

ACTION FORUM

AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY FOR RAINHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

APRIL 2017
NUMBER 530



Rainham Church School at the top of Station Road viewed from the churchyard which Joe Ennis visits in Nature Notes on page 8. The central section was built as the National School with public subscription (£685 7s 3d) in 1846. Two extensions were added: the boys school to the north in 1878 and the infants to the south in 1884. The Headmasters quarters were adapted for the girls and the lower schoolroom became Rainham's first Church Hall. The building was used as the first Rainham Community Centre in the 1960s when the schools moved to the adapted secondary school buildings in Orchard Street (made redundant by the newly constructed Howard and Rainham School for Girls). The old school was demolished in 1977 when the Rainham Precinct construction finally began and the Station Oast building was converted to a new Community Centre. See page 9 for Mr Tippins memories of Wakeleys Station Oasthouse.

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Editorial

Our front cover picture created some interest last month as trains always do! I am reliably informed that the train has 1st class Pullman carriages. See "PULLMAN" above the windows of the first carriage. The engine would have taken the train to Dover Marine where it was loaded onto a ferry for Calais. Victoria to Calais Nord took 8 hours. This service is not to be confused with the "Golden Arrow" which also left from Victoria but which went to Folkestone for the crossing. We have also received an interesting article from John Tippins (see page 9) who, as a boy, knew the Wakeleys Granary and Oast House building well as he visited it when helping his father with his agricultural supply business. This Rainham landmark still remains and the current leadership of the Community Centre, which now occupies the building, are keen to record its history while it is still possible. If you missed the appeal last month but have information, memories, or even pictures please contact 01634 230324 or email rdellar283@gmail.com
 This month we have another of Rainham's notable buildings pictured on our front cover. The old school at the top of Station Road was much loved and many were sorry to see the demolition of this memorable landmark to make way for the new shopping precinct in 1977. However by that time the building was in a very poor state of repair having been vacated by the school some ten years earlier and co-opted as a stand in Community Centre while fund raising allowed the purchase and conversion of the Station Oast complex. Little had been spent on maintaining this temporary home as it was only expected to be for a couple of years at the most. So it went and was quickly replaced by the large Co-op Supermarket and other shops and offices. The Co-op traded for twenty years before finally conceding to Tesco's greater power and the shop then went through a series of traders and substantial periods standing empty until finally opening as Wilkinsons (now known as Wilkos) giving Rainham shopping centre a new lease of life.
 There are still people around who remember the big old elm tree in the front playground of the old school, the outside iron staircase the boys had to climb to their lessons, the allotment gardens the children tended behind the building, the steps down into the cavernous hall used for Sunday school and Guide and Brownie meetings and the sounds and smell of the adjacent butchers shop particularly on pig slaughter days.

Happy memories for many.
 The clocks have sprung forward, the weather is warming up and more spring flowers appear in gardens and woodland every day so now is the time to get out and enjoy this beautiful time of year. Have a good month – we will be with you again in May.

Correspondence

SUFFOLK COURT LUNCH CLUB

Dear Editor
 We need your help at Suffolk Court!
 Suffolk Court is a sheltered scheme for elderly people ranging from 60 to 95 years old. The tenants have a Wednesday Lunch Club that provides a cooked meal and dessert for £3 (£4.50 for visitors). This allows tenants to bring a member of their family to have a meal in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.
 A roast dinner and dessert is provided one week and another meal we know and enjoy on the other week, like liver and bacon. The club used to run two weeks out of three but as our volunteers grew older we had to reduce the club to every other week. There are nearly 30 of us who benefit from this club.
 Now we are in danger of losing our lunch club altogether because we need volunteers. If any readers, who have a cooking or catering background would like to help by volunteering please ring Shona or Karen on 01634 388864 for information.
 Yours sincerely
 The Tenants of Suffolk Court

BREDHURST MAY DAY

Dear Editor
 Bredhurst School is holding their May Day event on Saturday 20th May this year, and the fete is set to be bigger and better than ever before as we are celebrating 150 years of the school. We are inviting all the May Kings and Queens from past years that we can find, as well as hoping to involve all of the local community.
 We would like to replicate the May Days from years back by decorating the streets with bunting and covering floats with flowers. It is set to be a very special afternoon! We want this year's May Day to be spectacular. It is such a special event every year, with the road closure and street parade, Crowning of the new May King and Queen, and traditional May Pole dancing by the children.

Kind regards
 Tracey Bond
 Friends of Bredhurst School Committee
 tracey@kitchenculturekent.com

HEMPSTEAD VILLAGE FAYRE 2017

Stalls now booking for the Hempstead Village Fayre which will be held on Harrow Road Playing Fields Sunday 21st May, 11.30am - 4.30pm.
 If you would like to hire a pitch or require further information, email valeriegorf@blueyonder.co.uk or telephone 01634 230214.

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY SERVICES

St. Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, ME9 0NX
 Dear Editor,
 We would like to invite people living with Dementia and their Carers to join us for a Dementia Friendly Service on the fourth Wednesday of every month in St. Matthew's Church, Wigmore at 2.30pm. We enjoy worshipping together and then share refreshments and have a cosy chat sitting around tables.
 For further information please contact Jean Penney on 01634 387379 or e-mail penneymejl@aol.com

Yours sincerely,
 Jean Penney - Church Warden

WIGMORE OPEN GARDENS WEEKEND

Dear Editor,
 This very popular biennial event organised by St Matthew's Church will be held over the 17th and 18th June 2017. If any Wigmore residents would like to consider opening their gardens in support of the church OR for a charity of their choice, then please could they contact me at paul@bellerby.me or on 01634 387328 for further information.

Yours sincerely,
 Paul Bellerby, Gardens Co-ordinator

MAJESTY

To Joe Ennis c/o Action Forum. I was so pleased to see your piece in (Ed: November 2016) Action Forum describing your visit to see "Majesty", the ancient oak tree at Nonington. And I was relieved to hear that the great tree is still alive and well – and good for another few hundred years. I must go back myself and pay it a second visit. As you say, standing inside gives you the sense of looking up a roofless tower, a wonderful experience.

Yours Thomas Pakenham.

(Ed: Author of "Meetings with remarkable Trees.")

STREET NAMING - FOUR GUN FIELD

Upchurch. The Four Gun Field housing development is nearly complete, with some new owners already moved in. The site is next to the Three Sisters public house, Otterham Quay Lane, and just inside Upchurch parish. Nine months ago the developers, Matthew Homes Ltd., put forward a number of naming suggestions to Upchurch Parish Council. After a series of emails, four names have been chosen. These are Eastwood Meadow, Woods Edge, Butcher's Green and Quilters Yard.

I was asked very late in the day to comment on the

four names, which I did after some very basic research.

I found, Josephs Edward Butcher came from Frindsbury and owned several sites including at one time, Four Gun Field.

John Woods came from Singlewell, Gravesend and owned brickfields in Lower Halstow.

John Francis Eastwood was the driving force in the area suggesting a merger with himself, Joseph Butcher, Frederick Quilter, Josiah Jackson, Charles Richardson and John Woods as Eastwood's Ltd. Frederick Quilter came from Belstead, Suffolk.

It would appear that no one checked these names for the new development and by the time I made my feelings and research known, I was told it was too late. Upchurch Parish Council had agreed with Matthew Homes and the details provided to Swale Borough Council Naming Department, run by Mid Kent.

The GIS Operative & Street Naming and Numbering Officer for the Council Naming Department, made it very clear, nothing was going to change. I was told everything had been checked by a historian, which turns out to be someone working for Matthew Homes in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire.

It is a great shame that the new development does not reflect the history of the area. In years to come, the new residents will ask about the names, so I hope someone will keep a copy of Action Forum.

Mike Gunnill

Email mikegunnill@mac.com

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Diary 2017

No charge is made for Diary entries
Copy should be in writing either by email to
af@thenet.uk.net or 5 Meresborough Cottages,
Meresborough, Gillingham, Kent ME8 8PP

Diary Copy Date: April 24th 2017

March 31st - April 12th - Art Exhibition 'ME, Scenes from the Medway Towns', by Local artist David Frankum, Nucleus Art Gallery, 272 High Street, Chatham ME4 4BP, All Welcome

April 1st - Beekeeping Course, 10.00am to 12 noon, for 10 weeks commencing, The Oast House, Granary Close, Rainham. Further details from Pat & Terry Clare 01634 233748 or patclare89@me.com

April 1st - Medway Folk Dance Club, United Reformed Church hall, Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30 - 10.00pm. New and experienced dancers welcome, with or without a partner, for more information ring 366189 or 388546.

April 2nd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am, meet Lindsay Floyd/Andy Boorman 07881 933358 Higham Railway Station car park (free) ME3 7JQ GR 715726 for a 5.25 mile historical easy walk with slight gradient using footpaths, lanes and pavements. No stiles. No Toilets on route. Dogs allowed

April 2nd - Medway Ramblers Walk, Chartham, 10.00am, Moderate 5 miles / 8.1 km (finish 12.45pm) Following the river towards the A2 and then back via the Canterbury Centenary Walk, the North Downs Way and Chartham Hatch. Contact: Tony/Ann, 01634 406634, vajra.faulkner@tesco.net

April 2nd - Newington Spring Craft Fair, Village Hall ME9 7JJ, 11.00am - 4.00pm. Handmade Crafts and Refreshments To book a stall, or information call Katie 01795 844949 or 07871 934848.

April 2nd - Volunteer Conservation Day, Riverside

Country Park, 10.00am - 2.00pm, meet at Visitors Centre ring 01634 337432 for details.

April 2nd - Special Easter Service, 6.30pm. We have a guest Medium, a healing meditation and Easter eggs at The Centre, M2 Services, Next to Travelodge, Farthing Corner, ME8 8PQ

April 3rd - 15th - Free Easter Family fun Hempstead Valley, 11.00am - 1.00pm and 2.00 - 4.00pm www.hempsteadvalley.com

April 3rd - Monday Hub, 10.00am - 12.30pm, St Paul's Church, Parkwood, ME8 9PN, Board games, Table Tennis, use of Laptop and much more, Free light refreshments, phone Jill on 01634 230780.

April 3rd - Medway Towns Bridge Club, Sociable duplicate Bridge every Mon, Tues and Fri, 7.30pm start, St. Luke's Methodist Church Hall, City Way, Rochester ME1 2BQ. Table money £3.50 guests, £2.50 members (£10 to join). We can usually find a partner for you on a Monday, details 01634 375706, 840094 or www.bridgewebs.com/medwaytowns

April 4th - Easter Bunny Crafts, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon, Create your own bunny, suitable for all the family £3 per person booking essential ring 01634 337432.

April 4th - All healing is free, but we gratefully accept donations. Every Tuesday evening 7.30 - 9.00pm. Every Wed 10.00am - 12noon The Centre, M2 Services, Next to Travelodge, ME8 8PQ

April 4th - GHS Floral Art Group, United Reformed Church (rear hall) Balmoral Road, Gillingham, 7.30pm, "Easter Basket" - fresh flowers, New members welcome, first visit free, no experience needed, for details contact Kaye Buss 01634 232998 or email kayebuss@btinternet.com

April 5th - Big Bug Hunt, Riverside Country Park, 10.00am - 12noon or 1.00 - 3.00pm, Pond dipping and sweep netting, suitable for all the family children must be accompanied by an adult, £3 per person booking essential ring 01634 337432.

April 6th - Bird Song Walk, Riverside Country Park,

9.00 - 11.00am, join a ranger and get to know bird songs, no experience needed, suitable for adults and enthusiastic children, £3 per person booking essential ring 01634 337432.

April 6th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker Glyn Bareham "Every Picture tells a Story" Village Hall behind All Saints Church 2.00 - 4.00pm. New members always welcome, phone 07583 343782

April 6th - Wigmore Thursday Club, St Matthew's Community Centre, 2.00pm, Truffle Making Demonstration, Gill Cromarty, for over 50s ring 01634 234712 for details.

April 7th - 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 7th - UpARA Upchurch Active Retirement Association, Village Walk, 10.00am details email Chairman davidpowell5@hotmail.co.uk

April 7th - Hempstara Whist Afternoon, 1.30pm start, Scout Hall, Dukes Meadow Drive, Hempstead, Whist players of all abilities welcome, A partner is not required, For details ring Eunice 01634 231664

April 7th - Lower Halstow Games Afternoon, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Community Hall, many games, £1.50 per person includes a cup of tea/coffee and biscuits and a very warm welcome.

April 7th - UpARA Upchurch Active Retirement Association, Monthly Meeting, Upchurch Village Hall, 2.00pm, Members Free, Guests £2, (7th April)

April 7th - Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society, Byron Primary School ME7 5XX, 7.15pm, Crossings of the Lower Thames and Medway - Rob Poole, Visitors welcome (small charge) details Val Barrard 07947 583327 email lupusrufus@sky.com or see www.grlhs.weebly.com

April 8th - Craft Market, St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Rainham, 9.00am - 12.30pm, Free entry, Stalls £10 each contact cjdcraftmarkets@yahoo.com or ring 07779 366054 for more details

April 8th - Barnardos Charity Quiz Night, 7.30pm start, Twydall Church Hall Gillingham. Tickets £5 each. Tables of 6-8, Bring your own Drink and Nibbles, Free Tea Coffee and Biscuits available, Book in advance, 01634 233405 or 01634 375486

April 9th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group, 10.00am meet Doreen Maguire 01634 37623 Capstone Park, Ski Slope entrance upper car park ME7 3JH for a 5 mile undulating walk around park. Minimum steps and no stiles, no known mud. Dogs allowed

April 9th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Sissinghurst Castle, 10.00am, Easy 5.5 miles / 8.8 km (Estimated finish 1.00pm) flatish circular walk via Frittenden, Len. 01634 319391, lenbeadle@blueyonder.co.uk

April 10th - Medway Scrabble Club, 2.00 - 4.30pm, St Stephens Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Chatham, new members welcome, 01634 230500

April 10th - Rainham Flower Club, St Matthews Church Hall, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, ME8 0NX Workshop tutored by Graham King on "Spheres" 7.30pm, information www.rainhamflowerclub.co.uk or ring any of the following numbers:- 01634 864572 / 01634 863034 / 01622 884478

April 10th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club, Parkwood Community Centre, Rainham, ME8 9PN, 7.30pm, Organist - Paul Roberts, details ring Brian Leonard 01634 234694

April 10th - Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship Group, Millennium Centre, Rainham meets 2nd Monday 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.

April 11th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, 7.30pm, Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, ME8 0BX, Fuchsias My Way - Expert and fuchsia judge Derek Dexter, Members £1, Non-members £1.50. New members and visitors always welcome, for details ring 01634 852519

April 11th - Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, 8.00pm, St. George Hotel, New Road, Chatham, 'I Collect the Evidence', New members welcome, for details ring 01634 851512 or simply just turn up

April 12th - East Medway U3A Mel Rees will take "A Light Hearted look on Life", and raise a laugh or two on the way. 2.00pm Rainham Mark Social Club, 56 London Rd, ME8 6YX. Cost £2. Phone 07895 890635 for further details.

April 12th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Hempstead Village Hall, 8.00pm, Craft Evening, for details contact Rhonda Peck 07951 629444

April 13th - Wigmore Thursday Club, The History of Pantomime, Paul Harris, (see 6th April)

April 13th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board games, tea and chat (see 6th April)

April 14th - At the Foot of the Cross, St. Mary's Church Choir and Upchurch Choral Society music and readings for Good Friday, St. Mary's Church, Upchurch, 7.00pm. Admission free. Retiring Collection in aid of "Save The Children".

Continued on Page 11

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RAINHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY
We are a friendly Society with an interest in general history. We have a season of talks in the winter months and Saturday outings in the Summer months. Membership is just £10 a year. Meetings are held in the Millennium Hall in Rainham. If you are interested in joining us or would like more information please contact Olwyn O'Dowd on 01634 263622 or Dinah Dimmick on 01634 389712.

FREE EASTER FAMILY FUN
Hempstead Valley is hosting FREE Easter events during the school holidays
Every day Monday 3rd to Easter Saturday 15th April 11.00am - 1.00pm and 2.00 - 4.00pm
There is no need to book and parental supervision is required at all times. www.hempsteadvalley.com

WISDOM HOSPICE SHOP
Our second shop is now open in Chatham High Street. We were delighted that the Mayor and Mayoress of Medway, Cllr Stuart Tranter and his wife Susan, cut the ribbon at the official opening. If you would like to donate goods or volunteer at the shop, please call
Kylie Robinson 01634 406275.

BARNARDOS CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT
Saturday 8th April, 7pm for 7.30pm start
Twydall Church Hall, Gillingham
Tickets £5 each, Tables of 6 - 8
Bring your own Drink and Nibbles
Free Tea Coffee and Biscuits available
Plenty of free parking, Book in advance
Phone 01634 233405 or 01634 375486

MEDWAY ANTIQUE & COLLECTORS' CLUB
St. George Hotel, New Road, Chatham.
Tuesday, 11th April, 7.30 for 8.00pm
'I Collect the Evidence.....'
May 9th, 'Paintings in Rochester Museum'
Memberships now open at £25
For further information ring 01634 851512 or simply just turn up

FREE FILMS
St. Mary's, Gillingham Green
All are welcome to join us for a showing of
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St. Mary's Church Choir and
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A selection of music and readings for
Good Friday
St. Mary's Church, Upchurch
Friday 14th April 7.00pm
Music includes works by Hugh Robertson,
Karl Jenkins and Pavel Chesnokov.
Admission free. Retiring Collection in aid of
"Save The Children".

SPRING CRAFT FAIR
St. Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow
Saturday 29th 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.
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BLUEBELLS & CREAM TEA WEEKEND
Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th April 2pm each day
Join BWAG for its popular Bluebell & Cream Tea Weekend. Guided walks through Bredhurst 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 Jim Chalmers on 07870 878907, Esther Huxstep on 01634 233752, email bwag@vanessajones.plus.com or buy on line at bluebellwalk2017.eventbrite.co.uk

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Nature Notes

NATURE NOTES FOR MARCH

In a previous Notes I wrote about spring and summer in St Margaret's churchyard. In this month's Notes I write about autumn and winter. Summer flowers that were still in bloom in autumn included toadflax, autumn hawkbit (like a dandelion with small, bright yellow flowers), herb robert and red clover. A cluster of fleabane flowers were in bloom on the north wall of the churchyard; they are like daisies and are a garden escapee. The flowers of the ivy plant appear in early autumn; they are rich in nectar and pollen. I noted a host of wasps, bees, flies and bugs and a late-flying red admiral butterfly, all of which had been attracted to the sweet feast. There was a good crop of nuts, fruit and berries for the birds in autumn. They included holm oak acorns; small, round, yellow crab apples; rose hips; yew berries and holly berries. Jays could occasionally be seen sneaking into the churchyard for the acorns. Although the seeds of yew berries are poisonous, the fleshy parts are eaten avidly by thrushes, blackbirds and finches, particularly green finches. The latter delicately discard the seeds and eat only the pulp. Thrushes and blackbirds eat the berries whole, but do not digest the seeds, which are excreted. When nobody is about, the wood pigeons pluck up courage to descend onto the holly trees and devour the berries. They can often be seen, flapping about, trying to keep their balance on the extremities of the holly branches. By the onset of winter, the holly berries had been largely eaten but, fortuitously, the ivy berries had by then turned black and were ripe. The "conkers" that fall from the horse chestnut trees are no longer keenly sought by local children. It would appear that anything powered by batteries has a greater attraction. Nevertheless, grown-ups by the hundreds congregated at the World Conker Championships, in October 2016, at the Shuckborough Arms near Oundle, Northamptonshire. The churchyard was not without some colour, even in the winter. Two ornamental cherry trees were in blossom, as was a viburnum bush. A group of stinking iris (or gladdon) plants, under the veteran yew tree, sported strings of brilliant orange seeds. The plant is

widely naturalised in churchyards, having been used, in the past, in winter, as grave-top bouquets and in church flower arrangements. There were a number of lichens growing on the tombs and gravestones, the most common one being of a yellowy orange colour and with a Latin name that is both difficult to pronounce and remember. Lichens are slow growing and, in a churchyard, are usually left undisturbed to grow larger and larger over the centuries. The majority of lichens prefer an unpolluted and sunny habitat. I noted a number of species of small and delicate ferns growing in the churchyard walls. They included maidenhair spleenwort, common polypody and rusty back. By the end of January, the ripe berries had been largely stripped from the growth of ivy in the churchyard and there were few birds feeding there. I did however disturb a blue tit that was feeding on fat in a half coconut suspended from a tree branch overlooking the cremation garden. A very thoughtful gesture by an unknown person! A robin's sweet, whistling notes could sometimes be heard, even on dark winter days. Strong winds had brought down the drey of leaves, built by a grey squirrel on a branch of one of the horse chestnut trees. High on the top of a neighbouring tree, the nest of a carrion crow, built of sticks and reinforced by mud, was intact. I was reminded of the fairy tale of three little pigs. I noticed a long, narrow track in the grass of the church yard, formed by the nightly perambulation by a fox of his territory. The track started near the Millennium Centre and appeared to be a short cut to the enticing smells emanating from the restaurant kitchens of the lower High Street. The first snowdrops and crocuses appeared in February on the grave of the Reverend Clifford, a previous Vicar of St Margaret's and, later, there was a good display of daffodils throughout the churchyard as a whole. As winter drew to an end, birds such as blackbird, hedge sparrow, wren and great tit, began to sing at dawn or dusk, in either the churchyard itself or in adjoining areas. Even the wood pigeons were joining in with their gruff coos. The horse chestnut trees were covered in sticky buds and, under them, the green shoots of lesser celandines were appearing. Spring was on its way. I cannot leave the subject of St Margaret's churchyard without saying

more about the yew tree. The trunk of the tree has split into four parts, each supporting branches. Two massive branches, growing from the base of the trunk fell to the ground some years ago but remained attached to the trunk and continue to flourish. According to Mr Tim Hills of the Ancient Yew Group, the tree is over 1,400 years old. That takes it back to about the time that St Augustine landed in Kent, in AD 597, with the aim of converting the country's Anglo Saxons to Christianity. It seems that the yew is not only older than the existing church building, but also older than the earlier Anglo Saxon and Norman ones.

Joe Ennis

WAKELEY'S GRANERY AND MILL IN THE OAST HOUSE RAINHAM

I was interested in the letter in March AF appealing for information about the Station Oast House. After WWII my father returned to his second profession as a shopkeeper, having worked through the war as a precision engineer. He had joined Gillingham Co-op as a salesman in the greengrocery and animal feed shop in Balmoral Road and established contacts around the area when he returned to take care of my grandfather. So in the early 1950s he left engineering and began building a business around animal feed, garden supplies and floristry. Animal feed was still on ration and there were problems getting and selling these items. You had to get animal keepers to register with you before you had anything to sell because you had to show their ration books to buy the goods. Floristry and garden supplies were also difficult so establishing a new business was a slow process and there may have been a bit of "black market" in those early days. Soon Dad learnt to drive and we got a van to go to local mills for feed products. Wakeleys sold crushed oats, layers meal and pellets and fertilizer, specifically 'National Growmore'. These items were still rationed and at 13 years old I was unsure how it all worked. Wakeleys were major hop growers with large quantities of hop bines which when composted and supplemented with minerals were sold as a proprietary product 'Wakeley's Hop Manure' a low grade fertilizer but excellent soil improver much prized by the gardeners of the area who had heavy clay soils. In the same way that these simple fertilizers were shared out so the animal feeds on offer were very simple. They were mainly whole grain wheat, barley, oats, locally grown pulses like field beans and a little

imported maize when it was available all milled to make a cheap low grade poultry and pig food. Rabbits and horses survived on crushed oats and barley with a few kibbled field beans (kibbled means crushed or chopped through a rotary sieve). Wakeleys also sold miller's offal - Bran and middlings for horses and pigs (middlings was mixed with swill to dry it into a sort of porridge). I think they may also have cut chaff for some of the stables but we never handled that. The mill consisted of several floors and goods were moved between them on a millers hoist, this was a rope with a slip noose at the end which could be put round the neck of a hessian sack or round the body of a paper sack. A pull on another rope operated a clutch to take the rope up, the trap doors beneath the bag were opened, the tension on the control rope was eased and the bag lowered to the next set of doors below. The operator then went down the steps to repeat the procedure until the bag reached the required level. Going up was simpler as the bag was simply pulled up between the trapdoors like valves and was held there until wheeled away with a sack barrow. So cereals could be moved easily to the top of the building and then poured into the hoppers for processing down through the mills or crushers as required. I recall that the granary and oast had its own railway siding but I don't think it was being used by then. It must have been active in earlier days transporting hops to London brewers and horse food for the road traffic of London which relied on equine "horse power" plus possibly bulk movement of fruit and vegetables into the capital as Wakeleys had extensive orchards and potato fields. When the station building closed Wakeleys moved their business to the fruit and potato cold stores they had in Horsham Lane Upchurch. My Father would have known all about Wakeleys being himself on old Rainham boy, he lived in the cottages opposite the bottom of Pump Lane just off the Lower Rainham Road, and he attended the school at the top of Station Road, from around 1913 to 1922 when the family moved to London. The school was approximately on the present Wilko's site. He often recollected scrumping in the local orchards after school. I hope I have given an insight into what the granary was like when it was operating and my personal details are included to put it into context. John Tippins formerly of Edward Tippins and Son Gillingham Road. Now 23 The Mailyans

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April 15th, Rainham South meet your local councillor
at 3:16 Cafe Parkwood 10.00am - 12 noon. No
appointment necessary.

April 15th - Craft Market at Smallholders Club. 2
Springvale. 11.00am - 2.00pm Free entry. Stalls
available. smallholdersclub@btconnect.com or
01634 263408

April 15th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 1st April)

April 16th - Medway Ramblers Walk, 10.00am,
Moderate circular walk 8.5 miles / 13.7 km, finish
2.45pm. Meet Linton Church car park ME17 4AW.
TQ753501 Bring picnic lunch. Contact: John, 07749
760788, billingsjc@blueyonder.co.uk

April 18th - The RSPB Medway Local Group Talk,
Parkwood Community Centre, 7.30 - 9.45pm £3.50.
Giving Nature a Home - Peter Holden MBE, For
Field Trips: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/medway.

April 18th - GHS Floral Art Group, Imposed Night,
(see 4th April)

April 19th - Wigmore Ladies Club, Howard Hall,
Woodside, 2.00 - 4.00pm, new members welcome
to cheerful group, just come along 01634 388912

April 19th - Bredhurst Garden Club, Third Wednesday
every month, Village Hall, 7.30pm, Jackie Aviolet
'Herbs - culinary, cultivation and folklore', Bring
and Buy Produce Stall, New members always
welcome, ring 07791 781 910 for details

April 20th - Rainham Women's Institute 1.45 - 4.00pm
Poetry to Tickle your Funny Bone, Wakeley Hall,
Oast House Community Centre, Rainham. Visitors
welcome for small entry charge per visit. Ring
01634 366276 for details.

April 20th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Whist, board
games, tea and chat (see 6th April)

April 20th - Wigmore Thursday Club, entertainment
from Kingfisher Singers, (see 6th April)

April 21st - UpARA Upchurch Active Retirement
Association, Village Walk, 10.00am (see 7th April)

April 21st - Hempstara Whist Afternoon, (7th April)

April 21st - Evening of Clairvoyance with Medium
John Shaw 7.30pm £6 The Centre, M2 Services,
Next to Travelodge, Farthing Corner. ME8 8PQ

April 21st - Jazz Gig, Anchorians Rugby Club,
Darland Avenue, Gillingham, 8.30pm, Alan Barnes/
Gilad Atzmon Quintet. Admission £12, Enquiries
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April 22nd - Music and Drama Festival, Rochester and
North Kent, The Pilkington Building, University of
Kent Chatham Maritime, 9.15am - 5.00pm, £7.50 all
-day admission as audience

April 22nd - Cake Decorating Competition,
Gillingham WI, English Festival Riverside Country
Park, over 14's and under 14's, Cakes theme Spring,
be at WI tea tent by 12.30pm, prize giving 3.30pm.

April 23rd - Medway Ramblers Walk, Shottenden,
10.00am, Moderate 6.5 miles / 10.5 km (finish
1.30pm). Contact: Tony/Ann, 01634 406634,
vajra.faulkner@tesco.net

April 23rd - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am meet Mo Fleisig 07976 600393 Eynsford
Village car park beside Post Office on High Street
DA4 0AE GR 540655 for a 5 mile 'Roman Round
Villa' riverside walk, Dogs allowed

April 24th - Monday Hub, (see 3rd April)

April 24th - Medway Scabble Club, (see 10th April)

April 24th - Rainham Evening Women's Institute, St
Paul's Church, Parkwood, 7.30pm, Speaker Chris
Stewart 'Work Aid - Tools for Africa', All welcome,
ring Kate Archer 01634 360797 or just come along.

April 25th - UpARA Upchurch Active Retirement
Association, Coffee Morning, Upchurch Village
Hall, 9.30am, Members £1, Guests £2, (7th April)

April 26th - All Saints Women's Fellowship, Charity
Presentation, (see 12th April)

April 27th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Outing to Hall
Place, Bexley, no local meeting

April 27th - Wigmore Thursday Club, Social Meeting,
(see 6th April)

April 27th - Free Films, St. Mary's, Gillingham Green
'Les Misérables', 2.00pm all welcome, Free entry
and refreshments! (No need to book) 01634 324783

April 27th - Rainham & District Dolls' House and
Miniaturist Group, 7.30pm, Howard Memorial Hall,
Woodside, All welcome, more details 01634 312038

April 28th - Medway Geographical Society, Holy
Trinity Church, Twydall Lane, ME8 6TN Plenty of
parking, 7.30 - 9.00pm, 'A Kentish Miscellany' -
Colin Coe, Everyone welcome, please come on the
evening or ring Lorna Bailey 01634 572139

April 28th - Wigmore Community and Residents
Association AGM, Wigmore Library 7.30pm.

April 29th - Spring Craft Fair, St. Margaret's Church,
Lower Halstow, 2.00 - 4.00pm join us for a wide
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April 29th & 30th - BWAG Bluebells & Cream Tea
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01634 233752, email bwag@vanessajones.plus.com
or bluebellwalk2017.eventbrite.co.uk

April 29th - Medway Folk Dance Club, (see 1st April)

April 30th - Medway Towns Footpaths Group,
10.00am meet Chris Morris 01634 374923 07847

828249 Toys Hill National Trust Car Park CTTN16
1QG GR 470518 for a 5.5 mile walk via Henden

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April 30th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Hosey Hill to
Chartwell via Toy's Hill, 10.00am, Leisurely 6

miles / 9.7 km (finish 1.15pm) circular walk could
be muddy, minor hills but no stiles. Lunch at

Chartwell (NT) Contact: Sandy, 07879417758

May 1st - Medway Ramblers May Day 'Sunrise Walk',
5.15am, leisurely circular 4 miles / 6.4 km, finish

7.30am. Park and meet at Mickeys Dinner - off
Chatham bound carriage way A229 / beside the

shell petrol station. ME20 7EZ, TQ747608 Kits
Coty to watch the Morris dance at sunrise. Contact:

Geoff, geoff.rambler@me.com

May 1st - Medway Towns Bridge Club, Sociable
duplicate Bridge every Mon, Tues and Fri, 7.30pm

St. Luke's Methodist Church Hall, City Way,
Rochester ME1 2BQ. Table money £3.50 guests,

£2.50 members (£10 to join). We can usually find a
partner for you on a Monday, details 01634 375706,

or visit www.bridgewebs.com/medwaytowns

May 2nd - GHS Floral Art Group, workshop with Viv
O'Sullivan, (see 4th April)

May 4th - Wigmore Thursday Club, The Red Arrows,
Guy Bartlett, (see 6th April)

May 4th - Hempstead Leisure Club, Speaker John
Mills "For the High Jump" (see 6th April)

May 5th - UpARA Upchurch Active Retirement
Association, Village Walk, (see 7th April)

May 6th - RAMASES Suzanne Lax-Boyots will be
lecturing on Tuthmosis III - The Napoleon of

Egypt, Newington Village Hall, 2.30pm, £8 for
guests in advance £9 on the day. Details 07476

636803 or annette.crowder65@gmail.com

May 6th - BWAG AGM, 3.00pm, Arran Bank Farm,
Dunn Street, Bredhurst ME7 3ND, guest speaker,

David Fleck, The Woodland Trust, Members and
non-members welcome details 07813 785940 or

email bwag@vanessajones.plus.com

May 7th - Medway Ramblers Walk, Lamberhurst,
10.00am, Leisurely circular walk 4.5 miles / 7.2 km,

finish 12.30pm. Meet in public park near the
Chequers Inn public house in Lamberhurst - nearest

post code: TN3 8HX TQ676362

May 8th - Monday Hub, (see 3rd April)

May 8th - Medway Scrabble Club, (see 10th April)

May 8th - Concert Medway Organ & Keyboard Club,
Organist - Claudia Hirschfeld, Ticket only event £4

(see 10th April)

May 8th - Rainham Flower Club, Workshop Tutored
by Pat Williams on "Seascapes" (see 10th April)

May 8th - Rainham Evening Bereavement Friendship
Group, (see 10th April)

May 9th - Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society, Growing
Pelargoniums by grower and hybridiser - Steve

Pollard, (see 11th April)

May 9th - Medway Antique & Collectors' Club, 8 'Oil
and Watercolour Paintings in Rochester Museum',

(see 11th April)

May 12th - Grand Charity Auction, Rotary Club of
Medway, Viewing 1.00 - 5.00pm Auction 7.00pm,

Roffen Club, 41 New Road, Rochester, ME1 1DX
Catalogues £1 on the door or email

tony@anthonyrux.co.uk All proceeds to Young
Lives Foundation and Air Ambulance

May 20th - May Day Event, Bredhurst School
celebrates 150 years. All May Kings and Queens

from past years are invited, details
tracey@kitchenculturekent.com

May 20th - Summer Serenade Concert, International
Soprano Christine Hubbard, St. Mary Magdalene

Church Gillingham, 7.00pm, tickets £8 each
gillinghamparishchurch@gmail.com 01634 853459

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