

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

APRIL  
2023

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## *A Rainham Spring*



This photo was taken in 1972, showing springtime in Finwell Road. The estate was built in 1967 along with others, like Chalky Bank Road, that expanded Rainham from Station Road in the 1950s and 60s.

(Photo courtesy of Andy James)

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## ***Letters to the Editor***

### **1966 Churchyard Survey**

Dear Editor,

In 1966, two teenage girls carried out a survey of the churchyard in Rainham. They recorded the inscriptions on the tombstones and also those on vases and surrounding stones that were on some of the graves.

The survey is now in the possession of the Kent Family History Society, which accepted my offer to prepare an index of the names that had been recorded 57 years ago. The society would be interested to know more about the survey, in particular why this was done and what the girls remember about it.

The names of the girls were Sally Glanville (who was living in Salisbury Avenue) and Beverley Constable (who was living in Crabtree Road).

Do any readers of Action Forum recall either of them or, better still, know where they are now?

Regards, David Auger

### **Coronation Memories**

Dear Editor,

When I was about eight years old and going to Barnsole Road school a big event was taking place - the Kings Coronation.

We all wore red white and blue to school that day and I remember being marched up to Gillingham Park with the rest of the school where there was a big party being held.

When we got there, we were all sat on the grass and given a paper bag with a picnic in; a couple of buns and a drink. This was nice but, to my recollection, the buns were stale.

All the other local schools were up there, it was a really big occasion, there was bunting and flags everywhere and a lot of the kids had little union flags on sticks that they were waving. I think there were probably some military bands playing up there too and other entertainments.

I'm sure it must have been a lovely day but, being quite young at the time, the only thing that really sticks in my memory are those

## ***Editorial***

I always love the Winter into Spring period. It feels such a positive time of year, with the days lengthening, the weather warming (despite the recent snow!) and gardens coming to life with flowers blooming. The daffodils, snowdrops and primroses are all out in our garden looking similar to the 1972 picture on the cover of Finwell Road, Rainham. It's surprising how little has changed in the photo during the last 50 years. Apart from more parked cars, the houses and gardens still look much the same as they did then.

Any gardeners out there have probably noticed the lack of rainfall over the winter months with no significant rain in January and February and reported river levels well down on where they should be. Hopefully this won't cause too many problems for wildlife going into the summer but we may need to take care with our water use again.



The observant among you may have also noticed the new Rainham sign that has been erected outside Natwest

Bank in the High Street. The design was created by Natasha Springett as a celebration of the Platinum Jubilee year and features key local landmarks such as St Margaret's Church, Oasts and the train station.

stale buns!  
Gwen Heald.

**Coronation Memories cont.**

Dear Editor  
I was seven. My only real memory of the coronation is watching it on a TV in a house across the road.  
What I do know from later reading is that it was a very wet day. The Queen of Tonga became notorious for keeping the hood of her carriage down for the whole of the procession.  
Hamish Mackay Miller

**Coronation Street Parties**

If your street has applied to have a party, we would love to hear from you and see any photos of the fun and games had during the occasion.  
Enjoy your planning!

**Rainham Community Champion Awards**

Dear Editor,  
It's once again time for the Rainham annual awards, with nominations now open!  
These awards are a chance for us to nominate anybody we know, whether they are a friend, family member, colleague, neighbour or teacher - all that matters is that we think they have made a difference to our community!  
Use the QR code which follows this letter and

head to the nomination pages or type in the following link:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSddbGgEUbNVTsnZ-eD4Pfqbk-ZRXsEY8tO1mbS\\_GkWU45OJFQ/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSddbGgEUbNVTsnZ-eD4Pfqbk-ZRXsEY8tO1mbS_GkWU45OJFQ/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0)

Explore the categories you can nominate for!  
Which ones might you choose?  
Regards,  
Russell Poynter



**Another 'Good' for our local schools**

Dear Editor,  
Following their joining of the Howard Academy Trust, we are delighted to be able to report that Waterfront UTC, has seen a marked improvement, moving from 'Inadequate' to 'Good'. following their recent Ofsted inspection.

Waterfront UTC offers construction and engineering specialisms, and allows some students to begin that specialism from the age of 14, providing more options for our young people within Rainham and neighbouring areas as they think about their future education and careers.

Everybody has worked so hard for this improvement so many thanks to all involved.  
Yours,  
Joel Blundell

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Meanwhile please feel free to donate at  
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### Stockbury Short Mat Bowls Club

Stockbury Short Mat Bowls Club welcome new members, with no experience or initial equipment required.

We meet on a Tuesday afternoon, 2:00-4:00 at the Memorial Hall in Stockbury Village (just off the A249).

For more information contact:  
Dennis on 0748 801859  
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### Picture Books of Old Rainham

Barbara Mackay Miller compiled three books published in 1982, 1987 and 2010, the third with Rosemary Dellar. All three have been out of print for some years but reprints are now planned.

Inevitably, Barbara received letters about errors and omissions, which she filed. Unable to find this file we are asking anybody aware of any corrections necessary to email them to [hamish@actionforum.co.uk](mailto:hamish@actionforum.co.uk) or post to the address at the top of p.2

### A fourth Picture Book of Rainham?

Since written, many more photographs have been collected by [www.rainham-history.co.uk](http://www.rainham-history.co.uk). It is proposed that these should form the basis of a fourth book.

Doubtless there are many more photos that should be considered.

Please submit any you have to [info@rainham-history.co.uk](mailto:info@rainham-history.co.uk). We can scan and return the originals to you.

### *Word on the Streets*

We have a few more streets that need volunteers due to health issues.

#### Permanent Cover

Sheldon Close, Mierscourt Close, Lower Mierscourt Rd (about 74 total)

#### Temporary Cover

Top of Otterham Quay Lane, Blackthorn Close, Bramley Close (about 50 in total)

If you are interested in helping out - even just temporarily, please do get in touch with Anne: **07791 585 998**



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## Community cont...



### The Oast needs your help

The Oast Community Centre is an important community building in the heart of Rainham, adjacent to the station. It is currently used by a range of organisations on a regular basis, as well as being used for one-off lettings. Uses range from dog training lessons, ju-jitsu, short-mat bowls to two community choirs and regular gigs featuring local bands.

We are currently looking to develop our volunteer network – local people willing to invest some time to help to continue to establish the Oast in our community.

Whether you have a few hours ad hoc or are able to offer a more regular commitment we would love to show you round and explain our plans for the future. Could you help with this important historical and community asset?

We will be running two informal meetings for anyone interested in supporting us. We will explain how the Oast is used and our future plans, as well as showing you the building. Refreshments provided!

We hope that you will consider coming along and please mention this to anyone you know who may be interested.

- Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 7.00 – 8.00pm
- Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2.00 – 3.00pm

### Your vote is needed!

It was fabulous to join the launch of Rainham's anti-idling project at The Howard School on the 9<sup>th</sup> March. Students from the school joined others from Rainham Mark Grammar School and Rainham School for Girls in a workshop led by Professors Tim Hophthrow and Dominic Abrams from the University of Kent.

Stuart Steed from Medway Council and Cllr Martin Potter, along with the school Eco-Coordination, encouraged the development of wording for a 'Community Sign' being assessed by the project. A resident's workshop held at St Margaret's Church developed six more ideas.

Ten ideas were narrowed to two, via a Facebook poll and we need your favourite, choosing between:

- a) **Lights RED, Engines DEAD!**  
**#Be More Rainham**
- b) **Cleaner air, show you care,**  
**please turn off your engine here.**

Email [alanstockey@gmail.com](mailto:alanstockey@gmail.com) with your vote and offers of help for the project by 31st March.

### Medway Music Club

Monday 10th April with Tony Stace!

Every artist is a professional musician and top-class player. Our venue houses a bar and tea/coffee are served in the interval, along with home made cakes and sausage rolls. A raffle also takes place during the interval.

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## *Nature Notes* (Stuart Bourne)

### MULCH

Let's talk about mulch. For those who don't get excited as me about the stuff, mulch is a covering you use on your flower beds.

The purpose of it is to make your life easier, by suppressing weeds and holding in water. So, a bit of effort now, can save you a lot in the summer.

Here are some of the types I recommend and their benefits:

Compost - this is the simplest mulch of them all. By using the end product of your compost heap, you can add lots of useful nutrients to your soil. The organic matter will also be drawn down by worms, improving the structure of your soil. The disadvantages of compost are that it needs topping up each year and it's not great at weed suppression.

Well-rotten manure - if you need an extra boost of nutrients for hungry plants and vegetables, nothing beats well rotten manure, so it's perfect for plants like roses. Like compost, it doesn't last long and is best dug into a veg patch each year.

Bark Chippings - much better at weed suppression and water retention, bark chippings also last much longer too. But as it rots away slowly, very little nutrients are released. However, chippings from willow trees have shown to protect trees from diseases, as they contain the same chemical as aspirin.

Gravel or slate - the best mulch for weed suppression and water retention, this stuff will also last you years and years. Obviously, they have no nutrient benefits, plus if you have bulbs and herbaceous plant, they may have difficulty punching through your stone mulch.



### Community Orchard

Chris, Karen, Steve, Clive, Leon, Kevin & myself got stuck into planting hedging plants (good progress on that) and apple trees (all

22 purchased with donation from Gillingham Horticultural Society planted). A good day's work and the new orchard is really taking shape with 84 trees now in the ground. Jo E

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## ***April Comes to the Wildlife-Friendly Garden***

(by Victoria Golding)

We are constantly surprised by the effects of climate change on our everyday weather. December was colder than normal after the warmest year on record. We had reasonable amounts of rain in January, followed by the driest February in thirty years, followed by a very cold March (at the time of writing). Early spring bulbs have been magnificent and have lasted longer than usual, but lavenders and other Mediterranean plants have suffered with the switches in temperatures and I mentioned the problem of cracked pots last month.

### Plant of the month

Now is the time to look for spent bulbs in pots in garden centres.

Avoid any with mould, and plant in clumps where they are going to cheer you up next year.

Short daffodils are lovely in lawns and snowdrops are perfect planted 'in the green' now, rather than as bulbs in the autumn.



Short Daffodils



Snowdrops

Remember to photograph where you have planted.

It will really help for the future!

### Jobs of the month

Don't worry about being behind because of the weather. It isn't too late for anything, other than tree and shrub pruning. This will have to wait till September because now birds will be using the branches as perches, the tangled foliage to hide from sparrowhawks (there are more about than we would expect) and of course, nesting, if you are lucky.

Put in another water butt, which makes hand watering so much more feasible if you don't need to walk far. Water and mulch shrubs, as you will be surprised how dry the soil is at depth. Whatever it feels like, we are still in semi-drought conditions, so capture the water when it is there.

Remember our three Ps from last month?

This month we are looking at Plastic.

We all know that we must reduce our usage, so lets reuse, repurpose and recycle our garden plastics as much as we can.

Save your plant pots for plant exchanges.

Any club that you belong to would love a well-grown plant as a raffle prize, so save any extra plants that pop up, pot them and name them then spread the joy!

We are all excited for our Open Gardens.

Find out all the details of gardens near you at:

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

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Happy Gardening,  
Victoria

(Kent Wildlife Trust  
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## ***Climate Conversations*** (AS)

### ***Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel***

This March, once again, saw the annual week where children across Medway are encouraged to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle to and from school.

As mentioned in previous editions, there are many who share the concerns of Alan Stockey and Ross Elliott about the need for a reduced use of cars on relatively short school journeys.

Pupils are challenged to see which school can log the most 'human-powered journeys' over the two weeks whilst learning about the effects of air pollution and the benefits of more active travel. It will be interesting to see which of the Rainham and neighbouring area schools topped the leaderboard!

Please continue to think about how your family could reduce its air pollution impact, even for just one day a week.



### ***Solar Together Registration***

Registration for a new round of the 'Solar Together Kent' scheme opened on March 20th.

Group-buying power is always cheaper and, with utility bills the way they currently are and solar panels reducing in price, now is a great time to get a survey done of your home, along with a quote of how much it might cost if it is a feasible option for you.



Register interest at:  
[solartogether.co.uk](http://solartogether.co.uk)

## ***The Great British Spring Clean 2023***

The Keep Britain Tidy campaign runs until 2nd April and households are being asked to pledge to fill up one bag of litter to improve the look of our streets and communities.

Last year, 306 people pledged, collecting over 3 tones of litter. Perhaps we could aim for 500 people this year?

Contact the Environmental Engagement Team to take part. They can also lend litter picking equipment and take away any rubbish collected - [eet@medway.gov.uk](mailto:eet@medway.gov.uk)  
Alternatively, you could borrow the litter picking equipment stored at Spice Fusion or Tufton Road (see the Eco-hub for details).

### ***Earth Hour - What did you do?***

Depending on when you received your Action Forum, this date may have already been and gone - 25th March.

My family prepare the living room, bathroom and kitchen with candles or solar lamps, light the stove in the living room and get a game ready to play by candlelight! For just one hour, between 8.30 and 9.30pm, we live without any electricity usage.

One year, we even tried to cook tea on the stove top - an interesting memory!  
A great way to encourage the family to appreciate our power, save money and learn - all at the same time.

### ***April Monthly Eco Challenge***

***'Choose one day each month to ditch the car and use public transport or human-powered transport instead'***

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## ***Rainham History*** (David Wood)

### The Wakeley Family in Upchurch

The Wakeley family began farming at Westmoor Farm in Rainham during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They became the biggest farming company in Upchurch during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and had a big influence on the village and its inhabitants.

Formed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, 'Wakeley Brothers' inherited land which included a sizeable acreage in Upchurch from Rainham farmer Thomas Dodd because of marriage between the two families. They employed large numbers of local people to work in their orchards, hop gardens, brick works and on their barges in the parish of Upchurch. They also had a blacksmith's workshop at Church Farm in Forge Lane.

The company built six oast houses in different parts of the parish to store hops produced at their Seventeen Acres hop garden in Oak Lane where the golf course is now located.

Many local Upchurch residents worked there over the years, with the most well-known being Mrs Margaret Neame from Upchurch Stores, who organised and led a group of ladies from the village to work there during the 1940s and 1950s.

A large number of Upchurch residents worked in the Wakeley hop gardens up to the 1970s. Perhaps you were one of them? Get in touch.

We hope to publish more of this article by David Wood in forthcoming editions.

## ***Easter Services***

### St Margaret's, Rainham

**Sun 2nd April**, 10.30am Palm Sunday All-Age Worship with Doug Horley, a Christian songwriter/performer

**Mon 3rd** - lecture by Bishop Simon Burton-Jones, giving insight into Holy Week

**Tues 4th** - Searchlight Theatre Co

**Wed 5th** - Stations of the Cross, 7pm

**Thurs 6th** - Traditional Maundy Thursday Meal and Service, 7pm

**Fri 7th** - Choir sing 'God So Loved the World', a mixture of hymns, anthems, readings and prayer, noon, followed by an hour at the Cross at 2pm

**Sun 8th**

- 6am Sunrise Service in churchyard, followed by breakfast

- 10.30am All-Age Easter Celebration and Holy Communion,

- 18.30pm Evening of Praise and Celebration

[www.rainhamchurch.co.uk](http://www.rainhamchurch.co.uk)

### St Thomas of Canterbury, Rainham

**Thur 6th April** - Maundy Thursday, Lord's Supper with washing of the feet, 8pm

Eucharistic Adoration "Keep Awake with Me One Hour" (Matthew 26.40)

**Fri 7th** - Friday of the Passion of the Lord

- Children's Stations of the Cross, 12pm

- Passion of the Lord, 3pm

- Stations of the Cross, 7.30pm

**Sat 8th** - Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

- Confessions 10.30am, 5.30pm,

- Easter Vigil Mass, 8.30pm

**Sun 9th** - Procession of Easter Light

- Morning Mass/renewal of Baptismal Promises, 10.30am

- Evening Mass/renewal of Baptismal Promises, 6pm

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## Dates for the Diary

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

**31st Mar** - 'Mapping the Surfaces of Mars' with Prof. Jan-Peter Muller, Bredhurst Village Hall, 8pm,  
[www.midkentaastro.org/events](http://www.midkentaastro.org/events)

**1st April** - 'One Big Family' Easter Craft Fayre to help the homeless, 11-3, Millenium Centre, many stalls and signing choir performance, email [reynoldsjan79688@aol.com](mailto:reynoldsjan79688@aol.com)

**2nd April** - Indoor Boot Fair, Twydall Community Centre, Beechings Way, ME8 6PZ, 10-1, contact Janet Duke: 07809 892883 or [pinkdukebox@aol.com](mailto:pinkdukebox@aol.com) (also 30th)

**10th April** - Medway Music Club, 7.30pm, Parkwood Community Centre, refreshments/bar, £7 entry, [phil.burt@ntlworld.com](mailto:phil.burt@ntlworld.com) or 07795 576294

**12th April** - East Medway u3a, 'Guide Dogs for the Blind', 2pm, £3 for guests, [sueu3acook@outlook.com](mailto:sueu3acook@outlook.com)

**14th April** - 'The Hidden Universe' with Dr Jennifer Millard, ZOOM only, 8pm, [www.midkentaastro.org/events](http://www.midkentaastro.org/events)

**18th April** - RSPB talk 'Nature of the New Forest' with Ian Rumley-Dawson, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30pm, £4 [www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway](http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway)

**19th April** - Woodland Task Day, Bredhurst Woodland Action Group (BWAG), meet at allotments, Hurstwood Rd, 9.45am, all welcome, lunch/refreshments, call 07813 785940 or check out Facebook or [info@bwag.org.uk](mailto:info@bwag.org.uk)

**19th April** - Wigmore Ladies Club, 3rd Wed each month, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside, 2pm. Come along or call 01634 388912

**20th April** - 'Question Time' with Steven Edney, Produce Stall and Raffle, Flower Arrangement Show, Bredhurst Garden Club, 1.45pm, Howard Memorial Hall, £3, BYO mug, contact 07781 781910

**21st April** - Photographic Exhibition, St Mary's Church, Upchurch, raising funds for Bell Tower Restoration Project. 10-4, £5 entry plus drink and voting slip, children free. Contact [elspethbaecke@gmail.com](mailto:elspethbaecke@gmail.com) (22nd/23rd)

**22nd April** - 'A murder Most Victorious', Three Towns Theatre production at Upchurch Village Hall, 2pm and 7.30pm, £15 with afternoon tea, message 07469 728553 or email [threetownstheatrecompany@gmail.com](mailto:threetownstheatrecompany@gmail.com)

**22nd April** - Quiz Night, Twydall Community Centre, 7pm, max 6 per team, £7pp including food, BYO drinks, donate a raffle prize, contact Janet Duke on 07809 892883 or [pinkdukebox@aol.com](mailto:pinkdukebox@aol.com)

**25th April** - 'Frozen Medway', Friends of St Margaret's Church Lower Halstow Social Club, 7.30pm, Memorial Hall, School Lane, ME9 7ES, £4, refreshments, raffle. Any enquiries contact Liz 01795 842272

**26th April** - Rainham Historical Society AGM and chosen charity speaker, 7pm, Millenium Centre, Rainham, £3, 01634 263622

**28th April** - 'Burma/Myanmar' - Jane Scotchmer, 2pm, Medway Geographical and Local History Society, new members welcome, Holy Trinity Church, Twydall, [lorna\\_bailey576@hotmail.com](mailto:lorna_bailey576@hotmail.com)/01634 572139

**Rainham Volleyball Club**, Tues 7-9pm, Sun 6-8pm, Rainham Girls, contact 07772 593674

Check out [www.thenet.uk.net/events](http://www.thenet.uk.net/events)

**Medway Concert Brass**, every Tuesday, Hempstead, contact [manager@medwayconcertbrass.uk](mailto:manager@medwayconcertbrass.uk)

**Bredhurst Woodland Action Group (BWAG)**, 3rd Wed of month for club night presentations with various speakers, Blacksmith's Barn, Bredhurst, 7.30pm, £5 w refreshments. Call 07813 785940, check out Facebook or [info@bwag.org.uk](mailto:info@bwag.org.uk)

**Evergreen Club**, each Wed, 2pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Rita on 07748 058770

**Rainham Health Walk**, alternate Weds, 10.40am outside St Margaret's, followed by an active and wellbeing session inside at 12pm, [walking@medway.org.uk](mailto:walking@medway.org.uk)

**Hempstead Players** community theatre group, 18+, 07421 817158/[thehempsteadplayers.co.uk](http://thehempsteadplayers.co.uk)

**Oast House Community Choir**, every Tues, 10-11.30, Rainham Oast, £5, Bob Carling on 07800 522724

**Bredhurst Art Group**, each Thurs, 1.00-3.15pm, contact Barbara on 07974 205656.

**Wigmore RVS Darby & Joan Club**, each Mon, 2-4, Hannah Hendra on 01634 362662

**Rainham & District Dollhouse & Miniaturist Group**, last Thurs of month, 7.30pm, Howard Hall, Wigmore, 01634 264295 or [rainhamdhkent@gmail.com](mailto:rainhamdhkent@gmail.com)

**Lower Halstow short mat bowls club**, each Mon 2-4, Wed 7.30-9.30, [glenyslovell@hotmail.com](mailto:glenyslovell@hotmail.com)/01795 842376

**Knit and Natter**, every Tues, 12-2pm, Rainham Mark Social Club, ME8 6YX, bring your craft, come and chat

**Hempstead Valley Short Mat Bowls Club**, contact Joy on 01622 693101

**Medway Model Club**, each Fri 7-10pm, all ages, Holy Trinity, Twydall, contact [kimmary18@hotmail.com](mailto:kimmary18@hotmail.com)

**Upchurch Horticultural Society**, 1st Wed each month, 97 Chaffes Lane, contact: [upchurchsociety@gmail.com](mailto:upchurchsociety@gmail.com)

**Rainham Community Choir**, every Mon 7pm, Rainham Oast, £4.50, contact [cdlmedway@gmail.com](mailto:cdlmedway@gmail.com)

**Breathe Easy Medway** (for those with COPD), 1st Tues of month, 1-3pm, Twydall Community Centre, ME8 6TQ, [secretary@BreatheEasyMedway.co.uk](mailto:secretary@BreatheEasyMedway.co.uk) or 07775 461573

**Scottish Country Dancing**, Mon - 1.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Thurs - 8pm, St Thomas of Canterbury, Rainham, [www.medwaycaledonians.co.uk](http://www.medwaycaledonians.co.uk), £3

**Crafty Friends** 6.30pm, every Mon, Rainham Oast Community Centre, contact [wilsons2@aol.com](mailto:wilsons2@aol.com)

**Rainham Chess Club**, 2nd and 4th Wed of each month, 7.30pm, Rainham Oast, Rob - 07890 938544

**Rainham Horticultural Society**, 1st Tues each month, 7.15pm, Rainham Cricket Club, 07931 337310/  
[Rainham.kent.horticultural@gmail.com](mailto:Rainham.kent.horticultural@gmail.com)

**Wigmore Ladies Club**, 2pm, Howard Hall Woodside,

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**01634 373111**

130-132 High Street  
Rainham  
Kent ME8 8AR

**01634 855558**

127 Watling Street  
Gillingham, Kent ME7 2YJ  
Car parking available

**01634 408777**

25 New Road, Chatham  
Kent ME4 4QJ  
Car parking available

**01634 386999**

31 Parkwood Green  
Parkwood  
Kent ME8 9PW



