

# ACTION FORUM

JULY  
2024

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AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

## That was Then and This is Now



Westminster Bank opened their Rainham Kent branch on 23 October 1961.

The branch occupied premises at 55 High Street until 1973.

The former premises are now occupied by the Favourite Chicken takeaway but the profile of the old building roof can still be seen today.

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## ***Editorial***

So, we are managing to keep the woodlice and slugs at bay. Following advice from a colleague, we now have a glass of pale ale buried into the soil and my husband does slug patrol each night before bed. The joys!

In the meantime, I have noticed the requests for help coming in. These fit alongside the committees of many local organisations telling me they are looking for the next generation to take over from them yet very few are stepping up. Is it simply that there are more expectations of us as husbands/ wives/parents etc?

It can't be longer working hours or an increase in home chores. My grandparents were at church 3 times each Sunday, ran the youth club, attended choir practice, home cooked, ran an allotment etc etc - on top of jobs and mostly without the gadgets we take for granted. Whatever the reason today, at some point the myriad of wonderful activities we have available for us to enjoy will cease to exist and become just another article for the history page!

Perhaps I need to start thinking about my nominations for some of those awards categories in the following letter, based on all the wonderful people who contact Action Forum each month to provide dates and activities for us to choose from.

On a more positive note, Action Forum would like to welcome Mark Wheeler to the Editorial team - he has offered to come on board and is learning the ropes regarding our advertising sections.

I look forward to hearing what August will bring in Action Forum but, in the meantime, enjoy a lovely July.

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

### **AF Sept 2019 photo**

Dear Editor,  
I have tried to ring Richard Grice to no avail so wondered if anyone else can help.

The photo on the front page of Action Forum (September 2019 No 557) shows a picture of the Girls & Teachers at that time - 1948. My sisters and I would like to know if Miss Whitehead who is mentioned is our Auntie, Pat Whitehead?

I would appreciate any help you can give, thank you.  
Dave Whitehead

### **The Rainham Community Awards 2024**

Dear Editor,


1st Accounts (UK) Ltd. are sponsoring the event that celebrates the spirit of our town – the Rainham Community Awards and we want you to take part.

This year, I urge you to nominate a deserving individual for 'The Great Neighbour Award'. Someone who has demonstrated care and commitment, whether through small acts of daily kindness or simply being a friend in times of need; these are the neighbours who bring warmth and cohesion to our community fabric. Nominating someone for 'The Great Neighbour Award' is a way to acknowledge their contributions and to say thank you.

Simply fill in the form or ask someone to do it on your behalf:

[www.Tinyurl.com/RCA2024](http://www.Tinyurl.com/RCA2024)

Please give us details or stories that highlight the impact of your neighbours' actions. It's always more impactful when the nomination comes with a personal touch!

 Thank you for your consideration and for being a part of the Rainham community. Together, we can make these awards a beacon of hope and appreciation.

Warm regards,  
Kate 1st Accounts (UK) Ltd

### **Rainham Community Award deadline**

The awards shine a spotlight on those who make a difference, with 7 categories to choose from:

Eco to Health & Wellbeing, Volunteers to Unsung Heroes.

Finalists will be invited to an Awards ceremony - last year proved to be a memorable occasion, reinforcing the power of community and the impact of individual contributions.

**But hurry, the closing date for nominations is 31st July.**

Have your say now!

[www.Tinyurl.com/RCA2024](http://www.Tinyurl.com/RCA2024)

### **Old Barn Orchestra Struggle**

Dear Editor,

The Maidstone and Medway Sinfonia orchestra may have to disband next year as current finances will not be enough for it to continue.

As the Old Barn Orchestral Society, under which identity it still operates, the orchestra has been going since 1927 but, as it approaches its next concert (at the Rainham School for Girls on 29<sup>th</sup> June), it desperately needs financial support, which could be in the form of sponsorship or from donations. Audiences could also be larger, as could the 'Friends of the Old Barn', which anyone may join.

The orchestra has always presented accessible

music, both well-known and less famous, and in this June concert, with music by Mendelssohn and Beethoven, there is a piece by Ethel Smyth – a woman composer bridging the 19<sup>th</sup> and twentieth centuries. At the last concert, the orchestra played music by other women composers that is just coming to light and had a short talk by Dr Leah Broad, a specialist in unearthing the stories of these overlooked women whose works are excellent but rarely programmed.

If you would like to know more about the orchestra and the plans that may never be realised, please come along at 7.30pm on 29<sup>th</sup> June – tickets are available at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/MMS](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/MMS) or contact Karen Brown on 07808 068881 to book or find out more.

Much appreciated, Colin Brown

### **Part-time volunteer bookshop vacancies**

Sunburst Books, in Rainham, has been expanded, refurbished and is now the largest charity bookshop in Kent.

It currently opens 9am - 3pm, six days a week but they would love to open until 5.30pm. To do so, they need more volunteers to staff the shop.

They are also starting to list books online but need more volunteers to help list, pick and pack orders.

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## ***Community***

### **Wigmore Open Gardens**

Saturday 29th June - 10-3pm

Refreshments & lunches are available, along with great raffle prizes, many plants and other items for sale.

It will be a worthwhile and enjoyable time.

For further details visit:

[facebook.com/stmattswigmore/events](https://www.facebook.com/stmattswigmore/events)

or contact Paul:

[paul@bellerby.me](mailto:paul@bellerby.me) or on 07486 906589.

### **Rainham Historical Society Excursion**

Saturday 13 July

Excursion to Sandwich and Deal

Departing at 8.40am from Lukehursts/  
Rainham High St.

Open to non-members: £31.

Contact: Mrs Val Ware: 01634 366276

### **Mayhem on Smuggler's Pier!**

St. Paul's Drama Group are proud to present this murder/mystery play by Richard Coleman.

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July, 7.30pm  
Community Hall, 100 Third Avenue, ME7  
2LU (opp. Robert Napier School)

Tickets: £9 Adult & £6 Child (under 16)  
available from [ticketsource.co.uk/mayhem](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/mayhem) or  
[www.stpaulsdramagroup.co.uk](https://www.stpaulsdramagroup.co.uk)  
Information from 01634 852712.

Do come & enjoy an evening with the 'end of pier' players at their first few rehearsal days!!

### **Hempstead Festival - Save the Date**

7th September, 2024

Hempstead Community Hub (library)

Crafters and horticulturists - plan your planting and craft entry and show off your talents. Purchase a space in the courtyard of the library for your craft stall.

With 73 classes, the event is open to anyone with a connection to Hempstead or the Parish of South Gillingham.

The Grand raffle funds future festivals.

Contact Hempstead Library for more info.

### **The Tuesday Social Club, Lower Halstow**

Sat 29th June, St Margaret's Church

**Guide Dogs for the Blind, with Brian Killick and his dogs** - 2pm

This is a great event, especially for children. There is no charge but donations are welcome. Refreshments available.

Contact Liz - 01795 842272

### **Meteorite Secrets!**

David Bryant is familiar to many for making meteorites available via his website:

[www.spacerocksuk.com](http://www.spacerocksuk.com)

At this meeting he will reveal how space rocks can reveal details about the formation of the planets, including the Earth we live on.

24th July, 8pm, Bredhurst Village Hall

For more information visit:

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



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## Community cont...

### 2024 Poppy Appeal

I am once again writing to ask all you lovely knitters out there if you would kindly knit some poppies for this year's Poppy Appeal for Hempstead Valley's Stall. You can make them with red, purple (for horses) or white (for conscientious objectors).

Please rest assured that all funds from the sale of the poppies goes to the Royal British Legion.  
Please contact Sandra on 07592 301151.  
Many thanks for all your donations.

### ***Word on the Streets***

*We need volunteer deliverers for:*

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Lonsdale Dr - 95-237 (73) and 112-226 (59)  
Lonsdale Dr - 239-365 (63) and 228-334 (48)  
Tanker Hill (64)  
Camellia Cl (30), The Mailyns (55)*

#### Parkwood

*Chipstead Rd (37), Nares Rd (60),  
Lyll Way (58) Moyle Close (49),  
Conrad Cl (27), Crispe Cl (19),  
Beke Rd (29), Chute Cl (16),  
Collings Walk (21), Brett Walk (21)*

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

### **Bredhurst Woodland Action Group Club Night**

**17 July** - 'Orchids of Kent', with Clive Nuttman (rescheduled from June - due to unforeseen circumstances), Blacksmith's Barn, Bredhurst, ME7 3JU, 19.30, £5 on the door, with refreshments.

**21 July** - woodland task day butterfly survey - meet at the allotments, Hurstwood Rd. ME7 3JZ - 09.45.  
All volunteers welcome, lunch and refreshments provided.

Call 07772 920359 or check out Facebook & [info@bwag.org.UK](mailto:info@bwag.org.UK)

### **Medway Music Club**

8th July, with Jon Smith,  
7.30pm at Parkwood Community Centre.  
See p13 for more.

### **The Tuesday Social Club, Lower Halstow**

Tues 23rd July, Memorial Hall, School La.

#### **The History of Kent Policing - 7.30pm**

Please do join us for a fascinating talk by Pam Mills.  
£4 entry on the door, refreshments and raffle included. Contact Liz - 01795 842272

### **Police Messaging Service**

Did you know that there is a two-way messaging service that allows you to keep in touch with local police teams.  
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## Nature Notes

### July in the Nature-Friendly Garden

Having had so much rain since autumn, it is odd that it is now getting dry. I had forgotten just how much water pots need and, now they are full of growth, the rain that falls, misses most of the pot, unfortunately. I have taken so much pleasure in the healthy garden growth this year, especially in the 'lawn' areas. So many wild flowers are naturalising and some of the seeds I planted in the winter are now adding to the display.

We see foxes in the garden almost every day, a pair and a scruffy singleton. Pete watched two young magpies teasing a cat on the store roof. The cat likes the sun and the magpies like insects in the crevices. One magpie was in front, taunting the cat, while the other was behind pecking at his tail. The cat would have a pounce at a bird, who would go away for a bit, then come back and it would start again. Eventually the cat got up and went away. Magpies 1, Cat nil!

### Plant of the month

The pea flowers and vetches are wonderful this year. Birdsfoot trefoil has been late and, at the time of writing, been out less than a week. But my pride and joy has come from a tiny magenta pea flower, grass vetchling. It appears to float within grass stems, a true

meadow plant I am thrilled to have. I will collect seeds for larger sowings next year.

### Job of the month

We both have suffered from Covid, which came as a horrible shock, as we have taken all our vaccinations. We are having nasty long-lasting side effects, including muscle pain and weakness which has prevented us from doing much, so I don't feel inclined to tell you all what you should be doing! I will get round to trimming edges and cutting some areas of grass down, but the floriferous areas are proving magnets to insects with pollen and nectar so I shall keep it long for a while.

Try to conserve water for the next few drier months to keep shrubs and trees happy.

Enjoy your outside spaces, including balconies, as shown on the Chelsea Flower Show exhibitions. I found a lot of the thinking at Chelsea very inspiring this year as so many people championed Wildlife Friendly Gardening.

Check out all our events on the website:

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

Visit your local nature reserves for a real treat.

Victoria Golding  
(Kent Wildlife Trust,  
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#### No 4 A cycle trip to Wormshill

I leave Newington Station on a journey suggested by Joe Ennis. Climbing through the lanes, I pass hedgerows frothed up with cow parsley while young rabbits skedaddle away. I cross onto a quiet road and am greeted by passing cyclists - a long way from the chaos of Stockbury Roundabout a few miles away. A dusty track takes me into Oad Street. I am tempted to drop in at the village cafe but resist and push on, passing old cherry orchards. The tree trunks are swollen after routine pruning over many years. Kent's old cherry orchards harbour the rare noble chafer beetle, a striking, metallic-green insect that relies on decaying wood in living trees. But mature orchards now have little commercial value, dwarf trees being favoured. Old orchards, like the ones I am passing, are rapidly vanishing.

The road climbs again, alongside fields of ripening wheat, before I swing onto Bicknor Lane. Blackbirds alert me to a kestrel sailing over on the hunt for voles. A chaffinch serenades me into Wormshill village with a descending trill, a greenfinch rasps and wheezes from a tree beyond and, opposite a field of buttercups, sits St Giles church, mentioned in the Domesday Book. A robin has found a home amid the ancient oak topmost rafters of the beautiful porch.

Churchyards are some of our most important meadow habitats. Many have escaped modern chemicals/over-zealous management and are

pockets of botanical beauty worthy of any nature reserve. Along with flowers like cowslips, ox-eye daisies and orchids, old churchyards support an array of insects. A small copper, one of my favourite butterflies, suns itself on an old, partly buried headstone. It's burnt orange and black spotted wings flick gently, warming up flight muscles in the sun. I wander, admiring the lichens and tufted mosses on old headstones, many dating from the 17th century. The average church-yard can support over 100 species of lichen, some of which survive nowhere else. The charity, *Caring for Gods Acre*, raises awareness of the importance of churchyards for nature, encouraging people to get involved caring for them.

My bike against an old flint wall, I settle in shade to eat my sandwiches, watching as a wood mouse scurries along the base of the wall, eyeing me nervously before disappearing. I leave it a tiny bit of cheese. I return through the Hucking Estate, an area of ancient woodlands running along the North Downs. Jackdaws chime across the valley, their calls sounding like two flints being struck together but perhaps that is due to the countless flint walled cottages passed today. Swallows are hawking for insects, skimming in my slipstream, so close I could reach and grab one. The road bowls endlessly downhill, a reward for this morning's hill climbs and the Borden valley opens up around me. It is a lovely way to end a rewarding day's cycle in the countryside.

Carol Donaldson,  
Environmental Consultant  
[caroldonaldson.co.uk](http://caroldonaldson.co.uk)

*Carol has a new book, The Volunteers, being published on 8th Aug by Summersdale.  
(Available online and from all good bookshops!)*

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## **Rainham History** (Andy James)

### **Banking in Rainham**

The last bank in Rainham, the Natwest branch is closing on 24 July 2024.

Until the last decade all the major banks were represented in town and, in the 1980s, even smaller building societies opened branches or had agencies within local estate agents.

The consolidation of banks since the 1990s and the rise of digital banking has reversed that trend and now only Nationwide Building Society remains. They've pledged to remain in all existing locations until at least 2028 but who knows what might happen then.

The cover photograph of the old 55 High Street building was taken around 1961 and Westminster Bank remained operating from there until 1973 when it relocated to 70 High Street - the branch's current premises on the corner of Orchard Street.

Westminster Bank later merged with National Provincial Bank, operating as National Westminster Bank from 1 January 1970.

There are also some photos of the 70 High Street branch over the years on the Rainham History website.

### **Help Stop 2000 Houses at Lidsing**

Bredhurst Parish Council (BPC) continues its High Court legal challenge against MBC (Maidstone Borough Council). 2000 new houses at Lidsing with virtually no infrastructure will force Medway Council to provide nearly all amenities, despite being already overstretched.

The development faces strong opposition. A Judicial Review is the only way to stop the development. Legal action began in April, papers have been lodged at the High Court and are currently being considered by a Judge. If the case goes according to plan, a full High Court hearing could take place in around four months' time.

This is a huge undertaking for tiny BPC but, with the tremendous support of residents across Medway and Maidstone, funds have been raised to allow the legal action. They are about £25,000 short so urgently need your help! All donations large or small will be much appreciated.

For more information visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lidsingplanningopposition> or [www.againstlidsing.co.uk](http://www.againstlidsing.co.uk). Phone 07813 785940 or email [clerk@bredhurstpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@bredhurstpc.org.uk)

Donate via GoFundMe

<https://gofund.me/1c0e9ac5>

or by cheque, payable to Bredhurst Parish Council and sent to the Clerk, BPC, c/o Englefield, Dunn Street, Bredhurst ME7 3LY (please enclose name, address, and email with cheques). Funds will be ringfenced and administered by BPC.

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## Climate Conversations



Monday 15th July is the closing date for two more categories at the Rainham Community Awards this year:

'Rainham Young Gardening Team' and 'Environment & Sustainability Shield'

For anyone requiring further details or support with entry forms, please do reach out - Alan Stockey on 07515 284244

### Food, glorious food... even the stuff you can't eat!

Did you know that the average bin bag in Medway is made up of 30% food waste? Why does that matter?

There are a number of reasons:

- \* Food disposed of in a black sack goes to waste, creating harmful gases including CO<sub>2</sub>, carbon monoxide and methane.
- \* Food disposed in a black sack is very attractive to rats and foxes, leaving streets regularly covered in rubbish, including dirty nappies.
- \* Council funding is then needed to clean it

up, reducing what could be spent elsewhere. Astonishingly, around a third of all food produced for human consumption is wasted per year, globally.

So what is the alternative?

- \* Less rubbish
- \* Less foxes
- \* Money earned from the compost made
- \* More council money available for alternative spending

What can you do?

- \* Collect a free 5 litre food caddy from your nearest library and start collecting food waste
- \* Put it into your brown bin for collection with the garden waste each week - instead of it being wasted we make it into compost to grow new crops - brilliant!

Your brown bin takes:

- Grass cuttings
- Prunings and weeds
- Leaves and foliage
- Small branches
- Food waste, including meat, fish, bones (no plastic bags)
- Raw & cooked food (fruit & veg peel)
- Teabags & coffee grinds
- Perished food
- Plate scrapings

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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)

**25th June** - 'The Maunsell Forts' with Frank Turner, Tuesday Social Club, 7.30pm, £4pp, Memorial Hall, Lower Halstow, contact 01795 842272

**29th June** - See a variety of local gardens with Wigmore Open Gardens, 10 - 3pm, 07486 906589, [paul@bellerby.me](mailto:paul@bellerby.me) or [facebook.com/stmattwigmore/events](https://www.facebook.com/stmattwigmore/events).

**29th June** - Guide Dogs for the Blind with Brian Killick, 2pm, St Margarets Church, Lower Halstow, free and very suitable for children

**29th June** - Wigmore Voices with 'Broadway', £10, 7.30pm St Matthews, Drewery Drive, 07990 837287

**29th June** - Old Barn Orchestra Concert, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, Karen on 07808 068881 or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/MMS](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/MMS)

**1st July** - 'Green Drinks, 7pm, Manor Farm

**5th/6th July** - 'Mayhem on Smuggler's Pier', 7.30pm, Community Hall, Third Avenue, ME7 2LU (opp Robert Napier), [ticketsource.co.uk/mayhem](http://ticketsource.co.uk/mayhem) or [www.stpaulsdramagroup.co.uk](http://www.stpaulsdramagroup.co.uk) (see p5)

**7th July** - RSPB Medway Walk, White Cliffs, Dover, CT15 5NA, what3words: unsecured.highlighted.apes, 10am, [www.group.rspb.org.uk/medway](http://www.group.rspb.org.uk/medway)

**7th July** - Afternoon Tea at St Michael & All Angels, Hartlip, 3-5pm, first Sunday of month upto Sept

**8th July** - Medway Music Club with Jon Smith, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30pm, refreshments/bar, £7, [phil.burt@ntlworld.com](mailto:phil.burt@ntlworld.com) or 07795 576294

**10th July** - 'History of Canterbury Cathedral', 2pm, Wigmore Smallholders Club, Wigmore, ME8 0JG, [sueu3acook@outlook.com](mailto:sueu3acook@outlook.com)

**13 July** - Rainham Historical Society Excursion to Sandwich and Deal, 8.40am departure from Rainham, £31, Contact: 01634 366276

**16th July** - RSPB Medway, 'Wildlife on Holiday' with Neil Phillips, Parkwood Comm Centre, ME8 9PN, 7pm, £4.50, [www.facebook.com/rspbmedway](https://www.facebook.com/rspbmedway)

**17th July** - RSPB Free Guided Walk, 10am, Hothfield Heathlands KWT, TN26 1HD, what3words: armrests.hike.stumble, Facebook or [www.group.rspb.org.uk/medway](http://www.group.rspb.org.uk/medway)

**17th July** - Wigmore Ladies, 2pm, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside, Call 01634 388912

**17th July** - BWAG Club Night, 'Orchids of Kent' Clive Nuttman, Blacksmith's Barn, Bredhurst, ME7 3JU, 7.30pm, £5, [info@bwag.org.UK/07813785940](mailto:info@bwag.org.UK/07813785940)

**21st July** - BWAG Butterfly Survey, meet at Hurstwood Rd allotments, Bredhurst, ME7 3JZ, 9.45am, refreshments and lunch included, [info@bwag.org.UK/07813785940](mailto:info@bwag.org.UK/07813785940)

**23rd July** - 'History of Kent Policing' with Pam Mills at Tuesday Social Club, 7.30pm, £4pp, Memorial Hall, Lower Halstow, contact 01795 842272

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

**24th July** - 'Space Rocks and Planetary Formation with David Bryant, 8pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, (see p5)

**31st July** - Nominations for Rainham Community Awards closes, see p2 for more

**Art Group**, Tuesdays, 10am, Twydall Comm Hub

**The Music Man Project**, accessible music education Sarah Mann, 07909515439 or [mmpkent@gmail.com](mailto:mmpkent@gmail.com)

**Wigmore Voices choir**, each Thurs, 8pm, St Matthew's Community Centre, Roger - 07774 457001 [wigmorevoices.weebly.com](http://wigmorevoices.weebly.com)

**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, [mail@medwaytownsbands.uk](mailto:mail@medwaytownsbands.uk) or 01474 745318

**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 234 712

**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 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 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

**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 and chat

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

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