

ACTION FORUM

APRIL 2016
NUMBER 519

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■



Rainham County Primary School.

Meredale School in Solomon Road pictured soon after the muddy track became an adopted road probably in the 1930s. Still clearly recognisable today this school was built in 1906 soon after the 1902 Education Act passed responsibility from voluntary bodies such as churches to the County Council. The new Council School and the existing Church School, at the top of Station Road, both educated all ages from 5 to 14 years although a few scholars were selected each year for Grammar School. This is how the school would have been when Harold Greenhalgh was Headmaster (see the article on page 9). When the Orchard Street Schools were built in 1932 over 11s moved for their secondary education and in the 1950s a new Junior School at Wakeley Road again relieved the overcrowding. The Infant School closed in August 2003 and the building is now a private school.

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AF
 Next Issue May 7th 2016
 Copy Date: April 26th, Sm Ads Ap 29th
 Editorial: Barbara Mackay Miller
 Advertising: Hamish Mackay Miller
 Action Forum Office
 4 Saracen Close, Gillingham Business Park
 Gillingham ME8 0QN
 Telephone: 01634 310011
 Email: af@thenet.uk.net

Editorial

Despite my gloomy predictions the daffodils have lasted exceptionally well and there should be a good display for Easter. A few primroses and bluebells would complete the spring scene. The cold nights have helped but we have had a few glorious days with blue skies and sunshine to enjoy. Now the clocks have sprung forward and we have ever longer light evenings it really feels that summer is on its way. Time for the traditional annual 'spring clean' in both house and garden. Nowadays there are many ways to dispose of items that are too good for the rubbish bin but you no longer want to house. Charity Shops, church and school fetes, bric a brac stalls, bring and buy, freecycle, internet selling (if you are brave and savvy enough) all provide a way to reuse items. Of course they all want good quality donations so the broken toys and chipped porcelain I am afraid will still have to go to recycling if appropriate or landfill but consider carefully before discarding objects because many tools, for example garden spades with broken handles, and some machinery, particularly sewing machines, can be restored by charities such as Tools with a Mission and usefully shipped abroad where they have a new life allowing someone to work and provide for their family.

One hundred years ago in 1916 the Great War was grinding on. Harold Greenhalgh the young Headmaster of Rainham Council School left his post, where all acknowledged he had been an exceptional leader, to enroll in the Royal Engineers. He had previously been rejected as physically unfit but times were getting hard and many previous rejects who responded to the 'Your Country Needs You' posters were now accepted into the forces. Sadly, as so many of his generation, two years later in April 1918 he was killed. Thinking back to 2014 and the poppy display at the Tower of London which had one flower for every life lost you begin to have a perspective on the true horror of those war years. Almost everyone would have had a relative away fighting at the front line and everyone must have been in constant dread of the telegram boy arriving with the worst news possible. Although they did not know it in 1916 the war was not yet half way through. Perhaps that was just as well the knowledge that the worst was yet to come would have been totally demoralizing. David Wood has written a biography of Harold Greenhalgh on page 9.

This month we have a diverse selection of items for you to peruse! Events for you to enjoy include Art Exhibitions, Concerts, Craft Fairs, Quiz Nights and a Murder Mystery evening plus of course the traditional annual May Day celebrations at Bredhurst. If you are looking for volunteering opportunities why not try the Hospital Shop, Beanstalk - helping children with reading in school or assisting BWAG with wildlife recording. To make new friends and widen your social life Wigmore Ladies Club would love to see you, join the Pedal for a Purpose charity ride or enjoy an organised Bluebell Walk. All this and more can be found in our pages this month. Enjoy the spring weather and have a very good month until we are here again in May.

Correspondence

WANT TO BE A BROWNIE?

Dear Editor

Come and join in the fun with 1st Rainham Brownies who will be celebrating their 95th birthday in July having been going strong since 1921.

Several of our girls are off to start their new guiding adventure in Guides at Easter and as a result we currently have spaces for girls aged seven to 10 years old to join in the fun and become a Brownie. We meet once a week in the Millennium Centre on a Tuesday. This term, amongst other things, we made pancakes, celebrated Chinese New Year, went swimming and had fun with our Growing Up Wild in Winter badge. If your daughter is interested in becoming a Brownie, please in the first instance email firsttrainhambrownies@gmail.com

Yours sincerely

Amanda

Leader in Charge, 1st Rainham Brownies

CHARITY CONCERT

Dear Editor,

I am very fortunate that the Genesis Sixteen Alumni Quartet, accompanied by Kerne Clemence, will be giving a charity concert, in aid of the Mayor of Medway's Charities, on Friday, 29th April at 7.30pm in St Margaret's Church, Rainham. Tickets £12.50 or £5 for students, available from either the Mayor's Parlour mayor@medway.gov.uk 01634 332404 or from St Margaret's Parish Office 01634 362023, office@rainhamchurch.co.uk.

The programme will include popular opera excerpts during the first half and thereafter music by Vaughan Williams, John Rutter and Mozart on the theme of Shakespeare. The concert is being sponsored by Medway Music Association and all proceeds will be in aid of the Mayor of Medway's Charities, (Molly Wisdom Hospice; Oliver Fisher Neonatal Unit; Holding On, Letting Go and Making Miracles). The fund-raising concert for my Charities in February of last year, at St Margaret's Church, proved to be so highly successful that, following many requests it has been decided to stage a second event during my

second year of office. Last year's performers were from the world renowned Guildhall School of Music and Drama. This year I am delighted to welcome the equally prestigious Genesis Alumni of The Sixteen. This is a concert not to be missed by music lovers.

Yours faithfully

Barry Kemp - Mayor of Medway

BEANSTALK Read - Grow - Succeed
 Beanstalk is a National Children's literacy charity that recruits, trains and supports volunteers to go into primary schools & help them with reading. Volunteer reading helpers spend just 90 minutes twice a week working on a 1 to 1 basis with 3 children. They read, play games and enjoy the all-important conversation that helps children improve their vocabulary. The charity is now looking for new volunteers to support children in Gillingham and would urge anybody that feels they could help, to get in touch with the Maidstone office on 01622 662026 or apply via their website at www.beanstalkcharity.org.uk

DEVELOPING DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

COMMUNITIES Sponsored by the Diocese of Rochester and Dementia Friends.

Saturday 16th April, 11.00am - 2.30pm

You are invited to attend an Information Meeting, at St Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, ME8 0AX, HEAR about the support available in Gillingham and discuss what more can be done to help those living with dementia. Refreshments will be available.

MEET the organisations in Gillingham who support those living with dementia
 EXPERIENCE some of the available activities which can help those with dementia
 LEARN ABOUT the experiences of some local people living with dementia

ATTEND Dementia Friends sessions (11.30am and 1.15pm) A quiet space will be available for prayer and reflection. Come for as little or as long as you wish and there is no need to book - just turn up on the day. Further information from 01634 813366 or email julia.burton-jones@rochester.anglican.org

ART EXHIBITION

Wynne Prescott, a local botanical artist will be exhibiting her latest works at Rainham Library Birling Avenue, Rainham, during the month of April; usual library hours apply - all works are for sale at reasonable prices. Contact no 01634 312387

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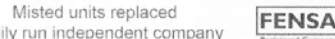
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VOLUNTEERS WANTED - HOSPITAL SHOPS
 The Medway League of Friends needs more volunteers to help in our busy shops, especially for evenings and weekends. If you have some time to spare and would like to make a difference, please contact the Operations Manager at Medway Maritime Hospital on 01634 830000 x 3695.

WIGMORE LADIES CLUB

It is with great sadness we announce that our group leader, Norma Guest, recently passed away. In memory of all the hard work that she did in setting up and running the club, the Club will continue to meet. We are a cheerful group of ladies and would love you to join us. We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Howard Hall, Woodside between 2.00 - 4.00pm. We have speakers and other activities and a lovely cuppa. Just come along or call 01634 388912 for further details.

MAY DAY SCHOOL FAYRE

Bredhurst C E P School ME7 3JY

Saturday 7th May 1.00 - 4.00pm. Traditional event that dates back to Victorian times - street closed between 12.50pm and 1pm for a parade led by the new May King and Queen!

There will also be performances of traditional dancing around the May Pole plus an Ice cream van, Bouncy Castle, BBQ, Cake Stall, Coconut Shy, Face Painting, Tombola, Raffle & lots more!

DISTRIBUTION

Volunteer distributors are needed for:

Rainham Henry Street, part Wakeley Road, Scott Av Bramley Close & Blackthorne Road
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Diary 2016

No charge is made for Diary entries
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Meresborough, Gillingham, Kent ME8 8PP

Diary Copy Date: April 26th 2016

- April - Wynne P Rescott, exhibiting her botanical art at Rainham Library, during usual library hour, all works are for sale at reasonable prices details 01634 312387
- April - Paintings by Artists, Clive Bass, John Gilson & Ron Wiseman on show & For Sale in Wigmore Library
- April 2nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 12noon meet Margaret 01795 843927 maglou1@yahoo.co.uk Lapwing Drive, Lower Halstow, Edith May's car park ME9 7DZ 6 mile walk around Lower Halstow.
- April 2nd - Handel's Messiah The Merry Opera Company St Mary Magdalene Church, Gillingham Green ME7 1SS, 7.00pm Tickets at door £10, Free parking
- April 2nd - Barnardo's Charity Quiz Night, 7.30pm start, Twydall Church Hall, Tickets £5, tables of 6-8 Book in advance, 01634 233405 or 01634 375486
- April 3rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Len 01634 319391 lenheadle@blueyonder.co.uk the Square, Hadlow, TN1 10DD TQ635498 for 6 mile easy walk to West Peckham, Pub serving lunch at the end.
- April 3rd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, Meet Mo Fleisig 07976 600393, Newington High Street car park (Free) GR 861649 ME9 7JP for a 6 mile circular walk towards Lower Halstow. No dogs
- April 4th - 10th - Free Spring Holiday Workshops at Hempstead Valley outside Boots, 11.00am - 1.00pm and 2.00 - 4.00pm, no need to book, supervision required at all times.
- April 5th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane, Spring Show, New members welcome, ring 366276 for details.

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- April 5th - 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 5th - Medway & Swale (West) Association for Breast Cancer, 7.00 - 9.00pm Medway Maritime Hospital, Area 7 Level 2, Penny Auction raising funds for our charity, details 01634 861802 or 07761 853750
- April 5th - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm, 'Laid Back' - a horizontal arrangement, New members welcome, first visit free, no experience needed, details Kaye Buss 01634 232998 kayebuss@btinternet.com
- April 6th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Mike near Barham village green. TR208500 CT4 6NZ for a 7.5 mile leisurely Four Churches walk visiting Barham, Womenswold, Bishopsbourne and Kingston. One short hill, muddy in places. Bring picnic lunch Pubs at end.
- April 7th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker Caroline Carter on RVS Village Hall behind the Church 2 - 4pm New members always welcome phone 0758 334 3782
- April 7th - Wigmore Thursday Club for over 50s, 2.00pm St Matthew's Community Centre, Birthday Lunch and entertainment from Harmony, ring 01634 234712
- April 8th - Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham every Friday 9.45am to help those who have lost a loved one. Join us for a cuppa and chat, ring Julie 01634 364309.
- April 8th - UpARA, Monthly Meeting Upchurch Village Hall, 2.00pm, AGM 3.30pm, Members Free, Guests £2 New Members Welcome For details email Chairman David Powell davidrpowell5@hotmail.co.uk
- April 8th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society, 7.15pm, Byron Road School, Memories of events etc. in the Medway Towns, For full details please contact Ron Baker 01634 854982
- April 8th - Medway Fundraising Committee Macmillan Cancer Support, A.G.M. RAT's Theatre, Stratford Lane, Rainham, ME8 8AG, 7.30pm. All welcome

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- April 9th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group Meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 London Capital Ring Walk stage 3 for a 9.5 mile walk starting at Greenford via South Kenton, finish at Wembley Park, Ring Stephen for details, No dogs
- April 9th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, 9.00am - 12.30pm Free entry, Stalls £10 from carole@cdadsweil.freereserve.co.uk or 07779 366054
- April 9th - Bredhurst Woods 10am - 1pm, Meet at Hurstwood Road, ME7 3JZ learn about monitoring wildlife, Free for BWAG & KRAG members or £3 for non-members, book in advance 07813 785940 or email bwag@vanessajones.plus.com
- April 9th - Spring Craft Fair, St. Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow, 2.00 to 4.00pm, first sale of the year, wide selection of local crafts, old friends and new very welcome, Refreshments available.
- April 9th - 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 10th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am Meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847 828249, Lower Upnor car park near Arrethusa Centre ME2 4XB GR 762713 for a 5.5 mile walk starts with a steep climb, some roads, field & woodland, no stiles. No dogs
- April 10th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Tony/Ann 01634 406634 vajra.faulkner@gmail.com end of Nashenden Farm Lane near Borstal. TQ733659 ME1 3TQ for a 6.2 mile leisurely walk along NDW back by river. Bring picnic lunch for midway break.
- April 10th - Pedal for a Purpose, Demelza Hospice, 10 mile Family Route, 52 mile Classic Route or 103 mile Epic Route. To sign up visit www.demelza.org.uk ring 01795 845249 or email emma.austen@demelza.org.uk
- April 11th - Medway Scramble Club, alternate Mondays, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, 01634 230500
- April 11th - Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham 2nd Monday each month for those in employment who have lost a loved one. Join us for a cuppa and chat, Julie 01634 364309.
- April 11th - Rainham Flower Club, second Monday each month 7.30pm, St Matthews Community Centre, Wigmore ME8 0NX 'Update your Skills' part 1, For details see www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring 01634 864572 Visitors welcome.

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- April 11th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, 7.30pm, Organist - Michael Wooldridge, details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694
- April 12th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, Growing Pelargoniums - Ken Abel, Members £1, Non members £1.50, All Welcome details ring 01634 852519
- April 13th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, American Heiresses: Sheila Boyd, for details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444
- April 14th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Healthy Eating, Grace Wilson, (see 7th April)
- April 14th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Outing to Hole Park. No local meeting.
- April 15th - UpARA, Village Walk, 10.00am from Village Hall, (see 8th April)
- April 15th - Hempstara Whist Afternoons, 1.30pm start, The Scout Hut, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead. Players of all abilities welcome, partner not required details call Eunice 01634 231664
- April 15th - Quiz Night, Hands & Gillingham Volunteer Centre, 7.30pm start. Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall Lane, ME8 6JU, Tickets £7 pp six per table, Sausage & Chips supper provided, bring own drinks and nibbles, Contact Hands office 01634 577984
- April 15th - Jazz Gig, The Greg Heath Sax Quartet, Anchorians Rugby Club, Darland Avenue, Gillingham, 8.30pm, Admission £10, Details 01634 365352 or 07544 312743
- April 16th - Rainham South Councillors surgery, Parkwood Youth Centre, 9.00am - 12noon, no appointment necessary.
- April 16th - Developing Dementia Friendly Communities, 11.00am - 2.30pm, St Matthew's Church, Drewry Drive, all welcome.
- April 16th - Concert Old Barn Orchestra Concert, 7.30pm, Pilkington Building, University of Greenwich Tickets from 01634 376979, 01795 843228 members of the orchestra or oldbarnos@gmail.com
- April 17th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Margaret 01795 477181 Leeds Village car park next to the church. TQ825533 ME17 1RL for a 5.5 mile leisurely walk through Leeds Village, across fields, through woods and through the grounds of Leeds Castle. Pub at end.

Continued on Page 11

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

SPRING CRAFT FAIR

St. Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow
Saturday 9th April, 2.00 – 4.00pm We are delighted
to be holding our first sale of the year and look
forward to welcoming old friends and new. Do join
us for a wide selection of local crafts at possibly the
prettiest location around. Refreshments available

RAINBOW CAFÉ - 2nd Thursday of each month
St Mary's Church, Upchurch
Thursday 14th April, 2.30 - 5.00pm. All Welcome.

QUIZ NIGHT

Hands & Gillingham Volunteer Centre
Friday 15th April, Doors open 7pm for 7.30pm start
Holy Trinity Church Hall Twydall Lane, Gillingham
Tickets £7 per person/up to six per table

Sausage & Chips supper provided
Please bring your own drinks and nibbles
Contact Hands office 01634 577984 answerphone

SPRING CONCERT Old Barn Orchestra Concert
Saturday 16th April, 7.30pm

Pilkington Building
University of Greenwich at Medway, ME4 4TB
Mendelssohn: music for a Midsummer Night's
Dream. Mendelssohn: Symphony No 1
York Bowen Horn Concerto,
Soloist Tom Bettley

Tickets from 01634 376979, 01795 843228 members
of the orchestra or oldbarnos@gmail.com

**WIGMORE COMMUNITY & RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION AGM**

Friday 29th April, 7.00pm. An opportunity to
informally discuss local issues affecting our
community with ward councillors.

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QUIZ

Brain Tumour Charity

Saturday 23rd April, 7.30 - 10.30pm

Twydall Hall, Twydall Lane, Gillingham

Ticket £5, Free tea or coffee and biscuits. Please
bring your own food. Free wine on table & a Raffle
Contact Olwen O'Dowd 01634 263622 for tickets.

BLUEBELLS & CREAM TEA WEEKEND

Saturday 30th April & Sunday 1st May
Walks start at 2.00pm each day
Join BWAG for its popular Bluebell & Cream Tea
Weekend. Guided walks through Bredhurst Woods
including a talk on the history of the woods followed
by cream teas at a local farm - shorter and longer
walks available.

Tickets £7 per person and must be purchased in
advance - tickets will not be available on the day
(children under 16 free).

For more details and tickets please call Jim Chalmers
on 07870 878907, Esther Huxstep on 01634 233752,
email bwag@vanessajones.plus.com or buy on line
at bluebellwalk2016.eventbrite.co.uk

ON THE BOX

Under the Applause Rural Touring Scheme
Bowjangles presents On The Box! at Bredhurst
Village Hall on Saturday, 30th April, at 7.30pm.
Tickets £10 from 01634 361263

Bowjangles are a string quartet who can really
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CONCERT

St Matthew's Church

Drewery Drive, Wigmore ME8 0NX

Saturday 30th April, 7.30pm

The Don Barcott Big Band

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR MARCH

Towards the end of each year, Mrs Ennis and I look forward to hearing the "clunk" of the National Trust's yearly handbook dropping onto the doormat. In early March, having consulted the latest edition, we made a trip to the Trust's Sissinghurst Castle Gardens near Cranbrook. The journey took us over the North Downs and through Maidstone. At Linton, we descended into the Vale of Kent, through which flows the River Medway and its main tributaries, the Teise and the Bult. We continued through the pleasant town of Staplehurst along the line of an old Roman road and, in due course, climbed into the wooded High Weald of Kent in which Sissinghurst Castle Gardens sits. At Boxley and Linton we had passed two busy roadside rookeries, which were an indication (hopefully) that winter was on its way out. Having arrived at Sissinghurst, we first had a walk around the estate's two lakes and the adjoining Roundhill Park Wood. The lakes are fed by the Hammer Stream and both teem with fish, mainly rudd, identifiable by their orange fins. The lakes are lined with bulrushes and other aquatic plants and are surrounded by alder trees. Signs of spring included hazel catkins and pussy willows. The wood is managed as a traditional sweet chestnut coppice, with standard trees of oak and beech. Dead trees are left standing as a source of food and nesting sites for birds. We came across lesser celandines, wood anemones, primroses and sweet violets but we were too early to see bluebells and foxgloves in bloom. We heard the loud, whistling "hweet" "hweet" call of a nuthatch, which has a blue-grey back and which can sometimes be seen on our nut feeders.

After our walk we headed for the Granary Restaurant and lunch. Meat from animals raised on Sissinghurst Castle Farm and vegetables grown in an organic garden on the estate are used as ingredients in dishes on the menu in the restaurant. We chose Sissinghurst roast lamb with rosemary infused gravy. The farm is run by a tenant who has introduced Sussex beef cattle, Romney marsh sheep and pigs. New hedges have been planted, by the Trust, to create the smaller fields that

existed in the 19th century, thus allowing regular movements of animals from field to field. The grazing grass for the beef cattle and the sheep is supplemented by feed such as cereals and peas grown on the farm. The arable fields are bordered by strips of uncultivated land sown with a mixture of grass and wild flowers which attracts insects, birds and mammals. The overall aim of the Trust is to convert the farm from what was, until fairly recently, a solely arable one into a traditional, mixed, Wealden-type one. After lunch, we had a walk around the garden. It is somewhat bare in early March, compared with the profusion and colour of summer. Even so, hellebores, daffodils, anemones, crocuses, snowflakes, primulas and grape hyacinths were in bloom in the Lime Walk. There was an impressive display of daffodils in the old Orchard. A new orchard of six acres has been set out near the car park. The Trust has planted some ninety standard trees of varieties of cooking and eating apples that were once grown in Kent. The standard trees will provide shelter for smaller trees of eating apples, pears, plums, damsons, greengages and cherries.

Before leaving the garden, we climbed to the top of the red brick Elizabethan tower, from where we had a good view of the estate and also from where we could hear the songs of a chaffinch, a song thrush and a robin, among others. In the absence of leaves on the deciduous trees and shrubs, the structure of the garden was readily apparent. In particular, the lines of the box and yew hedges were clearly defined. It is difficult to find a weed in one of the world's most celebrated gardens but it had a most unlikely origin among piles of rubbish covered in brambles and nettles. In 1930 the poet and novelist Vita Sackville-West and her politician husband Harold Nicholson bought the 400 acre Sissinghurst Castle Farm, in the grounds of which was the near ruin of a moated 16th century manor house. It had housed French prisoners of war in Napoleonic times, since when it has been described as a castle. As they created their garden from the dereliction of the ruins, Vita and Harold initially stayed in the Bull Inn in Sissinghurst village or camped out in the old buildings, shunning the comforts of the Victorian farmhouse. Their first priority was the removal of rubbish, being the

accumulated domestic debris of over a hundred years of neglect. The garden was first opened in 1938, in support of what is now the National Gardens Scheme. Entrance cost one shilling. Vita called her visitors "Shillings", many of whom she got to know well over the years, as they exchanged plants and garden gossip. Today, visitors come from all over the world - and they pay considerably more than a shilling!

Joe Ennis

THE DEATH OF A RAINHAM HEADMASTER in the Great War of 1914-1918

Harold Greenhalgh became headmaster of Rainham Council School, now known as Meredale in 1908, two years after it had been constructed and he proved to be very hard working and popular.

Originally from Preston in Lancashire, he came to Kent where he worked with Gillingham Education Committee and then with the dockyard class at Barnsole Road School. After this with the departure of headmistress Miss Dyason, he became headmaster of Rainham Council School where he soon proved to be a very capable head. According to an article in the East Kent Gazette dated April 1918, the school reached a high standard under his leadership and pupils won many scholarships. Because of his talent and interest in music he helped scholars obtain county honours and when war broke out in 1914 he organised collections of eggs and social gatherings at the school for wounded soldiers from Fort Pitt Hospital which gained him great respect in the community.

When Harold Greenhalgh first applied to join the army he was rejected for being physically unfit but he eventually passed for general service and joined the Royal Engineers in 1916. Stationed in Chatham he soon became a lance-corporal and he obtained the Haynes Memorial Medal, awarded to the best recruit in each new batch of Royal Engineers recruits. When he went to France in September 1917 he experienced several dangerous assignments before being commissioned to the Ordnance Department and made Ordnance Railhead Officer at Poperinghe in March 1917. He died there on April 9th 1918 aged 41. His major wrote a letter to his wife:

'About 10.0' clock on Tuesday 9th instant, Poperinghe Railhead, of which he was Ordnance officer in charge, was shelled by the enemy. One shell fell near where he, his sergeant and Private Barlow were standing. This killed Private Barlow. Your husband then

ordered the sergeant to run for an ambulance and knelt down to see if anything could be done for Private Barlow. When the sergeant was about 80 yards away a second shell fell at practically the same spot, killing your husband instantaneously by the concussion. The body was buried in a soldier's cemetery just outside Poperinghe, in the portion reserved for officers. The service was conducted by an army chaplain and attended by lieutenant colonel Fisher and myself on behalf of the Army Ordnance Department. A wooden cross is placed at the head of his grave, bearing his name, unit and that he was killed in action 9th April 1918.'

In 1919 at a meeting of the Kent County Education authority, committee member Mr Tapp said that in Mr Greenhalgh Kent had lost a very valuable teacher and questioned why headmasters should be taken away for military service. He also paid tribute to former Council School assistant teacher Mr. Hadlow who became an army sergeant and also died in the war and to Mr Pitcher who became a captain in the Artists and Rifle Regiment and suffered a head wound but recovered. Mr. Pitcher later received the Military Medal for bravery and resumed teaching at the Council school when the war ended.

Harold Greenhalgh left a widow, two young daughters and a big reputation at Rainham Council School after his death.

David Wood

BWAG WILDLIFE MONITORING in Bredhurst Saturday 9th April, 10.00am - 1.00pm

Meet at Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst ME7 3JZ
Have you experience in monitoring wildlife or want to learn about what's involved? Join BWAG and Dr Lee Brady to examine different types of habitat in and around Bredhurst Woods. Find out how to assist with BWAG's monitoring programme and how to submit records to ensure your sightings count.

Free for BWAG & KRAG members or £3 for non-members. Places must be booked in advance by contacting Vanessa Jones on 07813 785940 or email bwag@vanessajones.plus.com We must have your contact details in advance as this event may be called off if the weather is not suitable.

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Diary 2016

April 17th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am.
Meet Pearl Stevens 07724 602929 Newington Church
Car park off High Oak Hill GR 862653 ME9 7JT for a
6 mile undulating walk with road, field and grass and
tracks, 4 stiles, possibly muddy, No dogs

April 19th - Rainbow Whist Drive, (see 5th April)
April 19th - RSPB Medway Local Group Talk, Parkwood
Community Centre, 7.30 - 9.45 pm £3.50. Hedgehogs -
Dr Ray Allibone, www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

April 19th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'Happy Birthday
Ma'am' - making a crafted crown, (see 5th April)

April 20th - Wigmore Ladies Club, 2.00pm, Howard Hall,
Woodside, We are a cheerful group of ladies and would
love you to join us, come along or call 01634 388912

April 20th - Bredhurst Garden Club, 7.30pm, Village
Hall, Terry Clare - Illustrated Talk 'Bumbles and
Wasps', New Members Welcome, Ring 01634 233554

April 21st - Rainham Women's Institute, 1.45 - 4.00 pm,
Oast House Community Centre, Granary Close, "Going
Going Gone". Visitors welcome for small entry charge
per visit. Ring 01634 366276 for details.

April 21st - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board
games, tea and chat (see 7th April)

April 21st - Wigmore Thursday Club, Barbara Stevens,
Trials & Tribulations of a Public Speaker, (see 7th Ap)

April 22nd - Medway Geographical Society, Byron Road
Primary School, Gillingham ME7 5XX 7.30 - 9.00pm,
'The London of Charles Dickens' - Stuart Robinson,
Everyone welcome please come on the evening or ring
Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

April 22nd & 23rd - Wigmore MADS 'Sudden Death at
Thornbury Manor', Murder Mystery Evening, St
Matthews Community Centre, Wigmore 8.00pm. Bar
Tickets £7 & £6 cons from Sue 01634 370639

April 23rd - Quiz, Brain Tumour Charity, 7.30 - 10.30pm
Twydall Hall, Gillingham, Ticket £5, Free tea or coffee
and biscuits, bring your own food. Free wine on table
and Raffle Olwen O'Dowd 01634 263622 to book.

April 23rd - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 9th April)

April 24th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,
Meet Harry Keane 01634 231533 07719 356835,
Linton Hill car park (free) next to the church for a 4
mile circular walk across the Greensand Ridge, 12 stiles
and 2 plank bridges, may be muddy, No dogs

April 24th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet
Tania 07841 913561 office@taniapeitzker.com Court
Farm Butchery & Country Larder, Upper Halling.
TQ691643 ME2 1HR for a 3.5 mile leisurely walk, car
park for Ramblers, please follow the signs. Bluebell
patches in the forest behind Court Farm.

April 25th - Medway Scramble Club, (see 11th April)

April 26th - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch Village
Hall, 9.30am, Members £1.50, Guests £2, (see 8th Ap)

April 26th - Lower Halstow Gardening Club, Memorial
Hall, School Lane, ME9 7ES 7.30 pm, Maureen
Rainey from Kent Wildlife. Talk & quiz 'Gardening to
Save the Planet.' Visitors £1.50 - do join us.

April 27th - GHS "in house" mini Spring Show, United
Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road Gillingham,
7.15pm start, £2 members, £2.50 non member includes
refreshments, details 01634 852519

April 27th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Charity
Presentation, (see 13th April)

April 28th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social Meeting -
Chat & Games, (see 7th April)

April 28th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker Ann Knief
on "Lola Montez" (see 7th April)

April 28th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and
Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall, all
welcome, ring Sylvia Wildridge 01634 312038.

April 28th - UpARA Outing, 'Hairspray', Marlowe
Theatre, Canterbury, (see 8th April)

April 29th - Hempstead Whist Afternoons, 1.30pm start,
The Scout Hut, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead.
Players of all abilities welcome, partner not required
details call Eunice 01634 231664

April 29th - Wigmore Community and Residents
Association AGM, Wigmore Library 7.00pm,
informally discuss local issues with ward councillors

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April 29th - Concert in aid of the Mayor of Medway's
Charities The Genesis Sixteen Alumni Quartet, 7.30pm,
St Margaret's Church, Rainham, Tickets £12.50 or £5
students, 01634 332404, mayor@medway.gov.uk
or Church 01634362023, office@rainhamchurch.co.uk.
April 30th - Under the Applause Rural Touring Scheme,
Bowjangles presents On The Box! Bredhurst Village
Hall, 7.30pm, Tickets £10 from 01634 361263
April 30th - Concert, St Matthew's Church, Wigmore,
7.30pm, The Don Barcott Big Band, Tickets £10 from
01634 231350 email joycebest@blueyonder.co.uk
April 30th & May 1st - Bluebells & Cream Tea Walks
2.00pm, Tickets £7 per person purchase in advance -
under 16 free, Jim Chalmers 07870 878907, Esther
Huxstep 01634 233752, bwag@vanessajones.plus.com
or buy on line at bluebellwalk2016.eventbrite.co.uk
May 1st - Medway Ramblers Walk, 5.00am meet Geoff
Blue Bell Hill at Mickey's Diner - off Chatham bound
carriageway of A229. TQ747608 ME20 7EZ for a 4
mile leisurely Sunrise walk to Kits Coty to watch the
greeting of sunrise by the Kits Coty Morris. Breakfast
can be pre-ordered at Mickey's before the walk.
May 1st - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Steve Giddins 07720 628511, Grove Ferry Picnic
Area car park (fee £2) GR 236631 CT3 4 BP for a 5
mile circular walk via Stodmarsh, very flat.
May 1st - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet John
07749 760788 billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk Linton
Church Car Park TQ754501 ME17 4AW for a 7.75
mile leisurely circular walk through farms and orchards,
a few stiles, could be muddy if wet. Bring picnic lunch
May 3rd - GHS Floral Art Group, Workshop with Viv
O'Sullivan, (see 5th April)
May 3rd - Medway & Swale (West) Association for
Breast Cancer, Travelling boutique visit with ladies
clothes and accessories to purchase, (see 5th April)

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May 3rd - Rainham Horticultural Society, Tools of the
Trade - Russell Bowes, (see 5th April)
May 4th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Mike
St Marys Meadow opposite the Anchor PH, Wingham
TR244576 CT3 1AH for a 7 mile leisurely Four
Watermills Walk. Visit Wingham, Wickhambreaux,
Littlebourne, and Ickham. Bring picnic. Pubs at end.
May 5th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Characters - Wacky,
Weird & Wonderful, (see 7th April)
May 5th - Hempstead Leisure Club, "Elastics" exercise
for seniors with Sue (see 7th April)
May 6th - UpARA, Village Walk, 10.00am from Village
Hall, (see 8th April)
May 7th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Tania
07841 913561 office@taniapietzkier.com Upper Halling
Court Farm Butchery & Country Larder Car park for
Ramblers follow the signs TQ691643 ME2 1HR for a
3.5 mile leisurely walk with Bluebells
May 7th - Bredhurst C E P School May Day School
Fayre, 1.00 - 4.00pm. Traditional event, May Pole, Ice
cream van, Bouncy Castle, BBQ, Cake Stall, Coconut
Shy, Face Painting, Tombola, Raffle & lots more!
May 7th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 9th April)
May 8th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Geoff
07525161766 geoff.rambler@me.com Sevenoaks
Library, Buckhurst Lane, go to library entrance
TQ533545 TN13 1LQ for a 6.5 mile easy walk through
Knole Park and woodland bluebells. Pub at end.
May 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847 827249 Market
Heath, Brenchley, car park GR 672418 TN12 7NX for
a 5.5 mile lovely walk in the Weald via Marle Place. 10
Stiles some steps. Dogs on leads if permitted,
May 9th - Rainham Bereavement Evening Friendship
Group, (see 11th April)
May 9th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,
Organist - Ian Griffin, (see 11th April)

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