

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■

APRIL 2010
NUMBER 453



The Rainham and District Co-operative Society, at the top of Station Road, Grocery Department staff in front of their Christmas window display, December 1933. (The shop is currently Lloyds Pharmacy.) From the left: Alf Champion, Ben Rodwell, Percy Major, Reg Lucas, Joe Cox, Jim Foulsher, Muggleton, Doug Evers, and Norrington. See Alan Major's letter on page 3.

Robert J. Kitney

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Editorial

At last it seems we may eventually have spring. Suddenly the days are warmer and the little bits of occasional sunshine make everything seem so much better. Actually I think we got away lightly with the exceptionally bad winter in this south-east corner. Yes it was cold but at least the snow disappeared with commendable speed just as we were all getting thoroughly fed up with it, and despite the dire forecasts did not reappear. Can we now look forward to a long hot summer? Weather forecasting has evolved and progressed dramatically over the last decade, and now we have reasonable accurate day to day predictions, but still the medium and long term suggestions are best taken with a large pinch of salt. It is probably equally as good to rely on folklore, it could hardly be worse. April is notoriously the month of sunshine and showers. Numerous rhymes warn us against early reliance on its warm weather, 'change not a clout till May be out' can be taken as either the month or the hawthorne blossom, 'who doffs his coat on a winter's day will gladly put it on in May', and 'when April blows his horn 'tis good for both hay and corn' all advise of the unpredictability of the month. So perhaps we should forgive the weather girls when they confidently tell us of a wet day ahead that turns out to be one of glorious sunshine and almost worse vice versa.

During these long winter months many organisations have been busy preparing their summer events for you to enjoy. The season begins with a burst of walks through woodland and countryside to delight in the wonderful carpets of bluebells and other flowers. Timing could be tricky this year but hopefully once flowering begins we will have our usual marvellous displays, well worth a ramble to one of the known beauty spots. Spring Fairs, sales, concerts and dramatic productions figure largely in our diary this month and you are invited to attend any of the activities that interest you. In fact the organisers are relying on your presence to help boost their funds in many instances.

In an effort to reduce our road mileage by 5 miles a week as suggested in the advertisement we try to walk to work (Meresborough to Rainham) two or three times each week. Actually this serves several purposes loosing weight and getting fit amongst them! The

walk is very pleasant across the fields and an old orchard, by walking across the children's playground in Mierscourt Road to Church Path very little of the mile and a half is actually on roads. It follows some of the route in John Linney's article last month and the only difficulty I find is as the path emerges from a field onto Mierscourt Road. The steps for as long as I can remember have sloped downwards towards the road. In the snow and ice and even when they are just wet this tends to throw you rather dangerously out into the path of the traffic. I must be getting old as I find I now approach this part of the walk with extreme caution and would appreciate a hand rail to hold onto. Have a good month enjoy the sunshine and lengthening days and we will see you again in May.

Correspondence

FRIENDS OF TWYDALL SCHOOLS

Dear Editor,

On behalf of both the Infant and Junior schools in Twydall I would like to say a big thank you to all those readers of Action Forum who responded to my request for information regarding school memories and anecdotes.

The letters I received surpassed my expectations and were absolutely fascinating to read.

We held an afternoon tea for many of those who had written and again people were fantastic - bringing along old photos and school reports. The head took them on a tour of the school and it was interesting to see just how much the building has changed over the years.

If anybody would like to still contribute then we would be very happy to receive anything else but otherwise we would be delighted to welcome and chat with you at our school fete on June 19th.

Thank you once again,
 Elizabeth Poynter

SNOWDOWN COLLIERY MALE VOICE CHOIR – 24th APRIL

Dear Editor

The Snowdown Colliery choir are popular favourites on the Kentish music scene and they will be in Wigmore on Saturday 24th April to present the 5th concert in the current St Matthew's Community Concert Programme.

The choir will perform some popular and classical songs as well as extracts from some well known shows. This is male voice singing at its very best. At their last visit to Wigmore tickets quickly sold out so do please book early and avoid disappointment. Concert tickets are £7.00 (students free) and the evening commences at 7.30pm, at St Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive ME8 0NX

Please contact me on 01634 372508 (or e-mail mattconcerts@hotmail.co.uk) for tickets.

Yours sincerely
 Paul Warren

MEMORIES OF RAINHAM

Dear Editor,

With reference to the December 2009 cover photograph, (the Co-op Butchers in Station Road). It may have been shortly after this was taken that the butchers' shop was widened and altered to 'modernise' it. Maybe the Co-op bought the house next door to do this. I suggest it was done about the same time as the old Co-op shops, on the other side of Station Road almost opposite the C of E School, were demolished and rebuilt. I am not sure when this happened but knowing the shop in the High Street was rebuilt in 1928 and the furnishing and the grocery had a similar frontage, it was probably about the same time. It is also notable that, although the Co-op was a national chain, Rainham's branch did not put out of business the large number of grocers' shops in the area at this time.

I was interested in Ray Morley's letter (also in the December copy) the ARP HQ was indeed in Marlborough House by the Church Path. It reminded me that at age 11 I had to go there, with all other Rainham residents, to be fitted with a gas mask, this was duly noted in a book. 'At the war's end we had to again visit Marlborough House to return the, fortunately unused, gas mask. I wonder what they did with all those redundant gas masks?'

Yours sincerely
 Alan Major
 41 Heaton Road
 Canterbury CT1 3PY

MEMORIES OF RAINHAM

Dear Editor,

I recently purchased the Third Picture Book of Rainham, and the photographs within brought back some lovely memories.

I was particularly pleased to see the Camp School top class photograph of 1955, because many of the children were personally known to me. I had left in 1954, but I grew up with them and they were friends of mine for a long while afterwards.

Indeed, Heather Ward, who is pictured with her twin sister Wendy, was my very first girlfriend and lived in the same road as myself. She moved away to Lee Green, and I often wonder what happened to her.

I would be very interested to learn who is the owner of this photo. Thank you for reminding me of such happy days.

Best wishes,
 Michael Croucher
 232 Fairview Avenue

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BREDHURST IN FOCUS

Dear Editor

Bredhurst Woodland Action Group are holding 'Bredhurst in Focus' a photography competition, workshop and exhibition on 11th April, at Bredhurst Village Hall, Hurstwood Road from 10.30am - 4.00pm. There will be photographs of present day Bredhurst plus many from the 1900's. Refreshments available all day. Admissions 50p (free for under 16s and competition exhibitors). All proceeds will go towards the restoration and preservation of Bredhurst Woods. For details of this event and many more throughout April please visit www.bwag.org.uk or call 07813 785940.

Yours faithfully
 Vanessa Jones

DO YOU LIKE TO SING?

Are you retired, live in Medway, have transport and like to sing? Then we should like to hear from you. We are looking for new members to join our friendly Concert Party, giving afternoon performances in the Medway and Maidstone area. For details call Brenda on 01634 409564 (evenings).

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Diary 2010

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5, Meresborough Cottages, Meresborough, Gillingham, Kent ME8

Diary Copy Date: 13th April

April 3rd - Ladies Art Group meets every Saturday morning at St. Barbara's Garrison Church Hall, Brompton, to paint in watercolour. Small friendly group with a tutor. New members of any level skill welcome. Phone Barbara 01634 235733 or e-mail barbara.trigg@sky.com for details.

April 3rd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group Walk meet Stephen Manning, 01634 375821, 10.00am at Bredhurst commuter car park for 5-6 mile walk to Queendown Warren, dogs allowed.

April 4th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Tony & Ann Faulkner 01634 406634 at Boughton Street 10.00am for a 5.5mile walk to Mount Ephraim, Staplehurst, Hernhill and Dargate, pub at the end with meals.

April 5th - Easter Bunny Hunt, Capstone Farm Country Park 11.00am - 3.00pm, last entry 2.30pm. For accompanied children aged 5 - 12 years, Book in advance 01634 338191, £1 per child.

April 6th - Medway Antique & Collector's Club, 7.30 for 8.00pm, St George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, Mr Billy Buck - Georgian and Victorian Silver Boxes, Visitors £2.50 anyone interested welcome, ring 01474 823606 for details.

April 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm Cricket Pavilion, Berengrave Lane, Spring Show - Dusty Miller, new members welcome ring 231972.
April 8th - Wigmore Thursday Club, 40s Reminiscence, Shirley Goodhew, St Matthew's Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, 2.00pm. For people over the age of 50, ring 235507

April 8th - Medway Film Makers, 7.30pm Davis Estate Community Centre, Shooters Hill Camcorder Club visit, new members welcome 01634 360401 or www.medwayfilmmakers.com

April 8th - Hempstead Leisure Club - 'A Royal Interlude' - Peter Hartley'. For over 50's every Thursday 2.00-4.00pm. Meet behind church, 169 Hempstead Road. New members welcome, 366907.

April 9th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham, every Friday 9.45am - 12noon to help people who have lost their spouse or a close relative, join us for a cuppa and chat, ring Julie on 01634 364309 for details.

April 9th - Bredhurst Woodland Action Group, Family Wildlife Walk. Meet at Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst 10.00am. For details and to reserve a place visit www.bwag.org.uk or call Vanessa Jones on 07813 785940

April 9th - MKAS meet at the Bredhurst Village Hall on the second and last Friday in the month. For Observing we meet on other Friday's at the Victoria Hotel, Canterbury. Dr Caroline Smith. More details by phoning Trev on 07717678795 any reasonable time or www.midkentakastro.org.uk/

April 10th - Friends of St. Margaret's Indoor Boot Fair, Millennium Centre, Gatekeeper Chase 9.00am until 1.00pm. Tables at £10 in advance. Admission 30p. Light refreshments available. Bookings to Lesley 379796 or Kay 230430.

April 10th - Medway Folk Dance Club, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30 - 10.00pm. New and experienced dancers welcome with or without a partner, for more information ring 366189 or 388546.

April 10th - Instep Dancing, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, Ballroom, Latin, Sequence dancing, 8.00 - 11.00pm, ring 01634 363738 or s.collins02@btinternet.com for details.

April 11th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Sally Starbuck 07860243119 at Linton 10.00am for a 5 mile walk across the Greensand Ridge with good views, pub at the end with meals.

April 11th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group Walk meet John Trebill, 01634 244045, 10.00am at Penshurst Church 6 mile walk some hills, no dogs.

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April 11th - All Saints Church, Hempstead, Spring Tea Party, 3.00 - 5.00pm Come and celebrate this beautiful season of bloom. Spring bonnet/hat competition, contact Jean Bird on 234149 for tickets Adults £3.00, children £1.50

April 11th - Photographic Competition, Workshop & Exhibition, Bredhurst Village Hall, Hurstwood Road, 10.30am - 4pm 'Sights & Scenes of Bredhurst' photo competition, workshop and exhibition of 'Bygone Bredhurst' Admission 50p (free for under 16's and 'Sights & Scenes' exhibitors). Refreshments available all day. Funds raised in aid of the Bredhurst Woodland Action Group. For information or competition details call Vanessa Jones 07813 785940 or www.bwag.org.uk
April 12th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group for those still in employment 7.15 - 9.00pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham, ring Julie 364309.

April 14th - Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, An introduction to Tai-Chi - Mrs Fran Bennett, ring 01634 232617 for more details.

April 14th - Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm Upchurch Village Hall, Workshop evening 'tantalising tulips' details 01795 425700 or see www.rainhamflowerclub.ik.com

April 14th - Rainham Poetry Group, 7.30pm, 40, Birling Avenue, all lovers of poetry welcome, ring 01634 260228 for details.

April 15th - Fishing Teaching, Capstone Farm Country Park 9.00am - 12noon. Suitable for children aged 8 - 12 years, Book in advance 01634 338191, £8 per child.

April 15th - Rainham Women Institute 1.45 - 4.00pm Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rags to Riches. Visitors welcome for small entry charge per visit. More information 01634 364639.

April 15th - Hempstead Leisure Club - Games. (see 8th April)

April 15th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Bingo, (8th Ap April 16th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society, United Reformed Church, Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.15pm, 'Sittingbourne - A Coaching Town, Mrs. Allinson.' For more information contact 01634 854982.

April 16th - Wigmore Community and Residents Association - AGM 7.30 pm at Wigmore Library. Non-members wishing entry can join on the night.

April 17th - Gillingham Methodist Church, Third Avenue, 7.30pm. Medway Big Band. Enjoy an

evening of Jazz and Swing, concert in aid of Development projects. Tickets £5 available on the door or 01634 575139

April 18th - Berengrave Walk, 10.00am - 12noon. Book in advance 01634 337432, £1 per person.

April 18th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Bob & Kath Dyson at Chequers PH Loose Hill 10.00am for 6 mile circular walk, pub at the end with meals.

April 18th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group Walk meet Joan Weekes, 01634 855522, 10.00am at Cliffe Woods shopping centre for 4.5 mile mainly flat walk, dogs allowed.

April 18th - Compact Digital photography for beginners, Capstone Farm Country Park/South Woods (part 1 of 2) 9.00 - 12noon, for adults with an interest in natural history who are thinking of buying a compact digital camera, Book in advance £1 per adult per session 01634 338191.

April 18th - Bredhurst Woodland Action Group, Volunteer Day, 10am - 2pm. Meet at Hurstwood Road, help with restoration work in Bredhurst Woods, light coppicing, fencing repairs etc. Please bring gloves and wear suitable clothing. (9th April)

April 19th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, 7.30pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham, Adventures in the Allotment - Rob Masters, competition Brass, ring 372282 for details.

April 19th - Rainham Wives meet 8.00pm Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham, 'An African Experience' talk by Marilyn Lewis. New members of all ages are very welcome. We have a variety of speakers/activities etc. Subs £1.50 per meeting, this includes coffee and biscuits, for more details contact Sue on 01634 230639.

April 19th - Wigmore WI, 7.30pm Scout Hut, Edwards Close, Wigmore. Speaker Steve Long - Climate change, global warming & energy saving ring 263405

April 19 - 25th - Mid-Kent Astronomical Society (MKAS) is organising a side walk observation week at Dockside car park Chatham (by the cinema) 8.00 until around 10.00pm. Come and see the moon, Mars and Saturn.

April 20th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, Strood Library, 7.45 - 10.00pm, £3.00, Exploring the World of Bats, Shirley Thompson

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Continued on Page 11

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SIDEWALK ASTRONOMY
 Mid-Kent Astronomical Society (MKAS) is
 organising a side walk observation week at the
 Dockside Car Park Chatham (by the cinema).
 Monday 19th until Sunday 25th April
 8.00pm until around 10.00pm.
 We would like to invite teachers and students as well
 as Members of the public along to view objects such
 as the moon, Mars and Saturn.

ST GEORGE'S DAY CELEBRATIONS
 At 2pm on Saturday 24th April the Mayor of Swale
 will open the Grand Fete at Newington CEP School,
 School Lane, where there will be many stalls and
 stands with lots of traditional activities. There will
 be demonstrations from Footsies Dance Centre, a
 marching band, Newington School Choir and the
 Junior Tygers Taekwondo group, amongst
 others. For more information please contact the
 event leader Cllr Jayne Venables on 01795 842044
 or jaynevenables@yahoo.co.uk.

INDOOR BOOT FAIR
Village Crafts/Bazaar
 April 24th – 9am to 2pm
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NEW YEAR NEW RESOLUTIONS!
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR MARCH

In March I journeyed to the Isle of Thanet. I headed, firstly, to Pegwell Bay, near Ramsgate, where I would have my last sightings of over-wintering waders about to fly to their breeding grounds in the Northern Hemisphere. I then planned to visit the village of St Nicholas at Wade where I hoped to witness two welcome signs of spring.

When the tide is out at Pegwell Bay, an extensive area of mudflats is exposed. Although apparently bleak and inhospitable, this habitat is home to many shellfish, worms and other marine animals. These attract spectacular flocks of ducks and wading birds, especially in winter. The best time to visit a place like Pegwell Bay is an hour or two before high tide when feeding birds are being forced, by the rising water, to come closer to land. There is a hide on the reserve from which to get close-up views of the birds. In winter, the flocks of small grey waders which forage over the mud are mostly dunlins. There are also sanderlings, which can be identified by the way that they run back and forth along the water's edge like clockwork toys. Grey plovers, larger and more sedate, can be seen at Pegwell Bay in their hundreds. The latter two species fly here for the winter from Siberia. I was disappointed not to have witnessed a flight of waders wheeling, in unison, in the air. I would have to wait until next winter for such a spectacle.

Having had a cup of coffee at the "Dog Walkers' Cafe", I headed back towards St Nicholas at Wade, whose church tower is a prominent landmark for those travelling along Thanet Way. From the village, ancient lanes fan out to farms on the edge of the high ground of the Isle of Thanet. These farms overlook low lying fields, which are surrounded by fresh water dykes. The fields were created in medieval times from what was once the sea bed of the Wantsum Channel. The latter divided the Isle of Thanet from mainland Kent and was once a busy shipping lane.

I walked along the ancient lane which leads to Chambers Wall Farm. I had come to revisit a number of small leafed elm trees lining the lane and whose trunks are smothered in ivy. This particular species of elm is thought to be native to East Kent. Those elms

that remain in the lane may have survived the onslaught of the "Dutch" elm disease of the 1970s, which was spread by beetles, for a combination of reasons. They are geographically isolated on the Isle of Thanet, they are not growing in a heavy concentration and the dense ivy may have had the effect of keeping any beetles at bay.

Many of the elm trees at St Nicholas at Wade did, however, have dead branches last time I saw them in leaf. There has to be continuing concern, therefore, for their future. I was, nevertheless, pleased to see that, on all of the elms in the lane, flowers were emerging. The flowers are formed in clusters, have no petals and come out before the leaves. From a distance, the flowers give a pink brown stipple to the trees. Of all our flowering trees, only the catkins of the hazel tree come out before the flowers of the elm. The latter are not only a welcome sign of spring but are also evidence of elms that are still alive.

Moving into the village, I heard my second sign of spring before I saw it. It was the cacophony of a rookery, which is matched only by the colony's atmosphere of commotion. The rooks were nest-building in some sycamore trees lying between St Nicholas Church and the C of E Primary School. During March, the old nests that have remained from the previous year are being patched up, often with sticks stolen from the unguarded nests of neighbours. Consequently, there is great excitement at a rookery in the full swing of occupation, with noisy squabbling and mock fights.

Rooks are considered to be one of the most characteristic birds of British farmland. Their diet is omnivorous but, during the breeding season, the principle diet is grassland invertebrates. Since the high ground around the village is essentially arable, the rooks doubtless collect food for their young from the surrounding lowland marshes. Rooks often perform spectacular communal movements, with towering spiral flight above the colony, which are known as "crows' weddings". I am afraid that I myself did not witness such a performance whilst in the village.

I took the opportunity of walking around St Nicholas at Wade, which contains many old houses of red brick, some of which are gabled in the Dutch style. Standing opposite each other on the main street were

the Bell Inn and the Sun Inn, a reminder that it was long past my lunch time. Which pub was it to be? The Sun Inn seemed to be the most popular. On the other hand H'm .

Joe Ennis

THE RAINHAM PAROCHIAL CHARITY

The Charity Commission formed this charity in 1980 from six separate charities from the "Ancient Parish of Rainham" for the benefit of persons resident in the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Margaret's Rainham.

The Charity is able to make small grants to those in need who live in the above parochial area. They are unable to make grants in areas which are the responsibility of statutory State Benefits but may be able to assist those who have perhaps incurred unforeseen expenses which are not covered by the benefit system.

In 2001 the Charity Commission gave approval for any surplus income to be given as grants to other organisations and for projects which are for the general benefit of the persons in the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Margaret, Rainham.

The surplus funds for 2010 stand at £800. The Trustees of the Charity invite applications from those eligible.

Further information and a grant application form may be obtained from the Hon Secretary, Mr K.G.Stevens, 10 School Lane, Lower Halstow, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 7ET. Tel 01795 844304

NINETEENTH CENTURY RAINHAM: titbits from Milton Union records by Audrey Perkyns.

In the 1860s and 1870s the public health movement developed, partly as a result of the scientific discovery of the causes of disease. Smallpox vaccination was the first sign of this. Fresh water and sewerage systems came to urban areas first. The isolation of those with infectious or contagious diseases became important, and from the 1870s the Milton Union had adapted a part of the workhouse premises as an isolation hospital.

Inspectors of Nuisances (later Sanitary Inspectors) were the first public health officers to be appointed, followed by Medical Officers of Health (MOHs). In the Milton Rural Sanitary Authority (unfortunately this gives the acronym MRSA!) the MOH and the Guardians were keen to persuade the government to make notification of infectious diseases compulsory, as one episode illustrates.

In early 1876 there was a serious epidemic of scarlet fever in Rainham and Upchurch. The MOH was angry because Dr Penfold was not willing to notify cases occurring among patients who were not paupers, nor even to forbid their attendance at school. The problem was the association of the new Sanitary Authorities with pauperism because as new government responsibilities developed (registration, then vaccination, then public health), the obvious authorities to administer them were the ones already there - the Poor Law guardians.

The stigma of pauperism was felt keenly. Anyone needing attention from the Poor Law MO was automatically pauperised, and lists of people receiving Poor Law benefits were published on the church doors. The government had to insist that this should not apply to vaccination, because it wanted to encourage it. Many doctors were not prepared to let their private patients be tainted by association with pauperism, and Dr Penfold was one among many who refused to cooperate to notify infectious cases to the MOH.

In support of his appeal for compulsory notification, the MOH, Dr Ray, wrote to the Local Government Board in 1876 that the infection had been controlled in parts of the Union where notification and isolation had occurred, but not in Dr Penfold's area. 'I have just returned from a spectacle, which ought to be impossible in any civilized country, and more especially one in which legislation has recently turned to sanitary improvements. In the house of one Edward Hart, a laborer residing in Station Road Rainham, a death has recently occurred from scarlet fever; the body, four days a corpse, and still unburied, was, as expressed by a neighbour, already turning black from the Virulence of the disease; a child running about the house and absolutely appearing at the front door was full out with the rash, which symptomises the malady. Other children who had not had the disorder, were freely mixing with the infected child. The mother and father of the youngster, full as they must be of the morbid poison, were going about their respective avocations, and were not to be seen. A neighbour, who showed us over this fever poisoned den, was going in and out of her neighbour's house. The neighbours themselves, seeing no fear, were mixing freely with the infected children. This in simply monstrous'

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Diary 2010

- April 21st – Bredhurst Garden Club, Mr Les Morgan talk, 'Fuchsias and Pelargoniums', 8.00pm Bredhurst Village Hall, ring 01634 233554 for details, new members welcome.
- April 22nd – Wigmore Thursday Club, My Year in Journalism, Part 2 – Barbara Stevens, (see 8th April)
- April 22nd – Hempstead Leisure Club – 'Wills, POA etc' – Carolyn Brooks-Johnson.. (see 8th April)
- April 22nd – Medway Film Makers, DVD Authorian Review, (see 8th April)
- April 22nd & 23rd – Wigmore MADS present 'The Power of Song', 8pm in St Matthews Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. Tickets £6 & £5 concessions, Box office: Sue on 01634 370639
- April 23rd – SDBTT St George's Day, Beetle Drive, 7.30 – 10.30pm, Millennium Hall, Rainham. Tickets £7.50 each (Family 2 adults, 2 children over 10, £22.00) includes refreshments. Ring Olwen 01634 263622 for details
- April 23rd – Medway Geographical Society, Adult Education Centre, Green Street, Gillingham 7.30 – 9.00pm. Costa Rica and the Panama Canal – Dave Meredith. Ring 01634 362683 for details.
- April 23rd – Lower Halstow Memorial Hall, 50th Anniversary Celebrations 8.00 – 11.00pm Bert Butler and his Jazz Men, Tickets £6 from John Mustoo 01795 843681 Bring your own drink.
- April 24th – The Snowdown Colliery Male Voice Choir – One of Kent's leading male voice ensembles perform a variety of popular works. 7.30pm, tickets (£7.00 each) from 01634 372508, e-mail mattconcerts@hotmail.co.uk or sae to 42 The Goldings, ME8 0AX.
- April 24th – St Georges Day, Grand Fete, Newington CEP School 2.00pm. Many stalls and demonstrations. Two hour ramble from the school from 10.00am. For more details or to book a stall ring 01795 842044 or jaynevenables@yahoo.co.uk.

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- April 24th – Indoor Boot Fair, Village Crafts/Bazaar Lower Halstow Memorial Hall, 9am to 2pm call Kay 01795 844408 or Lynne 01795 843679 – Food, Drinks, Breakfast & lunch available.
- April 24th – Instep Dancing, (see 10th April)
- April 24th – Fort Amherst, Dock Rd, Chatham. Over Night Paranormal Investigations "Are You Brave Enough?" Gates Open 7:45pm, 8pm-3am. £35 per person, pre-booked only, for more information and booking 01634 847747 or fortamherst.com
- April 24th – Medway Folk Dance Club, (10th April)
- April 25th – Kite Making Workshop, Riverside Country Park 10.00am – 2.00pm. For accompanied children aged 5 – 12 years, Book in advance 01634 337432, £2.50 per child.
- April 25th – Bredhurst Woodland Action Group, Bluebell Walk followed by a cream tea at Arran Bank Farm., Meet at Hurstwood Road 2.00pm. Tickets £5 in advance or £6 on the day (children under 16 free) from Vanessa Jones on 07813 785940 or bwag@vanessajones.plus.com
- April 25th – Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Mike & Coral Partick at commuter car park just north of Bredhurst 10.00am for a 6.5mile walk via Darland Banks, Capstone Country park and Hempstead, bring snack, pub at the end.
- April 25th – Medway Towns Footpaths Group Walk meet Alma Miles, 01634 865583, 10.00am at Mote Park car park for 6 mile walk via River Len and Otham, dogs allowed.
- April 25th – Compact Digital photography for beginners, (part 2 of 2) (see 18th April)
- April 26th – Rainham Wives 'B.O.G.O.F.' fund raising for our charity Blythswood. (see 19th April)
- April 28th – Bredhurst Woodland Action Group, AGM, 7.00pm Bredhurst Village Hall, presentation by Sally Evans and Mike Phillips, Mid Kent Downs Partnership, on their involvement with the restoration of Bredhurst Woods. (see 9th April)

Continued on Page 13

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April 28th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Peter and Ann Green 01634 718895 at Hodsell Street 6.30pm for a 4 mile evening bluebell walk through woods and fields to Ridley, pub at the end.

April 28th - Rainham Poetry Group, 5.45 - 8.15pm, Sunlight Centre, Richmond Road, Gillingham, all lovers of poetry welcome, ring 01634 260228.

April 29th - Hempstead Leisure Club Games. (8th April) April 29th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Service and Table Games, (see 8th April)

April 29th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and Miniaturist Group, Howard Memorial Hall, Woodside, 7.30pm, 01634 312038.

April 30th - MKAS Peter Parish - Constellation of the month & Telescope Workshop. (see 9th April)

May 1st - Bug Life, The Vines, Rochester 11.00am - 1.00pm. For accompanied children, free.

May 1st - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Geoff Ettridge 07525161766 at Mickey's Restaurant on A229 Medway bound, bottom of Bluebell Hill for a 4.5mile May Day Walk, 5.00am, , back at Mickey's 7.45am for breakfast (pay for your own) Bring a torch for beginning of walk. Non walkers welcome to breakfast.

May 2nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Pat Coveney 07846948987 at Blue Bell Hill, Common Road car park 10.30am 4 miles, visiting Kits Coty House with woodland and Downs scenery. Pub at end lunches available (01634 861500 to book).

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May 2nd - Bluebell Walk, Capstone Farm Country Park 10.00am - 12noon. Book in advance 01634 338191, £1 per person.

May 3rd - Kite Making Workshop, Capstone Farm Country Park 10.00am - 2.00pm. For accompanied children aged 5 - 12 years, Book in advance 01634 338191, £2.50 per child.

May 5th - Crossroads Care Medway, coffee morning at Twydall Church Hall Twydall Lane, 10.00am-1.00pm, ring 01634 362433 for details.

May 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Peter and Ann Green 01634 718895 Cobham Village Hall car park 7.00pm , 4 mile walk. Pub at end.

May 7th - Fort Amherst, Dock Rd, Chatham. Ghost Tours 8pm, 8:30pm & 9pm, £10 per person, on the door, 01634 847747 or fortamherst.com

May 9th - Bredhurst Woodland Action Group, Spring Bird Walk, Hurstwood Road, 9.00am. Walk led by Owen Sweeney of the Kent Ornithological Society. All welcome. No charge, (see 9th April)

May 9th - Cats Protection Bredhurst Adoption Centre, Matts Hill Road, Annual Spring Craft Fair, 01634 377267 for details.

May 11th - Barnardo's Coffee Morning, 10.00am, Macklands House, Station Road Coffee/Tea and choice of delicious cake - £1. Cake Stall, Tombola & Raffle, all welcome.

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