

ACTION FORUM

MAY 2016
NUMBER 520

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ■



1st Rainham Guides arriving at Dymchurch for their summer camp in August 1925. The navy blue uniforms and hats were worn at all times and the distinctive black, blue and orange ties which were hand made by the Captain, Miss Johnson, for many years can be seen. Travelling in this style on the back of an open lorry with only the camp equipment for seats would cause much agonising for the Health & Safety department today. It must have been a very uncomfortable ride looking at the solid tyres of the vehicle but would have been the only way available to transport the company to camp. Joe Ennis describes in Nature Notes how the Guides walked to Bredhurst on Good Friday each year to pick primroses for their Easter church display. Admiral Johnson's daughters who ran the unit were dedicated to their task and many Rainham girls benefitted from their exceptional care and leadership.

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Editorial

May is a wonderful month. When the sun shines and the orchards are smothered with blossom I am very pleased to be living in the Garden of England. Unfortunately the cherry blossom burst whilst we were having our coldest nights of the winter in the last week of April. Frost plays havoc with the setting fruit so it remains to be seen if there is a decent cherry harvest in July. There is nothing that compares with the sight of an old fashioned cherry orchard with the large trees in full glorious white bloom against a clear blue sky with grazing sheep and lambs on the fresh green grass below. Wonder at it whilst you can – we still have a few acres around Rainham. The big trees will not be replaced as they come to the end of their life. Nowadays even if cherry is replanted it would be with much smaller and labour saving dwarf trees that can be picked from the safety of the ground and do not require the skilled work of harvesting from a very tall ladder. The smaller trees are still very pretty in bloom but the military rows of little apple trees look far more like the commercial operation that they are than a beautiful accident of nature.

We have much for you to enjoy this month. Of course Bredhurst are celebrating May Day (rather belatedly on May 7th this year) in the traditional manner. I know other local schools also preserve dancing round the maypole but the Bredhurst children should be congratulated for continuing a very long village tradition and for putting themselves in the spotlight at a public event. Later in the month on the 14th and 15th May an Art & Craft Exhibition with Flower Displays & Demonstrations called 'Flames of Inspiration' will take place at St Margaret's Church, Rainham and on 22nd May Hempstead Village Fayre will be held on the Harrow Road Playing Field. You will be very welcome at all these events.

As some of our correspondents quite correctly point out this month (see their letters on page 3) I did not guess the right date for the picture of Meredale School on the front cover in April. I should have looked more carefully as for the reasons they quote it is obviously post 2nd World War – good to know our readers are so observant. Please study this edition and do let me know of the 'deliberate' mistakes! Until we are with you again in June – half the year gone already – have a very good month and enjoy the summer warmth when or should I say if it arrives.

CLEAN FOR THE QUEEN

The residents of Meresborough have embraced this initiative with much enthusiasm to do their bit for the Queen. With the tireless and practical support of Simon Harwood, our Community Warden and the continuing efforts of residents, the lovely Conservation Area of Meresborough is being preserved for future generations to glimpse an aspect of Kentish country life that is fast disappearing.



During a two hour period on a sunny Sunday in April Meresborough residents collected this pile of rubbish, and more, from hedgerows on a quarter mile section of Meresborough Road. If you wish to organise a clean up in your area contact the council to see what help they can offer. We borrowed litter pickers and Hi Viz vests, black sacks were provided – the council even came and collected the piles of accumulated TV sets, assorted electrical goods, car tyres, an ironing board and about 30 black sacks of rubbish that we unearthed.

Correspondence

BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY

Dear Editor

The Charity Quiz held in April at Twydall Church Hall attracted 82 people and raised £600. £300 each to The Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund and Brain Tumour Charity www.braintumourcharity.org An enormous thank-you to all for your support and help.

On Monday 18th March I attended a debate in the Westminster Hall about a petition calling for an increase in funding into research into Brain Tumours. Over 30 MPs supported the petition and gave passionate 4 minutes pleas for increasing the share for Brain Tumour research which is very low at present. The Medway Brain Tumour Support Group based at St Mary's Island Chatham supported this petition.

Yours sincerely

Olwen O'Dowd-Fundraiser in Gillingham & Rainham

MEREDALE SCHOOL

Dear Editor

I was delighted to see the photo of my old school on the front of April Action Forum. I attended the school in Solomon Road in the late 1930s and early 40s. I lived at 15 Solomon Road for many years up until 1953 so I can say that the picture was taken post war as the old white Council houses are visible in the

photo and these were built with the assistance of Italian prisoners of war. I remember seeing them in their dark brown overalls and hats. Teachers at the school that I recall were Mr Pitcher – Headmaster, Miss Bassadonna, Miss Babbage and Miss Payne.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lydia Pest (nee Mepsted)

15 The Mailyns ME8 0DZ

MEREDALE SCHOOL

Dear Editor,

On the front cover of the April Action Forum you have a picture of "Meredale School in Solomon Road pictured soon after the muddy track became an adopted road probably in the 1930's" I don't know when the road was adopted but the photo on the front cover is almost certainly late 40s or early 50s. Why? Because if you look behind the front wall you will see concrete air raid shelters that were built using the iron form of the Anderson shelters. I remember these from my schooldays there in the early 50s and you could see the corrugations of the formwork in the surface, and you can see them in the picture, if you look carefully. If I remember correctly, there were six of these shelters; the two seen in the photo, two more further along, probably somewhere near where the car is, and two more down the Scotts Avenue side. Also, at the "end of the road", passed the school, are the white concrete prefab houses built after the war. I hope this will help date the picture more precisely.

Kind regards,

Ken Collyer

email: kenandberyl@naims.co.uk

THINKING ABOUT CHRISTMAS ALREADY!

In 2015 The Parish of South Gillingham performed a Community Passion Play on Parkwood Green. The feedback from the event was terrific and there were a number of suggestions that we might perform a Nativity.

Well we are! The script is written and we are planning a get together for those who might like to perform in the event or assist with staging it. We will be meeting in St Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive ME8 0NX on the evening of Monday, 13th June.

If you are interested please contact Clare Schofield for details of starting time. Telephone 01634 230423 or by e-mail claire.schofield01@gmail.com

RANSCOMBE FARM RESERVE – POPPY MEMORY BOARDS

2016 marks 100 years since the WW1 Battle of the Somme. Our thoughts turn to loved ones we have lost over the years.

Staff and volunteers at Ranscombe Farm Reserve, a stunning nature reserve situated between Strood and Cobham, are delighted to announce the installation of two memorial boards. These allow plaques to be erected in memory of a loved one and at the same time support conservation work of wild flowers for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. Botanists from across Europe travel to Ranscombe every year to enjoy some of the rarest and endangered wild flowers, some of which are only found in this site.

We invite people to celebrate special dates, birthdays, anniversaries or, especially with the Poppy field - commemorate those lost in battle at this special place in Kent. Memorial Plaque donations range in price, all money goes towards conservation work on the site. Plantlife has an ambitious long-term vision for Ranscombe Farm Reserve. We aim to develop the site as a stunning Kentish wildflower landscape that people can come and enjoy, as well as conserving the site's heritage, and demonstrating innovative conservation of some of Britain's rarest plants. Please help us achieve this aim.

Email or call Elizabeth.ohanlon@plantlife.org.uk
 01634 245413 Tweet photos @Ranscombe_Farm

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Diary 2016

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Diary Copy Date: May 24th 2016

May 1st – 31st - Rainham Art Club Exhibition, paintings and drawings on show and for sale Wigmore Library
May 7th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Tania 07841 913561 office@taniapetzker.com Upper Halling Court Farm Butchery & Country larder TQ691643
ME2 1HR for a 3.5 mile leisurely walk with Bluebell s
May 7th - Bredhurst C E P School May Day School Fayre, 1.00 – 4.00pm.
May 7th - Medway Folk Dance Club, United Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gill 7.30 - 10.00pm, new and experienced dancers welcome, with or without a partner, for more information ring 366189 or 388546
May 8th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Geoff 07525161766 geoff.rambler@me.com Sevenoaks Library entrance, Bredhurst Lane, TQ533545 TN13 1LQ for a 6.5 mile easy walk through Knole Park, Can be muddy, display of bluebells, Pub at end.
May 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847 827249 Market Heath, Brenchley, Brenchley Road car park GR 672418 TN12 7NX for a 5.5 mile lovely walk 10 Stiles and some steps. Dogs on leads if permitted
May 9th - Medway Scrabble Club, alternate Mondays, 2.00 – 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, 01634 230500
May 9th – Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham meets 2nd Monday evening each month to help those still in employment who have lost a loved one. Join us for a cuppa and chat, ring Julie 01634 364309.

May 9th - Back to Hockey, Gillingham Anchorians Hockey Club, 7.30 – 8.30pm for 6 weekly session see www.gahc.co.uk or England Hockey website.
May 9th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30pm, Organist - Ian Griffin, details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694
May 9th – Rainham Flower Club, 7.30pm, St Matthews Community Centre, Demonstration by Julie Wood 'A Tantalising Cocktail' details ring 01634 864572 or see www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk Visitors welcome.
May 10th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, Fuchsias – Fred Hepper, Non members £1.50, All Welcome, 01634 852519
May 10th - Rainbow Whist Drive, Bredhurst Village Hall Hurstwood Road, 7.30pm A partner is not needed and all whist players are welcome, details 01634 610364
May 11th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 6.30pm meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 Motney Hill car park GR 822675 ME8 7TZ for a 4 mile Evening walk in Berengrave Nature Reserve (100 wooden steps) Dogs on leads if permitted contact walk leader
May 11th – All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, AGM, for details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444
May 12th – Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, A Portrait of Matt Monroe, John Pearce, for over 50s ring 01634 234712
May 12th - Hempstead Leisure Club. Whist, board games, tea and chat, Village Hall behind the Church 2 - 4 pm New members always welcome, phone 0758 334 3782
May 12.13.14.19.20.21 – Oasthouse Theatre, Rainham The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde, Curtain up 8.00pm, Box Office on 0844 8793224 or on-line www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk
May 13th – 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.

May 13th – UpARA, Monthly Meeting Upchurch Village Hall, 2.00pm, Guests £2 New Members Welcome For details email davidpowell5@hotmail.co.uk
May 13th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society, 7.15pm, Byron Road School, AGM and DVD For full details please contact Ron Baker 01634 854982
May 13th - Paranormal Investigations, Fort Amherst, Dock Road, Chatham, Safety Brief 8.30 Activities 9.00pm finish 3.00am approx. Tickets £35 book on line, Pre booked - over 18s only, details 01634 847747 or see www.fortamherst.com
May 14th – Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, 9.00am – 12.30pm Free entry, Stalls £10 from carole@cdadsell.freemove.co.uk or 07779 366054
May 14th - Rainham South Councillors surgery Parkwood Youth Centre, 9am - 12 noon, no appointment needed.
May 14th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 for the London Capital Ring Walk stage 4 start at Wembley park, 8.5 mile walk via Hendon Park, finish at Priory Gardens, Highgate
May 14th - Plant Sale, Macklands House, Station Road, Rain 10.00am, Cake Stall & Refreshments, all welcome
May 14th - Gardening Club Plant Sale, 10am - 12noon, Memorial Hall, School Lane, Lower Halstow,
May 14th - Christian Aid Coffee Morning, Gillingham Methodist Church, Third Avenue, 10.00am – 12noon, Cakes and Plants, Admission 50p includes refreshments
May 14th & 15th - Flames of Inspiration Art & Craft Exhibition with Flower Displays & Demonstrations (Sat only) St Margaret's Church, Rainham, Sat 10.00am - 4.30pm, Sun, 12noon - 3.00pm. Tea/coffee & biscuits
May 15th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am meet Joan Weeks 01634 855522 Teston Country Park car park (fee) GR 708532 ME18 5BX for a 5.5 mile Wild Garlic walk 2 slopes (no hills) 3 stiles, Dogs on leads if permitted contact walk leader
May 15th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Ade 01634 306405 adeballard@yahoo.co.uk Yalding village war memorial junction Vicarage Road and High Street. TQ699503 ME18 6JA for a 7 mile leisurely walk up to the Greensand Way One hilly section but fairly flat. Bring picnic lunch. Pub at end with lunches available.
May 17th - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm, 'Miss Saigon' – an Ikebana style arrangement, New members welcome, for details contact Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com

May 17th - Medway RSPB Local Group Talk, 7.30 – 9.45pm, Parkwood Community Centre, £3.50, Hawaii - Landscapes and Natural History - Victoria and Peter Golding and AGM www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway
May 18th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet John/Lesley 07801537317lesley.fielding43@gmail.com Iwade Park along left side of Sheppey Way ME9 8SJ TQ903684 for a 5.4 mile leisurely almost flat circular walk . Pub near the end with lunches available.
May 18th - 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
May 18th - Bredhurst Garden Club, 7.30pm, Village Hall, Caroline Halfpenny – Talk 'Working in Monets Garden', New Members Welcome, Ring 01634 233554
May 19th - Rainham Women's Institute, 1.45 - 4.00pm. Wakeley Hall, Oast House Community Centre, Granary Close, Rainham, Annual Meeting. Visitors welcome for small entry charge per visit. Ring 01634 366276
May 19th – Wigmore Thursday Club, Australia, Paul Warren, (see 12th May.)
May 19th - Hempstead Leisure Club "Upchurch Bell Ringers" Vic Pursglove (see 12th May)
May 20th – UpARA, Village Walk, 10.00am from Village Hall, (see 13th May.)
May 20th - Hempstead Whist Afternoons, Scout Hut, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead. 1.30pm start. Whist Players of all abilities welcome. A partner is not required. For details call Eunice on 01634 231664.
May 20th – Jazz Gig, The Alan Barnes Band - Tribute to Duke Ellington and Johnny Hodges, Anchorians Rugby Club, Darland Avenue, Gillingham, 8.30pm, Admission £10, Details 01634 365352 or 07544 312743
May 21st - Walk This Way 50k Walk 50k Sittingbourne to Eltham or vice versa to raise funds for Demelza. Individual or team options see www.demelza.org.uk or call 01795 845 288
May 21st - Wigmore MADS 'From Broadway to MADSway', an evening of musical entertainment, 8.00pm, St Matthews Community Centre, Drewery Drive, Wigmore. Tickets £7 & £6 conc, from Sue - 01634 370639.
May 21st - Marilyn Baker & Tracy Williamson Concert, Gillingham Parish Church 7.00pm, Tickets £5 include refreshments 01634 932135 or 853459, free parking email:gillinghamparishchurch@gmail.com

Continued on Page 11

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST
by Oscar Wilde

May 12.13.14.19.20.21 Curtain up at 8pm

This classic play focuses around two young gentlemen living in 1890's England who have taken to bending the truth in order to put some excitement into their lives. Jack Worthing has invented a brother, Earnest, who he uses as an excuse to leave his dull country life behind to visit the ravishing Gwendolen. Algvy Moncrieff decides to take the name 'Earnest' when visiting Worthing's young and beautiful ward, Cecily at the country manor. Things start to go awry when they end up together in the country, and their deceptions are discovered - threatening to spoil their romantic pursuits.

A timeless classic you don't want to miss!
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FLAMES OF INSPIRATION

Art & Craft Exhibition with Flower Displays
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St Margaret's Church, Rainham,
Saturday 14th May, 10.00am - 4.30pm
& Sunday 15th May, 12noon - 3.00pm.
Tea/coffee & biscuits available all day

PLANT SALE
Macklands House, Station Road, Rainham
Saturday 14th May, 10.00am
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'FROM BROADWAY TO MADSWAY'
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Saturday 14th May, 10.00am – 12noon
Memorial Hall, School Lane,
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Proceeds go to club funds.

HEMPSTEAD VILLAGE FAYRE
Sunday 22nd May, starting at 11.30am until 4.30pm
Harrow Road Playing Field (behind The Flying Saucer Pub). Free Entry.
Dogs Flyball, Kung Fu, Dancing, Gymnastics,
Zumba and children's sports
Large variety of Stalls, Games and Vintage Vehicles
Show. Funds have so far been raised for Macmillan
Cancer, Kent Air Ambulance, BLESMA, The
Harmony Trust, Milly Foundation, sponsoring
Hempstead Christmas tree and a picnic bench at
Hempstead Park.

BARN DANCE

In aid of the Air Ambulance
Millennium Centre, Rainham
Saturday May 28th, 6.30 – 10.30pm
Tickets £10.50 include small Buffet Supper
and nibbles, BYO Drink, Raffle,
Please come and support us again
Ring 362415 for more information.

**ROYAL COFFEE MORNING
& CHARITY SALE**

In recognition of H.M. Queen's 90th birthday
celebrations the committee and friends of Bredhurst
Village Hall will be holding this event, on
Tuesday 7th June from 10.30am – 200pm,
at the Hall.

There will be memorabilia on display of H.M. Queen
over the years, including items from the Royal Yacht
and one of her visits to Medway. Merchandise of
The Royal British Legion will be available, as will a
large raffle, and items of all descriptions in the
charity sale.

Coffee, Tea and homemade cakes will also be
available. Please come along and enjoy some
refreshments, find yourself a bargain, and maybe
win a prize.

All proceeds from refreshments and raffle will be
donated to the Royal British Legion, and from the
sale, to Bredhurst Church Charity Shop. The shop at
the rear of the hall will also be open.

Any enquiries June Cox 01634 268544

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR APRIL

Easter is the most important festival in the Christian Church calendar because it commemorates the Resurrection of Christ. At Easter, St Margaret's Church is typically decorated with displays of white Easter Lilies, yellow chrysanthemums and green palm fronds. The spirit of Easter is reflected in the churchyard where cherry trees, daffodils and spring snowflakes are usually in bloom; they are amongst the first of the plants that have been dormant during the winter to burst into life. Some time ago, the childhood memories of Easter festivals of the late Helena Thomas were published in Action Forum. Mrs Thomas was the mother of Barbara Mackay Miller, the editor of AF. She recalled that, in the early 1920s, the Sunday School children turned the north porch of St Margaret's Church into a beautiful Easter garden. The 1st Rainham Girl Guides were responsible for decorating one of the windows. Their usual design included an enormous cross of primroses which stood amongst a garden of spring flowers. On Good Friday she and her fellow guides would set out for Bredhurst Woods to gather primroses, their picnic equipment carried on a hand drawn trek cart. In due course, not enough of the wild flowers could be found there and so commercially grown daffodils from Mrs Wakeley's fields at Meresborough were used by the guides. At the end of the account of her memories, Mrs Thomas said that she was thrilled to hear that small patches of primroses had been seen growing in the woods and banks around the Scragged Oak area. Perhaps they were coming back, she wrote.

In April I set out in the direction of the hamlet of Scragged Oak, with a view to reassuring the editor of AF that the well-meaning activities, a long time ago, of her mother and the rest of the Rainham Girl Guides have done no lasting harm to the local population of primroses. Having parked my car in Hurst Road, Bredhurst, I walked, via the church, to Kemsley Street Road. At a sign pointing to Scragged Oak, I took a footpath which led me across a large, grass covered field in a valley. On the opposite side of the valley, known as Strawberry Hill, I came across many clumps

of primrose, along with some sweet violets and cowslips. I was off to a good start in my quest. The primrose is a universal token of spring and produces flowers in every shade from deep yellow to palest cream. Cowslips seem to flower more prolifically among rank grasses (as they do on Strawberry Hill) and scrub. They have suffered in the past from the ploughing up of old grassland and by the use of chemical herbicides.

The footpath to Scragged Oak continues through a line of impressive, ancient beech trees and then crosses another valley. The trees, which mark a small length of the boundary between Bredhurst and Detling parishes, miraculously escaped the Great Storm of October 1987. Mrs Thomas recalled that she set out for Bredhurst Wood and so, instead of carrying on to Scragged Oak, I turned right into the wood. I intended to visit a chalk down land bank which overlooks two farms just off Scragged Oak Road. Only a few yards into the wood are two pollarded beech trees (near post 21) which mark the entrance to a rectangular shaped clearing in the scrubland that now covers the steep, eastern bank of the wood. The clearing is covered with thousands of clumps of primroses and common dog violets. It is almost certainly where The 1st Rainham Girl Guides picked primroses to decorate the church at Easter. The clearing is surrounded by a stock-proof fence which was erected by Bredhurst Woodland Action Group. (See www.bwag.org.uk for information about the wood and the conservation work carried out there.) There is an abandoned, concrete-lined pond at the top of the clearing, indicating that, in the past, sheep grazed there. But, once the grazing was discontinued, the scrub would have started to take hold. The fencing of the clearing has enabled Hebridean and Hardwick sheep and Exmoor ponies to be used to nibble off some of the scrubby re-growth. Also, volunteers from the Action Group have cut down invasive silver birch saplings, dogwood and guelder rose by hand, a never ending task. As I sat in the enclosure, among the primroses, with my flask of coffee, I thought about the guides pulling their trek cart up Maidstone Road, dressed in navy blue tunics belted at the waist; black shoes and stockings; colour ties of alternating stripes of orange, blue and black;

and wide brimmed, dark blue hats. They would have looked very smart. At Bredhurst they would have turned left into Hurst Road which, near the church, continues into the wood as an ancient, stony cart track. Their final leg of their journey, up a steep slope to the plateau of the wood, would have tested the guides' resolve. At some point in their flower picking they would have stopped for a picnic, no doubt carefully avoiding the rabbit and sheep droppings. I do not know what they ate but it is, I think, safe to say that they had some bottles of thirst-quenching lemonade on their trek cart.

Joe Ennis

BACK TO HOCKEY with Gillingham Anchorians Have you ever played and enjoyed hockey and fancy picking up a stick again? Or maybe you're looking for a new sport and want to have fun and make new friends? Now is your chance with 'Back to Hockey' - a national campaign being run locally at Gillingham Anchorians Hockey Club in Darland Avenue. This family friendly club has been playing in Gillingham for 61 years and celebrated the opening of a new all-weather pitch this year.

Four men's teams, three ladies sides and a thriving junior section of 100 children play at the club which achieved the ClubsFirst award last year and has nationally accredited coaches.

Anchs welcome new members of all ages and abilities, and are keen to offer hockey to even more people across Gillingham and Rainham by inviting those who are thinking of getting back into the sport - or maybe wanting to try it for the first time - to its special 'Back to Hockey' sessions starting on Monday 9th May. 'Back to Hockey' is a national England Hockey campaign designed for women and men with a focus on fun, fitness and friendship, for beginners who have never picked up a hockey stick before, to those who have been away from the game for a while and want to polish up their rusty hockey skills. You'll have the opportunity to get a bit fitter, learn new skills and play team hockey in a fun and sociable environment over the course of six weeks.

The sessions will run from 7.30pm to 8.30pm each Monday - starting from Monday 9th May - and will be split into men's and ladies sections so you'll be guided at your own level. (No session on bank holiday Monday 30th May). Sessions are free and you don't

have to attend all of them - just come when you can and see how you get on. Hockey sticks are available to borrow, just wear clothes suitable for sport (t-shirt, sweatshirt, shorts or tracksuit bottoms), and trainers or astroturf shoes if you have them. There are changing facilities including toilets and showers at the Anchorians Association clubhouse and the bar will be open for refreshments and socialising after every training session.

If successful, we hope to repeat the 'Back to Hockey' sessions at the start of the new season in September.

The club will also be running Family Fun Days throughout the summer for children and adults to have an informal and fun match together.

If you enjoy it then we'd be really keen to see you again when the season gets properly underway and can discuss individual and family membership packages.

If you have any questions or would like to register your interest in taking part, go to www.gahc.co.uk or our Facebook page <https://m.facebook.com/GillinghamAnchoriansBack2Hockey/>

For more information about the 'Back to Hockey' scheme and frequently asked questions, please see the England Hockey website.

UpARA's VISIT to GRAVESEND

On a lovely bright winters day at the end of January, a coach full of UpARA members ventured to the extremely impressive Gurdwara (Sikh place of worship) in Gravesend - (if you have ventured to Gravesend by train in the last few years, you cannot fail to have missed it!) and enjoyed a very welcoming and informative few hours.

Apart from taking in the scale of the temple and the vast site that it sits on, the group were given a very warm introduction by the guides who made everyone feel so welcome during the extensive tours and provided a very nice vegetarian lunch to everyone. It was very enlightening, and everyone seemed to appreciate a further understanding of the Sikh faith and also some Sikh trivia, (Did you know that Singh means 'Lion', and is the last name given to every Sikh man, and that Kaur means 'Princess', and is the last name given to every Sikh woman?)

ART EXHIBITION

Paintings and drawings by members of Rainham Art Club will be on show and for sale in Wigmore Library, Fairview Avenue between 1st and 31st May.

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Diary 2016

May 21st - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 7th May.)

May 22nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet

Derek 07768 448633 derek.kent@blueyonder.co.uk

Harrietsham car park south of A20 TQ867525 ME17

1AH for a 9 mile moderate circular walk Bring picnic

lunch for midway break, Pub at end.

May 22nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am

meet Pearl Stevens 07724 602929 Camer Park,

Meopham car park GR 9650670 DA13 0XT for a 6

mile mostly flat walk Steps over railway line. 1Stile.

Dogs on leads if permitted contact walk leader

May 22nd - Hempstead Village Fayre, Harrow Road

Playing Field (behind Flying Saucer) 11.30am -

4.30pm. Dogs Flyball, Kung Fu, Dancing, Gymnastics,

Zumba and children's sports large variety of stalls,

games and vintage vehicles show. Free Entry.

May 23rd - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 9th May.)

May 24th - UpARA, Coffee Morning, Upchurch Village

Hall, 9.30am, Members £1.50, Guests £2, New

Members Welcome (see 13th May.)

May 24th - Lower Halstow Gardening Club, 7.30pm

Memorial Hall, School Lane, ME9 7ES Jacqueline

Aviolet talking on 'Asters - history and propagation.'

Visitors £1.50 - do join us.

May 24th - Rainbow Whist Drive, (see 10th May.)

May 25th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group AGM,

7.30pm, Howard Hall, Woodside, Wigmore, Speaker

and Bar, All welcome ring 01634 317993 for details

May 25th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Mike

Teston Bridge Picnic Park [parking fee]. TQ708533

ME18 5BX for an 8 mile leisurely walk Bring picnic

lunch. Pub food available at end.

May 25th - Gillingham Horticultural Society, United

Reformed Church Hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham,

7.15pm, Malcolm Withnall talk 'Gardening Made

Easier'. £2 members, £2.50 non members includes

refreshments. Details Janet 01634 852519.

May 26th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social Meeting -

Singalong (see 12th May.)

May 26th - Hempstead Leisure Club - Whist, board
games tea and chat (see 12th May)

May 26th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and

Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall,

Woodside, all welcome, more details from Sylvia

Wildridge 01634 312038.

May 27th - Medway Geographical Society, Byron Road

School, Gillingham 7.30 - 9.00pm, AGM followed by

Holiday Memories, Everyone welcome please come on

the evening or ring Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

May 28th - Barn Dance in aid of Air Ambulance,

Millennium Centre, Rainham 6.30 - 10.30pm Ticket

£10.50 includes small Buffet Supper and nibbles, BYO

Drink, Raffle, ring 362415 for more information.

May 29th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am

meet John Trebill 01634 244045 Leybourne Lakes

Country Park car park (fee 80p) GR 697604 for a 6

mile mainly flat walk. Dogs on leads if permitted

May 29th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Ade

01634 306405 adeballard@yahoo.co.uk Charing

Station car park (£1), or adjacent roads. TQ950492

TN27 0AW for a 6.5 mile leisurely walk Bring picnic

June 1st - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Mike,

Underriver One Tree Hill car park on the road south of

Godden Green TQ559532 TN15 0SN for a 4.5 mile

leisurely walk, some stiles. Bring snack, Pub nearby.

June 1st - 30th - Art Exhibition by John K Austin,

Wigmore Library normal hours, paintings for sale.

June 2nd - Wigmore Thursday Club, New York to San

Francisco, Brian Biggs (see 12th May.)

June 2nd - Hempstead Leisure Club - Whist, board games

tea and chat (see 12th May)

June 3rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, 4.00pm meet

Margaret 01795 843927 maglou1@yahoo.co.uk

Lapwing Drive Lower Halstow TQ859674 ME9 7DZ

for a 6 mile moderate afternoon walk

June 3rd - Games Afternoon, Lower Halstow Memorial

Hall, 2.00 - 4.00pm - Euchre, Whist, Rummicub,

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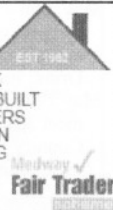
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Diary 2016

June 3rd - UpARA, Village Walk, 10.00am from Village
Hall, New Members Welcome (see 13th May.)

June 4th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Tania
07841 913561 office@taniapeitzker.com Upper Halling
Court Farm Butchery & Country larder Car park
assigned to Ramblers, please follow signs. TQ691643
ME2 1HR for a 3.5 mile leisurely walk

June 5th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Julie/
Trevor St Margarets at Cliffe free public car park
TR359447 CT15 6AP for an 8 mile moderate Cliff top
walk. Toilets on route. Bring picnic lunch. Pub at end.

June 4th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 7th May.)

June 5th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am,
meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847 827249 St
Nicholas Church, Ash, 2 small car parks n Ash or on
road parking. GR 287583 CT3 2EN for an 8 mile fairly
easy walk 5 Stiles. Dogs on leads if permitted

June 6th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 9th May.)

June 7th - Royal Coffee Morning & Charity Sale,
Bredhurst Village Hall, 10.30am - 2.00pm, In
recognition of H.M. Queen's 90th birthday
celebrations, queries June Cox 01634 268544

June 7th - Medway & Swale (West) Association for
Breast Cancer, 7.00 - 9.00pm Medway Maritime
Hospital, Area 7 Level 2, Talk on the work of a
Magistrate, details 01634 861802 or 07761 853750

June 7th - Rainham Horticultural Society, 7.30pm
Rainham Cricket Club, Berengrave Lane. Slugs and
Snails - John Llewellyn-Jones, New members welcome,
ring 366276 for details.

June 7th - GHS Floral Art Group, 'VE Day Memories' -
arrangement in an unusual container (see 17th May.)

June 8th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 6.30pm
meet Stephen Manning 07551 712438 Hurstwood
Road, Bredhurst GR 795622 ME7 3JZ for a 4 mile
Evening walk muddy if wet. No stiles & No steps.

June 8th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet
Arthur/Jan 01634 711734 arthur.waters@sky.com
Lower Upnor public car park, Albion Place, 763713
ME2 4XB for a 5 mile leisurely walk. one steep climb
Pub at end with lunches available.

June 9th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Life upon the
Wicked Stage, Wilf Lower (see 12th May.)

June 9th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker Dean
Caston "The Victoria Palace" (see 12th May)

June 10th - UpARA, Monthly Meeting (see 13th May.)

June 10th - Pamper Evening, 6.30 - 9.30pm, Parkwood
Community Centre, £2, Treatments from £5, proceeds
to Demelza Hospice, tables £10 please contact Margaret
Lewis: 01634 362898 e.mail: feb1636@sky.com

June 10th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History
Society, Members Evening, (see 13th May.)

June 11th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group Meet
Stephen Manning 07551 712438 London Capital Ring
Walk -stage 5 start Priory Gardens, Highgate 9 mile
walk via Stoke Newington, finish at Hackney Wick

June 11th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium
Centre, (see 14th May.)

June 12th - An afternoon with Ann Widdecombe. Tickets
£6 include cream tea from Parish Office 01634 853459,
01634 932135 or gillinghamparishchurch@gmail.com

June 12th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am
meet John Williams 01622 764821 07977 614033
Frittenden The Street park by St Mary's Church please
park considerably in the village for a 5 mile walk 10
Stiles Dogs on leads if permitted contact walk leader

June 12th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am meet Ade
01634 306405 adeballard@yahoo.co.uk Hadlow village
by The Square TQ634497 TN11 0DA for a 6.6 mile
leisurely walk.

June 17th - Wander with Wisdom, 8.00pm, 10k sponsored
Moonlit Walk from Medway Rugby Club, Rochester.
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