

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



APRIL 2005

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

Volume 21 Issue 1

April 2005

Thank you to everyone who has decided to advertise with us for the coming year. Some are “regulars” but others are new; we have two Child Day Nurseries within easy reach of Meppershall, a photographer based in the village offering professional family portraits, and many more, so please look through The Messenger as your first port of call - it’s becoming as useful as Yellow Pages! Mention where you got the number from as it is good feedback for the advertisers and supports local businesses. Without the income from the advertisements, The Messenger would not be able to continue. Thanks also to Steve Ansell for all his hard work in getting the advertisements together. It is a huge task and takes up a considerable amount of time.

Many interesting articles in this edition, but I would like to draw your attention to two in particular; “Meppershall Village Hall” and “Householders and the use of force against Intruders”.

The deadline for articles for the May 2005 issue of the magazine is 12th April 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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Distribution Manager:	Barbara Horwood, 8 Rectory Road 816177

MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE HALL

Some years ago a meeting was held to discuss the future of the current village hall and the possibility of building a new one. At that meeting a number of people said they wanted to keep the current hall and, although plans for a new hall were drawn up, we still have the same building. The state of the hall at the moment is such that the maintenance is expensive and will continue to be so year on year. The accounts show that in March 2001 we had £11,000 surplus and at March 2004 it was down to £6,500. Jobs that require urgent attention are a new roof, rewiring, disabled toilets, completely re-plastering and more storage. If all this is done then we will still have a building that is years past its useful life span and still unable to meet its current demand. Rents go up year on year, and even a grant from the Parish Council still cannot keep pace with the out goings on such an old building. It doesn't take a genius to work out that this hall will not stay open much longer at this rate.

At the AGM, to be held in June, three positions will become vacant. The Letting Secretary is standing down and I will be stepping down as Chairman and Secretary. Three positions that must be filled if the hall is to continue. The AGM date is to be agreed but if there are insufficient people to form a committee at that meeting, then the hall will close.

Bonfire night last year was well attended. This has been run by the village hall committee for several years. The bonfire itself has been built by the same two or three volunteers for the last few years and this year I will not be one of them. So if this is to continue then it will need a lot more volunteers than we currently have.

All in all it is your choice. If you want the hall to continue then it is up to you to do something about it. NO SUPPORT, NO HALL.

Paul Carne

Do we use it or lose it?!

On Sunday 13th March I attended the 11am family service in our Parish Church of St. Mary's. The service was well prepared with a lot of thought, was interesting and fun, simple enough for children to understand and to take part in with their parents, and provision also provided for babies and toddlers should they become restless. Hymns were both traditional and modern with easy, joyful and flowing tunes.

I was certainly shocked, but most of all saddened, by the fact that there were only two children and eight adults in the congregation. I am not criticising or judging anyone in any way, but if we were to be told in the not too distant future that our church was to be closed because of lack of use and support, the majority of people in our village would certainly object.

We have a wonderful and thriving church school in our village. Let us support our church as well, or do we really want to lose it!

HOUSEHOLDERS AND THE USE OF FORCE AGAINST INTRUDERS

- It is a frightening, although rare, prospect to be confronted by an intruder in your own home. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Chief Constables are responding to public concern over the support offered by the law and confusion about householders defending themselves. The following information summarises the position when you are faced with an intruder in your home, and provides a brief overview of how the police and CPS will deal with any such events. Wherever possible you should call the police.
- Does the law protect me? What is 'reasonable force'? - anyone can use reasonable force to protect themselves or others, or to carry out an arrest, or to prevent crime. You are not expected to make fine judgements over the level of force you use in the heat of the moment. So long as you only do what you honestly and instinctively believe is necessary in the heat of the moment, that would be the strongest evidence of you acting lawfully and in self defence. This is still the case if you use something to hand as a weapon. As a general rule, the more extreme the circumstances and the fear felt, the more force you can lawfully use in self-defence.
- Do I have to wait to be attacked? - no, not if you are in your own home and in fear for yourself or others. In those circumstances the law does not require you to wait to be attacked before using defensive force yourself.
- What if the intruder dies? - if you have acted in reasonable self-defence, as described above, and the intruder dies you will still have acted lawfully. Indeed, there are several such cases where the householder has not been prosecuted. However, if, for example: having knocked someone unconscious, you then decided to further hurt or kill them to punish them; or you knew of an intended intruder and set a trap to hurt or to kill them rather than involve the police, you would be acting with very excessive and gratuitous force and could be prosecuted. What if I chase them as they run off?
- This situation is different as you are no longer acting in self-defence and so the same degree of force may not be reasonable. However, you are still allowed to use reasonable force to recover your property and make a citizen's arrest. You should consider your own safety and, for example, whether the police have been called. A rugby tackle or a single blow would probably be reasonable. Acting out of malice and revenge with the intent of inflicting injury or death would not.

Will the police believe the intruder rather than me? - the police weigh all the facts when investigating an incident. This includes the fact that the intruder caused the situation to arise in the first place. It is hoped that everyone understands that the police have a duty to investigate incidents involving a death or injury. Things are not always as they seem. On occasions people pretend a burglary has taken place to cover up other crimes, such as a fight between drug dealers.

- How would the police and CPS handle the investigation and treat me? - in considering these cases Chief Constables and the Director of Public Prosecutions (Head of the CPS) are determined that they must be investigated and reviewed as swiftly and as sympathetically as possible. In some cases, for instance where the facts are very clear, or where less serious injuries are involved, the investigation will be concluded very quickly, without any need for arrest. In more complicated cases, such as where a death or serious injury occurs, more detailed enquiries will be necessary. The police may need to conduct a forensic examination and/or obtain your account of events.

To ensure such cases are dealt with as swiftly and sympathetically as possible, the police and CPS will take special measures, namely: an experienced investigator will oversee the case; and if it goes as far as CPS considering the evidence, the case will be prioritised to ensure a senior lawyer makes a quick decision. *It is a fact that very few householders have ever been prosecuted for actions resulting from the use of force against intruders.*



Langford Tennis Club

Summer will soon be with us and we should all be getting some exercise in the fresh air! How about giving tennis a try? The nearest tennis facility is in Langford, at the rear of the playing fields near the Church. Quite a few of our members are Meppershall residents and more will always be welcome to join.

We have two all-weather courts with floodlighting and a small clubhouse. Annual membership fees are modest at £40 for adults and £18 for juniors, with a special discount for family groups. We have adult social play every Saturday afternoon and run tournaments throughout the year. We also enter mens, ladies and mixed teams in the local leagues.

We have coaching sessions every Spring and Autumn. Our Spring session starts on Monday 18th April, every Monday for 8 weeks (but not on the two bank holiday Mondays). This is a chance for juniors to make a start or to improve their game. Age group 8-12 starts at 5pm and over 12s at 6pm. Our LTA coach Bob Brookes runs these sessions, for which there is a separate charge.

If you want more information, or an application form, contact Neil Franklin on 01462 815735.



MEPPERSHALL W.I.

President, Barbara Horwood, welcomed 23 members and Mrs. Virginia Hands as W.I. Advisor to our Annual General Meeting. Future events in the area include an international evening on Thursday 7th April at 7.30pm "An Evening in the Sun - Jamaica" at Flitwick Village Hall at £5.50. There are still some tickets for Manuka Honey a presentation evening of Manuka Honey and its medicinal properties, cost £3, 7.30pm at Flitwick Village Hall Thursday 28th April. Trash or Treasure on Tuesday 10th May at the Addison Centre Kempston commencing 7.30pm, doors open at 6.30pm, Lars Thorp and Penny Brittain will select items to value, cost £7 open to members and friends on a first come first served basis. Outing to London on 14th May, drop off and pick up close to Covent Garden. Spend the day as you wish cost coach fare only £10.50 leaving Clophill at 9.15am. We are planning a Treasure Hunt on foot around Potton on Friday evening 22nd July finishing with a chicken and chip or fish and chip supper cost £8 open to family and friends. Darts will be taking part in the new season commencing in April. Our Treasurer Mrs Joan North presented her financial statement for the year which was adopted. Betty Mather gave her report for the year outlining speakers and events during the year. Barbara gave the President's address and thanked everyone for their help and support during the year. Four committee members stood down: Mrs Joyce Smith, Mrs. Joyce Dew, Mrs. Pat Butler and Mrs. Jill Hickling. Barbara Horwood was re-elected as President for the coming year with Gillian Thomas Vice President, Penny Castle Secretary, Joan North Treasurer, Doreen Pritchard Mailing Secretary and Betty Mather Minutes and Press Secretary. The following members continue to serve on the committee: Mrs. Irene Heathcote, Mrs. Pam Flint and Mrs. Penny Trundle. After the serious business of the meeting, Virginia Hands gave us an interesting and amusing account of some of her experiences as W.I. Advisor, followed by a quiz devised by Doreen Pritchard and refreshments. Our next meeting on 13th April will be an open evening (including men) on the subject of recycling in Mid Beds. New members and visitors are always welcome.

Calendar of Forthcoming Events

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<i>Monday 11th April</i>	<i>Bible Society Action Group 9 Clifton Road, Shefford</i>	<i>7.45pm</i>
<i>Saturday 16th April</i>	<i>1st Stondon Scout Group Jumble Sale Village Hall, Lower Stondon</i>	<i>2pm</i>
<i>Friday 22nd April</i>	<i>Meppershall Lower School Association Children's Fashion Show, School Hall</i>	<i>7pm</i>
<i>Saturday 21st May</i>	<i>Jazz by The Vine Street Six St. Mary's Church</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>

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

First Mass of Sunday

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

Weekday Services See notice at Church or phone

Parish Priest:	Parish Secretary:
Fr. Bennie Noonan 813436	Rose Boulton 811547

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
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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 Came, 6 Hoo Road, Meppershall		857803
	Email: paul.came@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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ORGANISATIONS

Meppershall Village Hall Committee

Chairman:	Mr. Paul Came, 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		816208
	Tuesdays at 6.30pm - 7.30pm	Shefford Scouts HQ	
Beaver Scout Leader:	Mrs. Hayley Henshall		817446
Beaver Scout Leader:	Jan Montgomery	Shillington	712386

Bingo Fridays at 7pm Village Hall

Conservative Association

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

Cubs

Shefford	Wednesdays	6.45pm	David Cousins	811441
1st Stondon	Thursdays	7pm - 8.30pm	Michael Hammond	811548
Shillington			Pauline Goodman	711943

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

<u>Mepp'shall Players</u>	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

<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 Brennand		816600
Registrar:	Mrs. Viv Thorne		850821

<u>Scouts</u>			
Shefford	Diane Landau	01234	381153
Shillington	Paul Major		834251

<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	
		850075	

<u>Whitbread Wanderbus</u>			
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St. Mary's Parish Church Meppershall
 In the United Benefice of Meppershall and Shefford
 Rev John Harper, The Rectory, Church Road, Meppershall
 01462 3813334
 Churchwardens
 Brenda Wright 816446 and Brian Bellamy, 125 High Street

Dear Friends,

I have one book that I will always want to keep called "The Humour of Christ". It's not exactly a popular subject, but I treasure it for two reasons; first it reminds me that Jesus was a genuine human being and that like many an effective leader he knew how to make people laugh, and even more significantly it gives me good grounds to trust that there is a smile on the face of God himself.

I know from long experience that bible readings in Church rarely produce a chuckle (unless the Vicar can't find the place!), but I cannot believe that Jesus could have drawn such commitment from his disciples had he not shown them the funny side of life. And the laughs are still there if we're prepared to connect with them. "Did you hear about the man who had a great plank sticking out of his eye who tried to remove a speck from someone else's?" Or the blind man leading another blind man straight into the ditch. Do we really think this was meant to be received with straight faces? We've heard Jesus' stories read solemnly so often that we've assumed that was just how he told them, but if so, we miss so much. Humour can reach those parts that serious minded words rarely conquer, and respect for God is not the same as solemnity. Humour is there as a golden seam through so much of scripture. Abraham and Sarah both laughed at the news that they were to have a son in their old age - they even gave him a name meaning laughter (Isaac). Elijah uses comedy to mock the prophets of the false god Baal. "Why don't you pray louder" he tells them, "in case Baal is meditating or has gone to the toilet or has popped out for a walk or is taking a nap and needs waking up" (1 Kings 16).

But sacred humour isn't there just for the sake of variety. It tells us something very crucial about who this God we see in Jesus really is. It is because of the good news of what God has done, especially through the events of Easter, that we can have reason to enjoy this life; to allow his goodness to permeate all of me, so that inwardly if not always outwardly, a smile is in evidence. Life can be extremely tough for all sorts of reasons, and we will all know times when it's hard to imagine we'll ever see the humorous side of things again. God walks with us in our pain. Yet the purpose of Jesus' coming to earth, his death and resurrection, and indeed of

our own existence is that we may find life in abundance. And I can't believe that that's within our reach without a goodly share of the smile in the very heart of God.

With good wishes.

John Harper

Services in April

Sunday 3rd	Easter 2	8.30am Holy Communion 6pm Evensong
Sunday 10th	Easter 3	8.30am Holy Communion 11am Family Service and Baptism
	Preacher Phillip Evans, World Mission Adviser for USPG	
Sunday 17th	Easter 4	8.30am Holy Communion 6pm Evensong
Sunday 24th	Easter 5	8.30am Holy Communion 11am Family Communion
Weekday Services. All are welcome to join us at any of the following:		
Wednesday		10am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
Friday		7.30pm Compline (20 minutes)
Saturday		9.30am Morning Prayer (20 minutes)

The New Benefice Junior Choir has now sung for the first time in both Churches and new members (7 years and over) are welcome at the weekly practices which are held on Sundays in term time at St. Michael's Shefford, 3-4pm. Please ring Sandra for details 813334.

Coming up this month: Thursday 14th at 7.30pm Annual Parochial Church Meeting at the Methodist Chapel. All are welcome to hear the progress of St. Mary's over the past year and plans for the future, and those on the Church Electoral Roll have opportunity to vote for the new Church Council. Refreshments served.

Saturday 23rd at 7.30pm at St. Michael Shefford, "Shannon Express" top class male harmony choir from Irving Berlin to the Beach Boys. Details available soon.

Exploring Prayer Feet on Earth, Eyes on Heaven - an imaginative opportunity to explore different approaches to prayer at St. Albans Abbey on Saturday 7th May. All ages welcome. Advance booking is needed - spaces may be available. Details and forms in St. Mary's and at the Rectory.

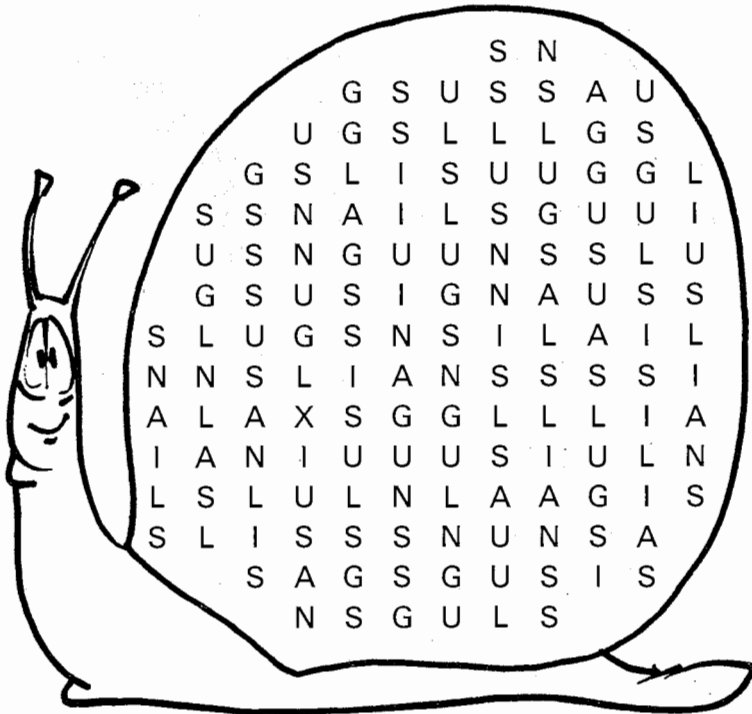
SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

Everyone was concerned regarding the weather, especially as we were heading for Folkestone in Kent at the beginning of March. As we approached the Kent border the snow was certainly more apparent. We were fortunate to have a superb driver from Chambers Coaches who decided not to get caught up in the queue of lorries making their way towards the Channel Tunnel, but to take the "Scenic Route" and what a picturesque journey it proved to be and arriving in Folkestone not very much later than scheduled. Those who were in our party enjoyed the hotel atmosphere and entertainment. Several decided to take up the offer of a day trip to France. Certainly it proved a successful weekend even if we wondered whether to pack our skis!! Arrangements are all in hand for our visit to Lake Como, a coach has been arranged to take us to and from the airport. Places still available for Edinburgh Tattoo, Monday 15th-Friday 19th August, flying from Stansted. Bournemouth, Tuesday 27th-Friday 30th September. Tinsel & Turkey, Monday 28th November-Friday 2nd December, includes 4 nights in Ostend, Chocolate Factory in Bruges, shopping in Gent, Lille for the Christmas Markets, also a present from Santa and return to Calais via Ypres with a chance to visit the famous Menin Gate. Day trips have been arranged for Covent Garden and Kensington Palace on Sunday 12th June. Blenheim Palace on Saturday 16th July the home of Sir Winston Churchill. We have booked The Palace of Varieties in Wood Green, London, for Thursday 21st July where we will enjoy roast beef lunch and "Bless em All" celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Second World War. On Wednesday 3rd August a visit to Ipswich to spend time in the historical town followed by a Harwich Harbour Cruise on the Orwell Lady. The cruise takes 3½ hours through beautiful wooded stretches of the River Orwell and down to the Stour Estuary. Bressingham, Norfolk Sunday 21st August - whether strolling in 14 acres of world famous gardens, travelling by steam train or shopping in Blooms Garden Centre - this is a must for all the family. Glenn Miller Festival Sunday 28th August and the Mapledurham experience (near Reading) on Saturday 10th September. We have arranged a return visit to the Poppy factory in Richmond on Thursday 20th October. We are still awaiting the dates allocated to us for our visit to Thursford for their wonderful Christmas show. For further information and prices please contact Enid on 01462 851397.

Puzzle Page

Slug ...

The words SLUGS and SNAILS are each hidden eight times. Can you bring them out of hiding?



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

Rosie Parrish who will be 14 on the 2nd
Micha Staines who will be 12 on the 5th
Caitlin Gardiner who will be 12 on the 12th
Matthew Hill who will be 12 on the 14th
Rhianan Gardiner who will be 14 on the 16th
Katrina Brennand who will be 5 on the 17th
Harry White who will be 4 on the 19th
Bethany Palmer who will be 8 on the 19th
Jordan Robbens who will be 14 on the 20th
Edmund Holmes who will be 7 on the 20th
Samantha Pepper who will be 12 on the 21st
Christopher Wilson who will be 13 on the 21st
Shane Sturgeon who will be 9 on the 21st
Stephen Moules who will be 13 on the 25th
Rachel Aberdein who will be 13 on the 28th

If you would like your name added to the birthday page
please telephone Tracey Norris on 815 694