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Editorial

By Dick Bulley

Well, the countdown clock was stopped at the last minute! The Messenger will continue beyond March 2018, thanks to two established village personalities, James Read and Mick Ridley, who are joining forces to produce it for at least another year. You probably know James from his work in many capacities with St Mary's and Mick may be best known for his work to Save the Sugar Loaf, although he has also been Chair of the Fair Committee for the last two years. The two in combination very much impressed the Messenger Committee with their enthusiasm and fresh ideas, of which the magazine has been much in need. I will leave Mick and James to tell you about their plans in their own first Editorial in the April issue, but one thing that came across strongly to the Committee was their resolve to keep the Messenger going as the valued organ of comment and communication that it has always been. That is not to say that there will not be changes, but the whole point of introducing new blood is to break out of a tired formula without losing what was good.

The changing of the old guard is an appropriate time at which to acknowledge with sincere thanks the simple fact that, especially in the last few months, the continuation of The Messenger has been down to the efforts of a team of people rather than any one individual. To address only the last period for which I have been responsible, first and foremost is the Messenger Committee, acknowledged on the last page as "The Team". My Assistant Editor, David Turner, has always done far more than assist: he actually puts the magazine together, with minimum interference from me. Similarly, John Thompson is billed as "Treasurer" which does not acknowledge that, as well as looking after the magazine's finances he loads the copy for printing every month, deals with any issues that arise with the printing machine (which completely fills his spare bedroom!) and gives house-room to the shifting team of printers and folders who invade it in the last week of every month. Also rather unsung is Colette House, who has always preferred to operate in the background but has actually been indispensable; it has taken 2 new people to cover the jobs that she has done in Advertising, not to mention proof-reading. Of the "front row" team, that just leaves Enid Pamment who every month marshals the rota of volunteers who mind the printing machine while it churns out the pages and who then fold them

and collate them into the magazine that drops onto your door mat and Martin Randall, our fund-raising expert. Among the printers special mention must go to Beverley Aberdeen and the team-within-a-team of Ruth & Denis Neilson. The table below lists, as of last month, all those who have participated in the collating and distribution but there have been others who have either moved away or, sadly, passed away:

Dawn Adams	Karen Hirst	Carmel & Malcolm Judd	Sandra Morgan	Lyn Thomas
Viv Clark	Jean Holden	Mrs Lambley	Linda Parker	John Thompson
Phil Collins	Barbara Horwood	Diane Lancaster	Anne Parsons	Mick Trundle
Anita Darby	Colette House	Elsie Lawrence	Jacqui Plumley	Wendy Reece
Sharon Edwards	Louise Hutson	Karen Lucas	Mandy & Trevor Puttick	Louise Woodcock
Marian Fairweather	Fay Ingber	Emma Maxwell	Graham Scrase	Lee & Helen Whybrow
Howard Freeman	Richard Ivory	Inge McConnell	Jan Thomas	Elizabeth Wilson
Kay Gardiner	Wendy Jones	Janice Middleton	Janet Thomas	

I apologise if a table of names seems a bit impersonal but I sincerely thank everyone named on that list for helping to keep The Messenger alive every bit as much as I have done. As ever, there is plenty of multi-tasking, so some names appear in several places.

The next set of people who deserve sincere thanks are those who have come forward to join the team and take the magazine into volume 34 and beyond. I have already mentioned James and Mick who will be piloting the ship, but also

to be added are Andrew Pain and Sharon Edwards who will be jointly looking after Advertising and Carmel Judd who will join Colette House in master-minding Distribution; welcome aboard to all of you.

With the help of all of the above, The Messenger gets produced and distributed every month, but to enable that to happen, we rely on our advertisers to provide the essential revenue. Our advertising team is now in the process of signing up advertisers for 2018-19, so I offer my sincere thanks to those who have supported us for the past year and especially to those who have agreed to support us again next year. Yet another group without whom the magazine could not have been published is our regular contributors: the index page shows those names that feature faithfully every month. Thank you, all of you, and please keep up the good work!

And finally you, our readers, who make the whole venture worthwhile. Surveys have shown that The Messenger is valued in the village, so I sincerely thank you for your support but can I also urge you to support the new team with contributions: articles, letters, whatever you like but keep it coming as it is your input that really keeps the magazine alive.

For the last time,
Dick Bulley, Editor.

.....all of which just leaves me, as Assistant Editor, to sincerely thank Dick on behalf of everyone on the Messenger Committee for steering us (yet again) through a very sticky patch and for being the catalyst for what we all hope will become a bright new era in the magazine's history. When next month's issue lands on our doormats, we should all take a moment to remind ourselves that it was his quiet resolve and determination to save the magazine when most were resigned to its demise that proved the inspiration for its survival. That's just what great leaders do, you know, and what we've come to expect from Dick. No surprise there, then. Thank you again, Dick.

David Turner
Assistant Editor

Letters to the Editor

Letter from Sharon Watson:

Mothers' Day, Sunday March 11th 2018

Did you all remember your Mum last Mothers' Day? It is not just buying a card or a small present or a bunch of flowers or taking her out for a meal, especially as all the prices go up on Mothers' day and greed creeps in. What counts are the simple things on every other day of the year: communication, phone calls, visits and taking her out voluntarily, not because it's the thing we are all commercially encouraged to do.

It might be nice to have at least one Mother's Day in every month!

Editor's Note:

Did you know: Mothers' Day is the American name for Mothering Sunday. Since the 1600s in the UK this day was celebrated on the 4th Sunday of Lent, also called Laetare Sunday, when the Christian church made a pause in the rigours of Lent. On this day, apprentices and young people working away from home were encouraged to visit their mothers and take them a small token of their love and respect.

Development Update: Report from the Trustees of Meppershall Village Hall

This update has been written on 12th February 2018. When you read this, work will have continued to move forward towards completion.

Work on the roof has been hindered by the frosty conditions but as you may have seen the final timbers are in place ready for the waterproof membrane and battons to be fixed. The roof tiles are stacked on the battons of the pre-school block and will be fixed in the coming weeks. The roofers will be working along the whole length of the building, finishing above the changing rooms.

You may also have noticed that the slate grey fascia panels have been fitted to the front of the entrance hall and also at the rear. They will shortly be fixed to the hall gable ends as well.

The next important step in making the building watertight is the fitting of the windows. The pre-school area is complete and later this week the glaziers will work towards the completion of the rest of the building.

Once all the major external work is finished the scaffolding will be removed and you will be able to see what the new building looks like from the outside.

The next stage of construction is called 'First Fix' when the M&E contractors take over. They are responsible for installing all the Mechanical and Electrical infrastructure such as heating, ventilation, lights, power, data, stage lighting equipment etc..

The Trustees are currently in discussions with the main User Groups about the final details of the facilities they would like in the new building. They are also talking about how the building can be used for other new activities while preserving what has been so successfully run by dedicated volunteers for many years.

The Pre-School, Bar, Snooker, Social Cub, Bingo, Brownies, Kickboxers and Meppershall Players continue to thrive in the Interim Village Hall and are looking forwards to operating in the new Hall as soon as they can. New members and participants are welcome, contact details are available at www.meppershallvillagehall.co.uk follow the links in the left-hand column.

If you are interested in organising an activity to be held in the new facility from early next year please contact our Booking Secretary for initial discussions. bookings@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk

Regular updates on progress, with photographs, can be followed on www.meppershall.org



We are now approaching a very key stage on the internal design and colour schemes of rooms, the entrance way, main hall, and importantly the two bars, social and sports room areas together with meeting areas and the PC office.

The trustees would therefore like to hear from someone who has a creative nature, flair, imagination, experience in design, and a good communicator who can assist us in making the Meppershall Village Hall a great and attractive Community Centre providing welcoming facilities from 8am in the morning to midnight for a variety of users and hirers. A lot of these will be new activities, never done before.

This is a really good time to become involved and be part of creating the ambience and best use of the new building for many years into the future.

Please email mvh.construction@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk

Telephone - Dave Birch - Treasurer - 01462 817014/07380 800259

Telephone – David Foskett – 01462 851770

Shefford Leisure Group

By Enid Pamment

Although the weather has proved very cold, we have experienced some really beautiful sunny days. The snowdrops in the garden are making an effort to raise their beautiful little heads and I am sure if you can cope with the blustery winds you could enjoy some of the 'snowdrop' walks in and around our area.



Amid all the busy building and construction work, the 'for's and against' which seems to be the main topic of Meppershall at the moment, we must welcome our new families coming to join us and wish them happiness in their new homes.

To cheer ourselves up after the dull grey Winter months, we have booked an afternoon of (fun packed) Cockney entertainment on board the Tereza-Joanne boat in the Royal Docks. This includes late lunch (or early tea)! And no bad language!! Do please join us and enter into the 'Chas & Dave' era!

I really must mention the London Museum of Water and Steam, home to the largest collection of working water pumping engines in the world. We have arranged a buffet lunch (not included). This is followed by a visit to the Musical Museum. This company is relatively new, taking groups of people to see this unique site, telling the story of how clean water, pumped and filtered at Kew Bridge, helped make London the city it is today. This is an extremely informative and educational visit.

The ever popular Shefford Leisure Group Annual 'Get Together' has been booked once again, a little later this year, for Wednesday 8th May – 2pm until 4pm; please ensure this date is firmly fixed in your diary. We meet at the Mount Pleasant Golf Club for a friendly afternoon, a 'well stocked' tombola, presentations and of course a delicious afternoon tea.

At the end of March our clocks Spring forward one hour which means lighter evenings and hopefully warmer days – not forgetting of course the 'host of golden daffodils'!

Take care of each other, and keep well.
Enid

On behalf of Shefford Leisure Group we would like to thank the Editor and his team for the dedication shown each month to the residents of Meppershall.

Having lived in Meppershall for 24 years, the monthly magazine has become a household friend. When we first moved into the village, I found a copy had been delivered to me by a kind soul and just moving to a 'new house' there were so many different 'handymen' required which were all to be found in the Meppershall Messenger! Over the years the magazine has grown, certainly becoming more 'professional' in appearance showing the love and care taken in producing such interesting and helpful contents each month.

Although sorry to see you 'stepping down' we do understand one still has one's life to lead. On that note I would like to wish our new editors and their team continued success and aren't we all lucky to have such dedicated and caring people living amongst us!

Well done to you all and long may the Meppershall Messenger continue!

Enid Pamment
Shefford Leisure Group

FORTHCOMING EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2018:

THE PEOPLE'S POST

Sunday 4th March 2018 – 100 years on!

We meet our Blue Badge Guide for morning refreshments and afterwards the choice is yours to either do the 'walking tour' or a half walking tour and finish off by coach whilst hearing the tales of drunken poaching mailmen, corrupt politicians, the Victorian internet and a canny public, determined to avoid paying for their post. Exmouth Market will be the place where we can choose our lunch stop. During the afternoon we visit the brand new state of the art Postal Museum to enjoy an incredible collection spanning five centuries. We will also ride the hidden tunnels of the Mail Rail – a unique piece of industrial heritage that has kept the capital's communications flowing for over 75 years. *(sold out)*

THE MOUNTBATTEN FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

Saturday 10th March – Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines at the Royal Albert Hall. – Matinee Performance. Arranged in conjunction with Stevenage Group Travel (*Reserve list only*)

IDEAL HOME SHOW OLYMPIA – Sunday 1st April 2018

CAMDEN MARKET – Sunday 8th April 2018

LIGHT HEARTED COCKNEY FUN AFTERNOON ON THE RIVER THAMES –

Tuesday 10th April 2018.

THE LONDON MUSEUM OF WATER & STEAM PLUS A VISIT TO THE MUSICAL MUSEUM – Saturday 28th April 2018.

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP ANNUAL GET TOGETHER -

Wednesday 9th May 2018, held at Mount Pleasant Golf Club from 2pm – 4pm. Afternoon tea & presentation.

THE COTSWOLDS EXPLORER – 3-DAY TOUR – May 27th 2018 for two nights – We will be staying at the 4* Oxford Whitney Hotel, just a short walk from the historic centre of Whitney, this hotel is the ideal base for travelling throughout Oxfordshire. The hotel features well equipped bedrooms, a heated swimming pool, spa bath, steam room and sauna which are all free for the group to use throughout their stay. Day trips include The Downton Abbey Matinee Explorer, Cotswolds Gold and the Cotswolds River Thames Explorer. We also have a Blue Badge Guide to accompany us. Please contact for prices and any further details required. A flier is available if requested.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL'S spectacular floral event – Friday 1st June 2018

ROYAL ASCOT LADIES DAY – Thursday 21st June 2018

ELY CATHEDRAL FLOWER FESTIVAL – Friday 22nd June 2018

WINDSOR CASTLE & SAVILL GARDENS – Sunday 1st July 2018

WISBECH ROSE FAIR (FESTIVAL DAY) – Saturday 7th July 2018

SMUGGLERS & STRAWBERRY JAM (Essex) – Monday 23rd July 2018

SANDRINGHAM FLOWER SHOW – Wednesday 25th July 2018

LITCHFIELD & THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM – Monday 3rd September 2018.

THURSFORD CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR – Sunday 11th November 2018.

LONDON SHOWS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE – ALL MATINEE PERFORMANCES:
(organised in conjunction with Stevenage Group Travel)

LION KING – Matinee – Wednesday 7th March, 2018 including a 2-course lunch at The Strand Palace Hotel, Lyceum Theatre, Stall Seats. Leaving Shefford at 9am

DREAM GIRLS – Matinee – Wednesday 7th March – Savoy Theatre, Stall Seats, Leaving Shefford at 9.30am.

KINKY BOOTS – (Matinee) – Wednesday 7th March – including a 2-course carvery lunch at the Strand Palace Hotel, Adelphi Theatre, Stall Seats, Leaving Shefford at 9am.

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC CONCERT ORCHESTRA FILM MUSIC GALA – Sunday 27th June, held at the Royal Albert Hall, Arena and Circle Seats. – Coach will depart Shefford at 11am.

STRICTLY BALLROOM – THE MUSICAL: Wednesday 2nd May, the uplifting story that inspired the world to dance, based on Baz Luhrmann's multi award-winning movie *Strictly Ballroom*. Piccadilly Theatre – Stall Seats – Coach will depart Shefford at 10.15am.

THE KING and I – (Matinee) – Wednesday 27th June 2018 – London Palladium – Royal Circle Seats – Coach leaving Shefford at 10.15am.

Please telephone for prices and availability 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. Enid Pamment – Shefford Leisure Group

Meppershall Parish Council

Report on February meeting from Cllr. Dick Bulley

The meeting took place on Monday 12th February and the Chairman, Cllr. Peter Chapman, asked me to make this report.

Among the issues raised in the open part of the meeting was the reported change in bin collection arrangements to every 3 weeks. In his report, CBC Cllr. Tony Brown said this was only one of a number of options about which CBC was consulting: the consultation would open next week for 6 weeks: he encouraged all residents to make their views known to CBC. There would be no final decision until March 2019.

A member of the public reported that the 60 MPH limit on Chapel Road at Hoo Farm was too high: it made pulling out of the farm dangerous; the Chairman agreed that MPC would pass this on to CBC Highways Dept. There were similar complaints about construction vehicles pulling out of the site at 4 High Street: The Clerk was instructed to check whether there was a traffic management plan for the site. Another complaint concerned excessive speed by construction vehicles on Shefford Road resulting in near-misses: The Chairman directed that this should be reported back to Croudace.

Planning

When the Council meeting resumed the Clerk reported that attendance at the planning appeal concerning 100 High Street had been a very useful learning experience and had demonstrated the effect of strong public representation; she hoped that even more people would attend the appeal concerning Stocken House, to be heard in w/c 10 April. Cllr. P. Smith added that the appeal now referred only to the second application, for 145 houses – the first appeal had been withdrawn.

New applications:

- for a directional sign to be erected beside the A507 – Council agreed to oppose this on the grounds of the precedent it would set.
- extension at 4, Shillington Road – Council agreed to ask for a turning circle in the plans, to avoid vehicles having to reverse out.
- Council also agreed to object to the proposed development at Tower View Nurseries on Fildyke Road, on the grounds of inappropriate housing mix and on Highways grounds in that there is no pedestrian foot way on that part of Fildyke Road: comments on this proposal to CBC Planning Dept by 26/02/18
- It was also agreed to support the request by the Doctors surgery in Lower Stondon that any S.106 money becoming due from developments in their practice area, which includes Meppershall, should be directed to expanding that surgery.

MAG

Cllr Thomason reported that Nadine Dorries, our constituency MP had visited Meppershall and listened to comments about proposed developments. He also said that attendance at the 100 High Street appeal had shown the need for preparation in advance of the Gladman appeal.

Neighbourhood Plan

After Cllr Thomason reported that central funding would not be available to fund administrative support for the Group, Council agreed that some of the £1,000 reserved for the Group could be used to fund support by the Clerk for up to 5 hours per week.

Highways & Transport

The Clerk reported that our application for Rural Matched Funding to finance anti-speeding measures had been rejected because Highways Dept was already looking at speeding issues on specific roads. She also tabled a draft letter to the Chief Constable asking for his support for an application to Highways Dept for revised lane markings and double white lines on the A507 leading up from the Esso Garage to The Airman.

New Village Hall

Cllr Foskett drew attention to the progress report that will be included in the March Meppershall Messenger. He added that drop-down bollards had been fitted to allow the gate on the pedestrian path to remain open, and an extra lighting bollard had been installed on the path. He confirmed that Croudace were allowed to sell up to 60 of the new houses before the new VH was complete.

Clerk's Report

The course on Understanding Planning would be rescheduled as soon as possible.

Cllr Bulley reported that the Gnomes had 9 applicants for defibrillator training and the Clerk thought this might be enough to make the training viable.

The Council did not support participation in the Great British Spring Clean this year but agreed to start looking in December for volunteers for Spring 2019.

Finance

Council agreed to spend an extra £5 per month to expand the band width of the village website.

Next Meetings

The next 2 meetings of the Parish Council will be on 12 March and 9 April 2018.



Although this has been a short half term, we have been very busy with our learning and other activities.

A team of children from Year 3 and Year 4 entered a Sports Hall Athletics competition in January at the Bunyan Centre in Bedford. Activities included jumping, running and throwing activities. Later on in the month, a team of children from Key Stage One took part in a Sports Multiskills competition. This involved a variety of activities using balls, beanbags and running skills. In both events all our children tried hard and showed great enthusiasm. We were very proud of their behaviour. Particular congratulations go to the Key Stage One team who came [3rd](mailto:3rdlewisobe@hotmail.co.uk) overall.

Our ever popular Parents Lunches have continued this term with each class inviting their parents to join them for a delicious school lunch.

On Thursday 1st February sixteen children from Year 3 and 4 travelled to the O2 Arena in London to take part in the Young Voices concert. Young Voices is an exciting opportunity for children to come together to sing in large choirs, in amazing venues. For this particular concert the children had to learn 14 songs from memory, some with dance moves. Rehearsals took place in the afternoon ready for the concert to begin in the evening. A total of 7972 children performed together that evening producing an incredible vocal sound. This was an unforgettable experience for all involved.

Finally, our half term ended this week with Judo taster sessions for children across the school. Each class was taught some basic skills and games by a coach from British Judo.

Nickie Moore
Head Teacher



February 2018 Update

CB/17/03887/OUT - Stocken House 145 application now gone to appeal – the hearing has been set for 10 April and is being held locally at Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands. A four-day appeal hearing.

MAG and MPC representatives attended the 4-day appeal hearing for 100 High Street and have realised that a visible presence by residents in the hearing chamber is vital – it shows the planning inspector the strength of feeling locally in opposition to a development. We are unlikely to know the outcome of this appeal until after the Gladman appeal is heard but hope the outcome is favourable.

If you are able to attend in the audience for any or all four days in April to show visible support from the village against this application we would appreciate this. Gladman have withdrawn their appeal for the 150 development.

Central Bedfordshire Council – Draft Local Plan – Pre-submission Consultation ended
22 February 2018

By the time you read this article the consultation period will have ended, and we may have a Local Plan from CBC which will ultimately be in force until the year 2035. We hope that you took the opportunity to comment on the Plan.

Introspective words: One of the unintended consequences of asking to be informed and involved with local Council decisions is the burden and responsibility of responding to the numerous consultations issued by the Council. The Council cannot be selective about which items they should consult us about – imagine the uproar if they passed something without consulting us.

They ask our opinion about all manner of things, and although it can be tiresome when these requests come thick and fast (as they are currently), we should remember however, where we would be without this freedom of democracy. We would just have ‘things’ done to us rather than being part of the decision-making process.

The next consultation is about rubbish bin and recycling collection timescales – please have your say – three weeks between collections is being mooted!

The CBC website can send you reminders and notifications about up and coming items <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKCBCC/subscriber/new>

Neighbourhood Planning – watch out over the coming months for information, local events and requests for your involvement in shaping the future of Meppershall.

“Neighbourhood Planning must arise from the community, with individuals and groups working in partnership with local businesses, developers and landowners in the area, to deliver sustainable development to meet the community’s needs for the future. Neighbourhood Planning is a new way of allowing neighbourhoods to have a say in the statutory land use planning of their own areas”. Quote from CBC Draft Local Plan – Pre- submission

Meppershall housing and planning developments update

CB/18/002323/FULL – Tower view Nurseries – Demolition of existing bungalow and redevelopment with 10 residential dwellings and all ancillary work



 <p>bhd Berkshire Housing Development 100% Housing - 100% Quality 100% Affordable - 100% Well 100% Sustainable - 100% Well 100% Well - 100% Well</p>	<p>81 FILDENE ROAD, MEPPERSHALL</p>	
<p>LOCATION PLAN</p>	<p>1-1250</p>	<p>1737</p>
<p>PLANNING</p>	<p>31.08.17 2017</p>	<p>LD-01</p>

If you wish to comment on this application you can do so by logging on to the CBC website:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning/view-comment/applications.aspx>

or by writing to: CBC at Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ

For and on behalf of Meppershall Action Group - **Our village – we do have a say!**

Visit by Nadine Dorries MP to Meppershall

MAG representatives along with the Meppershall Parish Council Clerk, met with Nadine Dorries on the 19th January to ask for guidance on the planning process and to make her aware of the unprecedented number of applications we face each month in the village.

The planning process is, we believe, set out in favour of developers in that they have months and months to prepare an application for development, aided by an army of paid professionals who set out documents and glossy reports to woo the planning officers and local residents. We the villagers have just four weeks to respond to each of these applications with reams and reams of paperwork to be digested so that we can defend the village from unsustainable development.

We were very pleased that Nadine had taken the time to research the situation in Meppershall with regard to local planning applications, the position of the Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan and current appeals. She was very well versed in our situation and seemed genuinely concerned with our plight.

She was supportive of our intentions to ensure that any planning development in Meppershall is sustainable in terms of the local infrastructure but she advised us that she has no planning involvement in her role as MP. To this end she suggested that we enlist the support of our two local ward councillors, Cllr Anthony Brown and Cllr Mark Liddiard, who are employed by Central Bedfordshire Council to support local communities with their defence of any inappropriate and unsustainable development that would harm the community.

She urged us to continue supporting the Neighbourhood Planning team in their efforts to map out the development of Meppershall that ensures sustainable growth whilst supporting the local community.



This term we have had lots of new Brownies join us and it has been fun to welcome so many new girls. We are now getting quite full, so please remember to register your daughter via the Girlguiding website even if she isn't quite seven yet to secure a place.

This term the Brownies have been doing activities to earn their Science Investigator badge, we made a PH tester out of red cabbage and the girls enjoyed seeing the colours change with different solutions, they also planted cress and made a cress head and we did a sounds quiz. We will be continuing with some more science fun next half term to complete the badge.

Snowy Owl enjoyed watching Paddington Two at the cinema so much that she decided to spend an evening doing Paddington themed activities. The idea had been to do something marmalade related, but it would appear that marmalade is not at all popular with 7-10 year olds, so at the Brownies' request, the plans were changed and we made buttercream and chocolate bear cakes, which proved very popular and very yummy, and also did some bear crafts and games.

We have also celebrated Burns night and made chocolate chip shortbread and finally (after some confusion and crashing into each other) learnt some Scottish dancing.

We also used a lot of imagination and spent a virtual night at the museums, playing wrap the mummy for the British Museum, made a flying Tetractyl for the Natural History Museum (now that's a sentence I hadn't envisaged I would ever write) and played inventions snakes and ladders.

February is always a special month for Brownies, as we celebrate Thinking Day by joining together with other Rainbows, Brownies and Guides in the District to spend an afternoon thinking about other girls around the world, making new brownie and rainbow friends and renewing our promise. Thinking Day is always on 22nd February which is the birthday of Lord Baden Powell, the founder of Scouting and coincidentally also the birthday of his wife Olave who started Guiding a few years later. As that is a school day, we will be celebrating Thinking Day with the Brownies on 25th February. The theme of this year's Thinking Day activities is Best of British.

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.



THE MEPPERSHALL PLAYERS



Well ladies & gentlemen, boys and girls it's all change for our late Spring/early Summer production. The comedy thriller whodunnit 'Murder at Little Hapnin' is still a work in progress and has been shelved until a later date. Instead, the Players are now rehearsing a variety show with songs, sketches, monologues, poems and the odd surprise. We will be performing this fun-for-all-the-family spectacular on the weekend of Friday 29th & Saturday 30th June, so make a note of it on your calendar or in your diary. More details in next month's Messenger (the Players all have their fingers crossed for the continuation of this wonderful magazine). *(You can uncross them now. Ed)*

The Players will be attending summer fairs throughout the sunny (we hope) season and will have a slightly different format for our stall than in previous years, but we do need prizes so if you have any unwanted gifts we would be most grateful for them.

Having recently attended a local pantomime where they had a very competent pianist, we have revised our needs for a Piano Player. Backing tracks at our pantomimes and modern variety shows gives the Players a much wider range of music that we might otherwise have overlooked, but we would still very much like someone who loves to play piano for an 'Old Time Music Hall Variety Show' we are planning for 2019, and our V.E and V.J Shows for 2020, as backing tracks are few and far between for songs of these eras and do not give the same atmosphere to the proceedings. Would you like to accompany the Players' in 2019 & 2020? If yes, we'd love to meet you in the not too distant future. Drop in on any Wednesday or contact Karen (Players' Secretary) on the number below.

Find the Meppershall Players on Facebook (Meppershall Players Community) Instagram, Twitter, and Meppershall Village Hall Website.

The Players meet every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm at the Interim 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

Police Advice

We are urging people to take action to help prevent their property being burgled.

The warning comes after a spate of burglaries over the weekend, with the Stopsley and Caddington areas being particularly targeted. There were a total of 37 break-ins reported over the weekend – with 15 in those two areas. Detective Constable Ben Stone said: “We are working hard to crack down on burglary and arrest those responsible, however, we’re also urging the public to follow our crime prevention advice to help reduce the risk of becoming a victim. Please remember to double-lock doors if you can, and secure all entry points to the property. Leave a light on if you’re heading out for the evening so it looks like someone is home, and please keep an eye out for elderly and vulnerable neighbours. Some of these burglaries have seen offenders claiming to work for either the police or the water board in order to gain access, so we’re also reminding people of our bogus caller advice and to never allow access to your property to someone you don’t know. If you have an elderly relative in Bedfordshire, please speak to them about the recent burglaries and remind them of our advice, as well as to report any suspicious activity directly to us.”

Burglary prevention advice

- Use your lights at home – keep them on a timer when you are out so it looks like someone is home
- Make sure all doors on your house and vehicle are securely locked at all times. If you have a UPVC door at home, make sure it is double-locked
- Keep all valuables and keys safely out of sight from windows, both in your home and car. Close curtains with a light on indoors
- Never leave garages or sheds unlocked – not only can valuable tools be appealing to thieves, they can also be used to force entry to your home
- Don’t hide your keys under a doormat or in a flowerpot – it’s the first place a would-be offender will look
- Ask a friend to keep an eye on your house when you go away, and do the same for neighbours by remaining alert to suspicious activity in your street
- If you have an unexpected knock on the door never open it to strangers, consider installing a door chain and always keep it on
- If unsure of the visitor’s identity always ask for their ID first and telephone the company they are purporting to be from, and use the telephone numbers listed in your local directory or provided independently by your service provider.

Please report any suspicious activity to us by calling 101 or visiting [the force’s online reporting centre](#).

You can also give information about crime to Crimestoppers, completely anonymously, on 0800 555 111.

Meppershall Calendar of Events – March

Day	Date	What's on	When	Where
Sat	3rd	Karaoke	20.00 hrs	Social Club
Mon	5th	Brownies	18.00 hrs	Interim VH
Tue	6 th	Kick Boxing	19.30 hrs	Interim VH
Wed	7 th	Meppershall Players	19.30 hrs	Interim VH
Thur	8 th	Gnomes Coffee Morning	10.45 hrs	New Meppershall Care Home
		Kick Boxing	19.00 hrs	Interim VH
Fri	9 th	Mothers' Day Lunch		Meppershall Academy
Sun	11 th	2 nd Sunday Stroll	14.00 hrs	St Mary's Church
		Paul Carne's Quiz Night	19.30 hrs	Social Club
Mon	12 th	Mothers' Day Lunch		Meppershall Academy
		Parish Council Meeting	19.45 hrs	Interim VH
Wed	14 th	Meppershall Players	19.30	Interim VH
Thur	15 th	Kick Boxing	19.00 hrs	Interim VH
Sat	17 th	Pre-school Nearly New Sale	11.00-15.00 hrs	Interim VH
Tue	20 th	Kick Boxing	19.30 hrs	Interim VH
Wed	21 st	Meppershall Players	19.30 hrs	Interim VH
Mon	26 th	Messenger Collating	14.30 hrs	Sugar Loaf
Tue	27 th	Kick Boxing	19.30 hrs	Interim VH
Wed	28 th	Brownies	18.00 hrs	Interim VH
Thur	29 th	Kick Boxing	19.00 hrs	Interim VH

Also see the calendar on the village website

This Month's Cover

What do you call a gathering of editors? A composition?

Our cover shows (r-l) out-going Editor: Dick Bully; incoming Joint Editors: James Reid and Mick Ridley; and David Turner, Assistant Editor, provides continuity.

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

(monthly payments discounted)

Contact Charlotte Robinson (6th Dan)

email: Charlotte@Krusader.co.uk

call: 01462 811386 mobile: 07887570193

www.krusader.co.uk



- Struggling to lose weight?
- Need to get fit or tone up?
- She-fit personal training can help achieve 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 www.she-fit.co.uk

email: charlotte@she-fit.co.uk (01462) 811386 or 07887 570193

Clophill Eco Colleges 2018 Events Calendar



CLOPHILL ECO LODGES

If you would like more information on anything, or to speak to us about any event, please call us on 07935 911207 or email info@ClophillHeritage.org

	Mothering Sunday Cream Teas	11th March 2pm – 5pm	£9 Per Person	Book Online
	Planting Day	17th March 10.30 – 4pm	Come and help us plant saplings around the site, free hot drinks & cake.	Book Online
	Sunday Teas	25th March 2pm – 4pm	Tea, Coffee, Hot Chocolate & Soft Drinks + Individually Priced Cakes	No need to book.
	Easter Sunrise Service	1st April 7.30am	Enjoy the Easter Sunrise Service in old St Mary's, followed by a coffee and bacon roll.	No need to book.
	Animal Encounter! With Cafe.	15th April 1pm – 4pm	Come and meet hedgehogs, lizards, guinea pigs & more + have your photo taken with an owl! + Cafe	FREE! No need to book.
	Earth Day Open Day	22nd April 1pm – 4pm	A free day for anyone who would like to learn more about wilderness crafts.	Book Online
	Sunday Teas	29th April – 2pm – 4pm	Tea, Coffee, Hot Chocolate & Soft Drinks + Individually Priced Cakes	No need to book.
	Greensand Country Guided Walk	27th May 12 – 2pm	£3 per person	Book Online
	Sunday Teas	27th May – 2pm – 4pm	Tea, Coffee, Hot Chocolate & Soft Drinks + Individually Priced Cakes	No need to book.

Meppershall Social Club

MARCH AT THE SOCIAL CLUB

***BINGO** - Every Friday. 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.

***KARAOKE** - Saturday 3rd March & Saturday 7th April 8pm-late With Stuart & Dave's Club Sound Karaoke, 1,000s of tracks to choose from. Sing-a-long to your favourite songs at this fun for everyone evening in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere; this is pure Karaoke no in fill music, just people who love to sing having a great time. So, if you like to sing come along, we'd love to hear you.

***PAUL CARNE'S QUIZ NIGHT** - Sunday 11th March at 7.30pm the most fun quiz on the planet, £1 per person, teams as big or small as you like, half of entry money to winning team, other half to the Social Club Charities for 2018. So far this year Team 'Sparks' has won the first two of 2018; can they make it three in a row? Or will your team be the one to stop them? It's still all to play for in this friendly fun for everyone quiz.

* Look out for posters on other Social Club events.

***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 815642. Club opens 8pm; we look forward to seeing you.

MEMBERSHIP for 2018 is available now (pick up a form at the Club).

Meppershall Social Club 01462 815642 after 8pm.



QUIZ NIGHT
ON
SUNDAY 11TH MARCH
STARTS 7.30PM



WITH QUIZMASTER
PAUL CARNE

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

(At Meppershall Interim Village Hall)

(£1 ENTRY FEE PER PERSON, NON-MEMBERS WELCOME)

CLUB SOUND
KARAOKE
WITH
STU & DAVE
SATURDAY 3RD MARCH
7PM TILL LATE
AT MEPESSHALL INTERIM VILLAGE HALL
1000'S OF TRACKS TO CHOOSE
FROM ALL YOUR KARAOKE
FAVOURITES



Notices

DEFIBULATOR TRAINING

The Parish Council is willing to fund a defibrillator training session during 2018 providing there is sufficient support to justify the cost. The GNOMES have undertaken to assess the level interest in the village to this training. Please email your interest to gnomes@meppershall.org by 20 Feb 2018 or by calling 07760 793921.

BDS Driving Tuition

I will shortly be retiring and would like to say a big thank you to my past pupils and their mums and dads who chose me to teach them to drive. I have many fond memories and some laughs along the way over the last fifteen years. So, the time has come to hang up the dual controls. Thank you once again, Bill Shaw

NOTICE FROM MEPPERSHALL PC

Appeals by Gladman Developments Ltd against the rejection of both its developments proposals relating to land at Stocken House, 59, Shefford Road

Appeals references: APP/P0240/W/17/3185183 & APP/PO240/W/17/3190584

The appeals are due to be heard by Mr. P. Rose, Planning Inspector, on 10th to 13th April at the CBC offices at Priory House, Monks walk, Chicksands. Starting at 10.00 AM.

This is a public hearing, open to anyone. Representatives of Meppershall PC and MAG have attended other appeal hearings and realised how important it is that the Inspector is left in no doubt about the strength of local opposition to the proposals. Come along on as many of the 4 days as you can manage; you will not be required to speak but your presence will lend weight to those who are speaking against the proposals.

Friends of St Mary's Quiz Night

We would like to thank everybody who attended the January Quiz Night and to let you know that £512 was raised on behalf of the Church. We know these events are always popular so are planning another one for July (look out for next advert). Friends of St Marys would also like to thank Quiz Masters, Graham and Jenny and also Graham Walker for all of his continued help and support.

Jill Wright - Secretary to FOSM

GNOMES News

Any readers who have recently come to live in Meppershall will find it useful to visit the Village website at www.meppershall.org. Among many other items of information about the Village they will find the tab "Welcome to Meppershall". This has been created by The Gnomes to replace the packs of printed material that we used to put through letterboxes. The on-line version has the same information as the printed packs, with the advantage that the links to other village organisations are live.

If you know of someone who is new to the village, please direct them to "Welcome to Meppershall": The Gnomes would also be very glad to hear from them as we are always on the lookout for new volunteers.

The Gnomes were recently represented at a presentation given by the Alzheimer's Society and thought more people would be interested to know something of the local programme offered by that society.

Alzheimer's Society Information Programmes in Central Bedfordshire

Activity	Venue	Day	Time	Who is the service for
Carers Information and Support Programme 1 (CRISP1)	Aragon House Southfields Shefford SG17 5AT	Friday morning weekly 20 April – 18 May 5 Weeks	10.00am– 12.30pm	Those caring for someone who has a recent diagnosis of dementia
Carers Information and Support Programme 2 (CRISP2)	Aragon House Southfields Shefford SG17 5AT	Friday morning weekly 23 November – 14 December 4 Weeks	10.00am– 12.30pm	Those caring for someone who has had a diagnosis for some time
Living Well with Dementia programme 2019	Aragon House Southfields Shefford SG17 5AT	Friday morning weekly 18 January – 01 March 7 Weeks	10.00am– 12.30pm	People with early stage dementia

The Summerfield Railway

Bedford Model Engineering Society

Summerfield Miniature Railway

Off the A600 just past Haynes Turn

Public Running Days in 2018 from 10.30AM to 4 PM

APRIL	Sunday 1 st		AUGUST	Wednesday 1 st *
	Monday 2 nd (Bank Holiday)			Wednesday 8 th *
	Wed 11 th (half term) *			Wednesday 15 th *
	Sunday 22 nd			Sunday 26 th
MAY	Sunday 6 th			Monday 27 th (Bank Holiday)
	Monday 7 th (Bank Holiday)		SEPTEMBER	Sunday 2 nd
	Sunday 27 th			Sunday 16 th
	Monday 28 th (Bank Holiday)		OCTOBER	Sunday 7 th
	Wed 30 th (half term) *			Sunday 21 st
JUNE	Sunday 10 th			Wed 24 th (half term) *
	Sunday 24 th		DECEMBER	Sat & Sun 8th/9th Santa Specials – pre-booking essential
JULY	Sunday 8 th			For further information, see our website: www.bedfordmes.co.uk
	Sunday 22 nd			
*On our Wednesday openings, only limited catering will be available.				

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Peter and Brenda Carter, of Shefford Road, who will be celebrating their Diamond (60th) wedding anniversary on 29th March 2018.



Junior Birthdays

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

Alessandra D'Amico who will be 7 on the 5th

Alexanda Cocks who will be 16 on the 7th

Genevieve Cocks who will be 15 on the 7th

Dylan Caddick who will be 13 on the 8th

Marcus Hart who will be 15 on the 12th

Ella Bryant who will be 13 on the 12th

Emma Horsford who will be 16 on the 14th

Aaron Vernon who will be 14 on the 16th

Caitlin Gouck who will be 11 on the 20th

Daisy Lucas who will be 16 on the 27th

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

Senior Birthdays

Peter Lambley will be 85 on 1st

Evelyn Jepps will be 98 on 3rd

Ron Mitchell will be 85 on 4th

Barbara Horwood will be 84 on 10th

Peter Longland will be 86 on 11th

Joan Kimber will be 89 on 18th

Richard Ivory will be 84 on 22nd

Denis & Ruth Go Gallivanting with Gertie – Part 3

Conclusion: Harris and Lewis (and home)

We landed at Leverburgh, a cluster of houses near a jetty. Lord Leverhulme, of washing powder fame, named this village, for when he owned the island he had intended it to build a large fish canning factory and distribution centre there. However, changes in taste and economic factors put paid to the idea and there are now moves afoot to have the village name changed. From here there are two routes north, one (the quicker) goes up the west coast, but the one to the east is more spectacular and mountainous and the scenery and views are breath-taking. The official name for the road is The Bays because of all the small hamlets, known as bays, that the road links. It is also known as the Golden Road, attributed to a grumbling councillor who objected to the cost. Most people live on the rugged eastern side rather than the more fertile western side. This had not always been through choice. In the late 1800s the crofters were evicted from their crofts on the western fertile plain into the mostly grey rock and heather on the east side. The clearance, as it was called, was to make space for sheep grazing. Obviously, sheep were more profitable to the rich landowners than crofters' rents. The crofters were hardy people and managed to construct "lazybeds" which were raised plots between the rocks fertilized by seaweed and peat. Some of these are still in use today. Harris, the southern half of the island is more mountainous than Lewis in the north and therefore more attractive with its boulder-strewn hills rolling down to lovely sandy inlets and the odd little cottages scattered here and there. We drove along this road with its dips and bends and at almost every turn we had to catch our breath. The scenery is really something to write home about. The disappointment is the lack of stopping places on this single-track road. There are some but they are few and far between and one is not encouraged to park in a passing place.



We visited Tarbert the largest town in Harris, clinging to the mountainside; apparently very impressive looking when viewed from the sea. It was here that we came across the biggest shop we had seen in our time in the Western Isles. It was very impressive and sold everything from mouse traps to dinner services with electrical goods in between. It would be very difficult not to find what you wanted in this shop. All we were looking for was an

electric plug converter from 3 pin to 2 pin and this store had one. We got settled onto our camp site from which we were able to clamber down to the beach. The path was very slippery due to all the rain but the view was stunning. The site itself was set on a slope with little paths to more level areas where one could pitch a tent. They had converted an out building into a kitchen come lounge with a log fire place and cooker so at least those camping had

somewhere cosy to cook and lounge rather than sit under canvas. After an uneventful night we set off to find a bird hide set in hills which, according to the guide book, was a great place to see golden and sea eagles. Nine miles northwest of Tarbert is the small hamlet of Miavaig where a track leads, for about a mile, to the hide. We followed this track and eventually arrived, somewhat windswept, at the spot. According to the log book inside the hide, no sightings had been made over the previous three days and as far as we were concerned it was about to extend to four. We saw nothing, not even a feather! I have become convinced that when guide books say that places are great for viewing wildlife, it all changes when I go to them.

The following morning dawned and it was raining. You have a dog, you have to walk, so we got a little wet, but when we got back we warmed ourselves with a nice breakfast and a cup of tea. We sat contemplating how we were going to dry out our damp clothes in such weather when water started dripping on us through the skylight. We had a leak, so it was a case of stuffing cloths into the roof light opening to sop up the water. As one cloth got wet we wrung it out and pushed another one in. We decided to go out for a drive, rather than stay stuffing cloths into the roof. This turned out to be sensible because moving appeared to reduce the flow of the water, but, on the other hand it was a little disappointing in that it was a Sunday and nothing was open and the weather did not encourage any outdoor pursuits. The rain eventually did ease and we were able to have a wander on a beach for about an hour. This dry time also gave me the opportunity to borrow a ladder and tape up the roof light and its surrounding frame, (good old gaffer tape) which did the trick. Over the remainder of the holiday the wooden frame surrounding the roof light dried out and no leaks since. This was the second event after having to use tape to seal the rear door after the accident. We decided we would head for Stornaway, the capital of the Western Isles, the next day and from there tour Lewis. The following morning, I had gone for a shower when problem number three threw itself at us. Ruth was in the van and heard, what she only could described as, a phhhft. Then she saw water pouring out of the cupboards underneath the sink. The water gushed onto the floor and she had the sense to open the rear doors to let it cascade out of the van. Fortunately, we were on a bit of a slope towards the rear. I came out of the shower to see this mini waterfall from the rear of the van and Ruth calling me saying that our water tank must have burst. We managed to stop the flow by cutting off the power to the water pump that automatically switches on when you turn on a tap. A water pipe joint had given way and the pump started as it would if a tap had been opened. I attempted to repair the joint but in doing so managed to snap the connector on the base of the sink tap. Total disaster! Using the windscreen squeegee, we squeegeed as much water out of the carpet through the rear door as we possibly could, then using whatever spare resource we had, tried to soak up as much of the water as possible. Fortunately, we had taken along a fan heater so we connected that to blow hot air over the area. What with wet cloths from the leaking skylight of the night before, soaked paper towels and other cloths from the floor, one can only say our spirits had been dampened somewhat. We assessed the problem. Our water system could not be operated so we needed a container of water for washing of hands and flushing the loo; we already had a container for drinking water, so we could manage – good; having agreed that, we sat down to breakfast! About midday we set off for Stornoway and were surprised to find

that it was a two-lane road all the way. We made excellent time and arrived at the site in bright sunshine. Our first task was to get all the wet cloths and towels out on a line to dry as best we could. We kept the fan heater going but any moveable mats were put outside to drain and dry. That was on the Monday, by the Wednesday we were back to normal except for the water supply which could not be fixed immediately and would have to wait until we got back home and ordered the correct parts.

It was all hands to enjoying ourselves and over the next 5 days or so; we celebrated our 58th wedding anniversary and visited all extremities of Lewis which included light houses, museums, beaches, standing stones and black houses. In the village of Arnol there are a few abandoned black houses but one has been restored to its original state. The outside is a mud and stone wall about 4 feet in height upon which a roof frame is placed, which in turn is thatched. The dark interior is lit and heated by a peat fire on the ground in the centre of the room. The smoke, and there is plenty of it, fills the room but slowly exits through the roof, which is a thatch of heathery sods and oat straw. This process, over the period of a year, ensures that bugs and other creepy crawlies are exterminated, the roofing material has to be replaced each year. The old roof is used as fertiliser on the fields - now that is true re-cycling! The black houses usually consisted of three rooms, a living room cum bedroom, an entrance where water and a bowl for washing could be placed and a byre for the animals. Everyone entered through the same entrance, and depending upon your status (human or animal) you had your own apartment. These houses were in use until very recently, refurbished of course, walls plastered, fireplaces installed but still the same basic design but with a more permanent roof structure.

We visited the Callanish standing stones which are pre-historic ruins. Around 50 slabs of stone, some as high as 15ft, were transported and placed on this site between 3000 and 1500 BC. No one has yet determined what it was actually built for but it does have a central burial chamber. Unlike Stonehenge, these stones are set upon a hill and can be visited at any time without payment or restriction. They are impressive, not only due to their age and physical condition, but for the wow factor of how they were brought there and put up, and what's more, are still standing! Of course, when you are here you have to visit Uig Museum and read about the Lewis chessmen. The actual chessmen are on display in Edinburgh museum but the story is that a farmer came across them in a sandbank in 1831. They are of Viking origin and carved from ivory and whale's teeth. A giant wood replica stands outside the museum and another sits at the side of the road near the bay where the sandbank was.

We visited two or three local museums depicting local life and the difficulties experienced by the crofters over the centuries make very sobering reading. Life has not been easy for them. One needs to be hardy to live here in normal circumstances so that the fact that they survived so well, with so little, for so long, is commendable. Many of the islands scattered nearby are uninhabited, but it is sad to think that at one time they were inhabited and only the greed of landowners forced the people away. A prime example of clearance to suit one's own need is in Stornoway. You cannot help but admire Lews castle, especially the grounds with all their huge trees. Throughout the islands trees are almost rare but here they are in abundance. This is due to Sir James Matheson who, in 1863, after moving out all the crofters who were working

and eking out a living on the land, built a castellated building with its terrific views over the harbour and the town. He imported tons and tons of soil and numerous saplings to plant his extensive woodland garden. Today the building is a museum, arts centre and an expensive retreat. The gardens provide walks and recreation for everyone. I just wonder if he would have spent so much money had he known that the local population was going to reap the benefit of having a beautiful park right in the centre of town for their enjoyment. I doubt it very much. It was while we were walking in this parkland that we came down to the far side of the harbour and saw two sea otters swimming in the water and watched them for quite a while until it started to rain so we retreated into the shelter of Matheson's trees. Looking around Stornoway I had to smile at a plaque on the wall of a building occupied by ARGOS which stated that the site was once occupied by WOOLWORTHS. I have seen many plaques on walls, usually in memory of people or historic events, but it is the first one I have seen commemorating Woolworths.

Eventually our date of departure arrived and we sailed from Stornoway to Ullapool so ending our Western Islands visit. Overall, we had a fantastic experience. The varying scenery, the peat bogs, the mountains, the little hamlets, villages and towns, the beaches, dunes and sunsets will always be remembered. Despite the weather and all the mishaps, we thoroughly enjoyed the trip. Would we do it again? Yes, is the answer, in fact plans are already being made to go to the Inner Hebrides next Spring in our leak free van!

Central Beds Recycling Advice

Recycle your household batteries separately

Simply put any used household batteries in an old unwanted standard sized carrier bag (**no black bin bags**) and place next to either your recycling* or black waste bin.

✓ Yes please

- ✓ 6v
- ✓ 9v
- ✓ D
- ✓ C
- ✓ AA
- ✓ AAA
- ✓ AAAA
- ✓ button batteries
- ✓ mobile phone batteries

✗ No thanks

- ✗ children's ride on toy, sealed acid / gel, car, motorbike or industrial batteries

***Please don't place bagged items inside your recycling bin as it won't be emptied.**

A great place to live and work.

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/recycling 0300 300 8302

recycle
for Central Bedfordshire

NEARLY NEW



Pre-School
Registered Charity No: 1031913

Sponsored by Croudace Homes

50p Entry
(inc. free
raffle ticket)



&

SECOND HAND

SALE



Raffle &
refreshments

Saturday 17th March
11am-3pm

Meppershall Interim Village Hall

(access and parking via Walnut Tree Way, SG17 5LJ)



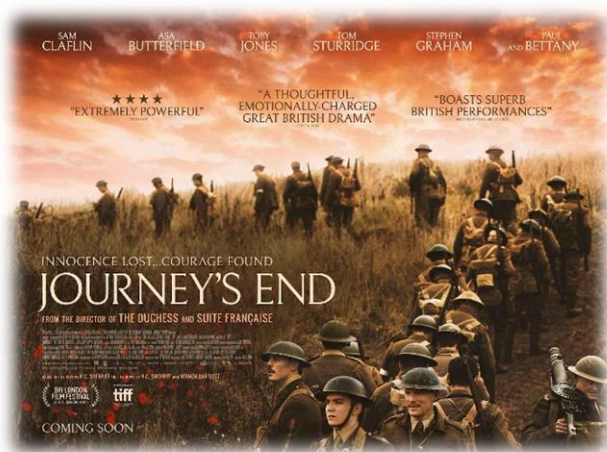
- Clear out after Christmas?
- Book a table to sell your own bric-a-brac
- Or donate goods to the Pre-School table (before 5th March)

Contact Jackie on 07590 656260
or drop-off donations @ Interim Village Hall 9.15am - 3.15pm weekdays

Film Review – Journey's End

By Carlie Newman

JOURNEY'S END (cert. 12A 1 hr. 47 mins.)



This film is such a sad piece - rather miserable in fact - but so well worth seeing. Based on RC Sherriff's own time in the field as depicted in his play written in 1928, we are right in the middle of World War One. It's the evening of the 1918 Spring Offensive. Bright and bushy-tailed newcomer Lieutenant Raleigh (Asa Butterfield) arrives at the unit full of enthusiasm for his role in the army.

The trenches are near Saint Quentin, France. He is pleased to meet a family friend, Captain Stanhope (Sam Claflin) leading the unit., but concerned when he finds that Stanhope has become a depressed alcoholic. Raleigh is helped, though, by kindly pipe-smoking Osborne (Paul Bettany), Stanhope's second-in-command, who is a teacher in civilian life. Osborne is known as 'uncle' and fulfils that role admirably. We are in the trenches beside the men who seem to know that they are not going to have the back-up that they need and that the raid on the Germans to capture one of their soldiers, has been scheduled too early - in order to fit in with an officers' dinner - so that some, if not all of them, will perish. The viewer gets a real feeling of the terror and sometimes panic that the men get as they spend time in close confinement in the dug-out.

The acting is spot-on throughout. We feel the misery of Sam Claflin as Captain Stanhope as he faces yet another day of carnage, while Paul Bettany gives out a feeling of calm as Osborne, refusing to let the other men see his knowledge of what is to come. Tom Sturridge puts on the opposite of a brave face to play Second Lieutenant Hibbert who has panic attacks and just wants to go home. Almost stealing the acting honours is Toby Jones as the friendly cook, Mason, who strives to serve edible food. Just avoiding being a stock character is Stephen Graham as sturdy Second Lieutenant Trotter who enjoys the food. Young Asa Butterfield portrays the right amount of innocence and enthusiasm as the new recruit. The battle scenes are the least successful as we can't make out the characters clearly enough, but the claustrophobic scenes inside the bunker best capture the atmosphere. This drama, well-helmed by director Saul Dibb, is certainly worth catching. **Rating: ******

COULD YOU BE AN ISA MILLIONAIRE?

Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) are a great way to invest free of tax on the income and any capital gains. The amount you can put in each year has gradually increased. A growing number of people are becoming 'ISA millionaires' as a result of rising stock market prices, and the steady increase in the annual ISA allowance.

GENEROUS ANNUAL LIMITS

The allowance for the 2017-18 tax year is set at £20,000, meaning that couples can put away up to £40,000. Sadly, it seems that the ISA message hasn't filtered through to everyone. HMRC has produced data that shows only two thirds of those earning more than £150,000 a year use up their ISA allowance each year. With pension contributions subject to annual and lifetime limits, ISAs represent an excellent way of topping up retirement income, although the cash or shares could be subject to inheritance tax on death, unlike the types of pension that can be passed on to beneficiaries more tax-efficiently.

MAKING IT TO A MILLION

If you were able to invest your full ISA allowance in a stocks and shares ISA every year, the ISA limit increased by around 2% each year, and your investments made an annualised return of 5% after fees, you too could join the elite band of ISA millionaires in 22 years (purely an example for illustrative purposes). Of course, we must underline that this is not guaranteed, because stock markets can and do go down as well as up.

PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE

If you're planning to invest this tax year, it's a good idea to put plans in place as early as possible. The longer your money is invested, the more time it has to produce tax-free returns. You can't carry any unused ISA allowance into the next tax year, so don't risk missing out on the valuable tax breaks available. We can help you investigate the choices on offer, and help ensure you use your allowance wisely.

ONE IN THREE RETIREES WILL HAVE TO RELY ON THE STATE PENSION

The Financial Conduct Authority recently carried out research¹ into the financial arrangements of just under 13,000 consumers in the UK. The results make for worrying reading. One of the findings that really stands out is that 31% of UK adults have no private pension provision, meaning they may have to rely solely on their state pension in retirement.

The report highlights that many people find pensions very confusing and have no idea what they will have to live on when they retire. The full state pension is currently £159.55 per week but is only available to those who have a complete record of National Insurance contributions. The study also revealed that only 35% of 45 to 54-year-olds have given serious thought to how they will manage in retirement. The sad fact is that the longer people leave it before addressing their pension needs, the harder it is to achieve a reasonable level of income in retirement.

PUTTING PENSIONS INTO PERSPECTIVE

Pensions auto-enrolment has been a very positive initiative that has resulted in far more young people paying into a pension than ever before. However, if workers only put in the minimum amount, this is unlikely to be enough to build up a sizeable pension.

The self-employed often regard their business as their pension or say that they plan to keep working as long as possible. However, this is a high-risk strategy, as they might not find a buyer when they want to sell or may find that ill-health prevents them soldiering on.

So, if you're self-employed, an employee, work part-time, run your own business or have accumulated pension pots with past employers, we can offer you advice about saving for a pension. After all, retirement should be an enjoyable and fulfilling stage of life, not a time spent worrying about money.

1 FCA, Financial Lives Survey, Oct 2017

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. I'm based in Meppershall and I'll be happy to talk to you.

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 † facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall



Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

01462 339962 – ronigoodman@gmail.com – usual day off Monday

Churchwardens:

Dawn Abbatt 01462 816962 Chris Valentine 01462 815971

Email: Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: annie10639@gmail.com

Things to watch out for...

Lent! Three more meetings at Keith and Ruth's house – why not try one of the St Mary's Lent Course meetings, listed in the events table below. Based on the film, 'The Terminal,' in which Tom Hanks plays a man who ends up stuck living in an airport. Each session includes a film clip, group discussion, bible reading, reflections, prayer. And once you've exercised your soul, why not exercise your body by walking with the Meppershall Strollers to Wrest Park? A relatively easy walk of 4 miles ending in the tea shop (and possibly gift shop) at this beautiful local English Heritage property.

Message from St Mary's...

I would like to begin once again, with a huge thank you to the Friends of St Mary's and to Graham and Jenny, and to all those who supported the event, for such a fun Quiz Night, and indeed for all their work in support of our village Church.

I don't know about you, but I am really looking forward to Spring this year. I have heard several people say (me too!) that this winter seems to have been particularly grey and that they are looking forward to more colour, blue skies and sunshine. The bulbs (I just love snowdrops!) are heralding Spring already, aren't they? And that looking forward to new life is of course woven into celebrating Easter and the resurrection of Jesus.

I suppose that one danger is that Easter may be perceived as coming at the end of the 'long and penitential 40 days' that we call Lent. Lent is a solemn time when we remember how Jesus spent 40 days and nights alone in the wilderness being tempted by the Devil (this year see Mark 1: 9-15). Jesus used this time to prepare for his ministry by fasting and praying.

In days gone by Lent was thought of principally as a time of fasting and the serious weeping and lamenting our shortcomings that caused some of our biblical ancestors to wear sackcloth and ashes as an outward sign of their inward conversion. I guess we might think that a bit extreme today.

However, we are all invited to set aside the 40 days of Lent to think about the way we are living, the choices we make, and whether those are fulfilling God's commandments to love Him and to love each other - or whether we need to make changes. Lent is the time when we try to draw closer to the God we believe loved us enough to send his Son to live and die, and rise again for us.

Wanting to take Lent seriously? It is not too late! A Meppershall Lent group is meeting on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm at the home of Keith and Ruth Callard (01462 815482 - 3(b) Fildyke Road) based on the film 'The Terminal'. Do give Keith and Ruth a call if you would like to join in.

In an effort to keep a positive focus on Lent some people have signed up to Stewardships' 40 Acts - "40 days, 40 reflections, 40 challenges to make a difference". If this might appeal to you, do have a look at 40acts.org.uk for a whole range of ideas. It isn't too late - they say it is not how many challenges you undertake - but how well you do the ones you do!

If you naturally think of Lent as a time of almsgiving - we are seeking to support 'the poorest of the poor' and so are collecting for Medecins Sans Frontieres and particularly for their work in Yemen. Gift Aid envelopes are at the back of the Church and can be put through the Rectory door, and there are also small collecting boxes there if you wish to collect your change for the rest of Lent.

I hope that whatever you choose to do keeps you looking forward to Easter, to its joy and its cries of "He is risen!" "He is risen indeed, Alleluia!" It is not fools who will be celebrating on April 1st this year...

With every blessing, Rector Roni.

Services and Events – March 2018 *At St Mary's unless stated below*

Date	Time	Service / Event
Weds 28 th Feb	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sun 4 th March 3 rd of Lent	11.00am	Holy Communion - Junior Church in the vestry
Weds 7 th March	10.00am 7.30pm	Holy Communion St Mary's Lent Course – Week 3. Loneliness – how did it feel, in the Garden of Gethsemane? At the home of Ruth & Keith Callard – call 815482 for more information.
Fri 9 th March	9pm	Silent Together Come to enjoy the presence of God in the tranquillity of the church - 30 mins.
Sun 11 th March 4 th of Lent	8.30am 11.00am 2.15pm	Holy Communion Morning worship – all welcome! Second Sunday Stroll – 4 miles to Wrest Park via Upper Gravenhurst. An old favourite – join us, Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com / tel. 857836.
Monday 12 th March	7.15 for 7.30pm	Bible Society meeting: 9 Clifton Road, Shefford. God Speaks to Hagar, with Paul Lanham.
Tues 13 th March	2-4pm	Rectory Tea - Chat and a cuppa, all welcome
Weds 14 th March	10.00am 7.30pm	Holy Communion St Mary's Lent Course – Week 4. Promises – ours, and those of Jesus. At the home of Ruth & Keith Callard – tel. 815482 for information.
Sun 18 th March 5 th of Lent	8.30am 11.00am	Holy Communion Holy Communion Morning worship – all welcome!
Weds 21 st March	10.00am 7.30pm	Holy Communion St Mary's Lent Course – Week 5. Punishment and Forgiveness. At the home of Ruth & Keith Callard – call 815482 for more information.
Sat 24 th March	9.00am	Celtic Morning Prayer
Sun 25 th March Palm Sunday	11.00am	Holy Communion - Junior Church in the vestry
Tues 27 th March	2-4pm	Rectory Tea – Getting Serious over a cuppa. All welcome for chat and a catch up.
Weds 28 th March	10.00am	Holy Communion
Thurs 29 th March	7.30pm	Maundy Thursday Service
Friday 30 th March	2.00pm	Good Friday Service
Sat 31 st March	7.30pm	Easter Vigil
Sunday 1 st April Easter Day	11.00am	Easter Morning – Holy Communion

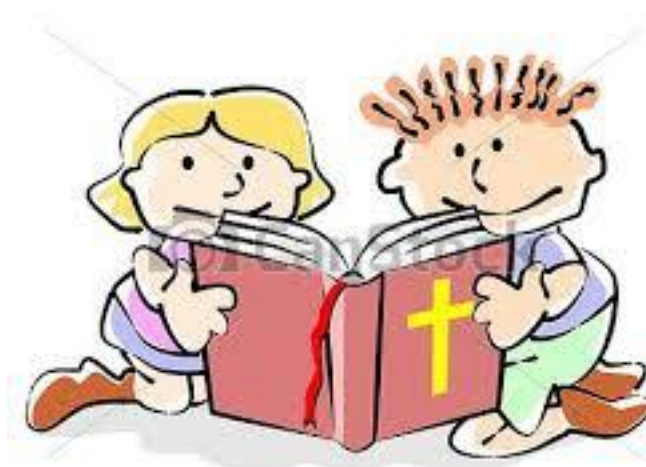
Junior Church

Our next Junior Church session is:

Sunday 4 March

11am at St Mary's Church

(ages 3 to 12)



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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 handwritten 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 12th 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>		
2018		
March	26	
April	30	
May	28	

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.