



Arms of the de  
Meppershall Family

**THE**  
**MEPPERSHALL**  
**MESSENGER**



**VOLUME 25 – Issue 2**  
***MAY 2009***

Meppershall Village Website: [www.meppershall.org](http://www.meppershall.org)

## **THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER**

### **CONTRIBUTIONS**

The editor welcomes contributions to the Messenger, whether as letters, articles or notices. Contributions should preferably be as attachments to e-mail but hand written contributions may be sent by post, left at the Editor's address below or in the folder kept at the Village Stores. Contributions should run to not more than one A5 page (except by prior arrangement) and should be received by the Editor not later than the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month for publication at the end of that month. Contributions received after the deadline may be held over.

### **DISCLAIMER**

The Editor reserves the right to omit or alter any ad or article and to change the content, format or issue date of the magazine without prior notice. The Editor cannot be held responsible for the factual correctness of, or for any libellous comment or statement made in any advert, article or other contribution published in this magazine. Every effort will be made to avoid any deliberate attempt to mislead or otherwise cause harm or damage to any person or persons by any advert, article or any other contribution published in this magazine.

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## **EDITORIAL**

First of all, profound apologies for our gaff in putting the wrong month on our smart new front cover. The truth is that all the production team were concentrating so hard on the new technology for the adverts that we completely overlooked what was under our noses! Our “cover story”(!) is that it was our April Fool joke, and congratulations to Mrs Kiteley who won a small prize for phoning to tell me about it.

Very sadly I now have to be serious and, for those that do not already know, report the untimely death of Moira Coomes, the much-loved Head Teacher of our village school. Moira had responded enthusiastically to my invitation to write a School Report for each issue of the Messenger and understood very well the importance of the school in the village life. I have made over this month’s “School Report” to her memory and have suspended the cover photo competition, for one month only, so as to carry a recent picture of the school by Paul Derrick (thank you Paul).

By way of clarification to my thanks to the late Mid Beds Council expressed in the last issue, P4 of this issue carries a copy of their letter granting us £2,450 which was used towards the cost of our new printer.

Also this month we have a very interesting one-off piece by Mick Trundle on page 23. Thanks to Mick for this, and a welcome to anyone else who has an interesting topic to write about. I would also like to see some deliberate humour (as distinct from our editorial *faux pas*!) in the magazine; any jokes or cartoons (suitable for a family magazine!) would be welcome. So would contributions to Freecycle, which has died the death again this month.

And finally, would all those responsible for organising events in the Village please remember our Calendar of Forthcoming Events. I have recently become aware of several events that were publicised in the Stores or the Village Hall but not in the Messenger. That seems a big missed opportunity, and a mention in the Messenger is totally free; just drop me an email or put a note through my door or in the folder at the Stores.

Dick Bulley



## LETTERS

### Message of Thanks

Jill's family wish to thank all those (including the dedicated Shefford District Nursing Team) who supported her in any way during her long illness.

We were all (including Jill) touched, immensely grateful and indeed astonished by the love and thoughtfulness of so many over a very difficult and distressing time. Jill appreciated all the flowers and cards and they filled her room with colour.

Thank you too for the many messages and words of comfort sent to us afterwards. We are very grateful.

Anne, Philip and Susan.

### OUR COVER COMPETITION

Although the competition was suspended for this month to make use of Paul Derrick's professional photo of the school, we are still looking for a cover for June and the months after that. Last month's cover prompted some more entries, but we need still more.

Now that we have some sunshine, get out there and take some pictures. They do not have to be views or places; pictures of people (with their permission!) or objects could be just as interesting: the only requirement is that they must be recognisably connected with Meppershall. They should also be "landscape" oriented, ie wider than they are tall, so that they will fit on the cover!



**Roy Waterfield**  
**Director of Community**  
**Services**

Mr J Thompson  
 Treasurer  
 The Meppershall Messenger  
 16 Brookmead  
 Meppershall  
 Beds  
 SG17 5NY

Dear Mr Thompson

**Grant Aid Award - The Meppershall Messenger**

Thank you for your recent letter and for your claim against the above grant aid award. As a result of this claim I can confirm that a payment of £2,450 will be transferred shortly, by BACS, to the nominated bank account.

As you have noted in your letter, you are required to acknowledge the support of this Authority, in connection with this project, wherever appropriate and I would appreciate a copy of the relevant edition of the Messenger that features this acknowledgment please.

I also look forward to receiving your report re the success of the project in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Barrow'.

**Sue Barrow**  
**PA to Director of Community Services & Grants Officer**

Priory House  
 Monks Walk  
 Chicksands  
 Shefford  
 Beds  
 SG17 5TQ

Please ask for: Sue Barrow  
 Direct line: 1462 611243  
 E-mail: [susan.barrow@midbeds.gov.uk](mailto:susan.barrow@midbeds.gov.uk)  
 Fax no: 08458495193  
 Web-site: [www.midbeds.gov.uk](http://www.midbeds.gov.uk)  
 Your reference:  
 Our reference: GA2851File 607 16  
 Date: 16 January 2009

## SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

At the end of March Shefford Leisure Group held their 'Get Together' which was well attended by all those who enjoyed a great evening and good company enhanced with an excellent buffet and entertainment given by 'The Barber Shop Boys'. Our cheque this year for Keech Cottage Children's Hospice came to the grand total of £1,100.00. This cheque was presented to a representative from Keech Cottage. The tombola raised £85.00 – a good start towards next year's cheque for Keech.

Three of our day trips – Pensthorpe, Creeks, Cockles and Cockneys, Stoke Brune, are fully booked, and we are holding a reserve list only. The dates allocated to us for Thursford Christmas Spectacular, are Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November.

Listed are a few of the day trips currently available:

London Museums Sunday

31<sup>st</sup> May

Bressingham Steam collection and gardens

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August

Runnymede and Windsor Castle

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August

Milton Keynes Theatre (using the Letchworth Lions Minibus)

Westside Story (Matinee Performance) Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July

Magic of the Dance (Matinee Performance) Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August

Our holiday booked for Paignton & Torbay will take place from June 20<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> when we visit the 'hotel on the beach' Preston Sands Hotel. During this time there will be two full

and one half day excursions. The local amenities are all within easy walking distance. Places are still available.

Street, Nr Glastonbury, staying at The Wessex Hotel will be our venue for Tinsel & Turkey this year. We are planning excursions to Wells and The Cheddar Gorge. Clarks Village Outlet Centre is within walking distance of the hotel. The dates for this holiday are Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December. Places are still available.

For all holidays, which include Hotel accommodation, Shefford Leisure Group acts as an agent for the tour operator, their terms and conditions apply.

*Shefford Leisure Group is open to everyone in the local community who feels they would like to join us on our ventures. We are always happy to meet new friends. Raffles are held and the proceeds are for Keech Cottage Children's Hospice. For further information regarding dates, prices and availability or to receive our monthly newsletter, please contact Enid on 01462 851397 or e-mail [Enidpamment@aol.com](mailto:Enidpamment@aol.com).*

## **GRAND UNVEILING!**

### **A DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES**

**Wed 27<sup>th</sup> May at 5 pm in the Village Hall**

**The new cabinet, housing past and future issues of  
The Messenger, will be unveiled by  
Mrs Dorothy Morris,  
founding Editor of the Messenger  
and ex-County Councillor Robin Younger,  
followed by refreshments.**

## Meppershall Parish Council Report

The March meeting of the Parish Council took place on Wednesday 1st April at Meppershall Lower School.

The Council were pleased to welcome David Rolfe, Senior Pilot of the Police helicopter based at RAF Henlow, who gave an excellent presentation describing the operation of the aircraft and outlining the role in policing our area as well as addressing the measures taken where possible to minimise the impact on the neighbourhood.

### **Highways and Lighting**

The Council were pleased to hear that the proposed scheme to form a footpath from the village to Shefford has not been abandoned by Bedfordshire Highways but unfortunately will not be started as soon as was originally indicated. With support being received from Shefford Town Mayor and a number of other Councillors, the Council will continue to promote the issue.

### **Environment and Leisure**

Regrettably the quotations for the grass cutting contract were delayed due to problems with the detailed mapping of the areas for maintenance and it was resolved to continue with the present contractor in view of the imminent start to the growing season. The contract will be open for retendering for next season.

The area of Fosters Field affected by the Village bonfire has at last been cleared satisfactorily and will be reseeded. The annual inspection of the play equipment will take place shortly. The proposal to provide low level solar powered lighting to the teenage area has been resubmitted to the planning authority.

## **Planning and Housing**

Only one application had been received and to which the Council found no objection. No response had yet been received to the Council comments on the Draft Submission of the Mid Beds Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Management Policy. Again any other parishioners are encouraged to respond to this opportunity to influence the future of the village.

## **From the District and County Councillors**

Councillor Rogers was present at the meeting and reported that following the demise of the County and Mid Beds Councils on the previous day, the Shadow Authority had begun work. Elections for the new Central Bedfordshire will take place in early June

## **Other Matters**

The Chairman reported that the refurbishment of the Churchyard gates which is being supported by the Council is underway and should be completed by Easter.

The work to install CCTV at the Village Hall to improve security using monies from the County Council Confident Communities Fund should be undertaken shortly. Notification had been received concerning changes to the timing of the visits of the Mobile Library and from the Project manager of the Bedfordshire East Schools Trust indicating that the Trust should come into operation on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

John Parsons,  
Chairman, Meppershall Parish Council

*The next Parish Council meetings will be held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May,  
the meeting at which the Council Officers and Spokespersons are*

*elected, and Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June at 7.45 pm at Meppershall Lower School.*

## THE MESSENGER'S 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Our plans are beginning to take shape.

I already have a splendid enlargement of the picture taken in 1985 to record the award of our “brick”, and this will be on show at the Grand Unveiling of the new cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> May. I have also been promised other photos of the Village as it was in the ‘80s and ‘90s. We plan to exhibit these on our stall at the Village Fete, as well as reproducing as many as possible in the special Souvenir issue of the Messenger.

We still need a copy of the first issue of the Messenger to complete the set in our new cabinet.

### Messenger Collating Dates 2009

Month	Day	Comment	Month	Day	Comment
April	27		Sept	28	
May	None	Bank Holiday	Oct	26	
June & June	1 29		Nov	30	
July/Aug	27	Double Issue	Dec/Jan	None	Double issue
August	None		Jan	25	2010

## Meppershall Bakery Bees *by Roger*

Where does the time go? Here we are, one third of the way through the year already. However, in beekeeping terms, we are just at the beginning of the season.

April's first inspection went well. All colonies were healthy. (Varoa only slight)

May is a month of growth. Everywhere plants are bursting into flower and, in the hive, the queen reaches her peak-laying rate producing up to 2000 eggs per day for a week or two. This means that combs in the brood chamber will be bursting with eggs, larvae and pupae. In short, May is a very busy month for the beekeeper.

Then, to add to the burden, there is oilseed rape. The trouble with oilseed rape honey is that all the honey is a super-saturated solution of sugar in water, which means that at cooler temperature the sugar tends to come out of solution and the honey crystallizes (granulates). The bad news is that this honey contains a high proportion of sugar glucose that results in a tendency to crystallize very rapidly. So how do you decide when to extract the oilseed rape honey? The old rule of thumb used to be, extract once the flowers have mainly faded and the field is returning to green. But the good news is, Beekeepers perceive oilseed rape to be a problem but it is really marvellous stuff. First of all, provided the weather co-operates, it can produce a bumper crop. The honey is mild-flavoured and pale with very fine crystals. When granulated, most customers love it.

May will be the time the bees start to swarm but with our weekly inspection we will try to keep on top of this. One hive has some queen cells, so I had to proceed to swarm control. As soon as you find queen cells, you should adopt your chosen method to manage the swarm so we don't lose half of our bees over the horizon and probably most of our honey crop for the year. There are many different procedures you can use. Probably the most widely used method is known as the artificial swarm. This method will maintain the maximum foraging force, with the queen egg-laying without interruption, which minimizes the loss of honey production. In short this means thinning-out the bees from one hive to

another so the bees think they have swarmed. Two stings in two days, so far!

## School Report

### Meppershall VA Lower School 'An Outstanding Church of England School'



MOIRA COOMES 1952 - 2009

#### **A tribute from Vincent Holmes - Chair of Governors**

As many of you will know by now, Meppershall school experienced a great loss at the end of last term. Mrs Moira Coomes died suddenly and unexpectedly on 1<sup>st</sup> April leaving the whole school community shocked and saddened.

She started at the school in September 2006, shortly after I became a Governor, and it was clear from the start that she was a wonderful school leader. Her enthusiasm for the job and her commitment to the school meant that this good school was going to get even better. Right from the beginning there were small changes made around the school, showing that she had plans and ideas of what she wanted to do.

One of the strongest of her qualities, of which there were many, was her ability to carry you along with her through a period of change. She was inspirational and had a clear vision about where she wanted to take the school, and how she was going to get there. But far from forcing people to change or to adopt new ideas, she was able to do it calmly, quietly and with conviction so that you genuinely wanted to go with her and be a part in the overall process of change.

On becoming Chair of the Governing Body last September I had the opportunity to work more closely with Moira and it became clear that the way she was with all the children and parents, and all the visitors to the school, was the way she really was all of the time. Whenever we met she was always cheerful and positive, even when we had the most difficult tasks to address. She never let anything get her down, and she was always positive about everything. Her professionalism and dedication to the education of the children within the school is beyond question.

These days, it's a hard task being a Head Teacher - constant pressures of performance targets, league tables, Ofsted and balancing the budget all weigh heavily on the shoulders of any person in the post. It was immensely satisfying, therefore, that the school was graded as "good with several outstanding features" last June by Ofsted and as "an outstanding Church of England school" in the SIAS Report in September. I know that she said these results were all a team effort, but that team has to be lead well in order to achieve such results and she carried out that role extremely well.

Next term will be difficult and strange within the school. It will continue to be a very successful and happy school, but there will be changes as we all get used to not having Mrs Coomes around. A major project of hers (the new outdoor play equipment) should be completed at the start of the term and I know the children will get a great deal of pleasure and fun from it. The Governing Body will work hard to support all the teaching staff, who will continue to do the great jobs they do every day. In the longer term we will seek to appoint another, equally good and inspirational Head Teacher to continue and enhance the work that Moira produced over the last three years.

Vincent Holmes

#### **From Margaret Evesham**

I was Chair of Governors when we appointed Moira to the Headship and worked with her for almost 3 years. Such was her commitment to the school that even *before* her appointment she began working with us by attending meetings to help plan the new extension to the school. Moira was an inspired and enthusiastic Headteacher. She had a clear vision for

the school, always looking for ways to make improvements for the benefit of the children. She left me in no doubt that she enjoyed working with us and that she had a healthy work-life balance. Moira had a strong sense of humour, always ready to laugh, even at herself. It was fun and exciting working with her and I shall miss her as a friend as well as a respected colleague.

Margaret Evesham

**From the Rev. John Harper**

*My enduring impression of Moira will be of a gifted Head teacher who knew clearly what was needed for the good of her school, and who had the grace and wisdom to inspire others to catch the same vision. Her fondness for children was reflected in her natural rapport with them in the classroom, and her engaging personality endeared her to children and adults alike. She has encouraged in so many ways the Christian ethos of the school, and her own faith and values permeated so much of the activities and relationships of each school day. She will be greatly missed, and in the relatively short time she has served the school she has achieved so much that will be of lasting significance in the lives of her pupils and in the interests of the school's welfare as a whole.*

John Harper

Moira did not live locally and many of you will not even have known of her, but those connected with the school will know what a huge difference she had made to the school in the two and a half years that she was with us. Under my other hat as Clerk to the school governors I can say that it was her immense enthusiasm and drive that, in association with the school governors, enabled so much to be achieved: the building of a new infants' classroom, new library and the creation of a new staffroom; the purchase of lots of computer equipment and electronic teaching aids that are being employed in a new school website and "learning platform", and most recently, a major renewal and upgrade of the outdoor play and learning facilities of the school. It is a terrible tragedy that she did not live to see this equipment installed.

Dick Bulley

### **A Farming Diary from Polehanger Farm. Episode 3.**

I saw ‘our’ first swallow yesterday, 14<sup>th</sup> April. Along with hearing the cuckoo this really is a sign that spring is well and truly here. Hedges and trees agree with multiple shades of green. Only the ash has yet to break bud at Polehanger. My father always quotes the old saying that if the oak breaks leaf before the ash we’ll only get a splash (of rain this summer) but if the ash comes before the oak then we’ll get a soak. Time will tell how accurate this folklore ‘forecast’ is !

In our fields we are really seeing the cost of last year’s late harvest. The oilseed rape crop either side of the road down to Shefford is looking forlorn, a bit like a moth eaten old carpet. It is behind in growth stage and showing much bare ground, in spite of the hard work that Mark Brinkley has put in over the winter trying to keep the pigeons away. Fertiliser, mainly nitrogen, is being applied in order to provide the nutrient requirements of the crop as it grows. It was touch and go as to whether the crop was worth persisting with into the late spring and summer. It will not be a great crop but it will be a crop . . . just.

The spring wheat is now up and showing green in Crackle Hill and Hungry Hill if you walk up the track behind the Village Hall. Soil conditions were not ideal and it took longer than we would have liked for the seedbed to dry out enough to drill the seed. It’s many years since we grew this particular crop so it will be interesting to compare gross margins (crop income less cost of seed, spray and fertilizer) against winter wheat.

All around the farm our hedges look wonderful. It is true that there was a net loss of hedges during the 1950’s and 1960’s as farmers rationalized field size to accommodate larger machinery. Government grants encouraged this process. In the last twenty years however we have not pulled up any trees or hedges but have planted

approximately 16 hectares (40 acres) of wood and spinney and 2500 metres of hedge. These are beginning to mature and show themselves off well. This may sound a bit self congratulatory but we are keen to dispel some of the common misconceptions about farmers' actions and attitudes.

If we still milked cows they would now be looking longingly over the barn gates in anticipation of being let out to graze after the long winter inside. All of us could (and still do) heave a sigh of relief as the longer days and the stronger sun lifts the spirits and the temperature.

Chris Foster 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009

P. S. Those of you who walk down the road to Shefford (and many of those who don't) will know that the proposed footpath is on hold as the new Central Bedfordshire Council takes over from the old County Council. To cover the period until that path is built (not too long we hope!) we are making a permissive path inside the hedge on the east side of the road (left hand side as you go up the hill). It will be mown grass but you are welcome to use it to avoid the road, if conditions under foot allow.

Meppershall Lower School Association are having a "James Bond & Casino Night" on the evening of Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June at the village hall keep your eyes open, more details will follow in the next edition.

## Computer Tips: More about Windows

### The Taskbar

At the bottom of your screen is the narrow strip called the Taskbar. It has several uses but has to be told how to behave. Firstly, right click on it and look at the options shown. If “Lock the Taskbar” is ticked, untick it with a left click. Whilst you are here, go to “Toolbars” and ensure that “Quick Launch” is ticked by left clicking on it. This releases the section to the left of the Taskbar upon which you can place programme start icons that only require one click to activate and can be seen all the time. To copy a new icon here from the Desktop, left click, hold down and drag the icon onto the “Quick Launch” area and position it so that the “No Entry” sign disappears and then drop it (unclick) in the position you prefer. It will now show as a small copy of the one on the “Desktop”. You will notice a small double arrow next to a dimpled divider, left click on this arrow to reveal other icons. You can adjust the number of icons in view by left click / hold down on the dimpled area and sliding it to the right to reveal them. Icons you do not use can be removed – right click and left click on “Delete” say “Yes” at the prompt. The most useful icon on the “Quick Launch” bar is the “Show Desktop” which will bring up the “Desktop” over all other windows you may have open.

If you have call to look at one programme to get information for another, load up just those two programmes and right click on the “Taskbar” / left click on either “Tile Windows Horizontally” or “Tile Windows Vertically” and this will split them on your screen . You can then click in each one and manipulate the programme as normal. On a big monitor you can do this with more than two programmes. You can of course copy and paste between them. To return to normal right click the “Taskbar” and left click on “Undo Tile”.

Tip of the month: If in trouble, turn the darned thing off and reboot, it usually does the trick! Please don't kick it or throw it in the nearest skip.

John Chapman – [www.ceekay.co.uk](http://www.ceekay.co.uk)

## Calendar of Forthcoming Events

### **May 2009**

<b><u>Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May</u></b>		
<i>Parish Council Meeting</i>	<i>7.45 PM</i>	<i>The School</i>
<b><u>Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May</u></b>		
<i>Grand Unveiling of Messenger Cabinet</i>	<i>5.00 PM</i>	<i>Village hall</i>

### **June 2009**

<b><u>Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June</u></b>		
<i>Parish Council Meeting</i>	<i>7.45 PM</i>	<i>The School</i>
<b><u>Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June</u></b>		
<i>James Bond &amp; Casino Night</i>		<i>Village Hall</i>
<b><u>Fri &amp; Sat 26<sup>th</sup> &amp; 27<sup>th</sup> June</u></b>		
<i>Has Meppershall got Talent?</i>	<i>7.45 PM</i>	<i>Village hall</i>

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**Do you have a party to organise and no venue?  
Do you have a wedding to organise and no venue?  
Do you have any event to organise and no venue?**

Have you thought about hiring

### ***Meppershall Village Hall***

**The Hall is available and can cater for all events, large or small.**

**There are tables, chairs, lighting, kitchen, licensed bar and all facilities needed for your event to run smoothly.**

**Our very reasonable rates vary with the time of day and day of the week eg:**

<b>Children's party (afternoon) -</b>	<b>£36</b>
<b>Saturday Evening -</b>	<b>£140</b>
<b>Wedding (all day) -</b>	<b>£220</b>

**If this sounds like what you need, please contact our Bookings Secretary  
Karen Lucas on 01462 811581**

**You can also visit our website for full information on  
[www.meppershallvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.meppershallvillagehall.co.uk)**

*Remember, it's your village. It's your Village Hall!*

### A SPOT OF RESEARCH

My wife Penny and I are members of Caddington History Group based in the village where we used to live. In the Autumn of 2006 we enjoyed a talk on the Women's Land Army (WLA) in Bedfordshire during WW2 given by Bedford historian, Stuart Antrobus. During his talk Stuart mentioned that he was writing a book\* on the subject and he was seeking volunteers to help him in his research. I and fellow Caddhist member David Moore put our names forward and for about six months of 2007 we journeyed once a week to the Imperial War Museum, Duxford where the WLA archive is located.

Our task was to trawl through the thousands of cards that contained the personal details of young women — pick out and photo-copy those who had either joined from Bedfordshire, or had come here to work on farms, orchards or Market Gardens. These cards listed address, date-of-birth, date of joining, previous occupation and date and reason for leaving, Most girls worked out their contract. Some left to get married, some got pregnant and some were fired for thieving or misconduct. Others couldn't handle the extreme physical nature of the work and were discharged as medically unfit. One card I came across bore the sad statement that the girl 'died as a result of a farming accident'. Proof that farms were (and still are) dangerous places to work.

The 'previous occupations' were most interesting:- as well as clerks, typists, shopgirls, hairdressers, 'clippies' and cinema usherettes I found a mannequin with an address in Mayfair (she lasted a week). Dave came up with a Clog Sole Polisher. (My Lancastrian-bom father wore clogs to school, and always maintained that they were more comfortable than they looked). I came across a Skiver, which is not what you think it is but a highly skilled operator in the tanning industry, and we both found several strippers, which we assumed were not the sort that got their kit off. There were many and varied reasons why these girls joined the WLA but the fact that many thousands did is something that we who lived through those times should never forget, for without them food production in this country would have been in an extremely parlous state.

Mick Trundle

\* 'We Wouldn't Have Missed It for The World.' by Stuart Antrobus. Published by The Book Castle, obtainable from them, Amazon or W H Smith online.



# The Meppershall Players

## Has Meppershall got Talent?

Come and join us for an informal evening of Comedy & Entertainment on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June, 7.30 at the Village Hall. Curtain up 7.45pm. No costumes or props necessary but provide your own if it helps your performance! Bring your party piece to the Village Hall on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30, for a run through.

## Pantomime 2009

This will be Little Red Riding Hood, celebrating its 1<sup>st</sup> performance by the Meppershall Players 25 years ago! **Read through:** Wed 1<sup>st</sup> July, 7.30 for 7.45 start at the Village Hall. **Auditions:** Thursday, (nb not Wednesday) 9<sup>th</sup> July, 7.45.

New members, adults and juniors (minimum age is 9 yrs.), are needed for this special production, as well as offers of help with set construction and painting, wardrobe, lighting & sound and Front of House.

The Players meet every 1st, 3rd and 4th Wednesday of each month and every 2nd Thursday at 7:30 pm at the village hall. Our current annual membership fee is juniors £2.00, seniors £5.00, family membership (minimum 1 adult) £8.00. We welcome anyone from age 9 to 90 plus years to participate in any of the following activities: acting, set building, painting, costumes, directing, sound & lighting, back stage and front of house. If any of the aforementioned appeals to you, we look forward to meeting you or call:

Chairman John Stinson 07957 104366

Graham Scrase 01462-813996

Colette House 01462-815585

Aly Borthwick



### What is the Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group?

The Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group is a friendly group run by a committee of volunteers. We meet in the village hall on Tuesday afternoons from 1:45 to 3:15pm (term time only). We welcome new members (mothers, fathers, grandparents, childminders, nannies, au pairs - anyone looking after babies and children under the age of five).

We are holding a *Free Fun Play* with The Orchard Children's Centre on Tuesday, 12th May from 1:45 - 3:15pm in the village hall. Anyone caring for a child under 5 years of age is welcome to come along to find out more about the Baby and Toddler Group and the services offered by The Children's Centre. Come and enjoy a play, chat, craft activity and refreshments.

Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group meets every Tuesday during term time in the village hall from 1:45 to 3:15pm. New members are always welcome.

Come along and join us - the first session is free!

For more information contact:

Sam - 07590290078 (Chair)

Catherine - 812134 (Secretary)

Jo - 813146 (Treasurer)





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**Extracts from the April Newsletter from the Shefford Safer Neighbourhoods Team: PC Steve Busby; PCSO Gill Richardson & PCSO Rachel Keen**

To contact the Team: Tel: 01234 842567 or  
email: [SNT.Shefford@Bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:SNT.Shefford@Bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk)

Priority Targets

What we are doing /have done to achieve results against our priorities:

**Parking:** Each individual report of inappropriate parking is responded to with the appropriate action considered at the time. Warning notices are issued and Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued where applicable.

We would like to remind people of the legislation around vehicles causing unnecessary obstruction. The law states that vehicles must not be within 10 metres of a junction and/or parked causing an unnecessary or dangerous obstruction. In certain circumstances where the obstruction is dangerous Police **will** have the vehicle recovered. If the owner/driver cannot be easily located, the owner/driver of the vehicle will incur the cost of such recovery.

**Speeding:** Speeding has been identified as a high priority in the SNT. Working in partnership with agencies like the Casualty Reduction Partnership and Roads Policing department we are implementing measures to tackle the issue. A new piece of equipment called SID (Speed Indication Device) has been deployed at various locations across the area to make drivers aware of their speeds. PC Busby is also

trained to use the Speedar, which is the hand held speed gun, and will be deploying it where possible.

**ASB/ Criminal Damage:** Several complaints have been received from residents in the Shillington area regarding youths being generally antisocial and causing a nuisance. This is not acceptable or tolerated by the Safer Neighbourhood Team. Warning letters have been sent out to parents/guardians of those responsible in order to try and reduce these issues. If you or someone you know has been subjected to these issues, please contact the SNT.

### **Police Surgeries - Mobile Police Station**

We will run this Surgery on a monthly basis and if it is well supported we will continue to run it for as long as possible. The Mobile Police Station will be held on the following days: Last Thursday of every month, starting Thursday 30 April at the Village Hall **Meppershall** from 11 AM to 12 noon. If you have any issues that you would like to discuss or you would just like to pop by and meet your local Safer Neighbourhood Team please drop in. Please note that while we will make every effort to run these surgeries there may be occasions when, due to operational needs, we may have to cancel a surgery.

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

<b>First Mass of Sunday</b>		
<b>Saturday Evening</b>	6pm	RAF Henlow
	9am	Shefford
	5.15pm	Shefford
<b>Weekday Services</b>	See notice at Church or telephone	
<b>Parish Priest:</b>	Parish Secretary:	
<b>Fr. Bennie Noonan 813436</b>	Rose Boulton 811547	

**THE MEPPERSHALL GARDEN CLUB**



A Celebration of  
Spring

In March, the newly formed Meppershall Garden Club enjoyed the first of many planned events when Kim gave a floral demonstration entitled 'A Celebration of Spring'.

The meeting started with a fun quiz on plant names and was followed by a demonstration of a Flower Arrangement Celebrating Spring and a Mothers Day Posy. Two lucky group members won the designs just in time for Mothering Sunday!

The meeting concluded with members being captured in a practical session learning how to make a decorative bow!

By the time you read this article, the April gathering will have taken place at Colette and Marcia's allotments in Meppershall. If you would like to join us for the meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 10.30am then please give one of us a call on:

***ST MARY THE VIRGIN  
MEPPERSHALL PARISH CHURCH  
(CHURCH OF ENGLAND)***  
***Church Rd, off Campton Rd***

Rector: (Meppershall & Shefford) Rev John Harper, Rectory, Church Rd,  
Meppershall. [revjohnharper@talktalk.net](mailto:revjohnharper@talktalk.net) 01462 813334  
(usual day off: Monday)  
Curate: Rev Patsy Critchley; 01234 381510  
(Patsy's usual ministry days are Weds, Fri & Sun)  
Lay Reader: Pam Halliwell 01462 817069 (usual day off: Friday)  
Churchwardens: Brian Bellamy 01462 815944 (Pastoral Assistant); Brenda  
Wright 01462 816446

**Services for May**

<b>Sun 3</b>	11.15 a.m. Parish Communion & JC in Rectory
<b>Sun 10</b>	8.30 a.m. Holy Communion
	11.15 a.m. Family Service
<b>Sun 17</b>	8.30 a.m. Holy Communion
	6.00 p.m. Evensong
<b>Thur 21</b>	<b>Ascension Day</b>
	7.00 p.m. Holy Communion
<b>Sun 24</b>	8.30 a.m. Holy Communion
	11.15 a.m. Family Communion & JC
<b>Sun 31</b>	<b>Whitsunday (Pentecost)</b>
	8.30 a.m. Holy Communion
	9.45 a.m. United Benefice service at St Michael's with breakfast from 9 a.m.

**Weekday Services:**

Wednesdays : 10 a.m. Holy Communion (B.C.P.)  
Fridays : 7.30p.m. Compline (Evening Prayer)  
Saturdays 9.30a.m. Morning Prayer

## Also this month

**Saturday May 9** A day of activities and celebration for children, families and leaders at St Albans Abbey. Bring your own lunch. Adults go FREE.

The day is aimed at children of all ages coming as church groups, school groups and families.

Please contact: Sandra Harper [revjohnharper@talktalk.net](mailto:revjohnharper@talktalk.net)  
01462

**Saturday May 16.** Parish outing to St John's College Cambridge – St Mary's patron. Tea, conducted tour, and Chapel Choral service.

contact Pam Halliwell - 817069  
and

**at St Michael and All Angels Shefford  
(St Mary's sister Church)**

**Sunday May 10** - 6p.m. United Christian Aid service, to mark the beginning of **Christian Aid Week**.

### **Alpha**

Meppershall's first 'Alpha' Christian nurture course came to a successful conclusion last month, with over 30 people participating throughout the 9 sessions, and a follow up social. Thanks to all who made this possible, particularly to the valiant cooks who provided substantial hot suppers for appreciative guests each week. A number of members were helped to make progress in their faith journeys, and plans are now afoot to provide further opportunities for faith to be explored and developed. The Shefford churches are preparing to hold an Alpha course in the town in the Autumn, and it is hoped that we will be able to host a second course in Meppershall in the new year. If you wish to find out what

the course entails or would like to have details of a forthcoming course please let me know – John Harper – 01462 813334

### **St Mary's gates**

The churchyard gates and the Church's external light fitments were beautifully restored in time for Easter, thanks to a generous grant from the Parish Council. Thanks also to those who joined the Churchyard working party, and indeed to all who continue to ensure that the Churchyard is kept in its first rate condition. At present we could well do with a new volunteer mower to take charge of one section - offers please to Peter Longland – 814053. We will shortly have a new shed to house the mowers, which in turn will enable us to improve the WC facilities in the boiler house.

### **Some thoughts from our Curate.....**

As I write this, Easter is fast approaching and by the time you read it we shall be looking forward to Pentecost which is celebrated 50 days after Easter. Pentecost is celebrated as the 7th Sunday after Easter and is traditionally known in England as Whitsunday.

The day of Pentecost was originally observed by the Jews as The Feast of Weeks. It was one of the major pilgrimage festivals when people made their way to Jerusalem. While Jesus' apostles were attending this festival and so were all gathered together, the Holy Spirit was bestowed upon them. The immediate result of this was that they could speak in a manner that could be understood by anyone regardless of their native

Until the introduction of the late spring bank holiday at the end of May, Whit Monday, the day after Whitsunday, was always a bank holiday in England, and school half terms always coincided with it. The term Whit comes from White. Originally White Sunday was a day for Baptism and the name probably derives from the white robes worn by the newly baptised. Unfortunately Pentecost / Whitsunday now passes largely unnoticed by non churchgoers as it only rarely coincides with the Spring Bank Holiday.

We should be delighted to see you at this major Christian festival; why not join us? The main service of the day on this occasion will be at our sister church of St Michael's Shefford at 9:45am.

Patsy Critchley

**RECIPE CORNER**

**MAY 2009**

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**RHUBARB FOOL BRULEE**

**Ingredients**

450g/1lb rhubarb, trimmed and cut into 3cm/1in pieces  
 50g/2oz caster sugar  
 250g tub of mascarpone  
 300g tub of crème fraîche (full or half-fat)  
 3 tbs Grand Marnier or other orange liqueur (Instead of liqueur, you can use lemon juice.)  
 Grated zest of half an orange  
 125g Amaretti biscuits  
 3-4 tbs demerara sugar

**Method**

- 1) Put the rhubarb, with just the moisture remaining on it (add no water) in a pan with the caster sugar and cook on a gentle heat covered for 8-10 minutes until tender: shake the pan occasionally to prevent sticking. Cool.
- 2) Break the biscuits but don't crush. Mix the mascarpone, crème fraîche, orange liqueur, and zest together until smooth and thick.
- 3) In a 1.3 litre / 2 ¼ pint capacity serving dish (an ovenproof soufflé dish is ideal if intending to grill in step 4, otherwise use glass), layer half the rhubarb, then biscuits, then cream, then repeat. Refrigerate.
- 4) Two hours before serving sprinkle the sugar on the top layer of cream. Either chill as is, in which case the topping will go melted and fudgy, or caramelize under the hottest grill possible, then chill until serving.

Recipes are kindly supplied each month by Brenda Putwain

## **GARDEN TIPS FOR MAY**

(With acknowledgements to the RHS)

- Take action to protect plants if night frosts are forecast
- Water plants that need it regularly.
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs that have finished flowering.
- Take softwood cuttings of shrubs.
- Lightly trim box and other formal hedging.
- Prune *Clematis montana* after flowering.
- Take cuttings from herbaceous perennials.
- Cut back and divide spring-flowering perennials.
- Plant out dahlias at the end of the month.
- Protect young plants from slugs.
- Clear out spring bedding and begin hardening off summer bedding plants.
- Thin out annuals and vegetables sown outdoors earlier.
- Feed fish regularly and give a special aquatic fertiliser to water plants.
- Feed and weed lawns to encourage growth as well as mowing regularly.
- Sow and plant out tender vegetables at the end of the month.
- Protect crops from carrot fly.
- Continue successional sowing vegetables.
- Remove all frost protection from fruit trees and start pruning trained plums and cherries.
- Move tender plants in pots outside for summer
- Ventilate greenhouses and conservatories and think about permanent shading for summer

### **LAST CHANCE**

- Sow or turf new lawns before it gets too dry.
- Finish planting evergreen shrubs.

### **GET AHEAD**

- Sow biennials for next year's spring bedding plants.
- Inspect plants regularly for signs of pests and diseases, and nip potential problems in the bud.

Bus Timetables – (Weekdays only given here)

In developing the Meppershall Village Plan it was clear that there was a lack of knowledge about the busses serving Meppershall.

The following information has been taken from the web and has been abbreviated to show the main stops, including Mennershall

Full information can be obtained from the bus companies or their websites.  
[www.mtbperth.com.au](http://www.mtbperth.com.au)

<b>Route 79 to Shefford – Meppershall – Barton - Luton</b>					
Shefford, High Street,					
Meppershall, Sugar Loaf					
Meppershall, Rectory Road					
Meppershall, opp Sugar Loaf					
Shefford, High Street,					
Barton, Windsor Parade					
Luton, Silver St					
Luton, Galaxy Centre					

<b>Route 79 to Luton – Barton – Meppershall - Shefford</b>					
Luton, Galaxy Centre,	0850	1040	1230	1440	1630
Barton, Windsor Parade	0912	1102	1252	1502	1656
<b>Shefford, High Street,</b>			1320	1530	1740p
Meppershall Loaf, Sugar	0712				1840
Meppershall, Rectory Road	0728	0928	1118	1328	1745
Meppershall opp, Sugar Loaf	0730	0930	1120	1540	1845
<b>Shefford, High Street,</b>	0735	0935	1125	1335	1847
					1330

Route 89 to Henlow Camp – Meppershall - Hitchin		N	Sch	N	Sch
<b>Shefford, High Street</b>		07.45	07.45	10:15	13:31
<b>Meppershall, Sugar Loaf</b>					
<b>Henlow Camp</b>		08:20	08:25		
<b>Hitchin, Bancroft</b>		08.23	08.35		
<b>Hitchin Station</b>					
<b>Hitchin, Bancroft</b>					
<b>Hitchin, Grove Road Rd</b>					
<b>Hitchin, Wilbury Way</b>		08:30	08:42		
Train departs to London					
Sch = School Days. NSch = non-school days.		B = via	Girls	School	
Route 89 to Hitchin – Meppershall - Henlow Camp		Sch	N	Sch	
Train arrives from London					
<b>Hitchin, Wilbury Way</b>					
<b>Hitchin Station</b>		15.54B	15:57	17:05	
<b>Hitchin, Bancroft,</b>		12:35	16:00	17:12	
<b>Henlow Camp,</b>					
<b>Meppershall, Sugar Loaf,</b>		16:41	16:41	17:15	
<b>Shefford, High Street</b>		13.12	13.17	17:56	

**A very happy birthday to those of you  
celebrating birthdays in May**

Summer Bridger who will be 3 on the 1<sup>st</sup>  
Grace Finedon who will be 1 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Joseph Daniel who will be 11 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Annabelle Fox who will be 12 on the 4<sup>th</sup>  
Laura Stock who will be 8 on the 4<sup>th</sup>  
Ryan Turner who will be 6 on the 5<sup>th</sup>  
Samuel Boggon who will be 9 on the 7<sup>th</sup>  
Sasa Kovacs who will be 9 on the 8<sup>th</sup>  
Frank Donachie who will be 10 on the 10<sup>th</sup>  
Michael Bull who will be 10 on the 11<sup>th</sup>  
Adam Palmer who will be 8 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
Sophie Palmer who will be 8 on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Alfie Harris who will be 1 on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Isabella Lambley who will be 6 on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
James Parrott who will be 9 on the 18<sup>th</sup>  
Lily Hefford who will be 1 on the 21<sup>st</sup>  
Rees Davies who will be 4 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Bryony Lowden who will be 9 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Chloe Thorne who will be 7 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Kieran Clark who will be 15 on the 27<sup>th</sup>  
Hanne Boggon who will be 15 on the 31<sup>st</sup>

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