



Arms of the de  
Meppershall Family

# THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



**VOLUME 26 – Issue 2**

**MAY 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.

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## EDITORIAL

To start with, a few announcements about contents: I am sad to have to say that John Chapman has decided that he has contributed as much as he can in his “Computer Tips”, which have run for nearly 2 years: I am sure that they have been really useful to computer users and I thank you very much John for contributing so consistently. But this is not to say that John will no longer contribute to the Messenger: see page 5!

When one door closes.....I am delighted to be able to say that, starting next month, Sandra Read, our own village historian, will be contributing a series of pieces on the history of the village from its earliest days. The research that we did for the Souvenir issue whetted our appetite to know more about our past, so I am really looking forward to this series.

This month there have been more letters on the subject of the proposed housing development behind the Village Hall. To do them justice I have given them space of their own: see letters page for details. I have also been able to fill 2 pages (36 & 37) with reactions to our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Souvenir issue; mostly very favourable reactions but also including corrections for a few mistakes. All of us who worked to produce it are very glad that you liked it!

The Messenger AGM was amazingly well attended, so thank you to all who came and commiserations to those who did not. I brief write up on the meeting appears on page 4, and I must repeat here the thanks I expressed at the meeting to all whose efforts get the Messenger out every month – not just the Committee, although of course they are brilliant - but the printers, collators and distributors too, and out advertisers who finance us; thank you all.

*Dick Bulley*

## LETTERS

### Dog Walkers

Once again, the subject of dog walkers.

As most of the village dog-lovers know - own a dog and clear up after! And I would like to emphasise that most of us do. However, who is the person who leaves their dog's full doggy bag under the hedge which passes across the land leading up to the playing fields? Not one bag but several over the course of a few days. Eventually it was cleared up, but by whom? Perhaps the farmer, who I'm sure would have been furious and then would close the gap again. Today it was my turn to clear a bag.

Please, whoever you are, clear up after your dog.

And while I am writing this, there are others who allow their dogs to foul the playing fields themselves; a small bag is all you need, and a hand-wash when you get home.

From all dog lovers. 31/03/10

*On the subject of dogs, we have had a report that a person was seen letting their dog into the churchyard to "do his business" and then calling him back to get into their car and be driven away. This is a particularly disgusting and offensive abuse of Church property and I hope the person concerned feels suitably ashamed to see their action described in print! I would also suggest to the PCC that a suitable "No Dogs" notice is fixed to the Churchyard gates.*

*Ed*

### ANCIENT ORDER OF FORESTERS

I am organising a dance on their behalf on Saturday 19th June in the Village Hall. It is a ticket only event, music is being supplied by "Soulman" and there is also a buffet. 8 pm 'til midnight. If anyone wants tickets please contact me on 01462 812708 or 07989 914941. They are £5.00 each.

Thank you

Helen Gudgin

*We have received a lot more letters this month. Some were concerning our Souvenir issue and these appear on pages 36-37. Others relate to the proposed development behind the Village Hall and as these are too long to include in the usual letters spot, I have grouped them together on pages 28 & 29*

*Ed*

## **MESSENGER AGM**

A record number of people (22) packed into the front room of The Sugar Loaf (thank you Jenny) on 13<sup>th</sup> April for our Annual General Meeting. The Committee of Dick Bulley (Editor); John Thompson (Treasurer); Christine Elbourne (Advertising Manager); and Colette House (Distribution Manager) were joined by their latest recruit, Brigid Holmes (Youth Editor). In the house were Phyl Kidger, representing the Printers; Ruth & Denis Neilson, Collating Managers; and Tessa & David Heath and Elizabeth Wilson, representing Distributors; Jacqui Plumley, Joyce Smith, Joan Wood, Barbara & Maurice Horwood and Linda Parker, representing Collators. Emma Brightwell represented our younger readers. Also present were Janet & Trevor Thorley, Alison Roberts & Helen Roberts, to talk about the Village Fair.

The business of the meeting was despatched fairly quickly: The minutes of the last AGM were approved; Dick circulated an Editor's Report which summarised the many achievements of the past year; John presented his accounts which showed that The Messenger's finances had remained remarkably healthy, despite exceptional spending on the Souvenir Issue. A deficit for the year of £2,343 had been covered from reserves, leaving total assets of £9,678 at year end. The Editor thanked the Treasurer very sincerely for his significant personal contributions to this excellent result through his fundraising and astute purchasing.

Christine Elbourne reported that our advertisers had remained very faithful, despite the recession and we have acquired some new ones, attracted by our new colour facilities and our improved lay-out. She thanked all our advertisers and especially those who had supported the Souvenir Issue. We have been able to hold our advertising rates for another year.

Colette House reported that the body of distributors had also remained very constant, with the few honourable retirements being replaced from her reserve list.

The Committee was re-elected for a further year.

Under AOB the meeting discussed the Messenger's participation in the Summer Fair, and agreed that we should aim at entertainment rather than fund raising.

### **2010 Collating Dates for your diaries**

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

## **COVER COMPETITION**

This month we received only **ONE** new picture, in addition to some historic ones from Christine Elbourne. The one new one came from Elizabeth Anderson and, with her permission, I am reproducing below parts of the e-mail that accompanied it:

*“Dear Ed*

*Once again I am trying to get a photo of The Hollies, Shillington Rd on the cover of the Messenger. Having read the 25 year edition I was inspired to give you a photo of one of the village’s older buildings, dating back to the 1600s. My mother and father bought it in the 1960s: Peter Kimber, one of the founders of the Meppershall Preservation Society, died in 1990 but mum, Joan Kimber, has just celebrated her 81st birthday. She has been involved with the Meppershall Social Club and also ran a Play-scheme for the village children in the 1970s. I would dearly like her to be able to see The Hollies on the front cover as she has had a year of ill health and hopefully now is ‘coming good’. Here’s hoping.*

*Liz Anderson (nee Kimber)”*

This gave the judges an idea: why not offer one of our “staff Photographers” (aka John Chapman and Paul Derrick) to take pictures on request to cheer up people who need cheering, like Joan Kimber? If you would like to see a specific picture, whether as a cheerer upper or to mark some special occasion, please let us know and we will do our best to oblige.

But you will have to wait until the June issue to see John Chapman’s picture of The Hollies, because on this May issue the judges thought it would be ideal to use a picture of a Maypole! And by happy chance we had the picture that appears on this month’s cover, thanks to Roger Bryant who sent it in for our Souvenir issue. It goes back to Meppershall Village Gala of 1982: does anyone recognise any of the young dancers?

Our new idea, (should we call it “Covers by Request”?) takes the competitive element out of our covers but is by no means intended

to stop you sending in your own picture if you feel inspired: it's just  
that so few people did! Ed.

## SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

The Group set off at 8am on a sunny day for our trip to Olympic London. Given all the road works we still managed to arrive forty minutes early where we met our guide. We parked up in a lay-by and drew our raffle before making our way to an East End Pub for coffee and biscuits. Suitably refreshed we returned to our coach for a drive over to Pudding Mill and Fish Island. We were then taken to a superb viewing point where we were able to look down on the massive Olympic Park to see the enormous strides taken in rebuilding this part of the East End. After which we returned to the Pub at Stratford for a enjoyable roast lunch. After our lunch we rejoined the coach for our journey on the Woolwich Ferry to the Woolwich Barracks where shooting events will be held. During our journey we saw the Excel Centre which will host Boxing, Judo, Wrestling etc. Before saying farewell to our Guide there was time for a last 'cuppa'. We have plans to return to the Olympic Park in October when the site should be nearing its completion.

The Annual 'Get Together' at the Memorial Hall, Shefford was very well supported by new and existing members, who enjoyed a quality buffet and entertainment by 'Patchwork' a group of versatile performers. Everyone supported the tombola, naming the Easter Bunny and the bid for a holiday in Torquay together with a substantial donation; this meant we were able to bank £314.00 for next year's charity. This year's cheque which was presented to Hilary Corfan, representative of Keech Hospice Care for Children, was for the grand sum of £1,150.00 making our total to date of £12,335.00 for which we must thank our members who generously donate our prizes and buy our raffle tickets.

## Forthcoming Events 2010

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

An East Anglian Panorama	Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June
RPO Grand Opera Gala	Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> June
Suffolk Costal Tour	Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> July
Rivers of Wine (Cruise)(Twin Cabins)	7 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> August
Tour of London (in song)	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September
Thursford Last Night of the Proms	Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> September
Visit to York	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> October
Land of Hope and Glory	Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> October
Thursford Christmas Spectacular	Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> November & Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> November
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 April 2010 meeting of the Parish Council which was held at Meppershall Village Hall on Monday 12th April.

PC Steve Busby reported that there were 3 crimes in Meppershall during March; a theft from a car in Coneygate, criminal damage and an assault outside the Village Hall. Also there have been numerous reports of nuisance youths; many have been made to sign a Contract of Conduct which, if broken, means the matter will be progressed further through the judicial system. If any Parishioner has information or actual details of these events please contact PC Busby on 01234 541212 (that is the number for all non-emergency matters).

In the open part of the meeting CBUA Councillor Brown stated that the Authority had started re-locating staff from the old County Hall to the refurbished offices at Dunstable but it would be about 2½ years before the process of relocating all the staff from Bedford would be completed. Also he gave details of CB's contingency plans for an incinerator in a brick pit at Stewartby which would be operational by 2016. This would not be needed if the plan for a larger incinerator operated by a private firm, as backed by Bucks CC, is built in the same location. With the cost of dumping rubbish into landfill sites due to rise to £80/tonne in 2012, a "do nothing" option is not acceptable.

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

Two planning applications had been received in this period: a retrospective one for a climbing frame at the school and the other for a replacement garden shed at the Manor House; no objections were raised.

The continuing saga of a footpath at the top end of Fildyke Road appears to be reaching a conclusion but not the one wanted by the Council. From comments received from Central Beds Planning section the length of time this has been outstanding and the inability of the Highways department and Environment Agency to decide whether the ditch should be piped and if there is enough room for the path means the condition on the planning approval will be dropped. The Clerk is to write to the Chief Executive of CBUC outlining our grave concerns of how the planning procedures work.

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

While potholes in the roads have been repaired quite quickly the same cannot be said of the footpaths. Cllr Bryant reported that Amey were not answering his calls and e-mails; it was agreed a letter go to Highways complaining about the lack of response. The Chairman asked Cllr Brown if he had found out whether Central

Beds had been represented at the meeting convened by Northants CC at Silverstone as a lessons learnt exercise on the impact of the recent cold weather on the highways. Cllr Brown said that CBUC had not attended. Once again the Council stated that while it was accepted that the decision to stop gritting the C roads had come from Government it felt that CBUC had not been in a position to cope and lessons need to be learnt. The Clerk is going to write to the Chief Executive of CBUC.

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

The installation of solar powered light on Foster's Field should happen in the near future as the company has been given the go ahead to cross the field. Further to a request from the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee in the open part of the meeting, the Council gave its backing to the use of Foster's Field for the Summer Fair and would investigate whether the Parish Council's insurance could be used.

### **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 and should be completed by the time you read this report. All the taps and pipe work on the allotments are to be checked.

### **Other Business**

The Village Caretakers Contract has been signed by both parties although some fine tuning on the use of the report sheets was needed.

Peter Chapman  
Chairman of Meppershall Parish Council

The next Parish Council meetings will be held Monday 10th May 2010 and Monday 7th June 2010 at Meppershall Village Hall commencing at 7.45pm.

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Welcome back to Jake Plumley who was born and brought up in the Village and has now returned to live in Fildyke Road with his wife Rebecca and son Harry. We hope you will be very happy here.

The Proud Parents

## YOUR SHOUT

In April 2009, keen skier Darren took his family, with friends, for a holiday in St. Gervais in the Mont Blanc region of the French Alps. What happened during this holiday in a horrendous freak accident is described below. I am retelling the story at his invitation: Darren is a very modest man, which is why I have not identified him, but he says that if it is of any help to others in a similar plight, his message is to be strong, follow the advice given and NEVER GIVE UP!

Darren was riding a steep drag lift, a circular disk which is attached to a pole, placed through the legs, and cushioned on the buttocks, which then tows the skier to the top of the slope, with the skier holding on to maintain balance. Alex, the eleven year old son of their friends, was on the front bar, but fell when he reached the top and fell back down at speed, knocking Darren off his own lift; they then both fell approximately 60 feet down a very steep slope, out of control and totally unable to stop.... that is until they both hit trees. Alex was knocked unconscious and was only saved from death by his helmet, Darren collided with the tree with his right hip, and they both lay there until help arrived.

Darren was placed on a stretcher, taken down the slopes and then airlifted by helicopter 70 km to Annecy Hospital where he spent a week in intensive care on a life support machine. He spent another week in hospital for operations to repair broken bones and was then transferred to Oxford by air ambulance and then on to Lister Hospital where he stayed for 16 nights undergoing countless x-rays and scans. Returning home he spent seven weeks sleeping in his lounge and had to learn how to get from the bed into a wheelchair, how to get from the wheelchair onto a walking frame, how to walk with the frame, and then with crutches unaided.

As may be imagined, Darren's injuries were extensive and he still requires further operations, including two on his knee, which requires total reconstruction. Fortunately he is being treated by a top specialist in the Chelsea and Westminster hospital, but his recuperation is ongoing with lots of physiotherapy to help build up the muscles in his legs and lower body. A long time resident of Meppershall, Darren was brought up in the Village from 1972, and is now back looking after his own family.

**TERRY LIGHTFOOT:** The concert hosted by the Friends of St. Mary's Church on Saturday March 20 was a huge success and a first in bringing a

TOP name to Meppershall. A full house enjoyed a variety of music by this great legend, and what was even better, Terry Lightfoot and his Jazz Men themselves thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

Buoyed by this success the Friends are working to bring another Big, Big name to Meppershall in the autumn. If you missed the March concert, hopefully you will come to the next one....this should be confirmed in time for the June issue.

### **MEPPERSHALL MUSIC FESTIVAL:**

Rector's wife Sandra Harper 'works her socks off' to bring entertainment to you. Do go along to the Music Festival, which takes place in the Village Hall on Saturday, May 22 beginning at 7.30pm. There will be a variety of musical talent, plus an exhibition of local artists' work. There will also be a bar or if you so prefer, there will be tea/coffee and home baked cakes. Tickets are £5 and are available from the Post Office, Roger's Bakery, Meppershall School and The Rectory 01462 813334.

### **BAPTISMS:**

In St. Mary's Church on Sunday, April 11, three children Leah Metcalfe age 4, Scott Metcalfe age 5 and James Metcalfe age 7, were baptised.

### **DEATHS**

**Ian Robert Wakefield** on 28<sup>th</sup> March, aged 49

**Sheila Ann Simons** on 5<sup>th</sup> April, aged 70

The sad news of the death of Sheila Simons, who has suffered for some time with M.S, was followed by her funeral in St. Mary's Church on Thursday, April 22 followed by cremation at Bedford Crematorium.

**Carol Millard** on 8<sup>th</sup> April, aged 73.

### **REMEMBER: It's YOUR SHOUT.**

Trevor Thorley. 01462 813357

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

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

*Ed.*

## School Report - Meppershall VA Lower School

### 'An Outstanding Church of England School'

The Spring term was a busy one, as always, with lots of exciting activities and visitors. Clare Bull an ex-pupil and environmental artist talked about how she uses recycled materials to create her works of art. She told the children about the community projects with which she has been involved and showed them the wonderful baskets she makes with fruit juice cartons. We look forward to her return visit when she will pass her skills on to us.

Year 3 and 4 and their teachers dressed as Vikings for an exciting and very informative 'Viking day' with a visiting historian. Activities included writing in runes, making armour, weaving, sewing and cooking and eating Viking soup!

The whole school enjoyed a Skip Hop day when they learnt an amazing variety of skipping moves and expended lots of calories! They will be able to use a few more on our wonderful new playground markings, not to mention all the digging as our new garden starts to take shape! The Oaks class were blown away learning 'Rocket Science' on a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) afternoon. This was organised as a middle school link.

The term ended with our Easter Service in Church when the children told the story of Easter through words, actions, pictures and music. The Summer Term brings thoughts of the future as we start to get to know our new entrants, our future 'Acorns', and make plans for our Year 4 'Oaks' to move on to their middle school.

Our Leavers, will have a variety of opportunities to become familiar with their new school. Links with our feeder middle schools are very strong and teachers work closely together. They have already made several visits between schools for transfer meetings and discussions.

The new entrants will have several occasions to meet their new teacher and visit the Foundation Stage class. We look forward to

working closely with our new parents and the preschool staff to ensure the children's move to school will be a smooth and happy one.

**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.**

A sincere "Thank you" to St Mary's Village Choir who gave us a wonderful evening of entertainment on 19<sup>th</sup> March.

We felt we had been to a concert hall, with all the elegant dresses. We enjoyed beautiful singing, fun and laughter and dancing too; we finished the evening with tea, biscuits and chat. A great night which many of the residents talked about for days afterwards.

Thank you all so much.

Lesley Skerman, Activities Organiser, Meppershall Nursinghome.

#### **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**

## Financial News Update

By the time you read this we'll almost certainly be only a few days away from a General Election. Whichever way you cast your vote, there is no doubt that tough times lie ahead for the country, which basically means you and me! Although statistically our economy is out of recession, I'll bet it doesn't feel like it, does it? No, I thought not. That is because we didn't feel the effects of going in until many months after the statisticians told us we were in. So, similarly we won't feel any better for a while after we come out. This effect is compounded by the fact that whoever wins the election, taxes will have to rise.

As we all struggle to adapt our lifestyles and budgets to absorb the increasing costs of fuel, gas, electric, and food (yes supermarket prices are up some 25% in two years), we naturally look to see where we can save money. We examine what our money goes on each month, and try to cut out the non-essentials. Very often this means that we stop paying for things that bring us no immediate benefit such as pension contributions, life cover, critical illness, and savings plans.

The likelihood of people ever starting these plans again is almost nil, so in order to save money, people are exposing themselves to potentially catastrophic financial problems in the future. The most important of these are your life cover and/or critical illness plans, as not only does the cost increase with age if you decide to start them up again, your health may have deteriorated as well.

Think of it this way – your Sky Sports subscription costs the same whether you are 18 or 80, it can be restarted any time, your family protection cannot – well not at the same price anyway. In fact I did hear of a case about six months ago where someone was diagnosed terminally ill, having cancelled all their life cover a year prior to that on the grounds of cost saving. So, if you are faced with such stark choices with your budget, I would urge you to think twice before cancelling your protection plans.

I mentioned earlier critical illness plans, which seem to have a bad reputation largely because of a few well-publicised cases where a payout has been refused. There are many providers of this type of cover, however only a few abide by a code of practice which means they all cover the same (extensive) range of conditions using common definitions. Many online providers, and Banks offer shortened versions, which are nowhere near as good. Yes, it can be expensive and that is because you

are nearly four times as likely to have a critical illness, than to die before age 65!

The other day I was reading the claims history for Zurich Assurance for 2009. They are one of the largest providers of this type of cover, and paid out over £65 million in claims in 2009. They received 814 claims, and paid out on all but 80 of them (90.1% payout ratio). Of the 80 claims turned down, 71 were because what was claimed for didn't meet the definition in the policy. This can include strange claims like broken ankle skiing, bad back etc., The remaining 9 were for non-disclosure. This means the claimant hadn't been entirely honest on their application. People frequently try to disguise health issues in order to keep the cost down, but it is false economy if you need to claim!

So, my message is please think twice before stopping plans that could secure your family's financial future just to save money now. There are often other places to make savings. I understand that it is difficult to see the benefit of paying for these when money is tight, but the consequences of not paying for them can be even worse. By all means shop around to make sure you are not paying too much for your cover, but please keep it going if you can.

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 12

Easter will be long gone when you read this, but as I write, it is Good Friday and it is damp and cold. Last episode I confidently predicted spring, triggered by the annual appearance of our nesting duck. Since then our Chestnut tree leaves have just broken their sticky buds and the Wheatear has appeared on its way from North Africa to the Arctic Circle. Spring is still coming but has had a serious wobble in the last few days; nature seems to have pulled the duvet back over her head for a bit more shut eye after an initial look out of the window. I don't blame her though. Roll on warm, sunny, scented, bee humming spring days!

Field work on the farm is up to date, given the late season, thanks to high capacity equipment and a willingness to work long hours in the short weather windows presented recently. Crop growth will 'explode' once the air and soil temperatures rise.

In late February we visited 'The Real Van Gogh; The Artist And His Letters' exhibition at the Royal Academy. It was a fascinating, if overcrowded, experience and showed the development of his self taught style alongside correspondence, mainly with his brother, as his art developed towards the famous pictures we most associate with him. I was interested in his early drawings made in Holland where his upbringing 'taught him to observe and love nature and see in it deeper truths'. The text running alongside the artwork made some interesting statements; for example:

"From the outset, Van Gogh was attracted to simple folk who lived close to nature."

"With these monumental figures of farm labourers at harvest time, Van Gogh achieved his goal of depicting the heroic quality of peasant life."

Read today, these comments seem rather patronizing but no doubt at the time they may have been fair. It got me thinking about how those working on farms are perceived today by the 'man / woman in the street', whoever he or she might be. The popular portrayal of life and work in the countryside by media savvy young farmers hides the reality of the understated, businesslike application of most farmers who form the quiet and unseen backbone of food production and countryside management in the U K.

Have you heard about the storm created by the announcement of a planning application being prepared by Nopton Dairies to set up an 8,100 high yielding cow dairy unit, eight miles south of Lincoln? Somehow, in this

context, big is seen by some as automatically bad with vociferous campaigners claiming there will be animal welfare and environmental problems; or that farming should return to small family run units. Presumably returning to the heroic peasant life of Van Gogh's paintings As an ex and profitable dairy farmer you will not be surprised to hear my views on this: but the constraints of space here mean you will have to wait for those in a later issue.

I was pleased to see the letter from John Chapman in the April issue in response to my comments on Climate Change. John introduces an interesting element which was not in fact implicit in my article, namely whether there are too many humans. This is a subjective topic, and I am not aware that there is a number which is commonly agreed upon that would be seen as either optimum or capacity. You could equally argue that the problem is more to do with inequality of wealth distribution and opportunity. It is a topic which can lead to all sorts of responses depending on whether you are living in relative luxury in the so called first world, or struggling to stay alive in the developing world. There need not be a direct correlation between numbers and waste if there are fundamental changes made to what creates waste and what is done with those waste products. I am not advocating a world population of 9 billion but I am advocating action that can conceivably improve the earth's environment and increase its capacity to maintain life, rather than a tendency towards self satisfied complacency.

More to come in future issues on Industrial Farming and World Environmental Issues, interwoven with tales of the simple yet heroic peasant life down on the farm . . . .

Chris Foster, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2010

The Messenger would like to congratulate the regulars at The Sugar Loaf for raising £211.50 with their Easter raffle and quiz nights. The money will go to Macmillan Nurses.

## Meppershall Bakery Bees *by Roger*

April was the month when colonies go from struggling to boiling-over. On the 9<sup>th</sup> April I carried out my first inspection, it did not go too well. Only 5 colonies left out of seven and two of the five hives are very small. I started with the smallest one first, only about 200 bees but I saw the queen and she was laying eggs, not much brood but some bees were flying and bringing in pollen. They had yellow trousers. I then went to hive 2, one of the stronger colonies: much better, lots of eggs, larvae and sealed brood. I saw the queen and about 2000 bees. I started to mark the queens in the hives so they are easier to see amidst thousands of bees on the frames.

Unfortunately, when I came to the next small colony, I could not see the queen at first. She had left the frame with all the bees on and was walking up the side of the brood box. I picked her up in my hand and gently held her between my fingers and marked her on the back with a green marker pen. After waiting 4 or 5 seconds, to let the ink dry, I replaced her back in the brood nest where 3 or 4 bees immediately smelt her and started to attack her and killed her as I watched! I could not believe my eyes. How sad! I wished I had not started. I quickly thought I now have no queen in this hive, so I went back to the strong colony and took two frames with bees, eggs, larvae and brood and placed them in the queenless hive. If the weather stays warm there is a good chance they will make a new queen. It will take about 28 days from eggs to eggs.

The next two hives were very busy and I marked one more queen. I did not see the last queen, but saw many eggs, which is a good sign that all is well. The reason for the bees' bad behaviour was probably that the queen smelt funny with the smell of the marker pen and the smell from me: she was a foreign body in the hive and the guarding bees destroyed her. This does happen from time to time but is very annoying. I wish them all good luck.

May is the month bees begin to swarm. We call it the swarming season, which lasts through May and June. As soon as we find occupied queen cells, we adopt our chosen method to manage the swarming process so that we don't lose half our bees over the horizon. Probably the most widely used method is known as the artificial swarm. This method will maintain the maximum foraging force, while the queen resumes egg laying without interruption; it therefore minimises the loss of honey production. If we follow the procedure carefully and do not miss seeing any queen cells it (nearly) always works. Last year I used this method on 14<sup>th</sup> April and it worked well. This year I think we will be about a fortnight behind because of the cold winter.

If you ever have any queries concerning my bee articles please don't hesitate to ask. *[via a letter to the Editor!]* Honey available at Rogers Bakery- see you there.

## Computer Tips:

### Free Software

We tend to accept that paying for software means that we will get a superior and well tested product that would not be possible if someone offered us “free” software to do the same job. In most cases this is probably true but there is one type of free to use software that is generally well up to the mark and is not a security hazard, namely, *Open Source*. The best of this type of software is generally hosted by well known names like Google and Sun being open to everyone to submit improvements, the best of which find their way in to the official versions which are available to download from the internet free of any usage constraints. Here are some preceded by their equivalents:

*Simple and easy no-frills word processor:*

Already in your Windows XP/Vista – go to “Start” – “All Programs” - “Accessories” – “Wordpad”.

*Microsoft Office ----- OpenOffice.org*

<http://download.openoffice.org>

*Paid-for Anti-Virus ----- AVG Free by grisoft.com - use this link:*

<http://free.grisoft.com/ww.download?prd=afe>

----- Avast:

[http://www.avast.com/eng/avast\\_4\\_home.html](http://www.avast.com/eng/avast_4_home.html)

*Paid-for Firewall:*

<http://www.pctools.com/firewall>

*Paid for photo suite ----- Picasa from Google:*

<http://picasa.google.com>

*Microsoft’s Email ----- Gmail from Google:*

<http://gmail.google.com/mail/help/about.html>

----- Thunderbird from Mozilla:

<http://www.mozilla-europe.org/en/products/thunderbird>

*Web Browser Internet Explorer ----- Firefox from Mozilla:*

<http://www.mozilla-europe.org/en/firefox>

*Video editing ----- Microsoft Movie Maker*

Already in Windows XP/Vista – see your programs list.

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

P.S. All web links can be directly accessed from Meppershall.org /  
Meppershall Messenger

## Calendar of Forthcoming Events

### April 2010

<b>Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup></b>		
Baby & Toddler – Storytime	2.15 pm	Village hall
<b>Thursday 29<sup>th</sup></b>		
Election Hustings	7.30 pm	St Michaels Church, Shefford

### May 2010

<b>Monday 10th</b>		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village hall
<b>Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>		
Art Exhibition +Teas	5.30 pm	Village hall
Meppershall Music Festival	7.30 pm	Village hall
<b>Sunday May 23<sup>rd</sup></b>		
Mini Sparks	10.30 am	St Mary's Church

### June 2010

<b>Monday 7<sup>th</sup></b>		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village hall
<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup></b>		
Village Hall Committee AGM	8.00 pm	Village Hall
<b>Saturday 19th</b>		
Ancient Order of Foresters dance	8.00 pm	Village hall
<b>Saturday 26<sup>th</sup></b>		
Village Summer Fair	2.00 – 5.00 pm	Fosters Field
Children's Disco	5.00 pm	Village Hall
<b>Sunday 27<sup>th</sup></b>		
Car Boot Sale	11.00 – 2.00 m	Fosters Field

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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 (Normally available Wed, Fri & Sun)	01234 381510
Church Wardens:	Mr. Brian Bellamy, 125 High Street Mrs. Brenda Wright, 75 High Street	815944 816446
Lay Reader:	Pam Halliwell, 15 Buxton Close	817069
Junior Church leaders	Alex Sinfield, 97 High Street Gillian Marshall-Davies, 9 Brookmead	851473 850947
<u>Parochial Church Council</u>		
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, Puritz & Collins,	The Health Centre, Iveldale Drive, Shefford The Surgery, 109 Station Road, Lower Stondon	814899 850305
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## LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

Chairman, Parish Council	Peter Chapman, 9 Brookside Council meets 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday day each month, in Meppershall Village Hall at 7.45pm	813497
Clerk:	Mr. C. Waghorn, 15 Church Lane, Letchworth GC Email: <a href="mailto:waggers.uk@ntlworld.com">waggers.uk@ntlworld.com</a>	637531
Central Beds Councillors:	Tony Brown, 11 Clifton Road, Shefford. Beds <a href="mailto:anthony.brown@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">anthony.brown@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Lewis Birt, 165 Clifton Road, Shefford Beds <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	816254 819948

Member of Parliament:	Mrs. Nadine Dorries, House of Commons London, SW1A 0AA Organising Sec: Mrs. Andrea Gordon	0207 219 4239 811992
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**SHOPS**

Roger's Bakery & General Store (next to School)  
 Mon-Fri 8.15am – 5.30pm / Sat 8am – 1.30pm 813398

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

**ORGANISATIONS**

**Babysitting Circle** Vacant

**Beavers** 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 [www.bedsroad.org](http://www.bedsroad.org) 811747

**Brownies** 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

**Meppershall Baby & Toddler** Tuesdays: 1.45pm – 3.15pm Village Hall  
 Chairperson: Sam Hefford 07590 290078  
 Secretary: Jo Wright  
 Treasurer: Mary Oram

**Meppershall Garden Club** 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  
 Joint Secretaries: 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**

Chairman:	(see Notice Board for opening times) Village Hall	
	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:	Sue Rafferty	30, Fildyke Road	816178
			<i>rafferty_p@sky.com</i>

Village Hall Telephone Number		817359
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**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
<i>tanya@tanya3.orangehome.co.uk</i>		

**Scouts**

Shefford	Diane Landau	01234 381153
Shillington	Paul Major	834251

<b><u>Shefford Leisure Group</u></b>	Mrs. Enid Pamment, 112 High Street	851397
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<b><u>Tennis (at Langford)</u></b>	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	0845 7555 555
	Monday – Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm	
<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. Tiggwinkles	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 Village Hall Fildyke Road	1.55pm – 2.10pm 2.15pm – 2.30pm 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, Village Hall Emma Scott, 29, Fildyke Road	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
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## **Credit Union in North Central Bedfordshire**

Take control of your finances and watch your money grow by joining the Bedford Credit Union. Bedford Credit Union now operates in what was Mid Bedfordshire. Credit Unions are financial cooperatives run by community not-for-profit organisations.

This financial service offers people an alternative way to save or borrow. Members can save for holidays, Christmas or other special occasions. They can save as little or as much as they want helping them keep control of their finances.

As Credit Unions are regulated by the Financial Services Authority members can be assured that their money is safe. When members invest in their local credit union, they know that the only people they are benefiting are their neighbours or colleagues.

Credit Unions keep money within a community because there are no outside shareholders to pay. Other finance organisations charge high interest rates on loans which tie people into long term debt. Members of Credit Unions can borrow at affordable interest rates with no hidden charges or fees.

### **You can join and start saving with us at the following collection points.**

- **Shefford Community Hall** ,60 High Street,SG17 5BD, Thursdays 1.00pm to 2.30 pm
- **Preen Furniture Bank**, Unit 5, Shortmead Industrial Estate, Shortmead Street,SG18 0BP, Tuesdays 10.00 to12.30.

Also, Bedford Credit Union would be interested in hearing from you if you would like to work as a volunteer.

### **How to Join**

It could not be easier to join Bedford Credit Union, as all you need to do is produce two forms of identity (for example a passport or driving licence) and a recent utility bill or bank statement, plus pay a £3 joining fee and deposit at least £1 in your new account.

### **Contact**

Anne Slade (Bedford Credit Union Development Officer) on 07596 927 404 or email: [Bedcumb@tiscalil.co.uk](mailto:Bedcumb@tiscalil.co.uk)

*[www.bedfordcreditunion.org.uk](http://www.bedfordcreditunion.org.uk)*

**North Central Credit Union Project is supported financially by  
Central Bedfordshire Council and Aragon Housing Association.**

## **FOR OUR YOUNGER READERS**

**Edited by Brigid Holmes**

Work out these anagrams of film titles - they're all fairly recent.  
Write your answer on the line provided.

wne omon \_\_\_\_\_

edbir rwas \_\_\_\_\_

tarava \_\_\_\_\_

yot sorty \_\_\_\_\_

ts rintnians \_\_\_\_\_

nriana \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks to Emma Brightwell for this quiz. Answers on page 35

## Disney word search

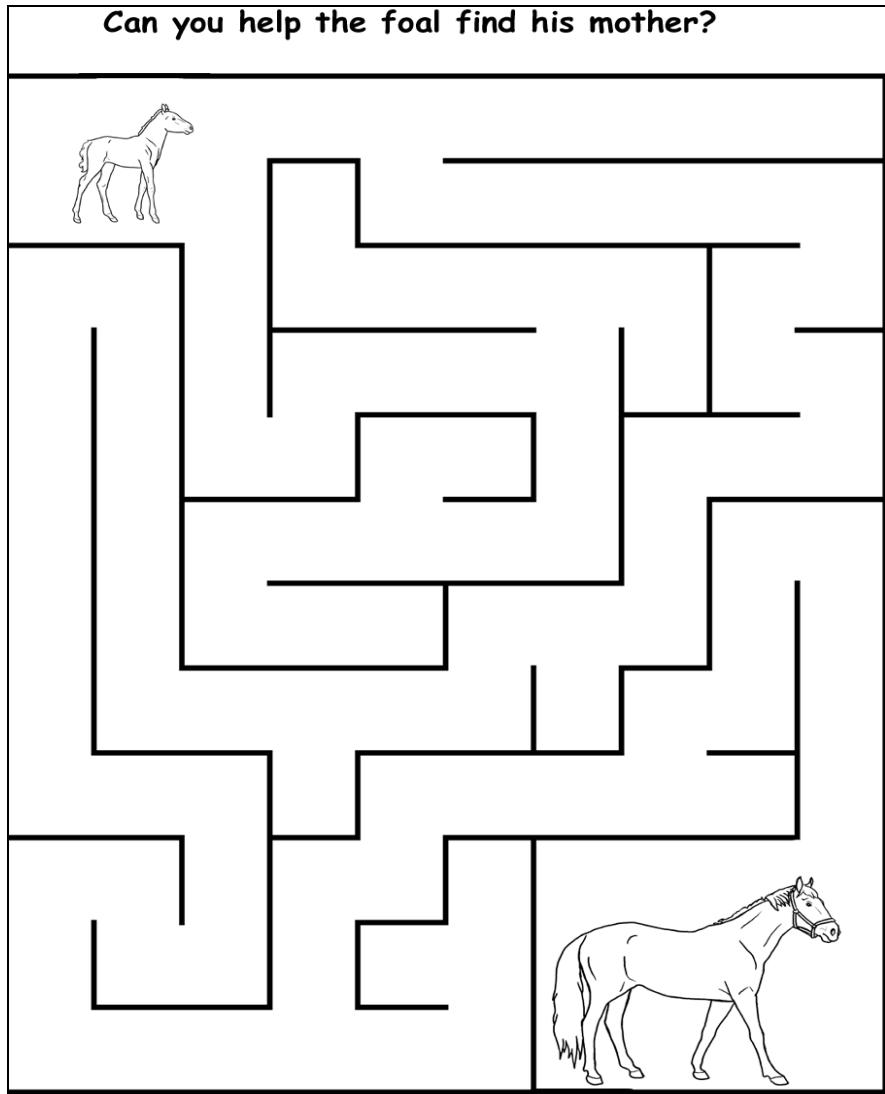
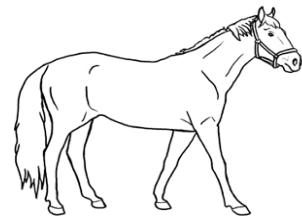
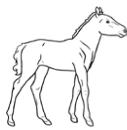
Words may go vertically and horizontally in either direction only.

v	i	r	w	d	m	d	i	a	i	s	a	t	n	a	f	
i	y	t	u	a	e	b	g	n	i	p	e	e	l	s	i	
g	n	o	m	e	o	a	n	d	j	u	l	i	e	t	x	
t	n	j	y	o	g	y	h	n	t	r	t	p	d	q	b	
w	w	c	u	m	n	v	c	j	o	a	l	e	d	x	r	
c	i	k	o	n	d	e	r	e	l	l	a	e	m	p	p	
a	k	o	p	t	j	m	i	o	k	b	e	w	d	r	r	
v	g	w	n	j	h	y	p	v	z	r	l	e	r	t	w	m
s	a	t	n	o	h	a	c	o	p	e	o	p	t	x	o	
p	t	m	p	n	d	k	a	s	y	h	d	a	r	g	b	
g	q	z	t	i	n	k	j	r	v	t	y	a	n	o	g	m
p	d	r	a	d	v	e	w	s	y	o	t	f	p	x	u	
q	n	a	r	d	a	h	p	y	i	r	i	q	i	v	d	
n	t	q	z	a	q	i	b	b	d	b	m	y	s	q	l	
p	h	r	a	l	l	f	i	s	i	p	e	j	l	h	q	
h	j	y	n	a	a	j	m	w	r	n	a	l	u	m	h	

cinderella  
 peter pan  
 sleeping beauty  
 aladdin  
 fantasia  
 pocahontas

tarzan  
 mulan  
 brother bear  
 gnomeo and juliet  
 dumbo  
 melody time

Can you help the foal find his mother?



If you have any suggestions for the young reader's page, please contact the Ed.

## Replies to Victoria Wolfe-Brown

After reading the letter from Ms Wolfe-Brown and not getting very far, I was annoyed at the reference in her statement about expanding the village which would bring in more 'troubled' families. I would have to say that obviously she is a person who is very shallow minded when it comes to families who live in Housing Association properties. I myself am part of one of those families and certainly do not class myself or some of my neighbours as being troubled; this is typical of the attitude that makes it hard for us families to settle into village life, as you make us outcasts before even getting to know us. I would like to add that I am pleased to say that those I have met in the village have not treated us any differently from any other people and certainly not as a troubled family.

Much as I agree with a lot of the content of her letter, I and other families have taken this comment personally and feel that it is unjustified to presume that all families on Social Housing estates are troubled.

Resident of the Acres

As a family living in social housing on the Bovis Estate, I found Victoria Wolfe-Brown's labelling us as "TROUBLED" families very insulting. I have children in Meppershall Lower School and Pre School and feel very much part of the village community. We are not all privileged to afford our own houses like many others, so more houses are needed, and that's not just happening in Meppershall, it's everywhere. So please Victoria Wolfe-Brown, don't tar us all with the same brush.

From a family of The Acres.

## Letter from Chris Foster

Victoria Wolfe-Brown makes some interesting points in her letter about the proposed new community hall. As I understand it, the plan is only a proposal at the moment, being put forward as a preferred site by Central Beds to the Inspector who will be looking at all such sites across the Central Beds area in line with local need and government policy requirements. I would like to comment on her main points. There is always understandable nervousness about the impact of any proposed new development. However, all communities are organic and dynamic and have to change if they are not to quietly degenerate. Victoria Wolfe-Brown is perfectly at liberty to question the benefit of this proposal but I would be interested to know on

what grounds she plans to contest its legality. In a situation such as this, there is often one person in favour of it, for every one who is against.

Our farm business is promoting this proposed development, with the support of the Parish Council. The plan has grown over the past 20 years in response to recognised social, sporting and infrastructure needs of the village.

It will not be our intention to hand over control of the development to any major, or local, house builder. Maintaining control will be an important part of retaining the overall shape and style of the development and therefore the proposed benefit to the village community in the long term. 'Promises' made at the outset will not be quietly dropped. The anxiety expressed about the impact of 68 new homes need not be the reality. Those homes can equally bring vitality into the community through increase in income from the precept and involvement of new people. The comments about 'troubled families' are unfortunate and unjustified.

The growth that could occur in the village will inevitably bring focus and pressure on infrastructure issues that are already evident. However a new community centre should be designed with flexibility and versatility in order to serve the developing needs of the village. For instance, if the local authority changes from the present policy of Lower / Middle / Upper to one of Primary and Secondary schools, then this could provide a positive solution to increased pupil roll and the traffic problems outside the Lower School at present.

I believe that the emotive comment "this site destroys the rural aspect of the village" is misplaced. Any housing proposed will be to the left of the track immediately behind Hilltop View and will not go as far as the ridge line. The track going down Crackle Hill will continue to be in farmland with rural views, as will the track along the top of Crackle Hill. Birds will still sing in gardens as well as hedges and peace will still be found where peace is now.

If the proposal is looked at carefully, it will be seen that it is more than just a replacement Village Hall funded by housing. There is recreation and football pitch space, an overflow cemetery area and the opportunity to develop an expanded community facility in the heart of the village. In summary, it is our belief that the development, as proposed, can bring much good to Meppershall.

### **Chris Foster**

*Further views on this important issue will be welcome.*

*Ed.*

## The New Wanderbus Arrives

The brand new Wanderbus has just been delivered. It's based on a Mercedes Sprinter but has been designed to our specification by Mellor Coachcraft of Rochdale. It's white but has our familiar yellow and black graphics which have been designed and produced by Meppershall's very own Signline Imaging. The Bus has a very quiet engine which conforms to the latest Euro 5 emissions regulations (very green!) and has automatic transmission which provides a smoother ride. Passenger comfort is further enhanced by climate control and tinted windows.

Our weekly, fortnightly and monthly public services are **OPEN TO ALL** and our fares very competitive and they are of course **FREE** to bus pass holders. Full details of all our services/timetables are now available on our website [www.wanderbus.org.uk](http://www.wanderbus.org.uk) or from the Co-ordinator on **01767 318444**.

The Services via Meppershall are summarised below:

Every Friday	<b>Shefford</b> (Morrisons)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	<b>Stevenage</b> (Tesco)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	<b>Milton Keynes</b> (Midsummer Blvd)
1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	<b>Bedford</b> (Town Centre)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	<b>Welwyn Garden City</b> (Howard Centre)

We are a not-for profit organisation run entirely by volunteers and all surpluses are invested in our buses. On this occasion we also received grants from The Bedford & Luton Community Foundation's Grass Roots fund; The Bedford Rural Transport Partnership; The Major Simon Whitbread Charitable Trust; The Gale Charitable Trust; Biggleswade & Sandy Lions and other charitable groups.

And finally – if you have a morning (or more!) to spare each month why not become a Wanderbus Driver ("Midas" training given) – please call Sherry Cole on 01767 318444.

Duncan Thomas



# The Meppershall Players

Regular patrons of the Meppershall Players will have noticed a new face in front of the curtains at their recent production. After more years than she cares to remember, Penny Trundle has stepped down as the Players 'Front Of House manager'. Two new volunteers (Ha Ha) have very kindly stepped forward and will take it in turns to carry out this most important of tasks. The Players welcome Beverley Aberdein and Rosemary Kitchener on board, and wish them every success in the future.

...oOo...

**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  
Colette House 01462-815585

Claire Piller

# Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group News

## AGM

Our AGM was held on 15<sup>th</sup> March. Jo Mitchell stepped down as Treasurer and Catherine Turner stepped down as Secretary. We thank them for all the work they have contributed to our group over the past year. Our new committee are:

Sam Hefford - Chair, Mary Oram - Treasurer,  
Jo Wright - Secretary, Catherine Turner, Sam Jones,  
Elaine Hobson, Gemma Coles, Liz Fleming

***\*\*\*IN THE EASTER BREAK OUR GROUP ENJOYED A DAY OUT AT STANDALONE FARM AND WE MET THE BABY LAMBS AND CHICKS\*\*\****



*We meet every Tuesday (in term time) at the Village Hall from 1.45-3.15 pm. Open to all parents and carers of children under 5. We have a craft table, dressing-up clothes, soft baby area, and lots of toys including ride-ons which we enjoy on the first Tuesday of the month. A drink and biscuit are included for the children and we have song time, or parachute games, or an activity game at the end of each session. The first session is free of charge so come along and meet us, you have nothing to lose!*

*More info contact Sam: 07590 290078, or  
Jo 01462 713999*

## **Meppershall Village Hall News**

### ***The Summer Fair.... Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2pm – 5pm.***

Arrangements for this year's "Village Summer Event" are going well and the Committee involved in the organisation are working extremely hard to ensure it will be a memorable time. Mike Till and I have heard from a few people in the village wishing to have stalls, but there is still room and time if anyone else is interested. A programme is being produced showing all the activities that will be happening on the day and we all hope that everyone will be able to come and support the event, making it a huge success and an entertaining and enjoyable afternoon for all involved.

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

The Car Boot Sale will take place on **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2010 from 11am – 2pm** on the field behind the Village Hall at a cost of £5 per car (setting up from 10am). If anyone is interested in having a pitch to sell their wares, please get in touch with either Steve Ansell at the Village Stores (811252) or Linda Primett as soon as possible. We need to know numbers before the Sale, for obvious reasons.

There has been a change to the Booking Secretary for the Village Hall. Alex Stock has resigned and Sue Rafferty has agreed to take the job on (her details can be found in the Who's Who section or on the Village Hall website).

The Annual General Meeting for the Village Hall Committee will take place on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June at 8pm in the Village Hall. All are welcome, especially if anyone wishes to come on to the Committee!

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



## The Treasurer's Charity



This month I return much nearer home, to Bedford in fact and ARAS - established in 1971, by Coral Brown, with the sole aim of caring for and re-homing needy dogs.



ARAS is funded by donations and the proceeds of dog training which is run by their Chief Dog Trainer Coral Brown.

(Beginners and Advanced Obedience Training classes are held 3 times a week. Full details can be found on the website - [www.arasrescue.co.uk](http://www.arasrescue.co.uk).)

The dogs that come to ARAS are mainly German Shepherds, but all needy dogs are taken in and given care and attention until they can be adopted.

Although ARAS is not a registered charity, they are registered with the Kennel Club as "German Shepherd Inn" and general breed rescue.

ARAS rescue always has German Shepherds of varying ages requiring new homes.

### **Key Facts**

- ARAS (Animal Rescue and Advisory Service)
- ARAS was set up in 1971
- ARAS is run entirely by volunteers
- ARAS cares for and finds homes for German Shepherds and other breeds
- ARAS has re-homed thousands of dogs in its 30 year history
- ARAS is based in Bedfordshire

Each dog has its own kennel complete with a large bed inside and a concrete run outside.



Dogs are sometimes kept in pairs to keep each other company. The kennels also have large paddocks where the dogs can run around, stretch their legs, play with toys and enjoy themselves. The dogs all love their turn out in the paddocks.

If you would like to enquire about re-homing a dog, wish to volunteer to help them or would like to help in any other way, you can contact them by:

- E-mail using the link below:  
**[enquiries@arasrescue.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@arasrescue.co.uk)**
- or telephone them on:  
01234 743797

For further information please contact Brenda on 01234 356675 or 07973688497

*John Thompson*

### **FUN DOG SHOW 9TH MAY**

**MARSTON SOCIAL CLUB**

**MARSTON MORETAINE**

**Proceeds to**

**Animal Rescue Advisory Service (ARAS)  
"German Shepherd Inn"**

**13 Classes to Suit All  
1 Per Class Rosettes to 5th Place  
Best in Show and Reserve Best in Show  
Show starts at 11.00am**



**MEPPERSHALL GARDEN  
CLUB  
(MGC)**

This month the MGC are giving up their slot to Lesley Skerman from Lavender House, Meppershall Nursing Home.

**Calling All Gardeners**

I have recently been appointed as Activities Organiser at Lavender House, which is the self-contained Dementia Unit of the Meppershall Nursing Home. We do have a garden – well, an area of grass – and my dream is to have a beautiful garden for residents to walk round and potter in during the summer for years to come.

To achieve this I need your help. I am growing annuals but if anyone is splitting/dividing perennials or any other plants, would you be prepared to share your surplus with us for this good cause? I am willing to collect them.

Lesley Skerman, tel: 814372

Lesley has asked the MGC for their help with garden design. If anybody would like to join us with this venture or to join the MGC, please ring:

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

**Answers to Film Anagrams:**

- 1) New Moon
- 2) Bride Wars
- 3) Avatar
- 4) Toy Story
- 5) St Trinians
- 6) Narnia

## OUR SOUVENIR ISSUE

I hope you all enjoyed our 25<sup>th</sup> birthday issue, and maybe even learned something about our village. I know that some people liked it because they took the trouble to tell us so:

*I thought I would drop you a note to say how much I have enjoyed reading the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Souvenir Issue of the Messenger. It is very interesting to learn about the history of the village we live in. Other people I have spoken to have also found it very interesting. I was going to suggest that maybe some of the articles that you could not use in this edition could be including in forthcoming monthly issues but after reading through the April issue I note that you have already suggested a Meppershall History page, which I think would be a very good idea.*

Regards  
Louise Hutton

Just thought I'd pop you over a quick email to say WOW !!  
The souvenir edition of the Meppershall Messenger is fantastic.  
Chris Addams

Just a quick message to say how much I've enjoyed the Special Edition of Messenger and what a lovely touch the pen and pad was – thank you for all you do.  
Emily Slade

*Much enjoyed the anniversary edition - congratulations to all concerned!*  
Thanks  
John Harper

Just a quick note to say thank you and well done for the 25th anniversary issue of the messenger, I think it was done so very well and have enjoyed reading it cover to cover. Being born and bred in Meppershall even though I now live in Shefford I still have my roots up the hill so to speak. My mother of 92 years and also mentioned in the book still lives there and so I do have reason to come into the village on a very regular basis.

Thanks all once again and well done !!!!

Helen Gudgin

*We also had a special call from the Parish Clerk, Chris Waghorn, to say congratulations to all concerned.*  
Congratulations to you and your team for a first class souvenir edition which held my interest from the first to last page.  
Regards

David Foskett

'The 25th Anniversary Souvenir Issue of The Meppershall Messenger really is a joy to read, or should we say still reading! Our congratulations to the team who obviously have painstakingly researched the history covering the past 25 years and must be applauded for their dedication.

*Enid Pamment, Shefford Leisure Group'*

That's the good news. The not so good news is that, inevitably, we got some things wrong:

Hi Richard

On page 10 Ref Orchard Close; the first Houses to be built were in 1969/70 not 1984/88 and the first residents arrived in the spring of 1970. The estate was for 16 Houses and 8 Bungalows plus the 2 bungalows facing Shefford Road. Over the years Orchard Close has grown to 60 properties. Roger Bryant  
PS (We have lived in our house for 40 Years)

We also have to apologise to Jack Groom for some confusion in our very brief biography of him. We should have said:

"Jack Groom was born on the 12th February, 1915 in East Ham, London. His Mother was Alice Barrett of Meppershall. The family moved to Meppershall in 1915. Jack's Father, Harry, built the greenhouses at the bottom of what is now Orchard Close. Jack married Edna Hill, from the North of England, towards the end of WW2 and has one son, Brian.

Jack still lives in Orchard Close"

We have also received a correction regarding the PO & Stores: what we said was not wrong but did not go back quite far enough. Before Connie Lawrence's Grocery shop, the PO was in the front room of Amy Millard's house at 53 High Street, now called "The Old Post Office"! We were advised of this by Kathleen Drummond who lived briefly with Amy as an evacuee from London in 1939.

Thank you Kathleen.

In our piece on New Close Nurseries, we gave the year of Fred Larsen's fatal accident as 1969: this should have been 1968. With apologies to Eric.

***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 May**

**Sunday 2** 11.15. a.m. Parish Communion.

**Easter 5** JC in Rectory

**Sunday 9** 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion

**Easter 6 Rogation** 11.15 a.m. Family Service.

**Sunday**

**Thursday 13** 7.30 p.m. Holy Communion

**Ascension Day**

**Sunday 16** 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion

**Sunday after Ascension** 6.00 p.m. Evensong and address

**Sunday 23** 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion

**Pentecost** 11.15 a.m. Family Communion, JC & Choir

1.00 p.m. Wedding: Faye Tinsley & Darren

Larkman

**Weekday Services:**

Wednesdays: 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion (B.C.P.)

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

Saturdays: 9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer

As I write this it is a beautiful spring day and the very long winter finally seems to be over. We celebrated Easter last weekend and it was good to see so many of you in church. Christians give thanks that Christ died for our sins, bringing us salvation and making us free.

Since last Sunday the much anticipated general election date has been announced. As the election approaches we should also give thanks for a different sort of freedom. Many can only look with envy at our democracy and our right to freedom of speech. We must not take these enormous privileges for granted and however weary we may become of electioneering, however disillusioned by the behaviour of some of our politicians, we should not forget that generally speaking the government of this country, whichever party it may be, does work for the good of the population of this country.

Because we live in a genuine democracy each one of us, over the next few weeks, should consider our voting options carefully. On April 29th the Shefford Churches have organised a Hustings to take place at St Michael's in Shefford at 7.30p.m. It looks as if all the major party candidates in the Mid. Beds. Constituency will be present, as will other party candidates.

I believe it is important for everyone to use their vote, but Christians, whose Saviour died for their freedom, have a particular responsibility to make sure their voices are heard and Christian principles upheld in government. This will only happen if we exercise our democratic right to vote.

**Patsy Critchley**

## **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. Thursday April 29, 7.30 p.m. The meeting is being organised by Shefford Churches Working Together

Shefford and District Bible Society Action Group invite you to a

### **Tour of Southill House**

Weds May 5<sup>th</sup> at 2.30 p.m. till about 4p.m. with tea/coffee & biscuits.

Tickets from £9 from Esther Buss 01462 816823 or Brenda Wright 01462 816446—proceeds support the work of the Bible Society . Parking from 2.20 p.m. Opportunity to view the gardens.

### **The Bible Society**

By Brenda Wright

A notice from the Shefford & District Bible Society and an invitation to visit Southill House appears on the previous page. Perhaps some people may not know much about The Bible Society.

If I could have been anyone other than who I am, I think I would like to have been Mary Jones. She was born in Wales and used to visit the local farmer's wife where she would touch the large family bible. Mrs. Evans promised that if Mary ever learned to read, she could read this bible whenever she wanted.

When Mary was 10, a school opened near by where she quickly learned to read and longed to have a bible of her own. So she did jobs for people and saved whatever she could, until 6 years later she had enough to buy a bible. Hearing that a Mr. Thomas Charles had bibles for sale, Mary walked the 26 miles into Bala, only to discover that Mr. Charles only had 3 bibles left, which were all promised to other people. Mary cried in her disappointment and Mr. Charles

was moved to give her one of the three. Later, he went to London and told Mary's story to a group of gentlemen, among them, William Wilberforce, and they founded the Bible Society in 1804.

Today, 200 years after its founding, The Bible Society translates, prints and distributes the scriptures in 200 countries and territories, including Iraq and Afghanistan. The Amity Printing Press in China has printed millions of scriptures in the last 10 years for distribution in China and south east Asia. Braille scriptures in different languages are produced in Germany. Today, where people cannot read, or prefer the spoken word, cassettes, videos, films and DVDs are produced, which have led to the growth of churches, particularly in Africa and South America. In Brazil, for instance, they hope to reach 10 million Brazilians with an audio New Testament in 2010. The Bible Society produces materials for use in our schools and among young people.

Along with its work on the scriptures, The Bible Society engages in humanitarian projects in many countries and also produces materials to educate people, particularly at this time concerning HIV and AIDS. The Bible Society is also a means of bringing together different branches of the church and different groups, e.g. Christians and Moslems on the West Bank and in Gaza.

The Shefford and District Interdenominational Action Group (two of whose founder members were Michael and Kathleen Foster) meets on the second Monday evening of each month in a different venue for prayer and bible study, and we give, or arrange events, to raise money. Last year's sponsored walk raised a record £1,000. We hope that, if possible, you will be able to join us for the tour of Southill House and gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> May; see notice for details.

## Junior Church

On Easter Sunday we celebrated Jesus rising from the dead and St Mary's marked the occasion in fine style – the Church was decorated with beautiful floral arrangements and the choir led the congregation wonderfully in song.

*Jesus said, "Let the little **children** come to **me** ..." Matthew 19 v14.*

Well - we were also blessed with the attendance of 23 children at our Easter mini SPARKS who also went on to enjoy our JC (Junior Church) sessions during the Family Communion service. Thank you so much to all of the children who attended and behaved so well during the SPARKS and Family Communion service.

I cannot help but reflect on what Easter means and the sacrifice God made for all of us; sending his only Son to die to take away our sins, then Jesus rising again giving us hope.

At JC the message of God's love is told in a fun and easy to understand way. We are always pleased to welcome new children.

Gillian



## MEPPERSHALL MUSIC & ART FESTIVAL

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

**5.30 → Art exhibition  
FREE ENTRANCE  
Afternoon teas on sale**

**7.30 Music Concert  
Drinks on sale**

**TICKETS: £5  
Concessions: £2.50**

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

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



**£1 / child**

**St. Mary's Church**

**[no need to register – just come on  
the day]**

**10.30 windmill craft**

**11.15 Family Service**

**12.15 refreshments**

## CHOCOLATE MUFFINS

Makes 12 large, or 24 small muffins.

100g (3 1/2oz) Plain chocolate, broken up

250g (9oz) Self-raising flour.

2 tsp baking powder

50g (2oz) Cocoa powder.

50g (2oz) Light brown soft sugar.

2 Eggs, beaten

50g (2oz) Butter, melted

250ml (8fl oz) Fresh milk.

1 tsp Vanilla essence.

200g (7oz) Milk chocolate chips.

### Method

- 1) Pre- heat oven to 200o C /400o f /Gas mark 6.
- 2) Line muffin or small bun tins with paper cases.
- 3) Melt plain chocolate in a bowl set over a pan of hot water.
- 4) Sift flour, baking powder, and cocoa powder into a bowl, and then stir in sugar.
- 5) Beat eggs, butter, milk, and vanilla essence.
- 6) Add flour mix, chocolate chips, and melted chocolate.
- 7) Stir briefly until the flour is only just incorporated.  
DO NOT OVER BEAT.
- 8) Spoon the mix into the paper cases, making sure the cases are filled almost to the top.
- 9) Bake for 20 -25 minutes.

## GARDEN TIPS FOR MAY

(With acknowledgements to the RHS)

- Take action to protect plants if night frosts are forecast

### 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 Shefford – Meppershall – Barton – Luton

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

#### Route 79 to Luton – Barton – Meppershall – Shefford

<b>Luton, Galaxy Centre,</b>							
<b>Barton, Windsor Parade</b>							
<b>Shefford, High Street,</b>							
<b>Meppershall Loaf, Sugar</b>							
<b>Meppershall Rectory Road</b>							
<b>Meppershall opp, Sugar Loaf</b>							
<b>Shefford, High Street,</b>							

- 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 of 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.

**Route 89 Henlow Camp – Meppershall – Hitchin**

Sch = School Days.	NSch = non-school days	Sch	NSch
Henlow Camp			
Meppershall - Sugar Loaf			
<b>Hitchin, Bancroft</b>		06:45	07:45
<b>Hitchin, Station</b>		08:20	08:25
<b>Hitchin, Bancroft</b>		07:19	08:35
<b>Hitchin, Grove Road Rd</b>		07:22	
Hitchin, Wilbury Way			10:35
Train departs to London			14:10
		07:32	
		08:42	

**Route 89 Hitchin – Meppershall - Henlow Camp**

Sch = School Days.	NSch = non-school days	Sch	NSch
Train arrives from London			
Hitchin, Wilbury Way			18:16
<b>Hitchin, Grove Road,</b>			18:20
<b>Hitchin, Station</b>		15:54B	15:57
<b>Hitchin, Bancroft,</b>		12:35	17:12
Meppershall - Sugar Loaf		13:08	16:00
			17:15
			17:48
			19:03

Times correct as at 02/11/09

Sch = School Days.  
NSch = non-school days.

Train arrives from London

Hitchin, Wilbury Way  
**Hitchin, Grove Road,**  
**Hitchin, Station**  
Meppershall - Sugar Loaf

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

Summer Bridger who will be 4 on the 1<sup>st</sup>  
Grace Finedon who will be 2 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Joseph Daniel who will be 12 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Annabelle Fox who will be 13 on the 4<sup>th</sup>  
Laura Stock who will be 9 on the 4<sup>th</sup>  
Ryan Turner who will be 7 on the 5<sup>th</sup>  
Samuel Boggon who will be 10 on the 7<sup>th</sup>  
Sasa Kovacs who will be 10 on the 8<sup>th</sup>  
Louisa Steeley who will be 14 on the 9<sup>th</sup>  
Harrison Isaac who will be 4 on the 10<sup>th</sup>  
Frank Donachie who will be 11 on the 10<sup>th</sup>  
Michael Bull who will be 11 on the 11<sup>th</sup>  
Adam Palmer who will be 9 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
Sophie Palmer who will be 9 on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Alfie Harris who will be 2 on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Isabella Lambley who will be 7 on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
James Parrott who will be 10 on the 18<sup>th</sup>  
Lily Hefford who will be 2 on the 21<sup>st</sup>  
Rees Davies who will be 5 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Bryony Lowden who will be 10 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Chloe Thorne who will be 8 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>

*If you are under 16 and would like your name added to  
the birthday page, please call Louise Hutson on 814148  
or email at [louhuts@btconnect.com](mailto:louhuts@btconnect.com)*