



## **What is in your Messenger this Month?**

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## Editorial

**By Mike McConnell**

Welcome to the first issue of a new volume of The Messenger – volume 33. Thanks also to those volunteers that have made the magazine what it is over the last 32 years by devoting their spare time to producing and distributing it to everyone in the village. Their many hands make light work of the tasks and ensure that they aren't too burdensome. In this issue, The Messenger is appealing for more help as it grapples with the changes proposed to The Sugar Loaf. See page 26 for more details.



Although it is out of step with our national and academic calendars, I think it appropriate to start a new volume at this time of year. Spring is a time for new beginnings and for looking forward to the promise of summer. One has only to listen to the increasing volume of the birdsong to realise that the year is already accelerating and those of us that are gardeners are beginning to rise to the challenge. Aspiring gardeners can still jump aboard as I see there are some allotments remain available (see page 10). The springtime also brings us a crop of annual general meetings. The notice for The Messenger AGM appears alongside that of the GNOMES (see page 15) and the meetings of Parish Council and Parochial Church also appear in the April Calendar of Events (see page 21).

Among the regular contributions to your Messenger this month, I'd like to highlight two pieces in particular; the bold initiative shown by Naomi Crowson (see page 3) in her efforts to help children in Africa by organising a concert in Hitchin and to thank our previous editor Dick Bulley for the contribution about his involvement with model railways as part of our Out of Village Pursuits series. If you have an interest that you must leave Meppershall to pursue and want to tell others about it, contact the editor.

Finally, I make no apologies for including information about Central Bedfordshire Council's (CBC) new campaign against fly-tipping in this edition (see page 6 ). Those who walk alongside the roads approaching our village cannot miss the fact that the verges of Meppershall are being abused as a dumping ground. Our assistant editor is continually notifying CBC of new deposits and will welcome the promise of a tougher line and the request for community support.

## Letters to the Editor

East African Playgrounds- Registered Charity in England and Wales (1129244)



Dear all,

My name is Naomi Crowson and I live in Meppershall. However, I am currently at Loughborough University studying Psychology, but am also part of the charity [East African Playgrounds](#), and I thought I would just give you an insight into something I'm taking part in this year.

Due to many years of political unrest and conflict, 8 million children in Uganda live in poverty. Within the schools out there, there is a lack of facilities, so the children learn through reciting facts and don't ever get the chance to be creative, use their imagination, and be children.

So as a charity we thought we'd change this. Since 2009, East African Playgrounds has been installing playgrounds in schools in Uganda to bring the gift of play to the children. As a charity, we also train teachers in play theory and how to incorporate the playgrounds we build into their lessons. High quality materials are used so the playgrounds are sustainable, but also the materials are locally sourced.

This year I thought I'd go out my comfort zone and set myself a challenge. In August, I am planning to go out to Uganda with a group of people from my university and the charity East African Playgrounds. Whilst we are there some of our time will be spent building a playground for the local community which will end up benefiting over 1500 children. I'm really looking forward to seeing the impact that the work we do will have on the lives of the children, and just to see the smiles which we will bring to their faces.

So, to help raise money for this charity, I have been co-organizing an acoustic gig 'Swinging Sounds', which will take place at Hitchin Town Hall on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April. We're lucky to have three artists Joe Waller, Luke Carey and Trevor Kaneswaran, who are supporting the event and will be giving some incredible intimate performances. If you'd like to come along for a chilled night of music, then tickets are available from [swingingsounds.bigcartel.com](http://swingingsounds.bigcartel.com). More information can also be found on the website, or alternatively if you have any questions drop me an email at [swingingsounds2017@gmail.com](mailto:swingingsounds2017@gmail.com).

Finally thank you so much for all your support,

Naomi Crowson

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## Village Hall Development Update

We are pleased to confirm that planning permission was granted on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

It has been nearly 6 years since these proposals were first discussed, and to finally get to this stage has required a considerable amount of effort from all concerned.

By the time this edition of the Messenger is circulated, work should have started on site in earnest. At the time of writing an ecological survey has been carried out, and nets put over a tree and hedges to deter birds from nesting there.

Over the next few weeks work will start on the temporary access road and the new Village Hall Car Park, ready for the Interim Village Hall to be erected and brought into use. This process is expected to take approximately 10 weeks.

Moving into the Interim Village Hall will require careful planning with the involvement of regular users, several of which tell us they have had items in storage for decades. Our discussions with them have been helpful and pragmatic.

The current storage containers should be relocated near the Interim Hall and additional storage will be available in the new Parish Council store which will be one of the first things built. That store will ultimately be used for Sports Field equipment.

The Interim Hall will be available to both regular users and casual hirers with bookings being dealt with efficiently (as always) by Louise Hutson.

After some negotiations with all concerned, and additional strengthening for the floor, it has been possible to accommodate one of the Snooker tables in the Interim Hall.

We are now entering a very active phase, and one we have all looked forward to for a long time.

If anyone has any questions about the planned progress, the construction work or any questions about the Village Hall itself please contact any of the trustees (details on website or specifically via David Birch [dcbirch@btinternet.com](mailto:dcbirch@btinternet.com) 01462 817014 or Graham Jones [graham@girasole.co.uk](mailto:graham@girasole.co.uk) 01462 851130)

Booking queries should be addressed to the Lettings Secretary, Louise Hutson on 01462 814148, or [bookings@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk](mailto:bookings@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk)

The Trustees Meppershall Village Hall



On 11<sup>th</sup> March we held our Spring Fayre. The sun shone on Meppershall and it truly felt like the first Spring day of the year and added perfectly to what was an amazing event.

We were blessed with a good number of people turning up to support the school. Visitors attending the fair were able to enjoy tea and home-made cakes, various commercial stalls, as well as a number of school stalls including 'Guess the Number of Sweets in the Jar', a very well supplied and attended Chocolate Tombola, a Mother's Day raffle and a general raffle, and 'Name the Teddy'. We were delighted to welcome many past pupils who came and enjoyed looking around the school and some now bringing their own children to the fair. It was a real family event and we raised over £1100! Thank you so much to our new MAPTA (Meppershall Academy Parent Teacher Association) committee who worked so hard to organise this event and thank you to everyone who attended and made this such a memorable, friendly, successful (and profitable) event.

We celebrated World Book Day on 28<sup>th</sup> February where children and staff dressed up in their favourite Roald Dahl character and brought in their favourite books to share with each other. There were an array of characters including a number of Matildas, Charlie Buckets, Violet Beauregarde, Veruca Salt, Willy Wonka, Miss Honey and Little Red Riding Hood and wolf (from his Revolting Rhymes). Just before home-time the children were able to choose a classroom to go to, where they could hear a story being read. The children had an opportunity to purchase books at our annual Book Fair, which was held in the school hall in the afternoon.

To complement the day we also held our annual Pancake Race. We had an excellent turnout of parents and grandparents to support the event and had 14 parents and grandparents willing to race! Thank you to MAPTA for providing pancakes for the children (decorated in a Roald Dahl theme based topping), tea, and coffee for all who came to watch the racing. Well done to everyone who took part in the pancake races. We have a few budding Olympians in our midst!

We hope that the glorious weather continues and that spring has sprung as we head towards the end of the Spring term. We have a number of events coming up during the coming months, so please keep an eye out on our website and our article in the Meppershall Messenger.

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Central Bedfordshire

# Your rubbish, your responsibility

#CrimeNot  
ToCare

**Are you doing the right thing with your waste? Find out or you could end up with a criminal record.**

**[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/flytipping](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/flytipping)**



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Thousands of people are contributing to the fly-tipping problem in England, and have no idea they are doing anything wrong. 47% of people don't know that they're responsible in law if their waste is fly-tipped by a third party and 36% of people think it is acceptable to get rid of an unwanted sofa or mattress in a way that is, legally, classed as fly-tipping. Keep Britain Tidy want to help you! So what could you be doing wrong?

**Unwittingly using a rogue trader to remove your waste** – whether you find someone through social media, an advert, or even someone approaching you directly – you need to check they are a registered waste carrier and they have a waste carrier permit. It is illegal for them to take your waste if they are not and they could be a rogue trader. You can check if they are a registered waste carrier online (see below) or by calling 03708 506 506.

**Putting that extra bin bag next to your bin** – there may be times you have an extra bag of rubbish that does not fit in your bin. If this is the case you should not leave it outside your property, whether that's in the alleyway or next to your bin on collection day, if you do you could face a fine.

**Putting your old washing machine or scrap metal out** – traditionally many people used to leave scrap metal, such as washing machines, old BBQs and old bikes out for the 'scrap man'. You should never leave any waste like this either on your drive, or in the street for someone to remove. They may not be a registered waste carrier, and could take the bits they need and dump the rest.

**Leaving your unwanted items out so others can use them** – sometimes the things we no longer need are in good condition, or could be restored by someone else, and it seems a shame to dispose of them. It is great if you can donate these items to your local charity shop or give them to someone who could make use of it – but you shouldn't leave out for others to take.

**Not checking where your waste is going** – being a registered waste carrier means the person can legally remove your rubbish, but you still need to check that you know what is going to happen to your rubbish. Don't be afraid to ask questions and ask for paperwork that shows where your waste is going.

- Ask to see their waste carrier permit – this is issued by the Environment Agency
- Ask for their waste carrier number and contact the Environment Agency
- directly on 03708 506 506 for a free instant waste carrier check
- If it's easier check on-line at [www.gov.uk/access-the-public-register-for-environmental-information](http://www.gov.uk/access-the-public-register-for-environmental-information)
- Ensure that you receive a transfer notice or receipt before your waste is taken away
- Make a note of their vehicle registration and vehicle details if you can –







## THE MEPPERSHALL PLAYERS



Mary Shelley's '*FRANKENSTEIN*' is brought to life on stage by The Players in all its dark splendour, almost two hundred years since the original novel was first published in 1818. **Tickets** for this production are on **sale now** at Roger's Bakery Meppershall 01462 813398. Yes, as well as serving you with yummy cakes and bread Mary and her lovely ladies can also sell you tickets for this great production *Performing* at Meppershall Village Hall on Fri 5<sup>th</sup> & Sat 6<sup>th</sup> May. Curtain up 7.45pm Tickets Friday £10 Con £8 Saturday £10 no concessions.

### Players' diary for 2017 to date:

'*FRANKENSTEIN*' 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> May 7.45pm at Meppershall Village Hall

Players' A.G.M. Wed 7<sup>th</sup> June, at 7.45pm at Meppershall Village Hall.

Pantomime read through Wed 21<sup>st</sup> June 7.30pm at Meppershall Village Hall

Pantomime Auditions Wed 28<sup>th</sup> June 7.30pm at Meppershall Village Hall

STMA Summer Fete 16<sup>th</sup> July 1-5pm Players Stall at Digswell Park, Shefford

Panto Rehearsals start Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> August 7.30pm at Meppershall Village Hall

'A Christmas Carol, the Panto' 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> December at Meppershall Village Hall (Pianist Wanted for Pantomime)

Find the Meppershall Players on Facebook (Meppershall Players Community) Insta-gram, Twitter, Meppershall Village Hall Website, and on the Players' notice board front foyer of Meppershall Village Hall.

The Players are always welcoming to new members; drop in to the Hall any Wednesday evening. Just walk in and say hello (we're a friendly bunch).

The Players meet every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. Membership is currently free we welcome people from the age of 9 to 90+ to indulge in all areas of theatrical performances, set-building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance, etc.

Interested? We look forward to meeting you.

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336

**Meppershall Parish Council****13th March 2017**

At the ordinary meeting of the Council held during March, the main points of interest discussed were as follows:

My first duty was to remind those present that the meeting was the last that Chris Waghorn would be attending in his role as Clerk. He actually finishes at the end of the month, after 20 years' loyal service to the Parish. He will be missed, but luckily the Council have found a replacement. Alessandra Marabese, who attended the meeting, is a Parish Councillor for Stondon and has the professional background suited to the work of a Clerk. We hope she enjoys working with Council for the benefit of Parishioners.

During the informal part of the meeting Tony Brown, Central Beds Councillor for Meppershall, informed the Council that CBC were going to trial a scheme where a group of Parish Councillors meet CBC officials to discuss matters that concern their Council and share any 'best practices' there may be. This sounds like a forum that was held in the days of Mid-Beds District Council/ Beds CC which ceased when Beds CC withdrew funding.

Returning to the formal meeting:

**Planning;** The following plans are still awaiting a decision; to demolish the bungalow at 79 Shefford Road and build two 4 bedroom houses, 79A Shefford Road, conversion of a garage and the change of use of the Sugar Loaf. A revised planning application for 38 dwellings on the land accessed from 100 High Street has been filed, however the Parish Council still does accept this planning application. The first meeting of MAG was very constructive and the Council will assist where even it can. The outcome of the appeal by Hawthorn Leisure to the Secretary of State into the awarding to the Sugar Loaf Community Asset status is still awaited. There has been no further information from Gladman nor North Herts Homes

**Finance** – The Clerk hopes to have the year-end figures completed before the handover

**Highway** – There are still numerous pot holes in the roads around Meppershall despite being promised the high output unit to be on site during the previous week. The Clerk is to write CBC on the matter. Further to comments from Parishioners last month regarding the state of Hoo Road beyond the recently tarmacked area the Clerk spoke to both CBC and the Internal Drainage Board, it appears to have worked as much remedial work has been carried out.

**Environment and Leisure** – The Parish notice boards, at present on the front of the village hall, are to be moved to posts on the grass by the bus stop, when the village is demolished.

**Allotments** – Some of the vacant plot have been let but there are some still available.

**Parish Plan** – The Council approved the document. A precis of the document will be sent out with the Messenger probably with the June edition. The Council thanked the team for their hard work and dedication on producing the document. I would like, on behalf of the Council, to thank all those Parishioners who responded to the questionnaires.

**Clerk to the Council** – As previously mentioned a new Clerk has been appointed.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 7.45pm in the Village Hall and the Annual Parish Meeting will be on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 7.45pm in the Village Hall.

Peter Chapman

Chairman Meppershall Parish Council – [chairman@meppershall.org](mailto:chairman@meppershall.org)

## CONTACTING THE NEW CLERK

It will be a few weeks before all the details on how to contact Alessandra will be known but the best way is by e-mail to [meppershallclerk@gmail.com](mailto:meppershallclerk@gmail.com) If you do not have access to a computer please ring me on 813497, leave a message and I will get back to you.



## Shefford Leisure Group

By Enid Pamment

Springtime is such a lovely time of the year, after the drab winter months (although we really must not complain as we have been blessed with some really lovely days)! Whatever the weather the gardens seem to know what is going on and never cease to amaze the way the Spring flowers can almost tell the time!

In March we visited Jewish London and our Blue Badge Guide took us through Spitalfields Market to visit the Synagogue, which was most interesting with the addition of a little humour.



All the seats were of carved wood, each side facing into the middle. The lighting and the whole ambience of the building was beautiful. Certainly not something one would expect to see in the middle of a market! After lunch we boarded our coach and made our way to Camden where the Jewish Museum is situated on three floors. This really was interesting just to wander around and read information on people's lives during the past two World Wars and the 'run up' to them. I personally would like to go back and spend more time meditating and expanding the knowledge of this period that I already had. A most interesting and eventful day.

Our visit to 'Potters' at Hopton-on-Sea proved very successful – the accommodation, food, entertainment and activities certainly could not be faulted.

There are a few new outings arranged which may interest you. New King's Cross Station, with a Blue Badge Guide – also St Pancras Station; it is amazing to see the transformation as well as a chance to go into the neighbouring British Library.

There are a couple of seats left for Anton and Erin on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Also please remember our 'Get Together' held at Mountpleasant Golf Club, Stondon on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April – 2pm to 4pm for afternoon tea, where we present our cheque to a representative from Keech Hospice Care for children.

The forthcoming events planned for 2017 are as follows, but always keep an eye on the list as I am frequently booking trips to try and give people a wider choice of events available.

### Forthcoming Events planned for 2017

Anton & Erin Swing Time – Milton Keynes Theatre	Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> April
Annual 'Get Together' at the Golf Club in Stondon	Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> April

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Camden Market - Coach leaves Shefford at 8am.	Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> April
The Rhine Cruise – Organised by Group Travel 5-days	Departing 29 <sup>th</sup> April
New Kings Cross Station (with Guide)	Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> April
North Wales Highlights - 5 days (all inclusive)	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> May
Brick Lane Musical – (25th year Anniversary Show)	Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> June
Hidden London & Regents Park – (With Guide)	Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> June
Kensington Palace & Gardens ( <i>Reserve List only</i> )	Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> July
Sandringham Flower Show - This event is now in it's 133 <sup>rd</sup> Year. From Sandringham Park you can see Sandringham House also Sandringham Church. Leaving Shefford at 7.45am.	Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> July
Malta – Flying from Luton Airport	Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> October
Thursford Christmas Spectacular - Leaving Shefford at 9am and stopping for coffee and a browse at Elveden <i>en route</i> .	Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> November
Auntie Brenda's Christmas Tale!! At Wicksteed Park Including Christmas lunch and afternoon tea. Links over 25 popular songs from Christmases throughout the years.	Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> December

### **LONDON SHOWS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE**

(organised in conjunction with Stevenage Group Travel)

42 <sup>ND</sup> STREET –Theatre Royal Drury Lane – Royal Circle Seats – Coach leaving Shefford at 10.30am.	Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> April
THE GIRLS – (matinee) This is a new musical comedy based on the Yorkshire Calendar Girls – Phoenix Theatre – Stall Seats – ( <i>Reserve List Only</i> ).Coach leaving Shefford at 10am.	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> April
THE AMERICAN IN PARIS (Matinee) –This was an Oscar winning film starring Gene Kelly – written by George & Ira Gershwin – Dominion Theatre – Stall Seats – coach leaving Shefford at 9.45am	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May,
RPO – FILM MUSIC GALA (Matinee) All the well known and loved music moments at the Royal Albert Hall. Arena or Circle Seats. Coach will leave Shefford at 11am.	Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> May
THE LION KING (Evening) The award winning much loved musical. Lyceum Theatre – Stall Seats – Coach leaving Shefford at 4.15pm	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> May
RPO – ABBAphonic - Abba's greatest hits – Royal Albert Hall – Arena and Circle Seats. Coach leaving Shefford at 4.45pm.	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> May
THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS –The London Palladium, Royal Circle Seats, Coach leaving Shefford at 10.15am	Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> June

Please telephone for availability and prices of any holidays, outings or shows listed above. For all holidays, including transport from Shefford and hotel accommodation, Shefford Leisure Group acts as an agent for the Tour Operator; their terms and conditions apply. Shefford Leisure Group is open to everyone in the local community, who feel they would like to join us on our ventures and see places they would not see under their own steam. We are always happy to meet new friends.

Raffles are held and all the proceeds are for Keech Hospice Care for Children. For further information regarding dates, prices and availability or to receive our monthly newsletter, please contact Enid on 01462 851397 or e-mail [enid.pamment@gmail.com](mailto:enid.pamment@gmail.com).

## Notices

### Bedford Model Engineering Society Summerfield Miniature Railway

Off the A600 just past Haynes Turn

Public Running Days in 2017 from 10.30.AM to 4 PM.

<b>APRIL</b> Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> (school holiday)* Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> (Bank Holiday) Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>AUGUST</b> Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> * Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> * Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> * Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> (Bank Holiday)
<b>MAY</b> Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> (Bank Holiday) Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> (Bank Holiday) Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> (half term)*	<b>SEPTEMBER</b> Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup>
<b>JUNE</b> Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>OCTOBER</b> Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> (half term)*
<b>JULY</b> Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>DECEMBER</b> <b>Saturday &amp; Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup></b> Santa Specials – pre-booking essential
*On our Wednesday openings, only limited catering will be available. For further information, see our website: <a href="http://www.bedfordmes.co.uk">www.bedfordmes.co.uk</a>	



### COMING UP IN APRIL @ THE WHITE HART CAMPTON

**SATURDAY 1<sup>ST</sup>** – LIVE MUSIC WITH 'ACOUSTIC AL'

**EASTER SUNDAY 16<sup>TH</sup>** - FAMILY EASTER EGG HUNT PLUS LIVE MUSIC TBA

**FRIDAY 21<sup>ST</sup>** – QUIZ NIGHT (POP IN TO BOOK OR MESSAGE ON FACEBOOK)

MORE EVENTS TBA, FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR DETAILS

**COME & SEE US EVERY WEEKDAY FOR LUNCHES!**

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**Swinging Sounds**  
A night of acoustic music in aid of Naomi's trip to Uganda

East African Playgrounds - Registered Charity in England and Wales (1129244)



**Trevor Kaneswaran**  
Trevor brings his own offering to the table, a collection of catchy, hook-filled indie-pop songs. Influences include Radiohead, Bon Iver, Damien Rice, Jamie Lidell and Jeff Buckley.



**Luke Carey**  
His sound has been described as a mix of laid back guitar pop, laced with rapid fire lyrics of his unique and uplifting street poetry. It's acoustic and undeniably poetic, but with an urban twist.



**Joe Waller**  
With 5 BBC Introducing tracks of the day, 3 Top 40 charting song writer singles and a Top 20 charting songwriter EP to his name, 2017 is set to be a big year for this emerging artist.

**Hitchin Town Hall Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April 19:30-22:00**  
**Tickets: General £10 Concessions £5 VIP £20 [swingingsounds.bigcartel.com](http://swingingsounds.bigcartel.com)**

### Meppershall Good Neighbours Group

The Gnomes would like to hear from you if:

- \* You have recently moved to Meppershall and would like one of our welcome packs
- \* You would like our help
- \* You would like to join us.

Call our helpline: 07760 793921 or come to our coffee morning at 10.45 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at the New Meppershall Care Home on Shefford Road. You can also find Meppershall Good Neighbours on Facebook [Find us on f](#)

### 'TRUGS & TROWELS' Campton Gardening Club

**Our next meeting will be on Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017**

**Campton Village Hall, 7.30-9.00pm**

A talk by Julie New Author of 'Who are the flowers in your garden'

**Everyone Welcome - Admission £1.50**

For more information, please contact... Maryika 01462 851729

**NB. Please note that the following month's meeting will be on 8<sup>th</sup> May and not the 1<sup>st</sup>, due to it being a Bank Holiday**

### **ZUMBA classes**

Wednesday Evenings at 6.15pm and 7.30 pm  
New Sunday Class at 10.30 am starting the 9<sup>th</sup> of April

Shillington Village Hall

No need to book, just turn up.

Zumba is a Fun way to exercise to dance music, and is very aerobic.

Suitable for all ages and abilities, cost is only £6

### **The Annual General Meeting of**

### **The Meppershall Messenger**

Is to be held in the Orchid room of the

Mount Pleasant Golf Club

at 16.30 hrs on Tue 30 May

All those interested in the magazine are welcome to attend

### **Notice of the Meppershall Good Neighbours Group (GNOMES) Annual General Meeting**

The GNOMES AGM for 2017 is planned for 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017 starting at 10:30 and will be held at the Mount Pleasant Golf Club.

All are welcome so please come along if you are interested in what the GNOMES have been doing for the community in 2016 and/or if you would be interested in joining our group of volunteers. It is always good to see new faces at these meetings.

## **Significant Events**

Kathleen Drummond will be 90 on 7<sup>th</sup> April.

Shireen Longland will be 86 on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

Our congratulations to everybody who is celebrating a birthday in April.

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## **Birthdays**

**A very HAPPY BIRTHDAY to those of you  
celebrating birthdays in APRIL**

Rebecca Myers who will be 12 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Teya Warner who will be 8 on the 4<sup>th</sup>  
Amie-Lee Lumbis who will be 10 on the 5<sup>th</sup>  
William Rogers who will be 14 on the 11<sup>th</sup>  
Kate Fleming who will be 11 on the 13<sup>th</sup>  
Jemma Dalton who will be 11 on the 20<sup>th</sup>  
Sophie Hing will be 7 on the 28<sup>th</sup>  
Charlie Lodge who will be 13 on the 30<sup>th</sup>

If you are under 16 and would like your name added to  
the birthday page, please call Louise Hutson on 814148  
or email at [louhuts@gmail.com](mailto:louhuts@gmail.com)

## **Covers by Request**

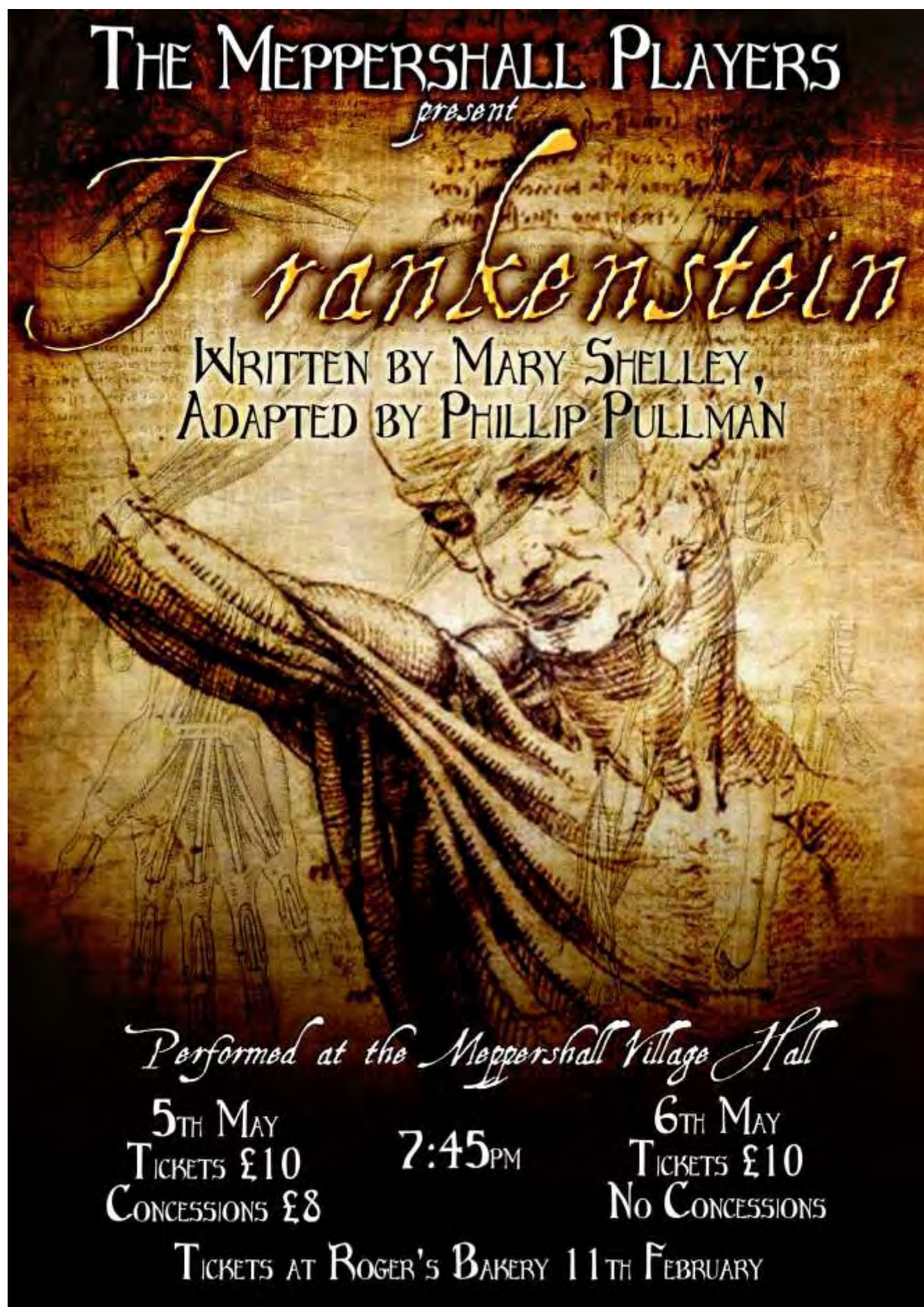
The cover this month shows the staff of the Meppershall Academy taken on World Book day.

The staff (who along with the children and parents and carers), had a fantastic day at school on Tuesday 28 Feb 2017 celebrating World Book Day and cheering on our parents in the pancake races. They had a marvellous array of Roald Dahl characters and a big thank you went to all of the parents for the effort put into the children's costumes and to the staff for looking fantastic! The head teacher would like to thank so much to the parents who took part and the MAPTA for providing the super pancakes and fillings and providing refreshments for the parents who came to watch. There was a super turn out.

For more detail, read the full article by Nikki Moore, Headteacher, on page 5.

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THE MEPPERSHALL PLAYERS  
*present*  
*Frankenstein*  
WRITTEN BY MARY SHELLEY,  
ADAPTED BY PHILLIP PULLMAN

*Performed at the Meppershall Village Hall*

5 <sup>TH</sup> MAY	7:45PM	6 <sup>TH</sup> MAY
TICKETS £10		TICKETS £10
CONCESSIONS £8		NO CONCESSIONS

TICKETS AT ROGER'S BAKERY 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

## **Meppershall Social Club**

**\*BINGO-** Every Friday Night

Doors open 6.45pm eyes down 7.15pm

Members free entry, Non-members £1 entrance fee

**\*MEAT RAFFLE-**drawn Every Friday Night during the Bingo Interval

£1 per square could win you your Sunday roast

**\* CLUB SOUND KARAOKE**

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April 8pm-late,

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May 8pm-late

with Dave & Stuart. 1,000's of tracks to choose from, Sing-a-long to your favourite songs, at this fun for everyone evening in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere

**\* PAUL CARNE'S QUIZ NIGHTS**

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm start.

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 7.30pm start

£1 per person entry fee, no set number in team (you can have as few or as many as you like in your team), 50-50 split of entrance fee, half to charity half to the winning team. Non-Members welcome

**\*SNOOKER** at the Social Club, members can play every evening when the club is open. For more information pop into the Social Club any evening, or contact The Club after 8pm on 01462 817359. Club opens 8pm; we look forward to seeing you

MEMBERSHIP for 2017 is now due (pick up a form at the Club)

Meppershall Social Club 01462 817359 after 8pm

\*\*\*\*\*

**BAR STAFF WANTED** - Contact Club Chairman Mr Graham Walker on

01462 815183



# Churchyard ~~Working Party~~ Rakes and Cakes Fun Day ☺

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**Come when you can, come when you want, from 8.45am.**

Okay, we admit it. The churchyard clear-up days aren't really about tidying, trimming and sprucing up one of the oldest parts of the village. Although, that part can be fun, honest.

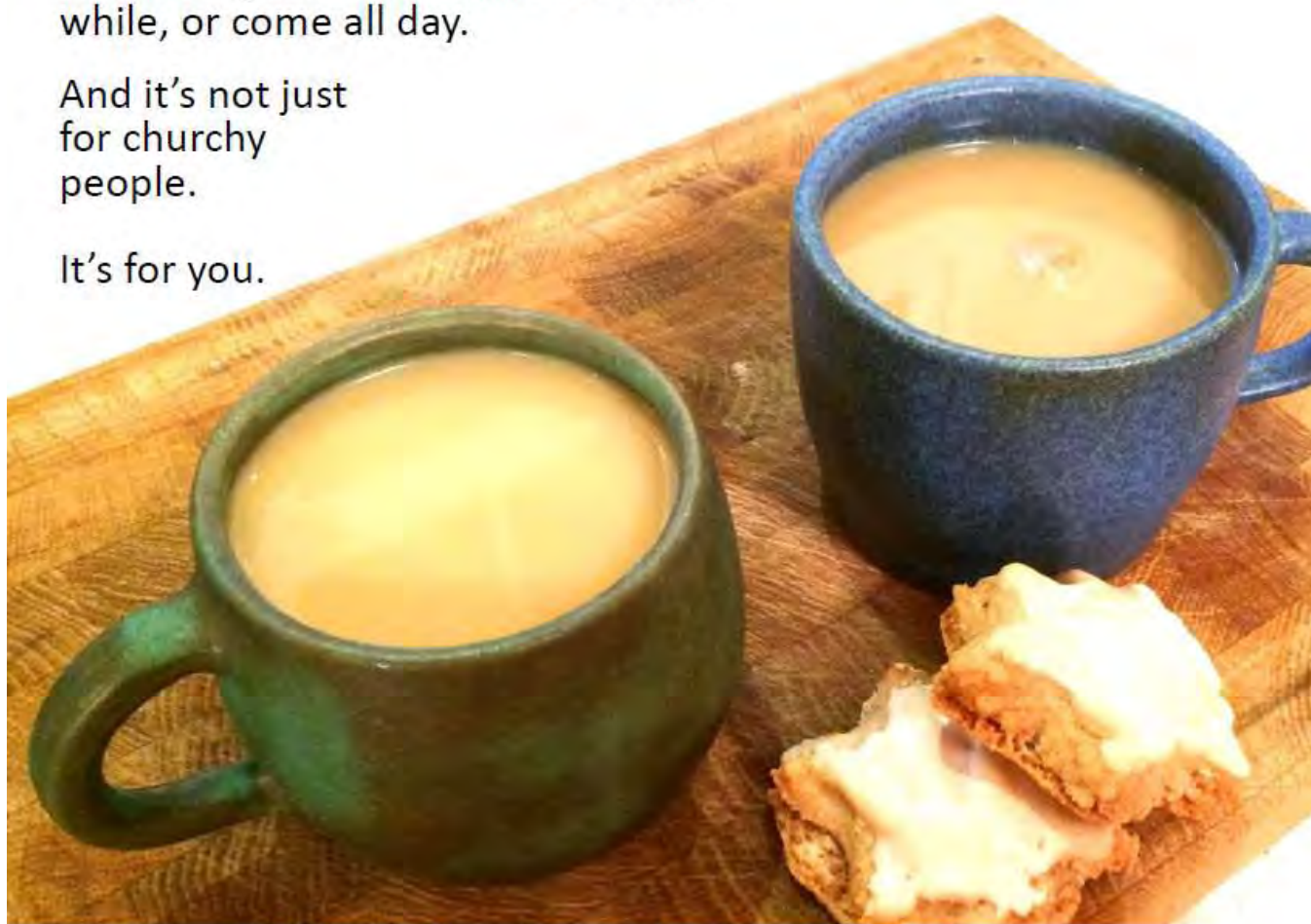
The perfect cup of tea, coffee and home-made cake, the lunch, the birds in the lime trees and yews, the chat and the chance to meet new friends or spend time with neighbours: these things are important too. Come and find out for yourself.

Bring your own tools – there are lots of little jobs to do – gloves, rakes, brooms, dustpans and snippers are usually enough.

It's all very relaxed – come for a little while, or come all day.

And it's not just  
for churchy  
people.

It's for you.



Brought to you by St Mary's Meppershall...



[facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall](https://facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall)



[Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com](mailto:Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com)

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**She-Fit Personal Training**

Struggling to lose weight?  
Need to get fit or tone up?  
She-Fit Personal Training can help  
achieve your goals.

Personalised exercises designed around  
you for results!

Fully equipped exclusive private studio  
based in the village of Meppershall,  
Beds.

First consultation free

For more information visit



**Charlotte Robinson**

(Kickboxing Instructor & Personal  
Trainer)

**Body Conditioning Class**  
**Blast away body fat!**

A Mixture of Weights  
and Cardio Training

The Most Effective way  
to Reduce Weight and Get Toned

**Meppershall Village Hall**

**Term Time Only**

**Thursday 6pm - 7pm - £6 a Class**

Email: [Charlotte@krusader.co.uk](mailto:Charlotte@krusader.co.uk)

# KRUSADER

**Kickboxing is a combination of Thai Boxing, Karate and Boxing.**

The class consists of cardio warm-up, body conditioning using punches,  
kicks, elbows & knees: sparring is optional.

**Meppershall Village Hall**

Junior class. Tuesday 6pm – 7pm (6yrs-12yrs)

Tuesday 7.30pm – 9pm

Thursday 7.00pm – 8.30pm

\*\*\*\*\*

**Venue 360 – 20 Gipsy Lane, Luton**

Saturday 10.15am – 12noon

£7.50 adults

£5.50 Juniors

[Click here to return to the Page of Contents](#) (monthly payments discounted)



## Meppershall Calendar of Events

### April

Day	Date	What's on	When	Where
Sunday	2	Junior Church	11am	St Mary's Vestry
Monday	3	Campton Gardening Club Talk (see page 14) Admission £1:50	7:30-9:00pm	Campton Village Hall
Thursday	6	Evergreens	2.30 - 4.15pm	The Sugar loaf
Friday	7	Bingo (non-members £1)	6.45pm for 7.15pm	Social Club
Saturday	8	Cakes and Rakes (see page19)	From 8:45am	St Mary's churchyard
Saturday	8	Swinging Sounds' Acoustic concert in aid of East African Playgrounds (Admission see page 14)	7:30 -10 pm	Hitchin Town Hall
Saturday	8	Club Sounds Karaoke with Dave & Stuart	8:00pm till late	Social Club
Sunday	9	Second Sunday stroll ( <i>circa</i> 5 miles to Henlow)	2pm	St Mary's church gate
Sunday	9	Paul Carne's Quiz night £1 pp admission	7:30pm	Social Club
Monday	10	Parish Council Meeting	7:45pm	Village Hall
Tuesday	11	Rectory Tea – chat and a cuppa – all welcome	2-4:00pm	Rectory
Thursday	13	Maundy Thursday Communion	7:30pm	St Marys
Thursday	13	Gnomes Coffee morning	10:45 - 11:45am	Mepp.Care Home
Friday	14	Procession of Witness in Shefford	11am	Shefford town
Friday	14	Good Friday Service	2:00pm	St Marys
Friday	14	Bingo (non-members £1)	6.45pm for 7.15pm	Social Club
Sunday	16	Junior Church Easter Sunday mini SPARKS Easter egg hunt	10am	St Marys
Sunday	16	Easter morning service, holy communion	11am	St Marys
Thursday	20	Evergreens	2.30 - 4.15pm	The Sugar loaf
Friday	21	Bingo (non-members £1)	6.45pm for 7.15pm	Social Club
Sunday	23	A short Junior Church will be held during the main service .	11am	St Marys
Monday	24	Annual Parish Meeting	7:45pm	Village Hall
Thursday	27	Annual Parochial Church Meeting	7pm	St Marys
Friday	28	Bingo (non-members £1)	6.45 for 7.15pm	Social Club

Also see the calendar on the [village website](#)

## Out of Village Pursuits

### THE BEDFORD MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY

Responding to the Editor's appeal in the February issue for people with interests outside the village to tell him about them, this is how I came to be a member of the BMES, since I am neither a model maker nor an engineer!

I inherited from my own father an interest in railways – in those days in good old steam engines! When it came to be my turn to be looking for entertainment for my grandchildren I looked for railways that we could visit and I came across references to The Summerfield Railway. Although this is a small-scale railway (7 ¼ inch gauge), it has the great advantage of being near Meppershall: up the A600 towards Bedford and just past the Haynes turn. After visiting and riding on this miniature railway several times on the pretext of entertaining children, I made enquiries about how I could become more involved.

It turned out that the railway is operated by The Bedford Model Engineering Society. The Society allows people with common interests to come together. Where those interests involve engineering, it gives its members access to machine tools and the opportunity to chat with people who have tackled similar problems and..... about 20 times a year, it allows us to play trains! Some of our members are fortunate enough to own their own locos and Summerfield allows them to exercise their pets, and provide entertainment for the public while they are at it! A few days in each year are reserved for members only to use the track and on a further weekend we throw open our tracks to visitors and their engines from all over.

The main station (Haynes End) is straight in front of you when you first turn in to the site, and adjacent to the car park is the Buffet which doubles as the Club House when not open to the public. The Society has been on this site for more than 25 years and has steadily extended its layout of track to a current length of approx. 2 miles. Most of that track is dual 7¼ inch and 5 inch gauge and we also have a garden railway operating on a smaller gauge. The terminus station at Haynes End has 3 covered platforms, thanks to the efforts of club members in the last two years and the most recent addition is a snug crew room which also doubles as a track building workshop. On public running days trains start from Haynes End and run up to Hammer Hill where passengers disembark, either to ride on the local trains that run on extensive loops or to enjoy the picnic and viewing area where the garden railway also runs; passengers then catch a later train back to Haynes End and the Buffet and another picnic area.

Each Wednesday some members get together to tackle the many tasks involved in maintaining, extending and improving the railway. As mentioned above, we built a roof over the terminus station and then built a crew room: we will shortly be embarking on a project to improve the toilet facilities on the site. As well as creating new things there is a continuous programme of renewing the actual track to compensate for the ravages of the weather and the wear and tear of train running. For us non-engineers, some of the tasks are simply labouring, but they are made bearable by tackling them with colleagues.

I was told early on that on running days there was always a shortage of Guards, so I signed up for training as a guard. It turns out that as well as the obvious whistle blowing and flag waving, the Guard has a key role in looking after passenger safety and observing the signals with the Driver. On most running days I can be found at the back end of the train, making sure that passengers keep their feet on the running boards and their arms in; and arranging photo opportunities with the Driver!

As well as our regular public running we have some special occasions during the year. In the summer we give over two successive days to giving rides to children from MENCAP, together with their carers and helpers; while at Christmas we run two days of "Santa Specials", when a fare buys not only a train ride but an interview with that bulky chap in the red suit, presiding in his grotto at the far end of the line and doling out presents to all his young visitors: there are mince pies and mulled wine for their parents, back in the buffet.

I hope that this article has given you some flavour of what I find attractive in the Summerfield Miniature Railway. I hope that you will come and enjoy a ride on the trains and experience it for yourself. If you think membership of the BMES might interest you, please make yourself known to any of the operating staff when you are there – you will be welcomed with wide open arms!

Dick Bulley

## The Lucy Page

By Lucy Standbridge

With the ongoing petitions (at time of writing) for appeals against the pub changing into a shop, I thought it would be intriguing to write about this topic.

In some of my previous articles I have interviewed and written about supporting local businesses within the area. With the proposed plans for potentially converting our Sugar Loaf into a small convenience shop (for which the Co-Op has applied) I asked would we, in time, continue to support these small and/or



local businesses, such as the Ansell Stores and Roger's Bakery? Many people initially say yes, they would continue to buy their usual things from the post office and bakery. However, would they stick to that or just pop to the Co-Op where they could pick up everything in one shop, even though it wouldn't be as freshly or tastily made?

The Sugar Loaf has been the centre of Meppershall, and it is our only pub, after going from three down to our last one, and now we are to lose it completely? The pub is used by a variety of different people in the community, and now even more so with the threat of losing such a fundamental element of village and community life. I have seen people up there for the football and rugby, social catch-ups, the Evergreens, and some people with a few mates for a game of pool. With the possibility of losing it, there have been more people using it which shows how we, as a community, do value our pub. Some people I have previously asked have said that perhaps if it was redecorated, made more appealing in appearance then it would be the heart of our village and could thrive with more people using it.

Turning the pub into a Co-Op or convenience shop would mean you would lose a spot to have a drink, watch TV events and meet up with friends (maybe not so applicable for the younger people in the village, but still for our parents now and us in the future. This could also be a reason to make our pub more family friendly. All of this to be replaced by a common store, oddly opposite our existing shop, which would begin to remove the feel of village life, especially alongside the new housing to come.

Make sure you have sent in your appeals against this proposed plan, and keep our village a community!



IN AID of THE MEPPERSHALL GNOMES

***A FUN EVENING OF  
Musical Entertainment***

ON  
*Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April 8pm-late*  
AT  
MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE HALL

**Entrance free**-donations for the  
Meppershall Gnomes would be  
Appreciated (gnomes-07760 793921)  
See them on Facebook



**Good  
Neighbours  
Offering  
Meppershall  
Excellent  
Services**

Music provided by *CLUB SOUND ENTERTAINMENT*  
*Featuring the vocal talent of*



*David  
Palmer*



*Karen  
Dalton*



*John & Christine  
Chapman*



*Karen  
Mitchell*



*Stuart  
Edwards*

*Dance & sing-a-long* (lyrics provided) to music from the  
1940's-2017. *A great night out for family & friends*  
A cabaret style evening with table seating we encourage you to  
bring your own supper and the Social Club bar is available all  
evening for your liquid refreshment.

Under 18's must be accompanied by an adult/guardian  
Only alcohol purchased from the Social Club bar can be  
consumed on the premises

# THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



## NEEDS YOU

Volunteers are needed to help with collation  
and distribution of the Magazine.

Please ring 851397 or 815585

## Financial Matters

By Paul Savuto

### THE NEW PENSION RULES – FAQs

The new pension rules applying to defined contribution pensions can seem quite complex; there's a lot of information to take in. Here we look at some of the frequently asked questions.

#### Q) DO I HAVE TO RETIRE TO ACCESS MY DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION?

No, you don't. There's no need to wait until the state retirement age. As long as you're over 55 you can access your pension. It doesn't matter whether you're still in work, about to retire or already retired.

#### Q) WHAT'S TO STOP ME WITHDRAWING MY ENTIRE PENSION POT AT AGE 55?

Whilst it's true that you can from age 55 take up to a quarter of your defined contribution pension as a tax-free lump sum, withdrawals over and above this figure are taxable. They will be added to the rest of your income in that tax year, and so you could find yourself pushed into a higher tax bracket. It's also important to bear in mind that pensions shelter your savings from income tax and capital gains tax until you take that money out, and it makes sense to keep this tax-efficient status going for as long as possible. Remember too that life expectancy is rising and you could spend 30 years or more in retirement and you'll want your retirement income to last as long as you do.

#### Q) PUT SIMPLY, WHAT IS FLEXI-ACCESS DRAWDOWN?

Flexi-access drawdown is a way of taking an income from the money you have built up in your pension while still keeping it invested. As the remainder of your pension fund remains invested, you still have the potential for the fund to grow free of income and capital gains tax. You have the flexibility to take money as and when you need it – you can choose to take up to 25% of your pension pot as a tax-free lump sum or gradually over time taking a quarter tax-free each time. You then move the rest into a fund or funds to allow you to take an income at times to suit you.

#### Q) WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DRAWDOWN AND AN UFPLS?

An UFPLS is an uncrystallised funds pension lump sum, and is a one-off lump sum taken from an 'uncrystallised' defined contribution pension pot. In this case 'uncrystallised' means the benefits have yet to be accessed. The amount of the pot deemed 'crystallised' depends on how much of the tax-free lump sum has been taken. On the face of it, UFPLS are similar to drawdown, but you can't take 25% of the fund and leave the rest of the fund invested; for that to happen you'd need to go the drawdown route.

Under an UFPLS, 25% of each pay-out is tax-free, and each individual withdrawal is crystallised against the lifetime allowance (LTA). If you reach

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that threshold, you would have to pay tax on the amount over and above the LTA, initially at emergency rate, whereas with drawdown, the act of making a fund available for drawdown crystallises the whole pot from the outset. Taking an UFPLS will trigger the money purchase annual allowance, which would reduce the amount you could contribute to your pension from £40,000 to £10,000. As ever, taking advice is absolutely essential to help ensure you select the most suitable option for your individual needs and circumstances.

**Q) IS MY PENSION FUND TAXABLE WHEN I DIE?** Any money left in your pension fund at your death can be passed on. This will be free of tax if you die before age 75 and the funds are paid out within a two year window. If you die at 75 or over, the person you name as your beneficiary will pay income tax on what they receive.

### **FINAL SALARY PENSIONS FAQs**

**Q) I'm a member of the Barclays 1964 Pension Scheme (Final Salary) and have been provided a transfer quote of over £800,000. This seems very high. Should I take up this option?** Many companies (particularly banks and insurance companies) are offering transfer values that are far higher than in previous years. Therefore, it is an excellent time to review your options. As your transfer value is more than £30,000 you will be required to seek independent financial advice if you choose to transfer. The decision to transfer away from a Final Salary Pension should not be taken lightly. There are many factors to consider. These include the size of the tax free lump sum, flexibility of pension withdrawals, loss of guaranteed pension and death benefits to name just a few.

**Q) I'm a member of a Final Salary Pension Scheme and I am concerned that my children will not be able to inherit the pension. Is this true? Would the position change if I was transfer my Final Salary Pension into a Personal Pension?** It would be important to check your scheme's rules. However, most final salary pension schemes offer a small provision for children until they are 18 years old (or 23 if they are in full-time education). If you were to transfer to a Personal Pension, you would be able to pass the pension fund to your children by way of nomination in the event of your death. However, there are many other factors in deciding if this is the best course of action. Therefore, we would strongly recommend that you seek independent financial advice.

As part of the service at DGS, we take the time to understand our client's unique planning needs and circumstances, so that we can provide you with the most suitable solutions in the most cost-effective way. For a free review of your current pension plans and financial situation, please contact Paul Savuto, AFPS, Chartered Financial Planner. DGS Independent Financial Advisers Ltd. 07834 499595 or email [ps@dgsifa.com](mailto:ps@dgsifa.com). I'm based in Meppershall and I'll be happy to talk to you .





Each year all the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides in the District all get together to celebrate World Thinking Day. World Thinking Day is a celebration of ten million girls worldwide that has taken place on every 22nd February since 1926. It remains a day for all Rainbows, Brownies and Guides to think of each other and celebrate their sisters all around the world.

We actually, as a District, celebrated on the prior Sunday. Our brownies spent the afternoon with over 120 other girls taking part in fun activities with an Australian theme. The girls participated in a treasure hunt, played some Australian themed games, decorated crocodile cakes, made dot paintings and other craft activities. Afterwards all the girls renewed their promise. We all had a very busy and fun afternoon and we also raised money for the Girlguiding World Thinking Day Fund.

Back at normal brownie meetings, we spent an evening playing some of our favourite games.

Another evening we pretended to be secret agents. Each brownie had their own secret agent name, we made our own obstacle course for the brownies to climb through, and we played some other spy related games.

We have also had a Beauty and the Beast themed evening. The girls made 'Beast' cakes, had to try to steal the rose from the Leaders by trying to be as silent as possible (not that easy for a brownie), but some girls managed it, and we had fun designing our very own Beasts.

We are looking forward to the lighter evenings and hopefully nice weather so that we can go out and about and we will be doing lots of Easter related activities very soon, which will no doubt involve an Easter Egg hunt, chocolate, bunnies, chocolate, chicks, chocolate. Oh, and did I mention chocolate!

If you are interested in your daughter joining Brownies or volunteering yourself, then please contact Snowy Owl (Suzanne) on 07817 392325 or you can register online at [www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk).



We wish everyone and all our families a very Happy Easter!

Spring is a time of new life and change. It usually makes us feel more energetic and hopeful after the long winter months, and we have lots to be hopeful about. At Meppershall Pre-school all our children are surrounded by people who care and want to make a difference to each child's life. We have a fantastic team of highly qualified staff, the vital committee of volunteers, and many other parents who help and support us in their own unique way. We also build links with the local community to continually strive to be better and improve what we can offer. Over the last few years one of the largest projects we have been involved with is a new pre-school facility being built as part of the new village hall. Although there has been some negativity with regards to this new development, we know how beneficial a dedicated pre-school room will be to our families and new families who join us. We will be able to offer a more stimulating learning environment for more hours each day, with a greater emphasis on child and adult led activities which can progress throughout the week without being packed away every day. Our new pre-school room will come to life and stay alive!

The first phase of construction has just begun and although we have an interesting journey ahead, we are very excited about this project finally starting and can't wait to see it through to completion. Croudace the developers have been amazing to liaise with so far, and we will be open throughout the entire build process.

We have a very busy summer term ahead! I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all our new families who start after Easter, and our newest full time member of staff who has just been appointed. Her official welcome will be in the next edition! We would also like to say good luck to Julia Roberts and Yvoone Wong who are starting fresh chapters in their lives after the Easter holidays, but who will both remain on our relief team. Good luck with your new endeavours and thank you for all your hard work so far!

We now only have a few sessions left to fill this summer term at Meppershall Pre-school, and September 2017/18 is filling up fast. If your little one has turned 2 and is ready to make new friends and enjoy our stimulating, safe environment, or if you would like them to join our waiting list, please ring Tamsin our fantastic leader during session time on the number below for more information. We are open every weekday from 9:15 till 3:15 (term time only).

**Meppershall Pre-school is a thriving village Pre-school with its very own 'Mini Diggers' allotment. We take up to 24 children in each session from in and around the surrounding areas. Priority is given to funded children, and we have limited spaces for two year olds.**

**Please ring Tamsin on 07816 357159, email [meppershallps@gmail.com](mailto:meppershallps@gmail.com),**

MEPPERSHALL SOCIAL CLUB  
PRESENT

*QUIZ NIGHT*  
*ON*  
*SUNDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL*  
*STARTS 7.30PM*



*WITH QUIZMASTER*  
*PAUL CARNE*

*TEAMS AS BIG OR SMALL AS YOU LIKE*  
*FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY*

***£1 ENTRY FEE PER PERSON***



## MEPPERSHALL GARDEN CLUB (MGC)



This month's article has been provided by MGC member Linda Parker.

April is here already, where have the first few months of 2017 gone? February and March went by in a flash but these months did provide us with a really lovely display of spring bulbs and early flowering plants.

With a view to taking advantage of these spring displays, for their March meeting members of the Garden Club arranged a visit to 'Greywalls', a privately owned garden in Farndish, Northamptonshire. This garden, which is open to the public at the beginning of March under the National Gardens Scheme, also allows small parties to visit by private arrangement. The house which used to be the old vicarage (not open to the public) is surrounded by a 2 acre mature garden. We saw over 100 varieties of snowdrops, drifts of hardy cyclamen and hellebores. There were signs of new spring growth on lots of the shrubs and many perennials plants had just started to show their heads above ground. A beautiful 'Daphne' with it's very heady perfume was in full bloom and there were really interesting pieces of artwork dotted around the garden as well as raised alpine beds made out of local stone. The garden also had many water features and natural ponds with views over open countryside. Much to their delight the rare breed hens were out in the fresh air again after having been quarantined for a few months due to the bird flu scare.

This successful visit was topped off with a stop for lunch at the Green Man in Lavendon where they kindly coped with 15 unexpected guests without any fuss.

Although we probably haven't seen the last of the bad weather, gardens and allotments have definitely started into life again. According to Mr Alan Titchmarsh, the more work and attention that you give to the garden at this time of the year, the more you can just sit back and relax in the summer months. I don't know about you, but I can never just sit and relax in my garden, something always needs doing at all times of the year.

If you would like to find out more about the Garden Club then please speak to any of our members or make contact via our email.

Linda Parker 01462 815114

Kim Lee Tyler 01462 811750

Email address: [meppershallgardenclub@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:meppershallgardenclub@hotmail.co.uk)

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MEPPERSHALL SOCIAL CLUB  
PRESENT

# *CLUB SOUND*

# *KARAOKE*

WITH

# *STU & DAVE*

*SATURDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL*  
*8PM TILL LATE*

*1000'S OF TRACKS TO CHOOSE FROM*  
*ALL YOUR KARAOKE FAVOURITES*



***NON MEMBERS WELCOME, UNDER 18'S MUST  
BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT***

## Fairy Tale for Modern Times: The Fisherman and His Wife

It will be well known to many readers that 'Fairy-Tales' frequently don't involve actual 'fairies' (although they often include magical beings), and that in their original form they were not necessarily aimed at children. Many began as folktales, found in many versions across Europe – and indeed across the world. In the first half of the nineteenth century, two eminent German historians, the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, collected many traditional folktales, first publishing their famous collection in 1812. Such stories can have an archetypal quality and also some at least can have a meaning for adults.

One such story is that of *'The Fisherman and His Wife'*, found in Grimm, as well as in Philip Pullman's more modern retelling. The story goes like this. The fisherman and his wife are a very poor couple who live in a shack, not much better than a hovel. One day when the fisherman is fishing in the sea, he catches a magic flounder (fish). The flounder cries out that he is an enchanted prince and begs not to be killed. The fisherman is a kind man and puts the magic fish back into the sea unharmed. When he goes home, the fisherman tells the story to his wife, who comments that the fisherman should have asked the fish for some gift (*'Those enchanted princes can do anything'*, she says). In particular, she says she wants a much better place to live in. Accordingly, the fisherman goes back to the sea, calls to the fish, and tells his wife's wish. The flounder replies, *'Go home, she's got her wish already'*; and when the fisherman gets back, sure enough his family now have a nice clean cottage. For a time the wife is contented, but after a while she complains that the cottage and garden are too small: now she wants to live in a great stone castle. Once again the fisherman goes back to the sea, and once again the flounder says, *'Go home, she's got her wish already'*.

Predictably, the fisherman's wife is still not satisfied. As the story goes on, she asks for them to be king and queen of their land; to live in a marble palace; to be Emperor of the realm; even to be Pope. Every time the fisherman goes back to the shore the weather is darker and the sea stormier, but every time the flounder grants the wish. Things come to an abrupt halt however when the wife says she wants to be God: she wants unlimited power over the universe. You will guess what happens next. The fisherman goes to the shore and in some apprehension makes the request: the flounder tells him to go back. Henceforth they are back in their first poor home with all their riches taken away from them.

Apparently just a traditional story, this tale can have a meaning for modern times – just as Dickens knew, when to his brilliant novel **Hard Times** he added the subtitle *'For These Times'*. (For what are 'These Times': but All Times:

that is, now?). *The Fisherman's Wife* is a tale about unrestrained material greed (and material greed, unfortunately, is one by-product of our modern capitalist society, arguably born in the era of Dickens and Grimm). The story implies that those whose material greed knows no limits, may find eventually that they lose everything. Or, as I would suggest in an alternate interpretation, they may find that what they have gained materially, is in the end of no worth - either to them or to anyone else.

Additionally, this story can offer us a meaning about Nature and our relationship to it. The magic fish can be taken to represent Nature, and its generosity to us. An announcement on the News a year or so ago told us that the human race, at least in the West, had for the first time become more urban than rural in its lifestyle and values. I think though that in all our concern with material objects, possessions, technology, all our clever inventions – we tend to forget that everything human beings have ever made or created over the centuries, has been made out of something that Nature originally gave to us. Without the source of our being in the natural world, we are nothing. Although we pay lipservice to nature in marking out small 'Reserves' for wildlife, fenland, etc (and charging a fee to enter them), it seems to me that human beings increasingly live as though nature and the countryside do not really matter. Fields, open skies, the habitats of birds and wild creatures, and the simple beauty and satisfaction that people find in them - all of these must give way to the urban and material requirements of the human race, because the human race (we think) is the most important thing on the planet. And that is where we are going wrong. If we do not genuinely value and take care of nature, it will be to our detriment, sooner or later. If we do not learn very soon to live in balance with nature, and to give nature the respect and space it needs, we will put ourselves at risk, socially, psychologically and spiritually; even materially. In the post-Brexit era on which Britain is embarking, we do not even know what our longer-term needs may be. We may yet need some of our fields, in the course of time, to feed ourselves.

The role of the magic fish in the fairy tale, can remind us of the generosity of Nature. Nature gives, and gives and gives to us. But one day, if we push it too far, if we cease to value the simple and good things it has given us - I firmly believe, that one day, it will have its own back on us.

Taking words that T.S.Eliot (the original author of the famous 'Cat' poems) wrote in one of his most beautiful and thoughtful works (*Four Quartets*),

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark....

The houses are all gone under the sea.

The dancers are all gone under the hill

*Note: The writer of this article is female. No sexism is intended to be read into this interpretation. The meaning of the story can be taken as deeper than that.*

## Message from St. Mary's - Services & Events

### Parish Church of St Mary The Virgin (Church of England)

Church Road, off Campton Road, Meppershall

[www.stmarysmeppershall.org.uk](http://www.stmarysmeppershall.org.uk) † [facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall](https://facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall)



#### Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

01462 339962 – [ronigoodman@gmail.com](mailto:ronigoodman@gmail.com) – usual day off Monday

#### Churchwardens:

Dawn Abbatt 01462 816962

James Read 01462 857836 Email: [Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com](mailto:Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com)

#### PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: [annie10639@gmail.com](mailto:annie10639@gmail.com)

### Things to Look Out For...

**Second Sunday** – 9<sup>th</sup> April – our Second Sunday Service with refreshments and chat midway through – and the Second Sunday Stroll this month through Shefford and down the Ivel to Clifton and Henlow. The Five Bells are calling.

**Easter!** – services and events throughout – Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday itself. Something for everyone – including the **Mini-SPARKS Easter Egg Hunt** on Easter morning at church!

**APCM** – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April – Annual Parochial Church Meeting (the church AGM) where we confirm who is doing what in the coming year.

**St John's College Cambridge** – 20<sup>th</sup> May – our church patron hosting us for a visit with afternoon tea and Evensong. All welcome – message us on FB, call or email (details above). Reserve early (40 places). We might use the Wanderbus!

### A Message from St Mary's...

As I write, it is beginning feel as though Spring has really sprung. Today the heating is off and the door into the garden is open - the birds are singing, the snowdrops are out, the buds are bursting on the branches and the garden is definitely springing back to life with our grandchildren playing out of doors without their coats!

April is also bringing with it Easter and the promise new spiritual life that this affords. After the discipline and the solemnity of Lent, especially of Holy Week when we remember Jesus' last meal with his disciples, his journey to Calvary and

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his death on the cross - the Church too will burst into new life with Easter flowers and Easter Alleluia's and cries of "Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!" Do look out for special Holy Week and Easter services and events and join the celebrations.

In preparation for Easter we will be tidying the Churchyard once again. And as summer approaches I would like to thank again, all those who look after their loved ones' graves and the churchyard as a whole. Visitors to our Churchyard so often comment on just how beautifully it is kept. I would ask everyone please to check that there are no glass vases, that any mini-conifers are removed (as they do not stay mini!) and consider whether any artificial flowers can now be replaced with the summer annuals and perennials much preferred by the Diocese. If in doubt, please ask me or check Churchyard Regulations - Diocese of St Alban's 2004.

April is also the time of year when churches (in the Church of England) have their Annual General Meetings. It is a time to look back over the previous calendar year and to report so many aspects of our church life....

It is also a time for me, as Rector, to say a huge thank you to all who have contributed to the life of St Mary's over the past year: the Church Wardens, the PCC, our Sacristans, our Lay Leaders of Worship, our caterers, churchyard working party-ers, choir and organists, sides persons, readers and prayers and rota-makers, grass-cutters, Junior Church team, Sparks organisers and helpers, Scarecrow festival organisers and participants, bike-and-hikers, CD Play-ers, cleaners, launderers, second Sunday strollers, flower arrangers, bell ringers, maintenance team, communicators and of course the Friends of St Mary's... and I apologise if I have missed any one! Thank you to all who contribute their gifts generously, quietly, tirelessly...and everyone and anyone who joins in the life of the church!

Thank you finally to everyone who entered the Christmas photo competition. The winner was Maureen Gravell and her photo will adorn the village Christmas card at the end of the year. You can also see it on our Facebook page.

Why not come along to one of the many events in the table below, and find out more about what St Mary's Meppershall is all about? We'd love to welcome you, wherever you may be in life and faith.

With my many many thanks, and prayers for a happy and blessed Easter time.

***Rector Roni***

**Services and Events – April 2017** *At St Mary's unless stated below*

Date	Time	Service / Event
Sun 2 <sup>nd</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> in Lent	10.45am 11.00am	Teen Table Talk at the Rectory Holy Communion With Junior Church (in the vestry)
Weds 5 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sat 8 <sup>th</sup>	From 8.45am	<b>Churchyard Working Party</b> – come whenever you can. See separate article in this <i>Messenger</i> .
Sat 8 <sup>th</sup>	10am-3pm	Bible Society - Clifton Providence Baptist Church - Quiet Day with Venerable Paul Hughes, Archdeacon of Bedford.
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> <b>Palm Sunday</b>	8.30am 11.00am 2.00pm	Holy Communion <b>Second Sunday Service</b> – the easy habit <b>Second Sunday Stroll</b> – meet at the church gate for 5 miles to Henlow (Five Bells / St Mary's Church) – via Shefford, Ivel Canal, Clifton. <a href="https://www.facebook.com/MeppershallStrollers">facebook.com/MeppershallStrollers</a> or email <a href="mailto:Meppershall.pcc@gmail.com">Meppershall.pcc@gmail.com</a> .
Mon 10 <sup>th</sup>	7.45 for 8pm	Bible Society meeting at 65 House Lane, Arlesey. Speaker: Revd Bill Britt of St Mary's Stotfold.
Tues 11 <sup>th</sup>	2-4pm	Rectory Tea – chat and a cuppa – all welcome
Weds 12 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Holy Communion
<b>Maundy Thursday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	7.30pm	Holy Communion
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> <b>Good Friday</b>	11.00am 2.00pm 9-9.30pm	Procession of Witness in Shefford <b>Good Friday Service</b> <b>Silent Together</b> – join friends to sit for a few minutes to enjoy the tranquillity of the church
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	<b>Easter Vigil</b> – a reflective time in the hours before the Easter dawn
Sun 16 <sup>th</sup> <b>Easter Day</b>	10.00am 11.00am	<b>Mini-SPARKS Easter Egg Hunt!</b> <b>Easter morning service</b> , holy communion
Weds 19 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sat 22 <sup>nd</sup>	9.00am	<b>Celtic Morning Prayer</b>
Sun 23 <sup>rd</sup>	8.30am 11.00am	Holy Communion <b>All Age Family Service</b>
Weds 26 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Holy Communion
Thurs 27 <sup>th</sup>	7.00pm	Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Parish Communion



St Mary's Church, Meppershall

## **Junior Church**

Our next Junior Church session is:

**on Sunday 2 April**

**11am at St Mary's Church**

**In the Vestry**

**(age 3 to 12)**

*and*

**Mini Sparks on**

**Easter Sunday – 16 April**

**10am – 11am at St Mary's**

*(including our annual Egg Hunt!)*



## The Team

### CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editor welcomes contributions to the Messenger, whether as letters, articles or notices. Contributions should preferably be as attachments to e-mail but hand written contributions may be sent by post, left at the Editor's address below or in the folder kept at the Village Stores. Contributions should run to not more than one A5 page (except by prior arrangement) and should be received by the Editor not later than the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month for publication at the end of that month. Contributions received after the deadline may be held over.

### DISCLAIMER

The Editor reserves the right to omit or alter any advertisement or article and to change the content, format or issue date of the magazine without prior notice. The Editor cannot be held responsible for the factual correctness of, or for any libellous comment or statement made in any advertisement, article or other contribution published in this magazine. Every effort will be made to avoid any deliberate attempt to mislead or otherwise cause harm or damage to any person or persons by any advertisement, article or any other contribution published in this magazine.

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<u>Collating Dates for your Diaries</u>					
April	24		October	30	
May	30		September	25	
June	26		November	27	Double issue
July	31	Double issue	January 2018	29	

***Please note that dates in the above table indicate the month in which the collating will take place, at 2.30 pm in the Sugar Loaf. The issue being collated will relate to the following month.***

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