

MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



November 2007

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

Volume 23 Issue 7
November 2007

I'm pleased to report that I have had a favourable response to my "Situations Vacant". Three people have come forward and offered their services; Dick Bulley (Editor), Chloe Peetz (Treasurer) and Christine Elbourne (Advertising Manager), so the future of The Meppershall Messenger looks good and the magazine will be continuing for the time being. The official "hand-over" will take place at our Annual General Meeting which will be held on Thursday 13th December in the Social Club at the Village Hall commencing 7pm. On behalf of everyone, a big "thank you" to the three who have volunteered their services and by doing so, enabled the Messenger to continue.

The next edition of The Messenger (apart from being my last one) is the double issue covering December 2007 and January 2008. Please remember to let me have any dates, events or announcements, etc. for that period. The edition after that will be in February 2008.

The deadline for articles for the **DOUBLE ISSUE** December/January edition of The Messenger is 12th November 2007. Please either leave them at the Post Office or drop them through my letterbox at 7 Brookmead. If you prefer, you can send articles to me at my e-mail address lindagoldl@aol.com (that's LINDAGOLDL). Thank you.

Linda Gold (Editor)

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~ Announcements ~

~ ~ ~ ~

My appreciation and thanks to all those who made
by 95th Birthday such a happy occasion.
As always,

Archie

~ ~ ~ ~

John Ponton celebrated his 90th Birthday in
October. A cake was made by Mary and Roger
from the Bakery and wine was served at the Social
Club. Thanks to everyone who helped us (it was a
surprise!).

John and Dora Pontin

~ ~ ~ ~

The cycle ride for the Historic Churches did very
well indeed this year. In spite there only being
three riders, between them they have raised £500!
I think this is a record for us. Trevor Wilkinson
visited 50 churches, which I think is a record
number for Meppershall riders too.

Very many thanks to them. This means we have
another £500 to keep the Church standing we hope
for another few years. Thanks also to the Church
sitters (as I call them). It really does make a
difference to see someone waiting to say "Well
done" and offer drink.

Shireen Longland

Village Plan

All the data from the questionnaires & other consultations have now been collated together and the team are busy on the next stage. This is probably the most important phase – deciding from all that has been presented what has been identified as needing attention and what can be done about it. In other words developing the plan itself.

So many of you said you would like to see and discuss the outcomes that it was clear a village meeting would be oversubscribed, if we could arrange a date to suit everybody – just about an impossibility.

What we have decided to do instead is to hold another set of open days, similar to those we held to gauge village opinion, to

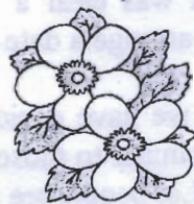
- Let people see the baseline results
- Look at the general analysis
- See what we are suggesting
- Be able to discuss your view point
- And hopefully villagers may have other, practical solutions to the identified problems.

Due to time to analyse, holiday time looming closer and to give everyone time, the planned dates are **Friday 18th & Saturday 19th January 2008 at the Methodist Chapel**. We will publicize the timings once they are finalized, but like last time will have a number of openings in order that as many people as possible are able to visit and give their inputs.

Thank You - John

Meppershall

Lower School



Autumn Fayre

Saturday 17th November
2-4 pm



Lots of stalls, crafts,
games and refreshments
for all the family.

MEPPERSHALL PRE-SCHOOL NEW OUT-DOOR PLAY AREA

Earlier this year Meppershall Pre-School was awarded a much needed grant to help towards the costs of building a secure outdoor play area, which will enable the pre-school children to go outside most days without all the associated problems or using the park.

To ensure this project gets up and running, we need your help to raise further funds. "£1 for Pre-School Prize Draw" will take place on 1st December. If we can sell one ticket to each house in the Village we will raise £700+, so please support us. Tickets will be sold door to door during November. Local businesses have enabled us to do this by giving generously. These include: Brinkley Aviation, The Carriage House Hotel, Rogers Bakery and Meppershall P.O. and Stores.

Please buy a ticket. Thank you.

Meppershall Pre-School

Village Hall, Meppershall, Bedfordshire, SG17 5LX



£1 for Pre-School Prize Draw

£100 Cash Prize

Meal for Two @ Carriage House

Case of wine

Sponsored by: Brinkley Aviation

Rogers Bakery

Carriage House Hotel

Meppershall P.O & Stores

Numbers Drawn 1st December 2007

@ Post office and printed in Messenger

MEPPERSHALL BABY & TODDLER



IMPORTANT NOTICE

NEW OPENING TIMES

1.30pm until 3pm



Every Tuesday (term time only)
Meppershall Village Hall

We need more volunteers to help run this group. Please come along and support your local toddler group. We cater from newborn to pre-school

We have ride on toys, pushalongs, bikes, seesaws and rockers. An art and activity table. Separate soft baby area (from new born). Toy Library. Organised events for children including Christmas Party, Teddy Bears Picnic, Easter Events and Halloween Fancy Dress Party. Photographer sessions. Book, craft and clothes sales

We understand that it can be a little daunting at first but we are an easy going friendly bunch of parents. Join us for a cup of tea and a chat.

We look forward to meeting you



Operations Christmas Child Shoe Box Appeal

We will also be holding a fund raising event to raise the funds to send the filled boxes abroad. This will be from 6pm to 7.30pm on 12th November. There will be games, Bring & Buy (brilliant new items for sale, so shop for Christmas) and other stalls. Please come along and join us for a fun evening raising funds for this worthy cause.

If you would like to donate any items for shoe boxes, or even empty or full boxes, please bring them on 12th November or drop them off to me at 5 St. Mary's Place any time or give me a call on 01462 817409 and I will collect them. Many thanks.

1st MEPPERSHALL BROWNIES

At the moment, for the first time in many years, we do not have a waiting list and if your daughter is between the ages of 7 and 10 she is welcome to join us at Brownies on Monday evenings from 6pm to 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Come along and see what we are about.

Meppershall Brownies are looking for extra help on Monday term time evenings. If you could spare the time to occasionally help out please get in contact with me. Any interested suitable person can help. Sometimes there will be craft work involved and perhaps there are skills you can pass on. We are also looking to invite people who have skills to share; anyone involved with other charitable organisations which the Brownies would like to hear about, anyone with first aid skills to pass on?

Please contact me on 01462 817409 or e-mail at ckelbourne@elbourne.co.uk

**Christine Elbourne
Brownie Guider**

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*The Friends of St. Mary's,
Meppershall are proud to present the
world famous*

PHOENIX A-cappella Showcase



*Join us for a night of fabulous musical
entertainment on Saturday 17 November at*

St. Mary the Virgin,
Meppershall
at 7.30 p.m.

Tickets only £10.00 to include
Buffet refreshments; choice of red or white wine.

Tickets available from
Trevor Thorley 01462 813357
The Rectory 01462 813334
The Bakery The Post Office

Calendar of Forthcoming Events

Saturday 3 rd November	Meppershall Village Hall Bonfire Night	
Saturday 17 th November	Friends of St. Mary's Concert with PHOENIX CHORUS	7.30pm
Saturday 17 th November	Friends of Samuel Whitbread Quiz Night @ Samuel Whitbread	7.30pm
25 th , 30 th November 1 st , 2 nd , 6 th , 7 th , 8 th December	Meppershall Players Pantomime 2007 at Village Hall	
Thursday 13 th December	Mepperhall Messenger Annual General Meeting @ Social Club	7pm
Saturday 26 th January 2008	Friends of St. Mary's Quiz Night at Village Hall	7.30pm

YOUR LOCAL COUNTRY MARKET NEEDS YOU!

CALLING ALL HOME PRODUCERS.

Would you like to sell your home-baked goods

Surplus home grown fruit & vegetables

Preserves or Handmade crafts

locally every Friday morning.

SHEFFORD COUNTRY MARKET WOULD
LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

All that is required is your time and a basic Hygiene
Certificate.

For more information please call at the stall
in the High Street one Friday morning or
ring Sheila Brown on 01462 815495



The End of an Era for Meppershall Methodist Chapel

For everything there is a season ... Ecclesiastes 3:1

It is with great sadness that I am writing to inform you that we have begun proceedings to close Meppershall Methodist Chapel. It is not a decision that has been taken lightly, or without a great amount of effort in trying to infuse the life of the congregation with enough numbers, commitment and resources to continue.

I truly believe that God has done many good things in and through the people who've been part of chapel life throughout its history. I have seen much good even in my time as minister here in Biggleswade Circuit. I shall never forget the children's holiday club and the celebration service with over 40 people packed into the chapel. The Sunday Club born out of that served a small group of enthusiastic children for several years. Indeed work with children and young people seems to have always been a strong feature of life at the Chapel: there have been various Sunday schools over the years and more recently the youth drop-in's led by members of the village community that were enabled through the availability of the premises.

We also recognise that there are a number of other community activities, not least the Thursday coffee mornings and the Parish Council meeting, for which the chapel plays an important part as their venue.

For many years Meppershall Methodist has run with a barest minimum of leadership and just a few members, mostly elderly and unable to offer much more than their valuable, very faithful support without which the chapel would have closed a long time ago. The public meetings a couple of years ago showed some promise and also gave voice to the value with which the chapel building is held in the wider community. The services that followed with an emphasis on prayer for the village and the informal Christmas event at the village hall were encouraging, and monthly afternoon services enjoyed good support for a further season but have now dwindled.

I expect most people have noticed the deterioration in the building. The coping stones that fell from the roof during the rains in June were

the latest sign of the need for urgent action. The last inspection gave a conservative estimate of between £40,000 to £50,000 of work to bring everything up to a good state of repair and comply with modern standards. We just don't have the financial resources for that or anyone to give a lead and co-ordinate such an amount of work. The state of the building is the final issue that has tipped the balance and left the Biggleswade Methodist Circuit with no choice but to cease worship here and close the chapel.

At this stage we don't have a precise timetable. As official processes take a little while to be complete so it is likely to be a few months before the building ceases to be available for use but those who still make regular use of the building now need to look for somewhere else to meet. There will be an official ending with a special service to mark the closure and give thanks for the life and work of God and his people through Meppershall Methodist Church over the years.

I have attempted to contact everyone with a direct involvement before this article is due to come out. If I have missed anyone I can only apologise.

I would like to everyone who has helped and supported me and the ministry of Meppershall Methodist during my time here, particularly Julie Taylor without whom we would not have held together.

It seems to me that the Christian cause now has more momentum from St.Mary's Church, with new initiatives under the leadership of Rev John Harper and his wife Sandra. I also intend to continue to be involved in the community when and where I can, e.g. school assemblies, special services and events. While the chapel has to close, the Christian faith is very much alive in Meppershall village through the followers of Christ who live and serve Him here.

Yours in Christ,



Revd Phil Snelson
Methodist Minister, Shefford

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN,
MEPPERSHALL PARISH CHURCH
SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER**

Rector: (Meppershall & Shefford) Rev John Harper, The Rectory, Church Rd, Meppershall. revjohnharper@talktalk.net 01462 813334

Curate: Rev Patsy Critchley; 01234 381510

(Patsy's usual ministry days are Weds, Fri & Sun)

Churchwardens: Brian Bellamy – 815944 (also Pastoral Assistant); Brenda Wright 816446

Sun 4 4th Sunday before Advent.

11.15a.m. Parish Communion and Sunday School

6p.m. All Souls service – especially for those facing bereavement.

Sun 11 Remembrance Sunday

8.30 a.m. Holy Communion

10.50 a.m. Remembrance Service

2 mins silence at war memorial 11a.m. All ages welcome

Sun 18 2nd Sunday before Advent 8.30 a.m.

Holy Communion 6p.m. Evensong

Sun 25 Christ the King – Sunday before Advent

8.30a.m. Holy Communion

11.15 a.m. Family Communion with 'Thanks Giving' for the Harvest renewal programme, and Sunday School

Dec 2 Advent Sunday – 11. 15 a.m. Parish Communion

and Sunday School

6p.m. Christingle service – details next month

Weekday Services:

Wednesdays : 10a.m. Holy Communion (B.C.P.)

Fridays : 7.30p.m. Compline (Evening Prayer)

Saturdays 9.30a.m. Morning Prayer.

St Mary's 'Thanks Giving'

Dear friends,

At last month's Harvest Supper the Parish Church launched a programme entitled simply 'Thanks Giving'. It's purpose is to focus on those two soundly biblical words –

1 'Thanks' – for all that God enables us to do in his service, corporately as a Church and individually. For all that sustains and enriches life, including our energy, skills, experience, time, capacity to care, etc, as well as our resources of money and of other kinds.

2 'Giving' – ie responding to God's generosity by giving back for His work something significant from out of His goodness to us. Christian giving is acknowledging, as King David once prayed, that ' all things come of you, and of your own do we give you" It is also recognising that, as the New Testament teaches: "It is more blessed to give than to receive".

As a Church it is so important that we sense where God is leading us, and trust that in His strength the resources will be provided to achieve His purposes.

With this in mind St Mary's has prepared a 'Thanks Giving' Vision statement as presented at the Supper. It looks like this:

together we are aiming to....

- **E NABLE** St Mary's to grow as a viable and outgoing Christian family, so that it has a secure future in the face of uncertain times.
- **E NCOURAGE** the offer of skills, experience and good will of all involved with God's work through St Mary's, so that the church's mission will be as effective and relevant as we can make it.
- **E NSURE** that the ministry team – (Rector, (* see below) - our new Curate , Rev'd Patsy Critchley, and lay members with particular roles,) are suitably resourced for their work.
- **E NDEAVOUR** to make our beautiful Church building as sound, user-friendly and welcoming as possible.

- ENRICH the lives of local children and young people with all the care, teaching, fun and worship God wants them to enjoy.

Realising this Vision is dependent on the commitment and generosity of the local Church community. Perhaps it needs saying that there is no 'benefactor' (ie the Diocese, Patron, or Church Commissioners or anyone else) who exists to guarantee or secure the viability of an individual church. That responsibility is in our hands, before God. Will you play a part in ensuring that St Mary's is not only sustained as a Parish Church, but actually makes tangible progress in communicating and celebrating the gospel in our area?

At the Harvest Supper 'Thanks Giving' packs were distributed, with opportunities for responses to be made in terms of people's giving of time, skills, energy and money. If you have received one of these, please respond as soon as you can – a 'Thanks Giving' service will be held on November 25 at which a summary will be given of the progress that this programme has achieved to date. If you haven't received one of these packs, which includes details of St Mary's present circumstances, please ask to receive one.

Finally I would like to convey my thanks for all that is already given for St Mary's, which is offered so willingly and graciously. If there are any matters here you would like to discuss, please get in touch either with me (813334) David Bartlett (finances) 811191 or Peter Longland (Gift Aid) 814053 or one of the churchwardens – see previous page.

With good wishes,
In His Name
John Harper

**The Rector receives a stipend (ie salary) as well as Church accommodation whilst in post. Most of this cost needs to be contributed to by means of our annual Parish Share, which in 2007 is £10,946. The Curate is non-stipendiary (N.S.M. = self-supporting) and has her own accommodation.*

In 2006 St Mary's total expenditure came to £19202, whilst our income was £13085, leaving a shortfall of £6117.

Elisha whose side is who on? will be the topic explored by the Bishop of Bedford at an open bible study evening at St Michael's on Monday November 12, 7.45p.m. All welcome – organised by the Shefford & District Bible Society Action Group

'Saving Mandela's Children'

Dianne Lang, till recently from Meppershall, will be signing copies of her new book at St Michael's Shefford on Sat December 1, 11- 12. Dianne is a Child Human Rights activist who established and runs a home in her native South Africa for abandoned, abused and HIV infected children. Dec 1 is also, appropriately, World AIDS day. Refreshments including some traditional South African food will be served, and Dianne will be reading extracts from her book. For more details ring Dianne – 685402 or Sandra 813334 or see www.diannelang.com

MID BEDS CITIZENS ADVICE SERVICE

To improve telephone access to its service Mid Beds Citizen's Advice is now operating a call centre. The new advice line number is 08444 771600 and calls are charged at the basic rate of 5p per minute from a land line. Trained volunteers at the Ampthill and Biggleswade offices deal with nearly 12,000 enquiries a year helping people resolve a wide range of problems.

Appointments are also available at Biggleswade Bureau, Century House, Market Square, Biggleswade Tel: 01767 601368 and Ampthill Bureau at The Court House, (Citizone Building), Woburn Street in Ampthill Tel: 01525 402742. Opening hours are weekdays 10.30am – 2.30pm.

Home visiting is available for people who are in poor health and therefore unable to access the Bureau. The outreach services can be contacted via the appointments line.

St. Francis of Assisi R.C. Church

Christmas Bazaar

Saturday 24th November 2007

Shefford Methodist Church Hall at 10.30am

Prizes include:

Four Joseph Tickets

£100 cash

Hot Stone Massage

Upside Down Christmas Tree

Waitrose "All things Nice" Hamper

And many more seasonal presents

Bazaar Stalls include:

Christmas Gifts and Bottle Tombola

Cuddly Pick

Christmas Crafts and Toys

Hot snacks, lunches and refreshments are served

Grand Draw takes place at 2pm

All Welcome

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 telephone

Parish Priest:

Parish Secretary:

Fr. Bennie Noonan 813436

Rose Boulton 811547

Leonard Cheshire Disability

Agate House, Woburn St, Ampthill Beds MK45 2HX

Registered Charity No. 218186

Church & Village Magazines – Copy for November 2007

The 1st of October saw us changing our name to Leonard Cheshire Disability. This is a positive move in our efforts to gain a higher public profile of our work with disabled people. It will support our journey towards our goal to be known globally for changing society's responses to disability by 2015. In reality, we remain much the same at Agate House, although we have dropped the 'Bedfordshire Cheshire Home' title in favour of being known as Agate House.

We reflect no loss whatsoever of our love and respect for Leonard Cheshire the man, but did feel the need to describe to the public and younger generations what our organisation is about. It is many years on from Leonard's tremendously brave and publicly well known wartime activities and many nowadays haven't heard of him and have no knowledge therefore of what our endeavours are about.

Here at Agate House, the redevelopment goes from strength to strength and our deliveries are showing the progress as lorries loaded with internal fittings are now just starting to arrive.

Coming up in November is our Christmas Bazaar – Saturday 17th, 10.30am-2.30pm. Light refreshments and lunches available as always. Do make a note in your diaries and join us.

We are still very keen to welcome new volunteers and Jeff still has a continuing need for quality bric-a-brac to stock his shop (open daily, Monday-Friday, 9am-4.30pm). Browsers always welcome – pop in and find a bargain!

Warmest good wishes

Judith Hagger
Volunteer Coordinator/
Fundraising

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

Autumn has definitely approached quickly, with the shorter days and darker evenings and by the time the November Messenger is published the clocks would have turned back making us well aware Winter is fast approaching when our thoughts turn to Christmas. However, we still have many trips arranged before the festivities commence. We have just returned from the Isle of Wight where we visited Whippingham Church which contained many beautiful features, royal photographs and memorials within it. After which we visited Osborne House once the home to Queen Victoria and her family, now the property of English Heritage. There were many reminders of their family life including the Swiss Cottage where the girls were taught domestic chores and the boys tended their own garden patch. A day's tour of the villages included Shanklin, Alum Bay and the Needles. We also visited the beautiful Botanical Gardens, the exotic yachts moored in Yarmouth and the unique village of Godshill the home of the famous model village. The hotel provided us with great entertainment on three of the evening, however, we still managed to fit in a visit to the spectacular Waltzing Waters.

Several of our members joined Stevenage Group Leisure on their trip to 'Thursford Last Night at the Proms' where they enjoyed traditional music and old favourites. London Museums is always a regular favourite. We will once again support Keech Cottage Children's Hospice with a stall at Barnfield College on Sunday October 28th. The children's hospice covers the whole of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire as well as Milton Keynes giving home support and medical care to families as well as at the hospice.

Our future trips include, Lord Mayor's Show in London, Saturday 10th November and Christmas at the Palace one of Mickie Driver's Palace of Varieties, Tuesday 13th November. We still have twin/double rooms available for our Tinsel & Turkey visit to Cumbria Monday 26th – Friday 30th November. Christmas by the Rhine – Sunday 23rd – Thursday 27th December. Bookings are now being taken for our holiday to Croatia next May.

Theatre trips are always popular, both in London as well as Milton Keynes, Gordon Craig and Dunstable.

Shefford Leisure Group is open to anyone who feels they would like to join us on our ventures. We are always pleased to meet new friends.

For further information regarding dates, prices and availability, please contact Enid on 01462 851397 or e-mail Enidpamment@aol.com

A very happy birthday to those of you celebrating birthdays in November

Alice Geneux who will be 5 on the 1st

Ben Halford who will be 3 on the 4th

Elliot Cooper Hughes who will be 9 on the 10th

Danielle Savory who will be 14 on the 10th

Freddie Hefford who will be 2 on the 10th

Emily Crowson who will be 11 on the 13th

Daniel Truett who will be 5 on the 15th

Abbie Saunders who will be 8 on the 19th

Lucy Wallace who will be 4 on the 23rd

Alex Thorne who will be 9 on the 28th

Rebecca Croft who will be 14 on the 30th

If you are under 16 and would like your name added to the birthday page, please call Louise Hutson on 814148

