

# ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA



Let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow!




Above is a photo of Rainham Station during the heavy snow of January 1987.

Medway was badly affected by the large amount of snow, with some trains stuck.

People helped each other - a few neighbours on the Lower Road worked together to ensure each home had food supplies and electricity.

(Photo thanks to Steve Murdoch)

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Next issue : Jan 22nd, 2025  
 Copy date : Jan 13th 2025  
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## ***Editorial***

As I write this, I am in the middle of preparing for a number of different carol services, school visits to our church, , a toddler group party, the Dickens Festival, an afternoon tea for carers and candle making (Victorian-style) - and all before writing Christmas cards and buying gifts!

It is such a busy time for so many but can also be lots of fun.

I pray we aren't so bogged down in the detail that we forget to look up and enjoy the beauty. The dark nights mean the fairy lights sparkle more brightly, the cold makes the fire in a local pub seem so much more cosy, Christmas music (even in November) makes me sing - there is much to love, as long as I remember to spare a moment to look around.

This edition is full of places to go, things to see and do, some at a cost but many for free, all aimed at creating those moments and memories.

There are many, though, who will be snowed under mentally and physically. Keep an eye out for neighbours who are struggling and need some extra support. The Just Say Hello project, and similar organisations, will be really beneficial to many this winter. Please donate where you are able. Shoeboxes have gone off to countries where people have literally nothing, but there is a need here in the UK too - it might just be less obvious.

On behalf of all the team at Action Forum, we want to say thank you for your support - from those who sort and deliver, those who advertise with us, to those who read.

Merry Christmas!!!

We hope you have a fabulous Christmas and wish you all the best for 2025!

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

### **November Edition Football photo**

Dear Editor,

I don't think the photo on the front page can be 1924/25 judging by the way the men in the back row are suited and booted!

Although the football bears these dates, maybe this is when the team were founded?

Kind regards

Ian Bracking

### **More on the Football photo**

Dear Editor,

I believe the young man in the front row with the football and shield by his feet is my dear father. He would be about 18 or 19 years old, having the position of goal keeper. His name is Sidney Wooley of Station Rd, Rainham.

I can't recall the number of the house but it was below the station; a group of 3 cottages. His father died aged 40, leaving three children. My father was only 8 years old at the time. His mother re-married George Cooper - her name was Alice Mary.

My father served in the Civil Defence during the war years. He was a lovely man.

Hope this information helps Paul Stephens. I remember the name Costen - my father used to mention it.

Kind regards, Brenda A Davies  
Harrietsham

### **Poisonous Mushrooms**

Dear Editor,

I read the recent article "A fungi hunt in Bredhurst Woods" in which Trevor claimed to be hunting for mushrooms.

I am sure he found many, but I am concerned that no caveat was included to warn people of the danger of eating foraged mushrooms, which may turn out to be something quite different.

A gravestone in Mitcham graveyard, says,

***'In memory of Mary, Sarah, and Eliza,  
the daughters of William and Elizabeth***

*Atwood of this parish, who were poisoned by eating fungous vegetables mistaken for champignons on the 11th day of October 1808 and died at the ages of 14, 7, and 5 years within a few hours of each other in excruciating agonies.*

*The father, mother and now alas, an only child, partakers of the same meal, have survived with debilitated constitution to lament so dreadful a calamity.*

*This monument is erected to perpetuate the fatal event as an awful caution to others – let it be, too, a solemn warning that in our most grateful enjoyments, even in our necessary food, may lurk a deadly poison and that when age and health are most apt to flatter us with length of days some unforeseen misfortune may snatch us in an instant to Eternity.'*

Perhaps you could belatedly print a warning, which may I appreciate be unnecessary for some folk, but perhaps not all.

Regards, Sally McCartan  
Rainham

### **Christian Businesses in Kent**

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Church, Maidstone. Invite some colleagues and book your place at: [cbik.uk/carols](http://cbik.uk/carols)

### **'Just Say Hello' food project and Christmas offering**

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We also have a Christmas dinner parcel offering for Rainham residents in need this year. We also welcome donations to help with this project.

Email [hello@rainhamchurch.co.uk](mailto:hello@rainhamchurch.co.uk) for any further information.



### *Want to donate?*

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♥ Thank you ♥

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## Community Christmas

### Christmas Services Around Rainham



#### St Matthew's, Wigmore

**30th Nov, 1.30pm** - Panto 'It's a Boy!'  
**15th Dec, 6.30pm** - Carol Service  
**17th Dec, 6.30pm** - Carols among the Trees  
 (with Salvation Army Band)  
**24th Dec, 3pm/5pm** - Christingle Service

#### St Paul's, Parkwood

**1st Dec, 3pm** - Christingle at Family Fun  
**15th Dec, 3pm** - Crib & Nativity Family Fun  
**25th Dec, 10.30am** - Holy Communion

#### St Peter's, Bredhurst

**8th Dec, 3pm** - Nine Lessons and Carols  
**24th Dec, 3pm** - Crib Service

#### Holy Trinity, Twydall Lane

see website for details

#### Twydall Evangelical, Goudhurst Rd

**22nd Dec, 4pm** - Carol Service

#### Rainham Christian Fellowship, Waltham Rd

**15th Dec, 10.30am** - Nativity Service  
**22nd Dec, 4pm** - Candlelit Carol Service  
**25th Dec, 10.30am** - Christmas Day Service

#### St. Margaret's Rainham

**29th Nov, 4.30pm** - Christmas Tree Festival  
**30th Nov, 10am - 4pm** - Tree Festival with  
 Festive Outdoor Market  
**30th Nov, 4pm** - Carols amongst the Trees  
**1st Dec, 2pm** - Christmas Tree Festival  
**1st Dec, 4pm** - Advent Coral Evensong  
**8th Dec, 4pm** - Christingle Service  
**20th Dec, 7.30pm** - Beer and Carols  
**22nd Dec, 6.30pm** - Carols by Candlelight  
**24th Dec, 1pm/4pm** - Christmas Eve  
 Crib Service  
**24th Dec, 11pm** - Midnight Mass  
**25th Dec, 10.30am** - Holy Communion

#### Wigmore Evangelical, Durham Rd

**10th Dec, 7.30pm** - Christmas Carols  
 (with Marconi Brass Band)  
**22nd Dec, 6.30pm** - Carol Service  
**25th Dec, 10.30am** - Christmas Day Service

#### Granary Church, Oast Community Centre

**22nd Dec, 3pm** - Carol Service with festive  
 refreshments (transport available)  
**25th Dec, 10.30am** - Christmas Day Service

#### All Saints, Hempstead

**21st Dec, 3pm** - Blue Christmas  
**24th Dec, 11.30pm** - Holy Communion





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## Community Christmas...

### Wigmore Voices 'Sing Noel'

Saturday 14th December at 7.30pm  
St Matthews Community Centre, Drewery  
Drive, Wigmore, Gillingham, ME8 0PD.

Tickets £10, refreshments included,  
Sue on 07990837287

### Gillingham Inner Wheel

Would you like to join a group of ladies  
in a women's organisation based on  
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Golf Club for lunch followed by a meet-  
ing, usually with a speaker, on various  
interesting topics.

If you are interested in joining us contact  
[chrismorris648@gmail.co.uk](mailto:chrismorris648@gmail.co.uk) for more.

### Medway Music Club

9th Dec, with Claire Greig,  
7.30pm at Parkwood Community Centre  
(see p13 for more info)

### Bredhurst Christmas Bonanza Shop

At the Charity Shop, we have gift stock at  
very reasonable prices including home-made  
preserves and potted hyacinth bulbs.

Every Wed and Sat, 1.30-3.30pm from  
7th December until 21st December

Free sweets for the children and a Grand  
Raffle to be drawn on 21st December.

## Word on the Streets

*Thank you so much to all who  
have volunteered to deliver for  
us. It is appreciated so much.  
We wish you a Merry Christmas!!!!*

*This month we have a number of roads  
requiring volunteers. If you think you can  
help with any of them then please contact  
Anne: 07791 585998*

### Rainham and Lower Rainham

Langdale Cl (105)  
Pomeroy Ave (50)  
Middleton Cl (61)

### Upchurch

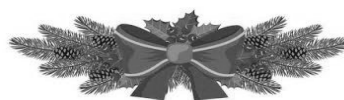
The Street (50), The Poles (28) + 10 Church  
(90) total

### Parkwood

Queendown Ave (77), Long Catlis 2-84a,  
Lambeth Ct (14), Dixwell (26),  
Donet Cl (16), Fairfax Cl (33),  
Callis Way (7), Cheney Cl (17),  
Lineacre Cl (16), Brackwood Cl (9),  
Napwood Cl (8), Cowbeck Cl (26),  
Hallwood Cl (34), Campleshon Rd (65),  
Hutsford Cl (31), Edisbury Wk (11),  
White Gate Ct (8), Idenwood Cl (14),  
Holtwood Cl (16)

### Temporary cover - Hempstead

Watermeadow Cl (20), Horseshoe Cl (13),  
Honey Cl (26), Cobblestones (43)



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## Nature Notes

### December in the Wildlife-Friendly Garden

What an interesting year we have had! Most environmental news has been horrendous, heart-breaking and worrying. The best tactic I have found is to concentrate on the things that I can do and not get bogged down in those out of my control.

I haven't been outside enough in the last few months, including neglecting the garden. Well, generally nature doesn't mind a bit of neglect so, instead of being unhappy about not being garden-ready before we go away for seven weeks (yes, I know, I am a really lucky person!), I am planning for those things I can do when I return.

I have sorted out my old seed packets and have made a list of seeds that I am ordering in the next week. A kind friend is looking after tender plants while we are away and, for the rest, I am trusting that there will still be flora and fauna when we get home with nectar and pollen in our garden.

### Jobs for December

Many of the things I talk about through the year are still valid. Carry a bucket and a hand fork with you, along with secateurs to take out the odd weed as you see it. Just a few each day and your garden will be ready for planting, when you are.

Keep watering pots or shrubs that are in rain shadow as these misty days are deceptive and you will be surprised how quickly established plants dry out. Winter is a great time to plant trees and hedges. Select things which grow well in your area and are suitable for your site, good for wildlife and, finally, prepare the ground well.

### Plant of the month

Like many of our Garden Advisors, I have found there aren't many berries left on our shrubs, including the holly tree. We still have ivy berries to come but not till much later in the winter. But the camellia, 'Yuletide' has grown very well this year. This shrub is quite expensive but it does grow well. The Mahonia x media 'Winter sun' is in flower, with the other variety that we grow, 'Charity' due to follow on a bit later. These pops of red and yellow do enliven the garden at this time.

Keep looking for our events:

[www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/whats-on](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/whats-on) including a Pond Refurbishment workshop on 8<sup>th</sup> February.

Happy gardening as we head through 2025!

Victoria Golding

(Kent Wildlife Trust,  
Wild About Gardens Advisor)



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### A Medway Winter

The nights are becoming longer still, the weather colder, and much of nature is already asleep.

Queen bees (and other creatures) snuggle below fallen leaves left to nature where they fell, or within mouse nests, or in chambers constructed underground, with some bees choosing to overwinter in empty snail shells. And amongst the fallen leaves are tree seeds needing a period of very cold weather for stratification so they will germinate in the spring while, above, buds have begun the process which will see leaf and fruiting flower buds bursting when the days grow longer and warmer.

But not all of nature sleeps.

Foxes hunt rats and dig holes in lawns to uncover chafer grubs that would otherwise lead to areas of yellow dying grass as the grubs feed on roots.

Some buff-tailed bumblebee queens will found winter colonies, surprising gardeners as they seek out rare nectar from winter blooms, including sweet-smelling winter-flowering honeysuckle shrubs, mahonia and hellebores, followed by snowdrops, acconites, lesser celadine and crocuses in the early Spring.

And the birds, having found sheltered places to roost during spells of bitter cold, will be visiting bird-feeders more often now that there is less natural food around to fuel their bodies

through the coldest nights.

With so much decline in the natural world, there are opportunities for gardeners to help nature survive the cold:

Just leaving leaves where they fall, not tidying dead garden vegetation from flower-beds until the daytime temperature is consistently above 10C, ensuring hedgehogs can gain entry and leave the garden when they forage, having temporarily woken thirsty and hungry, needing to find food and water to see them through until Spring.

Try to leave dishes of water where they will not freeze and clear the ice when they do. Nesting boxes often double as roosting places during the cold, used not just by birds seeking shelter, but insects as well.

Out in the estuary, when the tide is low, there are hundreds of waders seeking winter food in the mud. So many have travelled hundreds of miles to be there. On a bright cold winter's day, there's no better place to be to see a winter spectacle than down by our river, far better than any nature programme on TV; a touch of beauty in a season dominated by gloom, darkness and cold, all for making the effort to be there and see.

Leon Roskilly  
Wild About Rainham



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## Community Christmas...

### Rainham Theatrical Society's 'Puss in Boots'

To help brush away those January blues why not come along to Rainham's very own theatre as the Rainham Theatrical Society present their annual pantomime.

Puss in Boots uses trickery and deceit to gain power, wealth and the hand in marriage of a princess for his penniless and low-born master.

This show, by Ben Crocker, is full of comedy, music and, of course, audience participation!

**Jan 10th and 11th**  
**Jan 17th and 18th**  
**Jan 24th and 25th**  
**Jan 31st and Feb 1st**

Curtain up at 8pm on Fri and 7pm on Sat  
Saturday Matinees at 1pm & 4pm

Oasthouse Theatre, Rainham  
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[www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk](http://www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk)

There is only one way to find out  
if good triumphs over  
evil...book a ticket now!



### Maidstone and Medway Sifonia presents...

Ruth Gipps – Variations on a Theme by Byrd,  
Beethoven – Symphony No.1 in C

Louise Farrenc – Symphony No.1 in C Minor  
Conductor – Ben Knowles, Leader – Kate Coles

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm**  
Brompton Academy, Gillingham, ME7 5HT

Tickets can be bought on the door,  
by card ([www.ticketsource.co.uk/MMS](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/MMS)) or  
by phone on 01634 376979  
£12pp (£10 for Friends of the Orchestra),  
under 18's are free.

A group of musicians first met to make  
music together at the home of County  
Medical Officer, Dr Ponder and Old Barn  
Orchestral Society was then founded in  
1927. Based in Maidstone, the orchestra  
gives 3 concerts a year, with this one in  
December championing the music of two  
women composers.

Sadly, costs outweigh income and we  
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With a long and rich history, players would  
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## Father Christmas

### Gillingham Rotary Club Christmas Floats



**Tues 10 Dec** - start Taverners Rd  
Taverners, Bettescombe, Elmstone,  
Bettescombe, Arthur, Maidstone, Herbert,  
Lonsdale, Broadview

**Thurs 12 Dec** - start Edwin Rd/Sylvan Rd  
Edwin, Durham, Maidstone, Lyndhurst,  
Marshall, Platters

**Sat 14 Dec** - ASDA, Pier Rd, Gillingham

**Fri 20 Dec** - start junc Eastcourt/Broadway  
Elmfield, Featherby, Chilham, Eastcourt,  
Allington, Broadway, Priory, Abbey, Featherby,  
Hanway, The Chase, Chattenden, Broadway

**Sat 21 Dec** - ASDA, Pier Rd, Gillingham

*Don't forget that these dates and routes are all  
subject to change due to weather.*

### Gillingham Lions Santa Sleigh Runs



**Mon 9th** - Hempstead  
Barncroft, Hempstead, Almond,  
Magdalen, Lavenda, Birch,  
Plumtree, Medlar, Cedar, Kingsdown

**Tues 10th** - Hempstead  
Coppergate, Evergreen, Sheperdsgate,  
Honey, Lamplighters, Cobblestone,  
Horseshoe, Old Barn, Greenfinches, Everglades

**Wed 11th** - Kenilworth  
Kenilworth, Windermere, Sandown, Bransgore,  
Sunningdale, Wimbourne, Tanker, Gayhurst

**Thurs 12th** - Fairview  
Fairview, Foulds, Primrose, Magnolia,  
Clematis, Norman, Wigmore, The Hazels,  
Woodside, Bredhurst

**Fri 13th** - Highfield

Highfield, Benson, Derwent, Oldfields,  
Salisbury, Century, Nursery, Henley, Cheriton

**Mon 16th** - Parkwood

Campleshon, Wood, Queendown, Lineacre,  
Idenwood, Hallwood, Donet, Dixwell, Long  
Catlis, Fairfax, Foxburrow, Readscoft, Beke

**Tues 17th** - Parkwood

Capel, Gunnis, Galdwyn, Culpepper, Conrad,  
Chipstead, Long Catlis, Hawbeck, Roper,  
Sedley, Deanwood

**Wed 18th** - Twydall

Waltham, Eltham, Lyminge, Bodiam, Sturry,  
Herne, Blean, Patixbourne, Detling,  
Hawthorn, Begonia

**Thurs 19th** - Twydall

Staplehurst, Goudhurst, Ash, Leeds, Charing,  
Lynsted, Bearsted, Westerham, Minster,  
Crundale

**Fri 20th** - Lower Beechings

Eastcourt, Littlebourne, Bishopsbourne,  
Kennington, Brabourne, Kingsnorth,  
Thornham, Rolvenden, Ruckinge, Boughton

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### Father Christmas at Macklands House

Santa (on his sleigh) will be visiting  
us in Station Road (Rainham).

**Saturday 21st December, 4.30-7.30pm**

Children will be able to give a letter (or list!)  
to Santa. Refreshments  
available (mince pies, hot  
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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)**

**1st Dec** - RSPB Free Guided Walk, Leysdown, 10am, ME12 4RJ, [what3words: jubilant.implore.hunt](http://what3words:jubilant.implore.hunt), see Facebook or [www.group.rspb.org.uk/medway](http://www.group.rspb.org.uk/medway)

**1st Dec** - Parkwood Craft Market, 10.45am, Parkwood Community Centre, free entry

**1st Dec** - Christmas Tree Festival, 2pm, St Margaret's

**3rd Dec** - RSPB Zoom talk with James Lowen, 'Tango Birding in Argentina', 7.15pm, £3pp, email name and email to [info.rspbmedway@gmail.com](mailto:info.rspbmedway@gmail.com)

**3rd Dec** - 'Green Drinks, 7.30pm, The Railway PH

**7th Dec to 21st** - Christmas Bonanza, 1.30-3.30pm, Bredhurst Church Charity Shop, ME7 3JZ, see p11 for more

**7th Dec** - Maidstone and Medway Sinfonia Concert, 7.30pm, Brompton Academy, Gillingham, £12pp 01634 376979/07808 068881 or on door, see p11 for more

**7th Dec** - Union of Catholic Mothers Carol Concert featuring The Medway Singers, 7.45pm, St Augustine's, Deanwood Drive, 01634 375413/360062

**9th Dec** - Medway Music Club with Claire Greig, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30pm, refreshments/bar, £8, [phil.burt@ntlworld.com](mailto:phil.burt@ntlworld.com) or 07795 576294

**10th Dec** - Christian Businesses in Kent Carol Service, 5.30pm, Life Church, Maidstone, [cbik.uk/carols](http://cbik.uk/carols)

**11th Dec** - 'History of Father Christmas' 7pm with Rainham Historical Society, Millenium Centre, £3pp, 01634 263622

**13th Dec** - 'Christmas Social', 8pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, [www.midkentastron.org.uk/events](http://www.midkentastron.org.uk/events)

**14th Dec** - Medway Repair Café, Gillingham Community Hub, 10.30am

**14th Dec** - 'Sing Noel' with the Wigmore Voices, 7.30pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Wigmore, £10pp with refreshments, Phone Sue on 07990 837287

**17th Dec** - RSPB Free Guided Walk, 10am, Riverside Country Park, ME7 2XH, [what3words: flow.spurtd.race](http://what3words:flow.spurtd.race), [www.group.rspb.org.uk/medway](http://www.group.rspb.org.uk/medway)

**17th Dec** - Carols among Trees, 6.30pm, St Matthew's

**17th Dec** - RSPB Indoor talk 'A Flame the Winter Can't Kill' with Robin Smith, 7pm, £4.50pp, Parkwood Community Centre, [info.rspbmedway@gmail.com](mailto:info.rspbmedway@gmail.com)

**20th Dec** - Beer and Carols, 7.30pm, St Margaret's

**21st Dec** - Blue Christmas, 3pm, All Saints, Hempstead

**21st Dec** - Macklands House Santa Visit, 4.30pm, Station Road, donations gratefully accepted

**10th Jan** - 'Galaxies: One Gigayear at a time' with Dr Julian Onions, 8pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, [www.midkentastron.org.uk/events](http://www.midkentastron.org.uk/events)

**10th/11th Jan** - Puss in Boots panto, Oasthouse Theatre, Rainham, see p11 for details

**17th/18th Jan** - Puss in Boots panto, Oasthouse Theatre, Rainham, see p11 for details

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

**Sunbeams Baby and Toddler Music Gp**, every Tues, 1.45pm, All Saints, Hempstead, [sjcross13@outlook.com](mailto:sjcross13@outlook.com)

**Medway Watersports Centre**, [sails@medwaywatersports.co.uk](mailto:sails@medwaywatersports.co.uk)

**Oast House Badminton**, each Tues, 7pm, £5pp, [cescottie@hotmail.com](mailto:cescottie@hotmail.com)

**Medway Towns Bands**, every Tues and Wed, Hempstead Infants, 01474 745318 or [mail@medwaytownsbands.uk](mailto:mail@medwaytownsbands.uk)

**Medway Scrabble Club**, alternate Mons, St Stephen's, Maidstone Road, Chatham, 07523 124668

**St Matthew's Film Club**, 2pm, last Monday of month, £2 for refreshments, [geoff.hufton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:geoff.hufton@hotmail.co.uk) or 01634 234712

**The Thursday Club**, St. Matthews Community Centre, Wigmore, 2pm, contact Geoff on 01634 234712/[geoff.hufton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:geoff.hufton@hotmail.co.uk)

**Rainham Tea Dances**, every Fri, 2-4pm, £1 plus £1 visitor fee, United Services Club, Rainham, £2, Jane or Gary on 01634 374938

**Bredhurst Whist Club**, every Tues, 7-10pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, 07707 669915

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

**Rainham WI**, 3rd Thurs of mth, Rainham Cricket Club, 1.15pm, small charge, 01634 234997

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

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

**Gillingham Inner Wheel**, two Tues each mth, Upchurch Golf Club for lunch, followed by a meeting on various topics, [chrislmorris648@gmail.co.uk](mailto:chrislmorris648@gmail.co.uk)

**Kent Classic & Sports Car Club**, 2nd Thurs of mth, Three Mariners, Lower Rainham, 01634 362612

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

**Lower Halstow short mat bowls**, each Mon 2-4, Wed 7.30-9.30, [glenyslovell@hotmail.com/01795842376](mailto:glenyslovell@hotmail.com/01795842376)

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

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

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

**Rainham Community Choir**, every Mon 7pm, Rainham Oast, £5, contact [cdlmedway@gmail.com](mailto:cdlmedway@gmail.com)

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