



Arms of the de
Meppershall Family

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



VOLUME 27 – Issue 4
JULY 2011

Meppershall Village Website: www.meppershall.org

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EDITORIAL

By the time you read this, the big event will be over – I mean, of course, the Meppershall Summer Fair. Because we had to go to press before the great day, we will have to postpone our reports and our pictures until the August/September double issue, but in that issue we hope to publish a special Summer Fair colour supplement like we did last year.

In this issue the big news is that we have two new series starting. On page 31 we have The Lucy Page, to be contributed each month by Lucy Standbridge. Lucy is 9 years old and in her first year at Henlow Middle School. At her Grandma's suggestion, she started to produce her own newspaper, The Locket, for her family and friends, so The Messenger will bring the work of this remarkable young lady to a wider readership.

Our other innovation this month is on page 22, where we start a series aimed at providing advice to the many small businesses that thrive in Meppershall. Albane Quesnot runs a business herself in providing coaching and support to businesses (see her advertisement "just A") and her new series will make some of her expertise available without charge!

I am also very glad to report that Jeremy Holden has re emerged safely from the depths of Cambodia to continue his fascinating series "Life on the Wild Side". See page 20 for elephants!

And finally..... I would draw your attention to page 28, which includes the results of a police survey of the speed of cars through the village. The sheer volume of traffic is far more than I would have believed, and the proportion exceeding the speed limit is a cause for real concern.

Dick Bulley

LETTERS

Hi there.

I wonder if this is a valid enough point to warrant placing in the Meppershall Messenger, please?

I walk three little dogs. My terrier cross was attacked last year by a pack of dogs but not in this village. Hence she is very nervous around bigger dogs and those she doesn't know well. This has had a bad effect on me also, as it was unwarranted, unexpected and unprovoked. Both my dogs were marked by the attack but my sister was bitten, battered and bruised.

My point here is that I wish people who walk their dogs in the village, and of course those who visit our fine walks, would have a little more thought for my three little girls and my shattered nerves. We are all desperate to build some 'nice' and rewarding interactions with other dogs.

I know my girls aren't perfect and my terrier certainly has a bark on her!!! Also my new girl likes to voice her opinion. But as one good dog trainer once said when her dog was barking. 'Well it is a dog and that is how they communicate'. Never are my dogs loose to execute this behaviour.

Please could you treat my dogs as though they have as much right to be on the village walks as your dogs do, even if they can't cope with a larger animal running straight at them? When I shout "Could you get control of your dog please?" it would be a joy for my team and me if you could.

I called to a man in Royston, 'Could you call your dog please?' And his reply was. 'Oh he's fine'. A couple of weeks later this particular staffie ripped a Labrador to pieces in an unprovoked attack when it escaped from its garden. I have heard so many bad staffie stories so please forgive me that I feel a mite nervous around them. They are delightful dogs until they are 'not'. I don't want my much loved canines to be at the mercy of a 'NOT' moment, please. But that is a whole different story.

As a final statement I would like to apologise profusely to anyone whose dog my lurcher took a dislike to. She was ill and it wasn't known how much this affected her. She also had the crucial 5 months out of socialisation at a vital age as a young puppy. I would walk her for weeks if not months without incident and then the moment would reappear. Well I am honestly extremely sorry for any inconvenience.

Yours most sincerely, Jill Dickson

From Jean and Simon Holden:

*Dear Friends and Neighbours of Meppershall,
I would like to thank you all for the support for Simon
and myself at a very sad time in our lives, at the loss of
Eddie.*

*The many cards were all very beautiful and, to know
that my husband was so well thought of is very touching.*

Thank you and God bless, Jean.

MEPPERSHALL MUSIC FESTIVAL – SATURDAY 4TH JUNE

Those of us who were lucky enough to obtain tickets for the Meppershall Music Festival we were certainly not disappointed. The varied programme throughout the evening was of a very high standard, from our own Meppershall School Choir to the Meppershall Church Choir and in between we had various solos. These included two very talented young singers, a lad who happily showed us his skills on the drums, and a violinist whose playing enchanted us all. The MC for the evening was our own Rector John who thanked us all for coming to see ‘Meppershall’s got Talent! and not staying at home for the final of ‘Britain’s Got Talent’! I for one will certainly put next year’s date in my diary to ensure I am not disappointed. Well done to Meppershall – not only for the artists but for the organisers and the ‘backroom boys’

A big ‘thank you’ from a member of an appreciative audience.

Enid Pamment

Hi

Whilst I appreciate that the passing of members of our community is a sad event, we do seem to be having a run of front covers that look more like orders of service at a funeral rather than the front cover of a community newspaper. I was especially saddened as there was a lovely picture of the school children hidden away in black and white. Could we not see happier covers in the future that reflect Meppershall as a vibrant community made up of young and old?

There does seem to be a sudden move towards a lot of special features directed at older residents, for example birthday slots, details of elderly residents and memoriams when people pass away. This does seem disproportionate when you look at how the Office for National Statistics own figures show that they are by no means the majority of the population.

So please could we have more maybe about the school, preschool, toddler group etc? The largest section of our population (34%) is in the age range 25 – 49 and probably wants to see more items of this sort.

Please don't misunderstand me, I think the Messenger generally does reflect a broad section of the population; just the last few issues seem to be rather focused on one element of our community.

Regards.

Samantha Jones

Point taken about covers, but in the content of the magazine, I can only publish what comes in. This does not always provide the balance that I would like. I think our new series on Business Coaching is a step in the direction of the "neglected" age group, but I really would welcome new material, especially if it deals with matters of interest to these readers in the middle! - Ed

Meppershall Bakery Bees *by Roger*

All hives doing well. I have collected a few supers and extracted the honey. There are 6 more supers to come off before the honey crystallises. I will be doing that the second week in June in time for the Summer Fair. Meppershall hives have so far not shown any signs of swarming, or queen cells. At some time our colonies may try to raise another queen. This can occur if the colony produces its own virgin queen before a swarm leaves the colony or if the old queen just gets too old and the workers feel she needs to be replaced, this is called supersedure.

The new queen, when she emerges, will try to ensure that there are no other queens in the colony. She will then spend about four days in the hive, feeding to build her strength after the use of all her resources during pupation. During this time her pheromone glands develop and the workers recognise her as their new queen and start to feed and care for her. The workers will encourage the queen to the hive entrance, on a sunny afternoon, and help her to fly off to mate. Until she returns the colony is desperate, as their only chance of survival has flown away. While she is out of the hive she is very vulnerable. She is large and can only fly slowly and is prey to any bird that finds her. Her time out of the nest is very short (on average about 20 minutes) and she tries to mate with as many drones as possible (drones are the male bee which have no sting).

If she is not too successful on the first flight she will need to go out again to mate with more drones. It is said that ideally she mates with about 18-20 drones, this gives her about ten times the quantity of sperm she needs but allows her to collect a good variety of genes to ensure healthy offspring. She stores the sperm in her spermatheca where she can keep it alive for up to five years ! It is estimated that she stores about eight million sperm – plenty for a lifetime of laying eggs. Unfortunately if she does not mate enough times she can run out of sperm in a short time and become a drone-laying queen. No good for the beekeeper.

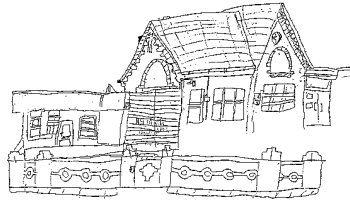
If the queen is lost or killed by a bird on her mating flights, the colony becomes hopelessly queen less. After a few weeks some of the workers will develop the ability to lay eggs but these are unfertilised and will only produce drones. If the beekeeper takes no action the colony will continue for a few weeks producing drones and then collapse because no new workers are present. If the colony is hopeless the beekeeper must come to the rescue and help it recover. We can buy a new queen from a bee supplier, which is delivered in a cage by post in a couple of days, and we simply place the new queen in the hive. She comes already mated and ready to start laying eggs. I will go into the introduction of a queen to a hive in next month's issue.

Honey available at Rogers Bakery. See you there.

Meppershall VA CE Lower School

*'An outstanding Church
of England School'*

June 2008 and December 2010



School Report- May 2011

Just before half term we said goodbye to our Site Agent Mr. John Cook who decided the time had come to retire. Mr. Cook has served the children of our area for many years, having worked at Samuel Whitbread Community College before joining us at Meppershall six years ago. A keen gardener, Mr. Cook always joined in and indeed continues to help the children with Gardening Club at school. He is famous for his Gardener's Question Time activity with the children last summer and for once cycling through the snow to make sure the school could open!

Children, parents, governors and retired members of staff came to our assembly to present Mr. Cook with gifts as recognition of his work at the school. Mrs. Reynolds arranged for some special cupcakes with a gardening theme as the guests had refreshments in the staff room afterwards. He will be missed by all but we know it's not goodbye as we see him at his beloved allotment and at Gardening Club.

Our summer term continues with lots of exciting activities, trips to the Natural History Museum and Mead Open Farm, transfer activities with Henlow Middle School and Robert Bloomfield Academy and of course Meppershall Pre School. You will see us dancing at the Meppershall Village Fair- warning you will be invited to dance with us! Let's hope the good weather continues for all our sporting activities too.

Lyn Fairweather
Head Teacher

Meppershall Parish Council Report

This report is for the latest meeting of the Parish Council which was held at Meppershall Village Hall on Monday 13th June 2011. There was little to discuss and the meeting was over within 65 minutes

The new Central Beds Council is taking its time to settle in, and as a result Tony Brown and Lew Birt had little to report. Some Parishioners present felt that in times of cut backs the appointment of the previous Chairman and Vice Chairman to the Executive was not appropriate.

The Vacancy on the Parish Council

Richard Bulley, editor of this magazine, indicated his willingness to join the Council and was duly co-opted on to the Council until the next elections in 2015.

I cannot deny it! - Ed

Planning & Housing (spokesman Cllr. Peter Chapman)

Recent Applications: - none received.

The application for a single storey rear extension to 18 High Street has been approved.

Finance

The Clerk produced the figures for the financial year 2010/11 that will be going to both the internal and external auditors.

Highways & Lighting (spokesman Cllr. Roger Bryant)

Cllr Bryant reported that it was still hoped that the improvements to the road surface of Chapel Road would take place in June.

The salt bins had been received and stored with a supply of salt until late autumn.

Environment & Leisure (spokesman Cllr. Paul Merryweather)

The container has been moved from behind the village hall to its place on the allotments and the Council would like to thank Corin Harris, John Cooper, Mick Trundle and Paul Carne for their efforts in moving it.

The two new metal picnic tables and bench seats have been received. One will be placed on the concrete base of the old shed in Foster's Field and should be in place by the time of the Summer Fair.

Two new litter bins are to be obtained for Foster's Field one as a replacement for the existing vandalised one and a new one to go near the picnic table.

Old Road Meadow

The other table will be in place near the Hoo Road entrance.

The Summer Fair

The Parish Council will be in attendance and will be available to receive the views of Parishioners on any matter of concern.

The next Parish Council meetings will be held Mondays 25h July and 12th September 2011 at Meppershall Village Hall both commencing at 7.45pm.

Peter Chapman - Chairman of Meppershall Parish Council

YOUR SHOUT with Trevor Thorley

LITTER

This exercise on Saturday June 11 can be considered to have been successful. The initiative by Pam Halliwell brought out a number of volunteers (although it would have been nice to have had a few more), and it resulted in ten plus bags of rubbish. I think Pam was pleased and it might well be repeated again in the future. In the meantime our village is a little cleaner!

MEPPERSHALL ART EXHIBITION

This was very well attended in the Village Hall during the afternoon of June 4. Entry was free and there was a brilliant display of work for visitors to view. Delicious cream teas were available to savour: two homemade scones with cream and jam, plus a cup tea, was great value for £2, with many people opting to give more.

MEPPERSHALL MUSIC FESTIVAL

This took place in the Village Hall on June 4 commencing at 7.30pm. It was a SELL-OUT and the audience were treated to a night of great variety and talent.

Rev John Harper welcomed everyone who had chosen to come along and miss the Britain's Got Talent show in favour of Meppershall's very own Talent show, and he was right.

St. Mary's Village Choir took to the stage on four separate occasions with a wide selection of songs, with the finale being 'Rule Britannia' to a crescendo of flag waving. Meppershall School Choir entertained with 'The Roundabout Road' 'Singing In The Bath' 'Any Dream With Do' and 'Time To Go Home'. The Syntropic Dance Crew were simply magic, and the Drum Solo by Marc Neilson, his first time on stage, was captivating. Caroline Page with her Violin Solo of 'Meditation from Thais' by Massenet was stunning. The Bassoon and Clarinet duet by Carolyn Holmes and Sandra Harper; Hannah Stock with 'Somewhere Over The Rainbow'; Piano pupils, Grace Howard, Mia Thompson, Emma Horsford, and Lucy Standbridge; The Angel Choir singing 'Sing A Song of Sixpence', 'Don't Sit

Under The Apple Tree', 'and 'Blowing Bubbles', were class acts who all contributed in their individual ways to a great evening.

Sue Chappell played an inspiring piano solo 'Arabesque' by Schumann' and Gemma Parr-Smith singing 'My Heart Will Go On' (Celia Dion) showed again that she has a future on the stage if she sticks with it.

Karen Mitchell who moved over from the Meppershall Players for the evening with a song 'Why Am I Always A Bridesmaid' had the audience in stitches.

Cheryl Parr-Smith played the piano throughout the evening, accompanying many acts.

The evening was the brainchild of Sandra Harper and she should take all the credit for a great evening. Rev John Harper also played his part as an excellent compere, in addition to his membership of the choir.

Proceeds from the day are going to Lavender House (Meppershall Nursing Home) to help towards new garden furniture.

COMING SOON

Look out for the announcements of tickets for sale for the ABBA concert, hosted by The Friends of St. Mary's and scheduled for 22 October. A fantastic evening is in prospect.

JUNE 1

Was a great day, hot sunny and great for cutting the lawn. I proceeded to do just that. After half an hour or so, I decided to take a break and enjoy the sun for a little while. Relaxing in a chair at the bottom of the garden I wiped my brow and after a short while resumed my mowing. Crunch! I thought that Janet had left a few stones on the path as she picked strawberries earlier that morning. Wrong! I had taken my spectacles off while relaxing, and promptly ran over them with the mower. A lesson learnt and an expensive one!

Remember: It's YOUR Shout.

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

SHEFFORDD LEISURE GROUP

As promised in the last issue we can now report on our trip to Frogmore Paper Trail which took place on Sunday 5th June. Frogmore Mill has a long history dating from the 13th Century; however, it was not until 1774 that the mill was first used for paper making. Growth in trade and general wealth of Britain resulted in an increasing demand for paper, and many mills in river valleys around cities of the industrial revolution, especially London, became involved in the paper industry. All paper was then made by hand: the process was slow and expensive in terms of labour and the size of the sheet was limited to that of the hand that held the mould. In 1803 the Fourdriniers brothers commissioned Brian Donkin to develop 'The Louis Roberts paper machine' and the world's very first continuous paper making machine was installed at Frogmore Mill.

We had a friendly greeting when we arrived at Frogmore, and the kettle was already on for a welcome coffee and biscuits before adjourning into the conference room for a presentation on the paper industry. We were then divided into two groups, one taking the canal boat trip whilst the others toured the mill. Their first stop was to be shown how paper making was done by hand, this was a remarkably easy process but very time consuming and members were given the chance to make their own piece of paper.

We then moved on to the pilot paper making machine where they were actually making paper for Timberland which contained wild flower seeds. We brought some of this back with us. We then moved on to the letterpress printing and we were given a demonstration of this trade. It was then time for our pre-ordered lunch before swapping places with the other group. Frogmore Paper Mill, although still producing paper is run mainly by volunteers whose enthusiasm was infectious and all agreed they had had a most interesting and varied day out before taking our leave.

We are still taking bookings for our forthcoming holiday to Pembrokeshire and Tenby in October, a tailor made holiday for Shefford Leisure Group. This is a particularly beautiful part of the British coastline and the holiday is open to non members as well as members.

A few tickets are available for the ever popular 'That'll be the day' on Sunday 30th October. This fab show will take place at The Grove Theatre, Dunstable.

Owing to Thursford Christmas Spectacular being an evening performance, we have arranged to stop in Swaffham for a late lunch of fish, chips, mushy peas, roll and butter plus tea or coffee. Make sure you book this event in plenty of time.

Forthcoming Events 2011

Afternoon tour of Chicksands Priory	Sunday 17 th July
Black Country Museum	Thursday 28 th July
Lincolnshire 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 Explorer	Thursday 8 th September
Pembrokeshire and Tenby	Mon.10 th – Fri 14 th Oct
"That'll be the Day" – Grove Theatre	Sunday 30 th October
Thursford Xmas Spectacular (evening perf)	Wed 16 th & Sat 20 th Nov
Christmas in the Royal Landscape	Thursday 1 st December
Carols with the Stars at RAH	Thursday 8 th December
John Rutter Xmas Celebrations RAH (Matinee)	Saturday 10 th December
Brick Lane Music Hall, including lunch	Tuesday 20 th December

London Theatre trips are available with a coach 'pick up' in Sheffield. 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. Shows currently available-
 Matinees: Love Never Dies; Royal Ballet Romeo & Juliet; Legally Blond.
 Evenings: Les Miserables; Million Dollar Quartet; The Wizard of Oz.
 For all holidays which include hotel accommodation, Sheffield Leisure Group acts as an agent for the Tour Operator, their terms and conditions apply.

Enid Pamment, Sheffield Leisure Group

Sheffield 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

Last month I talked about how you are virtually guaranteed to lose money by leaving it in deposit-based accounts. I also touched on the benefits of long term diversified investing. I thought I would put things into perspective a little by telling you how the UK Stock market has done this past year. I'm writing this on the 10th of June and over the last twelve months the FTSE100 Index (that's the 100 largest companies registered in the UK) has risen by 18.80%, and the All-Share Index (that's every listed company) has risen by 20.17%: both very impressive returns. Despite the doom and gloom in the media, some companies are obviously doing OK.

When I talk to clients about investing, most of them automatically think of two things: firstly shares, and then secondly individual companies. The first of these is scary, and as regards the second they don't feel they have the expertise to choose, so instead they do nothing and leave the money in the bank – but in reality it doesn't have to be like that.

Clearly the two indices whose performance I've quoted above are pure shares (or equities), but the investments I recommend are funds – which are a collection (typically 70-80) of investments run by professional fund managers. Some of the funds are pure equity funds, but many are either other asset classes e.g. Fixed Interest (or bonds) or a combination of the two. So why is a fund better than direct investment in the companies themselves? Well firstly if you invest directly, you will probably be linking your fortune to the performance of a very small number of companies (sometimes just one or two). You pay all the dealing costs, and unless you are an expert it's pot luck whether you do well or not.

By investing via funds you not only have the expertise and research of the fund managers on your side, you also get exposure to a far wider range of investments than you could afford to on your own, and at lower costs (because of the large fund discounts that the

managers get). So the result is that you dilute your risk because it is spread over many investments instead of just one or two. Invest in several funds and you dilute your risk even further.

It's a perfect way for small investors to get access to the benefits of large scale investment.

There is a huge number and range of funds available – some very specialised and some very general. They range from very highly speculative (scary for most people), through to medium risk and down to cautious risk funds. If you are an average/medium risk/balanced type investor, this category of fund has produced an average 7.5-8% p.a. return over 5-10 years. The cautious funds have returned in the region of 5.5-6.5% p.a. over the same period reflecting the lower level of risk they are taking.

So, how does one start? Well, a good place to start is with Investment ISAs (often wrongly referred to as Stocks & Shares ISAs). The annual allowance is now £5,340 p.a. per adult (mini ISA), or £10,680 for a full (or Maxi) ISA. An increasingly popular source is where people have accumulated sizeable amounts of PEPs and Cash ISAs which are earning very little or nothing in interest. It is possible to transfer some of that money into investment ISAs and still retain the tax free status of the ISA wrapper. There are lots of funds to choose from covering the entire risk spectrum.

Beyond your ISA allowance there is the same range of funds available - it's just that they aren't tax free beyond that, but they still give you the opportunity to grow your money faster than leaving it in the bank.

I hope this gives some of you a little more confidence to consider investing. Even if you only manage to beat cash deposits you are still better off.

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

Polehanger: A Farming Diary

Episode 24

Weather or not

Today (6th June) my heart is singing (quietly to itself, you understand) like the blackbird in the rain in our garden. We have had the best part of 20 hours of steady rain which, together with a couple of decent rains a week or so ago, at last brings some welcome relief to our drought stricken region. (The TV weather forecaster subsequently said this evening that more rain had fallen at a location in Surrey in the past 24 hours than in all of March, April and May put together; about 22mm, which is still less than 1inch, if you'll excuse my mixing measurement scales). How do you define a drought? A visitor travelling around the area would not automatically jump to the conclusion that East Anglia has had the 'driest spring ever'. Nothing was obviously amiss from a car window until you gave careful inspection to what was happening at soil level and in the (lack of) crop canopy. I keep consoling myself that at least we will get a harvest, when many parts of the world will not.

Oakley: a month in the life of a wheat plant

Oakley is now on ear but there are fewer ears than we would like to see. In the face of drought stress the plant aborts side tillers as it makes sure that it produces at least some seeds to fulfil its 'role in life'. The rain will help to fill the grain sites on the ears that survive and we hope this will lead to a better harvest yield than was looking likely in May. Only after harvest will we know for sure, but modern combines can give a good idea, as weights are estimated electronically as grain is discharged into the trailer carting to farm store.

Elsewhere on the Farm

Although I have yet to see one here at Polehanger, badgers have been spotted regularly in the locality. I am pleased that this was not the case (to my knowledge) when we milked cows, as this meant we were not faced with the huge issue faced by the west country and Welsh cattle / dairy farms of how to prevent cross infection of TB from badger to bovine. Cull or vaccinate? I can take a relatively detached view from a distance now. If I, or you for that matter, were the present Minister for Agriculture, what would you decide to do?

Global Issue / Warm off the Press

A recent report commissioned by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and presented to an international congress in Germany in May, has highlighted that more than 1 billion tonnes of food is

being wasted globally each year. Consequently this in turn is wasting land, water and energy resources. The study says that food loss occurs at all stages of the cycle; from production through harvest, postharvest and transport, to processing and consumption. These losses are more significant in developed countries. Consumer waste accounts for 222 million tonnes, and is a growing percentage. This is as much as the entire net food production of Sub-Saharan Africa.

EU Farm Commissioner Dacian Ciolos said (quite rightly in my view) that “the world cannot have the luxury of throwing away more than a billion tonnes of food each year globally. Countries must make optimal use of natural resources in the context of global food security”. More sustainable agriculture will be a key part of CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) reform post 2013.

Another challenge for us all!

I'll attempt to unravel what sustainability means for us as farmers later in the year. I'm not sure myself. Sounds fine in principle but what does it mean in detail on our farm?

50 Years Ago: Michael Foster's Diary Extract from 1961

28th June: Windy warm and sunny. Flat out irrigating brussels, grass and mangolds

14th July: Rogueing (*hand pulling*) wild oats (*aggressive weed cereal*) in Sugar Loaf Field (*behind Village Hall*)

26th July: 2 men hand hoeing (*growing*) brussels crop for weeds. 18 acres takes 6 days.

29th July: Trying to catch up with office work but spent 3 ½ hours getting 2 yr. old heifer out of old tree stump hole near river where stuck.

30th July: Walked round barley and oats in field to see whether should start harvest as many have done locally, but decided not ready until end of week. (*Later entry shows it rained at end of that week!*)

1st August: Fetched 500 rail sacks (*for grain storage post-harvest*)

7th August (Bank Holiday): Enjoyable day off in garden. Found two cricket balls in hedge whilst clearing trimmings (*lost by sons?*)

21st August: Finished harvesting oats but many shed on ground from continuous wind and showers (*the frustration of harvest weather!*)

Thought for the Month:

Does Roger have any thoughts about the demise of the honey bee locally and internationally: pesticide or mite or virus . . . ?

Chris Foster : 10th June 2011

The History of Meppershall - 12

Smallpox in the Village

Based on facts taken from the diary of John Blundell and the parish registers.

My Journal

It is the year seventeen hundred and sixty three and a year of disease in our village. On April the 6th I forbade my workers to cut firewood near John Bunyan's cottage and land this year if the smallpox remained in the home, he being my tenant at Cracklehyll. On April the 14th Sarah, the wife of John Bunyan, died of the smallpox and she was laid to rest in the churchyard. It was a good year for those dealing in lime, it being used around the bodies, and on the belongings of those individuals, to hopefully incinerate all traces of the smallpox. I bought 20 bushels of lime on the 20th of that month. To ensure my own good health I then, on the 29th, had Dr Hicks, from Shefford, bleed me with leaches. The smallpox continued and on both the 7th and 9th of May I took physic [*medicine*].

A note - On Thursday the 12th of May I bought myself six white handled knives and forks for 6/- from the market.

7th May. Paid George Harlow, my labourer who lives on the corner of the drive to the Rectory, 1/- for working in my wheat barn until 3 o'clock. George Gray was paid 1/- a load and a pint of my ale each day for threshing it [total wages to be 37/-]. On the 12th of June I gave George Harlow a pair of shoes that I find most uncomfortable and do not wear.

It was the middle of June this year that smallpox came to a home close to my own. Mrs Painter, wife of Egram Painter, has the smallpox. Egram keeps changing what he wishes to be called, last year he was Egram Parrott because he has never bothered to sign himself Painter-Parrott ever since he first came here as manager of

Fowler's Farm. The Painter's live at Manor Farm , directly opposite my home and on the 13th I was therefore "obliged to remove and took with me eight shirts, five pair of hose, eight neckins, three wigs and three hats" [*John's own words*]. Mrs Painter was delivered of a daughter on the 12th whilst ill with the disease. It was thought that there was no hope for the newborn infant, yet both mother and baby have survived.

On the 16th I feared I was coming down with smallpox, despite all my precautions, but it was just a mild malady and I was fully fit a few days later when I went to buy myself a pair of new hose which cost me 5/-.

On the 12th of September John Bunyan paid his half year rent and left his key at my sister's house on the 18th with the promise to mend the windows and pay for someone to whitewash the house. On the 24th of September I was able to have my second crop of clover on Three Acres Close, up on Cracklehyll.

The year is now ending with all my labourers in good health for which I am most thankful.

John Blundell

In 1761 and 1762 there were four deaths each year in the village but in 1763 ten deaths occurred. It is not noted why the individuals died except for the mention in John's diary of the Bunyan's having smallpox.

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Elephant Dreams

As a child I seldom suffered bad dreams. The occasional ones that did occur were so abstract as to be unexplainable – as I learned when trying to explain to my mother why she had found me curled in the dog’s basket one night after I had sleep-walked during a childhood nightmare. It was as if my subconscious lacked a physically identifiable object of terror on which to focus. This all changed many years later after I was chased by wild elephants in the Sumatran jungle.

For such large animals, elephants in the rain forest are surprisingly silent and unobtrusive. The Asian elephant is smaller than its African cousin but a formidable beast nonetheless. Despite this, in five years of tramping about the forest, I had never seen one. I regularly came upon steaming dung piles, trampled areas where the herd had slept, or their tray-sized footprints. They even photographed themselves on my camera traps. But the living animals always eluded me. I didn’t think about them being dangerous, nor make any effort to avoid them: in fact I didn’t think much about elephants at all.

Then one evening, hiking back to camp with my guide Karno, we spied a herd moving diagonally across our path about 30 yards ahead. Karno was ready to run in the opposite direction. I stopped him. We still had an hour to walk and this was the only path back; we had to take it or spend the night out in the forest with neither food nor shelter. The elephants didn’t seem troubled. They passed single file, one after the other, across our trail. I didn’t want Karno to start running and frighten them. This was a wildlife watching opportunity. I didn’t know then that Karno had a lot of experience with forest elephants, and he knew how dangerous they could be. We stood watching them pass, frozen into statues of ourselves so as not to be seen. Suddenly, one of the animals stopped. Elephants have poor eye sight, but make up for it with their other senses. It seemed to know we were there. I began to feel uneasy. The elephant had an unfriendly look about it. I suggested to Karno we move out of sight behind a nearby tree. It was a mistake: the moment we moved the elephant charged. The next few minutes were chaotic and dreamlike. For the first time ever, I was running for my life. I remember stumbling into some swampy ground and trying to run with my camera gear, each step getting slower and heavier. Elephants can communicate ultrasonically. I am sure this is what happened, because although none of the herd made an audible sound, they

were suddenly charging at us from all directions and my line of escape became a headlong charge into the path of another elephant.

By the time I stopped running I was exhausted and about ready to give up my life to the trampling feet. But the elephants had stopped chasing us. We had emerged at a cliff; I was prepared to start climbing down if they approached any closer. I could see one large female standing like a block of granite, unmoving. I imagined her guarding the passage of the herd. There was something primal in that standing elephant that left an impression in my mind. It was the beginning of something.

A month or so later I was woken at 3 AM by Karno asking me about a noise coming from the jungle. I could hear katydids, a tree frog, nothing else; then, ripping out of the darkness with a shocking suddenness, a vast roar followed by a deep rumbling purr. My sleep-dazed mind heard a dragon-shriek followed by the sound of a vast body being dragged across the ground. But I knew, too, that it was the noise of an agitated elephant. My hands began to shake. Something about the vulnerable hour and these chilling roars coming out of the dark forest made me feel like a frightened hominid on the prehistoric African savannah. It was a level of primal fear I had never known before, unreasoning and visceral. I abdicated all responsibility to Karno. I had made some poor judgments when we were being chased previously, and now he was in charge. We waited to see whether the elephants (I imagined there was more than one) would come any closer. Karno built a fire of green leaves that spewed acrid smoke, while I scanned the forest with my weak torch. Another roar announced the elephants had come closer – a couple of hundred yards. Karno's advice was that we decamp to the river and perch ourselves on a boulder midstream until morning. We did this, and once the sun had risen we crept back to camp, packed our things, and went home.

Previously, there had been a space in my psyche for that primal fear we label the beast and that haunts our nightmares. But as large as they are, the elephant slipped into that space and I carried it back from the forest with me. And now, during times of stress when troubled dreams come, they always feature an elephant.

Business Advice: a new series

Meppershall counts an incredible number of businesses. Just a stone throw from me along Fildyke Rd, there is Maurice and his pallets, Steve and his cars, Colette and her B&B guests, Mervyn and his websites, Christina and her pampering treatments, Emma and her dance school... and the list goes on throughout the village.

With so many local entrepreneurs, I thought it would be a good idea to add a business touch to our Messenger. I shall be writing an article on business topics every month: How to start up a small business; Keeping your company going through recession; Why you always need a contract; and so on.

Also, to make it more dynamic, feel free to ask me your burning questions, by email or phone (details below).

For this first article, I would like to address the issue of **cashflow**.

It is a terrible thing when a company, big or small, has to close down, even though its order books seem quite healthy. The reason? Customers are waiting, but the company cannot purchase the necessary supplies, because they are waiting for payments from other clients.

What can you do to protect your business?

Assess your situation regularly

Looking at how much money you can make is not sufficient: you must assess this against a timeline. In the example below, Job 1 may be a nice little earner, and even cover the cost of supplies for all these jobs, but this money won't be available until the end of Week 3.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Pay for supplies	Job 1	Job 2	Job 3	
Do the job		Job 1	Job 2, Job 3	
Get paid			Job 1, Job 3	Job 2

Job 3 may be smaller, but should be paid within a week. Could you do it first? A little cash in the bank is better than a lot waiting to arrive.

Look at your plans weekly or monthly. I know it doesn't sound like fun, but it is easy and can really help keep you afloat.

Put safeguards in place

What you can do very much depends on the nature of your business, but here are some ideas.

Make it a policy to obtain a part payment upfront from your customers. Sometimes, only 20% goes a long way towards easing off your cashflow. For example, it may help you finance the supplies for a smaller job, which will be paid immediately. It could also help you clear existing debts with suppliers, allowing you to continue purchasing from them.

On that note, negotiate short-term credit with your suppliers, preferably when your business is doing well. You may not need it now, but you never know when a weekly or monthly credit will come handy.

Always have a contract with your customers. I will come back to this topic in a subsequent article, but here is one good reason for now: if you do not have a contract stating when the product or service has to be paid by, your clients can drag it for a very long time and you really can't do much about it.

Also, to protect yourself further from bad debt, consider taking up insurance.

What if you are really stuck?

Don't be ashamed to talk to family and friends. Many entrepreneurs seek financial support from their loved ones when they start a business, but surprisingly few think to ask them again later on. If your relatives entrusted cash to you when you had never run a company, is it unreasonable to think they will support you now that you are experienced?

Don't be afraid to talk to your bank. Contrary to popular belief, banks are still willing to lend (let's face it, this is still how they make money). Prepare a solid case: show that you have orders on the books and a track record of good turnover; define a cash flow forecast including your loan repayment; present your action plan to avoid getting in the red again.

Don't delay in seeking help. Business Link, HMRC and the Regional Chambers of Commerce offer a lot of free advice. Business advisors, accountants and lawyers can also provide invaluable guidance. You don't have to fight this alone.



Albane Quesnot

01462 850518

albane.quesnot@just-A.co.uk

your local Business Coaching and Support partner

St Mary's Church Meppershall tea towels and mugs for sale!

Did you know that the Village Stores sells mugs and tea towels commemorating our beautiful church of St Mary's? Please have a look! The quality Linen Union tea towels also show other important village institutions (village hall and the school, to name a couple) drawn by a local artist. Both mugs and tea towels 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.

Our occasional purveyor of doggerel – Chris Waghorn – noted these words in last month's advert for St Mary's tea towels and mugs and they inspired his muse. They showed me that I had not paid sufficient attention to the order of words in the advert; this has now been rectified! - Ed

St Mary's at the Village Stores – I wonder what she'll buy?
 I can't imagine what she'd need, however hard I try.
 Perhaps she'll hit the Lottery, but that don't ring quite true
 'Cos if she won 6 million quid whatever would she do?
 She couldn't go and spend it and her boss would doubtless say
 "I've warned you once already, Mary, - now you'll have to pay"
 A roll of thunder heralded a lightning bolt of blue
 Which neatly plucked poor Mary from the patient check-out queue
 And the moral of this sorry tale is very plain to see
 'Saints and sinners never mix' – that's her obituary.

July 2011

Saturday 2nd		
<i>RBMS Summer Ball</i>	8.pm - midnight	Robert Bloomfield, Shefford
Wednesday 6th		
<i>Panto read through</i>	7.30 pm	<i>Village Hall</i>
Sat 9th & Sun 10th		
<i>St Mary's Gift Weekend</i>	10.30am-4.30 pm	<i>St Mary's Church</i>
Wednesday 13th		
<i>Panto Auditions</i>	7.30 pm	<i>Village Hall</i>
Saturday 16th		
<i>Foresters Social Nite</i>	8.pm - midnight	Village Hall
Monday 25th		
<i>Messenger Collating</i>	2.00 pm	<i>Snooker room</i>
<i>Parish Council Meeting</i>	7.45 pm	<i>Village Hall</i>
Mon. 25th - Thur 28th		
<i>Sparks</i>	10 am – 2 pm	<i>St Mary's Church</i>
Saturday 30th		
<i>Neil Sartain</i>		<i>Village Social Club</i>

August 2011

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From the Parish Registers:

Funerals

Edgar Arthur William Holden (Eddie), died 17 April, aged 88. Service in St Mary's Church, May 10th

John Ian Winter (Spike) died 15 May, aged 83. Service at Luton Crematorium, June 1st

Patricia Fay Sheppard (Pat), died 13 May, aged 74. Service at Harwood Park Crematorium, May 31st

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. We have looked at grape varieties, vineyards, winemaking and the effect of oak – this month we check out tannin and acidity.

4. Tannin and Acidity

It's important to recognise the presence of tannin in wine, which gives a clue both to the wine's potential longevity and, in some cases, to the grape variety from which it is made. Found in the skins, stems and pips of grapes, as well as in wooden barrels, tannin is a vital preserving ingredient which must, nonetheless, be handled intelligently to keep it in balance with the other elements which make a fine bottle.

Some grapes are low in tannin, others improbably rich. For example, the tannat of south-western France has extremely thick skin and five pips per grape, rather than the more usual three. There is much that the winemaker can do to minimise the effects of excessive tannin, including ensuring that the grapes are fully ripe before picking, removing stems and even pips before fermentation. For wines intended to be drunk young, micro-oxygenation techniques may be used to coax tannin and pigment molecules in the grape skins to form the

long, delicate chains conducive to softer wines, a process which would normally take a long maturation period.

Whether a wine is to be aged for many years, or enjoyed in its youth – for a briskly tannic young red can be exceptionally good with certain rich foods – the important thing is that any tannin present should not overpower the fruit. Green, unripe tannins taste unpleasant in a young wine and rarely improve with age. Ripe, well-managed tannins, on the other hand, often evoke tasting terms like ‘silky’ or ‘harmonious’.

Just as some grapes are more tannic than others, the level of natural acidity in grapes varies considerably, not only from variety to variety, but from region to region. The presence of acidity is what turns alcoholic fruit juice into a refreshing glass of wine but the key word, again, is balance. The shrieking sharpness of unripe grapes is hard to tame, while a wine lacking in acidity is at best flabby and at worst, unpleasant. Good acidity, which helps inhibit the effects of harmful bacteria, among other things, makes a wine taste racy, fresh, and even mouth-watering.

Next month, we shall look at the effect of time.

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.

SPEEDING PROBLEM IN THE VILLAGE.

This item was sent in as a letter, but I think it merits a feature of its own. The writer supplied a copy of the traffic survey results that support the staggering figures which she quotes below. It really is a serious problem, and the Messenger would be glad to hear other views on it and, especially, any suggestions for tackling it. Ed

Those of us who live on Shefford Road have been very aware for far too long that there is a speeding problem. Both I and my husband have spoken to the community police team on more than one occasion to try and find a solution with the help of the police, to no avail. However, thanks to the wonders of Facebook, I recently managed to ask the Chief of Bedfordshire Police, Mr Alfred Hitchcock, directly how I could get the problem recognised. He gave me a number for the Road Safety Unit and I spoke to them and agreed a black box which records speed data would be installed.

The box was installed on the 21st May near the flashing speed warning sign (which the police now agree is in completely the wrong place). Unsurprisingly, it has shown that there is a serious problem with over 30% of vehicles speeding at over 35mph. Unfortunately, it doesn't record the actual speed - only the number above the prosecutable limit.

We were completely amazed at the volume of vehicles that use Shefford Road: the results show that over 20,000 vehicles a week are using the road and whilst many of you reading this probably think that 30% isn't very many, when it is shown as a number it is staggering: 6,270 vehicles a week are speeding on Shefford Road - 6,270 vehicles that are putting pedestrians and other road users at risk.

I have to watch my son and other children cross this road every week day to catch the bus to school and have on several occasions seen near misses with cars, children and animals. With the number of people speeding it is only a matter of time before there is a serious accident.

The sheer volume of speeding traffic now means that Shefford Road is classed as a High Risk route and therefore the local Police are now obligated to carry out a monthly speed check. The information has also been passed to the Highways agency to investigate a permanent solution to the problem. I have spoken to our Local PCSO Gill Richardson about these results and whilst we stood talking, a number of cars cut the corners at speed and suddenly braked when they saw the Police Car. I am pleased they did, though, as it meant that Gill got to see for

herself how bad the problem is. As a number of properties at this end of the village are having work done at the moment there are often parked cars or other obstructions, and speeding will lead to an accident as you cannot see round corners.

It is completely unacceptable to be travelling at such speeds through the village, especially when you all know there are children living in the village. I am of course aware that Shefford Road is used as a cut through from other villages to get to the bypass and from Shefford to get to Luton, but even so, many of these speeding vehicles are from this village. Maybe if we all took a few extra minutes and obeyed the speed limit, it won't take someone getting seriously hurt or, worse still, someone dying, for you all to take notice.

I'm told that a few years ago, speed humps were being considered for the village but the plans were never put in place due to concerns that this is the main route for the Fire service to Shillington. There are many towns and villages round here with speed humps and other speed reducing measures that are also on fire routes. They are designed to allow Emergency vehicles to pass over them easily and quickly, so that argument is both null and void. Now that the scale of this problem has been established, it would be reassuring to see something being done about it by the Parish and Local councils.

Please remember that the speed limit of 30 mph is set at that for a reason. I don't care if you are late for work or a meeting or an appointment, OBEY the limit. Try to imagine how you would feel if it was you that caused an accident by speeding; the whole "I'm just one car and I can't make a difference" attitude isn't valid. We all have to make the change; every single resident of this village needs to slow down before someone gets killed.

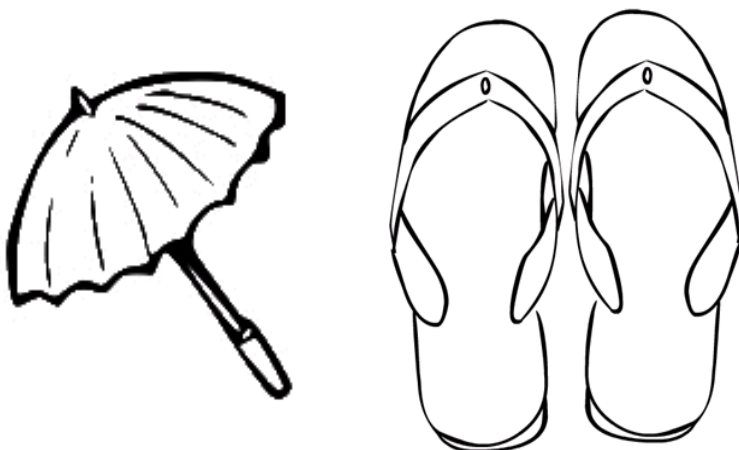
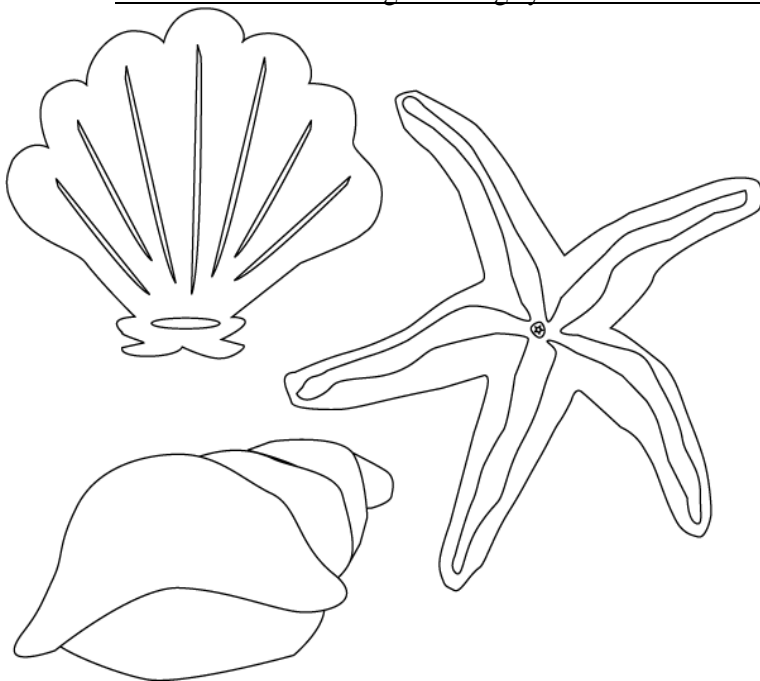
The maximum fine for being caught speeding is £60 and up to 6 points on your license. Bear this in mind with the forthcoming speed checks: 6,270 vehicles at £60 a time is £376,200 for the Police per week, and at that amount of money it is well worth their time and effort to carry out the speed checks! I joked with the Road safety team that they would be able to pay a beat officers salary for a year from the fines but even I massively underestimated the numbers, £376,200 would pay many beat officers salaries for a year!

Speeding has to stop, every single one of you has to slow down coming through this village, before someone gets hurt. And for those of you that refuse, I look forward to reading the next statistics with how many of you are being prosecuted.

FROM OUR YOUTH EDITOR – Brigid Holmes

Summer is here!

Colour in these drawings of things you find on the beach



THE LUCY PAGE

Hi, my name is Lucy Standbridge and I'm 9 years old. I'm going to be writing a page in the Meppershall Messenger and over the next few months I hope to include interviews with local people both young and old. Watch out I might come and find you!

Hurrah for technology - what would we do without it? Take a look at some of the genius gadgets that might be coming your way!! Check out these cool things that could change our lives in the future.

- Myself, I would like to see Harry Potter's invisibility cloak, and this could become a reality, thanks to light bending nanofibres sewn into clothing!

I asked a few other people.....What do you want to see in the future?

- Marc Neilson, age 10 said: "Flying cars ".
I found out there are already some flying cars, but they are extremely expensive. Some were built more than 50 years ago and can be seen in museums. (Maybe if you win the lottery Marc, you can get one!).
- Our neighbour, Mr. Dave Sanders said: "A time machine that can go in past and future".

I discovered that building a time machine would be very difficult, as it would have to involve such things as space black holes! - stick to watching Doctor Who Dave, and let's do the Time Warp again!



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

Residents in Meppershall are asked to be vigilant and to review the security of all doors and windows, after an attempted burglary took place in Hoo Road, on Saturday the 28th of May. The offence took place between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. The offender has gained access to the rear garden, and tried to forced open the wooden back door. Although the door has been damaged, no entry has been gained and no property was 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./,2,2,5,9,4,/2011. Alternatively text your message to (07786) 200011 or email your message to chc@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk. Or call crime stoppers in confidence on (0800) 555111.

Many Burglaries can be prevented. Keep doors and windows locked at all times. Remove all keys from the locks and keep them in a safe place and out of view. Avoid leaving property like handbags, keys, or laptops in hallways, or where they can be seen from outside the house. Keep garden furniture, ladders, and wheelie bins in a secure garage or shed, or locked up away from the house, where they might be used to climb onto a roof or access a first floor window. Be a good Neighbour. Be aware of sounds like breaking glass. Report any suspicious activity, or vehicles, in the area.

Bedfordshire Police ask residents in Meppershall to stay alert for suspicious activity on roofs, after a metal theft took place in the High Street, near to the junction with Gregory Close, over the weekend. The offence took place between 10:30 p.m. on the 28th and 9:00 a.m. on the 29th of May. Offenders have gained access to the garage roof, removing lead flashing.

We would ask residents in the local area to be aware of this incident and contact the Police if they see anything out of the ordinary. If you have any information about this crime, please contact the Police Control Centre on (01234) 841212, and quote crime reference, J,D./,2,2,6,7,6,/2011.

Ways to protect lead include:

- Coating it with anti-climb paint, which makes it messy and difficult to remove. The paint is non-drying and marks clothing and skin, helping to identify offenders
- Forensic marking helps identify stolen metal and trace it back to the owner. Products available include SmartWater, Red Web and SelectaDNA Grease
- Check your roof regularly, since the earlier you report a theft the more chance there is of finding the stolen metal, particularly if it is marked
- Regularly check the perimeter security of your home and bolt gates to the rear garden. Ensure security lighting is in good working order.
- If lead or copper is due for replacement, consider modern alternatives that are less attractive to thieves.

For more information on reducing vehicle crime visit http://www.safer-beds.org/rmwebportal/rm_desktop/files/Crime%20Reduction%20-%20Vehicle%20Crime.html

MEPPERSHALL MUSIC & ART FESTIVAL

‘by the village for the village’

Art Exhibition

THANK YOU to everyone who made June 4th such a special day.

A special thank you to St. Mary's ladies who provided and served the cream teas. Absolutely delicious and very reasonably priced. What an opportunity for old friends to chat and new friendships to be made over a cuppa.

The exhibition was not a money making event but was an opportunity for Meppershall artists and craftsmen to share their talents with the village and maybe inspire others to try something creative.

Have we an organiser out there to put it together next year?

Musical Concert

‘by village people for village people’

A very big thank you St. Mary's Village Choir who hosted the concert for the second year running. Their aim was to bring the village community together through music. And what a success! We had a packed audience enjoying all styles of music, performed by all ages from our very musically talented village. This year we made a profit of £237.00. and St. Mary's Village Choir decided to buy some much needed garden furniture for the residents of Lavender House [*part of Meppershall Nursing Home*] with the proceeds.

Next year

Colette House and Albane Quesnot have offered to take on the organisational side of the Music Concert and I'm hoping that the next musical director of St. Mary's Village Choir will soon be known. So if there are any instruments hiding in your attic you can now release them and start practising ready for next year!

Please contact Colette and Albane for any further information.

albane.quesnot@btinternet.com

Tel: 850518

colettehouse@gmail.com

Tel: 815585

Thank you for your support.

Sandra Harper

MEPPERSHALL SOCIAL CLUB

Regular Activities:

Tuesdays:	Darts
Thursday:	Dominoes/Crib
Friday:	Bingo Night

If you don't fancy any of the above, why not pop in on any night for a friendly chat and a drink? And become a member:

Family membership	- £15.00
Single membership	- £ 7.50
OAP Family Membership	- £10.00
OAP Single Membership	- £ 5.00

See a member of the bar staff for a membership form.

We also have two full size snooker tables open to members only, so why not become a member and come and enjoy yourself?

SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS FOR 2011

30 th July	NEIL SARTAIN UB40, Bob Marley & Reggae	Ticket only: £5.00 & £3.00
24 th Sept	DENNI Fantastic Soul Singer	Ticket only: £5.00 & £3.00
29 th Oct	HALLOWEEN DISCO with DJ Ben	All Welcome – Mums, Dads, Kids
5 th Nov	BONFIRE NIGHT DISCO with A/C	All Welcome – Mums, Dads, Kids
24 th Dec	XMAS EVE DISCO with A/C	All Welcome – Mums, Dads, Kids
31 st Dec	NEW YEAR'S EVE DISCO with DJ Ben	All Welcome – Mums, Dads, Kids

Watch out for posters & banners around the village and in the Social Club for these fantastic events. For tickets and any queries, call Louise Savory on 07909 600199 or call round to 8, Hill Top View, Meppershall.

MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE HALL NEWS

We had our Annual General Meeting on 9th June 2011. It was good to see a few new faces at the meeting. After the usual reports, Steve Ansell was re-elected as Chairman, Dave Birch as Treasurer, Linda Primett as Secretary and Sue Rafferty as Bookings Secretary. The other Committee members have agreed to carry on for another year, with the addition of a new member.

The next year will bring its own challenges, not only in the continuing task of maintaining the Village Hall, but also in the future of the existing building. As you may all be aware, the proposed housing development behind the Village Hall is making progress and the Village Hall Committee will be very much involved in overseeing the future of the Village Hall. We are committed to ensuring that, whatever the outcome, the needs of the village and the importance of the Village Hall will be recognised.

I hope you will all agree that the Village Hall is a vital part of our community. Your continued support at our fundraising events is imperative in order to keep this facility going. All the Committee members are more than happy to organise events and give up their time, voluntarily, to see that these events happen. But, of course, it needs the support of the villagers to make it successful and, on behalf of the Committee; I should like to say a very big “Thank You” for all your support.

Because of timing, this article will be going to print before the Summer Fair. I’m sure I’m not presuming anything..... it was a fantastic event, really well supported; everyone had a good time and the weather was perfect. I’ll give you a proper report next month!

Remember.... It’s your Village. It’s your Village Hall!

Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group News



Thank you to everyone who donated books to our stall at the Summer Fair.

Coming up in July at your village Toddler Group:

Jo Jingles are coming to Toddlers!

On **Tuesday 5th July** Jo Jingles will be coming to run a session for us - if you are looking after a baby or child aged under 5 years of age come along and join us!



Teddy Bears' Tea Party!

On **Tuesday 19th July** bring your teddy along to our Teddy Bears' Tea Party - look out for posters around the village for more information.

The session on the 19th July will be our last session before the holidays - but we are meeting for days out during the summer holidays - including a trip to Fancott Miniature Railway. E-mail meppershalltoddlers@gmail.com for further information or join us on Facebook (Meppershall Toddlers).



The Meppershall Players



The 2011 Pantomime: we have decided to do “Aladdin” this year. Hopefully, by the time you are reading this I will have finished writing the script, and because I had such a good time last year directing the Panto, I volunteered to do it again.

The read through of the Pantomime script will be on Wednesday 6th July, and if all goes well the auditions will take place on Wednesday 13th July.

We are also trying something different this year with our

Performance dates: instead of performing over the usual three weeks, we will be doing it all in one week. Starting Wed 30th Nov, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Dec, on Sat 3rd Dec there will be a Matinee and Evening performance.

Thursday will still be our charity night, so if you have charity status, and would like your charity to be considered to benefit from that evening, please submit your request in writing to the Players.

We already have a Spring 2012 production in mind. We will be performing the play “Gaslight” which will be directed by Mr Graham Scrase, read through and auditions for this production will take place after the Pantomime is finished, dates in next month’s Messenger.

Pianist Still Wanted: If you play piano and you’re reading this thinking “I wouldn’t mind playing piano for the Players”, contact me (Karen) or come to the hall on a Wednesday evening.

The players meet every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. 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

Meppershall Garden Club

Our Gardeners Question Time in May was a resounding success. Thank you again to Keith Hichisson from Langford Garden Centre and his team and all of you who made this event such a success.

June was a busy month for us. Much of it was spent planning and preparing for our plant sales and competitions for the Village Summer Fair. Which, by the time you read this, will be a pleasant memory! Indeed, if last year is anything to go by, we will be very pleased with the support shown from our community.

Have a great Summer. Let's hope we can get out in the garden and enjoy the beautiful plant life.

Kim Lee Tyler

For more information on the Garden Club, call:

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

NOTICE BOARD

Foresters Friendly Society - Coming Events

Saturday 16th July – Village Hall Social Nite. 8.00- Midnight
Music by Chris Cole and The Rockets. Tickets £5.00, including buffet.

Saturday 22nd October - Village Hall Social Nite. 8.00- Midnight
Music by Denni Harris. Tickets £5.00 including buffet.

JOIN OUR GLEE CLUB!



Free Taster Session

Wanna Beez GLEE CLUB!

Learn professional Musical Theatre techniques
then put on a GLEE spectacular!

Ages 4-17



Contact Natasha bijoux88@yahoo.co.uk 01462 851206

COVERS BY REQUEST

This month's cover picture is again by John Chapman. There is no particular reason for featuring the Meppershall Airfield in July, but to have an airfield at all makes Meppershall a bit distinctive and it is a lovely picture.

While writing of John Chapman, I can confirm that, as promised, his video of the motorcade that commemorated Eddie Holden is now in the Village Archive, which can be accessed by the link from the Village website: see the web address on our front cover every month.

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.

SIGNIFICANT BIRTHDAYS IN JULY

Congratulations to:

Alan Pritchard, who will be 81 on the 1st July.

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



Meppershall Pre-school Ponderings

We would like to welcome Max, Tabitha and Lyland to the Pre-school and hope they enjoy their time with us.

Before May half term we held a Mini Olympics and invited family along to watch the children take part. This was a great success and will hopefully be repeated again in the future. We would like to thank the mums who made the delicious cakes, and the staff for such an enjoyable event. £47 was raised by the cakes. Well done to our entire mini Olympians, and those brave parents who took part.

We now have three new faces on the committee, and every position has been filled, allowing the Pre-school to continue running. If you would like to become a friend of our Pre-school please ring for more information. Welcome and thank you to Dawn Abbatt, Rebecca Plumley, and Sarah Harris. Thank you to Jessica Bryant and Millie Germann for all their hard work and support last year.

New Chair: Debbie Jones 07713 627376

New secretary: Sarah Harris 07974 363873

Thank you to Sarah Myers who will continue her role as Treasurer.

At Meppershall Pre-school we are dedicated to providing a safe, happy and stimulating environment, where children from two and a half years old can learn and develop through play, whilst being encouraged and cared for by our friendly experienced staff.

Session times (term time only):

Monday to Friday	9.30am – 12.00pm
Monday to Friday LUNCH CLUB	12.00pm – 12.30pm
Monday, Wednesday and Friday	12.30pm – 3.00pm

If you are interested please contact Joy and come along for a visit!

Meppershall Village Hall, High Street, Meppershall, Beds, SG17 5LX

01462 817359(in session time), or www.meppershall-ps.co.uk

Registered Charity: 1031913

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 July

Date	Time	Service
Sun 3 rd Trinity 2	11.00 am	Parish Communion with Choir & Junior Church at Rectory
Sun 10 th Trinity 3	8.30 am	Holy Communion with address. Gift weekend – see below
Tuesday 12 th	2.30 pm	Meppershall School Leavers Service
Sunday 17 th Trinity 4	8.30 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion Family (All age) Service and Commissioning of Sparks Leaders
Sunday 24 th Trinity 5	11.00 am	Family Communion & Junior Church
Sunday 31 st Trinity 6	11.00 am	United Benefice Parish Communion with JC. Lunch after.

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

Also this month...

July 14th: Sparks planning session – for everyone involved. 7 pm. Rectory

Sat July 9 and Sun 10th - 10.30 – 4.30p.m.

St Mary's Gift Weekend

I do hope you will pay a visit to your Parish Church over this weekend, and catch something of its story and its purpose. As usual we hope to provide for all ages – and I'm sure you will receive a warm welcome, whether this is your first visit or you're a regular. Donations and proceeds towards Church improvement and restoration.

Home made refreshments - Teddy (and other furry creatures) abseil from the tower - Display of historical documents, including parish registers (find your christening/ wedding entry?) - Balloon race* (see below) - View our new conservation area - Meppershall School artwork display. Bell ringing display (Sat 3.30 – 5.15)

***BALLOON RACE!** Come and enter the balloon race and see your balloons launched from the top of the church tower. The balloon travelling the greatest distance will win a unique, prestigious prize - will it be yours? (All landing points will be notified in the Messenger in the autumn; all balloons biodegradable).

-oOo-

Dear Friends,

I was struck last month by the news that scientists can now probe the brain so profoundly that the words we communicate with can be detected as they are being formed i.e. before they are spoken. How mind blowing is that? And yet science is also telling us that there are real limits to human understanding – our brains are finite in their capacity to fathom the wonders of existence. It seems we need to find a way to be reconciled both to the impressiveness of our achievements and also to the fact that some things are just beyond our reach.

Centuries ago ancient writers came to much the same conclusion. They too were conscious of human cleverness as it had then developed, but also recognised that there are some truths too deep for us to master on our own. One such author was Augustine of Hippo, a colourful character with a brilliant mind. He achieved notable success as a university academic, but he knew deep down that there was more to life than cleverness. After years of inner searching and dissatisfaction with his intellectual attainment, he wrote these words: " Father you have made us for yourself. We are restless till we find rest in You". That saying has stayed with me for the past 40 years or so since I was ordained. Augustine (Saint Augustine as he became) reminds me that the peace and fulfilment we strive for isn't found through what we achieve, whatever direction that takes, but by knowing that we are valued for who we are by the God of all wisdom. Human achievement used aright is an astonishing reflection of the wisdom of the One who has made us for Himself. Yet as a safeguard against frustration when we face the limits of our ability, God offers us his rest, his enduring gift of peace.

The key to that sense of rest, as Augustine discovered, is found in a human being who gained no worldly success or achievement on this earth. Yet in that man Jesus God made accessible to us both the wisdom and the humility that is at the heart of His nature. Jesus' life and the manner of his dying and rising is God's way of making real his words- 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest'. That is the assurance that Christian faith provides – we are cherished for who we are, as we are - wise or otherwise, made in God's image. And we find our peace not in an endless striving to achieve more and more, but in knowing that we are loved, accepted and trusted

With every good wish
John Harper

1ST MEPPERSHALL BROWNIES

Our church service was about water aid. Our opening hymn was ‘All things bright and beautiful’. Then Brown Owl talked about how we use water every day. In Africa people have infected water which gives them diseases but we have clean fresh water. They carry the water about 4 miles every day which is the same as walking to Henlow and back. We had turns at trying to pick up Brown Owl’s suitcase which weighed as much as the water would, but no one could pick it up - it was too heavy. So imagine carrying a heavy suitcase on your head for four miles every day.

Then two of the Brownies held up two bottles of water. One was really dirty and one was fresh and clean. The one that was dirty was what people in Africa would have to drink and we drink fresh and clean water.

Sophie read out a prayer about clean water and oceans and rivers. Then we sang our second hymn which was ‘Think of a world without any flowers’. We then said our school prayer (Brown owl : the Lord’s prayer). Then we read the Salmater story about a little girl in Africa and how she had to carry water until Samaritan’s Purse Turn-on-the-Tap program installed a water filter. We had a quiz about water. Then we acted out The Rainbow Play. It starts with what looks like rocks on the ground but they are grey people. Some had shelter, some had food, some had water and some had heat. They all learnt to share so they all had all they wanted.

We sang our final hymn ‘He’s got the whole world in his hands’.

Written by Monica and Kerys, 1st Meppershall Brownies

JONAH MAN JAZZ

MEPPERSHALL SPARKS 2011

The Sparkling Christian Holiday Club!

When - 25th - 28th July 2011.

Time - 10am – 2pm

Where - St Marys' Church, Rectory & Field.

Who - children 5 – 12 years.

Cost - £2-50 a day.

Wear - old clothes.

Food - bring your packed lunch.

Info. Sandra 01462 813925, sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk

Registration forms from - St Marys' Church, The Rectory, St. Michaels' Church and through local schools.

SPARKS 2011 JONAH JAZZ

..... a sizzling, christian holiday club for:

5 – 12 yrs

Mon. 25th, Tues. 26th, Wed. 27th, Thurs. 28th JULY

10am – 2pm

at St. Mary's Church, Meppershall, The Rectory & gardens

[please note - the site is NOT enclosed]

Your child will need:

- **£2 per day [bring on the day]**
- **A PACKED LUNCH [NO GLASS]**
- **TO WEAR OLD CLOTHES inc. flat shoes**

We provide drinks during the day.

NON-RESISTERED CHILDREN WILL NOT BE ADMITTED ON THE DAY.

Sandra 01462 813334 sandray.harper@yahoo.co.uk Morag 01462 643387

Please RETURN FORMS to St. Mary's Church, or The Rectory, Church Rd., Meppershall

NAME [S]

Age[s] on 25th July 2011 **Tel:**

Address

Email **Additional contact**

Details of any regular medication or medical problem

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

☐

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

☐

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

NON-RESISTERED CHILDREN WILL NOT BE ADMITTED ON THE DAY.

Signature of parent / carer:

PEACHY CHICKEN

JULY 2011

SERVES 6

6 chicken breasts / quarters

1oz margarine or butter, melted

6 peaches, skinned, halved and stoned. Or 800g/1lb 12ozs can peach halves, drained

FOR THE SAUCE

3 tablespoons runny honey

1 tablespoon English mustard

1-1 ½ tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

6 tablespoons malt vinegar

¼ teaspoon hot pepper sauce

½ teaspoon dried marjoram

½ teaspoon dried oregano

METHOD

- 1) Heat oven to 180c / 350f / gas 4. Brush chicken with melted fat and place in roasting tin.
- 2) Combine the honey, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, hot pepper sauce, marjoram, and oregano and pour over chicken portions.
- 3) Roast for 40 minutes, basting chicken pieces with the sauce occasionally.
- 4) Add the peach halves, cut side down and cook for a further 30 minutes. Basting occasionally until the chicken is tender and the peaches are heated through.
- 5) Place the chicken and peaches on a serving dish. Skim the fat from the sauce and serve the sauce separately.

Recipes are kindly supplied each month by Brenda Putwain

GARDEN TIPS FOR JULY

(With acknowledgements to the RHS)

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

LAST CHANCE

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

GET AHEAD

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

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

Anabella Gould who will be 14 on the 1st

Charlotte Rose who will 4 on the 3rd

Oliver Zimmerman who will be 12 on the 6th

Chelsea Addams who will be 14 on the 6th

Charlotte Watson who will be 10 on the 12th

Chloe Watson who will be 10 on the 12th

Joshua Wright who will be 11 on the 13th

James Metcalfe who will be 9 on the 14th

Erica Ward who will be 12 on the 17th

Scott Metcalfe who will be 7 on the 17th

George Nash who will be 5 on the 18th

Elysia Warner who will be 6 on the 20th

Cameron Maxwell who will be 9 on the 26th

Kerys Henderson who will be 9 on the 26th

Heather Bull who will be 10 on the 26th

Ella Gregg who will be 13 on the 30th

*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*

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

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

Collating Dates for your diaries

2011

July	25	Double
August	no	
September	26	
October	31	
November	28	Double
December	No	

2012

Jan	30	
February	27	
March	26	
April	23	
May	29	(Tue)
June	25	