



Arms of the de  
Meppershall Family

# ***THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER***



**VOLUME 26 – Issue 10**  
***MARCH 2011***

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

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*You may have noticed from this Contents list that we have no Wine Talk this month – indeed Duncan Thomas wrote last month that it would be his last piece. I would like to thank Duncan for taking on that series and providing us with such knowledgeable and entertaining guidance.*

*Ed.*

## **EDITORIAL**

Issue 10 signifies the end of another Messenger Year; we have completed our 26<sup>th</sup> year of publication. It has been quite an eventful year, starting in April with our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Souvenir issue, which turned out to be such a success. In May we published a Time-line of Meppershall history and the June issue saw the first of Sandra Read's fascinating pieces filling out the history of the village. In July we simply maintained our usual high standard, with the proposed housing development behind the Village Hall providing a recurring topic. Then in August we were able to present a picture supplement on the Summer Fair that had taken place in such glorious weather in June. Following our summer break, we introduced a change in the October issue, which did not contain the "Who's Who" because that had been hived off into a separate booklet, to be kept for future reference. (Note to Village organisations: the updated "Who's Who" will appear in April, so please notify me of any changes required). November & December were again "the mixture as before", which brings us to February and the tributes to Archie Russell.

Ten issues that owed their quality and variety entirely to our contributors: I should like to thank them all, on behalf of our readers, for their continuing support, notably Roger, bee keeper and baker, who notches up his 30<sup>th</sup> piece in this issue, and Chris Foster who reaches his 20<sup>th</sup>. Thanks must also go to the sustained efforts of the Magazine Committee and all our volunteer helpers, printers, folders, collators and distributors. I am immensely proud and grateful to have been in the editor's chair. Please come along to our AGM on 13<sup>th</sup> April (see page 38) and tell us what you think and how we could improve.

Sadly, this issue again has to record the passing of some notable villagers. In Your Shout on page 9 Trevor Thorley records a tribute to Barrie Carne, which is illuminated by the letter from Mick Trundle. A further letter from John Pontin sadly marks the death of his wife, Dora. John became the oldest inhabitant that we are aware of in Meppershall on the death of Archie Russell, and it such a shame that Dora did not live to enjoy that eminence with him.

*Dick Bulley*

## LETTERS

A belated newsletter from Lesley Skerman  
Dementia Unit  
Lavender House  
Meppershall

At Christmas time we were very busy and very lucky. Meppershall Village Choir and Meppershall School Choir both came and performed for us. We had a carol service and our Christmas party on 18<sup>th</sup> December – the day of the great snowstorm. We were lucky that our entertainer arrived before the snow! Cook did us proud with a wonderful selection of food and drink. We drew our raffle, which made £119 for the residents' fund.

We had an entertainer again at New Year, and this week three of our residents enjoyed a ride through the countryside and pretty villages, ending at a garden centre for lunch.

We have a programme of events to look forward to this year, including our Summer Fete which will be held on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June in our garden, which will soon be blooming again.

Sincere thanks to all concerned for your donations to our home last year.

Lesley

Letter from John Pontin.

I would like to thank all the people who have sent me cards and good wishes following Dora's death. I miss her every day but it is a comfort to know that so many other people loved her as well.

*Dora was a distributor for the Messenger for many years. The Messenger team and many other people in the village will miss her.*

*Ed.*

Letter from Mick Trundle

Trundle Towers

10/02/11

I'd like to share a couple of memories of the late Barrie Carne.

Barrie was a member of the original village drama group, the MADS, and having two of his offspring as long serving members of the present Players, he would occasionally appear in the audience, usually at a pantomime. Barrie would be amused by something and laugh – well, I say laugh but it was more like a cackle. This would normally cause the rest of the audience to erupt. This separate performance would last for several minutes and all activity on the stage would cease. Eventually sanity would return and we on stage could return to grappling with the complexities of the script.

A few years ago Barrie needed some equipment transporting to Haynes, and he asked me if I could assist. I duly turned up at the Carne residence with an upright Landrover, to find Barrie loading one of his home-built trailers. I bent down to look at something on the trailer and Barrie, knowing me to have been a welder in another life, said "Don't look too closely." I straightened up and muttered a quick prayer. In the event, nothing fell to pieces on that or subsequent journeys, which were always accompanied by a great deal of humorous banter.

Sadly, we have witnessed the passing of another village character.

*Mick Trundle*

Letter from Jean Holden

May I thank friends and neighbours for their concern for Eddie, and St Mary's for the prayers said at Church. Eddie is still undergoing tests but seems to be a lot better.

Jean

Letter from Shefford, Stotfold & Arlesey Safer Neighbourhoods Team – Bedfordshire Police.

Current issues in Meppershall include nuisance motorcycles, theft of car aerials and speeding. Recent speed checks have taken place in Shefford Road and drivers have been advised regarding the speed at which they were travelling. Further speed checks will be forthcoming.

There have been a number of phone calls regarding nuisance motorcycles. As of yet we have not caught up with the culprits but please keep the calls coming, as when we do, Section 59 warnings will be issued, with a view to seizing and crushing the motor cycles. A spate of thefts of car aerials has also occurred. We encourage all residents to be vigilant and to report any suspicious activity.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team's next surgery will be held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March in the Village Hall car park between 3.45 & 4.30 pm. We can also be contacted on 01234 842567 or at [SNT.SheffordStotfold&Arlesey@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:SNT.SheffordStotfold&Arlesey@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk)

Leigh Iddon, PCSO 3660

*PS from the Editor*

*I was contacted by a resident who had been bothered by a cold-calling roofer. He was interested in setting up a No Cold-calling Zone.*

*I asked our Mid Beds Councillor Tony Brown how we might go about that, and he replied that, unfortunately, the police programme relating to such zones had been discontinued. He passed on advice from the police to call 999 if you actually feel threatened and need immediate help, or call 01234 841212 to report a concern. You could also use the SNT number quoted above, but whichever phone number you use, be sure to ask for a call reference number when you get through.*

## **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 February 2011.

The main news from our Central Beds Councillor is that the budget for 2011/12 will be set on February 27th and is expected, in line with Government guidelines, to be the same as last year.

The Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee asked permission to use Foster's Field for the Meppershall Summer Fair.

CBC Cllr Lew Birt suggested that a fund be set up for parishioners or organisation who wished to help fund the footpath down Shefford Hill and he kindly set the fund running with a £100 donation. If anyone wishes to follow his kind gesture please send your donation to the Clerk or any Parish Councillor.

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

Recent Applications: - Extension to the rear of 55 High Street – no objections from the Council.

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

Cllr Bryant reported that he had received a reply to the Council's complaint about the resurfacing of Chapel Road. It would appear that someone thought they could save money by using bitumen instead of tar as the agent to stick the stones to the road. While Central Beds decides what to do to next a road sweeper is employed once a month to pick up the loose stones.

One job on the list for 2011/12 is to repair/improve the drain that runs from the High Street along the back of Hoo Road to Brookmead.

4 broken road signs have been reported.

### **Shefford Hill Footpath** - as at 14 February 2011.

My thanks to the 50 parishioners who responded to the insert in the last issue of The Messenger. Of those fifty, thirty six were in favour of the proposal that the Parish Council should continue to pursue the outlined action, seven were against and the remainder offered comments and suggestions without coming down on one side or the other. Regardless of the 'yes or no' factor, there was much useful feedback in both suggestions and opinions.

Before considering any of these, the efforts of the Parish Council and of Councillor Tony Brown (our Ward Councillor on Central Bedfordshire Council) have proved to be productive and there is, in total, just under £12,000 of Development Grant monies that can be utilised in the project plus a further £3,000 contribution from the Rights of Way and Footpaths section of the Unitary Council.

This will have a large bearing on the project as a whole and the requirement for the Parish Council to make a large capital contribution is reduced to a manageable level that could be dealt with in the normal course of business. We have two Ward Councillors and Tony Brown having done a great deal of work to establish the above funding, his colleague Lew Birt has suggested that a fund might be started whereby individuals could, if they so desired make a personal contribution; at the recent Council Meeting he made the first donation (see above).

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

Minor repairs have been carried out on the children's play equipment with more to follow.

It was agreed that the VHMC could use Foster's Field for their Summer Fair on 25th June.

The next Parish Council meetings will be held Mondays 14th March and 11th April 2011 at Meppershall Village Hall both commencing at 7.45pm.

Peter Chapman - Chairman of Meppershall Parish Council



## YOUR SHOUT

## With Trevor Thorley

**BARRIE CARNE:** The funeral service for Barrie Carne took place at Luton Crematorium on Monday January 31 at 4pm and afterwards in Meppershall Village Hall.

(Below is a tribute as told by his family)

Barrie was borne in Llanelli, South Wales, and he met Barbara when she was 17. He left his job and went to work as a van driver in the shop where Barbara worked so that she would go out with him. They were married in August 1956 and had three children, Paul, Keith and Karen.

In 1958 the employment situation was not good in Llanelli so when K & L foundry at Letchworth were looking for workers, Barrie's father suggested that he could go there for work. Barbara joined him leaving Paul with her parents and although it wasn't plain sailing to start with they made their home in Baldock before moving to Meppershall in 1963.

Barrie had a variety of jobs from caravan builder to furniture maker and lorry driver to computer engineer. It's fair to say that he's tried most things though it was pointed out never a vicar or a brain surgeon.

In Meppershall he ran a couple of pop groups and was a lead singer with a very nice tenor voice. In his youth he had acted with the likes of Kathy Staff, before wrinkled stocking fame, and continued with the Meppershall drama group both on and off stage.

Over the years he made a good many things, most, but not all, successful. A double bed with drawers and continental headboard; a Hawaiian guitar; swing sheds; a go-cart for his grandsons and two boats. The latter were built just as drawn in school, pointy end at the front and blunt end at the back. Despite being made out of porous plywood packing cases they floated well and were used on the river at Langford as well as in the sea at Great Yarmouth.

Not so successful was his five-seater bike, reduced to three on appeal. This idea came when a round the village bike ride was announced. Barrie joined two bikes together side by side then attached a fifth wheel behind with a bar stool and a drinks cabinet mounted on top, those who saw it will never forget it! The intrepid threesome, Paul, Brian Dodson and Barrie perched on top, left the Sugar Loaf at 9.30am and did not arrive back until 7pm when they were towed in.

He had a great sense of humour and regardless of how he was feeling or whatever the pain, if you asked him 'how he was' the answer was always the same 'superfine'. He was never one for sitting still and had a great interest in machines. He would travel all over the country collecting machines with Paul and his short-cuts were legendary.

He enjoyed his model railway, being instrumental in moving the model club from Chicksands to Henlow when they lost their building in Chicksands. He would travel to see steam engines with Paul and frequently they would be standing on a

freezing platform somewhere for five seconds of smoke and steam. He enjoyed his allotment and grew a wide variety of flowers and vegetables, a great deal of which were given away to friends and family.

He was a great lover of barbecues and, as well as the many private ones at home, which would always be well marinated, he did many for organisations in the village. He made and erected the village flagpole, now long since gone, and was always willing to help anyone. His many American friends from Chicksands still call in, email or ring, even though some of them have been gone for over 30 years. Most of the ladies he met were greeted with 'Hello Flower'; some say that's because he couldn't remember their names but it put a smile on their faces anyway. In fact it is really hard not to smile when you think of him, as his sense of fun was contagious.

As Barbara said, 'we are a very close family and we will miss him very much.

(Since Barrie's funeral, Paul has become a grandfather and Barrie would have become great-grandfather to a baby girl born on February 6.)

**QUIZ NIGHT:** It was lovely to see local groups competing in friendly revival at The Friends of St. Mary's annual Quiz Night, which took place in the Village Hall on Saturday January 29. Those taking part included TWO teams from The Post Office, which included a welcome sight of a table of teenagers, Roger's Bakery, Ivel Valley Walkers, St. Mary's Church, Team Eric returning to defend their trophy, TWO tables from the Gardening Club, a regular contestant, ex Biggleswade resident who returned from London to form a local team 'Pat's People' and actually won this year by a single point over three battling teams who tied for second place. With others, they made up the total of fourteen tables. Graham Jackson and Jenny officiated most efficiently as quizmasters and were presented with tangible gifts for their valuable contributions to the evening. They are already booked to come back for January 28, 2012, are you?

**CDs** of Meppershall Parish records covering the period from 1602 – 1950 with Church history and photographs, are now available from James Read at [Meppershal.PCC@gmail.com](mailto:Meppershal.PCC@gmail.com) or 01462 857836, cost £20. Proceeds to the care of St. Mary's fabric.

**Remember it's 'YOUR SHOUT'.**

Trevor Thorley [trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com](mailto:trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com) 01462 813357

# Meppershall VA CE Lower School

*'An outstanding Church of  
England School'*

*June 2008 and December 2010*



## School Report - March 2011

This month I am handing over our school report to Oaks Class. I asked them to write about life in Year 4, so here we go...

'The staff are very nice, polite and helpful. They are kind to all children in this very cool school.'

*William Jay*

'In year 4 we have some different teachers for some different subjects; like we have Mrs. Terry for maths, literacy, art, geography and design and technology. On Wednesday we have Mr. Smith for PE. Last but not least, we have Mrs. Allen for science and math also Mrs. Allen plays the piano in assembly, wonderfully!'

*Kerys Henderson*

'In year 4 or Oaks, we have been learning about the human body. I've enjoyed learning about the human body because you get to learn how you move.'

*Niamh Fairweather*

'We have been learning about France by going onto the laptops and finding out where France is.'

*Cameron Maxwell*

'This term we have been learning about the Bayeux Tapestry. Everybody has traced around an image of the Bayeux Tapestry and we are going to make one and show it in an assembly.'

*Thomas Clark*

'In art we are learning about the Bayeux Tapestry which is connected to our topic of France. We have been drawing the Bayeux Tapestry and have been painting them with water colours.'

*Caitlin Saunders and Lewis Savuto*

'At the bottom of the field at Meppershall Lower School we have a nature area. In the nature area there is a lovely small pond. The nature area is a lovely quiet place; it is full of beautiful trees.'

*Daisy Lucas*

'Every Friday there is a Match Attack club. It is where people bring in football cards. Every Friday some people swap their cards. There is an art club too it is fun.'

*Jack Gregg and Lewis Caddick*

'On a Friday we have Golden Time where we get to choose different things.'

*Cameron Heathfield*

'Meppershall Lower School is fabulous! There is a great after school club called Choir Club. There are about twelve people who go to choir, it is a great opportunity for your child.'

*Emma Horsford*

'In the playground the main sport is football and most or all of the boys play. The opposite is netball which is all girls.'

*Robert Andrews and George Scott*

'There is a tag rugby tournament coming up and our PE teacher Mr. Smith is coaching us. We do tag rugby matches and it is fun. Try it!'

*Lucian Sinfield*

'We have a specialist PE teacher called Mr. Smith. He teaches us football and tag rugby and lots more. We all enjoy his lesson.'

*James Metcalfe*

*Impressions collected by Lyn Fairweather*

## **SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP**

Once again Shefford Leisure Group used their usual tour operator for their 'Kill or Cure' trip. When we reached London we met our guide Marian at the George Inn, situated opposite the Law Courts, for a coffee stop. With Marian we then rejoined our coach for a whirlwind tour of 2,000 years of the history of medicine and nursing. Marian gave us an insight into the history of the many hospitals, some of which had changed their names. On completion of the circular tour we returned to the George Inn for a sumptuous carvery lunch which had been arranged and included, along with the coffee, in the price, which saves time having to find somewhere to eat. This gave us time to visit the Law Courts, and Twinings' very narrow emporium which sells a number of various teas. Also nearby was the RAF church of St Clement Dane. Our afternoon was devoted to one of the newest and most attractive private collections in London. Sir Henry Wellcome was a fascinating chap, as rich Croesus and curious as the proverbial cat. Henry's first invention was invisible ink, he then went on to invent a medicinal tablet and establish the pharmaceutical giant Burroughs Wellcome. Like a giant cabinet of curiosities, the medicine man gallery provides a permanent home for some of the most mind boggling objects that Wellcome gathered from around the World. Everything from art and medical implements to the more gruesome items of his collection e.g. shrunken heads!! After such a tour the café in the museum was a most welcome sight where we could purchase a beverage before saying farewell to our guide and returning to Shefford.

Don't forget we are holding our annual 'Get Together' in the Memorial Hall, Shefford on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March 7 – 10pm. This is for the annual presentation of the proceeds from our many raffles held exclusively for Keech Hospice Care for Children. Entertainment, a tombola and buffet are included in the price for this fun evening.

We are still awaiting information regarding our allocation of tickets for the ever popular Christmas Spectacular at Thursford. This year we are planning a new venue for our evening meal.

## Forthcoming Events 2011

Essex Smuggling Haunts+Colchester	Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March
Swan Lake on ice (Matinee) Milton Keynes	Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> March
Bosworth Hall Hotel Murder Mystery	Fri 18 <sup>th</sup> - Mon 21 <sup>st</sup> March
Annual Get-together, Memorial hall, Shefford	Saturday 26 <sup>th</sup> March
Treasures of Tuscany	Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> Wed 13 <sup>th</sup> April
Newmarket and The Gallops	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> April
Moggerhanger, Tour of House and tea	Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> May
Frogmore Paper Trail & short river trip	Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> June
Tour of the Cotswolds	Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> June
Afternoon tour of Chicksands Priory	Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> July
Black Country Museum	Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> July
Lincs Heritage Aviation Centre Air Show	Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> August
Wizard of Oz (Matinee)	Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> August
Brick Lane Music Hall, including lunch	Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> December

London theatres are available, picking up from Shefford. Shows currently on offer include:

Jersey Boys	Matinee	Tuesday 8th March	Stall Seats
Love Never Dies	Evening	Wednesday 18th May	Stall Seats
Ghost	Evening	Monday 27th June	Stall Seats

Please telephone for prices, availability and other theatre trips on offer. 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)*

## Financial News Update

Last month I talked about the need to take control of your own finances, and within days of penning it I was able to save a couple with a young family over £30 each month by replacing their existing life assurance plan for a new one with higher cover. I'm currently working on another client who has been paying into a pension with a company that effectively ceased trading in the 1990's. He's seen no growth on his plan for over ten years, and didn't know because he hasn't looked at it! Need I say more?

In the issue before last, I outlined the raft of new responsibilities around pension provision that are heading for employers, starting next year. I've been speaking to both company directors and accountancy firms, and I'm shocked at the lack of knowledge about the extent and impact of what's coming and the apathy around planning for it.

The reason that I've referred to the two previous articles is that there is a common thread running through here. I know it's not immediately obvious, however there has been a quiet revolution going on to state pension provision these last few years, and you won't be surprised to know that it's to your detriment! Many people believe that they will get a full Basic State Pension at retirement. Whilst this is largely true for those retiring now, in future your National Insurance payment record may well result in you getting less than this. In addition we of course have the fact that you now have to wait longer for it, and this is going to move out to eventually age 68, and I suspect then on to age 70.

Since the late 1950's, employed people have had some element of earnings-related top up to the Basic State Pension. Initially this was the Graduated Pension, which was replaced in the 1970's with SERPS (the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme). This was diluted several times by successive governments as the scale of the demographic timebomb became apparent. Eventually it was re-

hashed in the late 1990's into the State Second Pension (S2P for short), which continued on an earnings related basis for a few years, but then switched to flat rate provision. Thus the link between what you earn, and what you get is broken, and those who earn more get relatively less for what they pay!

From 1988 onwards it was possible to 'Contract out' of this part of state provision, and have some of your National Insurance contributions diverted to a plan in your own name, the idea being that you might get more with favourable investments returns. This option is no longer available, and indeed the whole second tier of state provision is mortally wounded, and will disappear completely. I'll bet you hadn't realised that?

This brings us full circle: the new pension regulations ushering in (virtually) compulsory scheme membership will ultimately replace what used to be provided by the state. Interestingly employees will provided their own 'Second tier' pension, but will not get a reduction in National Insurance contributions – surprise, surprise! So the need to take control and be responsible for one's own financial planning has never been more important. The state isn't going to provide for you in your old age, so you will have to do it yourself. I've heard every excuse going as to why people do not want to pay into a pension plan, and I've examined some of them in previous articles. Those who do not believe in saving for their retirement, nearly always have no explanation as to what they are going to do instead!

I know these are lean and difficult times, but it won't always be so, and any saving is better than none.

Jon Ingarfill

Tel: 07870 564115 or email: [jon.ingarfill@pocockrutherford.com](mailto:jon.ingarfill@pocockrutherford.com)



Where are the weeks going? Already as I write Snowdrops are well in flower and crocuses are showing through. The days, especially evenings, are noticeably longer. The light is different and the birds know something is changing.

On a lovely crisp sunny morning earlier this week a pair of buzzards were wheeling and mewling above our river woodland. Nature is stirring!

### **Oakley: a month in the life of a wheat plant**

Oakley is starting to 'rev' up now that the air and soil temperatures are warming.

Up until this point in Oakley's life, there has been little requirement for nitrogen in the soil for growth. Residual inorganic and organic nitrogen is sufficient and has kept the plants green and healthy. Sometimes after a very wet cold spell they can look pale and start to brown.

A top up spray has just been applied to tidy up the difficult grass weeds that I have referred to before. This completes the planned autumn programme, pre and post emergence that was interrupted by the weather.

Where Oakley is the first wheat, after the previous Rape crop, the plants are tillering now in early February. This is the developmental process where more than one shoot per plant is established that potentially gives an ear for harvest. At drilling time in the autumn the aim is to establish the optimum number of plants per square metre. In the spring the aim is to establish the optimum number of tillers per square metre, which is easier if the plants are there in the first place.

This will give the best chance to optimize yield and so nitrogen is applied to give tillers the best chance of survival. As these Oakley plants are more advanced than their second wheat later-drilled cousins, they need less nitrogen at this stage.

Second wheats will be tillering at the end of February and will have their first course of nitrogen applied then.

In order to prevent excess nitrogen being applied and subsequently leaching into water courses after heavy rain, accurate assessments of the crop's requirements are made so that only correct amounts are spread on any particular field. Official checks are made to ensure this happens.

### **Elsewhere on the Farm**

The last of the hedge cutting has been done to comply with the cutting window that closes at the end of February.

I have been pruning the 15 year old Chestnuts down our farm drive to try and encourage a good shape for later years.

It's time to prepare financial budgets and consider any adjustments to longer term plans in the light of continuing high grain prices worldwide. It

looks as if these will stay high for another 12 months at least, although it is impossible to predict with complete confidence. China is experiencing a big drought apparently and world stocks are low (see below).

### **Higher Level Scheme**

You may recall that we are 3 years into a 5 year environmental scheme called the Entry Level Scheme. In this we are paid back some of the European support money that is deducted at source from our SPS payment to fund environmental work on farms. In the ELS, we commit for example, to cutting only half of our hedges each year, to putting in 6 metre grass and wild flower margins against ditches to encourage wildlife and prevent any accidental chemical contamination and to leaving skylark plots uncropped within a field.

We are now applying to upgrade this to the Higher Level Scheme. We do not know yet what effect DEFRA funding cuts will have on the success of our application. If successful, we will be leaving some land as stubble for 12 months on a rotational basis, grassing areas around the farm buildings that have archaeological remains below the surface, and sowing some smaller areas with plants that are particularly attractive to birds, bees and insects.

### **Interesting Statistic of the Month**

Lancashire dairy farmers are losing up to a tonne of feed as it's put in front of their cows to huge flocks of scavenging starlings. The UK is the only EU country that will not allow starlings to be controlled

### **Global Issue**

World stocks of wheat and maize are falling as 'weather events' in many countries have lowered last year's harvest and threaten this year's one too. As prices for grain rise, this seriously disadvantages livestock producers that incorporate grain in their feed rations.

### **Warm off the Press**

Footpath to Meppershall could and should be implemented this year. The problem will not go away, the land is available, and the funds required are not excessive. Let's do it!

### **Thought for the Month**

As you look around the world, in what ways are you blessed?

Chris Foster : 13<sup>th</sup> February 2011

## **The History of Meppershall - 8**

*Based on documents in the Public Record Office and Bedfordshire Archives.*

Dear Uncle Harry,

26 April

1658

We are in deep mourning. Today Rebecca Vaughan, the daughter of Timothy Archer, our Rector who is still in the Fleet Prison, was buried in the churchyard with the whole village in attendance. She spent all her life here until the family were forced to move to Ampthill.

Rebecca died ten days ago in London and her husband Thomas Vaughan, the famous alchemist, brought her body here to rest in her father's churchyard. She married but six years ago and was well loved and respected for her kind nature and intelligence. Thomas was utterly devoted to her and told us that, during their short marriage, she worked closely with him in his experiments to understand the mysteries of nature [we were a little disappointed that he was not working on turning metal to gold but it seems he despises alchemists who seek to do so]. Together Rebecca and Thomas have written an alchemical book entitled "Aqua Vita: Non Vitis" and Thomas said that they hoped that this would "produce medications and other substances useful to all people". We are proud to have had a girl from our village grow to carry out such important work yet so sad that her life was cut short so soon.

Mrs Archer visited with me after the service and brought me news from Ampthill. She told me something that, I am ashamed to say, made me smile even on such a sad day. I could not help myself however and Rebecca smiled too. She gave me leave to pass the message to you. If you remember, her daughter Elizabeth married Richard Emery, our Lord of the Manor and they have now joined Rebecca in Ampthill. They recently bought The White Hart Inn at Ampthill and above the hearth the children have painted a large fleur de lys in good paint then covered it in lime wash, such symbols being forbidden in the country now it has become Cromwell's Protectorate

of course. *[The present fleur de lys has been adapted since it was first painted]*. Hopefully one day soon it can be uncovered safely.

Edward asks leave to visit you on market day if that is convenient. I will ask the messenger to wait for your reply.

I wish you good health,

Your loving niece,  
Mary Robinson

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### **Something to think about.**

The whole Parish Council (10 posts) is up for re-election at the beginning of May and an election will be held if more than 10 nominations are received, something that has not happened since 1991. The role is unpaid and would mean giving a couple of hours mainly on a weekday evening twice a month. One of those occasions is the Council Meeting which is usually held on the second Monday of each month; the other is for a group meeting which held on a convenient evening. While people will have their political opinions, all Councillors are classed as Independent while on the Council. Training will be available for new Councillors.

If you are interested and live or own land within the Parish of Meppershall, come along to the March 14th meeting to see what is involved. The next step is to collect a nomination form from Central Beds' offices at Chicksands when they become available, get it signed by two people over 18 who are eligible to vote in the election and return the form to Central Beds by the closing date for nominations. If you require any more information on being a Councillor please ring Peter Chapman on 813497.

All Councils need a regular influx of new, if possible, younger blood. Could that be you?

## **Meppershall Bakery Bees *by Roger***

Now is the time to check if our colonies need feeding. During February the bee colony has been quietly getting on with life raising early brood and venturing out on warm days to collect mostly pollen and water. In early March life is starting to speed up and although the first abundant sources of nectar are becoming available, the colony is still largely dependant on the stores it stowed away last autumn.

All hives are okay. I have been feeding with fondant just in case. By the end of March a quick inspection will have been performed. The purpose of this, in early spring, is to find out if the colony is queen rite, in other words if there is a healthy queen and if there are any frames that need to be replaced at the next inspection.

I always have a matchbox handy in which I collect a sample of bees for analysis and check for varroa. The national bee unit website gives us full details of how to monitor varroa levels, calculate mite population and what steps to take if mites have become resistant to chemical treatments. With the increase in incidents of mite resistance to the chemical treatments now available in UK, alternatives should be considered. This is known as integrated pest management or IPM.

Various IPM treatments exist.

- Trapping mites in brood which is then discarded, particularly drone brood which varroa mites favour when laying eggs.
- The application of dust e.g. icing sugar, to bees to initiate grooming and mite removal.
- Slowing down or reducing the growth rate of mite population by the use of genetic resistance in bees.
- Apiary isolation to reduce drifting from other infected colonies.
- Use of screen bottom where the mites fall through the mesh and onto the ground away from the colony.

IPM is not anti-chemical, instead it is part of an overall process where chemicals are used in conjunction with the techniques mentioned above to limit mite population.

Honey available at Rogers Bakery- see you there.

# CALLING ALL ARTISTS!

We are looking for this year's artist to Design the Summer Fair Programme cover based around the theme "My Meppershall".

- No age restrictions – adults & children welcome to enter.
- A5 'portrait' style, colour preferable.
- Winner will have their picture printed for the front cover of the Summer Fair Programme. Runner up will have their picture printed on the back page.
- Closing Date: Friday 1 April

*Please leave entries at the Meppershall Village Stores or alternatively email: [alli.roberts@hotmail.com](mailto:alli.roberts@hotmail.com)*

## Calendar of Forthcoming Events

### March 2011

<b>Monday 14th</b>		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
<b>Thursday 24<sup>th</sup></b>		
Police SNT surgery	3.45 – 4.30 pm	Village Hall car park
<b>Saturday 26<sup>th</sup></b>		
Pulloxhill Singers	7.30 pm	St Mary's Church
<b>Saturday 26<sup>th</sup></b>		
Pre School Ladies evening	7.30 – 10.30 pm	Village Hall
<b>Monday 28<sup>th</sup></b>		
Messenger Collating	2.pm	Snooker room

### April 2011

<b>Friday 1<sup>st</sup></b>		
Closing date for Summer Fair programme design competition		
<b>Saturday 2nd</b>		
Quiz Night – Beat the Teachers!	7 for 7.30 pm	Village Hall
<b>Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup></b>		
Mothers Day	10.30 – 12 noon	St Mary's Rectory
<b>Thursday 7th</b>		
Annual Parochial Church Meeting	7.30	St Mary's Church
<b>Monday 11<sup>th</sup></b>		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
<b>Wed 13<sup>th</sup></b>		
Messenger AGM	7.30 pm	The Sugar Loaf
<b>Sunday 24th</b>		
Mini Sparks Inc Egg Hunt	10.15 am	St Mary's Church
<b>Tuesday 26th</b>		
Messenger Collating	2.pm	Snooker room

# ***MEPPERSHALL SUMMER FAIR***

***SATURDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011***

***In the Field behind Meppershall Village Hall***

***1pm – 5pm***

***Put this date in your diary to come along and support this  
spectacular event!***

***FREE ENTRY***

***Lucky Programme***

***Grand Raffle***

***Refreshments***

***Lots of stalls, attractions and fun for everyone***

***Interested in having a stall?***

***Interested in volunteering to help on the day?***

***If so, please contact either***

***Linda Primett on 815629***

***or Mike Till on 817176***

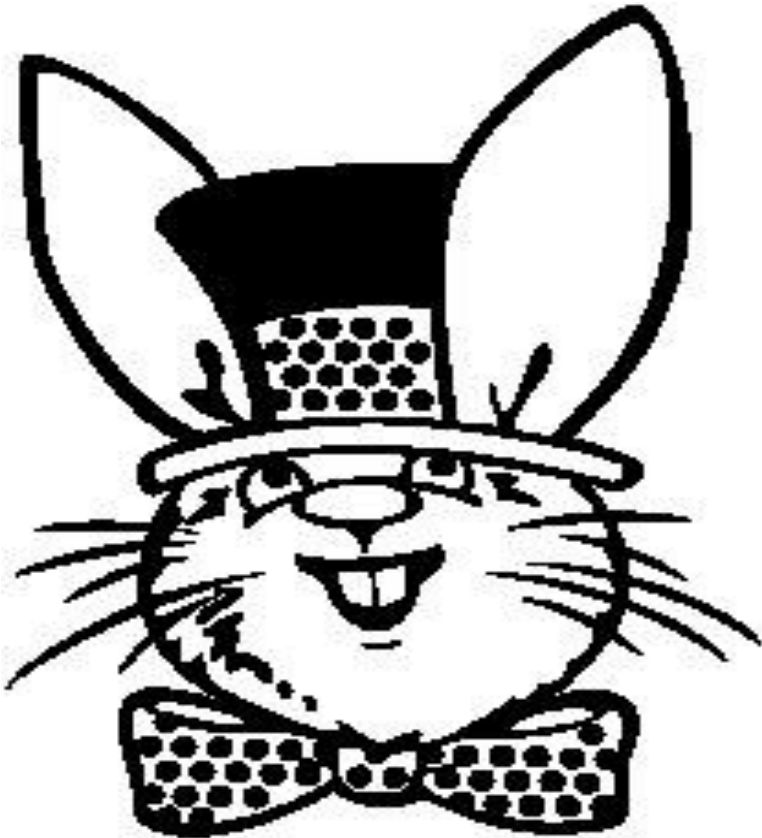
***Remember, it's your village. It's your Village Hall!***



**FROM OUR YOUTH EDITOR – Brigid Holmes****The New Pet Competition!**

To all the young readers: - If you would like the chance to enter your pet into the Meppershall Messenger please can you email [brigidkhomes@btinternet.com](mailto:brigidkhomes@btinternet.com) and remember to put your name (and your age if you like) with a short paragraph to tell all the readers about your loved pet!

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***Colour in the March Hare!***

**And the winner of the March Issue is Bethany Edwards  
with her gorgeous cat Mia**



This is Mia. She is an all black fury ball of fun; she enjoys her cuddles and loves to play fight. She is a year old but she still acts like she is really young! She is mainly a house cat and loves to sleep on our beds. She can be very naughty, scratching our banisters and climbing on the surfaces. Mia loves to play outside but sometimes she gets scared of the bigger cats. She has been welcomed well into the Edwards' household and it feels like she has always been around!



This is a Ringmaster Message from Bedfordshire Police. Please pass the details of this message on to any friends, and neighbours.

A vehicle crime took place in Orchard Close, in Meppershall, between 7:30 pm on the 17th and 3:00 am on the 18th of January. The vehicle was a Red, 03 registered, Vauxhall. A side window was smashed and some power tools were taken.

If you have any information about this crime or other suspicious incidents, please call the Police Control Centre on 01234 841212, and quote crime reference, J,D/,2,4,4,3,/2011. Alternatively text your message to 07786 200011 or email your message to [chc@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk](mailto:chc@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk) or call Crime stoppers in Confidence on (0800) 555111.

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

Thank you for your support.

## **Help Get Handle on Burglary – Lock YOUR door**

The police, who have stepped up the fight against burglary in Bedfordshire, appealed to the public for help today Monday, February 7. Officers want residents to remember to shut windows and double-lock UPVC doors at night, which involves lifting the handle before turning the key. Lifting the handle ensures strong claw or shoot bolts at the top and bottom of the door are properly in place, rather than just the central chamfered catch.

Police are highlighting the offences, and the crime prevention advice, as part of an ongoing initiative running throughout Bedfordshire to drive down burglary and other serious acquisitive crime. Police are making more arrests and only this weekend the number was boosted further when two men were apprehended in connection with burglaries and attempted burglaries at various addresses in Houghton Regis.

Chief Insp Neill Waring said: “The criminal fraternity should be under no illusion that burglary is a top priority and we will do everything in our power to apprehend those responsible. The public can help by ensuring doors and windows are properly locked and that valuables, including car keys, are kept well out of sight. Residents should also consider security marking valuables with a product like SmartWater, which is invisible to the eye but glows when it is placed under ultra-violet light. This has already proved the undoing of a number of criminals.”

Anyone with information about burglary can contact police in confidence on 01234 841212, Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111 or text to 07786 200011.

# Bedfordshire Young Farmers

Are holding their **64<sup>th</sup> Country Show & Rally on Saturday 21st May, at College Farm, Lower Gravenhurst, Bedfordshire** by kind permission of Frank Redman and Sons. Hosts for this event are Silsoe & District Young Farmers.

There are seven clubs in Bedfordshire - Bedford, Biggleswade, Blunham, North Beds, Leighton Buzzard, Silsoe and Woburn - who will compete against each other in a variety of different classes such as showing of livestock, show jumping, tractor skills, cookery, handicrafts, flowers, welding plus many other classes.

Events in the main ring start from 1.00 pm with the Bucks Beagles followed by lots of fun competitions including tug of war, ending the day with a parade of floats.

The event is sponsored by local firms. Many of them will be supporting Young Farmers on the day with trade stands. There will also be a craft tent full of a wide variety of gifts, books, clothes etc. There will also be a Farriers Blacksmith Shoe Making competition running during the day.

Refreshments will be available throughout the day. Gates open to the public from 10.00 am.

For further details or information contact the Secretary  
Alison Redman for more details

Email: [redman@gotadsl.co.uk](mailto:redman@gotadsl.co.uk) or 01525 860717

# Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group News



*\*\*\*Thanks to Liz and Nicola who came along to one of our sessions and sang songs and shared stories with us.\*\*\**

*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. The first session is free of charge so come along and meet us, you have nothing to lose! The first Tuesday of the month is 'ride on' day so if you love pedalling around then come and have some fun. We have weekly crafts and song times, not forgetting the ever popular biscuit and drink at the end of play time. More info contact Sam: 07590 290078, or Jo 01462 713999.*

We are a friendly group of mums, carers, grandparents and childminders. We would love to see some new faces come along and join us. A lot of our regulars have moved on to pre-school so we would love to have new members. If you have a new baby please bring them along, we have a baby area set up each week and you can chat to other parents and enjoy a cup of tea/coffee.

**OUR AGM WILL BE HELD IN MARCH. WE NEED NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS. IT DOESN'T TAKE UP MUCH TIME SO PLEASE JOIN!**

## Collating Dates for your diaries

### 2011

March	28	
April	26	<b>Tuesday</b>
May	31	<b>Tuesday</b>
June	27	
July	25	

### 2011

August	No
September	26
October	31
November	28
December	No



## The Meppershall Players



The Players are hoping to put on “an Evening of One Act Plays” to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> May. They are all comedies: I could tell you the titles and what the plays are about and who’s directing, but I think I’ll leave that till next month’s issue. It will keep you in suspense and give you something to look forward to!

This production won’t have the usual layout of rows of chairs, but tables, and we encourage you to bring your own food to eat (for yourselves, not a share with all event!) We have done these evenings before and I’ve seen the odd hostess trolley turn up with three course meals appearing (complete with candelabra). You decide how you want to enjoy the evening.

The 2011 Pantomime: we are looking at several different scripts at the moment, so I can’t tell you exactly what it’s going to be, but I can tell you that it won’t be “Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White, Cinderella or Robinson Crusoe, as we have done these stories twice already. That’s not to say they’ll never be done again, just not for a few years. If anyone out there reading this feels they would like to direct this years Pantomime, contact any member of the Players that you know, or me (name and number below), to express your interest, or come along to our group meetings (details of which are also below) by the beginning of April

The players meet every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. Membership is very reasonable: Senior’s £5 & Junior’s £2 per year. We welcome anyone from the age of 9 years to 90+, to indulge in acting, singing, directing, choreographing, sound, lighting, set building, scenery painting, front of house, backstage, stage managing, make up, costumes, etc.

If you are interested in any of the above we look forward to meeting you.

Karen Mitchell  
01462 816336

# Moppershall Music & Art Festival



## Remember last year? Great fun!

A good time was had by everyone celebrating the musical and artistic talent of our very own village. And what a variety of talent we have right here on our doorstep. So .....

let's do the same again this year.

If you'd like to take part in this grand village event, or know of someone who might be persuaded please contact me, Sandra Harper, 813334 [sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk)

## THINGS YOU COULD DO [open to ANY other ideas too]

- **PLAY AN INSTRUMENT**  
eg. Solo instrument or group. Classical, jazz, hip hop folk, etc. Maybe you're an established quartet / pop group? Or why not rescue the instrument in the attic and start practising?
- **SING** - solo, group or choir.
- **DANCE**
- **Master of Ceremonies**
- **Organising raffle**
- **Organising / serving refreshments [afternoon & evening]**
- **Transporting stuff**
- **Lights & microphones**
- **EXHIBITING ART WORK** (there's a bit of bribery! ...1" to book a place will get 1" choice of position)
- **Press Officer**
- **Ticket Sales**

Let's aim for variety in art and music: all styles & all ages.  
Sandra Harper, 01462 813334 [sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk)



# *Ladies Evening*

*Come and pamper yourself!!!*

*Beauty Treatments*

*Jewellery*

*Handbags*

*Pampered Chef*

*Massages*

*Flourist*



*And many more.....*

*Meppershall Village Hall*  
*Saturday March 26<sup>th</sup>*  
*7:30-10:30pm.*

*Tickets £5 including a drink on arrival*  
*Tickets available from Rogers Bakery and Village Store in*  
*Meppershall*

*All proceeds go to Meppershall Pre-School*  
*Registered Charity No 1031913*



## Meppershall Pre-school Ponderings



We are happy to welcome six new children to our Pre-school this month – Alfie, Beatrice, Thomas, Benedict, Lilly and George and hope they enjoy their time with us.



We have been learning about good dental hygiene during our dentist role play and the children enjoyed a walk around the village, showing their friends their houses. During the run up to half term it will be party week in the role play area, where we are making invitations, hats, cards and even birthday cakes!

Our theme for next half term is 'Opposites'. We will also be kept busy looking at St David's Day, St Patrick's Day, Red Nose Day, Mothers Day, Easter and Spring.

Meppershall Pre-school is situated in the village hall. Children can attend from the age of 2 years 6 months.

Session times (term time only):

Monday to Friday 9.30 am – 12.00 pm

Monday to Friday Lunch club 12.00 pm – 12.30 pm

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 12.30 pm – 3.00 pm

If you are interested and would like to arrange a visit please contact us on (01462) 817359 during session times or e-mail [info@meppershall-ps.co.uk](mailto:info@meppershall-ps.co.uk), alternatively you will find more information and our prospectus on our website [www.meppershall-ps.co.uk](http://www.meppershall-ps.co.uk).

# Meppershall Garden Club

We had a good January meeting where we discussed the many activities we would like to take part in during the following months. These included a wide range of places to visit – we have yet to select our preferred places; our participation in the Meppershall Summer Fair with more plant sales and competitions; open gardens for MGC members, and the continuing maintenance of planters & borders at the Village Hall.

Many of us spent a pleasant evening at the Friends of St Mary's Church quiz at the end of January. We didn't win, but we didn't come last either!

Didn't we have a couple of glorious days in early Feb? The sun was shining & the bulbs were beginning to show. I cannot help looking for the snowdrops flowering as I wander. By the time you read this I guess some of the daffs will be flowering; isn't plant life wonderful?

Kim Lee Tyler

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

If you would prefer to contact us by e-mail then please send your email to the editor who will pass your message on to us.

**The Friends of St. Mary's Meppershall**

are delighted to welcome

**THE  
PULLOXHILL  
SINGERS**

**On Saturday, 26th March 2011**

**in St.Mary's Church at 7.30pm**

*Tickets £10.00 to include buffet refreshments; with red or white  
wine FROM:*

**Trevor Thorley 01462 813357**

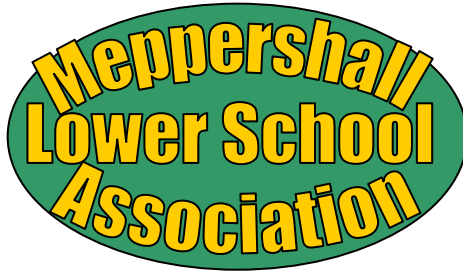
**The Rectory 01462 813334**

**Roger's Bakery & The Post Office**

**SIGNIFICANT BIRTHDAYS  
IN MARCH**

Evelyn Jepps will be 91 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Peter Longland will be 80 on the 11<sup>th</sup>  
David Niven will be 91 on the 15<sup>th</sup>

We send congratulations and best wishes to all of the above.  
We also send best wishes to Minnie Tink and hope that she will soon  
be back to health.



## **Meppershall Lower School**

### **“Beat the Teachers” Quiz Night**

**The Meppershall Lower School Parents Association is holding a quiz with a twist on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April at Meppershall Village Hall!**

**We would like to extend an invitation to adults in the village to host a table (of up to 8 people) to see if your knowledge can beat that of the table of Meppershall Lower School teachers! Doors and bar open at 7pm for a 7.30 start.**

**Tickets can be purchased in advance at £5 per person, inclusive of a cheese ploughman’s platter; contact Jaqui Derrick on 812 181 or [jaquiderrick@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jaquiderrick@hotmail.co.uk)**

**All proceeds will go towards 2011 fundraising.**

**We hope to see you there!**



Want to do something different? Want to raise money where you live or work? Want to eat Fish and Chips, while raising money for charity? Hold a fish and chip supper on Friday 20th May 2011 whilst raising awareness of spinal cord injury and supporting SIA's information and support services. You could hold a fish and chip supper in your own home, at work or hold a larger supper at your local community centre.

SIA will provide a fundraising pack containing hints and tips, recipes, invitations and donation envelopes. By inviting 7 friends and asking them to donate an additional £5.00 means you will raise at least £35.00 from your supper but we will also give you additional fundraising ideas to raise even more money for SIA.

Last year we had over 100 suppers taking part in England and Wales and we raised £6,000. In 2011 we want to double that figure and ensure we can provide more support to spinal cord injured people.

The money raised from the suppers will help the Spinal Injuries Association offer support to individuals who become paralysed and their families, from the moment a spinal injury occurs, and for the rest of their lives by providing services and publications which enable and encourage paralysed people to lead independent lives.

Every year in the UK over 1,000 people experience a spinal cord injury and there are an estimated 40,000 spinal cord injured people in the UK alone.

Community Fundraising Officer, Elizabeth Wright, says, "The Fish and Chip Supper is a wonderful opportunity for a great evening with friends and family. We are also encouraging people who work to hold a Fish and Chip Lunch in their work places to raise even more funds. You may be even a local community group wanting to run a fun evening with your group. Be a part of something special and make a real difference to help spinal cord injured people gain access to the information and support they need to enable them to live full and independent lives."

For more information or request a fundraising pack call Elizabeth Wright on 0845 678 6633 xtn 229 or email [fishandchips@spinal.co.uk](mailto:fishandchips@spinal.co.uk) or visit [www.spinal.co.uk](http://www.spinal.co.uk)

## COVERS BY REQUEST

This month's cover picture shows the house known as The Coach House, one of the most attractive houses in the village, but I think it has not before featured on a Messenger cover. This picture is one of many kindly provided by David Foskett.

Mentioning David reminds me of our new Picture Archive. If you have not already visited it by following the link from the Meppershall Village website, try it now. We have not yet loaded all the pictures that The Messenger has, but already you can get an idea of what it will be like. If you would like to see your pictures there, and receive a digital copy to keep, just get in touch with one of The Messenger committee.

*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.*

# MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER AGM

**The Annual General Meeting of The Meppershall Messenger will  
be held in the Sugar Loaf at 7.30 pm on  
Wednesday the 13th April 2011.**

Please come along and support your magazine committee, and tell us  
what we are doing right and what we could be doing better.

## ST MARY THE VIRGIN

### MEPPERSHALL PARISH CHURCH (CHURCH OF ENGLAND) Church Rd, off Campton Rd

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

01462 813334 (usual day off – Monday)

Lay Reader: Pam Halliwell (usual day off – Friday) 01462 817069

Churchwardens: Brian Bellamy 01462 815944 (Pastoral Assistant);  
Brenda Wright 01462 816446

### Services for March

Date	Time	Service
Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> Sun before Lent	11.00am	Parish Communion and Junior Church - Rectory
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday	10.00 am	Holy Communion (7.30 pm Holy Communion at St Michaels)
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> Lent 1	8.30 am	Holy Communion
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> Lent 2	8.30 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion Family Service
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> Lent 3	11.00 am 2.30 pm	Family Communion & Junior Church Wedding Anniversary Thanksgiving: Trevor & Moira Wright

### *Weekday Services:*

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

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

Saturdays 9.30a.m. Morning Prayer

**Lent** is a yearly opportunity to 'go deeper into God'. For many that means foregoing some of the non-essentials of life, so that we



can become more clearly focussed on the primacy of God and our relationship with Him. That kind of self discipline can help us take significant strides in our walk with God, and is a safeguard against allowing things, including the good ones, to take over the role that is God's alone. So if that seems a right path for you, take it up not just to be able to master 'giving up', but so that the presence and purposes of God become a deeper reality for you.

Another approach to keeping Lent is what seems diametrically opposite, i.e. taking on something new in order to grasp more of the wonder of God's ways. Next month there will be four informal get-togethers at different venues in the village designed to explore the various types of people who encountered Jesus on his journey to the cross. We'll be looking at the way those types figured in the biblical story, but also at how they have echoes in ourselves and then at the way we interact with the God Jesus opens up. So if you feel willing to try something that may be new to you, or if this sounds familiar, you will be welcome on any or all of Wednesdays Mar 23, 30 and April 6, 13 from 7.30 – 8. 45p.m, starting at The Rectory on 23rd. Just come along and see what you make of it. Talkers and listeners equally welcome, so give it a try, and keep open the possibilities that God may have in readiness for you this Lent.

All good wishes  
John Harper

### ***What's on this month:***

**Fri 4: Women's World Day of Prayer .** This year the service has been arranged by the women of Chile. Our local service will be at All Saints Church Clifton, 2.15p.m. The address will be given by Major Joy Davidson of the Salvation Army. Cards and various items will be on sale and there will be refreshments. Everyone is welcome. If transport is required phone 816446

**Sats: 12,19,26, Apr 2,9,16.** 12.30-1.30.

Ecumenically run Lent lunches with a reflection and proceeds for Christian Aid at Shefford Community Hall. No booking - first come first served - donations pot for Christian Aid. Brief reflection at 1p.m. These are popular so early arrival is recommended.

**Mon 14:** Shefford & District Bible Society Action Group – 7.45p.m. at The Rectory. Bible study: ‘Thomas, called Didymus, the Disciple’

**Tues 15:** Bishop Richard meets St Mary’s PCC to explore approaches to ‘Living God’s Love’, at Rectory (time to be confirmed).

**Thurs 17 :** 7p.m. ‘Summer Sparks’ initial meeting at Rectory – ‘What’s it all about?’

THIS IS FOR EVERYONE, whether you attend SPARKS for an hour or for the full 4 days; whether your part is to pray or provide resources; whether you’re a group leader, a teacher, a crafty or sporty person, or just interested in what your Church is doing..

**PLEASE MAKE THIS DATE A PRIORITY – March 17.**

**Sat 26** Friends of St Mary’s present : The Pulloxhill Singers, 7.30p.m. in St Mary’s Church. Tickets including buffet and wine, from Trevor Thorley 813357, The Rectory, Roger’s Bakery, Post Office and trustees

**And on Sat May 7<sup>th</sup>** - outing to visit St John’s College Cambridge, St Mary’s Meppershall Patronal Body. Arrival 3.45p.m. for tea in the ‘Wordsworth Room’ , a conducted tour of the College, and attendance at Choral Evensong in the Chapel, with the voices of the superb St John’s Choir. Depart around 7p.m. – no cost entailed - transport by shared cars. Please let me know if you wish to reserve a place – all welcome.

JH – 813334

**'Summer Sparks'** this year takes place on Mon July 25, Tues 26, Weds 27, Thurs 28, 10a.m. – 2p.m. For more info:  
 Sandra 813334 [sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk)  
 Morag 843387 [Morag.deluca@ntlworld.com](mailto:Morag.deluca@ntlworld.com)  
 Janice 813925 [janice.middleton@talktalk.net](mailto:janice.middleton@talktalk.net)

***Next month:***

**Weds Apr 6.** 2.15 p.m. Meppershall School Easter Service in Church

**Thurs 7.** 7.30p.m: St Mary's Annual Parochial Church Meeting in church – all welcome.

**Parish Registers:**

**Funerals:**

Rex Donald Chapman, Leacroft, 35 Fildyke Rd. died 10 January aged 90.  
 Service 2 February at Luton Crematorium

Barrie Carne, 6 Cracklehill Rd, died 17 January aged 75.  
 Service 31 January at Luton Crematorium.

Dora Pontin, 40 Fildyke Rd, died 22 January aged 87.  
 Service 17 February at Bedford Crematorium

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI**  
***CATHOLIC CHURCH***  
**HIGH STREET SHEFFORD**

SATURDAY MASS	6pm RAF HENLOW
SUNDAY MASSES	9am & 5.15pm AT SHEFFORD

For weekday services and confessions please see notices in the church or telephone:

Parish Priest Canon Noonan on 813436 or Parish Secretary Rose Boulton on 811547 or email [rosedene@talktalk.net](mailto:rosedene@talktalk.net)

**ST MARY'S CHURCH**

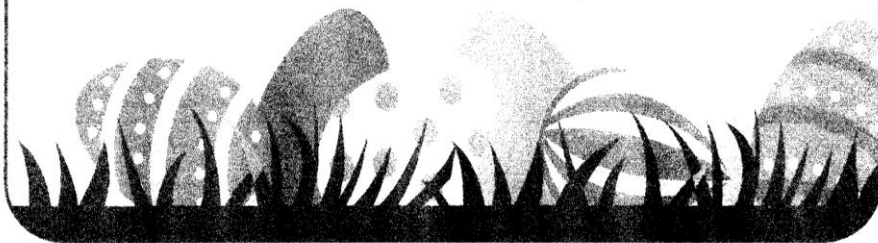
**EASTER  
MINI SPARKS**

***INCLUDING EGG HUNT!***

**Sunday 24 April  
10.15am  
in St Mary's Church**

**Join us for lots of activities and fun!  
Just £1.00**

**Questions? Call Gillian on 850947**



St Mary's Church, Meppershall  
Junior Church

Join St Mary's Junior Church  
for

# MOTHER'S DAY

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April,  
10.30am to 12noon  
in The Rectory

For more information contact Gillian on 850497

**BEEF WITH SPICED APRICOTS****MARCH 2011**

454g (1lb) casserole steak, cubed  
1x15ml sp (1tbsp) vegetable oil  
2x15ml sp (2tbsp) red wine vinegar  
1x15ml sp (1tbsp) brown sugar  
1x2.5ml sp (1/2tsp) ground allspice  
1x2.5ml sp (1/2tsp) ground cinnamon  
Salt and pepper  
450ml (3/4pt) stock  
15 shallots, whole  
175g (6oz) ready soaked dried apricots

**METHOD**

- 1) Heat the oil in a large saucepan and brown the beef.
- 2) Remove and place in an ovenproof casserole dish.
- 3) To the saucepan add the vinegar, sugar, spices, and seasoning, cook until syrupy.
- 4) Add stock and bring to the boil
- 5) Pour over the beef.
- 6) Cover and cook in a preheated oven for 1 hour.
- 7) Remove from the oven and stir in the shallots and apricots.
- 8) Cover and return to oven for a further hour, until beef is tender and apricots have softened.
- 9) Ten minutes before the end of cooking time, stir well and again before serving
- 10) Serve with a selection of seasonal vegetables...

Recipes are kindly supplied each month by Brenda Putwain

## **GARDEN TIPS FOR MARCH**

(With acknowledgements to the RHS)

- Mulch bare soil in beds and borders
- Move evergreen shrubs
- Prune bush and shrub roses
- Propagate shrubs by layering
- Increase stock of perennials by taking basal stem cuttings from the new shoots
- Lift and divide overgrown clumps of perennials
- Split polyanthus after flowering
- Take cuttings from dahlia tubers
- Plant summer-flowering bulbs
- Sow sweet peas out of doors, or plant out young plants raised under cover. Pinch out growing tips of young sweet peas to encourage side-shoots
- Sow hardy annuals where they are to flower
- Reseed bare patches in the lawn
- Start mowing lawns regularly
- Take pumps out of store and put them back in the pond; begin feeding fish
- Sow vegetables outside and harden off young plants to put outside
- Plant early potatoes and asparagus
- Protect fruit blossom against frosts
- Sow half-hardy annuals and other frost-tender bedding plants under cover
- Water indoor plants regularly, now that the weather is warming up.

### **LAST CHANCE**

- Finish planting bare-root trees and shrubs and new fruit trees and bushes
- This is the latest time to plant snowdrops and winter aconites

### **GET AHEAD**

- Put grow bags in the greenhouse to warm up before planting
- Put stakes and other plant supports in to support new growth before it really needs it.

*A very Happy Birthday to those of you  
celebrating birthdays in March*

*Archie Underwood who will be 7 on the 6<sup>th</sup>  
Tyler Ball who will be 13 on the 7<sup>th</sup>  
Alexanda Cocks who will be 9 on the 7<sup>th</sup>  
Genevieve Cocks who will be 8 on the 7<sup>th</sup>  
Dylan Caddick who will be 6 on the 8<sup>th</sup>  
Marcus Hart who will be 8 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
Ella Bryant who will be 6 on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
Emma Burr who will be 14 on the 14<sup>th</sup>  
Katherine Gower who will be 13 on the 14<sup>th</sup>  
Emma Horsford who will be 9 on the 14<sup>th</sup>  
Aaron Vernon who will be 7 on the 16<sup>th</sup>  
Brigid Holmes who will be 15 on the 18<sup>th</sup>  
Gracie Sue Bavister who will be 5 on the 18<sup>th</sup>  
William Roberts who will be 14 on the 19<sup>th</sup>  
Daisy Lucas who will be 9 on the 27<sup>th</sup>  
Chloe Scott who will be 14 on 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  
or email at [louhuts@btconnect.com](mailto:louhuts@btconnect.com)*





# THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

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

## **DISCLAIMER**

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

## **THE TEAM**

Editor	Dick Bulley	116 Shefford Road	815114
		E-mail: richard.bulley@btinternet.com	
Youth Editor	Brigid Holmes		
Advertising	Christine Elbourne	5 St. Mary's Place	817409
Manager		Email: mail@elbourne.co.uk	
Distribution	Colette House	90 Fildyke Road	815585
Manager		Email: colettehouse@gmail.com	
Treasurer	John Thompson	16 Brookmead	812983
		Email: jthompson244@btinternet.com	