

Arms of the de
Meppershall Family

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



VOLUME 26 – Issue 4

July 2010

Meppershall Village Website: 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 12th 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

My first message this month is to pedestrians using Shefford Hill. As a driver, I frequently meet pedestrians on the hill, some on the correct side of the road (their right) and some not and, because of the bend in the road, it is quite easy to come upon them without warning; the avoiding action which results is not good for any of us. What I do not understand is why those pedestrians are not using the clearly marked permissive footpath in the field on the right as you go down the hill. The path is kept mown and is perfectly passable, especially in the recent dry weather. Without having tried it, I would say that it was even passable for buggies! While we wait for the wheels of bureaucracy to turn this into an official Council path, it would be so much safer for drivers and pedestrians alike if they were separated by several yards and a hedge!

Although this issue will come out after the Village Fair, it has to be printed before the great day on 26th June, so my report on what I am sure will be a huge success (weather permitting!) will have to await the double August/September issue. As one not directly involved, I have been immensely impressed with all the energy and imagination that has gone into the organisation. It's a shame that commercial skulduggery meant that all the "for sale" signs advertising the fair had to come down, but the publicity has still been excellent – thanks to Helen Roberts and Alison Roberts and their team.

Speaking of Helen Roberts reminds me to mention that she has edited the back half of the magazine this month as Assistant Editor. This is a trial arrangement, aimed at making sure that the magazine does not depend too much on any one person. I thank her for her willingness.

Several of our contributors this month make mention of John Barrall, who sadly died in May (see Your Shout). It turns out that John was indirectly responsible for one of our regular features, "Rogers Bees", but people who have come to the village since 1999 when he left the rectory, will remember him as quizmaster for the Friends of St Mary's winter quiz. We send sincere sympathy to Joan and her family.

Please take a few minutes to complete the Housing needs survey which is distributed with this issue at the request of the Parish Council, and return it in the Freepost envelope provided.

Dick Bulley

LETTERS

John Barrall

Many years ago, Meppershall had a craft day at the church, where I found my interest in beekeeping thanks to John Barrall, who sadly passed away at the end of May. When John decided to pack up beekeeping 4 years ago I had 2 of his hives and some equipment, which is still in use. Thank you John for introducing me to a wonderful hobby. (Nice one John)

My piece this month is dedicated to John's memory, in gratitude and affection.

Roger

Letter from Lesley Skerman

Lavender House
Dementia Unit
Meppershall Nursing Home

Dear Ed,

A big thank you to all concerned for sharing your garden plants and to Meppershall Garden Club for their time and for donating a magnificent obelisk. With the help of our gardener, who has worked really hard, we have created a lovely rose bed around the obelisk.

Meppershall Brownies visited us and gave us a sing-song in both lounges before planting 2 rose bushes, donated to mark the 100th birthday of their organisation.

We have also had donations from Clifton Village and friends and families of Lavender House.

Thanks to you all, we now have a garden with flower beds and colour. The residents really appreciate it: some have been busy planting and watering pots of annuals and veg; others simply wander and enjoy it all.

With thanks again to all concerned, including Brown Owl and her staff.

Lesley

COVERS BY REQUEST

This Month

This month’s picture is not by request after all. The picture was sent in by David Foskett who spotted this beautiful flower growing in Old Road Meadow. It is the **Star-of-Bethlehem** *Ornithogalum umbellatum* of the Lily family (Liliaceae).

According to Google, “*The Star-of-Bethlehem is native to Eastern Europe and parts of the Middle East. The foliage and bulbs contain toxic alkaloids that can poison livestock.*”

Google also says: “*The Star-of-Bethlehem is a surprisingly aggressive little plant*”, but I think it makes a lovely summery picture: thank you, David.

If you would like to see a specific picture on our cover, please get in touch in time for us to arrange with one of our in-house “paparazzi” to do the business.
Ed.

Collating Dates for Your Diary					
	2010			2011	
July	26	double issue	January	31	
August	No		February	28	
September	27		March	28	
October	25		April	25	
November	29	double issue	May	31	Tuesday
December	No		June	27	

Meppershall Bakery Bees *by Roger*

On the first Saturday in June I gathered my extra supers, clearer boards, my beesuit, smoker, empty supers to put my full honey frames in, and all the rest of my equipment, and set off for the honey harvest. I was expecting at least 12 supers with capped honey ready to extract. The rape was still 50% yellow but I thought I would check to see if the honey was capped and ready to take. Dressed in my bee suit and wellingtons, I moved through the rape on one side and peas and field beans on the other, startling a muntjak deer which ran into the rape, sending up pheasants and partridges. I arrived at the hives, which are now 7 with 2 nucs, stopping 25 yards away from the hives. Having lit the smoker and put on my hat, veil and gloves, I was ready for the short walk. All the hives were very busy. The bees were fanning in front of the entrance - the temperature was 24-26C and they were trying to cool the hive down. After 2 or 3 puffs from the smoker to calm the bees I waited for a few minutes before removing the roof and the lifts to expose the supers underneath. I could see some of the honey was not capped or ready to take. I thought it would be best to place another super on top and leave for another week. I walked back to the car to fetch an empty super when I heard a very loud buzzing.

Looking up I saw a fantastic sight, 20-30,000 bees swarming across the field. As I walked back to the hive with the empty supers, the air was full of thousands of bees. When the swarm reached the edge of the field they settled in a sloe tree about 4 feet high. Thousands were still following and flying around the first swarm. The swarm started to grow from the size of a football to the size of a dustbin lid. I carried on with my inspection of the rest of the hives. By this time the swarm was settled and ready for collection. Walking calmly back to the car I picked up my swarm box and sheet. Back at the swarm I started snipping away some of the branches from the outside of the swarm. The bees were still coming and the swarm was still getting bigger, 'This is going to be a big one', I thought cutting the main branch. The bees dropped into the box and I placed the sheet over it leaving a small gap for the rest of the flying bees to join the gang. I had a spare brood box and removed the middle frames. I struggled to lift the box, it was so heavy, and then I gently tipped the bees into the hive and placed a crown board and then the roof. Most of the bees were inside some were outside and thousands were on me! As I watched they began to leave me and go inside. I still had two hives to inspect. These were the ones I artificial swarmed in May so they should have queens in. I could see the queen cells still not open. I lifted the top off the cell and saw the queen about to emerge; before I could do anything about it another queen emerged and both scrambled off across the frames. I now have 2 virgin queens in one hive. One should survive, but still have to mate before we have eggs. The queen had already hatched in the other hive.

Honey available at Rogers Bakery- see you there.

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

We made a second trip to The Grove Theatre Dunstable, to see 'The Buddy Holly Show' where we enjoyed a swinging success with music from The Big Bopper, The Everley Brothers and Roy Orbison, which included many of their songs from the 60's and 70's.

At the end of May and with nice weather to accompany us, we made our way to the Cotswolds. We met our Guide at Burford, with time to wander around and enjoy a coffee before rejoining the coach for a journey through narrow lanes during which Anne, our Guide gave us the history of the Cotswolds. We then made our way to Tetbury where once again we refreshed ourselves. After lunch most of us visited Prince Charles emporium to purchase gifts which were personally chosen by Prince Charles for sale in his Highgrove shop. We re-joined the coach to visit Chavenage House, the family home of the Lowsley-Williams where we were divided into two groups with Father and Daughter Caroline taking each group around the house. When the two groups met up we all agreed that we had had a hilarious insight into this much loved historic Elizabethan home, complete with its own private Chapel.

Our first visit in June was to Forty Hall and Capel Manor, Enfield, North London. It is amazing that so near to London we are greeted at Forty Hall by 300 acres of picturesque parkland as well as a museum and a brand new café. After coffee our Guide told us of the history of Forty Hall and the planned renovations to restore part of it with the idea that they will open the second floor to the public, hopefully by 2012! Some of us visited the art exhibition whilst others enjoyed the sunshine by the lake, complete with the wild life. We then re-joined our coach for a visit to Capel Manor where another 30 acres awaited us. This was almost like a mini Chelsea, with richly planted themed gardens around every corner. It offers a unique opportunity to see behind the scenes at greater London's only specialist college for those interested in plants, animals and the environment. As this property is mainly geared to the training of students, we were able to purchase lunch at student prices – another bonus to an otherwise successful day.

Forthcoming Events 2010

Suffolk Coastal Tour (reserve list only)	Thursday 29 th July
Rivers of Wine (Cruise)(Twin Cabins)	7 th – 14 th August
Sing Along with Ampthill Lions	Tuesday 7 th September
Tour of London (in song)	Wednesday 8 th September
Thursford Last Night of the Proms	Tuesday 28 th September
Made in Birmingham	Wednesday 29 th September
Visit to York	Friday 15 th October
Land of Hope and Glory	Wednesday 27 th October
Thursford Christmas Spectacular (matinees)	Saturday 13 th November & Wednesday 17 th November
Christmas Cruise	8 th December
John Rutter – Royal Albert Hall	Saturday 11 th 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

Meppershall Parish Council Report

This report is for the latest meeting of the Parish Council, which was held at Meppershall Village Hall on Monday 14th June.

The first part of the meeting was given over to a briefing from David Bowie, Head of Service, Traffic Management, at Central Beds. He explained that following his brief drive round the village before the meeting, the only area where traffic management could be enforced at present was outside the school and it may not be in the interest of the village as a whole to have yellow lines anywhere else. The Chairman said his personal opinion was that parked cars were a cheap form of traffic calming but he wondered if white lines could be used in front of people's drives and round corners. Mr. Bowie said that to assist drivers in complying with section 247 of the Highway Code regarding parking close to a road junction, white lines could be employed. The Council will consider at a later meeting what action to take, if any.

For the second month running neither of our Central Beds Councillors was present so there was no update on CB matters.

It was brought to our attention by a member of the public attending that two trees had been cut down on the outside the building land behind 2 Cracklehill Road. Although one was dead the other sapling was not; also a hedge within the boundary of the property had been severely damaged. It was agreed later that a letter would be sent to CB planning, backed up by a phone call, asking if permission had been granted for this work to be done, as required by the planning restriction placed on the development.

The Council was asked if they had had prior knowledge of the letter in The Messenger regarding the proposed development behind the Village Hall and if there was going to be a reply. We had not seen the letter prior to the publication of The Messenger and the only item to comment on was that the Village Hall Management Committee was approached when initial consultations took place approximately three years ago when they gave reserved agreement to the project..

Planning & Housing (spokesman Cllr. Peter Chapman)

A full reply has been received from Tricia Turner, Leader of Central Beds, to the Clerk's letter about the problems regarding the footpath outside 92-112 Fildyke Road but it did not answer any of the questions. It would appear that this is still an open item with CB.

Recent Applications:-

Land to the rear of 30 Shefford Road – new 3 bedroom bungalow. A letter had been sent restating our objection on the grounds of over-development of the site and suggesting that the development should be reconsidered in light of the changed government and the known views of the new coalition on building on gardens.

110 Shefford Road – two dormer windows to front elevation, no objections.

Highways & Lighting (spokesman Cllr. Roger Bryant)

Cllr Bryant reported that two entries had appeared on the list of works for the village: a footpath scheme in Fildyke Road and a survey on walking from Campton to Meppershall. The Clerk is to write to find out what the works are and who asked for them as this Council had not done so and it was felt that the money could be better spent on other schemes in the Village.

Still no reply has been received to the letter regarding the stalling on the date when the footpath to Shefford will be completed and this was mentioned in the Clerks' reply to the Leader of CB on the Fildyke Rd matter.

Environment & Leisure (spokesman Cllr. Paul Merryweather)

Grass cutting – a meeting will be held with the Contractor to review quality etc as soon as possible.

Wry Close Allotments

All allotment holders are in the process of being informed of the number for the combination lock for the gate and height restrictor.

Resignations

The Village Caretaker, Ian Summerfield, has tendered his resignation. The Council thank him for his efforts in keeping the place tidy.

During the meeting Cllr Castle left, saying he was resigning and this has since been confirmed in writing. The disagreement was over what could be termed reasonably practicable for Health and Safety Matters in relation to the Village. As Chairman I am sorry it came to head in the way it did, but would thank him for all his contributions while he has been on the Council.

Peter Chapman
Chairman of Meppershall Parish Council

The next Parish Council meetings will be held Monday 26th July 2010 and Monday 13th September 2010 at Meppershall Village Hall both commencing at 7.45pm.

YOUR SHOUT

John Chapman has written to me with this observation, which others too may have witnessed:

“On Thursday May 13th at around 3.15pm I observed a buzzard skimming over the field beside the water tower. Suddenly, it folded its wings and dived into cover beside the Rookery Wood. This is the first time I have seen buzzards here. The Shefford pair has been around for several years now, so maybe this one is one of their offspring or perhaps it is just extending its territory! This is a great wildlife success story of the past few years, resulting from the curbing of agro-chemicals which adversely affected their eggs, and education of the farmers giving them reasons not to cull them”.

Only recently we had a bird of prey at the bottom of our garden, which was spotted devouring a poor blackbird. Is there an increase of predator birds in the village?

John goes on to say:

“I have heard concerns about the level of oil seed rape this year, with the level of resultant hay fever sufferers. I cannot comment on this for I feel sure that whilst one certainly sympathises with sufferers, there must also be very good reasons for growing the crop with resultant and subsequent benefits for the farmer. I personally cannot fail to be awestricken by the beauty of this crop when it is in full flower; to observe the fields in colour from the top of Cracklehill at such a time is a sight to behold!”

Mark Bartlett, son of Christine and David Bartlett who live in Taylors Close, was married on June 4, 2010 in Cartona, Italy. Mark’s bride is Kathryn Alton whose parents live in Huntly, Aberdeenshire. Many family members gathered to join Mark and Kathryn in Italy in the week preceding the wedding and were able to enjoy exploring some of the lovely hilltop villages of Tuscany as well as venturing

further afield to Florence and Rome. Mark was a pupil at Meppershall Lower School before going on to Henlow Middle School and then Bedford Modern School. Mark and Kathryn met when they were both studying for their PHD degrees at Cranfield University where Mark is now an Academic Fellow. It's lovely to hear a story such as this and of someone who has lived and been brought up in the village. I am sure that we would all like to wish Mark and Kathryn all the very best in their future life together.

Rev. John Barrall, a past Rector of Meppershall from 1991 to 1999, sadly passed away on Saturday, May 29 after an 11-year battle with prostrate cancer. John leaves his beloved wife Joan and his sons and daughter Tim, Michael and Kate.

During their time in Meppershall, John was instrumental in launching The Friends of St. Mary's, a group still extremely active in raising funds for the wellbeing of the church. Others will remember John as Rector in the church and for baptising their sons and daughters, and services of marriage. John and Joan moved to Northill but they still came back to Meppershall to Quizmaster the Friends Annual Quiz-night, held in January each year.

The funeral was held at Northill Parish Church on Wednesday, June 16 at 2pm followed by burial at St. Mary's Church, Meppershall.

John was everybody's friend, very proactive and approachable. He will be greatly missed by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Joan wishes to say a big thank you for all the many cards and messages she has received in this difficult time.

Trevor Thorley 01462 813357. trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com

Remember....It's 'YOUR' Shout!

School Report - Meppershall VA Lower School

'An Outstanding Church of England School'

As I write this, the Hazels Class are putting the finishing touches to the songs they will be singing at an inter- schools Sing Quest Concert in the Bedford Corn Exchange. The event promises to be a very exciting and a memorable occasion. Music has always had a high priority at Meppershall. Talking to some ex pupils recently they remembered fondly the enjoyment of whole school singing and visitors often comment on the high quality produced. The Sing Quest initiative has been organised to bring singing back to schools as it has sometimes been squeezed out of the curriculum. Our school choir has also been working hard on their repertoire in readiness for the BEST (Bedfordshire East Schools Trust) Festival. We are now a member of the trust, together with other schools in the Samuel Whitbread pyramid who work together for the purposes of collaboration and sharing good practice.

Our school Savings scheme started this term and a very positive response was shown by pupils who already have clear ideas about their financial plans! They will be learning more in Money Week!

The Acorns and Beeches class spent a wonderful day at Wild Britain at the beginning of June. They went on an insect safari and were able to observe a wide variety of mini beasts with the help of the resident naturalist. Walking in the tropical house, the children were able to move amongst the amazing butterflies and see terrapins at close hand. After going on a hedgehog trail and excavating in a mole's mine, they returned to the coach where many of them slept the journey away (and that was just the teachers!).

The Oaks class sent two teams to compete in a Swimming Festival at Flitwick Leisure Centre. This was the culmination of the six week swimming course that took place last half term. To mark the start of

the World Cup, the children were treated to a fun presentation by one of the coaches from the Redbourne Partnership, which provides many of the sporting activities in which we take part. This term we will be entering Tennis, Cricket and Multi Skills festivals. We are also practising hard for the Henlow Football tournament and for Country Dancing at the Village Fete.

We are using the summer weather to improve our outdoor area with planting and creative ideas using recycled materials as we focus on helping the environment. We have our own compost bins and take recycling very seriously. We were reminded of the importance of this by a special assembly presented by the Hazels class. Gardening club continues to grow (literally) and the giant radishes produced were added to the lunch time menu by Mrs Fitzpatrick our school cook.

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

As I write this month's article we are a few days away from the new Government's first Budget, in which we'll find out how they are going to set about tackling the deficit. Some of the media seem to hyping this up into some sort of frenzy resulting in clients calling me for advice on what to do. For the vast majority of us any impact will be slight; Governments can raise phenomenal amounts of revenue by taking an extra couple of pounds or so a month, off all of us. In most people's minds the fear is much worse than the reality!

A good example of this is the speculation around Capital Gains Tax. Very few people in the UK actually pay CGT. In simple terms it is a tax you pay if you sell something for a profit. Three years ago Alistair Darling reduced the rates from 20% & 40% down to a flat 18%. The recession then prevented him following this up with Income Tax, so we are left with CGT rates which are out of kilter with the rest of the tax system, so it's no surprise then that this Government will want to re-align things.

Clients have been contacting me to ask if they should sell their shares or their caravan in Dorset, or their apartment in Spain/Portugal/Cyprus/Florida etc., There are two points here – firstly CGT is only payable if you realise the profit. So, if you are not intending to sell it, you won't have to pay any tax! Secondly, everyone has an annual allowance of £10,100, and it's only gains (profits) above this that are taxable. Many shareholders annually sell just enough shares to use this allowance (often reinvesting it into ISA's). Above all do not lose sight of the fact that it is only the gain that is potentially taxed, **NOT** the original cost. One word of warning here is that giving something away counts as a disposal (at market value) for CGT purposes, so even though no money changes hands, CGT could still be payable.

Another tax attracting media speculation is that VAT will rise from 17.5% to 20%. The common perception is that everything in the shops will go up – well some things will, but we have the choice whether we buy them or not, so if you don't want to pay the higher price, don't buy it! Also don't forget that many things are either zero-rated (i.e. the tax is 0%), or pay a reduced rate of 5%. Amongst the zero-rated items are food and drink (excluding alcohol, crisps, snacks etc.), children's clothes, books/papers/magazines, water and sewerage charges. Then at the reduced 5% come gas, electric, and heating oil. Most health, welfare, education, mobility and leisure costs are also either zero- or 5% rated. So the basics of everyday life should not be affected.

I suspect some items currently zero-rated will cease to be so, I can see easy targets such as books/papers/magazines, but we shall see. Whatever is done will impact upon us all to an extent, but let's not run around in blind panic at what might be - we should wait and assess the real impact on our individual lives.

Finally I'm pleased to read that the compulsion to buy an annuity by age 75 looks like it's heading for the bin! This limit has been in place for decades from a time when relatively few people actually lived that long. Nowadays it is totally alien to expect that someone's outlook on life, their needs, and aspirations will change dramatically overnight when they cease being 74 and become 75. The option to annuitise at any time will still be there, but forcing people to do something which is contrary to their needs has long been a bone of contention. I notice a few TV adverts regarding annuities are popping up (one of them doesn't even mention the word annuity), so next time I thought I would cover these to examine some of the myths and pitfalls.

Jon Ingarfill

Tel: 07870 564115 or email: jon@rutherfordfinancial.co.uk

Polehanger: A Farming Diary - Episode 14

Arable crop farming is by its very nature seasonal and annually repetitive. I have now been compiling this diary for more than a year and should really be looking back to make sure that I don't go over the same things as last year. But of course that is inevitable in the general sense. The detail is never the same but the activity is.

It is June as I write, so we know that the wheat will be on ear by now and that we need to keep it and the top flag leaf clear of disease in order to maximize the area of the plant that can 'see' the sun. Photosynthesis will fill the grain with the starch that will become flour. We want plump, 'bold' not shrivelled grain. The recent rains have come at a good time to ensure that there is enough moisture in the soil to facilitate this. At this stage, we have done all we can to help nature and we must wait for her to take her course in the ripening process over the next 8 weeks or so leading up to harvest. It is always a salutary reminder that whilst farmers can do much to tweak their crop's potential, once the grain is sown, it is sunshine and rainfall, or lack of it, that are the main determinants of harvest yield.

In this period the grain store will have been thoroughly cleaned and fumigated to ensure there are no insect pests which could spoil the stored grain after harvest. A break away from the farm, and forward planning are on the menu in preparation for the very busy period from mid July until the end of October.

In the May issue, I promised to comment on the planning application at Nocton in Lincolnshire, for the huge dairy unit for 8,000 cows. The Nocton proposal has raised some heated debate that actually has wider implications than this particular one. Issues of animal welfare, environmental care, provision of 'cheap' food and the shape of the countryside all raise their heads.

On a very simple level, as an ex dairy farmer, I would make the following points about Nocton.

Cows that are not looked after well will not produce good lactations, will have poor fertility and a short productive life. It takes at least 2 years and more commonly 30 months to raise a dairy heifer calf to a point when she starts milking. The investment that sort of time scale needs cannot be compromised by poor welfare and management if you want to stay in business, whether you milk 50 or 8000 cows.

The Nocton unit will be large enough to employ a full time vet which will mean timely preventative and emergency health measures.

A non grazing routine will mean all year round housing but this does not mean cramped conditions. There will be exercise areas and plenty of fresh air. Contented cows will be a priority, even for purely commercial reasons. The practical logistics of moving 8000 cows around grazing fields and in for milking twice a day would be counter productive. Food will be brought to the cows (called zero grazing) rather than cows walking to fields in summer, but this is the case for all dairy herds in the winter in the UK. When we had 140 cows there was nothing better on a summer morning at 4.30 am (once roused from slumber of course) than fetching cows in from the field for milking as the sun rises, but it took at least 40 minutes to do so. However the same cannot be said in a wet autumn when each cow has to wade through a muddy gateway with the ensuing problems of dirty, cracked udders and damaged feet. The image of 8000 cows going through gateways doesn't bear thinking about!

Environmental issues, in particular pollution, are another big concern. The Environment Agency should and will have strict guidelines that will need to be adhered to before the unit is built. Dirty rainfall runoff from hillside grazed land can pollute watercourses, so the issue is not simply one of size or indoor rearing.

Small dairy units are much less likely to produce milk profitably because of fixed overhead costs being higher per cow. Gradually those herds are disappearing as they become relatively uneconomic for the capital and time investment involved.

Cheap food has become regarded as the norm and right of 'the man in the street'. As a general rule I believe this will only come from larger efficient units. The economic influences that cause manufacturing plants to get bigger are the same for farming, and already are in operation for cereals and horticulture. It is perfectly valid to have a contrary point of view about small farms and scale of operation but you cannot have cheap food and a profitable agricultural sector on that basis.

It is interesting that there seems to be a move towards part time, small holding or self sufficiency allotment type units. A reconnection with the countryside and growing or rearing your own food as a reality or aspiration is clearly on the agenda for many. But that is a personal lifestyle choice rather than an economic decision.

Do you agree?

Chris Foster: 16th June 2010

Chris always aims to make us think as well as to inform us. Please write in with your thoughts.

Ed

The History of Meppershall - 2

Based on documents in the Public Record Office

Problems of a landowner

The Manor House, Meppershall

1207

My dear brother Luke de Meppershall,

It is five years since you were accused of killing the monk at Chicksands and I now need to speak to you urgently concerning the gifts of land that our father was unwise enough to make. It would gladden my heart if you would return and clear our reputation by naming the true murderer within the group with whom you fled,

I am sure you will recall the time when our father sought to buy his way into heaven and, by following the custom of many large landowners, he gifted much of our family lands to Chicksands and Merton Priors. I trust it has benefitted his immortal soul but it has caused some problems for me! Although the family held the land by virtue of holding the office of Larderer, being in charge of provisioning the royal household, he gave it away without the permission of the King.. I now hold my lands by being obliged, to pay one tenth of a knight's fee and I also have to provide 40 days service of a mounted man with a coat of mail, a helmet and all weapons. When I inherited the manor, what was left of it, it took some time to pass into my hands since the King, as is the custom, took land and harvest back into his own hands until my legal right as heir was proved. I hope when my son John inherits it will not take so long.

Luke, I am not happy about the wholesale gifting of land carried out by our father. He gave 215 acres of arable land [*Bury Farm*], all the meadow between Farismede and Everwyn [*between the river and the Manor*] and all the common pasturing land he held, to Chicksands Priory. He also gave 100 acres [our brother Thomas gave some also] to Merton Priory [*Hoo Farm*] and more of our best land in Hertfordshire to Chicksands for a Grange [*St Thomas Chapel Farm*]. He even gave our Felmersham lands to Lenton Priory, as well as part of the advowson [*the right to appoint the rector*] of our own church here in the village.

We are still having difficulties with the prior of Lenton because we [remove extra space here] retain a portion of this right. My son, John and I feel we have no choice but to make a case against the Prior; he is claiming that he should have been given the greater part of the advowson. I am furious: it is the church our family built - it is MY church beside MY home and John, with his legal training (the cost of his education at last begins to bring some return!) assures me that if I swear on oath before the Justices at Bedford, stating that I DO have the greater right, then my case should be successful. It is indeed fortunate that I am known, by people who matter, to be a truthful man – even though I still owe the king some money. To me this seems to matter little since the king has owed me money at times.

There is also going to be a problem sooner or later with the Prior at Chicksands because he does not think he should appear at the regular manor court that I hold. If other landowners can bother to appear I see no reason to excuse him, but the fines I can impose would never be paid by him so I don't bother. I hope my son won't have so many problems with the land I gave to Warden Abbey [*Woodhall Farm*].

I need to know if you heard about any conditions attaching to the gifts of land and I would also like to know if you ever heard where he lodged our copies of the documents. You listened, more than I, to old family tales, so you may know which of the family was stupid enough to give the Knights of St John of Jerusalem (at least it wasn't to the Templars!) 360 acres at Polehanger?

Please write back if this letter reaches you.

Your loving brother,
Gilbert de Meppershall

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Calendar of Forthcoming Events

July 2010

Wednesday 7th		
Meppershall Players AGM and Panto Read-through	7.30 pm	Village Hall
Wednesday 14th		
Panto Auditions	7.30 pm	Village Hall
Tuesday 20th		
Baby & Toddler Teddy Bears Picnic	1.45 pm	Village Hall
School leavers service	2pm	St Mary's Church
Thursday & Friday, 22nd & 23rd		
Monday & Tuesday 26th & 27th		
Sparks 2010 Awesome	10.am -2.pm	St Mary's Church, Rectory & Grounds
Monday 26th		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
Thursday 29th		
Mobile Police Surgery	4.30pm-5.30pm	Village Hall

August 2010

Sunday 15th		
Village BBQ	4.00 PM	St Mary's Rectory Garden

September 2010

Saturday 11th		
Beds & Herts. Historic Churches Trust sponsored Bike & Hike	TBA	TBA
Monday 13th		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall

October 2010

Saturday 9th		
Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen	7.30pm	St Mary's Church

WHO'S WHO AND WHAT'S WHAT IN MEPPERSHALL

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 Amptthill 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
Collins & Garragher,	The Surgery, 109 Station Road, Lower Stondon	850305

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

Chairman, Parish Council	Peter Chapman, 9 Brookside	813497
	Council meets 2 nd Monday day each month, in Meppershall Village Hall at 7.45pm	
Clerk:	Mr. C. Waghorn, 15 Church Lane, Letchworth GC	637531
	Email: waggers.uk@ntlworld.com	
Central Beds Councillors:	Tony Brown, 11 Clifton Road, Shefford. Beds	816254
	anthony.brown@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk	
	Lewis Birt, 165 Clifton Road, Shefford Beds	819948
	lewis.birt@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk	
	Surgery/Advice Centre: 1 st 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
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

<u>Babysitting Circle</u>	Vacant	
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<u>Beavers</u>	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	811747
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<u>Brownies</u>	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

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

<u>Meppershall Garden Club</u>	3 rd 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:	Jessica Bryant	819143
Secretary:	Rachael Bamford	819403
Registrar:	Jessica Bryant	819143

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:	Sue Rafferty	30, Fildyke Road	
Village Hall Telephone Number			817359

Web address: www.meppershallvillagehall.co.uk

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
	tanya@tanya3.orangehome.co.uk	

Scouts

Sheffield	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

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

In the Rectory Garden,
Church Road, Meppershall

Quality Meats,
Crispiest Salads,
Mouthwatering Puds

Sunday 15th Aug @ 4p.m.

FOR ALL WHO LIVE, WORK, PLAY IN MEPPERSHALL

TOMBOLA, GAMES AND
STALLS

Adult **£6** Under 12's **£4**

Family of 4 (2 adults, 2 under 12's) **£18**

Tickets: the Post Office, the Bakery, Rectory 813334

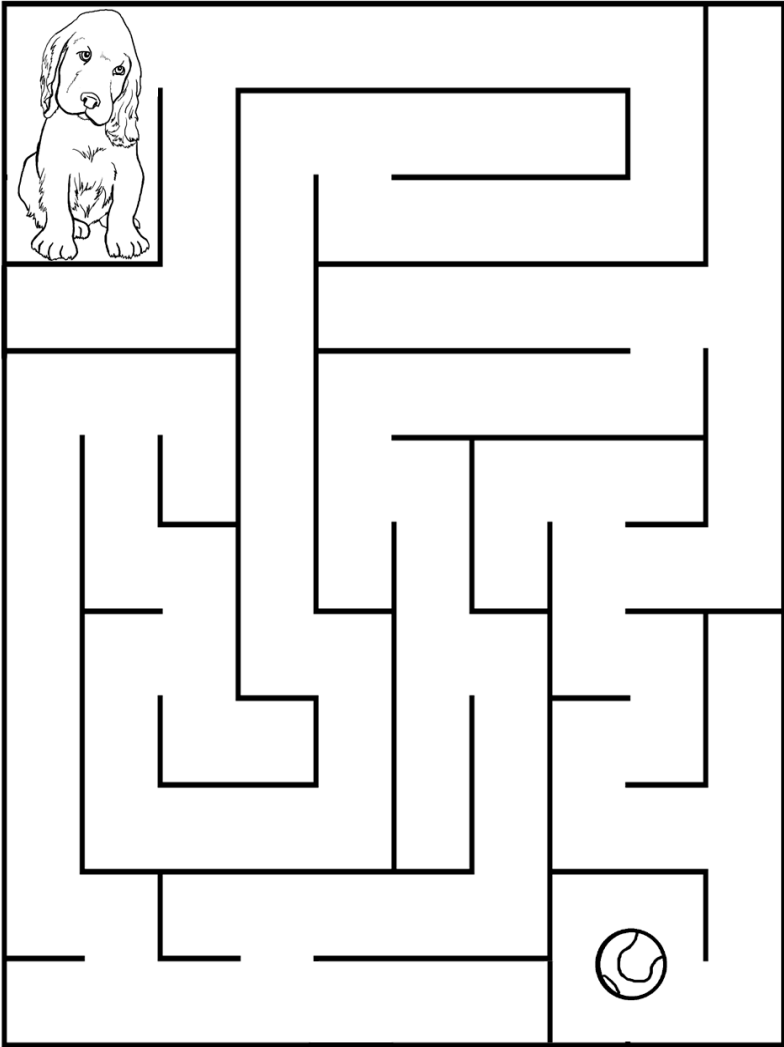
FOR OUR YOUNGER READERS

Edited by Brigid Holmes

Joke: Q: Why did the boy blush when he opened the fridge?

A: He saw the salad dressing!

Help the puppy find the ball.



Younger Readers' Quiz.

Write your answers on the line provided.

1. Who sang the recent song O.M.G ?

2. What is the song sung by James Corden and Dizzee Rascal called?

3. Which artist sang “Frisky”?

4. Which movie is the song “We dance on” from?

5. Which singer sang “Love Story”?

6. Who sings “Solo”?

7. Who sings “Under Pressure (ice ice baby)”?

(Answers are on Page 48)

If you have any suggestions for the young readers’ page, please contact Richard Bulley



RINGMASTER

COMMUNITY MESSAGING PORTAL

Ringmaster messages are compiled by Bedfordshire Police, for more information and advice crime prevention checkout www.safer-beds.org

This really is a good site (Ed)

Two recent local crimes have occurred where the victim trusted the offender and handed over cash and valuable belongings never to see them again.

The first was a burglary in Higham Gobian where jewellery was stolen. The burglary followed a visit two days previously from three men in a car who offered to demolish and rebuild a garden wall. The victim handed over a large amount of cash; the wall was demolished, but never rebuilt.

The second was in Caddington, the offender completed gardening work and left with a silver Omega watch which he offered to have repaired and return to the owner.

Bedfordshire Police offer the following advice:

Never buy goods, or services at the doorstep or over the phone. If you need work undertaking obtain 3 written quotes before you proceed. Ask a friend or neighbour to recommend a company. Do not pay any money until you're happy that the work has been completed.

Trading Standards have a list of local registered traders, call 08454 040506 or check out

www.bedford.gov.uk/business/trading_standards.aspx#TSAMembers

then follow the link to North Beds or Central Beds listings.

If you have information about suspicious incidents or crimes, please call the Police Control Centre on 01234 841212, text to 07786 200011 or email **chc@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk**.

Or call Crime stoppers in Confidence on 0800 555111.

For your **FREE property marking kit** contact Ringmaster on 01234 275288 or email **Ringmaster@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk**

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The **Mobile Police Surgery** will be on the village hall car park on **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> July** between 4.30pm and 5.30pm.

# Meppershall Facebook

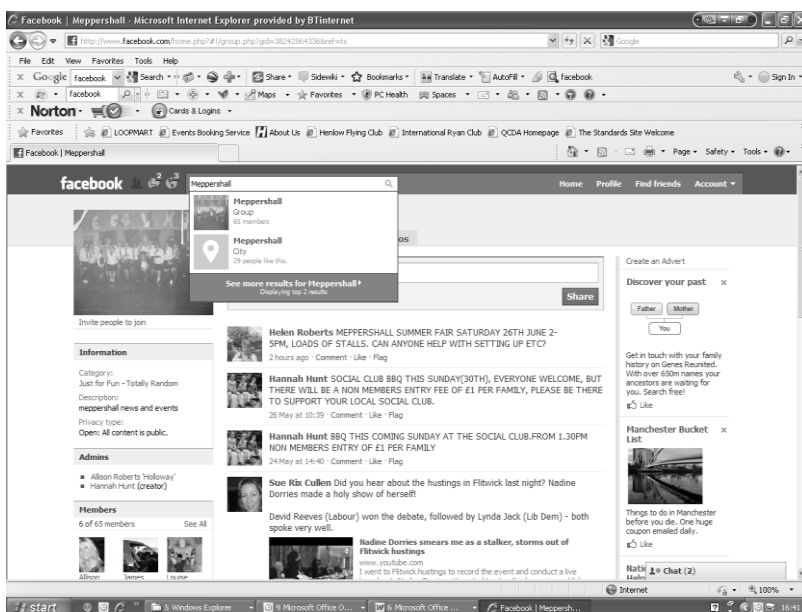
Meppershall has a facebook site with 65 members and 3 photo's (all a very dodgy looking 'St Trinian's' gig! Log in to see them).

Facebook is a great community tool, helping people to communicate with old friends, meet new ones and to stay in touch with what's happening.

Anyone can join and anyone can post pictures. It's free and all you need to get started is an email address.

Here's how: Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and complete the registration page (you'll need to create a password). Onscreen instructions guide you through the setting up of your profile - you can choose whether to add a picture of yourself and how much information to share.

Once you're set up, go to 'Groups', type 'Meppershall' into the search box (see below), choose the Meppershall Group and join in.



Any problems contact Allison Roberts [alli.roberts@hotmail.com](mailto:alli.roberts@hotmail.com) or Helen Roberts [helen@theroberts.myzen.co.uk](mailto:helen@theroberts.myzen.co.uk)

See you there!

## Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group News



**Can you help us? Too old for your wands, wings, princess or fairy dresses? Or maybe you've out grown spider man We would welcome donations of dressing up clothes for our toddler group. Please either drop them off at one of our sessions or call the numbers below and we will arrange collection.**

*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*

Date for your diary..... 20<sup>th</sup> July, this is our last session before the summer holidays, and sadly some of our toddlers will be leaving us as they go up to school. To say farewell we are having a Teddy Bears Picnic for all our babies and toddlers, bring your favourite bear along and join in the fun.

We are planning another visit to Summerfield Railway at Haynes in the school holiday, and we are planning more events in the school holidays which we will tell you about next month, contact for these events will be Catherine Turner - tel 01462 812134



# The Meppershall Players



...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.

**Panto Auditions:** 7.30pm on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010 in the Village Hall.

**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

## WANDERBUS COMES OF AGE

Your Editor, accompanied by Colette House and John Chapman with his camera, were privileged to be invited to the “*programme of cuts*” (very topical!) at Southill Village Hall on 14<sup>th</sup> June.

Special guest Pam Rhodes made the first cut into a Wanderbus 21<sup>st</sup> birthday cake provided by a well-known village baker and bee-keeper, following which we all trooped outside to see her, assisted by one of the regular Wanderbus passengers, cut the ribbon to bring into service a spanking new bus.



So what and why is the Whitbread Wanderbus Ltd? It is a not-for-profit organisation set up 21 years ago by a farsighted combination of local & central government and local sponsors. Its purpose is to provide transport via regular scheduled services for those people in our area who, for whatever reason, do not have transport of their own. Pam Rhodes reminded us how

much most of us rely on having our own transport readily available. It aims to be self-funding, so fares are competitive but commercial: Albeit the majority of its passengers qualify for a free bus pass, the services are open to all. The Treasurer is Duncan Thomas, whom we thank for the invitation.



A summary of the services as they serve Meppershall appears on page 33 in this Messenger and will be printed from now on with the other bus timetables. For more complete details and for details of other routes, contact the co-ordinator, Sherry Cole, on 01767 318444 or visit [www.wanderbus.org.uk](http://www.wanderbus.org.uk)

Summary of Wanderbus services to and from The Sugar Loaf, Meppershall:

| Service | Destination                       | Days                                                | Time     |          |
|---------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
|         |                                   |                                                     | Dept     | Return   |
| W1      | Bedford                           | 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed<br>each month | 09.32.am | 12.10 am |
| W6      | Shefford<br>(Morrisons)           | Every Friday                                        | 09.20 am | 11.10 am |
| W10     | Stevenage<br>(Tesco)              | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday<br>each month               | 09.10 am | 11.50 am |
| W11     | Milton Keynes<br>(Midsummer Bvd.) | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday<br>each month               | 09.10 am | 12.45 pm |
| W14     | WGC (bus stn)                     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday<br>each month                | 09.15 am | 12.10 pm |

## ADVANCE NOTICE

The 2010 Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust sponsored **Bike & Hike** will this year be on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. That is not too far away as school holidays start in a few weeks and time will fly! We need as many of you as possible to take part in the cycling, walking, helping and sponsoring to see if we can beat last year's figure of £626.60. Half of the money raised will go to St Mary's Church in the village and the other half to the Trust. We must ensure that we raise more money than the local opposition, St Francis' in Shefford.

More details later, but please keep the date free and ensure that your equipment is well oiled.

Trevor Wilkinson  
01462 811583

## The Treasurer's Charity



This month I go beyond Bedfordshire again to the only registered charity totally committed to funding the fight against cancer in our pets.



### Millicent's Story

Hello! I'm Millicent, and I'm nearly ten years old. I live with two other Labradors, a yellow one called Matilda and a chocolate one called Martha, plus two people, Nina and Jonathan.

When I was aged seven, I stopped eating, and we all know that things are serious when a Labrador stops eating. Jonathan felt my tummy, and found some lumps that shouldn't have been there. My local vet thought I had lymphoma and was pretty pessimistic about my chances. Luckily, Jonathan knew another vet who specialised in animal cancer. I was taken to see him, and he prescribed chemotherapy. After quite an unpleasant experience with all the medication, including a three day stay in my local

dog hospital with a drip in my leg, here I am!

It was difficult at times for Nina and Jonathan. Halfway through my course of medicine, Nina thought that they should have let me quietly slip away - although I don't do anything quietly if I can help it. She's jolly pleased now though, and I get extra cuddles every day. As Jonathan says, the only way to be certain of dying of cancer is not to be treated for cancer!

My local pet doctor tells other dogs about me, and they are offered treatment, rather than a 'no hope' diagnosis. So even though I felt rather poorly at times during the couple of months of chemotherapy, I have helped other dogs with the same illness. I am really quite famous around these parts. So, nearly three years on, and I'm still the boss of the house. I always was a stubborn little madam!

Pet Cancer is set to become a top health priority thanks to the work of the Animal Cancer Trust. With one in four dogs and one in eight cats likely to develop a tumour in their lifetime, the work of the Animal Cancer Trust in supporting education and research into the latest cancer treatments is seen as vital.

Find out more and/or contact them at:

### Animal Cancer Trust

5 Flag Business Exchange, Vicarage  
Farm Road, Peterborough,  
Cambs PE1 5TX  
08701 644225

[www.animalcancertrust.org.uk](http://www.animalcancertrust.org.uk)

[info@animalcancertrust.org.uk](mailto:info@animalcancertrust.org.uk)

John Thompson

## THE MEPPERSHALL GARDEN CLUB



June has been a busy month for members of the Garden Club both in their own gardens and at the village hall and also in their involvement with the Village Fair. Hopefully you will have noticed that the village hall planters have been updated with their summer bedding which was generously supplied by Sara Till and Colette House. Sarah and Colette managed to produce all this year's bedding plants from the seeds and cuttings taken from last year's display. As some of the winter pansies and primula were not quite over, these were transferred to the front border which is growing rapidly in its second year.

During the month, we held our regular monthly meeting and some of us even managed to fit in a private visit to two beautiful gardens in Barton-Le-Clay; The Manor House and Wayside Cottage. Both these gardens are open to the public under the National Gardens Scheme at various times during the year.

By the time that you read this article, we may have had the opportunity to meet some of you at the Village Fair where we will be selling "the fruits of our labour". If you want to know more about the Meppershall Garden Club or wish to join us in any of our activities, then please contact:

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



# **KENNY BALL & HIS JAZZMEN**

**Excitement is mounting for the visit of this household name in the Jazz world as Kenny Ball, with his Jazzmen, comes to Meppershall as part of his 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary tour.**

We are extremely privileged to have such an icon of the jazz world come to Meppershall as part of his celebratory tour, which takes in famous venues in the British Isles as well as Europe. We sit comfortably there on his website as October 9, Meppershall, Bedfordshire, ENGLAND!

**For the first time we will be working to a seating plan and tickets will be available from August, but you can register your interest NOW!**

There will be a bar and the performance, in St. Mary's Church at 7.30pm, will be two hours of actual playing with an interval of approximately 25 minutes. Kenny Ball, who is delighted to be coming here, will be around at the end of the performance to sign his latest CD, which will be on sale on the night. Can't wait!

**It promises to be a night to remember, you can contact me on 01462 813357 or email [trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com](mailto:trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com)**

## **Ringling church bells in Meppershall**

People usually associate the music of church bells with the happy celebration of a wedding, the marking of the New Year or the call to worship. However, the ringing of bells also marks other events, sometimes sad ones.

Traditionally, the tenor (heaviest bell) which at Meppershall weighs 12 cwt (approximately 250 kg) tolls for a time before a funeral. Ringers may sometimes ring all the bells before the service. If this is done the bells are rung half muffled. This means that the clappers (the bit that hits the side of the bell) are covered with leather straps. This causes one note of the bell to sound clear and sharp while the other is soft and quiet. Ringing like this is meant to represent the joy of the resurrection but also recognizes the sadness of those left grieving.

On rare occasions the ringers at Meppershall will sound out the Passing Bell. This is an ancient tradition which in a world before modern communication was a means of passing on the message of a death. There is a set pattern. The tenor is tolled three times for a man or twice for a woman or once for a child. Then the age of the deceased is sounded. Finally the tolling is repeated. The Passing Bell must be tolled within twenty four hours of the death.

The Passing Bell last sounded for the Rev. John Barrall on the Saturday morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2010. A half muffled quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles was rung on the Thursday night of the 3<sup>rd</sup> June in honour and celebration of his life. John was a ringer and had celebrated and rung in the New Year with the Thursday band for many, many happy years. We will miss him.

So if you heard the bells at those times then you were listening to centuries of tradition that acknowledges sad as well as happy events.

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

|                          |                                   |            |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| First Mass of Sunday     | 6pm                               | RAF Henlow |
| Saturday Evening         | 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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***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 July**

|                               |                                        |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b>  | 11.15am Parish Communion.              |
| <b>Trinity 5</b>              | JC in Rectory                          |
| <b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b> | 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion               |
| <b>Trinity 6</b>              | 11.15 a.m. Family Service              |
| <b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b> | 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion               |
| <b>Trinity 7</b>              | 6.00 p.m. Evensong and address         |
| <b>Tuesday 20th</b>           | 2pm Meppershall School Leavers Service |
| <b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup></b> | 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion               |
| <b>Trinity 8</b>              | 11.15 a.m. Family Communion & JC       |

(St James)

### **Weekday Services:**

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

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

Saturdays 9.30a.m. Morning Prayer

### **Service of Prayer for Healing and Wholeness**

The four Shefford Churches will once more hold a time of worship for anyone seeking God's peace and strength for themselves or others. We meet on Monday July 5 at St Francis RC Church, High St Shefford at 7.30p.m. and all are invited to stay for BBQ'd refreshments in the garden afterwards.

### **Confirmation?**

If you'd like to explore the purpose of Confirmation and what's involved in preparing to be confirmed, you will be very welcome at a no obligation 'Just looking' session on Weds July 7, at The Rectory. We will also look at the link with baptism, whether or not you have already been baptised. (It isn't uncommon for people to be baptised and confirmed at the same service) Young people aged 10+ are invited to come along at 6.30 p.m. and adults at 7.45p.m. Do ring if you'd like to talk it over first – 813334

### **St Mary's Churchyard**

Please consider giving a little of your time to ensure that St Mary's churchyard is maintained to the high standard we have been accustomed to in recent years. Two volunteers have recently needed to step down, and we urgently need others to take their place. Mowing machines are provided.

Also we have recently constructed a fine new shed to house the mowers, so that their current store can then be transformed into a respectable toilet. To utilise the new shed we need a working party to form an earth ramp up to the entrance. If you can help at a **Working party on Saturday July 10, 9.30** on, or would like to

know more about helping with the churchyard, please let Peter Longland know on 814053.

**Dear friends,**

It's a funny old world. As the years roll by I've discovered that some things I've taken for granted are more fiction than fact. We used to live near Runnymede, where King John signed Magna Carta, but, as was quickly pointed out, he didn't, because the man couldn't write. Nearer to home I'm sure I was taught that Winston Churchill stirred the hearts of wartime Britain with his offer of "blood sweat and tears"? But what he really said was "blood, toil, tears and sweat".

But what does all that matter, so long as we get the gist of things right. A few little inaccuracies are neither here nor there, unless we're contestants in Brain of Britain. But again there are some truths that do matter, and we can be misled in a big way if we just sail along with the popular opinion.

For instance, take the statement: 'We remember Jesus because he was the greatest moral teacher the world has ever known'. It sounds plausible enough, but in reality it strikes at the heart of Christian belief. We wouldn't know of Jesus' teaching if He had only been a great moral teacher. The reason we know of Jesus is that he was and is who he claimed to be, that is the human expression of God himself. Either we take Jesus at his word, with all that that implies about his relationship with God the Father, or we conclude that He was deluded. C.S.Lewis, author of the Narnia stories, put the point like this: 'A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic or he would be the Devil of hell. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman, or something worse'.

Popular opinions need careful sifting. That seems to apply both to the trivial as well as to the deeply consequential.

With good wishes

John Harper

## St Mary's Churchyard

Would you be willing to help maintain our beautiful churchyard? We have a conscientious team of volunteers who keep the grass in admirable condition on behalf of the parish, and who would greatly appreciate the help of a few more colleagues. Mowing machines are provided.

If you would like to know more please contact Peter Longland – 814053

## Village Family Notices

**Deaths:** Colin Paige, peacefully at home on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010, aged 64 Years.

Rev, John Barrall, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2010, aged 79 Years.

**Marriages:** Darren Larkman and Faye Tinsley, Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2010 at St. Mary The Virgin Church, Meppershall.

**Christenings:** Grace Jane Bough daughter to Simon and Jaden, on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at St. Mary The Virgin Church, Meppershall.

*Do let me know of any deaths, marriages, births, christenings or birthdays connected with the village for inclusion in the Messenger.*

*Ed*

## ROSE PLANTING

On 24<sup>th</sup> May Meppershall Brownies made their contribution to the beautification of the Village Hall by planting a rose to mark the centenary of the Girl Guide movement. The rose is called The Girl



Guiding Centenary Rose, and in planting it the Brownies were encouraged and assisted by members of the Meppershall Garden Club. We trust that it will still be flourishing when these young ladies bring

## ***SPARKS 2010 AWESOME***

***a sizzling, christian holiday club for 5 – 12yrs***

**Thurs. 22<sup>nd</sup> Fri. 23<sup>rd</sup> Mon. 26<sup>th</sup> Tues 27<sup>th</sup> July 10 – 2pm**  
**at St. Mary's Church, Meppershall, the Rectory & gardens**  
***[please note - the site is NOT enclosed]***

**Your child will need:**

- **£2.50 per day [bring on the day]**
- **A PACKED LUNCH [NO GLASS]**
- **TO WEAR OLD CLOTHES**

**We provide drinks during the day.**

If anyone [aged 13+] would like to help for all or part of any day, contact:  
Sandra 813334 [sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk) Morag 643387  
[morag.deluca@ntlworld.com](mailto:morag.deluca@ntlworld.com)

their own children to Brownies!

**Please RETURN FORMS to school, or  
The Rectory, Church Rd., Meppershall  
!!Register now, ONLY 80 places available!!**

**NAME[S] .....**

**Age[s] on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2010 .....**

**Tel:.....**

**Address.....**

**email.....**

**Additional contact.....**

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

**.....**

**Please TICK if you DO NOT want your child to be in any photographs/TV**

**Please TICK that you are aware the venue IS NOT an enclosed site.**

**If your child wishes to be in the same group as a friend [s], please give  
name[s] .....**

**Signature of parent/carer: .....**

**More registration forms available from St Mary's or St Michaels Church**



**STRAWBERRY SENSATION TRIFLE**

1 Large jam Swiss roll  
30ml (2tbsp) Kirsch liqueur  
450g (1lb) strawberries, hulled and halved  
150ml (1/4 pint) white wine  
30ml (2tbsp) lemon juice  
75g (3oz) caster sugar  
300ml (10floz) fresh double cream  
Chopped pistachio nuts and sliced strawberries to decorate

**METHOD**

- 1) Slice Swiss roll and arrange in a large glass bowl. Pour over Kirsch.
- 2) Place strawberries on top.
- 3) Put wine, lemon juice and sugar in a bowl.
- 4) Add cream and whip until mixture is softly stiff and holds its shape.
- 5) Pour over strawberries, cover and refrigerate for about 2 hours.
- 6) Decorate with nuts and strawberry slices.

Recipes are kindly supplied each month by Brenda Putwain

## GARDEN TIPS FOR JULY

(With acknowledgements to the RHS)

- Make sure birds have water in dry weather
- Keep new and young plants well watered during the summer, but use water wisely
- Watch out for pests and diseases
- Regularly feed and water all plants in containers
- Continue deadheading flowers as they fade
- Prune shrubs that flowered in early summer
- Take semi-ripe cuttings from shrubs
- Trim conifer hedges and take cuttings
- Summer-prune wisteria
- Divide bearded irises
- Layer and take cuttings of carnations and pinks
- Disbud dahlias to get larger blooms
- Plant autumn-flowering bulbs
- Transplant seedlings of biennials sown earlier
- Water vegetables regularly
- Lift new potatoes, onions and garlic
- Pinch out runner beans when they reach the top of their canes
- Pinch out outdoor tomatoes when four trusses have formed and remove side-shoots
- Pick raspberries and currants
- Harvest herbs for drying
- Keep greenhouses well ventilated and damp-down regularly.

### LAST CHANCE

- Fill any gaps in beds and borders with bedding
- Sow the last vegetables for harvesting in autumn
- Plant out all winter brassicas.

### GET AHEAD

- Make plans to have plants cared for if you are taking holidays in August
- Order spring-flowering bulbs
- Prepare ground for making new lawns in autumn
- Sow salads under cover for autumn and winter
- Prepare new strawberry beds.

## Summer Fair Next Year?

This years Fair was organised by a handful of your friends and neighbours, with not much previous experience, just a sense of humour, patience and hard work.

Hopefully you attended the Fair and spent an enjoyable afternoon, so would you spend a few moments telling us what you think?

Is it worth building on this year's effort to repeat and improve on the Fair next year? Please give us your thoughts below.

Did you attend the Fair? YES / NO

What attracted you to attend? A PARTICULAR ATTRACTION /  
CURIOSITY / TO SUPPORT THE VILLAGE HALL / OTHER REASON  
(PLEASE EXPLAIN)

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What was your favourite attraction?

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Should Meppershall have a Fair next year? YES / NO

What improvement would make the biggest impact?

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Any other comment

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please hand in your completed survey to the Village Stores. ☺

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**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**

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

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

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

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

Sch = School Days. NSch = non-school days

Henlow Camp

Meppershall - Sugar Loaf

**Hitchin, Bancroft**

**Hitchin Station**

**Hitchin, Bancroft**

**Hitchin, Grove Road Rd**

**Hitchin, Wilbury Way**

Train departs to London

|  | NSch  | Sch   |
|--|-------|-------|
|  | 06.45 |       |
|  | 07.45 | 07.45 |
|  | 08.20 | 10.00 |
|  | 08.23 | 13.35 |
|  | 07.19 |       |
|  | 08.35 |       |
|  | 07.22 | 10.35 |
|  |       | 14.10 |
|  | 08.30 |       |
|  | 08.42 | 08.42 |
|  | 07.32 |       |

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

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

Train arrives from London

Hitchin, Wilbury Way

**Hitchin, Grove Road,**

**Hitchin Station**

**Hitchin, Bancroft,**

Meppershall - Sugar Loaf

|  | Sch    | N Sch |       |
|--|--------|-------|-------|
|  |        |       | 18.16 |
|  |        |       | 18.20 |
|  |        | 17.05 |       |
|  | 15.54B | 15.57 | 18.27 |
|  | 16.00  | 16.00 | 18.30 |
|  | 12.35  | 17.15 | 18.03 |
|  | 13.08  | 16.33 | 17.48 |
|  | 16.33  |       |       |

Times correct as at 02/11/09

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

*Anabella Gould who will be 13 on the 1<sup>st</sup>  
Charlotte Rose who will 3 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Oliver Zimmerman who will be 11 on the 6<sup>th</sup>  
Chelsea Addams who will be 13 on the 6<sup>th</sup>  
Charlotte Watson who will be 9 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
Chloe Watson who will be 9 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
Joshua Wright who will be 10 on the 13<sup>th</sup>  
James Metcalfe who will be 8 on the 14<sup>th</sup>  
Jessica West who be 15 on the 14<sup>th</sup>  
Erica Ward who will be 11 on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Lewis Caddick who will be 8 on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Scott Metcalfe who will be 6 on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
George Nash who will be 4 on the 18<sup>th</sup>  
Cameron Maxwell who will be 8 on the 26<sup>th</sup>  
Kerys Henderson who will be 8 on the 26<sup>th</sup>  
Heather Bull who will be 9 on the 26<sup>th</sup>  
Ella Gregg who will be 12 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 814148*

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### Answers to Younger Readers' Quiz:

- 1) Usher
- 2) Shout
- 3) Tinie tempah
- 4) Street dance 3D
- 5) Taylor Swift
- 6) Iyaz
- 7) Jedward