

ACTION FORUM

April 2015
NUMBER 508

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■



St Margaret's Church of England School Sports Day in 1949. From left to right standing at the back the teachers are: Mr Turner, Mrs King, Miss Evans, Miss List and Mr David. The girls who have been named are: Margaret Thorn (extreme left), Betty Fagg (holding the shield) next to Sandra Stevens, Linda Ashdown and Helen Roberts. We would love to learn the identities of the three girls between Margaret and Betty and the one unnamed child at the extreme right of the picture. Please email af@thenet.uk.net if you can help.

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AF

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Editorial

In January we reported on our annual donation from excess funds to charity. For the first time this year we sent £2000 to 'Tools with a Mission', an organisation dedicated to refurbishing tools, including sewing and knitting machines, which are then distributed in Africa to help individuals set up a business and so support their families. The letter of acknowledgement the charity has sent to us reports that in 2014 they shipped 21 containers serving over 400 different vocational training projects in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. Smaller consignments went to Malawi, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar and Bangladesh. Our donation helped at a time when funds were more than usually stretched as it had been necessary to replace one of the collection vans. Water and Sanitation are also an important part of the work in Africa and the charity is now trying to make an even bigger impact by teaching villagers the skills necessary to make their own storage tanks. For children 'Scholar Packs' are popular and highly valued in schools which barely have the basics for teaching purposes. If whilst spring cleaning you come across tools which are no longer of use to you please do remember the charity and give them a call. Our local collector is Mr Rod Butcher 01634 571647. Inevitably several Easter themed events appear in our pages this month. The usual 'Egg Hunts', Bunny related crafts and springtime walks are joined this year by a new venture by the parish of South Gillingham who are staging a Passion Play on Good Friday at Parkwood Green. The famous event in Germany at Oberammergau immediately comes to mind. In 1633, the residents vowed that if God spared them from the effects of the bubonic plague ravaging the region, they would produce a play thereafter for all time depicting the life and death of Jesus. Word spread throughout the region about the play, and it became too expensive to perform every year, so the town decided that every 10 years would be sufficient. This is now each year ending with a zero. I have not heard of any such motive for the play at Parkwood but nevertheless it is a massive undertaking and I am sure will be appreciated by a large crowd and help to explain the real reason behind the Easter celebrations to the younger generation.

We have a lot to look forward to this month. Outdoor

events are again possible as the days become warmer and we all anticipate a long, hot, dry summer. Well we can hope! Have a very good month, we will be with you again in May.

Correspondence

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
JUNIOR SCHOOL

Dear Editor

The Governing Body of St Margaret's Junior School is seeking to appoint another Community Governor. Governors maintain a strategic overview of the school, its day-to-day running being left to the Headteacher. In 2013 the school was judged a good school by Ofsted who also noted that there was good capacity, within senior management, to realise its vision of providing an outstanding education to the pupils. St Margaret's Juniors was, in fact, graded an outstanding Church School at its National Society Statutory Inspection in 2014.

Any candidate for the appointment as a Community Governor will be required to have the necessary commitment and also have a willingness to undertake training, both at Medway Council in Chatham and on line. Further information can be obtained from me on (01634) 235182.

Joe Ennis

A Governor of St Margaret's C of E Junior School

HOSPITAL RADIO MEDWAY

Dear Editor,

Based in Medway Maritime Hospital we are looking to recruit more volunteers. If you have some time to spare and are aged 18 + please get in touch. Whatever your talents Hospital Radio Medway needs you - maybe you would like to collect requests from the Patients, act as a Librarian, be a Presenter or help in the Studio as a Programme Assistant - we will give you all the training that you need. A specialised job is that of Engineer. We urgently need someone to help 'fix' things in order to keep our Station in the best condition possible. If you are interested please leave a message on our phone 01634 406865, or email studio@hospitalradiomedway.co.uk More details on our web page www.hospitalradiomedway.co.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

CONCERT IN BREDHURST

Dear Editor,

Under the Applause Rural Touring Scheme, Rob Heron & The Tea Pad Orchestra will be in Bredhurst Village Hall on Saturday, May 9th at 7.30pm. The orchestra are a hot six-piece band who play an eclectic mix of North Western Swing, Gypsy Jazz, Hokum Blues, Ragtime, Cajun, Country Roots and folk, all mixed together with a 21st century twist and a belly of laughter. Tickets at £9 are available from Ann Keeble on 01634 361263, proceeds to Village Hall funds.

Yours sincerely,
Pam Merryweather

THE BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY

www.thebraintumourcharity.com

Olwen O'Dowd who is a fundraiser in Gillingham and Rainham is available to give a short talk about the charities work to any small local group looking for a speaker for a donation to the charity.

Please contact Olwen on 01634 263622 or leave a message.

GAMES AFTERNOON

Lower Halstow Memorial Hall every first Friday each Month from 2.00 - 4.00pm. The Games include Whist, Rummicub, Scrabble, Dominoes, Euchre and many other board or card games.

There is no joining fee, just £1.50 which includes a cup of tea/coffee biscuits and a very warm welcome

A PASSION PLAY

The True Story of Easter

To be performed at Parkwood Green,
Deanwood Drive, Rainham ME8 9PN

on Good Friday, 3rd April commencing at 2.00pm.

The Play recalls the last hours of the life of Jesus culminating in the Crucifixion.

The site opens from 1.30pm when you can mingle with the actors. The Play is about 75 minutes.

Plenty of information will be available on the day about the staging of the Play, (which is "in the round"), together with details of South Gillingham Churches' services where the story will continue to be told on Easter morning.

You are invited to be part of this unique

Easter experience. There is no entry charge and children will be particularly welcome.

We look forward to welcoming you.

An Event sponsored by
the Parish of South Gillingham

ART EXHIBITION

Paintings by Local Artists, Clive Bass, John Gilson & Ron Wiseman will be on show and For Sale in Wigmore Library, 208 Fairview Avenue between 1st April & 30th April

REFLECTIONS

St. Mary's Church Choir & Upchurch Choral Society Music and Readings for Eastertide
Good Friday 3rd April, 7.00pm
St. Mary's Church, Upchurch
Admission free.

Donations to the Wisdom Hospice.

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EGG ART

Capstone Farm Country Park
Tuesday 7th April, 9.30 - 11.30am
Discover the large number of different eggs created by Capstones birds to inspire your own egg design this Easter. Suitable for accompanied children aged 3 - 12 years. £3 per child
Ring 01634 338191 for details.

AFTERNOON DANCE

Tuesday 7th April, 2.00 - 4.00pm
44two Club, Featherby Road, Gillingham
All proceeds go to the Alzheimers Society
£3.50 pay at the door, Drinks available from the bar.
Contact Mr E W Grundy 01634 388053 for details

BUNNYTASTIC

Riverside Country Park
Thursday 9th April, 9.30 - 11.30am
Explore the world of being a rabbit from where they live to what they eat before using your own bunnytastic ideas to create your own rabbit. Suitable for accompanied children 3 - 12 years old, £3 per child, Ring 01634 337432 for details

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Gillingham & Rainham www.grlhs.weebly.com
Byron Road Primary School, Gillingham

Friday 10th April, 7.15pm.

'Farewell to Kent' - Helen Allinson

Visitors welcome for a small charge.

For further information contact Ron Baker
01634 854982 or email r.baker1234@btinternet.com

MERISI BROTHERS

Performing for

Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research

Parkwood Community Centre

Sat 11th April, 7.30pm (Doors Open 7pm)

Tickets £5, Licensed Bar

Call Dot 01634 864642

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Diary 2015

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Copy should be in writing either by email to
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Diary Copy Date: April 21st

April 1st – 30th – Art Exhibition, Paintings by Local Artists, Clive Bass, John Gilson & Ron Wiseman on show and for sale at Wigmore Library
April 1st – Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Mike, 10.00am, Commuter car park just north of Bredhurst TQ799629 ME8 0LU for a 7 mile leisurely walk to Queensdown Warren via Yelsted. Bring picnic lunch, Pub at end.
April 2nd – Tai Chi Class, Lower Halstow Memorial Hall every Thursday 1.30 – 2.30pm, each class £5.
April 2nd – Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board games tea and chat, Hempstead Village Hall (behind Church) 2.00 – 4.00pm. New members welcome, 01634 366907
April 2nd – Wigmore Thursday Club, What's Happening at Hempstead Valley, Mark Ruffitt, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, for over 50s, ring 01634 234712 or 01634 372508 for details.
April 3rd – Passion Play, 2.00 – 3.15pm, Parkwood Green, Deanwood Drive, Free entry, details 01634 230423 or e-mail passionplay15@outlook.com
April 3rd – Games Afternoon, Lower Halstow Memorial Hall, 2.00 – 4.00pm, £1.50 includes a cup of tea/coffee biscuits and a very warm welcome
April 3rd – St. Mary's Church Choir & Upchurch Choral Society, Reflections, Music and Readings for Eastertide, 7.00pm, St. Mary's Church, Upchurch, Admission free. Donations to the Wisdom Hospice.
April 4th – 25th – Art Exhibition, Rainham Library by members of Rainham Art Club
April 4th – Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am Meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 Whistable Station, Railway Ave car park (£2.50) GR114664 CT5 1LH 5.5 mile linear coastal walk to Herne Bay, return by bus or walk! Contact Stephen for details. Dogs OK
April 5th – 50th Anniversary St. Matthew's Church, Service of Holy Communion, 10.00am, Celebrant The Bishop of Rochester, Details Ninon and John Tice 01634 360633 email ninandjon@btinternet.com
April 5th – Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Tony/Ann 01634 406634, 10.00am, Sutton Valence outside the Swan Pub TQ813491 ME17 3BQ 5.2 mile leisurely

walk along the Greensand Way, moderate slopes, 7 Stiles, Good views. Snack stop Pub at end with lunches
April 7th – Egg Art, Capstone Farm Country Park, 9.30 – 11.30am, Suitable for accompanied children aged 3 – 12 years, £3 per child, ring 01634 338191 for details.
April 7th – Afternoon Dance, 2.00 – 4.00pm, 44two Club, Featherby Road, Gillingham, All proceeds Alzheimers Society, £3.50 at the door, Drinks available from the bar, contact Mr E W Grundy 01634 388053 for details.
April 7th – Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, Spring Show, New members welcome, ring 01634 366276 for details.
April 7th – GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm, Imposed Night, New members welcome, first visit free, no experience needed For details contact Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com
April 7th – Rainbow Whist Drive, Bredhurst Village Hall Hurstwood Road, 7.30pm A partner is not needed and all whist players are welcome, Details 01634 610364
April 8th – Springtime at Cobtree Park, 10.00am – 12noon, A free ramble with the Ranger for all the family. No booking needed. Cobtree Manor Park, Forstal Road, Aylesford ME20 7AE (by rangers cabin)
April 8th – Family Bushcraft, Capstone Farm Country Park, 9.30 – 12noon and 1.30 – 4.00pm, Suitable for adults and accompanied children over 5 years old, £10 per person, Ring 01634 338191 for details
April 8th – Family Birdwatching, Riverside Country Park, 1.00 – 2.30pm, Suitable adults and accompanied children over 5, £3 pp Ring 01634 337432 for details
April 8th – Bredhurst WI, 7.30pm Village Hall, Jacqueline Aviolet – I'm a Tulip, visitors welcome, For details ring 01634 389966
April 8th – Rainham Flower Club, Upchurch Village Hall, 7.30pm, Workshop 'Simple Pleasures' tutored by Pat Williams, for details ring 01634 864572 or see www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk

WATERCOLOUR and CALLIGRAPHY Beginners and Improvers One Day Courses

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www.suninthewoodcraftdays.co.uk

April 9th – Bunytastic, Riverside Country Park, 9.30 – 11.30am, Explore the world of being a rabbit. Suitable for accompanied children 3 – 12 years old, £3 per child Ring 01634 337432 for details
April 9th – Hempstead Leisure Club, "Evacuees" Talk by June Faulkner (See 2nd April)
April 9th – Wigmore Thursday Club, Running Round the World, Jack Denness, (see 2nd April).
April 9th – Donn Barcott's 'Five 5 Live', 44Two Sports and Social Club, 8.30pm, Featuring Elaine Dyan and Andrew Hawkes Magician, Admission £6 all welcome, Details 01634 405037
April 10th – Gillingham & Rainham Local History Society www.grlhs.weebly.com Byron Road Primary School, Byron Road, Gillingham, 7.15pm. 'Farewell to Kent' – Helen Allinson, Visitors welcome for a small charge, details Ron Baker 01634 854982 or email r.baker1234@btinternet.com
April 10th – Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham, meets every Friday 9.45am – 12noon to help people who have lost a loved one, join us for a cuppa and chat ring Julie 01634 364309 for details.
April 11th – Medway Towns Footpaths Group Meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 Leeds Church car park ME17 1RL for a 6 mile easy walk finishing at Lenham Village Centre ME17 2QH Contact Stephen for details.
April 11th – Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, 9.00am – 12.30pm Free entry, Stalls £5 from carole@cdadswell.freemove.co.uk or 07779 366054
April 11th – Merisi Brothers performing for Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30pm (Doors Open 7pm), Tickets £5, Licensed Bar, Call Dot 01634 864642
April 11th – Instep Dancing, social dances, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, ME8 0BX, Ballroom, Latin, Sequence, 8.00 – 11.00pm enquiries 01634 363738 or email s.collins02@btinternet.com
April 11th – Medway Folk Dance Club, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham 7.30 – 10pm New and Experienced dancers welcome with or without a partner. For more information ring 366189 or 388546
April 12th – Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am Meet John Williams 01622 764821 07977 614033 Harrietsham Station (fee payable) GR866529 ME17 1JA. For a 6 mile moderate walk via Ringlestone and Pilgrims Way with 21 stiles. No dogs

April 12th – Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Arthur/Jan 01634 711734 arthur.waters@sky.com, 10.00am, Meopham Green TQ641652 DA13 0PZ for 6 mile leisurely walk See Windmill. Pub at end with lunches
April 13th – Monday Hub, St Paul's Church, Parkwood, ME8 9PN, 10.00am – 12.30pm all welcome.
April 13th – Medway Scrabble Club, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, alternate Mondays 2.00 – 4.30pm, new members welcome, 01634 230500
April 13th – Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham, meets 2nd Monday evening each month to help people still in employment who have lost a loved one, join us for a cuppa and chat ring Julie 01634 364309 for details
April 13th – Reiki Kyokai Led by Robert Jefford, 8.00 – 10.00pm, Ramada Encore Chatham Historic Dockyard, £12 pp, open to All, Booking Essential. For details and book email kentreikishares@gmail.com
April 13th – Medway Organ & Keyboard Club Concert, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, 7.30 – 10.00pm, Organist – Claudia Hirschfield [Ticket Only], details and tickets ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694
April 14th – Gillingham and District Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, 'Growing Pelargoniums' – Steve Pollard, for details ring 01634 852519
April 14th – Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, St George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, 8.00 pm, Surviving the Titanic – Ian Porter, All visitors most welcome. medwayantiquespublicity1@virginmedia.com
April 15th – Dawn Chorus, 5.15 – 7.00am, well worth the early start! join a local expert to identify bird song, for all ages and abilities, £3 pp. Booking required on 03000 414 793. Cobtree Manor Park, Aylesford ME20 7AE
April 16th – Cobtree Easter Trail, 10.00am – 12 noon, follow the clues to help the Easter Bunny! For all the family, £3 pp Booking required on 03000 414 793.
April 16th – Rainham Women's Institute 1.45 – 4.00pm, Speaker on "Brought up in care", Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham. Visitors welcome for small entry charge per visit, ring 01634 366276
April 16th – Wigmore Thursday Club, All the Year Round – Seasonal Customs of Kent and Sussex, Mick Lynn, (see 2nd April).
April 16th – Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board games tea and chat (see 2nd April)

Continued on Page 11

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 such as Dancin' Fool, This Can't Be Real, and of
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 Tickets £13, concessions £11
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 Box Office - 01634 338338

TAI CHI CLASS
 Lower Halstow Memorial Hall every Thursday at a
 new time of 1.30pm to 2.30pm, each class £5.

5TH ANNUAL BARN DANCE
 In aid of The Kent Air Ambulance
 Saturday 18th April, 7.00 – 10.30pm
 Millennium Centre, Rainham
 Buffet Supper, Raffle
 Bring your own drinks
 Tickets £10.50 from Mary 01634 362415

THE KINGFISHER SINGERS
 An Evening of Light Musical Entertainment
 St Margaret's Church, Rainham
 Saturday 18th April, 7.30pm
 In aid of Pancreatic Cancer
 Tickets £7.50 from the Church office,
 Mrs G Tomlin 01634 232665 or for £8 on the door
 Refreshments included, there will be a Raffle.

TABLE-TOP SALE
 Hempstead Village Hall Committee
 Hempstead Village Hall, Hempstead Road
 (behind All Saints' Church),
 Saturday 18th April, 10.00am - 2.00pm.
 Tables are £10. If you are interested in having a
 table, please contact David, by phone 01634 377177
 or email davidwilliamfuller@gmail.com

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ART EXHIBITION
 at Rainham Library by members of Rainham Art
 Club between 4th April & 25th April 2015

SPRING CRAFT FAIR
 St. Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow
 Saturday 25th April, 2.00 – 4.00pm
 Our first sale of the year!
 Do join us for a wide selection of local crafts,
 including jewellery, home baked and
 home made produce, woodwork, pens, pottery and
 cards at possibly the prettiest location around
 Refreshments available

BLUEBELLS & CREAM TEA WEEKEND
 Sat 25th & Sunday 26th April, 2.00pm each day
 Join BWAG for its popular Bluebell & Cream Tea
 Weekend. Guided walks through Bredhurst Woods
 including a treasure hunt and talk on the history of
 the woods followed by cream teas at a local farm -
 shorter and longer walks available.
 Tickets £7 per person must be purchased in advance
 - tickets will not be available on the day (children
 under 16 free).
 For more details and tickets please call Vanessa
 Jones 07813 785940
 email bwag@vanessajones.plus.com

RAMASES
 (Rainham and Medway and Swale Egypt Society)
 Saturday May 9th, 2.30pm
 Lecture given by Lucia Gahlin
 'The iconography and ideology of Nefertiti and the
 Amarna Royal Women'
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 Members £7, Guests £9
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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR MARCH

The gardens of Rudyard Kipling's former home, Bateman's, at Burwash in Sussex, are open all year round. Snowdrops are the first of the spring flowers to bloom, in February. My wife and I went there in late March of last year. The house and gardens are owned by the National Trust and lie in the Sussex High Weald, which consists of rolling hills, ancient woods, small fields and scattered farms and hamlets. There are three formal gardens at Bateman's, two of which are walled and the largest of which is surrounded by neatly trimmed yew hedges. Visitors first enter the walled Orchard Garden. Here grow old almond, plum, quince, medlar, mulberry, apple and pear trees, all festooned in lichens, which are more noticeable when the trees are bare of leaves. Two lines of pear trees form what is called "Pear Alley". It consists of a tunnel of iron arches which support the trees and which form a covered walkway. In the quietness of the Orchard Garden, we could hear the songs of a chaffinch and song thrush and, coming from the cover of a nearby oak tree, the call of an unseen nuthatch. We then passed into the walled Mulberry Garden. This once contained a mulberry tree planted by Rudyard Kipling in 1905, which had to be replaced in 2004. The Mulberry Tea Rooms and Restaurant, converted from former cows sheds, line one side of the garden. The borders of the garden contain apple and pear trees, herbaceous plants and vegetables for the restaurant. A robin, attracted by digging in the garden, flew continually between its perch on the top of the garden wall and any newly unearthed worms. The largest of the gardens, the Rose Garden, contains a rectangular pond which was brightened by a display of yellow marsh marigolds. The garden is bordered by squarely cut yew hedges and contains two rows of pleached limes and a massive ash tree. Two blue tits kept calling to each other as they searched the twigs of a tree for caterpillars and other invertebrates. We could also hear the repetitive "Teacher Teacher" call of a great tit. Bumble bees, newly emerged from hibernation, were attracted to the red flowers of a quince growing up one of the walls of the house.

Domestic flowers of early spring were growing throughout the three formal gardens. They were hellebores (some white and some tinged with pink), daffodils, snow flakes and pale blue scillas. We then headed for the Wild Garden, through which flows the River Dudwell, a tributary of the River Rother. The very earliest of the wild flowers, the snowdrops, had bloomed and faded. Snowdrops were probably brought into Britain in mediaeval times and planted in the grounds of churches and monasteries for religious reasons. There is always a good display of snowdrops in the churchyard of St Peter's, Bredhurst. It is possible that some of the colonies of snowdrops in this country are of native origin, particularly those in south west England and along the Welsh border. The Atlas of Kent Flora claims that some snowdrops in the county are perhaps native although, in most sites, the plant gives the appearance of having been deliberately or accidentally introduced.

We came across many clumps of primroses and violets in the Wild Garden, as well as extensive areas of wood anemones and lesser celandines. In April, the month after our visit, cowslips, snake's head fritillaries, milk maids, blue bells and ramsons would have been putting on a good show at Bateman's. Ramsons grow prolifically in the damp valley of the River Dudwell. They smell of garlic and have white flowers of six petals in a star shape. The most conspicuous of the flowers in bloom in March in the gardens as a whole were daffodils, including thousands in the Wild Garden. Today, the wild daffodil, once widespread and common, occurs only in certain widely separated parts of the country, such as Devon, the Black Mountains of Wales, the Lake District and the Sussex Weald. It is possible that some of the daffodils in the Wild Garden are of native origin but the vast majority of those at Bateman's appear to be domestic ones planted by Rudyard Kipling and other owners of the house. Here in Kent, there is a colony of wild daffodils at Lesnes Abbey Wood near Erith. Having enjoyed a display of some of the wild flowers that are the traditional harbingers of spring, it was time to seek out those other signs of the new season. The National Trust had not disappointed us. On show in the Mulberry Tea Rooms and Restaurant was a mouth-watering display

of cakes, including "Moist Banana", "Lemon Drizzle" and "Coffee and Walnut". It was confirmation that the long winter was over.

Joe Ennis

LETTER FROM A RAINHAM SOLDIER AT GALLIPOLI IN 1915

Seymour Wickens from Station Road, son of tobacconist Reuban Wickens and one of three brothers, joined the East Kent Mounted Rifles with his brother Reg in 1915 and they both went to Gallipoli. Towards the end of 1915 he wrote home to his parents describing his situation there and this appeared in the East Kent Gazette dated February 26th 1916. 'After starting from Liverpool we were not supposed to stop until we reached Lemnos but while in mid ocean we sighted two small rowing boats which afterwards we found out were lifeboats with French sailors in them, who had been torpedoed. We stopped to pick them up and about an hour afterwards we were chased by a submarine and were supposed to have been fired at. Of course everybody was on deck with lifebelts after hearing the alarm which was enough to frighten anybody, and it was only the skilful way in which the captain of the ship turned round and headed in the opposite direction to which we were going that saved us. At night we turned back, and I think we must have gone about 25 or 26 knots an hour. The next day we reached Lemnos and stayed on the boat for seven days. Then we got off on to smaller boats and went to Cape Helles at night where we landed. We had to march the matter of a mile or two when we found ourselves in the third line of trenches with bullets whistling over our heads. That was our first experience of active service. About a week afterwards we went into the firing line for three days and I think we had about five killed and wounded. But I must say this, the Turks are very fair fighters. It is not owing to the Turks unfairness that we had such a rough time; it was owing to the rough ground and the hard work to get water and food. You could hear nothing else but the cry for water all day long. If we got a bottle full, we had to hide it up and say nothing about it, otherwise we would get a crowd round us asking for a drink and get none ourselves. We used to have spells in and out of the trenches in the firing line for fourteen days, and out for what was supposed to be a rest for fourteen days; but the rest was jolly hard work, either digging new trenches or

making roads during the day and unloading provisions during the night.

Wherever we went we had to make our own dug outs with the sky as a roof. I remember one night it rained and everybody was washed out with everything floating down the gully. The next day one chap I know, he comes from Gillingham, was walking about with a towel round him while his clothes dried. As for shells, we could not walk about anywhere without having a shell drop somewhere near us, and, of course, we had to bob down anywhere to get out of the way. Once Johnny Turk gave us forty two hours to shift one of our hospitals, because he thought we were landing troops and food under cover of it, so, of course, that was another job for us because he was dropping shells a bit too close to be healthy. On another occasion he gave us seventy two hours to get away from Cape Helles; if not he was going to blow us off, but instead the British destroyers from the sea and the heavy guns on hand gave Johnny a warm time. When the seventy two hours were up we thought Johnny Turk was short of rations so we sent him across some "iron rations" if you know what I mean - a few bullets and one or two big shells to go on with. I think I must now finish up as you will get sick of reading, but one thing I want to say is that nobody except those who have been there to see will ever know what the men have been through in the Dardanelles.'

Shortly after this letter was written trooper Seymour Wickens got shot in the wrist and was evacuated to hospital in Malta but he did rejoin his regiment after his recovery and later saw action in Palestine and France. Both brothers survived a short period on the Western Front then returned to Rainham where they lived out the remainder of their lives.

David Wood

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Diary 2015

- April 16th - 18th - Copacabana, Three Towns Theatre Company, Brook Theatre, Chatham, 7.30pm, Sat Matinee 2.30pm, Tickets £13, concessions £11, Family of 4 (max. 2adults) £44, Box Office - 01634 338338
- April 18th - Rainham South Councillors Surgery, Parkwood Community Centre 10.00 am - 12 noon. No appointment necessary.
- April 18th - Table-Top Sale, Hempstead Village Hall, Hempstead Road (behind All Saints' Church), 10.00am - 2.00pm, Tables are £10 contact 01634 377177, or email davidwilliamfuller@gmail.com
- April 18th - The Kingfisher Singers, An Evening of Light Musical Entertainment, St Margaret's Church, Rainham, 7.30pm, In aid of Pancreatic Cancer, Tickets £7.50 from Church office, Mrs G Tomlin 01634 232665 or for £8 on the door, Refreshments included, Raffle.
- April 18th - 5th Annual Barn Dance for The Kent Air Ambulance, 7.00 - 10.30pm, Millennium Centre, Rainham, Buffet Supper, Raffle, Bring your own drinks, Tickets £10.50 from Mary 01634 362415
- April 18th - Quiz Evening, 7.30pm, Rainham Oasthouse, admission £2.50, (£2 members) rolls available 60p each, for details ring Maggi 01634 610391.
- April 19th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Chris 01634 360270 chris.strachan@live.com 10.00am, Rochester Railway Station (outside main entrance) TQ747681 ME1 1HF for a 10 mile moderate walk from Rochester to Wouldham and back, very steep climb to top of North Downs, Pubs, cafes etc. at end.
- April 19th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am Meet Lindsay Floyd and Margaret Norman 07743 702049 07780 517785 Hadlow park in village car park GR636497 TN11 0RT for a 4.5 mile easy flat field walk, a few gentle slopes, 4 gates and 1 stile, can be muddy. Dogs allowed
- April 19th - Bluebell Walk in the Woods, 10.00am - 12noon, A free ramble with the Ranger for all the family. No booking needed. Cobtree Manor Park.

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April 20th - Rainham Wives, Methodist Church Hall, Wakeley Road, Rainham 8.00pm, 'Barefoot in Burma' illustrated talk by Betty & Tony Mitchell, New members welcome, £2 per visit includes refreshments, for details ring Sue 01634 230639.

April 21st - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30 - 9.45pm £3.50, The Medway Living Landscape - AGM - Alison Ruyter, Walks see www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

April 21st - GHS Floral Art Group, 'St. George's Day' - tapestry style bowl arrangement, (see 7th April).

April 21st - Rainbow Whist Drive, (see 7th April).

April 22nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Mike, 10.00am commuter car park just north of Bredhurst TQ799629 ME8 0LU for a 6.5 mile leisurely walk. Bring picnic lunch, Pub at end.

April 22nd - RainARA, 442 Club, Featherby Road, Rainham, AGM, Members only, Details kentsoftkent@tiscali.co.uk or 01634 373596

April 22nd - All Saints Women's Fellowship,

Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Charity Presentation, for details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

April 22nd - Bredhurst Garden Club, 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall, Daniel Denness Illustrated Talk - 'Hardy Orchids', New Members Welcome, Ring 01634 233554

April 22nd - Gillingham Horticultural Society, 7.15pm, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham. Ian Currie the "Weatherman" Talk

'How Weather affects gardening and our daily lives' £2, £3 non members, details 01634 852519

April 23rd - Hempstead Leisure Club, "Titanic" Talk by Ian Porter (see 2nd April).

April 23rd - Wigmore Thursday Club, Being a Professional Toastmaster, Phil Shorthouse (see 2nd April).

April 24th - Medway Geographical Society, Byron Road School, Gillingham, 7.30 - 9.00pm 'The Weather in Kent' - Bob Ogley, All welcome, 01634 362683.

April 25th - Bird Spotting for Beginners, 8.00 - 10.00am, A free guided session for adults and older children. Booking required on 07870 988 128. Sorry, no dogs.

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Diary 2015

April 25th - Spring Craft Fair, St. Margaret's Church,
Lower Halstow, 2.00 - 4.00pm, wide selection of local
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April 25th & 26th - Music and Drama Festival, Rochester
and North Kent The Pilkington Building, University of
Kent, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, ME4 4TB Tickets
to spectate, £7.50 for all-day admission 01634 316677

April 25th & 26th - BWAG Bluebells & Cream Tea
Weekend, 2.00pm each day shorter and longer walks
available. Tickets £7 per person (under 16 free) not
available on day, call Vanessa Jones 07813 785940 or
bwag@vanessajones.plus.com

April 25th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 11th April).
April 26th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Len 01634

319391 lenbeadle@blueyonder.co.uk, 10.00am, Yew
Tree Inn, Sandling TQ757584 ME14 3DB for a 4 mile
leisurely circular walk via Boxley, 7 stiles, fairly flat,
Pub midway, Pub at end with lunches.

April 26th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,
Meet Gill Smith 01622 710569 07999 858981,
Frittenden, park on road near Village Hall GR814409
For a 5 mile easy walk via Sissinghurst Castle with
some stiles. Dogs allowed

April 27th - Monday Hub, (see 13th April).

April 27th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 13th April).

April 27th - Rainham Wives, 'Lola Montez, 19th Century
Adventures' talk by Dr Ann Kneif, (see 13th April).

April 29th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Peter/Ann
01634 718895, 10.00am Village Hall, Hodsell Street
near Green Man Pub (off the Gravesend/Wrotham
Road) TQ625630 TN15 7LE for a 4 mile easy walk
The highlight will be the Bluebells all being well! Pub
at end with lunches available.

April 30th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Service, (2nd Ap).

April 30th - Hempstead Leisure Club, New Age Curling,
Bocchia, board games, tea and chat (see 2nd April)

April 30th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and
Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall,
Woodside, Rainham, Sylvia Wildridge 01634 312038

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May 2nd - 30th - Art Exhibition, Wigmore Library by
members of Rainham Art Club

May 3rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Ade 01634
306405 adeballard@yahoo.co.uk, 10.00am, Yalding
village by the war memorial junction of Vicarage Road
and the High Street TQ699503 ME18 6JA for a 7
mile leisurely walk via the Greensand Way. One small
ascent otherwise fairly flat. Bring picnic lunch for
midway break. Pub at end with lunches.

May 4th - Reiki Kyokai (see 13th April).

May 5th - Rainham Horticultural Society, Design Ideas
from Visiting some British Gardens' - Malcolm
Withnall, (see 7th April).

May 5th - Rainbow Whist Drive (see 7th April).

May 5th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Beneath the Waves'
Seascape petite arrangement, (see 7th April).

May 7th - Wigmore Thursday Club, English Concertina,
Sandra Sharp, (see 2nd April).

May 7th - Hempstead Leisure Club. Whist, board games
tea and chat (see 2nd April)

May 8th - Gillingham & Rainham Local History Society
AGM, (see 10th April).

May 9th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium
Centre, (see 11th April).

May 9th - RAMASES Newington Village Hall, 2.30pm,
Lecture Lucia Gahlin 'The iconography and ideology of
Nefertiti and the Amarna Royal women' Members £7,
Guests £9 Tickets at the door, ramesesnk@hotmail.com
or ring John Dewey 01795 472316 for details

May 9th - Rob Heron & The Tea Pad Orchestra, Applause
Rural Touring Scheme, 7.30pm, Bredhurst Village Hall,
Tickets £9 from Ann Keeble 01634 361263, Proceeds
to Village Hall funds.

May 9th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 11th April).

May 10th - Medway Ramblers Walk, meet Chris, 01634
360270 chris.strachan@live.com, 10.00am, Woodland
Trust free car park, Hucking Estate ME17 1QT (not
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