

First published March 1969



Until the railway came in 1858, the current Station Road was known as White Horse Lane.

Many other road names have also changed over the years, Read the article on page 11 to find out more. (photo courtesy of Rainham History)





## Editorial

Rain, rain and a bit more rain!

It has certainly been a wet spring so far, with just a few days of sunshine here and there to lighten the load. I am hoping this means no water issues this summer but only time will tell.

The road closures of late have also made life a little more difficult for those using road transport. The works on the Lower Rainham Road, this time, are for more gas leaks. The gasmen have spent hours trying to determine where pipes are/go, in order to attempt to locate the source of the leak. It goes to show just how reliant we are on these old roads, designated as B-roads yet treated like main arterial routes. Unfortunately, they were simply not designed to take the traffic levels they now do. So what is the solution?

New roads going in all the time, with all the new housing estates going up. It will be interesting to see which names are chosen and consider why those names. Looking at Andy's article on p11, there have been varied reasons over the years - some pragmatic, some vanity, some for remembrance. They provide us with such a wealth of history.

Easter is almost here and soon the children will be enjoying the Easter break. They will be able to take advantage of the Alebrije trail around the shopping area in Rainham and we would love to hear from anyone who successfully completed it.

There is also a lot going on, particularly with theatre and music. See p5 and 7 for more info and let us know what you thought afterwards.

In the meantime, Happy Easter and don't eat too much chocolate!

# Letters to the Editor

#### Cycle lanes on Maidstone Road

#### Dear Editor

I have just read the 'shocking news' that the council want to create new cycle and walking lanes on Maidstone Road. Has someone dreamt up this ridiculous scheme! There is hardly much room to drive a car etc what with cars parked either side of the road.

I thought the council was trying to save money let alone spending thousands on a hair-brained scheme. Save the people of Medway money.

#### Regards

Brian (I deliver AF on Maidstone Road)

### Lower Medway Archaeological Group

Dear Editor,

Page 11 of your March 2024 issue, contained an insertion from Alex Noble-Jennings relating to the above heading. I was involved for a while in this organisation and would love to get in touch as perhaps there may be mutual interest. Many thanks for your attention.

Kind regards, John Edwin Jarvis

#### Lower Medway Archaeological Group

Dear Editor.

I saw your notice in the latest Action Forum.

I was once the Chairperson of the group. I took over from Peter who retired and has sadly passed away since.

I enjoyed going and meeting people, including a dig at Gore Farm Upchurch. I also managed to get some of our members to a volunteer dig at Grange Road before they built the new houses. They found roman artifacts, along with a lead lined coffin.

Sadly the group disbanded as we couldn't get any new members.

Julie Dray

#### The dreaded auto-correct!

Dear Editor,

Just a friendly note about a couple of slips in the March Nature Notes - where it should have been:

'ready to defend its territory' and 'Its turquoise blue back' i.e. not **it's**.

Regards, John Coppen PS - AF is always a good read!

\*\*\* We are always grateful to receive corrections and feedback. Thank you for taking the time.

#### Medway Asthma Self Help (MASH)

#### Dear Editor

Having just taken over as chair of the Medway Asthma Self Help trustees, I would be very pleased to receive any offers of volunteer time to help support our weekly Friday asthma clinics and awareness raising events, as well as interest in bolstering our small team of trustees.

Asthma is often a lifelong condition, but one effectively managed with care plan awareness and/or medication.

With an average of 1 in 11 children being inhaler-dependent, and there being an increasing focus in Medway on introducing asthma-friendly schools, we offer an essential community service.

To find out more, please contact: <u>admin@medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk</u>

Many thanks, Paula Hamilton

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#### Wigmore Open Gardens Weekend

Dear Editor,

We hope to be able to run this popular fundraising event over the weekend of 29th & 30th June 2024. Could any residents in and around the Wigmore area interested in opening their gardens, please contact <u>paul@bellerby.me</u> or 01634 387328 for further information.

#### Frogs and Local Archaeological Research

Victoria Golding mentioned the demise of adult frogs in her garden last year. Luckily, such has not happened here. I started off with a small number in my back garden 20 years ago and now they are everywhere. There is so much frog spawn (as of March) the water in the ponds can no longer be seen. A considerable amount of the spawn never hatches, presumably due to disease, but I do wonder if the 'lads' have not been able to keep pace! I have lost all my newts though; and the grey squirrels or magpies (shoot both!) always get the blackbird eggs/ chicks.

The Rochester and District Archaeological Group, in the meantime, keeps a presence in Medway, publishing 'The Archaeology of Kent: Past, Present and Future' each year. Anyone can submit an article for publication and illustrations are always needed.

Alan Ward - 18 Fane Way, Parkwood, ME8 9TD





### **Community**

#### <u>Bluebell Walks & Cream</u> <u>Teas - 27th/28th April</u>

Come and join a guided walk with us, followed by a cream tea at the Blacksmith's Barn, Forge Lane, Bredhurst.



There will be two walks each day, a long one (4 km ish) and a shorter one. Meet at the Barn at 2pm each day Tickets £10. Parking limited to Blue Badges.

www.BWAG.org or 07772 920359.

#### 20th Gillingham Scouts Quiz Night

Sat 13th April, 7pm Scouts HQ, Dukes Meadow Dr, Hempstead

Come and help raise funds for our scout minibus fund. £5pp, max of 8 per table, bring your own snacks, cash bar open

events@20thgillingham.com

#### **Hempstead Players Community Theatre**

Comedy Contrasts - two plays for the price of one:

**'Looking for Dr Parkinson'** and **'Last Tango in Little Grimley'** 

One a light-hearted historical comedy, the other a hilarious farce.

Friday 12th April, 7.30pm Saturday 13th April, 2.30pm and 7.30pm £10 per ticket <u>www.thehempsteadplayers.co.uk</u>

#### Come and find ten Mexican folk-art inspired 'Alebrije' in an augmented reality story trail.



The FREE trail uses QR codes so anyone with a smartphone can take part and see interactive characters burst into life. Ten magical creatures are located in the windows of participating businesses along the High Street, Station Road and Rainham Shopping Centre and can be found in any order. Simply scan each QR code to unravel the story and win an e-book concluding the tale. The trail runs from 12 Feb to 12 April 2024.

#### HANDS, Gillingham

A small local charity, looking for more volunteer drivers to take the elderly to appointments. Milage is given and you will make a real difference to someone in need.

We have an increasing demand for our Service. Please ring 07845 624468, leave your details and Joyce or Daphne will ring you back.

#### The Tuesday Social Club, Lower Halstow

Tues 30th April, Memorial Hall, School La.

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### Community cont...

#### **Three Towns Theatre Co Production**

'Stepping Out' Upchurch Village Hall, The Street, Upchurch Saturday 27th April - 2:30pm and 7:30pm

A warm and funny play about the attempts of some working-class women (plus one man) to overcome their inhibitions and left feet.

Mavis, a former chorus girl tries her hardest to teach but, before the dancing begins, Mavis must mediate the minor dramas that erupt among this motley but loveable crew on their way to triumph at their recital.

For further information/to order tickets email <u>threetownscommittee@gmail.com</u> or message 07469 728553.

# Word on the Streets

We need volunteer deliverers for:

Rainham Beacon Cl/Balmer Cl (36) Pump Lane - Begonia Ave to railway bridge, incl Aylward and Emmeline (112) Beechings Way - from Pump Lane to Pembury Way, incl Truro, Ripon & Ely (70) De Mere Cl (18), Chesham Dr (12), Sutherland Gdns (35), Barleycorn Dr (41)

#### <u>Parkwood</u>

Deanwood Drive (240) - can be split up

If you are interested in helping out - even just temporarily, please do get in touch with Anne: 07791 585998



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#### <u>Upchurch Choral Society</u> <u>Concert</u>

**'Music for Springtime'** A concert of favourite anthems and songs from the shows

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024 St Mary's, Upchurch at 7.30pm. Interval refreshments will be available courtesy of the Friends of St Mary's Upchurch.

**£12** on the door, children **free**. <u>sue.rossiter1@outlook.com</u>/01634 234780

#### Bee-keeping taster day - May 11th

Thinking about keeping bees? Wondering how to get started or where to keep your hive? What are the time commitments and costs?

Find out more with this one-day introduction provided by experienced beekeepers at the Pavilion Apiary, Mockbeggar near Wainscott.

Booking is essential. Contact the MBKA Secretary for details: admin@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk

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# Nature Notes

#### April in the Wildlife-Friendly Garden

After my concern last month, frogs eventually arrived in the pond and I have frogspawn in batches, about two weeks apart. It has survived frost and the spawn is developing! My perennials are starting to perk up with the first flowers on the pulmonaria just starting to come out. I love the names: Blue Ensign and Shrimps on the Barbie. Sissinghurst White, which I did not split has been blooming for the last six weeks. The soil still is cold and wet, despite having liberal amounts of manure. Thank goodness it is starting to dry up, which is something that I thought I would never say!

#### Plant of the month

My favourite plant of the moment is one that isn't considered useful for wildlife, Magnolia. I suspect that is something that we may want to reconsider because, although magnolias evolved before bees and are pollinated mainly by beetles, they are underrated as important for wildlife as well as being a food source for many birds. I do see bees on the summer flowering varieties as well as beetles. The many types of magnolia have been so beautiful this spring, mainly because they have been late and haven't succumbed to the horrible browning from frost. As I write,

### Wanting an allotment?

As I grow older, I would like to share my large garden where I grow a surplus of fruit and vegetables to donate to local foodbanks. Priority is given to birds, pollinators and other wildlife.

To learn more call Hamish - 07835 859846

many spring varieties are in flower, lifting our spirits after the difficult winter.

#### Job of the month

My friend Mary recommended to me 'The Well Gardened Mind' by Sue Stuart-Smith, which is a very readable book about the role gardening can have to help with low mood and depression.

"In the garden, the cycle of life can help us because in the depths of winter, a belief in the return of spring draws us ever forward and gives us something to hold on to ... When we sow a seed, we plant a narrative of future possibility. It is an action of Hope".

Isn't that just the most inspiring thought? So, with the seed sowing season being in full swing it is a very satisfying way of increasing your stock of plants as well as having things for those odd corners. It is inspiring to think that gardening can be part of our mental health resilience.

At present I am growing for Wild about Garden's Open Gardens. More news on that to come later.

Treat yourself to a National Garden Scheme Open Garden visit to give you more inspiring ideas during April.

(Kent Wildlife Trust Garden Advisor)



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#### **Spring**

Spring is my favourite time of the year. Although it started early this year, back in the damp miserable but not so cold February, there's still much to see as native flowers come into bloom, birds complete their migrations then start signing to claim their territories and begin nest-building.

As I seek out and walk Rainham's still existing wild spaces, every few yards my eye catches something new to see, from bursting buds, new green leaves and queen bumblebees searching for a new nestbuilding site, to buzzards calling high in the sky.

Even in the grass verges along the roads there is new life to see, for those that aren't too occupied with the mundane time-sapping stresses of the day. And just taking a few minutes to look not only changes our viewpoint, but a moment taken to really look, hear and smell brings a refreshing peace that transcends all else and helps us to cope better with our too-busy lives.

And this Spring, more chaotic than past Springs, has many surprises, as new creatures and plants become established in our changing environment and familiar species become more absent.

Amidst the chaos of a changing environment there are always some good news stories and it seems that urban hedgehog populations have increased a little as more people make their gardens a little wilder, perhaps just a small

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area, and more hedgehog holes are made in otherwise impenetrable fencing, allowing our favourite wildlife creature to roam from garden to garden to forage for all the food they need.

As the days grow longer, and warmer and we get to spend more time outdoors, now is a good time to look at our gardens and plan for the seasons ahead, and to consider how we can maybe change small things to encourage more wildlife to visit. It's interesting that a garden left entirely to nature does not support the amount of wildlife that a carefully-managed garden with bright flowerbeds, a tended lawn area with (mostly hidden) wildlife features, such as a brush pile or perhaps a log pile amidst the shrubbery, will do. Almost everyone enjoys birdsong and butterflies, some are fascinated by bees and wonderfully coloured beetles, children especially will watch spellbound as a froglet hops unexpectedly from beneath a pot, or a cellar slug explores a damp area.

A really interesting garden needs planning as much as a pretty garden, and now is the time to really think about what will make that happen in our own garden.

Leon Roskilly

Why not check out Leon's Facebook page: *Wild about Rainham (Kent)* 



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# Rainham History (Andy James)

#### How Rainham Street Names have changed

This original article by Freddie Cooper has now been updated.

Starting in the east, in 1867 the present Seymour Rd was Wakeley Lane but by 1901 had become Moor Street Lane. There is obviously a close association with the Wakeley family who, until very recently, lived at the house on the corner of the Lane, the only property which has retained the ancient mounting steps by the front gate.

Coming a few hundred yards to the west, **Meresborough Rd** was previously Almshouse Lane, said to have been associated with the alms-houses at the top of Otterham Quay Lane. The section of the A2 between here and Mierscourt Rd was previously known as Broad Walk but is now just **High St**.

**Mierscourt Rd** has also had many changes; being Bush Lane then Chapel Lane, after the congregational church was first built at the northern end, and then Meres Court Rd changed for some mind-boggling reason to Mierscourt.

At one time I had to draw attention in the press to the spelling at the bottom which was 'Miers' with another name plate further up as Meres', the latter being more correct as obviously both this road and Meresborough were originally named after the de Mere family who had estates in the area. In some maps Mierscourt is combined, in others it is two separate words.

Maidstone Rd was Bredhurst Lane at one

time but in 1929, when Rainham was absorbed into the borough of Gillingham, all roads in Rainham which had a similar name to those within the Gillingham area were altered to avoid misunderstanding. Thus:

Hamilton Ave became **Salisbury Ave**, Oxford Rd became **Asquith Rd**, York Rd is now **Durham Rd** and Shakespeare Rd became **Hothfield Rd**.

Milton Rd is now **Webster Rd** (presumably renamed after Dr Webster, a local doctor in the early 20th Century) but Milton House still stands at the end of the road. **Station Rd** was White Horse Lane before the railway came in 1858, the reminder being the pub on the corner.

The only name now duplicated is the High St which has been somewhat complicated by the Post Office now trying to persuade people to leave Rainham out of their address. This means that places in High St, Rainham are stated as High St, Gillingham. Whilst the Post Office may sort by post coding, it can be very misleading to other people.

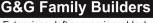
Lots of changes, but also lots of fun tracking the history of our local area!

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# **Climate Conversations**

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What do you do with a broken toaster? Or with a bike when the wheel gets a puncture? Or with a jumper full of moth holes?

Toss it? No way!

If you have something that needs fixing or would like to find out how to fix it yourself then make a note of the dates below:

Chatham Library	April 27th
Strood Library	May 25th
Chatham Library	June 22 <sup>nd</sup>

Everything centres around making repairs. Various volunteer repair experts will be available to help make all possible repairs free of charge!

Tools and materials will also be on hand.

Toasters, lamps, hair dryers, clothes, bikes, toys, crockery... anything that is broken is welcome and probably be repaired. The Repair Café specialists almost always have the know-how.

Visiting us is a great way not only to save money but also to do your bit in reducing the amount of waste we produce in Medway.

Phone: 01634 337 799 for more info.

#### **Small Electricals**

Alternatively, if you have a small appliance that has a wire, plug or takes batteries and can fit in a carrier bag, you can recycle it at No appointment is required - simply take your items to any library in Medway and we'll recycle it for you.

#### Red Route Outcome (Alan Stockey)

It would appear from the response by Medway Council to a Freedom of Information Request (yes, I had to ask), that the decision to proceed with the Rainham Red Route was signed off by the Director of Place (Adam Bryant) on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

This decision is very disappointing and still somewhat confusing, as the response to my Stage 2 Complaint, which I received on 1<sup>st</sup> March, said the decision had not yet been taken?!

I have still not received an answer as to what all the small camera installations that occurred the length of the High Street were all about (and then taken down) but it is presumed they were to ensure that there were no ANPR Camera blind spots.

We urgently need a Council that listens to residents not just speaks to them or puts flyers through doors and then runs away.

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### **Dates for the Diary**

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

until 12th April - Rainham Story Trail 'Alebrije' with Mexican folk art, QR codes around Rainham Shops 2nd April - RSPB Medway Zoom Talk, 'Wonderful Winter Wildlife', Ashly Grove, £3 pp, 7.15 pm, email address and name to medwayrspb\_descar@btinternet.com for the link. More info at: <u>https://group.rspb.org.uk/medway</u>

8th April - 'Green Drinks, 7pm, Manor Farm

**8th April** - Medway Music Club with Tony Stace, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30pm, refreshments/bar, £7, <u>phil.burt@ntlworld.com</u> or 07795 576294

**10th April** - East Medway u3a 'Birdwise', 2pm, Wigmore Smallholders' Club, ME8 0JG, Members free, Guests £3, <u>sueu3acook@outlook.com</u>

**12th April** - Hempstead Players Community Theatre 'Comedy Contrasts' - two plays for the price of one; one a light-hearted historical comedy, the other a hilarious farce, 7.30pm, £10pp, <u>www.thehempsteadplayers.co.uk</u>

**13th April** - Hempstead Players 'Comedy Contrasts' 2.30pm, 7.30pm, £10pp, <u>www.thehempsteadplayers.co.uk</u>

**13th April** - Scout Fundraising Quiz Night, 7pm, £5pp, tables of upto 8, cash bar, bring own snacks, Scout HQ, Dukes Meadow Dr, H'stead, events@20thgillingham.com

13th April - RSPB Medway Nightingale Community Walk, 7pm, meet Northward Hill Car Park, ME3 8DS, what3words: risks.dandelions.forgives,

Facebook or www.group.rspb.org.uk/medway

**16th April** - RSPB Medway, 'South American Birds' with Barry Wright, Parkwood Community Centre, ME8 9PN 7pm, £4.50, <u>www.facebook.com/rspbmedway</u>

17th April - Wigmore Ladies Club, Howard Memorial Hall, Wigmore, 2pm, Contact 01634 388912

17th April - BWAG Club Night, 'Flowers of Kent' with Sue Buckingham, Blacksmith's Barn, Bredhurst, ME7 3JU, 7.30pm, £5, <u>info@bwag.org.UK</u>/07813 785940

**19th April** - One Big Family's 'One Way Ticket' murder mystery eve, Rainham School for Girls, 7pm, £15pp, including ploughman's supper, bring own drinks, Contact <u>sandracolyer@hotmail.co.uk</u> for more

**24th April** - 'Medway Aircraft Preservation Soc talk' Rainham Historical Society, 7.30pm, Millenium Centre, £3, 01634 263622, followed by Society AGM

**26th April -** 'Mary Barton - Fair Maid of Kent' by Melanie Gibson-Barton, Medway Geographical and Local History Soc, Twydall Church, Twydall Lane, 2pm. Annual membership £20, visitors £3.50 per meeting. Lorna Bailey on 572139 or Vanda Woollett on 389916

**27th/28th April** - BWAG Bluebell Walks and Cream Teas, Blacksmith's Barn, Bredhurst, 2pm, £10pp Book on 07772 920359/Facebook: <u>info@bwag.org.UK</u>

27th April - Medway Repair Café, Chatham Lib, 10.30am

**30th April** - Story and Music of Rodgers & Hammerstein, Memorial Hall, Lower Halstow, £4pp, raffle and refreshments, contact 01795 842272

#### Check out www.thenet.uk.net/events

Scottish Country Dancing, Mon - 1.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Thurs - 8pm, St Thomas of Canterbury, Rainham, <u>www.medwaycaledonians.co.uk</u>, £3

Crafty Friends 6.30pm, every Thurs, Rainham Oast Community Centre, contact <u>wilsons2@aol.com</u>

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

Rainham Horticultural Society, 1st Tues each mth, 7pm, Rainham Cricket Club, 07954 180590 rainham.kent.horticultural@gmail.com

Hempstead Friendship Club for ladies, every 2nd/4th Thurs, behind Hempstead Library, 2pm, 07951 629444

**Wigmore Ladies Club**, 3rd Wed of mth, 2pm, Howard Memorial Hall, 01634 388912

Rainham Flower Club, 3rd Wed of mth, Bredhurst Village Hall, 7.30pm, 01634 307855/01795 843180

Rainham Cricket www.rainhamcricketclub.com

Rainham Ladies Choir, local, enthusiastic, nonaudition choir meeting Mon evenings, Rainham School for Girls. rainhamladieschoir.com or email rlchoir@outlook.com

**St Matthew's Place of Welcome**, Thurs informal drop-in, 10am, geoff.hufton@hotmail.co.uk

**Wigmore RVS Darby & Joan Club**, Howard Memorial Hall, 2-4pm, Hannah Hendra 01634 362662

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

**Bredhurst Garden Club**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs each mth, £2 1.45pm, Howard Memorial Hall, Bring and Buy Produce Stall, 07791 781910

**HempstARA Art Club**, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues of mth, Scout Hall, £7, 07710 406154/01634 389054

Medway Aircraft Preservation Society (MAPSL), restoring vintage aircraft at Rochester Airport, visitors welcome Mon, Wed, Sun from 9.30am, contact www.mapsl.com

Art Group, Tuesdays, 10am, Twydall Comm Hub

The Music Man Project, accessible music education Sarah Mann, 07909515439 <u>mmpkent@gmail.com</u>

Wigmore Voices choir, Thurs 8pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Roger 07774 457001 wigmorevoices.weebly.com

Sunbeams Baby and Toddler Music Gp, every Tues, 1.45pm, All Saints, Hempstead, sjcross13@outlook.com

Medway Watersports Centre, sails@medwaywatersports.co.uk

**Oast House Badminton**, each Tues, 7pm, £5pp, cescottie@htomail.com

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

Profits from Action Forum are distributed between a number of charities. 13

# Small Ads

Price: £2.75 per line per month Box Ads: £36.00 per month £96.00 3 months paid in advance Please email wording & your address. See p2 for contact details & copy dates

GARDEN READY FOR SPRING? Planning, planting, pruning, weeding, lawncare by experienced nurseryman/ estate gardener. Friendly, professional service. Adrian: 07763 189708

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http://www.uplift-therapies.co.uk THE WINDOW WIZARD Replacement glass, hinges & handles. UPVC specialist - 01634 871808

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**ST MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY** Centre, Wigmore – modernised centre with main hall, meeting rooms and kitchen available for hire. Disabled access and hearing aid loop. To book, phone 01634 235507.

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maintenance in Hempstead and Wigmore area. Please call 01634 370583 or 07701 007866

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With over 300 pages and 200 photos, this is the first detailed history of the village. £15 from Sunburst Books, Station Rd, Rainham.

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#### WIGMORE EVANGELICAL Free

Church, Durham Rd. Sunday Services 11am (with children's activities) and 6.30pm. For details of other weekly meetings, including children's and youth work, please see our website: <u>wigmorefreechurch.org.uk</u> Visitors are always welcome. Pastor Rev T.J. Wood - 01634 388187

RAINHAM CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Sunday Services 10.30am at Begonia Avenue Church, Twydall. Further details from 07434 672418

ACCOUNTANCY SERVICES Accounts, VAT, Tax Returns, Payroll. If you have a problem just give us a call. We come to you and the first consultation is free.

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To read about the history of Sunburst Books and future plans see article on the Rainham History Website. Search for is http://www.rainham-history.co.uk/sunburst

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