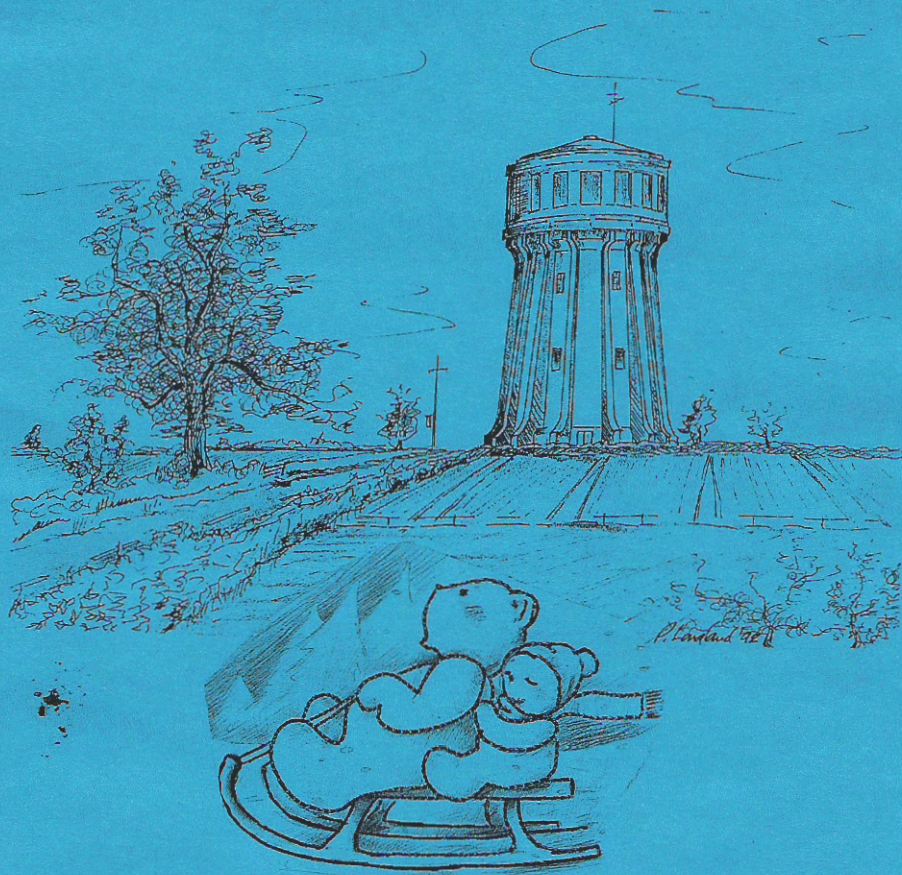


THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



***DECEMBER 2004/
JANUARY 2005***

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

Volume 20 Issue

December 2004/January 2005

As far as I am aware, we had a trouble-free Halloween with no unpleasant tricks being played and everyone enjoying the evening. The firework display was also another great success, and I should like to say a big thank you to everyone involved in arranging it. Unfortunately, as you will read in the magazine, the evening was spoilt for some people....

Please note that The Messenger Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 10th December at 2pm at Meppershall Stores, 6 High Street. Should anyone like to volunteer their time to come on to the team, but cannot make the meeting, please let me know. We do need more people to help with all sorts of aspects of running the magazine; the more we have the less work it is for others!

Finally, I should like to wish everyone a very happy, peaceful Christmas and New Year. Whether you are spending it at home with family and friends, or going away, I wish you a very enjoyable time.

The deadline for articles for the February 2005 issue of the magazine is 12th January 2005. Please either leave them at the Post Office or drop them through my letter box at 7 Brookmead. Thank you.

Linda Gold
Editor

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Editor:	Linda Gold, 7 Brookmead 811970
Advertising Manager:	Steve Ansell, Post Office Stores 811252
Distribution Manager:	Barbara Horwood, 8 Rectory Road 816177

Notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting of The Meppershall Messenger to be held on Friday 10th December 2004 at 2pm at Meppershall Stores, 6 High Street. The meeting is open for anyone to attend. However, if you cannot attend the meeting but would like to come on to the Committee, or help in any other way, please leave your name, address and telephone number with me, Linda Gold. Details can be left at the Post Office and Stores or drop them into my house before Friday 10th December.

I would like to compliment the young lady who brought poppies to our door in Fildyke Road.

She was very polite and a pleasure to meet.

Joan North

I understand that the firework display at the Village Hall was a great success and went off without a hitch, despite the dreadful weather.

However, many people's evening was ruined by mindless vandalism. A small group of young lads (local to the Village, I'm disgusted to say), went on the rampage later that evening and slashed countless tyres and damaged vehicles parked outside people's homes in Hoo Road, Brookmead, Fildyke and Shefford Road. Their appalling behaviour cost their victims hundreds of pounds to put right, to say nothing of the inconvenience and time off work to make good the damage.

Is this their idea of a fun evening?! I moved to Meppershall to enjoy the quiet village life where people have respect and time for each other. What is Meppershall turning into? What makes it worse, is that the people involved actually live in the Village - they were recognised, but more information is needed, so if anyone can assist, I'm sure the police would be most interested.

1st Stondon Scout Group

This will be my final report as Akela as I will be finishing in December. We arranged a day at Boyd Field in October to make up for the disappointment of no camp. We packed a lot of activities into one day. The boys cooked their own lunch over open fires but had bought additional food from home just in case they got hungry. Due to the recent rain the wood was damp and it took them longer to get the fires going, but the sausages were well cooked eventually. They had the opportunity to climb the climbing wall. Most of the cubs managed to climb to at least half way and our smallest cub managed to get to the top. The day finished off with archery. It was at this point that we discovered a lot of the cubs were left handed and at least six of our cubs were called James or Jamie. Another point of interest that was raised by the instructors that left handers find it more difficult to listen. If you have a left hander is this true?

We were asked by Mid Beds Council to provide a guard of honour for their Civic Service. Michael Hoare, Michael Roberts and Jonathan Davies looked very smart in this role. They thought the best part was the tea afterwards and the fact that the conker trees inside RAF Henlow had dropped a lot of conkers. Our annual conker tournament was enjoyed by all with this years champion being Billie Dixon.

Other events this half term have included an Indian evening when the cubs found out about Divali and Rangoli (painting associated with Divali). They had a taste of assorted Indian food and we had a sari, which James Simms sister modelled for us. The boys were surprised how much material was in a sari; it went from one side of the stage to the other. Our annual visit to the maze at Shefford was an opportunity for the cubs to run around in the dark looking for a postman and a post box while negotiating the maze. Several of the cubs were convinced it would be easy but had to admit that it is totally different at night.

Our jumble sale was an opportunity for everyone to have a clear out. We raised an amazing £543 towards our funds. Friday night collecting the jumble was a challenge as it poured with rain for the whole evening. The boys and adults collecting ended up looking like drowned rats but at least it was dry on the Saturday. We had a good support on Saturday from our usual clientele and some new ones. A big thanks to everyone who supported us.

We have just started on our Christmas performance, which is a tale with a difference. Do you know what happened to the wise Men after they visited the stable? We will let you know after Christmas. We enrolled six boys into the Pack, Jamie Lamley, James and Mark Cornish, James Vosper, Lewis Cross and Thomas Henry.

Finally, as mentioned, I am stepping down as Akela but to date we have not found anyone willing to take up the challenge. We need someone who enjoys working with young people, has a sense of fun, enjoys a challenge and is willing to lead a small team to enable the Pack to continue running. Support and training available. We have a Pack of 20 Cubs waiting for YOU to volunteer - please don't let them down.

Alison Hammond - Akela

1ST STONDON SCOUT GROUP

1st Stondon Cub Pack, which comprises of boys between 8-11 from Stondon, Meppershall and surrounding areas, is a thriving Pack with maximum numbers and a strong committee supporting it.

Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, our current leader is having to leave and we are left with a vacancy.

If you are interested in taking on this role and would like some more information as to what is involved, please contact Alison or Mike Hammond on 811548.

MEPPERSHALL BABY AND TODDLER GROUP

The Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group is a friendly, active group run by committed volunteers who are nominated and voted for by the parents themselves. We meet in the Village Hall on Tuesday afternoons (term time only) from 2pm to 3.30pm. All are welcome, from new born babies to the more active toddler. Dads are also welcome. We have ride on toys, pushalongs, bikes, slide, seesaws and rockers, an art and activity table, separate soft baby area - from new born with all the toys they could wish for. Toy Library - borrow (for a nominal fee) any toy we have. Organised events for children include Christmas Party, Teddy Bears Picnic, Easter Events and Halloween Fancy Dress Party. Photographer sessions. Book, craft and clothes sales.

All this for only £1 per family per session. Come along and join us, first session is free! If you have just become a new parent, please come along to our group. We understand that it can be a little daunting at first but we are an easy going friendly bunch of parents, no cliques, just like minded parents who want to talk, share stories and discover that it is not just their little angel that "does that". Oh, and of course, the children and babies absolutely love it.

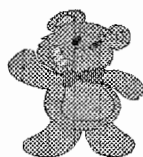
Children's Christmas Party. This year's party will be held on Tuesday 14th December in the Village Hall between 1.30pm and 3.30pm. Come along and meet Father Christmas. There will be a bouncy castle, raffle and lots of other fun Christmas activities. Tickets are on sale now, £1.50 per child (under 1's free). Price includes food.

Parents Night Out. Not forgetting us parents, we have booked a table at the Five Bells in Henlow for the evening of 10th December. More details can be found on the Toddlers' Notice Board.

Thank you to everyone who came and supported us at our Halloween Party. The children looked so scary in their costumes. Our fancy dress competition was won by Darcy Lamb and Olivia Nesbitt. Thanks to our judges; it wasn't an easy task. I hope you all saw our article in the Biggleswade Chronicle.

For further details, please contact either Claire Penny (Chair) 850987, Louis Hutton (Secretary) 814148 or Karen Lucas 811581.

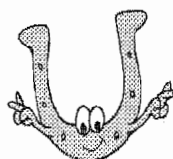
MEPPERSHALL PRE-SCHOOL



Goodbye and Good Luck to
*Louis Bradshaw, George Duffield and
Eleanor Manning who are all leaving to
start school in January 2005.*

We all hope you will remember the special and fun times
at Pre-school.....

- ☺ Christmas, Easter and End of Term parties
- ☺ Christmas carols at St Mary's church
- ☺ Visits to the local park and shops and church
- ☺ Your first visit with us to your new school
- ☺ Sports day in the park
- ☺ Your parent/carer coming in to help
- ☺ Learning something new



For more information about how Meppershall Pre-school provides
education through play for children in Meppershall and
surrounding villages please contact Michele Brennand on 816600

British Legion Poppy Appeal 2004

We will not have received all donations when The Messenger deadline arrives, so posters will be displayed when we have the Village total.

I and my family got involved with the Legion when, due to my husband's injuries received during World War II, we needed their help and support. Also, his uncle disabled in World War I, spent the rest of his working life making poppies for each year's collection.

Apart from their yearly appeal, the Legion goes quietly about its work, giving and offering a vast range of support to past and present military personnel and their families, so it is with regret that after approximately 40 years I am figuratively speaking, hanging up my collecting tin. It is doubtful at present if there will be any door to door next year, due to lack of response to appeals for assistance, especially as the Village keeps growing. I would still organise static collection points in the Village, i.e. shops, pub and school.

Finally, once again, a heart-felt thank you to my helpers for freely giving their time to support this worthwhile charity.

Joyce Harris
Village Organiser

Meppershall Brownies

Operation Christmas Child. Thank you so far for the tremendous response to the shoe box appeal. We will have the boxes filled by the time you read this and I will let you know the final total. There have already been some very generous donations.

Christmas Concert. The Brownies would like to invite you to a Christmas Concert to be held in the Village Hall on Monday 13th December from 6.30pm to 7.30pm. We will be serving light refreshments and hope to see as many of you as possible.

Carol Singing and Toy Donation with the Brownies

You are all warmly invited to join the Brownies for an evening of carol singing on Monday 13th December at 6.30pm in the Village Hall. In addition, this year you are invited to bring a toy or a gift as a donation to the Refuge in Bedford which cares for mothers and their children who are seeking shelter from domestic violence, and is run by Christian Family Care who also run Family Centres in Mid- Beds.

Some of you may recall that there used to be a Toy Service each December in the Chapel. Since the services have been suspended in the Chapel for the time being, Brown Owl and the Brownies decided to offer the carol singing evening as an opportunity for all of us to donate toys for the Refuge this Christmas.

Toys should be new or in excellent condition and cover age range from babies to around 12. Teenagers are usually given gift tokens and gifts of toiletries are welcomed by mothers. The refuge celebrate Christmas giving gifts to all who are being cared for there. This means that they have to plan ahead and make sure they have appropriate gifts for their guests. Please do not wrap gifts as the Refuge staff will need to see what they have. At a desperate time for those seeking help at the Refuge, mothers and children too, will feel included by being given a specially selected gift. Rest assured that your gift will bring joy to the person on the receiving end. There will be an opportunity for the donation of gifts during the carol singing and they will be taken to the Refuge at the earliest possible moment.

I am particularly indebted to the Brownies and Brown Owl for offering their evening of carols as a donation point for toys and gifts. It is a warm and generous gesture, in keeping with the Christmas spirit. If you have any queries about the Toy Donation, please contact me, Julie Taylor, on 814387. Please phone Brown Owl on 811964 if you have questions about the carol singing.

Come and sing your hearts out.

MEPPERSHALL W.I

President, Barbara Horwood, welcomed
24 members and 1 visitor to the November meeting.

Eight members had a very enjoyable evening at the Federation meeting with Lars Thorp from the Antique Road Show giving a very entertaining insight into the TV programme.

Future events in the area include BCFWI Annual Quiz on Tuesday 22nd February 2005 at 7.30pm at the Addison Centre Kempston, teams of 3, spectators welcome, £4 per team, £1.50 spectators. A Chance to Speak at Millbrook Village Hall on 1st March 2005 10am - 3.30pm, an opportunity to gain confidence to speak at meetings. Unfortunately the Christmas Concert scheduled for 10th December at Houghton Conquest Village Hall has had to be cancelled as the entertainers have disbanded.

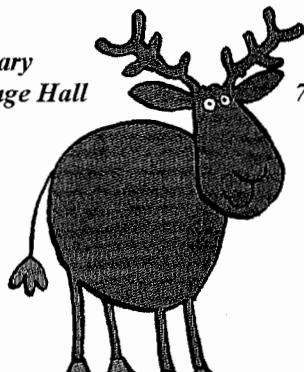
Our speaker for the evening was Mr. R. Revels on the subject of Wild Beds. His talk was accompanied by some beautiful slides taken all over areas of Bedfordshire from woodlands, heathland and wetland sites. Bedfordshire has a wide diversity of soils with the greensands ridge running right through the County plus chalkland and some marsh and fenland areas. Many varieties of butterfly can be found from the White Admiral to the Beds Skipper butterfly first found in this County also many moths. Some introduced species such as Muntjac Deer, Mink and American Crayfish are doing quite a lot of damage to our natural wildlife but areas of set aside are good, encouraging skylarks, etc to return to our countryside. Grey squirrels also cause damage and are responsible for the loss of red squirrels from the County but we do have quite a few black squirrels now but they unfortunately are more closely related to the grey. A very enjoyable evening.

Our next meeting will be our Christmas evening on 8th December. Visitors and new members are always welcome.

Calendar of Forthcoming Events

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<i>Friday 3rd</i>	<i>The Meppershall Players "Cinderella"</i>	
<i>Saturday 4th</i>	<i>Village Hall</i>	<i>7.45pm</i>
<i>Sunday 5th</i>	<i>The Meppershall Players "Cinderella"</i>	<i>2pm</i>
	<i>Village Hall</i>	<i>6pm</i>
<i>Thursday 9th</i>	<i>The Meppershall Players "Cinderella"</i>	
	<i>Village Hall</i>	<i>7.45pm</i>
<i>Friday 10th December</i>	<i>Meppershall Messenger AGM</i>	
	<i>6 High Street, Meppershall</i>	<i>2pm</i>
<i>Friday 10th December</i>	<i>The Meppershall Players "Cinderella"</i>	
	<i>Village Hall</i>	<i>7.45pm</i>
<i>Saturday 11th</i>	<i>The Meppershall Players "Cinderella"</i>	
	<i>Village Hall</i>	<i>7.45pm</i>
<i>Monday 13th December</i>	<i>Bible Society Action Group</i>	
	<i>17 Langford Road, Henlow</i>	<i>7.45pm</i>
<i>Monday 13th December</i>	<i>Brownies Evening of Carol Singing</i>	
	<i>Village Hall</i>	<i>6.30pm</i>
<i>Saturday 22nd January</i>	<i>Friends of St. Mary</i>	
	<i>Quiz Night, Village Hall</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>



WHO'S WHO AND WHAT'S WHAT IN MEPPERSHALL

CHURCHES

St. Mary's Parish Church

Rector:	Rev. John Harper	
	The Rectory, Church Road	813334
Church Wardens:	Mr. Brian Bellamy, 125 High Street	815944
	Mrs. Brenda Wright, 75 High Street	816446

Parochial Church Council

Secretary:	Mrs. Linda Chillman	
	76 Shefford Road	850543
Treasurer:	Mr. D. Bartlett, 14 Taylors Close	811191

Methodist Chapel

Minister:	Rev. P. Snelson, 79 Ampthill Rd, Shefford	813284
Letting Secretary:	Mrs. J. Taylor, 6 Stondon Road	814387

Roman Catholic Church

Priest:	Father Bennie Noonan	813436
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SCHOOLS

Meppershall Lower School:	Head	Mrs. Murray	813293
Henlow Middle School:	Head	Mr. Payne	813733
Samuel Whitbread Upper School & Community College			
	Head	Mr. Owen	629900
Adult Education Tutor		Mrs. J. Robinson	629906

DOCTORS

Cakebread, Baldock, Bietzk, Griffith & Baxter	Appointments Only	819200
The Health Centre, Iveldale Drive, Shefford	All other enquiries	814899
Puritz & Collins, The Surgery, 109 Station Road, Lower Stondon		850305

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

M.P. Jonathan Sayeed (Conservative), House of Commons, London	0207 2915142
County Councillor - Mr. Alan Burnage, 23 Broad Street, Clifton	811681
District Councillor - Mr. Paul Carne, 6 Hoo Road, Meppershall	857803
	Email: paul.carne@midbeds.gov.uk
	Fax: 01462 857804
District Councillor - Mr. Tony Rogers, 3 Poppyhill, Henlow	816305
	Email: tony.rogers@midbeds.gov.uk
	Fax: 01462 816510
Parish Council meets first Wednesday in month, Methodist Chapel at 7.45pm	
Chairman: Mr. P. Chapman, 9 Brookside	813497
Clerk: Mr. C.J. Waghorn, 19 Icknield Green, Letchworth, Herts.	637531
	Email: waggers.uk@ntlworld.com

SHOPS

Roger's Bakery & General Store (next to School)	813398
Mon-Fri 8.15am - 5.30pm	Sat. 8.00am - 1.30pm
Post Office & Village Store, 6 High Street	811252
Post Office:	Mon-Fri. 9.00am - 1pm & 2pm - 5.30pm Half day Sat.
Shop:	Mon.-Thurs 6.00am - 6pm, Friday 6.00am - 7pm
	Saturday 6.30am - 7pm Sunday 6.30am - 1pm

PUB

Ron and Doreen - Sugar Loaf Public House, 25 High Street	857991
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ORGANISATIONSMeppershall Village Hall Committee

Chairman:	Mr. Paul Carne, 6 Hoo Road	813305
Treasurer:	Mr. D. Birch	817014
Booking Secretary:	Mrs. C. Turner, 24 Orchard Close	812791

Village Hall Phone Number: 817359

Babysitting Circle Organiser: Mrs. Sharon Edwards 814326

<u>Brownies</u>	Mondays at 6pm - 7.30pm	Village Hall	
Brown Owl:	Mrs. C. Elbourne		811964
Snowy Owl:	Mrs. Suzanne Brightwell		815752

<u>Beavers</u>	Fridays at 6pm - 7.15pm	Stondon Village Hall	
Beaver Scout Leader:	Mr. Steve Mann		816218
	Tuesdays at 6.30pm - 7.30pm	Shefford Scouts HQ	
Beaver Scout Leader:	Mrs. Hayley Henshall		817446

Bingo Fridays at 7pm Village Hall

Conservative Association

Chairman:	Mr. I. McLuskie	813417
Secretary:	Mrs. G. Bird	811260

Cubs

Red Pack	Wednesdays	6.45pm	Mr. D. Cousins	811441
1st Stondon	Thursdays	7pm - 8.30pm	Mrs. Alison Hammond	811548

Evergreen Alternate Thursdays at 2.30pm Village Hall
(Over 60s) Miss E. Ashton (Poppy), 20 Fildyke Road 07931 636544

Friends of St. Mary's Church

Chairman:	Mr. T. Thorley, 9 Hoo Road	813357
Secretary:	Mrs. M. Evesham, 107 High Street	814291
Treasurer:	Mr. H. Davies, 15 Hoo Road	812127

Shefford Leisure Group Mrs. Enid Pamment, 112 High Street 851397

Lions Club of Shefford Mrs. Enid Pamment, 112 High Street 851397

Mepp'shall Players Amateur Dramatic Society

Contact:	John Nye	814113
Secretary:	Karen Mitchell	816336
Treasurer:	Frank Keen	815387

Meppershall School Association

Chairman:	Louise Palmer	850113
Secretary:	Dawn Addams	814707

Meppershall Social Club See Notice Board for opening times

Chairman:	Mr. G.R. Walker, 37 Brookmead	815183
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<u>Meppershall Baby & Toddler Group</u>	Tuesdays at 2pm - 3.30pm	Village Hall	
Chairman:	Claire Penney, 3 Gregory Close		850987
Secretary:	Louise Hutson, 10 Buxton Close		814148
Treasurer:	Karen Lucas, 51A High Street		811581

<u>Playgroup</u>	Monday - Friday at 9.30am - 12 noon	Village Hall	
Chairman:	Mrs. Julie Stock		817371
Secretary:	Mrs. Michele Brennan		816600
Registrar:	Mrs. Viv Thorne		850821

<u>Tennis</u>	(at Langford) - Neil Franklin		815735
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<u>Womens Institute</u>	2nd Wednesday in month 7.30pm	Village Hall	
President:	Mrs. Barbara Horwood, 8 Rectory Road		816177
Secretary:	Mrs. Doreen Pritchard		
Press Secretary:	Miss Betty Mather		

<u>Youth Club</u>	Fridays 7pm	Village Hall	
	Linda & Matt Ford	851567 OR Sue & Steve Covington	815736

AMENITIES

<u>Banks</u>	Barclays Bank, 6 North Bridge Street, Shefford	01438 202122
	Monday - Friday 9.30am - 4.30pm	

<u>Dentist</u>	Mr. Lakhani, High Street, Shefford	814020
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<u>Electrician</u>	Mr. R.A. Price, 118 Spring Drive, Stevenage	01438 361715
		Mobile: 07710 821878

<u>Fishmonger</u>	Les Braithwaite (Mobile Van) - Thurs. Approx 11.45am
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<u>Greengrocer</u>	Nigel Mann (Mobile Van) - Fridays 2pm - 6pm	711802
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<u>Hedgehog Rescue</u>	Beds & Herts Hedgehog Rescue - call Jeanette	711370
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<u>Mobile Library</u>	Alternate Wednesdays:	
	Nursing Home	10.00 Rectory Road 10.25
	High Street/School	10.50 High Street/Taliesen 11.10
	Village Hall	11.30 Fildyke Road 12.00
	Shefford Road	12.25

<u>Library</u>	High Street, Shefford	639070
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<u>Kennels/Cattery</u>	Wayside Kennels & Cattery, Chapel Road	813261
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<u>Newspapers</u>	Meppershall Post Office & Stores	811252
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<u>Plumber</u>	Alan R. Dellar	814584
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<u>Police</u>	Emergencies/Police attendance required	01234 841212
	Or	01582 471212
	Shefford Police Post (non-emergencies)	01234 841212

<u>Livery Yard & Training Centre</u>	Caroline Carter, Centre Line Dressage Fildyke Road, Meppershall	07747 686118
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<u>Whitbread Wanderbus</u>		850075
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MEPPERSHALL METHODIST CHURCH

With the approach of Christmas, an especially busy time for us in the Chapel, and also since services have been suspended since September, I felt the need to explain what was rather an abrupt ending of services at the Chapel.

There are several reasons for the suspension of the services but the overriding reason was that we had no one to steward the services on a regular basis. I have been Steward at Meppershall for five years, since Dorothy Morris's departure. Previously we had both run the Sunday School at the Chapel. When Rev Phil Snelson arrived five years ago it was decided to keep the Chapel going, and at the time the Chapel was meant to be self sufficient in running itself from Meppershall. We had a small but loyal and spirited congregation who put worship in the Chapel as a high priority, and attended very regularly, and a small but equally loyal Sunday Club who delighted in Becky Snelson's inspiring sessions and activities, as she taught them about Jesus. It is amazing that, under Phil's leadership, we managed to do remarkable things which churches twice our size would not have contemplated. Harvest Festival and Auctions, Songs of Praise, Mothering Sunday Services, Remembrance Sundays with the Brownies and our own Congregation, Toy Services and Christmas parties and a special Holiday Club with the Chapel overflowing - it seems very often that we had been Blessed, and I do believe we have been Blessed. Ours was never a struggling church, it was a **SURVIVING, WORSHIPPING CHURCH FOCUSED ON JESUS CHRIST**. Our normal Sunday Services and Communion reflected this too.

This year, things changed with a re-emergence of ill health, both personally and with a close relative in Wales. A couple of hospital admissions and more trips to Wales meant I could not be in two places at once and there was no one who could step into my shoes on a semi-permanent basis. It was a distressing time for me, but when I had to give up my school teaching and other activities I knew that my stewardship was under threat too. At the same time, the congregation

remained small and frailer. With no one able to commit to taking on the Stewardship (which encompasses everything from cleaning, lettings, publicity and all the service preparation and leading some services) and being there for the greater majority of services, the only answer was a suspension of services. As you may know, the Chapel is still open for community group bookings and suspension means just that, not closure. I do not know what will happen, but from personal experience we would need a few people to share the work if a revival of worship was to take place.

My thank you to Phil for being so centred in Christ, that he took the risk of keeping a small Chapel going, despite the odds and upheld it as a place of quality Christian worship. To Becky who enthused the children and young people with her fun way of teaching and who's pupils will always remember what she taught them about Jesus. To Kath Milner who joined us from Shefford two years ago and who made the organisation of visiting Preachers and Ministers her own and did it splendidly - as well as attending the Chapel and taking part in services. To Win Gray who's encouragement, faithfulness and wisdom kept me going and who was my deputy for three years. To the unfailing dedication of our congregation who made Meppershall Chapel a centre of Christian Worship time after time, my grateful thanks.

Right now you CAN all do something significant for us - take the CELESTIAL OPTION, ON OUR BEHALF AT THE CHAPEL. No, I don't mean take a trip to Mars, but PRAY for us as that is what THE CELESTIAL OPTION is! The Lord will do the rest. Please get in touch if you feel you can help, comment or otherwise (814387). Have a joyful Christmas and a New Year filled with the Love of God. I've now migrated to Shefford Methodist, and I thank them for their warm welcome.

Julie Taylor

St. Mary's Parish Church Meppershall
In the United Benefice of Meppershall and Shefford
Rev John Harper, The Rectory, Church Road, Meppershall
01462 381334
Churchwardens
Brenda Wright 816446 and Brian Bellamy, 125 High Street

Services in December and January

Sunday 5th	8.30am 6pm	Holy Communion Evensong	Advent 2
Wednesday 8th	12pm	School Christmas Production	
Thursday 9th	6.30pm	School Christmas Production	
Sunday 12th	8.30am 11am 3pm	Holy Communion Family Service and Baptism Christingle Service	Advent 3
The Father Christmas float will be visiting the village this afternoon and evening			
Sunday 19th	8.30am 6pm	Holy Communion Candlelit Crib and Carol Services	Advent 4
Friday 24th	11.30pm	Midnight Mass	
Saturday 25th	11am	Christmas Day Family Communion	
Sunday 26th	8.30am	Holy Communion	Christmas 1
January			
Sunday 2nd	8.30am 6pm	Holy Communion Evensong	Christmas 2
Sunday 9th	8.30am 11am	Holy Communion Family Service	Epiphany 1
Sunday 16th	8.30am 6pm	Holy Communion Evensong	Epiphany 2
Sunday 23rd	8.30am	Holy Communion	Epiphany 3
Sunday 30th	8.30am 10am	Holy Communion United Benefice Communion at St. Michael's Shefford and Breakfast from 9am	Epiphany 4

There is also a service of Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) every Wednesday at the new time of 10am and the night time service of Compline is held every Friday at 7.30pm. Morning prayer is said at 9.30am on Saturdays.

Also, SPARKS, A SIZZLING HOLIDAY CLUB for all 5-12 year olds. Monday 3rd January 10am - 2pm at St. Michael's, Shefford (the Church by the traffic lights). £2 per child. Registration forms from The Rectory (01462 813334), St. Mary's, St. Michael's, Meppershall and Shefford Lower Schools.

Dear Friends,

I am looking forward greatly to my first taste of a Meppershall Christmas, both in St. Mary's and beyond. You will of course be most welcome at any of the special services as above (and if you'd like to help the Church look extra special, help with the cost of flowers will be much appreciated.

Advent, not to be confused with the "run up to Christmas, has to do with adventure. It's the time when we're invited to take a deliberate look at what lies ahead in God's gracious providence, and then let the adrenaline flow. It's exploring the adventure of living each moment in the expectation that the Lord who came as a child at Bethlehem will come anew to complete High Father's purpose for all his people, myself included. I realise of course that this isn't easy to focus on as we busy ourselves with the festive schedule, but I want to suggest that Advent is the Church's best kept secret - it's the antidote to commercialised Christmas - an opportunity to reflect on the God who comes to meet us, to restore us with his love each day that he gives us, within and beyond this early experience. Just as the people of the Old Testament waited eagerly for the coming of the Saviour, Advent gives us opportunity to anticipate his coming, so that when Christmas finally arrives we are prepared to meet with fresh eagerness the Christ who is for all time the Light of the world.

Every Sunday during Advent we will focus prayers and light a candle for a particular deprived child being supported through the work of Christian Aid, as a way of channelling the light of the Lord whose coming we look towards.

A double thank you to all who contributed to the Christmas Bazaar on November 27th and to those who have donated the cost of a pew bible to St. Mary's. We hope to have these ready with commemorative inscriptions early in the New Year. Details to come.

Finally, a Lenten Retreat Getting Closer to God is planned for Saturday 5th February for anyone in Meppershall and Shefford, 10.30 - 3.45pm at the Focolare Centre for Unity in Welwyn. Please ring for details.

With every good wish for a reflective Advent and then a very Happy Christmas.

John Harper,
Rector of Meppershall and Shefford (01462 813334)

News of events in both parish Churches can be found on the weekly Link news sheet, available from Church and Rectory, and also from the Meppershall website: meppershall.org and via St. Michael's: sm3a.org.uk



ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI
CATHOLIC CHURCH
HIGH STREET
SHEFFORD.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Friday 24 December:

CONFESSIONS: 11.00am – 12 Noon
3.00pm – 3.30pm

CHILDRENS
CHRISTMAS MASS: 6.00pm

CAROLS &
MIDNIGHT MASS 11.30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY:

Saturday 25 December:

MASSES: 9.00am and 11.00am
No Evening Mass.

SUNDAY 26 December:

MASSES: 9.00am: 11.00am and 5.15pm.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI
CATHOLIC CHURCH
HIGH STREET, SHEFFORD
Sunday Masses

First Mass of Sunday

Saturday Evening	6pm	RAF Henlow
Sunday	9am	Shefford
	5.15pm	Shefford

Weekday Services See notice at Church or phone

Parish Priest:
Fr. Bennie Noonan 813436

Parish Secretary:
Rose Boulton 811547



Calling All Drivers

The Bedfordshire Community Transport Brokerage (or Beds CTB for short) is a minibus sharing scheme that enables groups and organisations within the community to use accessible and affordable transport.

The scheme is new to Bedfordshire and has already started to make a big difference to a variety of groups across the county:

- Older peoples groups are helped to get out to visit a range of interesting activities.
- Scouts, Guides, churches and young peoples groups can go on trips, to get to conferences and other outings.

Frequently buses are available but drivers are in short supply and to help the brokerage expand we need to recruit more volunteer drivers. Payment can be offered to drivers in some circumstances.

To meet with the safe driving standards of the brokerage, drivers will need to have Mini Bus Driver Awareness (MiDAS) training. This is a nationally recognised standard for mini bus drivers. Funds are available, subject to approval, to pay for the training for drivers involved in Beds CTB. Drivers can choose whether they want to be a dedicated driver for a particular organisation like Scouts or Guides, or are available for more general work. Even a few hours a month could help a group provide a special treat!

If you are interested, and to find out if you would qualify for free training, please contact Beni Wright at Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity on 01234 838771 ext 106.

THE LIONS CLUB OF SHEFFORD

Another consignment of used spectacles has been transported to the sorting depot before being shipped to the Third World countries. The spectacles are always very well received and put to very good use in these countries. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported this activity. We meet at The White Hart on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8pm. If you would like further information concerning our Club's activities, please contact Lion Bob Izzard on 01462 629325. In the meantime, we would like to wish everyone in Meppershall a very happy Christmas and good health during 2005.

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

Several seasonal trips have been arranged for December, commencing with the Tinsel & Turkey now taking place in Scarborough from the 3rd - 6th December. Cruising into Christmas, going by coach to the Thames Barrier where we will join our skipper for a 90 minutes twilight cruise to the Palace of Westminster via Greenwich, the Docklands and the City including sailing beneath a floodlit Tower Bridge. We then board the coach to find the hidden corners of London, which is followed by a fish & chip supper. 2005 - Weekend breaks include the March Mayhem at the Grand Burstin Hotel early March, Shefford Leisure Group "Fun Night" the 1st April and Lake Como 16th - 19th April flying from Stansted. Several day and theatre trips have been arranged and it looks like being another fun packed year for 2005. All these trips are open to the local community and all raffle monies raised will be donated to Keech Cottage Children's Hospice. Periodically, arrangements are made for people to visit Keech Cottage. Certainly this gives people first hand information as to how their well earned money is spent. After a successful 2004 we now look forward to 2005. May we, Alf, Mary, Ann and Enid wish you all not only good wishes for Christmas and New Year but continued happy travelling for 2005. To join us contact Enid on 01462 851397.

THE LIONS CLUB OF SHEFFORD

Chartered 1998

Meet at The White Hart in Shefford on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8pm. Interested? Then why not come and meet us. Enjoyment can be achieved by helping other people in our community. Tel. 01462 851397.

A very HAPPY BIRTHDAY to those of you with birthdays in December ...

Ellie Roberts who will be 6 on the 1st
 Lee Britton who will be 2 on the 7th
 Andrew Blaxell who will be 13 on the 9th
 Hugo Norris who will be 2 on the 12th
 Ashley Staines who will be 14 on the 12th
 Eliza Norris who will be 7 on the 15th
 Robbie Taylor who will be 14 on the 19th
 Adam Parrish who will be 9 on the 20th
 Benjamin Jarvis who will be 4 on the 24th
 Daniel Adams who will be 10 on the 27th
 Alexander Hardy who will be 14 on the 29th
 Chloe Peetz who will be 15 on the 29th
 Bethany Daniel who will be 10 on the 31st
 Nathan Fleetwood who will be 10 on the 31st

...and in January

Michael Bates who will be 15 on the 3rd
 Harry Rose who will be 2 on the 5th
 Adam Larsen who will be 15 on the 7th
 Zoe Wingfield who will be 14 on the 7th
 Glen Fergus who will be 12 on the 9th
 Scott Bray who will be 9 on the 9th
 Ewan Cooper who will be 7 on the 10th
 David Lovelock who will be 14 on the 10th
 Georgia Rose who will be 6 on the 12th
 Rachel Holmes who will be 7 on the 12th
 Matthew Bull who will be 8 on the 12th
 Georgia Edwards who will be 8 on the 12th
 Ryan Bray who will be 8 on the 18th
 Luke Britton who will be 7 on the 20th
 James Frost who will be 8 on the 21st
 Joshua Savorv who will be 9 on the 25th