



Arms of the de
Meppershall Family

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



VOLUME 27 – Issue 1
APRIL 2011

Meppershall Village Website: www.meppershall.org

WHAT'S IN YOUR MESSENGER THIS MONTH?

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EDITORIAL

As my Editorial in the last issue looked back over Volume 26, so this one looks forward to the coming year. Although we try to make each issue topical and reflective of its time, there are a few points in the year that we know in advance. For instance, we know that the Summer Fair will be on 25th June, so the July issue will include a feature on it. If the sun shines, we will hope for lots of pictures to make up a special colour feature.

This first issue of the new Volume sees the start of two new series. On page 5 we present Jeremy Holden's introduction to a new series on wildlife that he has agreed to provide. You may remember that back in August 2009 we carried a page about local boy Jeremy who works for Flora & Fauna International (FFI). He is currently based in Cambodia, and we have persuaded him to contribute a series of pieces describing his work for FFI. This should make an interesting change from the very local material that is The Messenger's staple fare.

Then on page 22 we welcome the start of a series on wine kindly provided by The Wine Society. Each article in the series includes a link to the Society's web site, so if the pieces interest you, why not follow up and maybe join the Society?

I am very pleased to acknowledge here the donation of £500 from the Foresters Friendly Society towards the costs of producing the Messenger. Coupled with them I would also like to thank all the advertisers who have signed up for another year. We recognise how tight finances are, for businesses and individuals alike, so we are especially grateful for the donation and for the continuing support of our advertisers.

Dick Bulley

LETTERS

Letter from Pat Russell:

Dear Editor

Re:ARCHIE RUSSELL

Archie's family would like to express their thanks to the people of Meppershall for all the kind, sincere and generous support shown to us during the last difficult and sad couple of months. We have been very moved by the love and care shown to us after Archie's death, which was a true reflection of the love shown by so many in Meppershall to Archie, and Ena during their lives. We miss them both dearly, and are very aware that their many friends in Meppershall will miss them too. They have left a large space both in Meppershall, and in our family.

Thank you once again for all your love and kindness.

The Russell Family.

Pat Russell

Letter from Wayne Allen:

I would like if I may to request some space in the messenger for the following appeal:

Last year my son and I supplied a number of classic motorcycles for display at the summer fair. We were also joined on the day by a number of other enthusiasts which was most welcome. I would like to encourage other motorcycle owners to register their interest in displaying their bikes, whether old or new, with me so I can work with the organisers to arrange suitable space. There was a great deal of interest in the bikes last year so I would like to build on this and make this years stand more appealing by adding more diverse machines for display.

In addition to this if any motorcycle owners are interested in arranging local meetings for ride outs, advice, repairs or to swap bike stories I would like to hear from them. Thanks to everyone who attended the stand last year and let's hope we can repeat the great weather we had.

Regards, Wayne

Letter from Lesley Skerman:

Lavender House (Dementia Unit)
Meppershall Nursing Home.

Spring is coming and our wonderful garden is coming to life. If you could have seen the garden last year, and how much it was used by so many of our residents; sometimes we even had our music sessions out there. Residents are already pottering in the garden with my colleague, Jeanette.

As I said, spring is coming: are you having a spring clean and perhaps replacing your garden furniture? If so, could you please consider Lavender House, who would be more than willing to accept any furniture in reasonable condition, especially sun umbrellas.

This month we have had weekly entertainers, plus Micky White; two dogs visit regularly, and so many balloons to blow up for so many birthdays. Early in March we were given a wonderful evening of entertainment by St Mary's Village Choir, with beautiful singing, fun and laughter and finishing with tea, biscuits and chat. The residents really enjoyed it.

If anyone has any garden furniture or umbrellas to donate, please contact me, Lesley Skerman, activities co-ordinator, on 01462 814372. I would be so obliged.

Lesley.

LIFE ON THE WILD SIDE

By JEREMY HOLDEN

INTRODUCTION

I was born on Meppershall High Street over 40 years ago in the same house in which my parents still live. Then Taylor's Close was the site of a pub, what seemed to a small child like a rambling mansion, and a straggling abandoned orchard. Fowler's Drive was a farm yard, and Hoo road entered in to Shefford Road as a dirt track. Many of the houses were large bungalows set in spacious gardens and full of birds. Behind the houses market gardens flourished. Beyond were woods, private and guarded places where rooks nested in the bare spring branches and foxes lived among the bluebells. As a child I trespassed these places, which seemed wild and dangerous, marvelling at the wildlife I found there, and often fleeing from angry farmers.* It gave me a taste for the wild, for the dark visceral sense of being an explorer in forbidden places, which has never left me. These places and the wildlife they harboured were important, both in themselves and in a deeper personal sense. A desire to record them made me become a photographer.

As a 15 year old I was given my first camera, and within a few years I began travelling the world trying to capture the sense of awe I felt in the wilds. One trip took me to the rain forests of Sumatra where a strange encounter with an unknown species of great ape changed my life. Since then I have carved out a precarious niche documenting, photographing and even discovering rare and cryptic creatures in the rain forests of Southeast Asia.

For the moment I am based in the battered but loveable country of Cambodia and work with the Cambridge-based conservation organization Fauna & Flora International www.fauna-flora.org. The need to preserve wild places is now urgent, especially amid the fast pace of change in the developing world. It is to this end I have focused my life. Over the coming months I will share some of my experiences in the strange countries and remote places I have been, and try and evoke a sense of what it is like to live on the wild side.

*Despite frequent trespassing I owe a debt of gratitude to the late Michael Foster and Donald Simpkins who both encouraged my interests and allowed to me wander their land at will.

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 March 2011.

The village beat policeman PC Kevin Thornley reported that between 1/12/10 and 13/03/11 there had been 27 recorded incidents in Meppershall. The breakdown is as follows; 9 thefts from vehicles (mainly car aerials) 5 violence against the person (mainly domestic disputes) 3 thefts from buildings, 2 thefts from outbuildings/sheds, 6 criminal damage and 2 anti-social behaviour. He also reported that he is trained in using a radar speed gun and would be out and about with it. So be warned. Please be aware that there have been a couple of distraction burglaries in Campton recently, people posing as charity collectors.

On February 27th Central Beds Council set a zero increase budget for 2011/12 and with the Fire, Police and Parish all setting zero increase rates, your Council tax should remain the same.

Planning & Housing (spokesman Cllr. Peter Chapman)

Recent Applications:- Change of use of the Methodist Chapel to a single dwelling. The Council are concerned about the parking arrangement and asked for the details of a document mentioned in the application.

New chalet Bungalow in the garden to the rear of 47 Hoo Road: The Council have objected on the grounds over development of the site and discrepancies in the plans.

The owners of the Pigling, a house built behind Woodview Nursery without planning permission, were summoned to the Magistrates Court on 1st March and were fined £500 plus costs. If they have not moved out by the beginning of May they will be summoned to Court again and the fine will be much larger.

The inspecting officer has reported on Central Beds Local Development Framework (LDF) document and has concluded that the possible development behind the Village Hall could continue forward.

Highways & Lighting (spokesman Cllr. Roger Bryant)

Cllr Bryant reported that no decision had been reached on what to do about the poor resurfacing of Chapel Road.

2 of the 4 broken road signs have been repaired.

Although a bit late for this winter, 4 new salt bins are to be placed around the village.

Shefford Hill Footpath – funding is almost in place to complete the improvements to the existing permissive path and the work will be undertaken at the end of August after harvesting. Planning and seeking finance for the rest of the path is in progress.

Environment & Leisure (spokesman Cllr. Paul Merryweather)

The storage container for the allotment area has been delivered to the rear of the Village Hall; plans to move it to its final position are in hand.

Two new metal picnic tables and benches have been ordered. One will be secured to the concrete pad on Fosters Field where the shed once stood, the other is going to Old Road Meadow to replace the damaged one.

It was agreed to enter the Old Road Meadow site into the CPRE Living Countryside Awards 2011.

The Green Infrastructure Plan has been returned to its authors for clarification on certain points. Once everything is agreed it will become part of the Council's overall plans for the Village.

The next Parish Council meetings will be held Mondays 11th April and 9th May 2011 at Meppershall Village Hall both commencing at 7.45pm. The annual Parish Meeting when Parishioners can ask questions on any matters, will be on Monday 18th April 2011 in the Village Hall at 7.45pm

Something to think about.

Further to last month's piece in the Messenger, just to say time is short as nominations for the Parish Council have to be submitted to Central Beds, on the correct forms available from the offices at Chicksands, by noon on 4th April 2011.

Peter Chapman - Chairman of Meppershall Parish Council

As noted above, the planning inspector has reported no objections to the LDF that includes the possible development behind the Village Hall. This framework plan will come before Central Beds Council for adoption on 14th April. Our 2 Councillors for Shefford, Cllr. Lewis Birt and Cllr. Anthony Brown will be in attendance. If you have a view on that possible development, make your view known to one of your Councillors before they vote:

lewis.birt@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk, or
anthony.brown@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Ed

YOUR SHOUT with Trevor Thorley

JEREMY HOLDEN: Local boy Jeremy Holden has achieved fame in his career as a Biologist and with his evident skills as a photographer.

Jeremy attended Meppershall Lower School in the seventies, and ended his schooling at Samuel Whitbread Community College before moving on to Barnfield College in Bedford and then on to a three-year degree course at Nottingham University where he obtained a 2-1 degree in Photography.

In 1993 Jeremy accepted a post in the Indonesian Islands where he met a young lady called Debbie Martha who introduced and enrolled him onto the staff of the magazine Fauna and Flora as a photographer and biologist. Jeremy has also done a lot of freelance work but it was on a Fauna and Flora International survey in the Cardamom Mountains where he discovered a carnivorous pitcher plant, which has since been named after him as the *Nepenthes Holdenii*.

The Cardamom Mountains are a treasure chest of new species but he was surprised and thrilled to find something as exciting as an unknown pitcher plant. The discovery is an indication of the rich diversity in the mountains' forests as well as previous lack of research. In 2009 he discovered the rare green-blooded Samkos bush frog in the same region.

Nepenthes Holdenii can grow up to 30cm long which enables it to gain extra nutrients in impoverished soils. One of its strengths is its unusual adaptation to be able to cope with fires and extended periods of drought, particularly prevalent in Cambodia's dry season. It is able to exploit clearings caused by the fires by producing a large underground tuber, which grows to eventually send up a new pitcher-bearing vine once a fire has passed. Jeremy is currently working on a new book about carnivorous plants in Cambodia with French botanist and *Nepenthes* expert Francois Mey.

NOTE: I have had the pleasure of knowing Jeremy for many, many years, from the day when, as a very young boy, he darted out from the pavement in front of my car; to this day, when he sees me, he will remind me and

thank me gratefully for stopping in time. Fortunately I was very much alert and travelling at no more than 20mph, so I was able to stop in good time, but it could have been a very serious situation had I been travelling faster.

Getting on my soapbox, there is too much speed in the village, with many people travelling over 30mph as if they had a train to catch. Sooner or later there will be an accident in Meppershall due to speed. With all the traffic that we now have in the village and all the children that we should be caring about, consideration for the implementation of a 20mph speed limit would be no bad thing! .

Remember it's Your Shout.

Contact me at trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com or 01462 813357

St Mary's Church Meppershall teatowels and mugs for sale!

Did you know that you can easily buy mugs and tea towels commemorating our beautiful church of St Mary's at the village stores? Please have a look! The quality Linen Union teatowels also show other important village institutions (village hall and the school, to name a couple) drawn by a local artist. Both mugs and teatowels have the attractive traditional blue colour of St Mary.

Prices are as follows:

Linen Union St Mary's Tea Towels: 1 for £4.50, 2 for £8.00, 3 for £12.00, 4 for £15.00. St Mary's mugs : £3.50 each or 3 for £10.

Rest assured that all proceeds from the sale of these items go towards church funds. With thanks for your valued support.

Meppershall VA CE Lower School

*'An outstanding Church of
England School'*

June 2008 and December 2010



School Report - April 2011

As I write the view from my office is changing rapidly; the daffodils are beginning to show their beautiful yellow faces, the children are outside playing football and the sun is shining. Spring is in the air at last.

This term we have been our usual busy selves. For example just last week Oaks class were at a Tag Rugby Festival, we had a K'NEX challenge morning which involved lots of science and design and technology for Hazels and Oaks plus a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) day for everyone. We also managed to fit in our usual lessons too!

Last Tuesday nine children from Oaks class took part in a Tag Rugby Festival at Ampthill Rugby Club. The team consisted of boys and girls and our representatives were a credit to our school. They won every match until the semi final where they were beaten by just one point. Well done to Kerys, Daisy, Caitlin, Cameron, Jack, Thomas, Lucian, Emma and Lewis!

Hazels and Oaks had a great morning designing and building bridges with K'NEX construction materials. This activity enhanced and extended their knowledge about the bridges in France they had previously studied in their topic of Vive la France!

Our STEM day ranged from a workshop on creating bubbles in Acorns class to building 3D tetrahedrons in the hall for Hazels and Oaks classes. Once again our creative approach to the curriculum ensured that each session gave the children a different perspective on their learning, e.g. Beeches and Willows are studying 'Who lives

in a house like this?’ and their ‘bricklab’ workshop helped them look further into how buildings are constructed.

It’s not only the children who come to school at Meppershall. This term each class invited their families to come and join in with a Maths lesson and many of our parents came to school to see how we teach this particular subject. I think they learnt some new tricks from their children and enjoyed the whole experience too. The children are also very busy preparing class assemblies where their families can come and see what they have been doing in school this term.

We are now in Lent and preparing for Easter. Some of the children and I have a weekly lunchtime Lent Group where we follow activities specially prepared for young children by the Diocese of St. Albans. Other children are preparing for our Easter Service at St. Mary’s by writing the prayers and practicing the readings. Rector John and Mrs. Harper have also prepared an Easter Experience in church for our older children.

Finally, we are going to have a fun day on March 18th to raise funds for Comic Relief with dressing up and a joke telling session.

WHO’S WHO AND WHAT’S WHAT IN MEPPERSHALL

We are now preparing the second issue of this stand-alone booklet containing the names & contacts of all (we hope) Meppershall organisations. If you know of any changes that need to be made in the information published last October, please advise the Editor as soon as possible.

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

We ended January by acquiring tickets for February 25th at the ever popular BBC Radio 2 recording of Friday Night is Music Night at The Mermaid Theatre in London. We had just reached Hatfield when for the first time since organising these trips our coach broke down with a punctured tyre! However Gary our driver soon arranged with Chambers from Stevenage to send a replacement coach. Within a short time, we were all transferring onto the replacement coach and proceeded along the motorway to the theatre. Although we were concerned about the timing, we did arrive as the doors were opening and everyone managed to get a seat. The show was certainly not disappointing with good music and some humour to make the evening flow so well.

We started March with a tour of the Essex Smuggling haunts and Colchester. Our first stop after picking up our Guide was at Maldon's Hythe Quay where we were directed to The Queen's Head Inn in time for a bacon roll and coffee. Maldon is an ancient riverside town, the home of the famous sea salt, and Hythe Quay on the Blackwater Estuary is where majestic Thames sailing barges still tie up. Then we boarded our coach for a drive through the lonely marshlands of Essex which was 'smuggling country'. Our guide told us many humorous stories about the smugglers. Colchester was our next stop for a leisurely walking tour which included the Castle, the old Dutch Quarter and St. Helen's Chapel, a Greek Orthodox Church just large enough for 53 people to worship. As we had 53 people on our coach it was indeed standing room only! After lunch we made our way to our final stop, the Tiptree Jam Factory, where we could visit their museum, wander around their shop looking at their amazing array of jams and preserves and treat ourselves to a delicious cream tea before wending our way back home.

The following day we visited the Milton Keynes Theatre to see Swan Lake on Ice . This truly amazing show was both colourful and spectacular with superb skating by 'The Imperial Ice Stars'.

We have a further two venues planned for March, the first being our Murder Mystery Weekend at Bosworth Hall Hotel, Warwickshire. We will finish the month with our Annual 'Get Together' and cheque

presentation to our representative from Keech Hospice Care for Children. Details will be reported in the April Messenger.

Forthcoming Events 2011

| | |
|---|---|
| Treasures of Tuscany | Saturday 9 th Wed 13 th April |
| Newmarket and The Gallops | Thursday 21 st April |
| Moggerhanger, Tour of House and tea | Thursday 5 th May |
| Frogmore Paper Trail & short river trip | Sunday 5 th June |
| Tour of the Cotswolds | Thursday 16 th June |
| Afternoon tour of Chicksands Priory | Sunday 17 th July |
| Black Country Museum | Thursday 28 th July |
| Lincs Heritage Aviation Centre Air Show | Saturday 6 th August |
| Grebe canal cruise with cream tea | Sunday 21 st August |
| Wizard of Oz (Matinee) | Wednesday 31 st August |
| Ashdown Forest | Thursday 8 th September |
| Christmas in the Royal Landscape | Thursday 8 th December |
| Brick Lane Music Hall, including lunch | Tuesday 20 th December |

At the time of going to press, we are still awaiting details of ticket allocation for the ever popular Thursford Christmas Spectacular show in Norfolk.

London Theatre trips are available with a coach 'pick up' in Shefford. If there is a particular show you would like to see, please don't hesitate to contact me. I am only too happy to help.

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 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

Financial News Update

The only constant in the world of finance is change! Last month I was busy telling you that the earnings related part of the State Pension had been slowly ebbing away, then this month they announce that they want to give every pensioner a flat £140 a week, and do away with most if not all of the means tested add-ons. Hoorah, Iain Duncan-Smith really does seem to have some common sense. Perversely, this saves money...it actually costs something like £156 to pay out the current pension because of all the bureaucracy surrounding it!

Those of us who operate in the industry are also bracing ourselves for a major change from the end of 2012. I don't expect you to know about it, nor even care about it, however it will fundamentally change the way financial products are sold, and so you ought to be aware of it at least. The whole piece of work is called the Retail Distribution Review or RDR for short.

On the good side, every adviser will have to be qualified to an advanced level way above the current minimum qualifications. Thankfully I reached this point many years ago; however there are a lot of advisers looking to either retire or leave the industry rather than take a lot of rather difficult exams. The downside is that there will be a lot fewer advisers out there. We have already seen the Lloyds Banking Group, and Barclays, withdraw from giving advice in their branches ahead of RDR coming in, and speculation is rife that another high street bank is shortly to follow suit.

Another big change is the way advisers are classified; in 1986 it was decided to differentiate between those advisers who were selling only one company's wares from those who could sell anyone's. The terms 'Tied Adviser', and 'Independent Financial Adviser' (IFA) were born. At one end were the tied sales forces like the Prudential, Co-op, Pearl, Allied Dunbar and the banks. Nearly all of these no longer exist, and those that do have forged relationships with other

providers to widen their product base, and so the term ‘Tied Adviser’ doesn’t really fit the bill any longer. At the other end, a great many of the IFA’s, through a mixture of market consolidation and their employer’s producing ‘Best Advice Panels’ to choose from, found they were not truly ‘Whole of Market’ but restricted to a handful of providers only. So, both ends migrated towards the middle and a new classification emerged – Multi-tied Advisers. So, RDR is going to change it all again. Those who are true IFA’s will have to prove they are really using the whole of the market, and in most cases will charge you fees for their time just like a solicitor or accountant. The rest of us will operate in the poorly titled ‘Restrictive Advice’ sector. Here the cost of the advice will be deducted up front from what you buy, as opposed to the current method of dribbling it out over the life of the plan.

What really concerns me here is that the vast majority of people will not want to pay fees, neither will they feel comfortable with the term ‘Restrictive Advice’, and so they will either do nothing or head for the internet! Doing nothing is a frightening scenario for the future, and don’t get me wrong, there is some great stuff on the internet, but there are some costly mistakes to be made as well, and I’ll talk about some of the pitfalls next month – all is not what it seems!!!

I appreciate that many of you are thinking ‘So what?’ it really doesn’t affect me. However everyone needs advice at some point in their lives, and for many, this has previously meant speaking to the bank. This access to advice is much less available than before (and likely to get significantly worse). Does it change the way you think – no, but you ought to be aware of how things are. I think it’s a little bit like knowing how to rewire a plug – it’s awfully dull, but you ought to know how it’s done, because it can be pretty disastrous if you get it wrong.

Jon Ingarfill

Tel: 07870 564115 or email: jon.ingarfill@pocockrutherford.com

I am writing this in the last days of February. After a few cold, grey ones, today is a beautiful spring day; warm and bright. Blossom is breaking out, daffodils are about to, and there is once again the prospect of longer, brighter days ahead. (On reviewing this article on the 28th February the weather has returned to type!)

Oakley: a month in the life of a wheat plant

As you know, we are not growing any Oil Seed Rape this year, which will soon be growing upwards apace on neighbouring farms as soil and air temperatures rise. Oakley will take a bit more time to wake up fully and get going; but get going it will during March. A close eye will be kept on it by regular field walking to monitor growth stages, weed population and control, and disease thresholds. Nitrogen applications will be tailored to the crops optimal nutrient requirements and will be spread in split doses with one eye on growth stage and the other on the weather. We need rainless and still(ish) days to apply the fertilizer, but rain following soon after to dissolve the granules so that they can soak into the soil and be taken up by Oakley's root system. Last year, when we had such a very dry spring, much of the April applied nitrogen lay on the soil surface unavailable to the crop at the time it was most needed.

Elsewhere on the Farm

Skylark plots are one of the options we implement in our Entry Level Scheme (ELS). These are uncropped rectangles approximately 6m x 10m left in the field to give bare earth for nesting sites. Usually we can arrange for the plots to be seedless when the rest of the crop is being drilled; occasionally, as in this year, they have to be sprayed out now before the crop gets going. I hope the increase in skylark numbers that we have seen recently will continue.

Higher Level Scheme

Last month I wrote about applying to upgrade our existing E L S membership to the Higher Level Scheme. This would involve a 10 year commitment on our part and we would receive annual payments to take out a further 15% or so of our cropping area and put in various wildlife enhancing and archaeological protection options. With wheat at £100 per tonne, which it was when we started drawing up our application, this made both good commercial and environmental sense. With wheat currently fluctuating at around £180 tonne this is not so commercially viable. If we farmed 1000 acres plus then this would be less of an issue. More on this next month.

Interesting Statistic of the Month

From a farming periodical: “The World Food Programme recently bought 1.25 billion US Dollars worth of food. Food price rises across the globe will drive a further 44million people into poverty in developing countries”

Global Issue

. . . . However, in contrast to the 2008 spike in world grain and food prices which brought civil unrest in many poorer countries, better harvests in African countries in 2010 have kept prices stable there; global rice price rises have been moderate and the outlook for the rice market looks stable, which is of course significant for the large populations of the far East and the Indian subcontinent.”

By the time you read this we may be clearer about the effects of the current political instability in the Middle East and North Africa

Warm off the Press

The plans to create a ‘super dairy’ at Nocton in Lincolnshire have been withdrawn, after The Environment Agency expressed concerns about the lack of information on the risks posed to the underground aquifer beneath the site. This excused the local council from having to read through ‘in excess of 14,000 submissions’ to the proposed enquiry.

My feeling is that there will be further applications to build large dairy units and we will see more than one before too long. Otherwise milk production in this country will become a niche business. Vociferous opposition will remain.

50 Years Ago

During the 1960’s and ‘70’s my father kept detailed diary accounts of what happened each day on the farm and who did what. I have been looking back to 1961 and as 2011 goes by I will make a summary of the entries for the corresponding month 60 years ago.

March 7th: Brussels Sprout picking finishes.

14th Brussels stalks chopped up by rotivator and spring barley drilled as soon as conditions allowed and seed bed created.

15th Brussels seed drilled by hand in a small nursery bed. (Plants to be transplanted in June as a rotation crop for picking the following winter.)

18th Very warm and sunny; 72 degrees (Fahrenheit!)

20th Wages raised to £8 for a 45 hour week and Saturday work stopped at 11am.

30th Cows out to grass for first time this year in daytime only. Total daily milk rises from 162 to 180 gallons but “cows very loose”!

Chris Foster : 28th February 2011

The History of Meppershall - 9

Hearth Tax records reveal the old layout of Meppershall.

Based on documents in the Public Record Office.

Note to myself

1671

Today I must submit the number of hearths in each house to the Bedfordshire authorities, omitting only the eight villagers which receive constant alms – the poor not to be taxed. My legs ail me, therefore, since I know it so well, I think I will ‘walk around the village’ in my mind so that I can consider which of the houses need particular attention. For my rectory (*not the present house known as The Rectory*) I must split the hearths between the counties, seven of the ten being within the Bedfordshire boundary. At the end of the drive, on the corner of the lane to Stondon, lives John Stringer [1 hearth] [*the Thatched Cottage*] and crossing the lane, a little down the path to Shillington, dwells John Cannon, the blacksmith. His cottage [*opposite the Donkey Field*], has one hearth and the forge fire must be listed also, as he will be taxed on both. The only omissions allowed, apart from the poor, being bake ovens and those not fully finished. To my knowledge none of my congregation have blocked a hearth to avoid the tax but I must remember to check this tomorrow, by inspecting the homes.

After Widow Austin’s cottage [1 hearth] is the lane to the church and the Manor, where Widow Norman is living and which has but three hearths. After William Fowler at Woodhall Farm [eight hearths in all], I’d be back in the village if I were on foot and Bryant’s farm [*Bury Farm*] would be next to list, John Bryant having three hearths. Past the church field, where the county boundary loops across the High Street, comes Widow Parcell’s cottage [once *the Five Bells Inn which stood where Taylor’s Close is today*]. This dwelling, like my own, has the boundary crossing through the house but the hearth is in Bedfordshire. From thence to Manor Farm, I must check the hearths in the new part (*four hearths are visible today*).

Opposite lives Jeremy Hanscome – a good size house but he told me this morning that he only has one hearth. It is difficult to demand to inspect his home as it will appear that I suspect a churchwarden of telling a mistruth, but I must do so or I will fail in my duty to the king. The two farm cottages for Kympton’s Farm are between Manor Farm and Kympton’s farmhouse [*Fowler’s Farm*], both Francis Mallin and John Lewis having one hearth each. Their homes are just within Bedfordshire for Widow Kympton’s farmhouse is exactly within the next loop of the county boundary as it crosses and re-crosses the highroad. Widow Kympton being obliged to pay Bedfordshire tax for the four- hearth house close by, which she also owns.

There are no more dwellings on this side of the street before the field lane, by which we can reach Polehanger Farm [*in a different position to the building we know today*], Anthony Blane to be taxed for all six hearths there. From Polehanger I would be able to visit Mr Dixey’s house, [*believed to be close to today’s Polehanger Farm*]. This must be inspected as he claimed one hearth was not

admissible in the last tax list -I think he resents paying tax on this building when he dwells mostly in London.

I must remember the cottage built within the most strange island of Bedfordshire, surrounded completely by Hertfordshire land, in Fieldwyck [*Possibly Ivy Cottage in Fildyke Road*]. From there I would now only need to list Edward Green and George Foster, both having two hearths, in Sand Lane [*the top part of Fildyke Road*] and William Pope's house [*his house stood on the High Street, roughly opposite the Post Office, and the land with this house included the allotments*]. William Pope is an example of how one cannot judge a man's status by the number of hearths on which he pays tax as his family live in a well built home but only one hearth is taxable. From the records which will be submitted, this makes him seem equal to a man living in the poorest of cottages.

I have but one week more to list and submit hearths for both the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire houses within the village. If I continue to ail I must instruct someone to check the homes on my behalf.

Timothy Archer, Rector of Meppershall

The number of hearths for houses is exactly right for the period. The 1663 hearth tax showed the same number of hearths per house as the 1671 tax list. Any extra hearths in houses still standing today show a post 1671 change in structure.

The county boundary used to run up Stondon Lane, through the Rectory and up to the High Street, approximately where the path used to run down to Rectory Farm. At this point it crossed the High Street, encircled a small field and then ran back across the road, cutting through the old Five Bells Inn. The county boundary then ran behind the present houses, back to the road along an old path and through the bungalows. It then enclosed Fowlers Farm, crossed back, running behind the allotments and down the top part of Fildyke Road to the footpath to the parish field in Hoo Road. It followed Hoo Road and turned left at the end following the road to the end of the parish. The Hertfordshire boundary followed ancient footpaths that can be identified on early twentieth century maps of Meppershall.

Hearth tax began in 1662 to provide an income for King Charles II but only lasted until 1689. In 1696 a window tax was imposed, which was more logical as larger homes had more windows. This tax was fairer in discriminating between rich and poor as the size of a house was not always reflected by the number of hearths. This lasted until 1851 and as the only way to reduce tax was to fill in windows one can still see houses today with bricked in windows. In 1797, even a clock tax was imposed to raise money to fund the early Napoleonic Wars. When one considers that the people paid a tithe of one tenth of all income, including crops, eggs and animals etc produced on farms, any extra tax caused much resentment and the more 'creative' taxes did not last long.

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Meppershall Bakery Bees *by Roger*

Spring start-up begins with the first inspection of the season and as winter crawls to an end, I picked the first mild sunny day with little or no wind to inspect our bees. It went well, all hives are okay and bringing in pollen. We know we are looking forward to summer and our routine inspections. There is a lot to do in the apiary, adding supers, cleaning brood boxes, adding new frames and foundation, keeping an eye on food stores and adding a spot of paint to some of the hives along with general repairs. Some of which should have been done earlier in the year; as you can see I am a little behind this year, more than I would like to be, so a busy time ahead.

Meppershall hives are now 5, having lost 2 over the winter but with next month being May, which is the start of the swarming season, we can soon add to the colonies. Towards the end of the month the colonies will start to expand.

Expanding colonies can have supers placed on them, as overcrowding is one of the main reasons for swarms emerging. Swarming is something bees generally try to do and beekeepers try to stop, so it is a point of conflict. Perhaps that's why we are called 'beekeepers'. It is the method used by the superorganism, which is the colony, to reproduce and is therefore a very powerful instinct. However it is clear that some colonies try to swarm as soon as possible and others do not. So that gives us hope. A colony preparing to swarm produces new queens, once the first queen larvae is capped over, the old queen leaves with up to half of the bees, mainly the young ones. One of the new queens eventually takes over the colony, mates and becomes the new mother. The whole process takes about three to four weeks. What circumstances encourage swarming? Overcrowded bees, a shortage of laying space, a queen more than a year old, a swarmy strain of bees and good weather. The list above gives clues to prevention. We cannot do much about the weather, but we can ensure that bees have sufficient room, the queen is young and we can breed or obtain a strain which is not too inclined to swarm at the first opportunity and by removing some frames of stores remaining from winter which can restrict the space available where the queen can lay. If this is the case, ensuring that the bees have sufficient stores, such frames can be stored carefully and used later for nuclei or other colonies that need food. We add the first super early before the bees start to look crowded and keep adding new ones as necessary. When we inspect our bees, a lot are out working so it is important to remember that they all come home at night and need space so each new super must be added before the previous one is anywhere near full.

Set 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

The Wine Society's Guide To Wine Tasting

The benefits of learning how to taste wine are both immediate and tangible. Being able to interpret appearance, smell and taste in the glass, and recognising the characteristics of the small number of grape varieties which lie behind most wine labels not only enhances enjoyment, but boosts wine confidence, two excellent reasons for learning the ropes. Anybody with working faculties and the will to succeed can do it, and, with a little practice, achieve a good standard of wine appreciation. This monthly guide aims to set out the general principles of tasting and understanding wine. First up, we look at one of the key factors which influences the taste of wine.

1. The Vine

The single most influential factor affecting the taste of wine is the grape variety or varieties from which it is made. It is impossible to put a definitive figure on the number of varieties of wine grape in the world – Italy alone boasts more than 1,000. However, the majority of the wines imported into the UK, where, ironically, we grow some of the more obscure ones, comes down to a surprisingly small number. Get to know these and you are well on the way to a good understanding of what's in the bottle. In the New World, and parts of the Old such as Alsace, you'll usually find the name of the grape on the label, but in most of France and Spain, the name of the region takes precedence. It helps to know that Chablis and white Burgundy, for instance, are both made from chardonnay.

Each variety has its own distinct character and part of the fun of getting to know them is choosing a word which precisely describes the smell and taste of a particular grape. Although personal impressions vary enormously, a number of common responses are recorded by tasters, for instance pear-drops or gooseberries for sauvignon blanc, or blackcurrant for cabernet sauvignon. Six key examples are listed below.

Sauvignon Blanc (Loire, Bordeaux, New Zealand, Chile, South Africa)

Grass cuttings, gooseberries, cat's pee (universal); boiled sweets,

pear drops (Sancerre); nettles, passion fruit (New Zealand); asparagus (some older wines). Fresh, zingy and verdant.

Chardonnay (*Chablis, white Burgundy, Champagne, and the rest of the world*)

Apples (cool climate); honeysuckle, hazelnuts, quinces, glacé fruit (white Burgundy) or melons, pineapples and bananas (warmer climates). Buttery, creamy and lanolic or oily are also widely-used adjectives, as is mushroomy (especially older wines, notably Chablis).

Riesling (*Alsace, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, South Africa*)

Pure, racy, mineral, citrusy, fragrant, flowery with elements of lime juice or lime cordial and, with bottle-age, petrol or kerosene. Once described – entirely positively! – by a guest at a Society dinner as reminiscent of a well-loved garden shed.

Cabernet Sauvignon (*Bordeaux, Australia, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, New Zealand, Languedoc, USA*)

Green pepper, cassis, blackcurrant cordial, roasted coffee beans, cedar, liquorice.

Syrah/Shiraz (*Rhône, Languedoc, Australia, South Africa, Chile, Argentina*)

Black fruits, brambles, plums, spice, black pepper, leather ‘sweaty saddle’.

Pinot Noir (*Burgundy, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Italy, USA*)

Forest fruits, leaf-mould, compost. Gamey, vegetal, seductive.

Next month, we shall look at vineyards and winemaking.

For more information about The Wine Society, including how to join, go to www.thewinesociety.com/join

Life membership of The Society can be yours for a one-off payment of £40, giving you a share in this co-operative business.

MEPPERSHALL SUMMER FAIR

SATURDAY 25TH 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!

Calendar of Forthcoming Events

April 2011

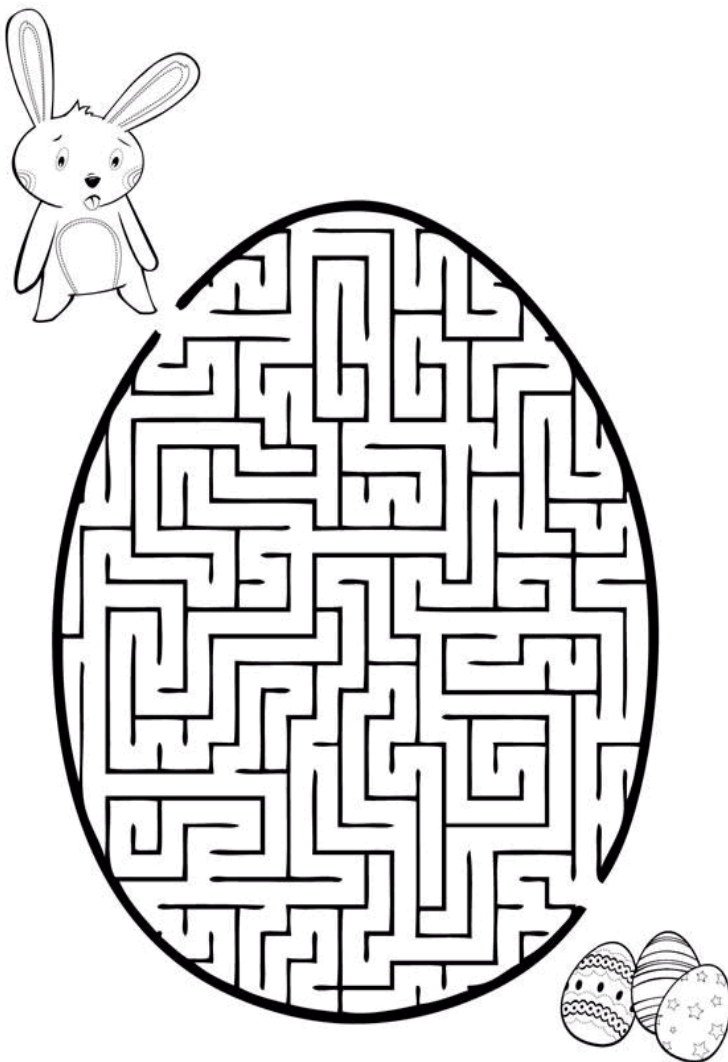
| | | |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|
| Friday 1st | | |
| <i>Closing date for Summer Fair programme design competition</i> | | |
| | | |
| Saturday 2nd | | |
| Quiz Night – Beat the Teachers! | 7 for 7.30 pm | Village Hall |
| | | |
| Sunday 3rd | | |
| Mothers Day | 10.30 – 12 noon | St Mary's Rectory |
| | | |
| Thursday 7th | | |
| Annual Parochial Church Meeting | 7.30 pm | St Mary's Church |
| | | |
| Monday 11th | | |
| Parish Council Meeting | 7.45 pm | Village Hall |
| | | |
| Tuesday 12th | | |
| Toddler outing to Standalone Farm | 11.00 | At Standalone |
| | | |
| Wed 13th | | |
| Messenger AGM | 7.30 pm | The Sugar Loaf |
| | | |
| Monday 18th | | |
| Annual Parish Meeting | 7.45 pm | Village Hall |
| | | |
| Sunday 24th | | |
| Mini Sparks Inc Egg Hunt | 10.15 am | St Mary's Church |
| | | |
| Tuesday 26th | | |
| Messenger Collating | 2.pm | Snooker Room |

May 2011

| | | |
|--|---------|--------------|
| Monday 9th | | |
| Parish Council Meeting | 7.45 pm | Village Hall |
| | | |
| Fri & Sat 13th & 14th | | |
| M'shall Players One-act Plays | 7.45 pm | Village Hall |
| | | |
| Tuesday 31st | | |
| Messenger Collating | 2.pm | Snooker room |
| | | |

FROM OUR YOUTH EDITOR – Brigid Holmes

Help the bunny find the eggs!



MEPPERSHALL
ART FESTIVAL
SAT. JUNE 4th

HELP

We need artists:
potters, water
colourists, painters,
tapestry, wood carvers,
pastels, architects,
designers, textiles,
embroidery, etc

*Please let me know if you or
anyone you know would like
to take part in this village
event.*

Sandra Harper 813334
sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk



Force Backs ‘Burglar Buster’ Campaign

BEDFORDSHIRE Police are throwing their weight behind a national initiative aimed at helping to protect the elderly from distraction burglars. From today Safer Neighbourhood Officers are starting to deliver hundreds of posters to shops, post offices, doctors’ surgeries, libraries and other locations as part of a national campaign called Operation Liberal. There are four posters in the campaign that feature the slogan “Not Sure? Don’t Open the Door” and pictures of pensioners who have become “Burglar Busters” by following key crime prevention advice.

For example, when two men claiming to be from the “Water Board” called at Jean’s home, she called police because she knew ‘Water Boards’ no longer exist. The men are now behind bars.

When two men posing as police officers called at the Harbans’ house, he kept the door closed while he called local police to check their identity. It turned out they were bogus.

Quick-witted Mary saw a suspicious couple calling next door claiming to have lost a ball in the garden. Mary noted the couple’s vehicle details and called police, who confirmed they were distraction burglars.

And John’s quick call to police helped stop a bogus caller pretending to be an energy supplier. John had signed up to the Priority Service Register password scheme and the caller did not know his password. John rightly refused to open his door.

Central Bedfordshire Police Crime Reduction Officer, PC John Shiels, said: “This area is not suffering a major problem with distraction burglars at the moment and we are determined to keep it that way. For that reason we are delighted to back this initiative and the ‘Not Sure? Don’t Open the Door Message’”. “Our advice to pensioners is to use a spy hole and door chain and insist on seeing identification. If you are any doubt about a caller do not let them in and call police. Anyone with information about distraction burglary can contact police, in confidence, on 01234 841212, Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111 or text to 07786 200011. For crime reduction advice email saferhomes@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk.

MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE HALL NEWS

The Village Hall has been completely re-decorated, including the entrance halls, Social Club, Snooker Room and toilets. We also have a new kitchen! Work began during February half term and we now have more cupboards, larger work surfaces, new flooring and new lights. The Committee would like to take this opportunity of saying “thank you” to the people that have worked so hard to make all this possible:

To Dave Hankins for doing all the decoration work, sometimes painting at midnight in order to fit in with the various bookings of the hall, etc.

To Paul Hudson of Paul Hudson Design in Meppershall for designing and supplying the kitchen units, work tops, sinks and cooker hood.

To Charlie Primett for fitting the kitchen so skilfully, working long hours to complete the job in the short space of time available.

The Committee would also like to thank all the User Groups for their patience during this time as the Hall was “out of bounds” while the work was being done and bookings had to be cancelled. Thank you for your understanding. I hope you’ll all agree that it was well worth the inconvenience! Finally, we would like to thank everyone who supported our fund raising events, thus allowing this work to be carried out. We fully appreciate that more could be done to improve the hall (in fact a new hall altogether would be nice) but, unfortunately, this is not possible so we have to make the best of what we’ve got. I hope everyone agrees that all the improvements have achieved this.

Don’t Forget!!

***MEPPERSHALL SUMMER FAIR
SATURDAY 25TH JUNE 2011 : 1pm – 5pm
Lots of stalls, attractions and fun for everyone***

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

Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group News



Date for your diary: 12th April 2011

Outing to Standalone Farm on Tuesday 12th April (meet at 11am at entrance to farm)

Adults and Children's books wanted.

We will be holding a second hand book stall at the Village fete in June - could anyone with books to donate please bring them to village hall on a Tuesday between 1:45 and 3:15pm or call Catherine on 812134 to 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. 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.



The Meppershall Players



Rehearsals are now well under way for “an Evening of One Act Plays” to take place on 13th & 14th May. “Look Who’s Tolkien” directed by Ryan Williamson; “When The Old Cock Crows” directed by Graham Scrase and “Dracula Revived” directed by Thomas Mitchell. All three plays are comedies and all three directors are directing for the first time (and all doing a very good job of it)

Tickets are On Sale Now at Roger’s Bakery, at the amazingly low price of £5 (no concessions) So book your seats/tables, plan your menu/food (for yourselves, not a share with all event) and come and enjoy a relaxing evening with your family/friends, whilst being entertained by the Meppershall Players.

The 2011 Pantomime: We are still looking for a script and director for this years Pantomime, so I can’t tell you what it’s going to be. I hope by the time you read this someone will have come forward to direct, but just in case they haven’t, and you’re reading this and thinking to yourself “I wouldn’t mind having a go at that”, contact any member of the Players that you know, or me (name and number below) 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 in 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

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**

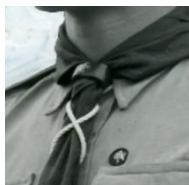
Let's aim for variety in art and music: all styles & all ages.
Sandra Harper, 01462 813334 sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk

When you think of Scouting, what comes to mind?

33



Boys, knots, woggles, tents, bob a job,
something about dyb and dob?



Think again!

Photography
Camping
Walking
Cycling
Gliding
Climbing
Rafting
Orienteering
Fencing
Abseiling
Sailing
Archery
Skating
Canoeing
Mountaineering

Members of Henlow/Clifton Scout Group have lots of fun and adventure, take part in lots of activities, indoors and out, boys and girls. We have a fantastic refurbished headquarters and lots of activity equipment.

But we do need more Leaders: can you give up some time to share our adventure? A commitment to Scouting looks great on a CV. Training is given, and support from other Leaders will be available for as long as needed.

For more information, please call Sarah on 01462 813799



***Boys, girls, adventure, outdoors, challenge, confidence and
above all fun!***



Meppershall Pre-school Ponderings



Our topic for this half term is Opposites – light/dark, big/small, hot/cold etc, and of course we're eagerly awaiting the Easter bunny!

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, alternatively you will find more information and our prospectus on our website www.meppershall-ps.co.uk.

SHEFFORD HEALTH CENTRE

On Monday 21st March the Health Centre moved to its new premises. The new address for Dr. Cakebread & Partners is

Robert Lucas Drive, Shefford, Beds. SG17 5FS.

Robert Lucas Drive is a turning off on the left of Hitchin Road as you are leaving Shefford. At the new Health Centre you will find the following services: baby clinic; counselling; district nursing; health visitors; midwifery; optometrist; physiotherapist; podiatry clinics dental services; speech and language therapy.

Phone number for all purposes is: 0844 894400

Meppershall Garden Club

Sun shining, birds singing, the sound of lawn mowers creeping into the weekends - Spring certainly seems to be here at long last!

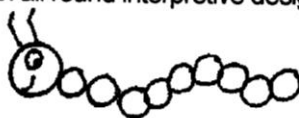
Time to start putting your thinking caps on for your entries into our Summer Fair competitions on 25th June.

Flower arrangement
on the theme of

"Afternoon Tea"



An all round interpretive design



And for the children



Vegetable Animals



(Animals, birds, insects etc. all acceptable)

We hope you will have fun designing your entries. More information and entry forms will be available from May onwards. If you would like to contact us before then, please call

Sarah Till 817176 or Kim Lee Tyler 811750

SIGNIFICANT BIRTHDAYS IN APRIL

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----|
| 2 nd April | Eddie Holden | 88 |
| 7 th April | Kathleen Drummond | 84 |
| 10 th April | Shireen Longland | 80 |
| 26 th April | Dick (Richard) Bulley | 70 |
| 29 th April | Pam Sheridan | 88 |

Belated congratulations to Brenda Wright who celebrated her 80th birthday on the 20th January.

We have to apologise to Peter Longland for aging him prematurely last month: he does not reach 80 until **next** year! We were also a little ahead of ourselves in presenting Shireen Longland with the cake that we are delighted to give to long serving helpers on the Messenger who achieve significant birthdays, but it does give us the chance to publish the picture in the month of her birthday!



ST FRANCIS CATHOLIC CHURCH
HIGH STREET
SHEFFORD

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES. 2011



PALM SUNDAY
(17 April)

9.00am **BLESSING & PROCESSION OF PALMS**
 MASS, with Reading of Passion of Christ

5.00pm **As above.**

MAUNDY THURSDAY
(21 April)

8.00pm **EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**
 Followed by Watching at Altar of Repose
 until Midnight. Compline at 10.00pm

GOOD FRIDAY
(22 April)

10.00am **MORNING PRAYER**

10.45am **SHEFFORD TOWN WALK OF WITNESS**
 Starting at METHODIST CHURCH, AMPHILL RD

3.00pm **SOLEMN LITURGY OF PASSION OF THE LORD**

HOLY SATURDAY
(23 April)

10.00am **MORNING PRAYER**

11.00 – 12 noon) **CONFESSION**
3.00 -- 4.00pm)

8.30pm **THE EASTER VIGIL**

EASTER DAY
(24 April)

9.00am & 5.15pm **MASS.**



♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

March was Prostate Cancer awareness month

Are you aware?

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK. 37,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer every year. 250,000 men are currently living with the disease.

Normally the growth of all cells is carefully controlled in the body. As cells die, they are replaced in an orderly fashion. Cancer can develop when cells start to grow in an uncontrolled way. If this happens in the prostate gland, prostate cancer can develop.

Prostate cancer can grow slowly or very quickly. Most prostate cancer is slow-growing to start with and may never cause any problems or symptoms in a man's lifetime. However, some men will have cancer that is more aggressive or 'high risk.' This needs treatment to help prevent or delay it spreading outside the prostate gland.

Prostate cancer symptoms

The most common symptoms of prostate cancer and an enlarged prostate that is not cancerous are the same. They are:-

- Having to rush to the toilet to pass urine
- Difficulty in passing urine
- Passing urine more often than usual, especially at night
- Pain on passing urine but this is rare
- Blood in the urine or semen but this is very rare

What causes the symptoms?

With both prostate cancers and non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate, the symptoms are usually caused because the growth presses on the tube that carries urine (the urethra) and blocks the flow.

If you have any symptoms, do see your doctor. Most enlargements of the prostate are not cancer (they are benign) and can be easily treated.

Above information was taken from: - www.prostate-cancer.org.uk and www.cancerhelp.org.uk/type/prostate-cancer

COVERS BY REQUEST

This month's striking picture comes from Jeremy Holden, whose new series starts on page 5. He tells me that it was taken by a camera trap, ie the tiger took its own picture! The picture shows a Sumatran Tiger because Jeremy is currently based in the Far East. He has bravely agreed to contribute a piece each month describing some of the many creatures that he has seen in course of his work for Fauna & Flora International. Unfortunately, the cost of colour printing will prevent us from illustrating them as lavishly as this one.

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.

MEPPERSHALL
MUSIC
FESTIVAL
SAT. JUNE 4th
HELP

We need musicians: bands,
instrumentalists, singers, choirs,
trios, break dancing, tap &
ballet, etc.

Any kind of music: classical, pop,
folk, etc.

*Please let me know if you or
anyone you know would like to
take part in this village event.*

Sandra Harper 813334
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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, The Rectory,
Church Rd, Meppershall 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 |
|---|----------------------|---|
| Sun 3 rd Lent 4 | 10.45 am 11.00 am | Congregational hymn practice Parish Communion & Choir – Junior Church at Rectory |
| Sun 10 th Lent 5 Passion Sunday | 8.30 am | Holy Communion |
| Sun 17 th Lent 6 Palm Sunday | 8.30 am 11.00 am | Holy Communion Family Service, with procession & “An Easter Experience” – a walk through Holy Week |
| Wednesday 20 th | 2.15 pm | School Easter Service |
| Friday 22 nd Good Friday | 2 - 3 pm | “Under the Cross”, with hymns, prayer and reflections. |
| Sat 23 rd | 7.30 pm | Easter Vigil, with lighting of Easter candle and renewal of baptismal vows. |
| Sun 24 th Easter Day | 10.15 am 11.00 am | Easter Mini Sparks (egg hunt) Parish Communion & Junior Church |

At St Michael's Church, Shefford

| | | |
|----------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Tue 12 th | 7.30 pm | United service of prayer for healing |
|----------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|

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|---------------------------------------|---------|--|
| | | and wholeness |
| Thur 21 st Maundy Thurs | 8.00 pm | Commemoration of the Last Supper with opportunity for sacramental washing of feet. |

St Mary's Weekday Services:

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

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

Saturdays 9.30a.m. Morning Prayer

As I write this we are emerging from a period of constant rain which has made the footpaths very slippery and limited my dog walks severely! But at the same time there are signs of Spring. The willow trees in the grounds of the Manor House are in leaf. The daffodils are either out or in bud and the crocus make bright splashes of colour. February fill dyke certainly lived up to its name but I am hoping the March winds will dry up the sodden ground and allow us all to get out in the sunshine without spoiling our efforts at Spring cleaning by bringing the mud in with us

The contrast reminded me of the season of the Church year. Easter is very late and so we are still in Lent with Passiontide and the Crucifixion still to come before we celebrate the joy of Easter. Some of us may have given up things for Lent or taken on something extra and I believe it is right for us to have a special time when we can, like the Olympic athletes, go into training for what lies ahead. The endless rain seemed like an echo of the gloom of Good Friday when we remember just what a horrendous death Christ suffered for us and that as He died there was an earthquake and the sun was darkened. But the light will return and on Easter Eve, in a darkened Church, the Easter candle will be lit and the light passed from one worshipper to another. On Easter Day the Church will be a mass of flowers and we hope the

singing will raise the roof. We have good reason to rejoice for we remember that Christ rose from the dead and is with us always and that because of this we all have the promise of eternal life. We hope many of you will come and celebrate with us. You will have a warm welcome and, who knows, you may even be offered a small Easter egg!

Happy Easter from all of us at St Mary's

Pam Halliwell

Material matters

It's good to report that plans are making good headway towards providing St Mary's with some appropriate kitchen facilities in the NW corner that will blend fittingly with the surroundings. We are fortunate to have skills available to provide a much needed hot and cold water supply, storage and serving amenities, so that we will be able to offer light refreshments in a much more user friendly and safety conscious manner, and enhance the welcome we are able to offer to visitors and regulars alike. So by the summer's Gift Weekend no more lugging of water supplies in from the churchyard tap, or battling with the steaming Burco!

Restoration work on the fabric is also moving on apace, particularly with the consequences of the harsh winter in mind. Specifications and costings are being drawn up so that work can be undertaken in the near future, and funds are available to tackle the most urgent work, thanks particularly to the efforts of the Friends of St Mary's. More information next month.

What's on in April:

This month sees the final two Lent house sessions on the theme of those who encountered Jesus on the way to the Cross, and what they may say to us. You will be very welcome at either/both, whether or not you have been able to share in the earlier ones:

Weds April 6, 7.30 – 8.45 p.m. at Dawn Abbatt's home, 28 Brookmead

Weds April 13. 7.30 – 8.45 p.m. at Pam Halliwell's home, 15 Buxton Close

Sats: 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 recommended.

Thurs 7 April 7.30 p.m. St Mary's Annual Parochial Church Meeting in church.

This is our annual opportunity to review the past year, to acknowledge all the willing effort that enables the life of the Church to be sustained, and to seek God's guidance for the future. All are welcome to attend, and those on the Church Electoral Roll are able to vote and/or stand for election as PCC members (including this year two representatives on the new Ampthill & Shefford Deanery Synod), and also to extend the Church's welcome in the key role of sidespeople. Do hope you can join us.

Hope in Bedfordshire are delighted to present a [Saltmine Theatre Company](#) production, '**Who Moved The Egg?**'. It's an Easter extravaganza for all the family that entertains and inspires in equal measure. Journey with us as we travel through from the Last Supper all the way to the Ascension. This will be this show's third national tour, and it has been very successful with all ages. The show is fast-paced, funny and full of audience interaction – whilst leaving plenty of food for thought. **Tickets are on sale at £8 Adults, £5 OAP/Students and £3 for under 12's** [Monday 25 April, 6:00pm at Christ Church, Denmark Street, Bedford, MK40 3TJ](#)
For more information or to buy tickets please phone 01234 344544, or visit the Hope in Bedfordshire website at www.hopebeds.org

Next month:

Sat May 7th - outing to visit **St John's College Cambridge**, St Mary's Meppershall Patronal Body, in their 500th anniversary year. 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 – or sign up on notice in church - all welcome

JH – 813334

ST MARY'S CHURCH

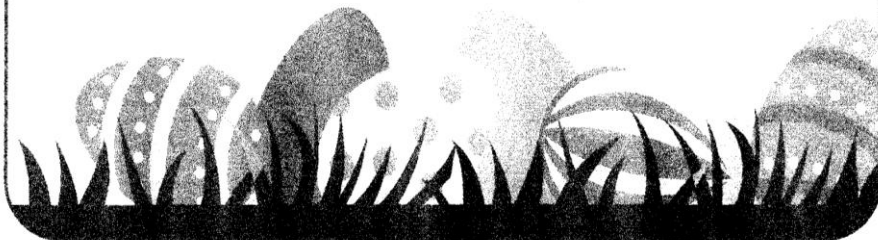
**EASTER
MINI SPARKS**

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 3rd April,
10.30am to 12noon
in The Rectory

For more information contact Gillian on 850497

An Easter Experience.

St. Mary's is OPEN [daylight hours] for a special journey around our village church.

Fri. 8th – Mon. 18th April

Visit six points of interest created in different parts of St. Mary's. Each 'station' explores one event in Holy Week. Each offers opportunities for reflection.

Meppershall school children will visit the church Thursday 7th April as part of their Christian education, helping them to feel the impact of the Easter message on their lives.

From Friday 8th there will be a daily opportunity for family, friends and villagers to share with the children an 'Experience of

and

PALM SUNDAY

~ An All age service

17th April 11am – 12am

Starting with a procession and leading into a led Easter Experience around the six stations telling the story of Holy Week.

Refreshments.

Rev. John Harper 813334 revjohnharper@talktalk.net

JC News

Sometimes we have Mums and Dads asking what exactly we do in “Junior Church”. Of course they realise that their children are going to be taught about Jesus Christ, who Christians believe is the Son of God, who came to live among us, as a precious gift of love from God..... Quite a tall order for us leaders, even if we have faith and enthusiasm, and want to spread the Good News of Jesus, and use our skills so that children may learn more and more about Jesus. There are restrictions – we have an age-range from four years upwards, and as coming to Junior Church is a voluntary activity, we cannot predict who will attend on any given Sunday.

Recently we have been telling the Old Testament story of 2 spies from the Israelites tribe who were sent by their leader Joshua to the city of Jericho to see if the land was good there. They were sheltered by a woman called Rahab, but the king of Jericho found out about these spies. Rahab was questioned about them, but lied to the King’s men. She had hidden the spies on the roof and then helped them escape. There was a moral issue too. Lying is not good and Rahab lied but she was also aware that God had promised land to the Israelite tribe and she believed in their God, so she chose to lie to protect the spies. As an activity the children produced a model of the spies escaping down a rope. . Children love to hear action stories, and with illustrations and explanations, they learn from them.

Last week we took a look at the raising of Jairus’s daughter. Jesus had been asked to come to Jairus’s home where his daughter was dying. But Jesus said that if they believed (in what he said) then the daughter would be saved. Again Jesus told them that the child was not dead, but sleeping. People laughed at Jesus as they believed she was dead, but her spirit returned and she was healed. There were major trust problems here. People believed that the child was dead. They did not believe Jesus. We played a ‘trust’ activity, here, where a blindfold child was led by a friend who gave directions which the blindfold child had to act on or not and each pair had to have a go – and learnt the layout of the downstairs of the Rectory (blindfold)! Do we believe and trust in Him? As we progress in our journey of faith, I hope it is a resounding ‘YES’.

This is just a ‘snapshot’ of what we do at JC. Please come to see us if you would like to know more. JC meets : 1st Sunday 11a.m. in Rectory; 4th Sunday 11a.m. in Church, and 3rd Sunday is 11a.m.Family – all age – Service. Phone: 850947; 851473; 814387.

Have an Awesome Easter.
Julie Taylor

CHEESY POTATO PUFFS

APRIL 2011

25g (1oz) butter plus extra for greasing.
500g (1lb 2ozs) potatoes cut into chunks.
4 spring onions finely sliced.
50g (2ozs) mature cheddar cheese finely grated
3 tbsp milk.
Fresh grated nutmeg
2 eggs separated.

METHOD

- 1) Heat oven 220 C/ 425 F/ gas 7.
- 2) Grease a six-hole muffin tin with butter.
- 3) Put potatoes in a pan and cover with salted water.
- 4) Bring to boil and simmer 15 minutes, or until very soft, but not breaking up. Drain well, mash well.
- 5) Mix the onions and cheese with mashed potatoes.
- 6) Melt the butter, add milk and stir into the potatoes, season well with salt, pepper, and freshly grated nutmeg.
- 7) Then beat in egg yolks. Whisk egg whites to form soft peaks then gently fold into potato mixture.
- 8) Spoon into muffin tin and bake 15/20 minutes, until golden brown and well risen.

Recipes are kindly supplied each month by Brenda Putwain

GARDEN TIPS FOR APRIL

(With acknowledgements to the RHS)

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

LAST CHANCE

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

GET AHEAD

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

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

Rebecca Myers who will be 6 on the 3rd

Teya Warner who will be 2 on the 4th

Amie-Lee Lumbis who will be 4 on the 5th

William Rogers who will be 8 on the 11th

Thomas Boggon who will be 13 on the 11th

Benedict Stinson who will be 3 on the 14th

Katrina Brennand who will be 11 on the 17th

Harry White who will be 10 on the 19th

Bethany Palmer who will be 14 on the 19th

Jemma Dalton who will be 5 on the 20th

Edmund Holmes who will be 13 on the 20th

Shane Sturgeon who will be 15 on the 21st

Bethany Lowden who will be 15 on the 27th

Charlie Lodge who will be 7 on the 30th

Alex Holcombe who will be 14 on the 30th

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

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.

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

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Collating Dates for your diaries

2011

| | | |
|--------|----|----------------|
| April | 26 | Tuesday |
| May | 31 | Tuesday |
| June | 27 | |
| July | 25 | |
| August | No | |

2011

| | |
|-----------|----|
| September | 26 |
| October | 31 |
| November | 28 |
| December | No |