

Arms of the de  
Meppershall Family

# ***THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER***



**VOLUME 26 – Issue 1**

***APRIL 2010***

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

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**EDITORIAL**

So here we are on the actual 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ever Meppershall Messenger. About the time you receive this, you should also receive our very special 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Souvenir Issue. That says all we can say about those 25 years, so I will leave you to enjoy it but I must acknowledge here the huge efforts of my colleagues on the committee, especially Colette House for collecting material and John Thompson for layout, plus Ruth & Denis Neilson, Phyl Kidger and Beverly Aberdeen for services to printing and collating. It has truly been a team effort.

The other good news is that The Messenger has its first Youth Editor in the person of Brigid Holmes. Brigid is currently at Samuel Whitbread, studying for her GCSEs, but she hopes in due course to work in magazine journalism, with a view to being a “real” editor eventually. We are really delighted to welcome her to the team, and hope she will remember where she got her first experience when in years to come she looks back from the dizzy heights! See her first contribution on page 26 and come and meet Brigid and the rest of the Messenger team at our AGM on 13<sup>th</sup> April; see page 25.

And youth, in the person of Alex Thorne, has also contributed a fascinating timeline of Meppershall on page 36. I have hopes that this can be followed up by a series of pieces on Meppershall history. So that takes care of the youngsters: what about the olduns, like me? I still need some help and occasional support: see page 5.

That proposed development behind the Village Hall. Victoria Wolfe-Brown has given us her take on it (see letters); are there any other views?

And speaking of the Village Hall, see page 31 and support the Village Hall Committee in their efforts to make this year's Summer Fair truly memorable.

Now a big “thank you” to the Foresters Friendly Society for another generous contribution that helps us to bring you The Messenger.

One last bit of housekeeping: **please note that the Editor's new e-mail address is: [richard.bulley@btinternet.com](mailto:richard.bulley@btinternet.com).**

*Dick Bulley*

## LETTERS

### **Letter from John Chapman**

Interesting ideas about climate change from Chris Foster. I agree with him that we should now be looking to do everything possible to maintain a climatic balance. However, we all will remember the "hole in the ozone layer" of recent history. Strange, now that it is apparently healing up, we do not hear scientists going on about it even though China and India and others took very little notice of the warnings and just carried on regardless. It appears, then, that this may be cyclical or caused by activity from the sun rather than human activity.

But, I think Chris touched on the main problem, which is too many humans. If you look at the world as a business it is impossible to create growth year on year for ever. The Earth does not have the resources to maintain such pressures so nature will take its course and many millions of people will perish as it does so. Thus, a natural balance will be maintained if we do not create that balance ourselves, possibly by a sympathetic gradual reduction in population. I doubt that there will ever be 9 billion humans on this earth; it is not built for such numbers. We are already running out of fish for instance and creating more waste than the earth can handle effectively.

*John*

*Chapman*

### **Letter from Victoria Wolfe-Brown**

#### **A new community hall but at what cost to the community?**

It is widely agreed that the current Village Hall has outlived its lifespan. It is a pre-fabricated building built in the 1960's which was only meant to last 10 to 15 years and is beginning to crumble and become costly to maintain. It currently hosts various important village activities such as the Pre-school, the Social Club, numerous plays and pantomimes and over the next few months the Parish Council meetings. It is to this end that a new community centre has been proposed, but what will be the true cost?

In order for this building to be constructed there will be, in my mind, a huge price to pay, namely:

- A large estate of a minimum of 68 houses that will be built behind High Street. This may be a larger site than most local builders can accommodate so it is likely to be along the lines of the "Bovis" style" estate that has been already built in the village. Within this site there has

to be an allocation for social housing which could potential bring in “troubled” families.

- An estate this size may cause potentially an overall increase in the population of more than 11%, making Meppershall nearly substantially larger. This level of growth will also have a noticeable impact on the local services such as the school and local transport.
- This site destroys the rural aspect of the village that we all enjoy. Due to the location of the site alongside the right hand side of the path, walking down Crackle Hill to Campton will be similar to going through an urban conurbation. I did not move out of London to live in a “small” town.
- Apart from being a fundamental change to the nature of the village, a new estate of this size will have an affect on the overall noise and disruption in the village during the building and after completion. I relish the summer days when all you can hear are the birds singing and all is peaceful and calm, but this will all be destroyed.

I believe that a Village Hall should be the hub of community life but in my mind the cost is too high for this particular proposal.

There is also a potential scenario, although promises will be made at the start of the development, that the Village Hall may, for whatever reason, not get rebuilt. Then the village would be in a worse position with no community facilities at all as the old one will have had to be torn down to allow access for lorries to the site.

It is for these reasons that I believe that the benefits that have been proposed are far outweighed by the ultimate cost of this site. At time of writing, I am currently lodging an objection to the legality of this site allocation, in that I feel it is too big for a village such as this and it is contrary to the Government guidelines for building in rural areas.

*Victoria Wolfe-Brown*

Would anyone care to express a contrary view? Ed

## **Letter from Paul Derrick**

I have decided to take the plunge and enter the Marie Curie Swimathon on the 16/04/2010 and swim 2.5K. I am looking forward to this challenge and hope that you would like to sponsor me - any amount would be appreciated for this worth while cause. Think of me dipped in bleach (again) for 100 lengths of a 25 metre pool, in my figure hugging Speedo's! It's simple to do; go on to [www.swimathon.org](http://www.swimathon.org) and click on sponsor a swimmer,

and entre my name and the pool that I am swimming at Hitchin Swim Centre.

## **COVER COMPETITION**

With apologies for being a month late in saying this, we are very happy to congratulate Christine Simpson on the really beautiful spring picture that graced our March cover. The judges felt that amidst all the rain and snow, and all the gloom that goes with them, we needed to be cheered up and offered some hope that there may be better weather ahead.

However, we had no such inspirational pictures for the April cover, despite some improvement in the weather – in fact we had **no new pictures at all**. Shame on you! Unless you get your shutter fingers busy, we shall have to look for a different kind of cover. In the meantime, we have used a picture kindly sent in by Gary Dilley for the Souvenir issue. Unfortunately it arrived too late for that, but we thought it was worth sharing anyway. Obviously a building being demolished, but do you know what building?

Answer on page 9

Ed.

# **HELP NEEDED!**

## **THE EDITOR WOULD LIKE SOME OCCASIONAL SUPPORT!**

(No connection with his drinking habits!)

We are looking for one or more **Assistant Editors** to do part of the job each month and to be able to take over in months when the Editor is away or falls sick.

The job requires access to a computer and reasonable familiarity with MS Word. There is a template for each month's issue that simply needs to be completed. Willing helpers should contact The Editor.

## **SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP**

Our Mystery Weekend took us down to Paignton in Devon. Although we stayed in the same town last year, we were in a different hotel which was situated virtually opposite the Pier. Our excursions took us this time to Exeter and Brixham where we enjoyed some wintry sunshine, only to arrive back to Shefford in the snow!!

Our visit to Stratford to see the Olympic Park which is being built, started with us meeting our guide at Stratford for coffee and biscuits in a typical East End Pub! Our drive took us to Pudding Mill and Fish Island before stopping for a short walk to our viewing point into The Olympic Park. Although fortunate to have a bright sunny day there was certainly a chill in the wind, but our guide made up for this with her vast knowledge of the progress in the construction of the Olympic Park. We returned to Stratford where we all enjoyed a roast beef lunch included in the price, before setting off for the Woolwich Barracks where the boxing, judo and shooting events will take place. We then visited the Gunpit Café before making our way home. A most eventful but tiring day.

We have a voucher available for a two night weekend break for two people at the TLH Leisure Resort in Torquay. Valid until 30<sup>th</sup> June, with the exception of Easter and Bank Holidays. Offers over £30.00 for this weekend break will be donated to Keech Hospice Care for Children.

Don't forget our 8-day Cruise on the Rhine in August. This year's overseas holiday will be on the Princes Christina. The all in price includes, coach from Shefford, tour manager throughout, return tunnel crossing, daily excursions, full board and luggage handling. (Twin Cabin Berths still Available). (Insurance Available).

### **Forthcoming Events 2010**

Hampton Court Palace (coach full)	Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> April
Camden Market, London	Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> April



Buddy Holly – Grove Theatre, Dunstable (coach full)	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> May
Tour of the Cotswolds (with Guide)	Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May
Chelsea Flower Show (coach full)	Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> May
London Museums	Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> June
Capel Manor Gardens & Forty Hall	Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> June
RPO Grand Opera Gala	Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> June
Suffolk Coastal Tour	Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> July
Tour of London (in song)	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September
Visit to York	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> October
Land of Hope and Glory	Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> October
Christmas Cruise	8 <sup>th</sup> December
John Rutter – Royal Albert Hall	Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> December

London theatres are available and if there is a particular show of interest, please contact me and we will see what can be done. Always open to new ideas and offers.

For all holidays which include hotel accommodation, Shefford Leisure Group acts as an agent for the Tour Operator, their terms and conditions apply.

Enid Pamment, Shefford Leisure Group

*Shefford Leisure Group is open to everyone in the local community who feel 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)*

## **Meppershall Parish Council Report**

This report is for the March 2010 meeting of the Parish Council which was held at Meppershall Lower School.

In the open part of the meeting CBUA Councillor Brown detailed the areas of proposed increase in the Council Tax. He also stated that the Authority is still Asset rich, that it has surplus property, land, assets which it has not been able to sell off in the present economic climate. The Chairman asked Cllr Brown if Central Beds had been represented at the meeting held the previous day at Silverstone. The meeting, called by Northants CC., was a lesson learnt exercise on the impact of the recent cold weather on the highways and was reported on BBC Look East. Cllr Brown was unaware of the meeting and said he would talk to portfolio holder about it.

A member of public asked for further information on the proposed development behind the Village Hall. The Chairman stated that nothing had changed since the last Council meeting which was covered in some depth in the March edition of the Messenger.

### **Planning & Housing (spokesman Cllr. Peter Chapman)**

The planning application for a bungalow to the rear of 30, Shefford Road had been re-submitted rectifying the problems that had caused the previous refusal and is likely to be passed.

### **Finance**

The action plan on the minor comments made during the audit of the accounts was tabled and accepted.

### **Highways & Lighting (spokesman Cllr. Roger Bryant)**

Potholes have been reported as they have been noticed and they have been repaired quite quickly. Please note any parishioner can ring Highways and report potholes or street light problems the phone numbers is 0300 300 8049 but remember to get a fault number in case you want to follow up the report.

## **Environment & Leisure (spokesman Cllr. Paul Merryweather)**

Foster's Field is still much too wet for the installation of solar powered light and it will be done as soon as machines can get on the field without causing too much damage.

The Council wish to thank the members of the Gardening Club for their efforts throughout the village in planting all the bulbs that are now blooming, indicating that the worst of the winter is over.

### **Wry Close Allotments**

The order to move the gate, install the height restrictor where the gate is and install fencing along the track has been placed.

## **CHANGE OF VENUE**

The Council have decided to change the day and location for their meetings. From the next meeting (April) the date will be the **second Monday** of the month except for July when it will be on the **fourth Monday**. As before there will be NO meeting in August. **The venue will be the Village Hall.** Please use the front door as there will be no access from the Social Club; no alcoholic must be brought into the meeting.

## **Other Business**

A review of the Village Caretaker's Contract was approved and a meeting with the caretaker will be held before the next Council meeting.

The Annual Village meeting will be held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April at 7.45pm in the Village Hall. This is the time when any Parishioner can ask as many questions as they like on any subject relating to the Parish Council and its staff. Please come along as it can get very lonely in the Hall on your own.

Peter Chapman  
Chairman of Meppershall Parish Council

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**Answer to Cover Photo question:** it is the Barley Mow, one of the 2 pubs that (I think) were once in Hoo Road. The Barley Mow was right on the corner of the junction with High Street. Do you know in which year it was demolished? The answer is in this issue, somewhere.

*Ed.*

## YOUR SHOUT

**ROMAN BIRTHDAY:** The Village Hall went back in time when Mary (bakery) celebrated her LX<sup>th</sup> on Saturday XXV11 FEBRUARY MMX.

There were Gladiators and Chariot racing and those family and friends who witnessed this happy event were in Roman attire too, as they swigged the wine and dined on the roast pork with trimmings of this bygone age. Hearty congratulations Mary.

**GOLDEN WEDDING:** On Saturday March 6 Janet and I celebrated our Golden Wedding (March 5) in the Village Hall.

We were really privileged to have friends and family from far away who joined other friends from here and across Bedfordshire to celebrate this milestone in our lives.

We met in Southampton in January of 1959 and were married in St. Leonard's, Bursledon, Hampshire, on March 5, 1960. (Used for the BBC soap Howard's Way). Travel has been an important part of lives: a passion for skiing with holidays spanning most of 30 years, 28 years of caravanning across England, Wales, Scotland and far flung parts of Europe and exciting times trekking the Himalayas, a camping trek to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and a six day yachting adventure on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia are some of the highlights we have been fortunate to do.

But, despite the opportunities we declined to move to Northern Ireland and later to Scotland for my work for The Mail on Sunday, we are still in Meppershall, 38 years after moving here in 1972. We have three great children, Ian, Claire and Martin, plus two gorgeous grandchildren Holly and Lily.

Meppershall is a great place to live, isn't it?

## WINTER SNOW:

Jan Waite from Church Road has sent me a short note dated February 22 on her experiences in the snow.

“This year has been horrendous for driving and yet again, tomorrow, ice is forecast. One of the reasons I bought the house

was that I was told the roads were gritted as far as the A507. It was only when I contacted Roger Bryant that he told me only the 'A' and 'B' roads were going to be treated and the road through the village was a 'C' road. I don't remember Central Beds telling me or anyone else of this change in policy, in fact I even saw a gritter going down Campton Road, never seen before! This was in December so when did the policy change? I am a Parish Councillor so I would have been expected to be told of a change, meanwhile I will put my life at risk every morning to go to work".

Thanks Jan.

**Keep your comments coming.**

**Trevor Thorley 01462 813357**

**[trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com](mailto:trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com)**

## **CONGRATULATIONS**

**Evelyn Jepps - 90 on 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

**David Niven - 90 on 15<sup>th</sup> March**

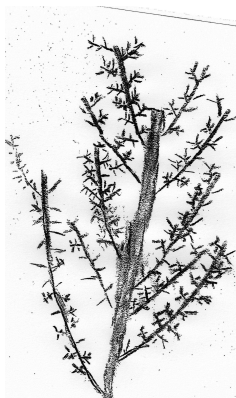
**Many Happy Returns to you both**

Please let Trevor know of other births, birthdays (any age), marriages and anniversaries that we can celebrate.

## School Report - Meppershall VA Lower School

### 'An Outstanding Church of England School'

As the spring arrives at last the children are enjoying spending more time playing outside. They have begun planning our new garden area and have signed up for Gardening Club. We look forward to a visit by Clare Bull, an ex-pupil who now works as an environmental artist and is going to help us with our designs.



Bare Branches.  
Children's drawing from  
observation.

Outside sports and activities now begin in earnest. The Tag Rugby team represented the school in an inter-schools festival at Ampthill Rugby Ground. They played really well only missing the semi-finals by one point. The Football team are busy practicing for a local tournament and all the children will be taking part in a 'Skip hop' day.

To celebrate World Book Day we had a week of fun activities culminating in a Dress up day where children came to school dressed as book characters.

A further opportunity to be creative was the 'Images' Art exhibition where all the children's art work was beautifully framed and put on sale as a school fundraiser. This was organised through the School Association who have many more fun activities planned. Money raised by the association

this year has already purchased a wonderful new play house and a bike shed for the Early Years 'Acorns' class.

PC Gill our community police officer came to do a 'PLOD' assembly this term. She reminded the children about Staying Safe on the roads. The Fire Service also visited school giving the Willows class an exciting opportunity to find out about Fire Safety and a chance to get in a real fire engine.



A Nest

Children's drawing  
from observation.

Our transition arrangements are beginning once again and Mrs Barker, our Acorns teacher, has already begun to get to know our next year's entrants. We have close relations with the preschool and with our feeder middle schools. Considerable dialogue and planning takes place to ensure that each phase of the of the children's learning journey begins smoothly.

**If your child's birth date falls between 1/9/05 and 31/8/06 you can still apply for a place in our 'Outstanding' Foundation Stage class for September 2010. Please contact the school office on 01462 813293. We do still have a few spaces in other classes for this year. You can read our excellent report on the OFSTED website.**



## Financial News Update

In the last two issues, I have outlined the main aspects of Inheritance Tax (IHT), and some of the steps that can be taken to avoid it. It is a hugely complex area, and I've tried to do it justice in this series of articles. This month will be the last on this theme, before we move on to a different topic.

If there's one thing I would like you to remember from this series of articles, it is this – IHT is voluntary; -with careful planning and professional help it can be largely avoided. Despite various promises from our Political Parties, it is a huge income producer for the Treasury's coffers, and most of it comes from people who either didn't realise they had a liability, or chose not to do anything about it!

I am going to finish off by looking at Trusts, which are widely used in IHT planning. I know that word strikes fear, confusion, suspicion, and maybe dread into many people's minds but Trusts are essentially simple, and I believe it is the terminology used which puts people off. Trusts have been used for hundreds of years, and it is true to say that if you need a bespoke trust drawn up by a Solicitor, then they can be both complex and expensive. However, most Life Companies have a range of pre-approved simple trusts which are perfectly adequate for the vast majority of circumstances.

So, what is a Trust? It is simply you giving something to someone to look after for you, for the benefit of someone else – that's it! Now for the terminology....The Settlor(s) is the person(s) (i.e. you) giving the something away. The thing you give away (for IHT planning this is usually money, an investment or a policy) is called the Trust Property (nothing to do with buildings). The people who look after this are the Trustees (and this often includes you), and finally the people who get it all when you die are the Beneficiaries. Many of us create Trusts verbally all the time e.g. 'will you look after my dog while I'm away?' It's just that we don't realise it.

OK, so why not just give them whatever it is now and be done with it? You can, and many people do this, however you must accept that in doing so they might spend it on things you do not approve

of, and you have no control over that; or they may get divorced and lose half the money to the estranged partner; or be made bankrupt and have it seized and so on. Therefore, a major attraction of Trusts is control. Whilst it is in Trust your Trustees (which may include you) control where it is invested, who will benefit, and you may even be able to receive income from it as well. To be effective for IHT planning you will lose control of the capital, otherwise it is deemed to be a 'Gift with Reservation of Benefit'. In other words, despite giving something away, you are still deriving use from it, and therefore it does not reduce your IHT liability.

Another important benefit of Trusts is that the Property (i.e. the thing in the trust) passes to the beneficiaries immediately upon your death, it does not have to wait for Probate to be granted. This is especially useful for Life Assurance policies in Trust. Upon death the policy pays out immediately to the beneficiaries. This is often then used to pay the IHT bill, rather than have to sell assets (e.g. the house), or worse still borrow it. There are a number of Trusts readily available, which are free from the Life Companies, and can make a substantial saving on tax for the family.

I hope this has given you an insight into arguably the most damaging (and hated) of all our taxes. A number of you have contacted me over the last few months on various issues, and I hope these articles help to inform you of what is available. Don't forget if there is a topic or subject you would like covered, please either ring or email me directly, or the editor, and I will do my best to oblige.

Jon Ingarfill

Tel: 07870 564115 or email: [jon@rutherfordfinancial.co.uk](mailto:jon@rutherfordfinancial.co.uk)

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**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**

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## **Polehanger: A Farming Diary - Episode 11**

Our Editor is a patient man; he has to be! Each month I promise myself that I will get my contribution written in good time before he needs to chase me up. I never do. It is now a day past the deadline already. My written work at school and college was like this too. Always last minute. Do other regular contributors have the same problem ? And what is the derivation of the word deadline ? Should I / we be worried ?

As I write on March 13<sup>th</sup>, the influence of the long cold winter is still very evident. There are no daffodils in bloom down our farm drive yet, no leaves breaking bud in hedgerows generally, no bumble bees looking for nesting sites, only occasional seasonal birdsong when the sun breaks cover. We do have a duck though, that comes off our pond and nests in an old water trough that is now planted up with grasses. She has done this for the past 6 or so years. She has appeared again in the past week, so I confidently predict spring will come, and come soon. It always does, eventually!

Spring and autumn are my favourite seasons. They are full of promise and reward to anyone who is involved in growing crops. That is not to say I don't enjoy a warm summer day in the garden with a beer and a book and a barbecue to look forward to. In my memory, hot summer days were always sweaty and dusty with hay making and combines without cabs; whilst cold winter days were spent thawing water pipes for cows to drink and trying to start reluctant tractors.

Another sign of spring used to be hares chasing and boxing each other in the wheat crops in March; but we don't see many now. Where have they gone? Like the house sparrow it does not seem clear why numbers have dropped. It is certainly too simplistic to blame farming practices alone. I hope that the conservation work we do on the farm may encourage them back; and that the hare coursers we used to get stay away.

Autumn sown crops are not really 'waking up' yet as I write, but they will, as soon as soil temperature rise. Then the seasonal cycle will continue with several fertilizer applications to provide optimum soil nutrients and similar chemical control of weeds and disease.

Grain prices for last year's harvested crop in store, and next year's unharvested crop, have fallen dramatically from those being offered

last summer. This makes budgeting very important and we aim to sell a proportion of our harvest forward (in advance) if our budgeted price is reached, in order to lock into that, rather than be totally at the mercy of the market post-harvest. Of course, prices may go up above the budget figure, but the markets can be so volatile due to currency fluctuations, world harvest forecasts and speculators that it isn't always possible to catch or anticipate the top price before it has gone . . . And you only ever know what was a top price in hindsight anyway.

In November last year I had the opportunity and privilege of going to Ethiopia with a group of 12 supporters of Farm Africa. The purpose of the trip was to inform and to raise sponsorship by running in the 10k Great Ethiopian Run in Addis Ababa. This event was started 9 years ago by the great Ethiopian long distance runner Haile Gebresalassie. When we took part there were 30,000 entrants. Together with the altitude of 7,000 ft this made it more of a challenge than we had originally anticipated. I pottered round in 90 minutes. The Ethiopian winner finished in a shade under 29 minutes! The following 6 days we travelled to visit 4 projects run by Farm Africa. We did not travel to the border regions as these are still too unstable politically. We were very struck by the rural poverty, the beauty of the Rift Valley, the changes that hope can motivate when information, skills and small loans are given. The effect on the women involved was particularly moving.

Have a look at [www.farmafrica.org.uk](http://www.farmafrica.org.uk)

One last thing. About every three weeks or so I trek up to the end of our drive and fill a small bin liner with rubbish thrown aside by pedestrians and drivers travelling up and down the hill to Meppershall. I get very irritated and mutter dark things under my breath. But really this is pointless and I manage to conclude that it is a good thing to tidy up even if it is needed as a result of other people's thoughtlessness. Maybe we should all pick up a bit of litter as we go about our village and make the place a bit tidier for a short while: and keep on doing it!

Chris Foster 13<sup>th</sup> March 2010  
**Meppershall Bakery Bees by Roger**

April is the month when we can really start to enjoy our beekeeping!

I always feel that April is the best month in the year. It is full of promise, spring flowers are in full bloom and the bees are collecting pollen and nectar.

Honeybees have a wonderful symbiotic relationship with plants. Flowering plants and bees have evolved together for mutual advantages. Bees rely on flowering plants for their food and plants need bees to accomplish cross-pollination.

Flowers advertise the goodies (nectar and pollen) in their flowers by being scented and brightly coloured and having 'guides' on the petals that indicate where bees can find nectar. Whilst foraging for nectar, the honeybee will collect fresh pollen on the branched hairs located all over its body. Some pollen will be brushed off by the bee and collected in the pollen baskets on its rear legs, but some will remain elsewhere on its body. When the bee visits another flower, some of the pollen will brush off on to the stigma of the flower to complete the pollination process. From the flower's point of view the honeybee is good at its job because it prefers to work a specific plant species at any one time and thus provides the correct pollen to another flower's stigma for good pollination. If you watch a bee collecting nectar you will see that it carefully approaches the flower and walks inside so that its proboscis can reach the nectarines deep in the flower. It has learnt how to deal with this type of flower and this is one reason why bees tend to keep 'faithful' to a particular flower type whilst there is nectar to collect. When the bee returns to the colony, it regurgitates the nectar from its honey stomach and gives it to a house bee, which will then start the process of turning it into honey.

Meppershall hives are looking good at the moment and April is the month, when the conditions are right, to have a detailed look inside the hive and get the colony ready for the summer. Now is a good time to see if the bees are healthy and take corrective action if necessary. When I inspect the colony I need to be checking a number of factors each time. It is sometimes easier to remember if I think of DEFRA, which is hard to forget in these difficult times.

D- Disease: looking for symptoms

E- Eggs: is the queen laying?

F- Food: is there enough honey to last till next inspection?

R- Room: are there empty cells in which the queen can lay?

A- Average: is the colony building strength at a similar rate to other colonies in the apiary?

DEFRA stands for Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

Honey available at Rogers Bakery- see you there.

## Computer Tips:

### Communication (comms)

Are we in danger of communication overload? First, just look at the main forms available to us at the moment.

Letter Post	Texting (SMS)
Fax	Twitter
Land phones	Blogging
Mobile phones	Social networking
Internet phones	Video telephone
Email	Face to face
Instant messaging	Communications to media

To add to these there are then the links between them all such as SMS to land phones, blogging to Twitter etc. This is all very well for personal comms but think of the nightmare and cost for businesses. Someone or a department has to disseminate which forms of comms should be standardised in the company, purchase all necessary hardware and software, arrange for its implementation, integration, security and maintenance, arrange staff training and decide how it is to be afforded. Then it has to be monitored to ensure its use is mainly for the business and that the information being traded does not compromise the company.

Prior to 20 years ago we had the first three forms and the world did pretty well on it with a few major ups and downs but we generally got better off. Now, with huge numbers of the world's population spending increasing amounts of their time using many of these forms of comms are we better off? The biggest recession on record, massive poverty and starvation, plenty of wars and strife, population explosion and global warming.

Perhaps we should be "communicating" less and "doing" more??  
John Chapman – [www.ceekay.co.uk](http://www.ceekay.co.uk)

*Incidentally, the only "secure" (relatively) mass communication these days is Recorded Letter Post preferably wax sealed.*

# Calendar of Forthcoming Events

## April 2010

<b>Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b>		
Easter Day Family Communion	11.15 am	St Mary's Church
with St Mary's Village Choir		
Mini Sparks	10.30-12.30 pm	St Mary's Church
<b>Thursday 8<sup>th</sup></b>		
Baby & Toddlers – Standalone farm	11.am	Farm Entrance
<b>Monday 12<sup>th</sup></b>		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village hall
<b>Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup></b>		
Messenger AGM	7.30 pm	The Sugar Loaf
<b>Thursday 22</b>		
Annual Parochial Church Meeting	7.30 pm	St Mary's Church
<b>Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> &amp; Saturday 24<sup>th</sup></b>	7.45 pm	Village Hall
Players: Ritual for Dolls		
<b>Monday 26<sup>th</sup></b>		
Messenger Collating	2 pm	Village Hall Snooker Rm.
Annual Parish Council Open Meeting	7.45 pm	Village hall
<b>Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup></b>		
Baby & Toddler – Storytime	2.15 pm	Village hall
<b>Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> (provisional)</b>		
Election Hustings	7.30 pm	St Michaels Church, Shefford

## May 2010

<b>Monday 10<sup>th</sup></b>		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village hall
<b>Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>		
Meppershall Music Festival	7.30 pm	Village hall

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## WHO'S WHO AND WHAT'S WHAT IN MEPPERSHALL

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### CHURCHES

#### St. Mary's Parish Church

Rector:	Rev. John Harper	
	The Rectory, Church Road	813334
Curate:	Rev. Patsy Critchley	
	39 Rooktree Way, Haynes	01234 381510
	(Normally available Wed, Fri & Sun)	
Church Wardens:	Mr. Brian Bellamy, 125 High Street	815944
	Mrs. Brenda Wright, 75 High Street	816446
Lay Reader:	Pam Halliwell, 15 Buxton Close.	817069
Junior Church leaders	Alex Sinfield 97, High Street	851473
	Gillian Marshall-Davies, 9 Brookmead	850947

#### Parochial Church Council

Secretary:	Mrs. Carolyn Holmes, 19 Buxton Close,	07868 530221
Treasurer:	Mr. D. Bartlett, 14 Taylors Close	811191

#### Methodist Chapel

Minister:	Rev. D. Haseldine, 79 Ampthill Road, Shefford	813284
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#### Roman Catholic Church

Priest:	Father Bennie Noonan	813436
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### SCHOOLS

Meppershall Lower School	Interim Head Teacher	Mrs. Smith	813293
Henlow Middle School	Head	Mr. Payne	813733
Robert Bloomfield Middle School	Head	Mr. Rogers	628800
Samuel Whitbread Community College	Head	Mr. Rob Robson	629900

### DOCTORS

Cakebread & Partners,	The Health Centre, Iveldale Drive, Shefford	814899
Puritz & Collins,	The Surgery, 109 Station Road, Lower Stondon	850305

### LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

Chairman, Parish Council	Peter Chapman, 9 Brookside	813497
	Council meets 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday day each month, in Meppershall Village Hall at 7.45pm	
Clerk:	Mr. C. Waghorn, 15 Church Lane, Letchworth GC	637531
	Email: <a href="mailto:waggers.uk@ntlworld.com">waggers.uk@ntlworld.com</a>	
Central Beds Councillors:	Tony Brown, 11 Clifton Road, Shefford. Beds	816254
	<a href="mailto:anthony.brown@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">anthony.brown@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a>	
	Lewis Birt, 165 Clifton Road, Shefford Beds	819948
	<a href="mailto:lewis.birt@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">lewis.birt@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a>	
	Surgery/Advice Centre: 1 <sup>st</sup> Friday each month (except August), Shefford Library 10am – 11.30am	
Member of Parliament:	Mrs. Nadine Dorries, House of Commons London, SW1A 0AA	0207 219 4239
	Organising Sec: Mrs. Andrea Gordon	811992

**SHOPS**

Roger's Bakery & General Store (next to School)	Mon-Fri 8.15am – 5.30pm / Sat 8am – 1.30pm	813398
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Post Office & Village Stores	6 High Street	811252
Post Office:	Mon-Fri 9am – 1pm & 2pm – 5.30pm (closes 12.30 Sat)	
Shop:	Mon-Thurs 6am – 6pm, Friday 6am – 7pm	
	Saturday 6.00am – 6pm, Sunday 6.30am – 1pm	

**PUB**

The Sugar Loaf	Andy, Jenny & Pete, 25 High Street	813513
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**ORGANISATIONS**

<b><u>Babysitting Circle</u></b>	Vacant	
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<b><u>Beavers</u></b>	Tuesdays 6.30pm – 7.30pm	Shefford Scouts HQ
Leader:	Mrs. Hayley Henshall	817446
Leader (Shillington):	Jan Montgomery	712386

**Beds Road Cycling Club**

Treasurer	Graham Laming	<a href="http://www.bedsroad.org">www.bedsroad.org</a>	811747
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<b><u>Brownies</u></b>	Mondays 6pm – 7.30pm	Village Hall
Brown Owl:	Mrs. Christine Elbourne	811964
Snowy Owl:	Mrs. Suzanne Brightwell	815752

**Cubs**

Shefford	Wednesdays 6.45pm	David Cousins	811441
Shillington		Pauline Goodman	711943

**Friends of St. Mary's Church**

Chairman:	Mr. Trevor Thorley, 9 Hoo Road	813357
Secretary:	Margaret Evesham, 107A, High Street	814291
Treasurer:	Mr. H. Davies, 15 Hoo Road	812127

<b><u>Meppershall Baby &amp; Toddler</u></b>	Tuesdays: 1.45pm – 3.15pm	Village Hall
Chairperson:	Sam Hefford	07590 290078
Secretary:	Catherine Turner	812134
Treasurer:	Jo Mitchell	813146

<b><u>Meppershall Garden Club</u></b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in month	
	Linda Parker	815114
	Sarah Till	817176
	Kim Lee Tyler	811750

**Meppershall Lower School Association**

Chairperson:	Louise Palmer	850113
Secretary:	Lorraine Jarvis/	811216
	Jacqui Derrick	812181
Treasurer:	Karen Lucas	811581

**Meppershall Players (Amateur Dramatic Society)**

Chairman:	Vacant	
Secretary:	Alison Heath	850191
Membership:	Colette House	815585
Treasurer:	Graham Scrase	813966

**Meppershall Pre-School**

	Village Hall	
	Monday - Friday	9.30 – 12.00
	Mon, Wed, Fri:	12.45 – 3.15
	Lunch Clubs: Mon, Wed, Fri:	12.00 – 12.45
	Contact during session times:	07816 357159 & 817359
Chairperson:	Damian Slade	850592
Secretary:	Rachael Bamford	819403
Registrar:	Louise Hutson	814148

**Meppershall Social Club**

	(see Notice Board for opening times)	Village Hall
Chairman:	Mr. G.R.Walker, 37 Brookmead	815183
	Tuesdays:	Darts & Snooker – 8.30 pm
	Thursdays:	Crib & Dominoes – 8.30 pm
	Fridays:	Bingo 7.00 – 9.00 pm

**Meppershall Village Hall Committee**

Chairman:	Steve Ansell	6, High Street	811252
Treasurer:	Mr. D. Birch		817014
Secretary	Linda Primett	18, High Street	815629
Booking Secretary:	Alex Stock,	9, Orchard Close	813241
	<a href="mailto:pintybinty@yahoo.co.uk">pintybinty@yahoo.co.uk</a>		07799 737217
Village Hall Telephone Number			817359

**Mid Beds Conservative Association – Meppershall Branch**

Chairman:	Mrs. Pippa McLuskie, 4 Stondon Road	813417
Secretary:	Mrs. Gee Bird	811260

**Neighbourhood Watch**

Village Co-ordinator	Tanya Clark	07890 307063
		<a href="mailto:tanya@tanya3.orangehome.co.uk">tanya@tanya3.orangehome.co.uk</a>

**Scouts**

Shefford	Diane Landau	01234 381153
Shillington	Paul Major	834251

**Shefford Leisure Group**

Mrs. Enid Pamment, 112 High Street	851397
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**Tennis (at Langford)**

Neil Franklin	815735
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**Thursday Tea Club**

	Thursday afternoons at the Sugar Loaf (any age)	
	2 – 4.30 pm	
Contact:	Pat Bass	851609

**AMENITIES**

<b>Bank</b>	Barclays, 6 North Bridge Street, Shefford Monday – Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm	0845 7555 555
<b>B&amp;B</b>	Old Joe's, 90 Fildyke Road	815585
<b>Dentist</b>	Mr. Lakhani, High Street, Shefford	814020
<b>Fishmonger</b>	Les Braithwaite (Mobile Van) – Thursday's approx 11.45am	
<b>Flower Workshops</b>	Joanne Sheppard, 74 High Street. Booking essential. Children: Saturday 10.30-12.00; adults Tue & Wed 7.30-9.00	816849
<b>Greengrocer</b>	Nigel Mann (Mobile Van) – Fridays 12.30pm – 2.30pm	711802
<b>Hedgehog Rescue</b>	Hedgehog Trust St. Tiggywinkles	01584 890801 01844 292292
<b>Henlow Bowls Club</b>	Denis Neilson	851208
<b>Kennels/Cattery</b>	Wayside, Chapel Road	813261
<b>Library</b>	High Street, Shefford	639070
<b>Livery Yard &amp; Training Centre</b>	Caroline Carter, Fildyke Road	07747 686118
<b>Mobile Library</b> (alternate Thur)	High Street/School 1.55pm – 2.10pm Village Hall 2.15pm – 2.30pm Fildyke Road 2.35pm – 2.50pm	
<b>Newspapers</b>	Meppershall Village Stores & PO	811252
<b>Police</b>	Emergencies/Police attendance required Shefford Police Post (non emergencies)	999 01234 841212
<b>School of Dance</b>	Positive Moves Saturday Mornings Emma Scott, 29, Fildyke Road	Village Hall 07914 063892
<b>Whitbread Wanderbus</b>		01767 318444

**USEFUL NUMBERS**

Bedfordshire Police	01234 841212		British Transport Police	0800 405040
Lister Hospital	01438 314333		Bedford Hospital	01234 355122
Central Beds. Council	0300 300 8118		QE2 Hospital	01707 328111
Central Beds. Highways Dept	0300 300 8049		National Rail Enqs	0845 484950
Gas Emergency	0800 111999		NHS Direct	0845 4647
Fire Safety Advice	0800 0435042		Electrical Emergency	0800 838838
Emergency Plumber: D R Eaton: 01462 812668 or 07778 447873				

# THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

## AGM

Our Annual General Meeting this year will be held on  
**TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2010**  
**AT 7.30 PM IN THE SUGAR LOAF**  
 (Free wine, plus hot-cross buns from Rogers Bakery!)

Please come and hear our report to you, the sponsors of The Messenger. Come and tell us what you like about it, what you do not like, and how we could improve it.

A special invitation to the many that make each issue possible by printing, collating or delivering it.

### 2010 Collating Dates for your diaries

April	26		August	No	
May	24	week early	September	27	
June	28		October	25	
July	26	double issue	November	29	double issue
			December	No	

# **FOR OUR YOUNGER READERS**

**Edited by Brigid Holmes**

## **Features Of Meppershall**

Hidden in this word square are 11 are things to do within Meppershall.  
Can you find them?

O	X	G	P	W	F	Y	W	M	A	D	X	R	P
S	R	T	D	O	A	A	M	E	A	D	O	W	A
S	H	S	Y	L	H	T	O	X	O	T	A	G	R
C	C	V	Z	O	B	S	E	L	Y	L	W	E	K
X	R	M	H	O	G	A	E	R	R	T	U	A	R
C	U	G	L	H	D	O	K	G	T	A	N	A	N
J	H	J	S	C	W	F	K	E	A	O	G	B	T
E	C	A	D	S	X	X	Q	C	R	L	W	U	X
J	B	T	L	R	J	G	M	N	V	Y	L	E	S
L	L	I	H	E	L	K	C	A	R	C	J	I	R
H	A	S	I	W	Q	V	N	L	W	O	K	D	V
J	R	I	P	O	N	W	Z	E	H	C	B	C	H
H	V	I	L	L	A	G	E	H	A	L	L	C	D
S	T	N	E	M	T	O	L	L	A	B	R	H	Y

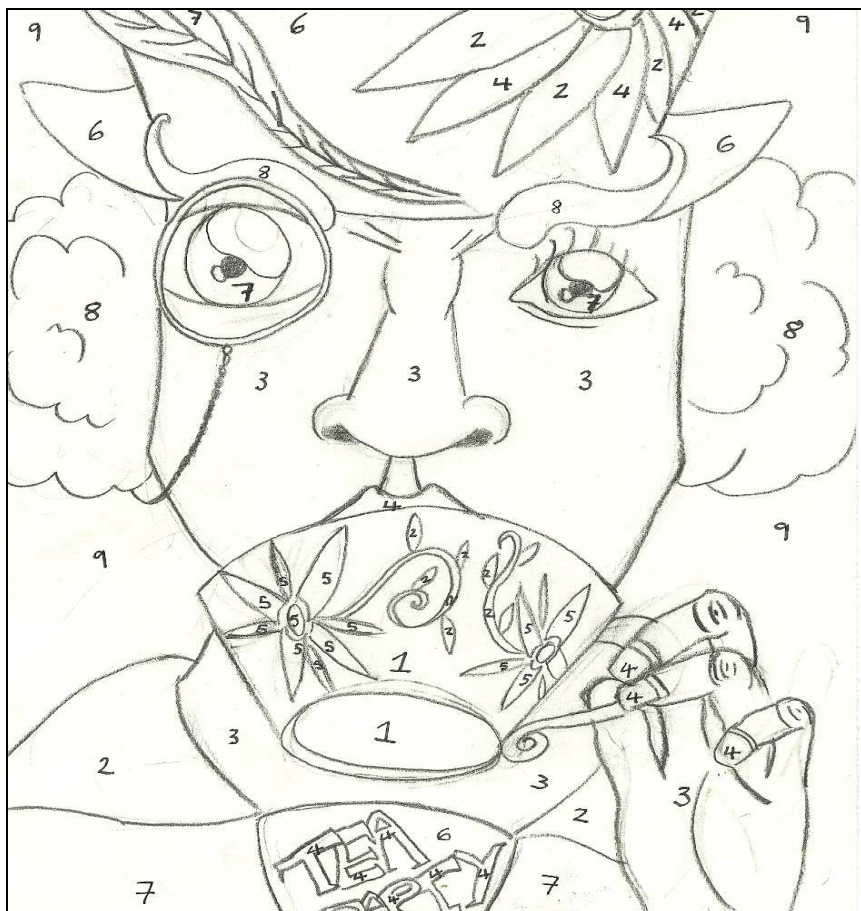
CRACKLEHILL
SUGARLOAF
MEADOW
CHURCH
VILLAGEHALL
BAKERY
LOWERSCHOOL
PARK
WATERTOWER
VILLAGESHOP
ALLOTMENTS

## **Song Quiz.**

All of the songs are recent..... fill in the gaps- Try and beat your friends!

- 1) **Open your \_\_\_\_\_ look up to the sky and see** <Queen
- 2) **Low cut see through shirts that make you go \_\_\_\_\_**  
< Starstruck
- 3) **Your the one for me I \_\_\_\_\_ I'm just a sucker for love**  
< Justin Bieber
- 4) **Take a breath take it deep \_\_\_\_\_ yourself he says to me**  
< Rihanna
- 5) **Why does \_\_\_\_\_ always feel like a battlefield** < Jordan Sparks
- 6) **I wake up everyday it's like a \_\_\_\_\_ everything in my life isn't what it seems.** <Dizzee Rascal

Answers on



Complete this picture by colouring it in, following these numbers:  
 1 = yellow; 2 = green; 3 = peach; 4 = red; 5 = pink; 6 = purple;  
 7 = blue; 8 = orange; 9 = black.

*Thanks to Jamie Challinor for this drawing.*

# Your Local Team Needs **YOU**



Shefford Saints FC has been established for over 20 years coaching both boys and girls aged 5 – 18 years old.

We are looking for boys and girls at all age groups who are not currently playing and want to be part of a team, especially reception and Year 1 children. We do not hold trials as we believe that football is for everyone.

We offer a variety of coaching for all abilities in a safe, controlled environment. All our sessions are coached by FA qualified coaches who have been CRB checked and hold both First Aid and Child Protection Certificates.

For more information visit our web site:

**[www.sheffordsaints.co.uk](http://www.sheffordsaints.co.uk)**

Or contact Mr Andrew Hall (Club Secretary) 01462 814712





This is a Ringmaster message from Bedfordshire Police. Please pass the details of this message onto any friends and neighbours.

A vehicle crime took place in High Street, Meppershall, Shefford, overnight between the 28th of February, and the 1st of March. Offenders have approached the vehicle, and used an implement to remove the backs of both wing mirrors. The vehicle is a black, 0 9, Vauxhall Astra.

Contact Ringmaster on (01234) 275288 or email [Ringmaster@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk](mailto:Ringmaster@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk) for a free property marking kit. Visit:

[http://www.safer-beds.org/rmwebportal/rm\\_desktop/files/Crime%20Reduction%20-%20Burglaries.html#changeClass5](http://www.safer-beds.org/rmwebportal/rm_desktop/files/Crime%20Reduction%20-%20Burglaries.html#changeClass5) for property marking advice. Bedfordshire Police remind vehicle owners to remove all property from vehicles when parked. Remember to remove the holder for any Satellite Navigation Systems, or Mobile phones, and clean away any marks left on the windscreen or dashboard. Leaving the empty glove box open will also discourage an offender breaking into the vehicle.

For more information on reducing vehicle crime visit:

[http://www.safer-beds.org/rmwebportal/rm\\_desktop/files/Crime%20Reduction%20-%20Vehicle%20Crime.html](http://www.safer-beds.org/rmwebportal/rm_desktop/files/Crime%20Reduction%20-%20Vehicle%20Crime.html)

Contact Ringmaster on (01234) 275288 or email [Ringmaster@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk](mailto:Ringmaster@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk) for a free property marking kit.

Visit

[http://www.safer-beds.org/rmwebportal/rm\\_desktop/files/Crime%20Reduction%20-%20Burglaries.html#changeClass5](http://www.safer-beds.org/rmwebportal/rm_desktop/files/Crime%20Reduction%20-%20Burglaries.html#changeClass5) for property marking advice.

Thank you for your support.



# The Meppershall Players



are proud to present

a

## Table Show

(Bring your own supper and wine. Social Club bar will be open!)

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**Two, one-act plays:**

### **RITUAL FOR DOLLS.**

A short play about four Victorian dolls, which come alive at the last stroke of midnight. They enact the story of ..... well, why not come and see for yourselves?

### **THE WALKING DEAD.**

This is about a couple who wished for a quiet weekend away but all is not as it seems. The quiet weekend becomes rather scary!

For more details please contact Pat Bass on 01462 851609.

**Tickets are on Sale NOW from Rogers Bakery!!**

**...oOo...**

Anyone who would like to direct a Xmas Panto for 2010, could you please come forward before 27 April, complete with a script & be available for a meeting on 28 April 2010.

We are currently looking for a pianist/keyboard player for future productions!

**Date for your Diary:** Players AGM at 7.30 pm on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2010 in the Village Hall with the Xmas Panto read-through afterwards.

**The Players meet every Wednesday of each month at 7.45 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+ 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: Graham Scrase 01462-813966



# Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group

## Easter Outing

Our last session before the Easter holidays will be held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March. Come and make a chocolate Easter nest and have fun on our bouncy castle!

On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April we are hoping to go to Standalone Farm (weather permitting!). We will be meeting at the farm entrance at 11am. For more information call Catherine (812134) - don't forget your picnic!

## Storytime

Come and join us on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April when there will be a storytime session at 2:15pm led by staff from Shefford Library.

Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group is open to parents, grandparents, childminders and carers of babies and children under five years of age. We meet in the village hall on Tuesday afternoons from 1:45 - 3:15pm (term time only). Come and try it - your first session is FREE!

For more information call Sam 07590290078

You will see from the article on page 32 that the Village Hall Committee is ahead of the game this year in making preparations for the Village Fair on 26<sup>th</sup> June. Helen Roberts is working on Publicity, and one of her ideas is to borrow some "For Sale" boards to dot around the Village, advertising the Fair. If you would be willing to have such a board in your front garden, please give Helen a call at

**Helen Roberts, 83, High Street. Tel: 811313**

**Meppershall Village Hall News**

### ***The Summer Fair.....***

We had a very successful meeting and arrangements for the **Summer Fair on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2010** are well under way. A big “thank you” from the Committee to everyone who has volunteered to help with the organisation of the event. Let’s hope it is well supported by the village and a successful and enjoyable time is had by all - not like the Valentine’s Night which was a complete disaster, as a result of which the Village Hall made a very considerable loss! The less said about that the better.....! We plan to start the Fair at 2pm and finish at 5pm, with a Family Disco organised by the Social Club starting at 5pm in the Hall.

If anyone in the village is interested in having a stall at the Fair, whether it be for selling home made cakes, jams, cards, etc. then please get in touch by the end of the month with either Linda Primett on 01462 815629 or Mike Till on 01462 817176. Also, we will need volunteers to help set up and clear away so, again, please get in touch if you can spare some time. You can always leave your name at the Village Stores.

Watch this space for regular updates!

### ***Car Boot Sale.....***

The Committee have also arranged for a Car Boot Sale to take place on **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2010 from 11am – 2pm** at a cost of £5 per car. If anyone is interested in coming along to sell their wares, or willing to help during the morning, please get in touch with either Steve Ansell at the Village Stores or Linda Primett. Further details of the event will be published later.

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

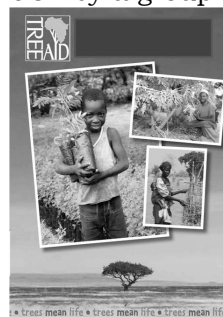
## The Treasurer's Charity

This month, I am once again looking beyond Bedfordshire for my charity. TREE AID was established as a charity in 1987 by a group of foresters in response to the famine in Africa, brought to public attention by Band Aid and Live Aid. They wanted to provide a long term solution once the emergency relief efforts ended. They believed that trees could significantly reduce the vulnerability of communities in rural Africa's drylands to drought and famine in the future. TREE AID is enabling communities in Africa's drylands to fight poverty and become self-reliant, while improving the environment. TREE AID is

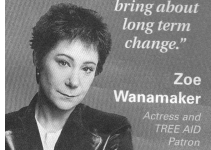


the UK's only forestry focused development charity providing funding and on-the-ground training and support to local organisations in the Sahel of Africa. TREE AID's work, which also strengthens villagers' resilience to the impact of climate change, has never been more important. TREE AID's vision is to see thriving and self-reliant communities in Africa's drylands. TREE AID's mission is to alleviate poverty sustainably, while improving the environment. The major focus for TREE AID has

been supporting 164 Village Tree Enterprise groups in identifying products with which they can develop viable businesses. It also means much greater impact in terms of long-term poverty alleviation for the villagers they support. TREE AID couldn't do what they do without the generosity of donors and patrons. When TREE AID tell villagers in Africa that they can only help them fight poverty because of the efforts of donors and patrons, the villagers are deeply moved that people so many thousands of miles away care about their plight. TREE AID needs people to know of their existence. You can have the opportunity to support the ground-breaking work TREE AID carries out to alleviate poverty through trees by visiting their web site at [www.treeaid.org.uk](http://www.treeaid.org.uk). Enclosed with this month's April issue of the Messenger is a leaflet which gives more details of the work of TREE AID and how you can help.



*"There are no quick fixes in fighting poverty in Africa's drylands, and restoring trees is one of the best things that the villagers there can do to bring about long term change."*

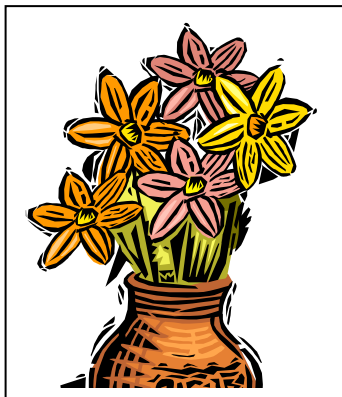


**Zoe Wanamaker**  
Actress and  
TREE AID  
Patron

*John Thompson*

## **THE MEPPERSHALL GARDEN CLUB**

**(The MGC)**



We are starting to see the results of our autumn bulb planting exercise around the village with crocuses and daffodils springing up all over the place. If there is a public area around your property or anywhere in the village where you would like to see some bulbs growing next year, then please let us know.

We must have picked the only sunny afternoon in February for our trip to see the snowdrops at Benington Lordship this year. The sky was blue, the sun was shining and the snowdrops looked really lovely. Let's hope we have similar weather for our forthcoming trips to see the tulips at Waddesdon Manor and the Woburn Garden tour later in the year.

If you would like to join the MGC, please ring:

Linda Parker	01462 815114
Sarah Till	01462 817176
Kim Lee Tyler	01462 811750

Answers to Song Quiz:

1( eyes; 2) woo hoo; 3) guess; 4) calm;  
5) love; 6) daydream



Dear All,

Myself and my 3 children (Hanne, Tom and Sam) are running for the Lily O'Brien's team in the RBC Race for the Kids event in aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital on the 6th June 2010.

The kids have promised to carry me if the going gets too tough!

Last year I was privileged to have a guided tour of Great Ormond Street Hospital. Whilst I was always aware of the good work they did I was inspired by the visit and amazed by the differences between the newly developed and older areas of the hospital. This is a great cause that really changes the lives of children and their families and your support will help ensure the best facilities possible.

Every year Great Ormond Street need to raise over £50 million to help replace cramped wards with new modern facilities, provide essential equipment and fund essential research to find treatments and cures for complex and difficult illnesses. With your support amazing things happen at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

You can help support us by making a secure online donation using your credit / debit card.

Please follow the link below and then click on the "Find a team" link on the right hand side of the page and enter Lily O'Brien's

[www.raceforthekids.co.uk](http://www.raceforthekids.co.uk)

For more information about the RBC Race for the Kids visit:

[www.raceforthekids.co.uk](http://www.raceforthekids.co.uk)

Everything we raise will help Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity treat over 200,000 sick kids every year!

Thanks for your support!

Paul Boggon  
Meppershall Resident

*Lily O'Brien's*  
CREATED WITH PASSION



## Meppershall Timeline

Researched on the Bedfordshire Libraries website by Alex Thorne (aged 10)

**1086:** The Domesday Book records that Meppershall (Malpertesselle) Manor was held by Gilbert, son of Solomon, and included 480 acres of arable or plough land in Bedfordshire as well as holdings in other areas.

**1175:** Meppershall Chapel built and dedicated to Thomas a Becket. It became an important place of pilgrimage for those too ill to make the journey to Canterbury. A papal letter of 1291 promised penitence to those who made the pilgrimage with "remission of one year and forty days penance." (Bedfordshire Times article, undated).

**1698:** A school is founded by the Misses Sarah and Elizabeth Emery, daughters of Squire Richard. The school originally housed six boys and six girls.

**1801:** The population of the village is 309 persons in 55 houses.

**1806:** Lysons' Magna Britannia reports that "The dining parlour of the old parsonage house, which stood within an old moated site, and has lately been removed, was on the boundary of the two counties. The beam had the following inscription, alluding to this circumstance: "If you wish to go into Hertfordshire, Hitch a little nearer to the fire."

**1839:** A National School building is erected at a cost of £140. This took over from the Emery School. A teacher's house was added in 1867.

**1841:** The population is 486 persons in 97 houses.

**1870:** Six people die from scarlet fever due to the unsanitary living conditions in the village.

**1871:** Six coprolite diggers are listed in the parish.

**1875:** Dr C.E. Prior of Bedford draws up a special report for the Sanitary Authority on the sanitary condition of Meppershall. This drew attention to overcrowding, cesspits near homes, the lack of a water supply and the generally bad living conditions.

**1881:** The population is 778 persons.

**1883:** A drum and fife band is formed in the village and a fete held at which there is sports, cricket and dance.

**1891:** The population is 650 persons.

**1899:** A great fire destroys Bury Farm and many cottages. The fire was dealt with by a horse drawn fire engine from Shefford. The fire had started from a steam threshing machine and made more than thirty people homeless. A relief fund was set up to help (Post Echo, 20th April 1982).

**1913:** The first glass house is erected in the village by William C. Cakebread for cucumbers. This starts a history of market gardening in the area.

**1917:** Mr Hanscombe starts a glove manufacturing factory called the Overhand Glove Co.

**1939:** Taylor's Reliance Coaches moves to Meppershall from Shillington. The family firm closed in 2001.

**1959:** Meppershall Manor severely damaged by fire (Bedfordshire Times, 20th March, 1959).

**1960:** Fire destroys the Village Institute. It had been built to commemorate the lives of the 17 village men who had lost their lives in the 1914-18 war.

**1964:** Nulectrohrs, a temperature sensing equipment manufacturer moves to Meppershall. The company closed in 1977 with a loss of thirty local jobs.

**1970:** The Barley Mow public house closes in Hoo Road.

**2001:** An appeal is launched to raise money to refurbish St. Mary's Church (Biggleswade Chronicle, 29th June 2001).

**2007:** Ministers take the decision to close Methodist Chapel after the congregation dwindled to just two the three members and repairs to the building would cost between £40,000 and £50,000. A final service will be held early next year. (Biggleswade Chronicle, 2nd November)

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Sources:

- Newspaper cuttings in Bedford Central Library
- Old Meppershall - a parish history by V.H. Chambers

*I hope this could be the start of a series on Meppershall History Ed*

## Meppershall Pre-school Ponderings

### Meppershall Pre-school Urgently Needs a Secretary.

Our 'Friends of Pre-school' group forms the backbone of the Pre-school, raising funds for buying new toys, making employment decisions and supporting the staff through the everyday life of the Pre-school. We're running dangerously low on numbers and without key people such as a Chair Person and Secretary, the Pre-school will not legally be allowed to remain open. The friends group meet twice a term and need a secretary to take and type up minutes. We would love to hear from both parents and villagers if you could help. Please call 817359.

If your child is aged between 2&6 months and 4 years and would like join in the fun at Meppershall Pre-school, please call 817359 to arrange a visit.

***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 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 end March - April**

**Holy Week:**

**Mon March 29** 7.30 p.m. Reflections for Holy Week

**Tue 30** 7.30 p.m. Reflections for Holy Week

**Wed 31** 10.00 am. Holy Communion  
11.00 am School Easter Service.

**Thursday April 1** 7.30 p.m. At St Michael's Shefford  
**Maundy Thursday** Commemoration of the Last Supper

**Friday April 2** 2.00 p.m. "Before the Cross"  
**Good Friday**

**Saturday April 3** 7.30. p.m. Easter Vigil Service

**Sunday April 4** 11.15. a.m. Communion with choir & JC +  
**Easter Day** Easter Sparks for 5 – 12s. See poster on P 43

**Sunday 11** 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion  
**Easter 2** 11.15 a.m. Family Service and baptisms

**Sunday 18** 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion  
**Easter 3** 6.00 p.m. Evensong and address

**Sunday 25** 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion  
**Easter 4** 11.15 a.m. Family Communion and JC

## **Weekday Services:**

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

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

Saturdays 9.30a.m. Morning Prayer

### **St Mary's Annual Meeting**

Please consider joining us in Church on Thursday April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7.30 p.m. for our Annual Parochial Church Meeting. This is your opportunity to hear about the Church's progress over the past year, comment and ask questions, and to look ahead to the year before us. You can also to help elect Churchwardens and (for those on the Church Electoral Roll), members of the new Church Council for the coming year. If you are interested in joining the Electoral Roll this is a good time to do so – forms will be available in Church, and details can be obtained from Christine Bartlett – 811191.

### **Alpha 2010**

This year's course is in full swing, but if others would like to come along they will be welcome on Weds April 14, 21, Sat 24, Weds 28 and Tues May 4, 7.30 p.m. – 9.30p.m. Just ring 813334 or e-mail [revjohnharper@talktalk.net](mailto:revjohnharper@talktalk.net) to ensure there's a hot supper for you.

### **Healing and Wholeness**

On Tues April 20 Shefford Churches are holding the quarterly service of prayer for healing and wholeness at St Michael's, Shefford, starting at 7.30p.m. All are welcome, and opportunity is given for personal prayer either for those present or for others for whom it is requested.

### **Election Hustings**

St Michael's Shefford will be the venue for a Hustings meeting so that local people can meet and question candidates for the General Election. The provisional date – depending on the date of the Election – is Thursday April 29, 7.30 p.m. The meeting is being organised by Shefford Churches Working Together

Dear friends,

One of my favourite Easter stories is simply a conversation between the risen Jesus and the man who had so recently denied him. After a night's fishing Jesus takes Peter away from the others and asks him: 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Three times he asks the same question, and Peter, knowing only too well that he had three times pretended not to know his Lord, as the cock crew twice, struggles to know how to reply.

"Lord you know everything; you know that I love you". It's a poignant moment, but also a critical turning point in Peter's life.

We might be willing to say what Peter said. But it isn't, at the end of the day what Peter said or what we might say that really counts – it's what Jesus says is the consequence of loving him. "If you love me", says Jesus, "you will feed my sheep and tend my lambs". It's not just the acknowledgement of our love that matters; it's the way we act it out. In other words, it's the way we love our neighbour that gives weight to the love we express to the Lord of Easter.

So when Jesus asks of us "Do you love me?" let's trust that there will be evidence to show, as there was so amply in the life of Peter.

All good wishes for a joyful Eastertide.

**John Harper**

### ***Junior Church ('JC')***

When you read this, Mothering Sunday will be over and by then I hope, Spring will be upon us. Mothering Sunday is a very special day, and even though it is over, I believe it deserves our attention. It is an opportunity for us all to thank mothers, including our own mothers, for all the love and nurturing they give us. But 'Mother Church' sustains us all year and we bring our families, including our children, to worship and honour our spiritual family – Father God, Jesus, His Only Son, our Saviour, the Holy Spirit and, particularly on Mothering Sunday, to give thanks and praise to Mary, the Mother of Jesus who rejoiced in the God who chose her to bear His son and after whom our Church here in Meppershall is named.

Meanwhile, in JC, we have had to stay indoors but our young members have been busy, busy, listening to a Bible story and enjoying the activities to follow, like watching Sandra's incredibly well-fed chickens roam the garden. Our older members were challenged with the parable of the Prodigal son, where a son returns home to his father after spending his inheritance, having eaten the food meant for the pigs as he was starving. The son is sorry for his behaviour but is forgiven completely by a rejoicing father.

The youngest members sat, wide – eyed, asking 'Why did he have to eat pig food?', 'Sorry' is a word that is familiar to them and accepted by them. Not having food to eat, that is harder to understand.

Our leader for the day was Morag who not only shared Pig -faced sweets with us but had baked Pig-shaped biscuits to be iced by the children! Of course, when they had iced their pig, they ate it - there and then! Morag had thought of that – and provided another pig-biscuit, to take home. Gill's older group enjoyed them just as much and so did I!

***Julie Taylor (JC team member)***

## ST. MARY'S VILLAGE CHOIR

Practices are going very well in the Rectory. It's warmer there than in the church! A bit of a squash though! We have grown to 18 singers. Are there 2 more out there to make it a round 20? Our thanks go to our practice pianists: Christine, Cheryl and Eunice.

This month we'll have done our first 'gig' in the village: at Meppershall Nursing Home and Lavender House. I'm sure we'll have given the residents a good time and found the experience enjoyable for ourselves.

The aim of the choir this year is to alternate between:

- singing for worship at St. Mary's and
- singing for the community.

On April 4<sup>th</sup> we'll be singing at the Easter Sunday Service at St. Mary's 11.15 am Everyone welcome. Free.

And on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 7.30 we'll be leading the Meppershall Music Festival in song and music. Dance anyone? I've heard that someone called Janet is good at limbo dancing!

**NEW PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. JUST COME ALONG TO THE NEXT PRACTICE. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY, JUST A JOY OF SINGING.**

Tues 29<sup>th</sup> Mar 8pm to 9.30pm Practice in St. Mary's

**Sun 4<sup>th</sup> Apr 11.15am – 12.30 Easter Day Family Communion**

Tues. 20<sup>th</sup> April 8pm – 9.30pm in the Rectory

Tues. 27<sup>th</sup> April 8pm – 9.30pm in the Rectory

Tues. 4<sup>th</sup> May 8pm – 9.30pm in St. Mary's

Tues. 11<sup>th</sup> May 8pm – 9.30pm in St. Mary's

Tues. 18<sup>th</sup> May 8pm – 9.30pm in the Rectory

**Sat. 22<sup>nd</sup> May Meppershall Music Festival 7.30pm**

Sun. 23<sup>rd</sup> May Family Service PENTECOST St. Mary's

Sandra Harper

[Sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk)

01462 813334



# MEPPERSHALL MUSIC FESTIVAL

**Sat. 22<sup>nd</sup> May**

**7.30pm**

**Village Hall**

**TICKETS: £5**

from P.O; Roger's Bakery, The School,  
& The Rectory.

**Come and celebrate the variety  
of music**

**with the musicians of  
Meppershall.**

**+ exhibition of local artists' work**

**Bar**

**Coffee and home baked cakes**

If you would like to take part either by;

- exhibiting some of your own art work or
- doing something musical

please contact Sandra Harper. 01462 813334

# mini- SPARKS

FOR



## EASTER Sunday

**Sun. APRIL 4<sup>th</sup> 10.30 – 12.30**

**£1 / child 5yrs. – 12yrs.**

**St. Mary's Church**

**10.30 painted glass; egg hunt;**

**the Easter story & worship**

**12.15 refreshments**

QUESTIONS? Sandra Harper 01462 813334

[sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk)

.....  
**Please RETURN FORMS to school, St. Michael's, St. Mary's, or The Rectory,  
Meppershall.**

**NAME[s].....**

**Age[s] on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb.2010.....**

**Address.....**

**Tel.No[s].....**

**Name of additional contact & tel No.....**

**Details of any regular medication or medical problem .....**

.....  
**Please TICK if you DO NOT want your child to be in any  
photographs, etc.**

**Signature of person with parental responsibility:**





**CROWN ROAST OF LAMB**

Serves 6

1 Crown roast of lamb (suitable stuffing) Lemon, Parsley and Thyme stuffing.

Paper cutlet frills

Fresh rosemary to garnish.

Method

- 1) Make stuffing 100g (4oz) fresh breadcrumbs  
15ml (1tbsp) chopped parsley  
2.5ml (1/2tsp) grated lemon rind  
2.5ml (1/2tsp) dried thyme  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
25g (1oz) butter, melted  
Fresh milk
- 2) Mix breadcrumbs with parsley, lemon rind, thyme and seasoning.
- 3) Bind loosely with melted butter and milk. Use as required.
- 4) Ask your butcher to prepare a crown from 2 best end necks of lamb, each with 6 or 7 cutlets.
- 5) Alternatively to make a crown yourself buy 2 best end necks, already chined.
- 6) Trim away meat from upper parts of bones, leaving 2.5cm (1 inch) of bone bare.
- 7) With skin inside, curve both necks round to form a crown. Hold together by stitching ends together with fine string and a trussing needle.
- 8) Place in a roasting tin and place stuffing in centre of crown. Weigh with stuffing to calculate roasting time, allowing 30 minutes per 450g (1lb) plus 30 minutes.
- 9) Cover tops of bones with pieces of aluminium foil to prevent over browning.
- 10) Roast at 180°C (350°F) Mark 4 for calculated cooking time.
- 11) Remove from oven. Transfer to a board or serving dish.
- 12) Remove and discard foil. Place cutlet frills on bones.
- 13) Garnish with rosemary and serve with accompaniments.

Recipes are kindly supplied each month by Brenda Putwain

## GARDEN TIPS FOR APRIL

(With acknowledgements to the RHS)

- Continue watering newly planted trees and shrubs if the weather is dry;
- Plant evergreen trees and shrubs. In cold, exposed sites, erect a windbreak to protect them;
- Spray roses against black spot;
- Trim grey-leaved shrubs to keep them bushy;
- Tie in the new shoots of climbers;
- Prune early-flowering shrubs;
- Prune shrubs grown for large or colourful foliage, such as cotinus;
- Divide perennials;
- Stake tall-growing perennials;
- Protect young growth from slugs and snails;
- Pot up or transplant self-sown seedlings that you find in beds and borders;
- Keep weeding. Annual weeds can be hand pulled but always dig perennial weeds right out;
- Dead head daffodils;
- Sow annual climbers and grasses;
- Plant new aquatic plants;
- Sow or turf new lawns;
- Feed established lawns;
- Sow greenhouse crops such as tomatoes;
- Continue sowing and planting vegetables out of doors.
- Prick out or pot up seedlings before they get congested and grow leggy.

## LAST CHANCE

- Cut down any dead growth left over from winter on perennials, especially grasses, before there is risk of damaging new shoots;
- Plant summer-flowering bulbs & sow sweet peas.

## GET AHEAD

- Prepare trenches for runner beans;
- Plant up hanging baskets if you have space under glass to give them shelter for a few more weeks.

### Bus Timetables – (Weekdays only given here)

In developing the Meppershall Village Plan it was clear that there was a lack of knowledge about the buses serving Meppershall. The following information has been taken from published timetables and has been abbreviated to show the main stops, including Meppershall. Correct as at Jan '09

Full information can be obtained from the bus companies or their websites.

#### Route 79 to Sheffield – Meppershall – Barton - Luton

Sheffield, High Street,					1533	1740	1840
Meppershall, Sugar Loaf					1538	1745	1845
Meppershall, Rectory Road					1540	1747	1847
Meppershall, opp Sugar Loaf	0728	0928	1118	1328			
Sheffield, High Street,	0730	0930	1120	1330			
Barton, Windsor Parade	0735	0935	1125	1335			
Luton, Silver St	0801	1003	1153	1403	1554	1759	1859
Luton, Galaxy Centre	0838	1031	1221	1431	1622	1825	1925

#### Route 79 to Luton – Barton – Meppershall - Sheffield

Luton, Galaxy Centre,					1440	1630	1750
Barton, Windsor Parade					1502	1656	1812
Sheffield, High Street,	0712	0912	1102	1252	1530	1740 <sup>p</sup>	1840
Meppershall Loaf, Sugar				1320	1538	1745	1845
Meppershall, Rectory Road	0728	0928	1118	1328	1540	1747	1847
Meppershall opp, Sugar Loaf	0730	0930	1120	1330			
Sheffield, High Street,	0735	0935	1125	1335			



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

*Rebecca Myers who will be 5 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Amie-Lee Lumbis who will be 3 on the 5<sup>th</sup>  
William Rogers who will be 7 on the 11<sup>th</sup>  
Thomas Boggon who will be 12 on the 11<sup>th</sup>  
Benedict Stinson who will be 2 on the 14<sup>th</sup>  
Katrina Brennand who will be 10 on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Harry White who will be 9 on the 19<sup>th</sup>  
Bethany Palmer who will be 13 on the 19<sup>th</sup>  
Jemma Dalton who will be 4 on the 20<sup>th</sup>  
Edmund Holmes who will be 12 on the 20<sup>th</sup>  
Shane Sturgeon who will be 14 on the 21<sup>st</sup>  
Bethany Lowden who will be 14 on the 27<sup>th</sup>  
Charlie Lodge who will be 6 on the 30<sup>th</sup>  
Alex Holcombe who will be 13 on the 30<sup>th</sup>*

*If you are under 16 and would like your name added to  
the birthday page, please call Louise Hutson on 874148  
or email at [louhuts@btconnect.com](mailto:louhuts@btconnect.com)*