger post which points up a steep hill towards the isolated hamlet of Hucking and the Hook and Hatchet Public House, in the woods on the top of the Downs. Finally, I reached the Dirty Habit Public House on the outskirts of Hollingbourne and the end of my journey. The pub was, for a long time,

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known as The Pilgrim's Rest. The current pub sign shows a monk dressed in his habit and riding a horse. I gave some thought to pilgrims who would have continued their journey where I had left off, along a track which remains unmetalled. I recalled the group of pilgrims shown in the stained glass of one of the Miracle Windows of Trinity Chapel at Canterbury Cathedral. The window glass dates back to the 1180s, well within 20 years of Thomas Becket's death and 200 years before Chaucer wrote "The Canterbury Tales". The windows contain contemporary depictions of the first pilgrims, just as they were dressed when they arrived in Canterbury.

The Pilgrims Way is an ancient track way, of much interest and typically Kentish.

June in the Nature-Friendly Garden

(Victoria Golding)

Today I looked up into the sky because the gulls were kicking up a fuss. There was a red kite, undeniable with its long, swept-back wings and forked tale. It rode a thermal, rising high in the sky, till I couldn't see it any more. This would have been an impossible sighting in the area ten years ago.

Lovely though that was, we do need to keep working for our commons species as well, especially pollinators. I notice many more caterpillars in my hedge now that it is better established. Night-flying moths are such an important food source for bats, so I hope that my little bit helps support the food chain in my area.

Plant of the month

As the flowers on foxgloves run out, cut the spike down to get a second crop of these nectar giving plants. Dead-heading is a job I am

really trying to do this year. My friends who regularly dead-head and cut back have plants that flower for longer and retain their colour and interest in the garden while I am still searching for something new to follow on. I am very fond of penstemons, which come in such a variety of colours and sizes and take over from foxgloves in providing height in the border.

Job of the month

Follow 'No Mow May' with '**Let it bloom June**', to keep the flowers coming in your grass.

I am noticing many more wild flowers this year compared with last year, both in the abundance and varieties of species.

I am trying to do my 'wander round the garden' with a bucket, secateurs, small fork and trowel, to dig up the weed as I see it, rather than just pass it by. I keep a watering-can nearby in case I can move one of my new plants, grown from seed this year, into the empty patch. This "Stealth Gardening" is paying dividends with the borders fuller and more colourful than last year.

The garden-visiting season is now in full swing. We have found our plant tables at our open gardens to be very popular this year as we offer plants not often seen in garden centres. Why not plan your next trip?

www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-gardens/open-gardens

This is a wonderful time of year, so I hope you can get out and enjoy it.

Happy Gardening!
Victoria

Kent Wildlife Trust, Voluntary Advisor



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Highs and Lows

(by Rosemary Dellar)

The Frustrations

If you are one of those noble volunteers who takes on more than fifty addresses, you may curse when, having gone out armed with what you thought was enough, you find that you are two or three short at the end of a road: the rest of your supply is still at home awaiting the next bout of fine weather. Perhaps on a showery day you have seized what had looked as though it would be a lengthy break in the clouds only to get half-way round when the heavens open. Then there are those houses whose front doors are adjacent, but whose very long drives are separated by a fence or an impenetrable hedge. Some people carefully place a bin in the gap between themselves and their neighbours...

The Benefits

Think of the exercise you are getting (but bless the thoughtful owners who put a mailbox near their gate).

If you are keen on mountaineering, you might consider Spekes Road as a challenge, or Idenwood Close or... I'm sure other distributors can suggest roads offering equally vigorous ways of keeping fit. Stair-climbing for instance:



there are plenty of short roads where you can perform this in the open air, which is obviously a double benefit to your health.

Even if you prefer to stick to your own fairly short avenue or close, each month reveals changes – new plants coming into bloom, doors newly-painted a different colour, a new car on a resurfaced drive, fresh curtains at the windows...

A cat (which may or may not belong to the house) will sometimes ask you to let it in, or simply like to be stroked. Perhaps a pram might suddenly be visible through the panel beside the front door. After two or three months you will often get to know the occupants as they put out their bins or are chatting to their neighbours when you arrive.

It's important to deliver AF as soon as possible after publication so readers can note dates for countryside events, fairs, and other one-off events.

And don't ignore apparently empty houses – if a family is due to move in shortly AF will immediately provide them with information on how to contact a carpet-fitter, a carpenter, a decorator or a gardener and so on.

On the other hand, if you notice that heaps of mail are piling up behind a door it might be worth asking a neighbour whether there's a good reason, and if they don't know, mentioning the address to the local Community Support Officer.

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Dates for the Diary

**Request an entry in the diary (free of charge)
contact: diary@actionforum.co.uk**

- 1st June - Hartlip coffee morning, St Michael and All Angels church, 10.30-12.30, (also 15th)
- 1st June - Upchurch Horticultural Society - 7.15pm, 07703 339290 or upchurchhortssoc@gmail.com
- 3rd June - Party Night at Bredhurst village Hall, £12 pp, 01634 268998/trsurridge@tiscali.co.uk
- 5th June - Afternoon Tea at St Michael and All Angels Church, Hartlip - 3-5pm (every first Sunday until Sept)
- 6th June - Rainham Ladies Choir, 7.30pm Rainham School for Girls, Contact 01634 262214 (also 13/20/27)
- 6th June - Green Drinks (environmental networking) Manor Farm 7.30pm, therainhamecohub@gmail.com
- 6th June - Rainham Community Choir, 7pm, Rainham Oast Community Centre (also 13/20/27)
- 6th June - Lower Halstow short mat bowls club, 2-4pm, 01795 842376/glenyslovell@hotmail.com
- 6th June - Medway Scrabble Club, 2pm, St Stephen's Church Hall, Chatham, new members welcome, contact eamonday9@gmail.com or 07523 124668
- 6th June - Medway Organ and Keyboard Club
50th Anniversary Concerts, 7pm/7.30pm start, Parkwood Community Centre, £7, phil.burt@ntlworld.com
- 7th June - Rotary Club of Gillingham, Upchurch Golf Club, 1pm, 01634 852712, (also 14/21/28)
- 7th June - Sunbeams toddler music group, 1.45pm, All Saints Church, Hempstead, sjcross13@outlook.com
- 7th June - Medway Brain Tumour Support Gp meetings, 11-1pm, 07565 881564
- 7th June - Bredhurst Whist, 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall. Contact Chris (eve) 07707 669915 (also 14/21/28)
- 7th June - Medway Concert Brass, Hempstead, contact manager@medwayconcertbrass.uk (also 10/17/24/31)
- 7th/8th May - Medway Towns Bands (1st/4th sections), Hempstead Infant School, mail@medwaytownsbands.uk (also 14/15/21/22/28/29)
- 8th June - East Medway u3a at Smallholders Club, ring 07816 159668 or visit www.u3asites.org.uk/east-medway
- 9th May - Crafty Friends 6.30pm, Rainham Oast Community Centre, wilsons2@aol.com (also 16/23/30)
- 10th June - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, AM, 01634 364309 (also 17/24)
- 10th June - Medway Model Club, all ages, Holy Trinity, Twydall, 7-10pm, contact kimmary18@hotmail.com
- 10th June - 'Dynamic Universe', Bredhurst Village Hall, 8pm, www.midkentastro.org.uk
- 10th June - 'Upchurch Choral Society, St Mary's church, Upchurch, 8pm, 01634 234780
- 11th May - Rainham Chess Club - 7.30pm, Rainham Oast Community Centre, robspringett@yahoo.co.uk (also 25th)
- 14th June - Kent Classic & Sports Car Club, Three Mariners, Lower Rainham, 01634 362612
- 15th June - Wigmore Ladies, 2pm, Howard Memorial Hall 01634 388912
- 16th June - Rainham WI, open from 1pm, Berengrave Cricket Club, contact 01634 234997
- 16th June - Bredhurst Garden Club bring and buy produce sale, 1.45pm, Howard Memorial Hall, contact 07791 781910
- 18th June - Quiz Night at Twydall Community Centre, 7pm, 07809 892883 or pinkdukebox@aol.com
- 19th June - Cats Protection Bazaar, Bredhurst Village Hall, £1 entry (kids free), 11.15-3.15, 01634 232471
- 22nd June - Medway Woodturners, Bredhurst Village Hall, 7pm, howardoverton123@btinternet.com
- 23rd June - Rainham & District Dollhouse & Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall, Wigmore, 01634 264295
- 24th June - Medway Geographical Society, 2pm Twydall Church Hall, contact 01634 572139 or lorna_bailey576@hotmail.com
- 24th/25th June - Oast Beer and Music Festival, tickets.oastfestival.co.uk
- 24th June - Trials, Tribulations and Triumphs of Mars Exploration, Bredhurst Village Hall, 8pm www.midkentastro.org.uk
- 26th June - Indoor Boot Fair, Twydall Community Centre, Beechings Way, 10-1pm, 50p entry, 07809 892883 or pinkdukebox@aol.com
- 29th June - 'Big Step Out' walking festival at Bewl Water, celebrating carers, visit: carerssteppingout.co.uk

Check out the www.thenet.uk.net/events for up-to-the-minute events.

Word on the Streets

We currently need a permanent volunteer to deliver to the following roads:

Rainham

Nightingale Close (75), Laurel Walk (28), Mierscourt Rd (from 200 - 306) Stoneacre (22), foxburrow Cl (29), Parkwood Green (27), Knavesacre Cl (30) part of Long Catlis Rd (17)

Contact Anne on **07791 585 998**.

If you are a volunteer distributor we would enjoy hearing about your experiences:
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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