

# MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



**December 2007/  
January 2008**

# THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

**Volume 23 Issue 8**  
**December 2007/January 2008**

As you may now know, I'll be stepping down as Editor of The Messenger at our Annual General Meeting to be held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December in the Social Club at 7pm. This edition will therefore be my last. I've received many comments of appreciation from residents in the village for my time as Editor. Thank you all very much for your kind words, which do mean a great deal.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking everyone on the "team" for all their kindness and support over the years. Together we have continued to produce an excellent magazine which is appreciated by the vast majority of families living in Meppershall. We have had a few problems along the way, but nothing that hasn't been sorted out with the patience and willingness of individuals giving up their personal time. It has been a pleasure working with all of you. I also know that I have upset a few people over the years, but you can't please everybody. I've done the job to the best of my abilities and leave with a clear conscience. I feel I have contributed to the village and will, no doubt, continue to do so in other ways in the future. I hope everyone in the village will continue supporting the magazine under the new Editorship – as I have said on many occasions, it is a valuable source of information and helps keep our ever expanding village together. All that remains is for me to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The deadline for articles for the February 2008 edition of The Messenger is 12<sup>th</sup> January 2008. Steve has very kindly agreed to keep a folder at the shop for any articles you may want included in the magazine for collection or, alternatively, you can drop them through the new Editor's letterbox at 116 Shefford Road (I'm sure he won't mind!). Thank you .....

*Linda Gold*

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# ~ Announcements ~

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May I take this opportunity to thank all my neighbours and friends for their cards and good wishes for my recent stay in hospital. Thank you.

**Trevor Jones**

~~~~~

Christmas Greetings to all my friends and neighbours in Meppershall!

As many of you know, I have moved away recently; how I shall miss you all (I may return!). Thank you all for your love and support, especially during the last couple of years. Have a Happy One!

**Helen Gillett**

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## **THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007  
Social Club**

### **A G E N D A**

**Minutes of Last Meeting**

**Matters Arising**

**Treasurer's Report**

**Other Reports**

**Advertising/Charges**

**Election of Officers**

**Any Other Business**

## *Editor's Note . . . . .*

I have been asked by a number of people to mention (yet again) the on-going problem of dog fouling in the village. I seem to remember mentioning this in my first edition of The Messenger, so I might as well mention it again in my last!

The problem seems to have got out of control again, with deposits of stinking dog poo being deposited on garden walls, driveways, pavements and, it would seem, any available surface!

It is utterly disgusting, harmful and completely irresponsible of certain dog owners. In case these irresponsible dog owners are not aware of the law, it is an offence to allow your dog to foul on public pavements, private driveways and garden walls and not clear up after them! I'm amazed that it has to be spelt out again, but for those of you who are not sure what to do when your dog has "dumped" ....

### **PLEASE CLEAR UP AFTER YOUR DOG !!!**

There are special bins at various points throughout the village for you to deposit your bag of poo. However, you can always take it home with you and dispose of it yourself. **DO NOT LEAVE IT LYING AROUND FOR PEOPLE TO WALK IN!!** There is nothing worse than scraping smelly dog poo off shoes and pram/pushchair tyres.

The problem seems to get worse this time of the year. I think some people think if it is dark then no-one is going to see them.

That is not always the case.....!

# **Village Hall News**

Firstly we'd like to thank all those that came to the bonfire and fireworks night on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. The weather was very kind and we had a great turn-out. We hope everyone enjoyed the fireworks and all the children enjoyed their free sparklers too. On that note, a big thank you to those of you that gave us an extra donation to help towards the additional insurance we had to take out to be able to put the event on.

The 'Build a guy' afternoon was enjoyed by everyone that came to make a guy. Prizes were awarded to the following children:

Daisy Lucas, James Aberdein, Megan and Rebecca, Ashley & Mitchell Brooks and Jaiden Hunt, Dan and Chelsea Adams, Ethan and Sasa Kovacs, Grace & Hattie Gravell and Sam Germann.

Well done to you all and if you haven't yet received your prize, please come and collect it from 51A High Street, Meppershall.

As I'm sure everyone is aware, there are 2 bottle banks outside the village hall for anyone to use. Unfortunately, when the small waste bin is full, some people are just leaving their empty boxes and bags on the ground by the bottle banks, or even putting them in the skips behind the village hall which are only for Social club use. If the waste bin is full and you cannot fit your bag or box into it, please take it home again and dispose of it there as it makes the outside of the hall look very untidy with rubbish left lying around.

The 'Rock Factor' will be playing again next February. Their last event was a sell-out, so make sure you book your tickets early if you don't want to miss out! Ticket details will be available soon.

**The Village Hall Committee**

# Village Plan

The plan is now in draft form and we have started consulting with partners, people, groups, and official bodies, that will take the agreed plan and work with it.

Part of the consultation is with all the villagers and for this we will be holding two Open Days at the Methodist Hall on Friday & Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> January 2008. We will put up notices as to the actual opening times, but it will be for most of the two days to allow as many people as wish to

- See what the plan consists of
- May be offer practical solutions where the team can't see any
- Offer alternate solutions to some items where the team have already made suggestions
- Help set priorities that you wish to see applied (not everything can be done all at once)

Some of the plan items will need to be carried out by the Parish Council, District & County Councils and already existing village groups. However there are some items where there is no existing framework but in the questionnaire people expressed an interest in helping & supporting these actions. The questionnaire was anonymous and so no names are known. Examples of these are Youth Groups, Neighbourhood Watch and Good Neighbour Schemes. Each of these items will need people to take them forward and we would ask that those interested either let one of the Steering Group know, or, come to one of the Open Days and put your details on the appropriate list.

There is one group that we would now like to get put in place, in order to take the plan forward. The present Steering Group has a mandate to produce a signed off village plan for Meppershall. By the time this task is complete the team will have been working on it for two years. However that is not the end of the road. With the plan in position we will need a new Village Plan Committee to

- See that the plan actually happens
- Monitor the partners that have agreed to carry out tasks to see what progress & development is happening
- To assist where road blocks occur by finding what local agencies, County, District, charities etc can help
- Ensure that the plan is a living thing that changes, in a controlled manner, to reflect the changes in the villagers aspirations over time

If you are interested in joining this committee, then please let one of the existing team know, or again, please put your name forward at the Open Days.

Thank You - John W



# Meppershall Pre-School

Meppershall Village Hall

This month we say GOODBYE to Harry Rose,  
Olivia Mardell, Keira Thomason, Marcus Hart,  
William Rogers, Kieran Heathfield, George Sale,  
Ethan Hunt, Ryan Turner, Isabella Lambley,  
Abbie Bradshaw, Alfie Gabbittas and Monica  
Steeley.



We wish them all luck in their new school and  
hope they have enjoyed their time at  
Meppershall Pre-School.



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## MEPPERSHALL PLAYERS

Have you got your tickets for the Pantomime? Don't miss your chance to see Dick Whittington and his Cat, magically assisted by the lovely Fairy Bowbelles and her apprentice, taking on the evil King Rat and his minions. Join them as Dick travels from London to the far shores of Morocco to seek his fortune. Will Dick marry Alice? Will King Rat be defeated? Will Paul Carne and Mick Trundle follow the script or lose the plot?

The answer to these questions and more will all be revealed on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November, Saturday 1<sup>st</sup>, Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>, Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>, Friday 7<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2007. Tickets are on sale at Roger's Bakery 813398 starting from the ridiculously low price of £5 matinees and £6 evening performances (there are no tickets available for the last night Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December as it has sold out).

We are now looking toward our spring/summer productions as well as Panto 2008. If you feel a creative urge welling up inside you, why not come and join the Players? Whether you would like to direct, act, stage manage, design backdrops or tinker with sound and lights, we would like to meet you (honestly we're very friendly!)

The Players meet every 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month and every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 8pm at the Village Hall. Our current membership fee is Juniors £2, Seniors £5 (per year) and we welcome anyone from the age of 9 to 90+ years to participate in any of the following activities: acting, set building, painting, costumes, directing, sound and lighting, backstage and front of house. If any of the aforementioned appeals to you why not stroll over to the Village Hall or ring me, Karen Mitchell Players Secretary on 816336. We look forward to meeting you.

## Calendar of Forthcoming Events

**25<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> November**

**1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> December**

*Meppershall Players*

*Pantomime 2007 at Village Hall*

*(see Posters for times, etc.)*

**Thursday**

**13<sup>th</sup> December**

*Mepperhall Messenger*

*Annual General Meeting @ Social Club 7pm*

**Tuesday**

**18<sup>th</sup> December**

*Meppershall Baby & Toddler*

*Christmas Party at Village Hall 1.30pm*

**Saturday**

**26<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

*Friends of St. Mary's*

*Quiz Night at Village Hall 7.30pm*

**February 2008**

*"Rock Factor" at Village Hall*

### 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**

*CHRISTMAS SERVICES  
AT  
ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
SHEFFORD*



*CHRISTMAS EVE  
(Monday 24 December)*

*Children's Christmas Mass  
6.00pm*

*Carols*

*11.20pm*

*Followed by  
Midnight Mass*

*CHRISTMAS DAY  
Mass*

*9.00am & 11.00am*

*(No evening Mass)*

*CONFESSIONS*

*Saturday 22 Dec: 10.30—10.55am : 3.00—4.00pm*

*Monday 24 Dec: 11.30am—12.30pm : 3.00—3.30pm*

***ST MARY THE VIRGIN,  
MEPPERSHALL PARISH CHURCH (CHURCH RD)***

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

Curate: Rev Patsy Critchley; 01234 381510

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

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

***SERVICES FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY***

**Dec 2      Advent Sunday – 11. 15 a.m.**

**Parish Communion and Sunday School**

**Dec 9      Advent 2 8.30a.m. Holy Communion**

**11.15a.m. Family service and baptisms-**

**William Bamford & Jack Kareem**

**6p.m. Christingle service**

**Please note** – Christingle is on a revised date –  
Dec 9 - not as in November Messenger. Collecting  
candles for the work of The Children's Society can be  
obtained from the School or Rectory, for  
presentation during the service.

**Dec 11      Tues 6p.m. Meppershall School Christmas  
Concert**

**Dec 12      Weds 2p.m. Meppershall School Christmas  
Concert**

**Dec 15      Saturday 6p.m. Village Carol Service  
(one off rehearsal for adults and Junior choir -  
Friday 14, 7-9p.m. – all welcome – see poster)**

**Dec 16      Advent 3 8.30a.m. Holy Communion  
6p.m. Evensong**

**The Father Christmas float will be touring the village during the afternoon/early evening of Sun 16**

**Dec 23      Advent 4. 8.30a.m. Holy Communion  
11.15a.m. Crib Service, especially for children**

**Dec 24      Christmas Eve. 11.30p.m. Midnight Mass**

**Dec 25      Christmas Day 11.15a.m. Family Communion  
(children may like to bring a toy to show)**

**Dec 30      United Benefice Family Communion at St  
Michael's Shefford 9.45a.m. (with 'Feast on  
Five' breakfast from 9a.m.) Please ask if lift  
needed. 813334**

**Jan 6        Epiphany Sunday . 11.15 Parish Communion  
and Sunday School (Rectory)**

**Jan 13      Epiphany 2. The Baptism of Christ.  
8.30a.m. Holy Communion  
11.15a.m. Family Service**

**Jan 20      Epiphany 3. 8.30a.m. Holy Communion  
6p.m. Evensong**

**Jan 27      Epiphany 4. 8.30a.m. Holy Communion  
11.15 a.m. Family Communion & Sunday School**

### **Weekday Services:**

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

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

**Saturdays 9.30a.m. Morning Prayer.**

**The Week of Prayer for Unity**, which marks its centenary this year, will be observed by all the Shefford churches from Jan 18-25. Also, a united **Service of Prayer for Healing and Wholeness** will take place on Tues Jan 22, 7.30p.m. at Shefford Baptist Church. For more information please ring 01462 813334.

Dear friends,

As I write responses are still being received from St Mary's 'Thanks Giving' programme that was launched at the Harvest Festival. I am pleased to say that it has encouraged more people to give regularly of their time, abilities and money to God through the life of the local Church. It is so good to see signs of people's generosity undergirding and helping to secure the future of St Mary's work. It is intended that this focus receives a year round emphasis, so as to ensure that today's Christian ministry is based on nothing but the principles of the New Testament Church.

The theme of 'Thanks Giving' is also especially relevant when it comes Christmas time. As a Christian Festival Christmas has so much to do with thankfulness, because we are acknowledging that in the birth of Jesus the unseen God has made himself available. In no other way could ordinary people have been able to identify with God's essential character. And in no other way could we begin to relate to this self giving God, and make sense of our relationship with him. Christmas begins with thankfulness.

Christmas is also about giving. God's giving to us, and our giving in response. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...'. Giving is what God does – that is His nature, at Bethlehem, on the cross at Calvary, in the upper room on the first Easter Day, and to us in our individual lives. And our proper response is to give. I don't only mean by spending more than usual on our present buying. I mean by giving of ourselves; in care for others, those known and those unknown; and that includes the giving of time – sometimes the commodity we are least prepared to be generous with. And giving is also part and parcel of our worship – giving time, attention, effort, praise, to the God whose

This is what the services at Christmas time are meant to be about – giving to Him in heart, mind and soul, gladly, joyfully, thankfully, because He has first of all given to us the greatest gift of all.'

With every good wish for a blessed Christmas, and every happiness in 2008

John Harper, Rector.

### **'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, 10.30 - 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. Hot refreshments, including some traditional South African food will be served. Dianne will be reading extracts from her book and showing a film of the Home. For more details ring Dianne – 685402 or Sandra 813334 or see [www.dianneland.com](http://www.dianneland.com)

From the Reverend Patsy Critchley

As I write this it is seven weeks since I was ordained in St Alban's Abbey and became your curate. I should like to thank everyone for the very warm welcome I have received. I am gradually getting to know people but as there have been so many welcoming faces I trust that I shall be forgiven for occasionally getting names and faces muddled!

Prior to beginning my ordination training I taught English at Samuel Whitbread Community College for many years. It is a great joy to catch up with some of my ex-pupils, either in person, or via photographs on proud grandparents' and parents' walls as I visit people in the village.

During my curacy with you I shall continue to live in Haynes with my husband Bill. My two grown-up sons, James and Tom, both live in Shefford, so we consider ourselves a very local family, although my roots are in West Dorset and Bill's in Lancashire.

I look forward to getting to know more of you as my work in the benefice continues

## **THE FRIENDS OF St. MARY's**

Thank you to those who supported our Phoenix Chorus concert last month, November 17, and I trust that you all had a great evening! As you probably know, tickets sold out very quickly and in fact almost two weeks before the night and we are very sorry that some people missed out. Considering the clamour for tickets that was experienced, it does give us 'food for thought' for considering the possibility of inviting the group back again for sometime in the future....if they would come!

Looking ahead, tickets will go on sale from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 for our annual 'QUIZ NIGHT', which will take place on SATURDAY 26<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, commencing at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. This has always been a successful and popular event, so folks, please start planning and sorting out your teams and let's make this another great night. Tickets are £5 in (tables of six - £30). A bar and Raffle will also be part of the evening.

Looking further ahead and to Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008, we welcome the 'VAUXHALL MALE VOICE CHOIR'. This concert will take place as usual in St. Mary's Church commencing at 7.30pm. An evening of fabulous entertainment is again in prospect, and, coupled with our popular buffet refreshments, what could be better! Tickets, as usual, are priced at £10 all-inclusive. For further details you may contact myself, Trevor Thorley (Chairman) on 01462 813357 [trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com](mailto:trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com)

Have a lovely Christmas; we look forward to seeing you in the New Year!



**Leonard Cheshire Disability**  
Agate House, Woburn St, Amphill Beds MK45 2HX

Registered Charity No. 218186

## **Church & Village Magazines – Copy for December 2007**

Autumn mists are rising over the fields as I drive to Amphill each morning and somehow that encourages reflection on what happens at Agate House.

Residents have visited Hitchin market and there have been two trips to see the film *Ratatouille*, but maybe the highlights were going to Wimbledon to see Tim Henman's last match and then watching Northampton Saints rugby team beat Doncaster.

For the last three or four months Jeff has opened his shop more – you're sure to find a bargain and a warm welcome Monday-Friday 9am to about 4.30pm, do feel free to pop in.

We get so much pleasure and support from the community, both around us in Amphill and further afield - now seems a fitting time to say a very big *thank you* to all our friends, volunteers and all the very kind people who do so much to make residents, staff and the service of Leonard Cheshire feel so supported. With such involvements and commitments all of us at Agate house find our lives to be enriched and so much more enjoyable and fun. We do greatly value all that everyone does for us and look forward to very many more happy times ahead.

Our sincere thanks to everyone and our very best wishes for a very *Happy Christmas & a Peaceful New Year*.

**Judith Hagger**  
Volunteer Coordinator/Fundraising

We have now reached the time of the year when our thoughts turn once again to the Festive Season and a New Year, so may we take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and good health and happiness in 2008.

Since our last report members enjoyed a trip to Cosmopolitan London where had a short stroll through areas of London successfully lived in by the Huguenots, Jews, Bengali and Bangladeshi communities. They then boarded the coach for a panoramic look at various communities from the Italians of Clerkenwell to the Welsh Dairy Farmers of the old Fleet pastures. The second short stroll was through Soho to London's China Town where many people enjoyed a Chinese lunch before boarding the coach again to visit the first traditional Hindu Mandir in Europe, described as the eighth wonder of the World by Reader's Digest. Several of our members also enjoyed a visit to Camden Market, followed by a further London trip for the Lord Mayor's Show which finished with a splendid firework display.

Before the end of the year several trips which are fully booked includes the Palace of Varieties, Thursford Christmas Spectacular, Christmas Chocolate Cruise, John Rutter's Christmas Celebration at the Albert Hall, Tutankhamun and the River Cruise. In between these dates we will enjoy a Turkey and Tinsel at Grange over Sands in Cumbria.

2008 starts with the traditional pantomime at Milton Keynes, Terracotta Army at the British Museum (fully booked), other forthcoming events include the Tower Bridge Exhibition, Beaconsfield & Bekonscot Model Village, Burghley House, a taste of Suffolk with a sausage and mash lunch at Jimmy's farm and our Annual 'Get Together'.

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](mailto:Enidpamment@aol.com)

On behalf of Shefford Leisure Group we would like to thank Linda, Steve and Ted for their time and dedication to the Meppershall Messenger over the past years. The Messenger is always, without exception a most interesting and informative source of information, beneficial to everyone in the village, and particularly helpful to new families who have chosen Meppershall as their new home. We would like to wish Dick, Chloe and Christine success in their new positions and a very big thank you for ensuring the continuation of this first class village publication.

**Enid Pamment  
Shefford Leisure Group**

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

Ellie Roberts who will be 9 on the 1<sup>st</sup>  
 Lee Britton who will be 5 on the 7<sup>th</sup>  
 Megan Myers who will be 4 on the 9<sup>th</sup>  
 Hugo Norris who will be 5 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Eliza Norris who will be 10 on the 15<sup>th</sup>  
 Adam Parrish who will be 12 on the 20<sup>th</sup>  
 Benjamin Jarvis who will be 7 on the 24<sup>th</sup>  
 Daniel Adams who will be 13 on the 27<sup>th</sup>  
 Bethany Daniel who will be 13 on the 31<sup>st</sup>  
 Nathan Fleetwood who will be 13 on the 31<sup>st</sup>



**...and those celebrating in January**

Louis Bradshaw who will be 8 on the 4<sup>th</sup>  
 Harry Rose who will be 5 on the 5<sup>th</sup>  
 Glen Fergus who will be 15 on the 9<sup>th</sup>  
 Ella Clark who will be 2 on the 9<sup>th</sup>  
 Olivia Mardell who will be 5 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Scott Bray who will be 12 on the 9<sup>th</sup>  
 Ewan Cooper who will be 10 on the 10<sup>th</sup>  
 Sam German who will be 4 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Georgia Rose who will be 9 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Rachel Holmes who will be 10 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Matthew Bull who will be 11 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Georgia Edwards who will be 11 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Ryan Bray who will be 11 on the 18<sup>th</sup>  
 Luke Britton who will be 10 on the 20<sup>th</sup>  
 James Frost who will be 11 on the 21<sup>st</sup>  
 Jonny Ward who will be 7 on the 25<sup>th</sup>  
 Joshua Savory who will be 12 on the 25<sup>th</sup>  
 Emily Frost who will be 7 on the 28<sup>th</sup>



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