



Arms of the de
Meppershall Family

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



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Meppershall Village Website: www.meppershall.org

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EDITORIAL

Here it is: our Summer Fair issue. I hope that the pictures in our colour supplement will bring back memories of a wonderful afternoon, with even more people than last year enjoying weather which decided at the last minute to be kind to us. I am sure you can imagine the amount of effort that went into bringing so much together on one afternoon. On page 35 Linda Primmitt offers thanks from the Fair Committee to all who made it happen: I would like to thank that Committee for sustained effort despite some set-backs, and especially Linda herself, Mike Till and Steve Ansell for their sterling efforts on the day. The Messenger is also grateful to Alastair Clay and Lenny Savell for their invaluable help with trying to erect tents and awnings in the gale early on.

Several people have spoken to me about the letter from Samantha Jones in our last issue. I took it as a comment on my editorial policy, to which Trevor Thorley has made a factual reply in Your Shout this month. However, some people have taken it as a disparaging comment on those deceased residents whom we featured in past covers. I would like to make clear that in publishing the letter I intended no such disparagement: my policy is to value all sectors of the village and all age groups equally. As I indicated in my comment under the letter, if the amount of coverage favours one group above another, that is a reflection of the material that comes in to me, not of any deliberate policy. Fortunately, Wayne Woodcock has helped me by sending in this month's cover picture – see Covers by Request on p. 40.

And now a bit of news about The Messenger itself: we have a new printer! We had experienced some mechanical problems with both the June and July issues and were preparing ourselves to raise the money in the autumn for a replacement early next year. Then our indefatigable Treasurer found an offer from our suppliers that offered a big discount on a new machine and very attractive terms for future maintenance and operating. We had to move extremely quickly to take up the offer, but I am hopeful that in the next issue I shall be able to report that we have found a fairy godmother in the Village – watch this space!

So now we go on our summer break – I hope you enjoy yours. Until we meet again in the October issue.....

Dick Bulley

LETTERS

Letter from Roger Smith

Hi Dick,

Whilst the correspondent in your July issue is entitled to raise the subject of speeding, in saying that: "it would be reassuring to see something being done about [speed humps] by the Parish and Local councils", they should be careful what they wish for. No sooner had humps been laid in Ickleford, between Arlesey and Hitchin, than the protests started, and there is now to be a village referendum on their removal. In Langford, they've tried both humps and chicanes, and don't like either.

The worst choice is the speed cushion that emergency vehicles can completely straddle. Unfortunately, many drivers try to do the same, racing over them with minimal inconvenience. What they do not realise is that the impact is being taken by the inner wall of each tyre which, unlike the outer wall, is not reinforced. If they are lucky, the damage is picked up at an MOT or routine service (expensive); if they are unlucky, by the police (more expensive); but if they are really unlucky by a blow-out at high speed on a motorway (potentially catastrophic). So you should really treat humps as you would a kerb, but then you lurch from one to the next, resulting in more noise, more pollution and more wear and tear on the brakes, clutch and drivetrain. To see what I mean, take a drive through Lilley when you next go to Luton.

Another factor that your Shefford Road resident might wish to consider is that, over a period of time, the repeated percussion of tyre striking hump can damage the foundations of adjoining houses.

And chicanes are no better. They are lethal when a few inches of snow or slush conceals the protruding kerb. And Langford found that, not only do they have little effect when the road is clear, but cars actually accelerate to beat the oncoming traffic. And I've lost count of the times that I've had to do an emergency stop because so many drivers don't recognise a "give way" sign when they see one. As for crossing the road to catch a school bus, maybe a pedestrian or pelican crossing is all that's required.

I hold no brief for speeding motorists, and would welcome a crack- down. However, please keep a sense of proportion. I seem to remember that when it was first proposed to lower the speed limit on Shefford Road from 40 mph to 30, the police actually objected, and I expressed concern that vehicles could then be parked on the road at night without lights. A more serious problem is outside the village store, where drivers approaching from Shillington are forced to pull out around parked vehicles before they can see that the road is clear. A "road narrows" sign at Fowlers Close, reinforced by "SLOW" painted in the road, would be very helpful to motorists approaching from Shillington who did not know the route - and a useful reminder to those who did. ger Smith, 14 High Street

Letter from John Chapman

The following (in inverted commas) was part of my objection to the new development at the rear of the Village Hall sent to the Central Beds Council in March 2010. As expected, it was completely ignored. These around 68 homes could produce another 700+ vehicle movements a day from residents, deliveries and sundry others (work it out!) all coming on to the Shefford Road or High Street, depending on where the junction will end up being imposed. Another potential 250 odd speeders per day it would seem.

“The road area around the village hall is already dangerous; a car recently demolished the telegraph pole on the village hall road frontage which is adjacent to the lay-by where the school children disembark from their buses. To add another major junction in this stretch of highway which has constant road parking and four other junctions within 120 metres is nothing short of lunacy. At peak times this part of Meppershall is very busy already and vehicle speeds are generally excessive. Several approaches by our Parish Council for speed restrictive measures have apparently been turned down out of hand. The offer of police with speed cameras was welcomed, only to find that they never turned up at peak times so caught few speeders.”

Previously, in summer 2009, I attended an open meeting of the Parish Council at which speeding in the village was brought up. The answer we received was that the Parish Council had approached the (then) Mid Beds Council several times about traffic calming with totally negative results and it seemed pointless to try again.

Councils seemingly work on numbers of serious injuries and deaths (as per Beadlow /Gravenhurst junction on the A507) before considering any changes to road safety. Shefford Road originally had a speed limit of 40mph imposed only after several nasty accidents at the chicane, one car ending up on its roof! So don't hold your breath.

John Chapman

Letter from Beverley Allen:

Hi

Does anybody know where the green waste bags disappear to when our green waste is collected.....because there seems to be a Green bag gremlin in Gregory Close who keeps swiping them , or are the bin men throwing them in the back of the lorry with the rubbish ?

The council must think we have a thing about green sacks as I have to keep asking for new ones. If you are the Gremlin just ring the council. They will let you have the bags - they are very helpful; just please stop taking ours, it is a nuisance
Thanks

Letter from James Read

Wet sponges! The Stocks at the Summer Fair ...

Meppershall has a great future ahead if the children who spontaneously helped out at The Stocks stall during the summer fair on 25 June are anything to go by! Thank you very much to all those younger members of our community who volunteered (requested!) to go in the stocks and have cold, soaking sponges thrown at them! Polite and helpful, they made the day a lot of fun, and were a credit to the village.

Letter from Wayne Woodcock:

(See our cover picture – Ed)

Meppershall VA CE Lower School entered a team into the Henlow VC Middle School 7 a side football tournament on 24th June. The team was made up mostly of year 4 pupils with a couple from year 3, managed by Mark Clark and assisted by Wayne Woodcock.

All the pupils had a fantastic time and played some good football in the three games, managing a win, a draw, and a loss. Although they weren't fortunate enough to get through to the final they played in the right manner with smiles on their faces.

Well done to Thomas, Lewis, Lucian, Jack, Cameron, George, Dylan, Lee, and Abby.

Letter from a former Meppershall resident who had just seen our July issue. Name and address supplied.

Dear Dick,

Re Samantha Jones letter in last month's Messenger and the reference to our elderly citizens.

Is it too much to give recognition and space to people who have lived all their lives in this village and have contributed, not only financially but with their time, talents and hard work to provide amenities that we would not otherwise have had, and make Meppershall what it is today?

There were an unfortunate number of funerals close together, but after a long hard winter people of that age are very vulnerable. More to the point, we have no control over when and how our lives will end. The classic cars were a spectacular sight on the day of Mr. Holden's funeral, and in no way did the photo on the front cover look like the order of a funeral service.

The school, preschool, toddlers and children's birthdays all have their individual monthly slots: where is the equivalent for the older villagers? (*Significant birthdays?* Ed)

The sentiments expressed in Ms Jones' letter sadly upset many families – was it really necessary?

Meppershall Bakery Bees *by Roger*

What a mistake to make! I went down to the apiary, the Friday afternoon before the show, to collect the bees for the observation hive and to mark the queen. I found her and picked her up between my thumb and forefinger; with my white marker pen ready I went to mark her on the back. As I dubbed the pen on her back I dropped her in the long grass! I thought that's done it! I searched for quite some time but no luck. Perhaps she had flown away. Then, looking between the brood box and lifts on the hive, I saw a white dot; yes it was the queen. I must have just nicked her with the pen. I picked her up and placed her back in the hive.

Sometimes when we lose the queen for one reason or another, we have to replace her. About 4 years ago I lost a queen, so I phoned my bee suppliers and ordered a replacement queen. Within a few days the queen arrived by post. The postman could hear her buzzing. When I opened the letter the queen and some attendants were in a cage. She was already mated and ready to go in the hive. Achieving that can be a little tricky: you cannot just pop her in as she is a stranger and the colony would be sure to kill her. We have to introduce her slowly. The colony needs time to accept her and become accustomed to her scent. Having removed the attendants from the cage and placed baker's fondant in the hole, I removed a frame from the brood box and hung the cage between the frames and left the bees alone for about a week. Then I inspected the hive to find the queen released, having eaten her way through the fondant, and eggs had been laid showing all was well. I now let the colony create its own queens.

All hives are okay. We now have 10 hives plus 2 nucs (small hives): these two are swarms which I picked up, one from Shefford and one in Meppershall. The artificial swarms we took all have queens and are laying. By the end of August we will have taken the main crop of honey and then begin treatment for varoa which is a six week course. The honey the bees collect after the main crop is theirs to store for the winter months. We sometimes feed with sugar syrup if they do not collect enough nectar.

As to my thoughts on the demise of the honey bee locally, Bedfordshire and surrounding area seem to be doing okay. With new beekeepers and the bee classes in Bedford and Luton doing so well and from speaking to local beekeepers their colonies are all on the increase, while wild bees seem to be swarming well this year. I myself have more than half a million more bees than 3 years ago. Most farmers are well aware of the effects of pesticides and leave spraying until the bees are not flying. All hobby beekeepers treat their colonies for varoa mites and viruses. Defra also keeps a keen eye on us and checks our hives for foulbrood, which is a bacterial disease of the bee brood. American foulbrood is very contagious. It is one of the most serious bee diseases. Good beekeepers learn to spot the signs of these problems and deal with them quickly.

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 - July 2011

Another academic year has flown by, and what a year too! A baptism of fire began my first year as Headteacher by having an Ofsted and SIAS inspection before Christmas. Happily though, our school kept its outstanding status as a church school and a good school with outstanding features from Ofsted.

As I look back and reflect on the year, I am astonished at the range of activities we give our children, considering we are such a small school. This would not be possible without the support from both staff that organise the events and parents who accompany us on trips or collect their children from sporting activities. The children benefit so much from competing with other schools and enjoying making new friends on field trips. I offer a huge 'thank you' to all of you who have helped in anyway this year.

Our school is so fortunate to have an active and enthusiastic PTA who work tirelessly to raise funds for the children. This year we have a fabulous Interactive Projector, Whiteboard and Sound System in our hall kindly donated by the PTA. Again
THANK YOU!

The children go from strength to strength academically too; this year our results at Key Stage 1 were above the National

Average in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Congratulations to Willows class for their positive attitude to school and learning. Our smallest children in Acorns class have been very successful too and their Early Years Foundation Stage scores are again above the National Average; a great start to their school careers! Finally, our local Middle School and Academy are receiving children with exceptional National Curriculum levels in our core subjects; congratulations to Oaks class too! One more thank you goes to all the staff, teaching and support, who work so hard to make our school so successful.

We face many challenges in Education over the next few years, financially with government cuts, a new curriculum is due, and Academy status is very firmly on the agenda for schools in Central Bedfordshire. However at Meppershall CE VA School, we are determined to continue to provide an excellent education for all our children in our caring and happy environment.

Have a lovely summer, enjoy your travels both at home and abroad and I look forward to sharing our school events with you all in September.

Lyn Fairweather
Head Teacher

Meppershall Parish Council Report

The Council meeting in July was on the 25th because there is no meeting in August. This issue of The Messenger was finalised before the 25th, so we will not be able to carry a Council Report until our October issue.

YOUR SHOUT with Trevor Thorley

COVERS:

Editors, whether they are the figureheads of National Newspapers, National Magazines or just Village magazines, are damned if they do, and damned if they don't. I refer of course to the letter sent in by Samantha, published in the last issue of the Meppershall Messenger, July 2011.

Comment! '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'.

This is criticism that I feel, and many more feel, is unwarranted. I have gone back as far as October 2010 and the run of front cover subject matter is as follows:

OCTOBER ISSUE 'Harvest', NOVEMBER 'Pumpkin', DECEMBER/JANUARY 2011 ISSUE 'Father Christmas –with two children', FEBRUARY ISSUE 'Archie', MARCH ISSUE 'Thatched Cottage', APRIL ISSUE 'Tiger in Sumatra', MAY ISSUE 'Gracie Bavister age 5 'Easter Bonnet', JUNE ISSUE 'Eddie Holden Classic Cars', and JULY 2011 ISSUE 'Meppershall Airfield'.

Does this meet with the statement above? I don't think so.

Our editor and his team work very hard to produce an excellent village monthly magazine that is second to none for miles around, probably up with the best nationally! There **IS** a balanced coverage as highlighted above.

If the criticism is aimed at our senior citizens, who have lived for many years in Meppershall, many who were born here, and have put hours of labour and kindness into the community, then regrettably, I feel it is so sad.

MEPPERSHALL SUMMER FAIR:

What a great event this turned out to be. The morning of Saturday June 25 started with heavy rain. If this had continued, what a calamitous situation it could have turned out to be. But mid-day came, and so did the sun. Nadine Dorries MP announced the event OPEN at 1pm and it was all systems go. People came from other parts of Bedfordshire as well as an excellent turnout of local folk. The organisers were delighted and so they should be - they should all take a 'pat on the back', for it was increasingly well organised and was perhaps the most successful of all time. There were 50+ stalls and organisations taking part, hopefully they will have found it well worth the effort for their individual causes while helping to provide an

abundance of fun for the visitors. It is even more to their credit since the Meppershall event had stiff competition from the Biggleswade Town Carnival - - that says something!

St. MARY'S VILLAGE CHOIR:

On Sunday July 3 St. Mary's Village Choir sang in St. Mary's Church for the last time under the leadership of Sandra Harper. Sandra was instrumental in forming the choir some time ago and it has developed so strongly that as well as singing in church, Sandra has arranged 'gigs' in a number of places, the Meppershall Music Festival to quote an example. On Sunday, Sandra was presented with a bouquet of flowers, and other lovely items, which she will be able to keep as a reminder of her time here in Meppershall. Wendy Corns now succeeds Sandra as Choir Leader and the choir wish her every success in her new role.

ABBA REVIVAL:

The Friends of St. Mary's are delighted to welcome Britain's Number 1 Tribute Band to St. Mary's Church on Saturday, October 22, commencing at 7.30 pm. There will be all the songs from the past sung with just the same enthusiasm and voice as the original group of the 70's. They come with a replica white piano, sound, and laser lighting. You can see photographs and details of the group on the centre pages. Numbered tickets will go on sale from August 22, so be sure to claim yours as early as you can after this date as the organisers are expecting a huge demand. A bar will be open from 7pm onwards. Additionally, if you feel that you want to go back in time and add to the spirit of the evening, you may come in dress from the 70's; this is not a condition, just an option, if the moths have not got into your wardrobe first.

Have great holidays.

Remember: It's YOUR Shout.

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

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

Our second visit to the Cotswolds at the end of June was again successful. We met our Guide at the Crown and Cushion Hotel at Chipping Norton for welcome refreshments before starting our day. On boarding our coach again we wended our way through villages with our Guide giving an informative and amusing chat on our way to Stow-on-the-Wold where we were given free time to explore and do a bit of window shopping. Our next stop was Boughton-on-Water for another wander around and optional lunch, after which it was time to re-join our coach for an onward journey through many delightful Cotswold Villages to Burford, allowing time for the 'must have' cream tea before returning home!

Recently, members of the Eastern Branch of the Group Travel Organiser's Association of which we are members, held their meeting in the Meppershall Village Hall. Members travelled from as far afield as North London, Ipswich, Essex, Bedford and nearby Letchworth Garden City. For many it was a 'first time' to Meppershall and without exception they thought the Village was delightful and how lucky we were to live in such a nice friendly village.

After our buffet lunch, we made our way in convoy to Chicksands Priory for a pre-arranged tour of the Officers' Mess. Some of our members came specifically to see the Priory where members of their family had been stationed. It is certainly full of history and was built between 1147 and 1153. Following the dissolution of the monasteries it was granted in 1540 to Richard Snow, a London grocer and conveyed to Peter Osbourne in 1576. It remained their family home until 1936 and in 1939 the Air Ministry took it over and has been there ever since. Certainly a visit is worthwhile!

Forthcoming Events 2011

Lincs Aviation Heritage Centre Air Show	Saturday 6 th August
Grebe canal cruise with cream tea	Sunday 21 st August
Love Never Dies (Matinee)	Wednesday 24 th Aug
Wizard of Oz (Matinee) (<i>Fully booked</i>)	Wednesday 31 st August
Sing-along Amptill Lions	Tuesday 6 th September
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
Lord Mayor's Show	Saturday 12 th November
Thursford Xmas Spectacular (evening)	Sunday 20 th November
Christmas in the Royal Landscape	Thursday 1 st December
Carols with the Stars at RAH	Thursday 8 th December
John Rutter Xmas Celebrations RAH	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 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

For the last two months I've covered the topic of investing. This probably has greater appeal to those who have built up savings over many years, and have perhaps finished raising their family. So this month I'm returning to a very important issue for those readers who are still bringing up children, and for whom the loss of a household wage would be devastating if not impossible to survive.

In an earlier article I covered to need for both life cover and critical illness cover especially for major household debts e.g. mortgages, and other loans. In that piece I quoted the statistic that 1 in 3 (i.e. 33%) of people will be diagnosed with some form of cancer during their lifetime. That's a frightening prospect in itself, however I read only today that the MacMillan Cancer Trust has now upgraded that prospect to 40% of people!

Being diagnosed with a potentially life-threatening condition is devastating enough as you face the prospect of surgery and/or chemotherapy or radiotherapy coupled with the uncertainty of whether it will be successful or recur later. Compound that worry with the financial stress of possibly losing one's job, home, and having unsympathetic creditors hounding you, and it can all quickly become too much. There is circumstantial evidence that stress levels can have a negative impact of ones ability to recover from a major illness or surgery.

Despite this, the take up of critical illness cover is horribly low. I appreciate that it can be expensive (compared to straight life cover), however you are 4 times more likely to suffer a serious illness than you are to die under the age of 65. Therefore the cost reflects the probability of it paying out.

Imagine if you will the following scenario – this is based on an actual case...young couple (30's) mortgage, car loans, two young children under 10 – pretty ordinary family set up I'd say?

One day the wife discovers a lump, sees her GP, gets referred to a specialist, who does a biopsy, confirms their worst fears, and arranges for the surgery and follow up chemotherapy to take place. Mentally the family are in meltdown as you can imagine. As they get to grips with their life-changing events, the financial stress begins to kick in. The wife despite having successful surgery finds the chemotherapy draining, and is unable to cope with getting the children to school and back, and keeping on top of the normal household chores (i.e. cooking, cleaning, washing etc.,).

He has a very busy job, which keeps him on the road a lot, and often away from home for a couple of nights at a time. He finds he has to take increasing amounts of time off to help the family, and his work suffers to the point where he is unable to do the job properly any longer, and ends up leaving (by mutual consent). Suddenly the household income has all but ceased, but the bills keep coming in. The health stress is now compounded by the financial stress. He can hold off some of the bills for a while, but the interest keeps racking up. I'm sure you can imagine what this must have felt like?

Imagine now the benefit of being able to clear their mortgage and car loans, plus have a lump sum to tide them over until the wife was back on her feet having made a full recovery? Thankfully in the real life case this happened, because they had seen the value in finding the cost of that critical illness plan each month, despite finances being tight. In fact, based on their own experience, they have since convinced several of their friends to take out cover. Isn't it time you did the same?

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

Polehanger: A Farming Diary

Episode 25

Weather or not

Remember my comments a month ago; and remember also that I am writing a month before you read this. How do you remember the weather in June? We had a week away in Devon in the middle of the month and that county was rapidly rehydrating whilst we were there!

There was above average rainfall in June, even in the driest eastern counties, arriving (just) in time to coincide with grain fill of most crops, helping to lift some of the earlier pessimism about yield prospects. However, soils remain very dry at depth due to rainfall of only 55-70% of normal for the March-June period. Bedfordshire was one of 5 counties officially declared a drought area.

Soil moisture deficits remain at around 120mm (6"), and cracks are still evident in fields. So, with 2-3 weeks of wheat grain fill remaining as I write, a return to drier weather could have further impacts. Temperatures were cooler throughout June helping to prolong grain fill, but the unsettled weather resulted in reduced sunshine, which is also a key aspect of determining yield.

Not simple is it?

Oakley: a month in the life of a wheat plant

My comments above cross over to this section. Our Polehanger crops look remarkably well considering the moisture deficit. However, if you look into the field, rows are still evident rather than a carpet of ears. This is the result of the aborted tillers that I mentioned last month.

Another effect of the dry conditions is shorter than normal straw. This is not an issue for us now. As you are probably aware we chop the straw as it comes out of the back of the combine and it is ploughed back in. However it would have been a problem if we still had cows and needed straw for bedding and feeding.

Forward prices for the new crop i.e. September onwards are fluctuating wildly at the moment having risen steadily since early spring. This is primarily in response to conditions in N America, Russia, Ukraine and Europe in general rather than the UK, together with investors piling into or back out of commodities. The UK harvest will have a secondary impact on prices but that will only become apparent as harvest gets underway and yields can be more accurately estimated.

Elsewhere on the Farm

In the office we are starting to look at budgets for harvest 2013 as well as fine tune next year's. Fertiliser prices in particular, followed by

agrochemicals, fuel and electricity, are rising steeply; and seed prices will always be higher if the crop price is. Consequently Andersons, a firm of farm business consultants, have pointed out that the break-even cost of growing wheat is rising fast. Last year it was £118 per tonne, this year it is likely to be nearer £125, and next year ??

As grain prices rise (and particularly as other low risk investments have given a very poor return recently) there is more competition for good arable land that comes on the market, pushing up prices to nearly double what they were three or four years ago. This affects the rental equivalent that has to be factored into any break even calculation.

Grass footpaths are being cut on a 4 – 6 weekly cycle.

Grain stores are being thoroughly cleaned and fumigated in preparation for harvest, which is likely to be early this year (weather permitting of course).

Harvesting machinery and post-harvest cultivation equipment has to be fully serviced and operational. Downtime must be kept to an absolute minimum, and maximum use made of the dry daylight hours.

Warm off the Press

Aberdeen University is closing its agricultural faculty in September, after 116 years, the latest in a string of traditional universities to close their agricultural departments. 'There is the possibility that we could run out of farmers and educated people within the industry'. It is suggested that UK agriculture is facing a shortfall of 30 – 50% of the graduate recruits it needs to maintain its workforce. Agriculture has become very sophisticated requiring a high degree of professionalism and multi-disciplinary technical knowledge.

New blood and enthusiasm are essential to meet the challenge of the UK's future food security.

Interesting Statistic(s)

Last year, saffron (a spice derived from the flower stamens of the Saffron Crocus) was fetching \$4,500 per kg. This year it is down to \$1,500.

Last year wheat was fetching £11 per kg. This year it is up to c. £16

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

Sept 7th: Took delivery of Ferguson 35. All tractors now run on diesel.

August and September in general: the diaries recount long, long hours of work tempered by weather delays and machinery breakdowns during harvest; and other frustrations as work progress is thwarted!

Thought for the Month: Last year's Wimbledon made £31million profit.

Chris Foster, 1st July 2011

Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Historic Churches Trust

Sponsored Bike'n' Hike - 10th September 2011

This is the 20th year that this very important fund raising event has been in operation. Over the last ten years the total raised each year has gone from £75,000 to £100,000 for the churches and chapels of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire and our local church, St Mary's, can once again benefit from this sponsored event.

Of every £1 that we raise in sponsorship, 50p is returned to us. This makes the Bike'n' Hike a very effective way to raise funds for our church and is good exercise. Last year we raised over £612, of which we received more than £306. The other half of the sponsorship money goes to the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust when it is then distributed, in the form of grants, to local communities struggling to raise funds for vital repairs to their church or chapel. I know times have been tough during the last two or three years but let us see if we can raise more than St. Francis RC church in Shefford, who managed £866 last year.

So let us look forward to an exciting day cycling, walking, roller blading or skateboarding between as many churches as possible between the hours of 10 am and 6pm. I now have all the necessary sponsor forms and lists of participating churches (of which there are over 500) so, if you wish to be adventurous and plan a route to call in to as many as possible within the time, please contact me for details.

Trevor Wilkinson
Tel: 01462 811583 or 0796 051 3498
Church Organiser.

Sadly, Sandra Read was not well enough to write the piece on Meppershall history which was intended for this slot. We wish Sandra a speedy return to health. – Ed.

MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Well, I don't think I needed to presume anything..... the Summer Fair was a huge success! The day started with some rather challenging weather – trying to erect tents and equipment in the gale force winds proved a little difficult, to say the least! However, all was ready for the Grand Opening by Nadine Dorries and, as the afternoon progressed the weather just got better and better.

It was wonderful to see so many people coming onto the field and taking part in the afternoon's activities. The Summer Fair Committee had all worked extremely hard making sure the event was a success and, on behalf of everyone who attended, I should like to extend a huge thanks to everyone who was involved. There were stalls and activities to suit all tastes and the turnout was certainly higher than last year. We are still getting money in from various sources, but the approximate amount raised for the Village Hall is in excess of £1,500, which is absolutely fantastic. I understand that all the other organisations that had stalls also did very well. Thank you so much for supporting the event – it makes it all worthwhile, not just financially but also in creating an event where it brings so many people together.

All the Grand Raffle prizes were won and collected on the day. There are two remaining Lucky Programme prizes to be claimed, nos. 12 and 97. The prizes are at the Village Stores for collection. If they are not claimed by the next issue of The Messenger, they will be kept for future events.

Despite a few ups and downs, the Summer Fair Committee has agreed to organise next year's extravaganza. We will be meeting after the summer to get the ball rolling. It has turned out to be an "Annual Must Have Attraction"!

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

Language

Memories of my school days are haunted by many regrettable incidents. The very fact that I had to go to school at all is one of them. Another, which I recall with both shame and a sense of pride, is the time I announced to my French teacher Mrs. Cracknel that I had no interest in learning French because I had no desire to go to France. I went on to state that the only foreign language I wanted to learn was the one spoken in Borneo. This *was* a place I wanted to go. Fuelled by Sir David Attenborough's documentaries, it was a mythic land to me. I had no idea at the time that there were many languages spoken in Borneo, or that the *lingua franca* of that great island, *Bahasa Malayu*, would be the first foreign language in which I would become fluent. The sense of shame comes from the fact that today I still cannot read Baudelaire in the original; the sense of pride, from a certain consistency with the desire that motivated that ignorant childish outburst.

Language teachers in the schools I attended never explained why we were learning a foreign language. Most of us thought it was in case we ever found ourselves in France, and not because language is central to thought. To learn another language is to learn another way of thinking: few things can give you a better appreciation of the complexities of people and the world.

For many hours of my present life I am among people whose languages I cannot understand. I have become adept at sitting silently in corners and just watching people talk, trying to guess what they are saying and feeling. On my most recent trip to Myanmar there were five languages spoken in our camp. And among the 15 people there, not one could understand them all. I used five different terms for thank you, depending on whom I was thanking: *Jesu tembare* to my Burmese counterparts, *Jesu jegiwa* to the Law Waw cook, *Aki shamo* to my Lisu porters, *Tshay tshay* to my Chinese Lisu hunter/guide, and just plain 'thank you' when I didn't know from which minority the person was from. It was confusing, but also helped to liven up the dullness of sitting out long periods of rain. People appreciate

the traveller bothering to learn their words, and a foreign country comes alive once you can start to speak its language.

But there is always that first day, arriving in a strange place with no words, no idea of the prices, or the food. As a budget-conscious vegetarian, the terms for prices and food are the first things I must learn. Numbers are often easy because they are usually single syllables and can be repeated until they flow like the words of a song. In Myanmar I was helped by the fact that the words for one, two and eight were *tit*, *nit* and *shit*. It always helps to have some mnemonic to relate to, and this is also a valuable technique for remembering words. In Khmer, the language of Cambodia, the terms for left and right are *chhveng* and *sadam* respectively. I remembered these by relating chhveng to Che Guevara (politically far left), and sadam to the infamous Hussein of far right sympathies. I have never gotten the two confused since.

Confusing words is another pitfall that can cause hilarity in the locals. On a recent filming trip in Sumatra I endeavoured to teach some phrases to the ‘talent’, as the presenter is known. He wanted to learn how to say ‘the food is delicious’. I repeated it a few times, but he botched it later over dinner and announced to the astonished locals that he eats children (the words for delicious - *enak*, and children - *anak*, being deceptively similar). I spat out my mouthful of rice, but the locals looked on gravely.

On the subject of rice, I made a similar error. In the west rice is rice, whether in its dry form or cooked. In the east there are different terms for the different states of rice. I didn’t know this when I first tried to buy 30 kgs for a field trip in Cambodia. I was inadvertently asking the young shop keeper for a sack of cooked rice. He was naturally perplexed at the request. Exasperated, I pointed to a sack I thought contained rice and asked for 30 kgs of that. The next day, loading the pick up which would take us to the forest I noticed one of the rangers frown as he lifted the sack of ‘rice’. A lifetime of familiarity with the stuff made him realize, even through the material of the sack, that this didn’t feel right. Opening it up, he found 30 kgs of sugar. It was a lucky discovery which prompted me to take a translator on my next shopping trip.

Business Advice -2

Keeping your business going through the credit crunch

If the extensive work I have done with start-ups recently is anything to go by, entrepreneurship in Britain has not been quenched by the financial crisis. Likewise, many existing companies have been holding on tight in the storm for the past 3 years and are still trading.

Nevertheless, there is no denying that the credit crunch is still affecting most businesses. If this is you, here are a few suggestions on how to keep going.

Make the most of the lulls

First and foremost, change your mind-set about the lack of work. See this free time as an opportunity.

Use it for marketing, focussing on low-cost strategies. Increase your visibility to potential new customers by updating your website, attending networking meetings and designing fresh and effective business cards and factsheets.

Make a point of revisiting past clients and staying on their radar: understand where they are at, propose follow-up services to them or offer upgrades for the products you installed a few years ago.

Also, use the quiet times to maintain or, better still, enhance your business. Make sure your team's professional qualifications are up-to-date, organise refresher courses or attend short lectures on new topics. Review and improve your factory processes.

And, for crying out loud, put up those shelves in your office! You've been moaning about the lack of storage space for 2 years; now is the time to get on top of the things you keep putting off.

Set up a flexible workforce

As the future remains uncertain, it can be unwise to recruit new staff at the first sight of new contracts. Yet you may need extra support.

Instead of hiring permanent employees with long notice periods or using agency staff, consider using short-term contracts. The mentalities are evolving: employees understand that indefinite contracts are a thing of the past, but most still prefer defined terms, rather than ad-hoc work.

Conversely, consider subcontracting out the tasks which are not directly associated with your trade. Use a virtual assistant. Ask your accountant to handle your payroll. Get a web designer to keep your website up to date. You may be a great

carpenter, but you are not an office admin, a webmaster and a bookkeeper as well. Focus your time and effort on what you do best and let someone else do the rest.

Identify potential savings

If your business turnover decreases, you need to spend less to keep afloat.

Use your premises over a reduced period of time to limit overhead costs. Apply the same tricks as you do at home: install energy-saving devices, switch off all computers over the weekend instead of leaving them on stand-by - review your utility bills...

A more sensitive issue is to discuss salary cuts with your team. Negotiations will undoubtedly be required and I recommend you get advice from HR professionals, business advisors or lawyers. However, this is worth addressing, as employees often favour keeping their job with a reduced pay packet, rather than face redundancy.

Never ever try to make savings by cutting down on the quality of your supplies: this may look good on paper, but it is a sure fire way to kill your company. Your existing customers expect a certain standard from you - your whole business depends on it. This, however, doesn't prevent you from shopping around for better deals.

Think outside the box to broaden your business

Finally, if your core activity is no longer sufficient to keep your organisation going, you need to come up with innovative solutions in order to survive and thrive. Brainstorming sessions are very effective for devising brand new strategies. Then get the right support to implement them. Call me if you need help.

A final word of encouragement: if you are still trading, despite the past 3 years of financial crisis, you and your business are stronger than you think.

Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races, one after another.

Walter Elliot



Albane Quesnot 01462 850518

albane.quesnot@just-A.co.uk

your local Business Coaching and Support partner

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 various aspects of vine growing and winemaking – this month we look at how time affects what's in the bottle.

4. Time

As wine gets older, it changes dramatically in taste. Harsh tannins polymerise and soften, brash acidity and raw alcohol interact to form compounds called esters, and primary fruit flavours evolve into complex bouquets. When mature, fruit and alcohol are in balance, the wine can be said to have reached a platform of 'drinkability', which may last for a number of years. At the end of this period, the wine is at the end of its useful life, and should be drunk up before it begins to taste dried out, or spiritry

There are often strict laws governing the ageing of wines before they are released. A *gran reserva Rioja*, for example, must be aged for a minimum of two years in cask and three years in bottle before it is released for sale. Once these legal requirements have been met, the question of when to drink it is less straightforward. Our aim at The Society is to release a wine in which the different elements have, in our view, reached

a degree of balance and harmony which makes it universally palatable for a period of time. We base the calculation of a drinking window on information from suppliers and our buyers' many years of experience and regular tasting. Our drinking dates tend to be conservative, taking into account the many diverse storage options used by members, from temperature-controlled cellars to cupboards under the stairs.

Taste being subjective, some palates respond more warmly to youthful charm than mellow (or potentially crusty!) old age. French wine drinkers, for example, are known to enjoy their Bordeaux in the bloom of youth, while we British tend to favour the other extreme of the Claret life cycle. On the other hand, very mature Champagne, although loved by some, is not to everyone's taste. It's not a question of right or wrong, but of making informed decisions about when to uncork a wine bought, for example *en primeur*, or whether paying a premium for an older bottle is worth it to you.

Next month, we shall start looking at how to taste.

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.

WANDERBUS

New route to/from Shefford Health Centre (“SHC”)

The Wanderbus is pleased to announce that, commencing on 26th July 2011 it will be operating a new “Surgery Shuttle” service every **Tuesday** afternoon. In fact there are two routes one, the **W15**, serving Shefford (E) Clifton and Henlow and the other, the **W16** serving Shefford, **Meppershall** and Campton

The route runs on a circle/loop basis and the **Timetable for Meppershall** is as follows

		<u>Run 1</u>	<u>Run 2</u>	<u>Run 3</u>
SHC	<i>Departs</i>	14:40	16:00	17:20
Shefford Road (by Post Box)		14:46	16:06	17:26
High St. (Sugar Loaf)		14:48	16:08	17:28
High St. (by Post box)		14:49	16:09	17:29
SHC	<i>Arrives</i>	15:09	16:29	17:49**

The first run is mainly to pick up passengers but if you are already at the Health Centre at 14:40 you can travel back with us. The second run is to return some passengers but also to pick up more passengers and take them to SHC and the final run is to return the remaining passengers.

If you intend to travel back on the final run please make sure that your appointment starting time gives you plenty of time in case the Doctors/Nurses become delayed.

** Although it is possible to board the bus on Run 3 so as to arrive at SHC at 17:49 a “Surgery Shuttle” return service is not available.

Because of the “shuttle” nature of this service is **NOT POSSIBLE TO MAKE RESERVATIONS** for the bus

Fare £1:50 single. Bus pass holders FREE

01767 318444

www.wanderbus.org.uk

Timetable – Example

A Patient/Passenger living near The Sugar Loaf makes a Doctor's appointment for 15:20; he catches the bus at 14:48 which arrives at SHC at 15:09. If there are no delays he can catch the second run leaving SHC at 16:00 and will arrive back at The Sugar Loaf at 16:08. Should he be delayed the third run leaves SHC at 17:20 and will drop him off at The Sugar Loaf at 17:28

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

August 2011

Saturday 20th		
Beds Police CAPS	2.00 – 3.00 pm	VH Car Park

September 2011

Sunday 4th		
Harvest Walk	11.00– 12.00 noon	St Mary's Rectory
Tuesday 6th		
Baby& Toddler Group restarts	1.30 pm	Village Hall
Saturday 10th		
Bike'n' Hike	10.00 am–6.00 pm	Your Choice
Monday 12th		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
Sunday 18th		
Harvest Festival	11.00 am	St Mary's Church
Monday 19th		
Harvest Supper	6.30 for 7 pm	Village Hall
Saturday 24th		
Mystery event	1.00 pm – 4 pm	Village Hall
Denni – fantastic Soul Singer		Village Social Club
Monday 26th		
Messenger Collating	2.00 pm	Village Hall

October 2011

Monday 10th		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
Saturday 22nd		
Abba Revival	7.30 pm	St Mary's Church
Foresters Social Nite	8.00 pm - midnight	Village Hall
Friday 28th		
Halloween Disco		Village Social Club
Monday 31st		

Messenger Collating	2.00 pm	Village Hall
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FROM OUR YOUTH EDITOR – Brigid Holmes

It's the summer holidays!

Bored? Here are 25 fun things to do in the summer!

Go to the park with your friends and walk round the fields

Have a summer sleepover with your closest friends

Make a smoothie using fresh fruits

Have a picnic

Find a job

Bake some cookies

Contact a friend you haven't spoken to in a while

Make a scrapbook of all of your favourite memories
so far of your childhood

Do a sponsored run, walk, bike ride for charity

Car washes to earn some money

Visit a museum

Make dinner for your family

Visit a Zoo

Go to a local swimming pool

Make a bird feeder

Tie-dye some old t-shirts

Attend some music festivals

Pick some blackberries and make a crumble

Go fishing

Get out the paddling pool

Have a beauty pampering session with your friends

Invite an old friend over for a BBQ

Have a family game night

Sort out old bits to give to a charity shop

Listen to your favourite summer tunes



Summer Wordsearch!

With thanks to Hannah Lusty for the summer wordsearch

KJHNJHJHICECREAMIKJEOURFITK
 FJLNNEWQSKCKIFQSGJKCAIHIAP
 RFGHRTYAFKFHJFRHJXSZSGCINL
 UFHSGJHITWATERFIGHTSJIPAADI
 ISUNSHINEUDGHSNGJKSQPOEGSI
 TKHRDFGHASDFBH
 GAHJHFAIBVW
 JDTQYUXBJSGNDVX
 SANDHJKOPD
 BEACHBALLJGSGJH
 ANBRIGSHKOS
 IOUHFDAGJKFCBXM
 DNKTDNDMJE
 KHJKYFAJFHSHOIGAGFHDZHKIGB
 GDHYHFDXICELOLLYFSGJFHSHIU
 JGTFDAGHCHJMSQHJYSHSHJKICC
 JRFBREGHJKBEEDGYIRFJIGJKKIE
 JGSHYIDJDJYSJPZXCVBNMASF GC
 SWIMMINGPOOLJHFREBDIFHJXVI



ICECREAM

SUNSHINE

SWIMMINGPOOL

BEACH

BEACHBALL

ICELOLLY

HOLIDAYS

TAN

FRUIT

ICECUBES

WATERFIGHTS

SAND

BEE

THE LUCY PAGE

This month, I have interviewed Mrs Gill Smith. When I first started at Meppershall Lower School, Mrs Smith was my first teacher. As most of you know she has now retired. Do you wonder what she's doing? Read on to find out.

How many years were you working at the Lower School?

I worked there for about 30 years.

What do you do with your time now?

I'm doing lots of gardening and also some beading too. I like visiting new places, especially gardens.

What time did you get up when you were working at school and what time now?

6:30 a.m. when I worked at the school and now it's 7 or 8 a.m.

Where's the best place you've been to?

Italy. But India and China are also very interesting.

Mrs Smith gave me a tour of her beautiful garden, which has a secret garden, three ponds and a very big vegetable patch. She has made parts of her garden into styles of different countries, like a hedge clipped into the shape of a bull's head (although she said it looked like a reindeer's) within the Spanish area. No wonder she had to retire, with such a beautiful garden to maintain.

With thanks to Gill Smith for agreeing to be interviewed. - Ed



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

Bedfordshire Police would like to thank the community of Chicksands, particularly the vigilant resident that reported suspicious activity in Truman Place that led to the arrest of 2 male suspects in connection with a number of metal thefts in the last week.

A number of properties in the area have reported the theft of copper gas piping from the outside of their homes. We would ask residents in the local area to be aware of these incidents and contact the Police if they see anything out of the ordinary.

Any suspected damage to Gas pipes should be reported the National Gas Emergency Service on (0800) 111 999.

Ways to protect metal include: Coating with anti climb paint, which makes the metal difficult to remove. The paint does not dry and will mark clothing and skin DNA style property marking. Products include Smart water, Red Web, and Selecta DNA. If metal is due for replacement, consider a modern alternative which is less attractive to thieves.

Check your property regularly, the earlier it is reported the more chance there is of recovering it. Check the perimeter of your home, bolt gates, ensure lighting is working, and remove any climbing aids.

Vauxhall Wing Mirrors Flying Away in Bedfordshire

Bedfordshire Police are investigating a string of wing mirror thefts across the county.

Reports have been received over the last six months of exceptionally high numbers of colour-coded wing mirror casings being stolen from cars. The targets are predominantly Vauxhalls, mostly from Bedford and Luton. In fact, 81 offences have been reported between January and June 1 this year. Fifty three of these thefts were from Vauxhalls, with Mark 4 and 5 Astras being the most commonly stolen type.

“We’ve noticed a significant upturn in this type of thefts in the last few months,” said Det. Con. Vicky Willett, from the Intelligence Unit. “The mirror casings are not cheap to replace and because they are not marked by the manufacturers, even if we find them it’s difficult to trace them back to their rightful owners and prove they are stolen. That means the criminal could get away with the crime and continue stealing.”

“We’re investigating the spate of thefts but we also really need the public’s help. We’d like as many people as possible to write their postcode and house number on the bottom outside edge on the casing. That means we can identify the stolen parts if we arrest those suspected of stealing them,” she said.

We have free ultraviolet markers to give away to people to do this and they are available from Greyfriars, Luton, Dunstable and Ampthill police stations. The UV pens can also be used to mark all household property such as electrical items, mobile phones and bikes etc.

If people who would like an indelible marker which is completely unique to their household they can buy Smartwater from Neighbourhood Watch for a £20 fee, call 01234 275165.

Burglar Gaoled after stealing Copper Pipes and flooding House

The owner of a house in Clifton, Bedfordshire, was horrified when he opened his front door on Saturday 25 June 2011 to find the property flooded. It was subsequently established this was not as the result of an accident, but was actually the work of burglar Jason Hill. Two days before the owner returned, Hill had stripped the house of all the copper pipe work

and even managed to steal the hot water cylinder from an upstairs airing cupboard. The value of the stolen property and the damage caused was in the region of £2,000.

Hill probably thought he had got away with the crime, but the very next day, the crew of Bedfordshire Police helicopter were busy monitoring the activities of a white van. It drove into Hertfordshire and was stopped by police officers in Letchworth. Inside they found copper piping, curtains and a hot water cylinder. The subsequent police enquiries led them back to burglar Jason Hill who, on 29 June, was arrested and interviewed. Hill, unemployed, aged 31 of 19 Hoover Place, Chicksands, Bedfordshire, appeared before Bedford magistrates today and pleaded guilty to the burglary and asked for five other burglaries and two thefts to be taken into consideration.

Hill was sentenced to 14 weeks in prison.

Detective Constable Surinder Ram of Bedfordshire Police's Priority Crime Team, said, "We are committed to reducing the numbers of burglaries and other crimes in Central Bedfordshire. At the present time, we are looking at other similar offences in the Chicksands area. I would urge anyone with information to contact us."

If you believe you can help the police enquiry, please call Police Constable Jo Barkat, in confidence, on 01234 841212, text 07786 200011, or call Crimestoppers, anonymously if preferred, on 0800 555111.

Queues for CAPS!

Bedfordshire police officers working on the force's Car Accessory Protection Scheme (CAPS) initiative have been heartened by the public's response and are now making more dates available for this free crime prevention service.

Meppershall

20 August, 2.00pm – 3.00pm, Village Hall car park.

At these locations, local policing teams will secure motorists registration plates with tamper proof screws and provide crime prevention advice. We are urging all members of the public to take advantage of our professional support to help safeguard their cars - valuable property, much sought-after by thieves!

MEPPERSHALL SOCIAL CLUB

Regular Activities:

Tuesdays:	Darts
Thursdays:	Dominoes/Crib
Fridays:	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

24 th Sept	DENNI HARRIS 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 Baby and Toddler Group News

Thank you!

A big “Thank You” to everyone who donated books, bought books or had a go on our Lucky Jars tombola at the Summer Fair. We made over £100 – the money is being well spent on new toys and crafts for the children. Thank you also to all the organisers of such a great village fair.

We have had a busy summer term – with a session led by Jo Jingles, a fun evening without children for the mums and by the time this is printed – hopefully a successful Tea Party for Teddies! It has been lovely to see so many new faces join the group this term. We are a friendly group who always welcome new members. We have babies from just a few weeks of age and have just said “Goodbye and Good Luck” to our oldest children who have moved on to school.

We meet on Tuesday afternoons in the village hall from 1:30 – 3:00pm (term time only).

Our first session back after the summer holidays is on the 6th September. We have a fun September ahead of us with a session from **Sing and Sign** on the 13th September and a **FREE** joined session with the **Orchard Children’s Centre** on the 20th September.

Come and join the fun!

For further information call Sam on 07590290078



The Meppershall Players



A big thank you to all of you who organised the “Summer Fair”; the Players had a great time. Thank you also to those of you who bought raffle tickets for the cuddly toys; we raised £17.50 for Moggerhanger Hospice. The winning tickets were yellow no.8, green no.10, and blue no.20. Match the Panto was won by Danielle Savory.

The 2011 Pantomime was to have been “Aladdin” but unfortunately only twelve people auditioned, and as most Pantos require a cast of about twenty four, we decided to defer Aladdin till next year. (Gives me more time to finish the script!) So this year we will be doing “A Variety Evening” on 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Dec, this entertainment (like our Pantos) will be suitable for all the family, with a table layout we welcome you to bring your own food for yourselves (not a share with all event) as we hope to make this a real Christmas Party atmosphere. Tickets will be on sale at Roger’s Bakery from 1st October (ticket prices tbc) We would very much like a pianist for this event, so if you play the piano and are interested in playing a variety of music, please contact me (Karen) on the number below. Rehearsals for this event start in September.

Our Spring 2012 production will be the play “Gaslight” which will be directed by Mr Graham Scrase. Read through and auditions for this production will take place after the “Variety Evening” has taken place: dates in next month’s Messenger.

The players meet every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. Membership is free and 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 (Players’ Chairman)
01462 816336

Meppershall Garden Club

Thank you all for your support at the Meppershall Summer Fair. Our plant sales were very popular yet again. Due to the windy weather we were unable to display all the competition entries in our Marquee – we didn't put the side panels on - worried that we might take flight!

However there were some wonderful 'Vegetable Animals' for the Children's competition and some very creative 'Afternoon Tea' entries by the adults. Thankfully we were able to display the more fragile adult entries in the Lifestyle Marquee.

Congratulations to all of you who entered: the judging was a very difficult job! You will find the winners' names in the colour supplement in the centre of this Messenger.

Our next job is to continue with our work on the Village Hall borders. The planters have now been filled with bedding plants kindly donated by Savins Nurseries.

Our next meeting will be a visit to members' allotments. Enjoy all that local & home grown produce in abundance out there.

Until next time
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 22nd October - Village Hall Social Nite.
8.00 - Midnight

Music by Denni Harris. Tickets £5.00 including buffet.

We have some surplus **printer ink cartridges** for disposal.

No 611 (Teddy Bear) various colours, suitable for Epson printers, this was wrongly ordered so is free to a good home.

Mick Trundle 01462 811457

Use this Notice Board to give the Village any information you wish: a coming event; for sale or wanted; anything shorter than a letter.

COVERS BY REQUEST

From Wayne Woodcock:

“I noticed in the July issue that you had a letter printed regarding features relating to older residents and also the covers not being vibrant/young. I have attached a picture which was taken at the recent Henlow School Football Tournament where Meppershall School had a team entered from year 4 with three children from year 3. The photo is of Dylan Woodcock, Lee Britton, and Abby Bradshaw, all from year 3. I thought this could be maybe considered as a cover?”

I was delighted to include this by way of age balance! - Ed

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 AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

Congratulations to:

David Drummond who will be 87 on 3rd August

Ida Taylor who will be 93 on 14th August

Bobby Sheridan who will be 88 on 8th September

From the Parish Registers :

Baptism:

William Mayes: 19 June, of 53 Orchard Close, Meppershall

Holy Matrimony

Michael Blackham and Claire Dodson, married on 22 July



Meppershall Pre-school Ponderings

We would like to start by saying goodbye and good luck to Kierah, Sian, Kian, Jack, Callum, Alan, Logan, Caitlin, Amie-Lee, Sophie, Tallia, Eilis, Charlotte, Matthew, and Chloe. We hope they enjoy starting lower school in September, and that all our children have a fantastic summer!

At the summer fair this year we had a Teddy Tombola stall, and Quoits for the children and grown ups! Thank you to Louise, Su and Helen for all their help. It was a glorious day, apart from the strong breeze which snapped two of our gazebo poles in half, and we made £62 for the Pre-school.

In September we will be starting up our own allotment to help the children discover where a lot of their food comes from, and unleash their green fingers. If anyone has any clearly labelled seeds or plants they would like to donate, please drop them off at Pre-school from September 8th during session time.

We are now enrolling for September and have plenty of spaces to fill. If you have a child between two years six months and school age, and you feel they may like to try something new, please enquire about a free taster session, so you can see how much they enjoy it to help you make up your mind!

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 August & September

Date	Time	Service
Sun 7 th August Trinity 7	11.00 am	Parish Communion & Junior Church at Rectory. * see below
Sun 14 th Trinity 8	8.30 am	Holy Communion with address.
Sunday 21 st Trinity 9	8.30 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion. Family (All age) Service and baptism of Evie Mew and Joseph Plumbley
Sunday 28 th Trinity 10	11.00 am	Family Communion & Junior Church
Sunday 4 th Sept. Trinity 11	11.00 am	Parish Communion & Junior Church at Rectory
Sunday 11 th Trinity 12	8.30 am	Holy Communion with address.
Sunday 18 th Trinity 13 Harvest Festival	8.30 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion Harvest Family (All age) Service – gifts of produce warmly welcomed – either for arrangement before or to offer during the service. See below for Harvest Supper on

		Monday 19 th .
Sunday 25 th Trinity 14 The Big Welcome	11.00 am	Family Communion & Junior Church. Do join us to explore or rediscover a user-friendly all-age service held in response to Jesus' words "Do this in remembrance of me". Invitation cards for use by the congregation will be available from Sunday 4 th September.
Sunday 2 nd Oct. Trinity 15	11.00 am	Parish Communion and Junior Church. Final Sunday for Rector John and Sandra.

*During the service the Rector will introduce informally the 'whys & wherefores' of the forthcoming Vacancy in the benefice. Comments and questions will be welcome.

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

HARVEST FESTIVAL AND SUPPER

All are invited to St Mary's for a Harvest Festival Family Service on Sunday September 18 at 11a.m. Gifts of produce will be greatly appreciated, either in the previous week for inclusion in the decorations, or else at the service as part of the offertory. The Harvest Supper and Auction is at the Village Hall on Monday 19th at 6.30 for a 7 o'clock start. Tickets will be on sale from the Post Office, Bakery and Rectory (813334) priced £6 and £3 for children (Lower School or younger). This year the Bishop of St Albans Harvest Appeal is called 'Restoring Lives', which supports a scheme in Cambodia set up to help impoverished families to become self sufficient. The proceeds of the auction will be put to this very worthwhile cause.

Also :

Deanery 'Church Crawl'

On three Saturdays in August – 13, 20, 27, there will be opportunity to discover some of the churches, their stories and their people in different parts of our new and enlarged Deanery of Ampthill and Shefford. Visitors will be welcome either to follow a suggested trail, or to choose particular churches to visit, some of which will be offering refreshments. Details shortly due to be publicised in Church or available from the Rectory.

Shefford & District Bible Society session at Meppershall Rectory.

Monday 12 September, 7.45p.m.

Moving On

As you may have heard Sandra and I will be saying goodbye to Meppershall and Shefford on October 2nd, after seven and a half happy and encouraging years here. I'm finding that the process of coming to terms with 'anno domini' is intermingled with very mixed emotions, - much that will be hard to let go of, not least the friendly faces of these two communities, but also much to look forward to, including the prospect of being nearer to the younger folk in our family and having more opportunity to give some support to the more senior ones.

Once retirement arrives, a process gets underway known traditionally by the rather grand title of the 'interregnum', but more frequently now as the 'Vacancy'.

This is the period during which there is no Rector in post and during which steps are taken by the two Church Councils in partnership with the Diocese of St Albans and the patron, St John's College Cambridge, to find a successor. How long this takes is hard to forecast, though nine months is fairly typical. During this time the life of St Mary's and St Michael's will be managed by the Churchwardens and PCC members, with the support of the local Rural Dean. I am very conscious that this presents a not inconsiderable responsibility to a fairly small group of people, though I have every confidence in those who will be shouldering this task. Regular weekly services, as well as baptisms, weddings and funerals will be led by visiting clergy, retired as well as those in post, and we are also fortunate to have Pam Halliwell as Lay Reader in the village to lead some of the non Holy Communion forms of worship as well as to carry out some of the pastoral care. It may well be that some Church activities or services will need to be re-assessed during the Vacancy, particularly as there are real

limits to the availability of visiting clergy, but I am sure the congregations will recognise the need to be positively flexible over the coming months, and to focus on the key ingredients needed to ensure there is a vibrant and effective Christian presence within each parish.

During the service on August 7 I will introduce the issues to do with the Vacancy and invite questions and comment from the congregation. Details of ongoing arrangements and contacts will be given in the next Messenger, and in the meantime please pray for those who will shortly be looking after the parishes of St Mary's and St Michael's and, if you sense there are areas where you feel able to contribute to this shared task your offers will be greatly appreciated – just speak to any of those detailed at the head of St Mary's services page.

It is good to report that a new Vicar has been appointed to our neighbouring benefice of Clifton and Southill - the Rev'd Anne Hindle, who will be licensed on August 30th.

Finally for now – many thanks to all those who contributed to last month's Gift Weekend and Sparks Holiday Club - exciting days made possible by a great team effort.

With every good wish
John Harper

From Pam Halliwell – Lay Reader

First I would like to say a big thank you to all who helped with the litter pick in June, especially to the person who read about it in the Messenger and came along and to the dog walker who joined in. For a while Meppershall really did look tidier, but unfortunately things are getting worse, particularly around the Village Hall. So come on everyone – please put it in the bin or take it home.

I wonder if like me you find this time of year full of uncertainties and questions. Will the holiday really match up to the picture painted by the travel agent? Can we really afford a holiday anyway? Will the children be happy in their next school or class? Will the older ones get the grades they need for university? Will the interest rates go up? Relief from us older pensioners as our savings will now pay off, though those with a mortgage will naturally be worried. What will happen about climate change? Will there be more natural disasters or areas of conflict? Perhaps these

uncertainties come to mind because August is a quieter month with fewer fetes and meetings etc. to deal with. I have to admit that at St Mary's we also have the uncertainty of how we will cope with the 'interregnum' and if the new incumbent will make changes we don't like. But we have the joy of knowing that God is in charge not only of that area but of all areas where we are uncertain and a little anxious. He has resources stored away for us and we can be quite sure that all will be well. Nevertheless if you are people who pray please spare a thought for us in the next few months as we continue to plan for the future.

Pam

Junior Church

By the time you read this edition of the Messenger, SPARKS will probably already have wowed and excited more than 90 children from Meppershall and the surrounding villages. This also means that there are some extremely weary adults out there too. An enormous THANK YOU goes out to all of the people who make this wonderful event come together and happen so successfully, not least of all thanks to Sandra for her inspiration, drive and amazing ability to make the 'couldn't possibly', 'possible'.

So, for 4 days of the year many children are touched in some way by the message of Christ, but what happens afterwards?

Well, the first Sunday of every month, Junior Church meets for a 1 hour session, we reveal the story and then we have fun! At the beginning of June we celebrated 'The Wedding of Cana'. The children saw water turn to 'wine' (I confessed that I couldn't really perform miracles though!) which they all had an opportunity to taste and then we continued our celebrations with some music and dancing.

At the beginning of September we are organizing a Harvest Walk in the village, please come along and support us. We recommend wearing wellies as last year on our Minibeast Hunt we encountered some rather sticky mud! If you would like to bring your child to Junior Church, but feel a bit unsure, please give me a call on 850947.

Blessings

Gillian

Junior Church Leader

A decorative graphic of a leafy branch, with several leaves in different shades of grey and black, extending from the left side of the page and partially overlapping the central text box.

**St Mary's Church,
Meppershall**

Junior Church

**Invite you to join us
on**

**Sunday 4 September
for a**

HARVEST WALK

A decorative graphic of a leafy branch, with several leaves in different shades of grey and black, extending from the bottom left side of the page and partially overlapping the central text box.

11am to 12 noon

Meet at the Rectory

Drink and snack provided

A decorative graphic of a leafy branch, with several leaves in different shades of grey and black, extending from the bottom right side of the page and partially overlapping the central text box.

Parish Records CD Publication – update

Many thanks to The Messenger for covering the new Parish Records CD earlier this year. Many copies have been sold, and our first order from the southern hemisphere led us to ship a copy to Australia in June. These worldwide enquiries are helped by the number-one Google ranking when searching for "meppershall parish records". Purchasers here in Meppershall, as well as further afield, have been finding many ancestors and friends among some 600 pages on the CD. It is indexed by year and is fully searchable for any text of interest (name, place etc) . Priced at £20, copies can be ordered by email - meppershall.pcc@gmail.com - or by phone on 01462 857836 - or read more at www.meppershall.org/church_records.html. All funds go towards keeping our fine church building in good order for another thousand years!

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.

PLUM AND APPLE CHUTNEY**AUG/SEPT 11**

1kg plums, quartered and stoned
 1.5kg apples or pears or a mixture, peeled, cored and diced.
 500g shallots.
 250g stoned prunes, roughly chopped.
 500g soft light brown sugar.
 600ml cider vinegar or white-wine vinegar
 2tsp dried chilli flakes
 Salt

FOR THE SPICE BAG

50g fresh root ginger, bruised
 2tsp mustard seeds
 2tsp black peppercorns

METHOD

- 1) Make your spice bag by tying up the spices in a small square of muslin. Put this into a preserving pan with all the other ingredients and bring slowly to the boil, stirring occasionally.
- 2) This will take a while, but don't hurry it. Let the mixture simmer, uncovered, for 2 ½-3 hours. Keep an eye on it and stir regularly to ensure it doesn't burn.
- 3) It's ready when it's thick and glossy, rich in color and well reduced, but still with chunks of fruit discernible. It is thick enough if, when you draw a wooded spoon through, the chutney parts to reveal the pan's base for a few seconds.
- 4) Pot the chutney while warm in warm, sterilized jars. Pack down with the back of a spoon to remove any air pockets. Seal with vinegar-proof lids.
- 5) Store in a cool, dark place and leave for a couple of months to mature before using.

Recipes are kindly supplied each month by Brenda Putwain

GARDEN TIPS FOR AUGUST

(for September tips see Aug/Sept issue 2010)

(With acknowledgements to the RHS)

- Make sure birds and other wildlife have fresh water and keep ponds topped up
- Water plants that need it regularly
- Collect ripening seed from plants you wish to propagate
- Trim hedges
- Prune rambling roses after flowering
- Trim lavender after the flowers have faded
- Layer rhododendrons, pinks and clematis
- Protect dahlias, and chrysanthemums from earwigs
- Feed and water all plants in containers
- Take cuttings from tender perennials such as pelargoniums and fuchsias
- Mow lawns less frequently if the weather is hot and dry
- Lift and dry onions
- Cut and dry herbs for winter use
- Prop up heavily laden branches of fruit trees
- Summer-prune gooseberries and redcurrants
- Water and feed tomatoes regularly and remove yellowing leaves
- Plant new strawberry plants and keep them well watered
- Harvest the first apples and pears
- Start potted cyclamen and freesias into growth

LAST CHANCE

- Finish summer-pruning apples, pears and other trained fruit trees
- Complete summer-pruning of wisteria
- Plant colchicums for autumn flowering

GET AHEAD

- Force hyacinths for Christmas
- Start planting spring bulbs, especially daffodils
- Prepare ground for making new lawns
- Divide perennials towards the end of the month
- Sow parsley and pot up herbs for later use.

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

*Megan Maxwell who will be 12 on the 6th
Beth Donachie who will be 14 on the 7th
Thomas Clark who will be 9 on the 8th
Jessica Myers who will be 5 on the 11th
Matthew Turner who will be 4 on the 12th
George Lumbis who will be 3 on the 14th
Lucy Standbridge who will be 10 on the 14th
Billy Gower who will be 10 on the 15th
Manishka Hart who will be 11 on the 21st
Noah Flint who will be 5 on the 22nd
Georgia Thomason who will be 10 on the 23rd
Toby Standbridge who will be 7 on the 23rd
Archie Zimmerman who will be 7 on the 23rd
Lucy Edwards who will be 11 on the 24th
Kate Chappell who will be 11 on the 25th
Max Chappell who will be 11 on the 25th
Ethan Kovacs who will be 13 on the 26th
Chloe Bryant who will be 4 on the 28th
Owen Steeley who will be 13 on the 31st*

...and September

*Joshua Turner who will be 6 on the 4th
Ryan Sturgeon who will be 14 on the 6th
Tailor Hunt who will be 9 on the 9th
Chloe Burr who will be 12 on the 9th
Niamh Maxwell who will be 11 on the 11th*

Ben Horsford who will be 12 on the 13th

Jack Gregg who will be 10 on the 17th

Leah Metcalfe who will be 6 on the 19th

Fern Sheppard who will be 13 on the 21st

Liam Sturgeon who will be 9 on the 22nd

Katie Halford who will be 12 on the 23rd

Lewis Bridger who will be 9 on the 24th

Jonathan Bull who will be 8 on the 26th

Marc Neilson who will be 11 on the 27th

Charlotte Turner who will be 1 on the 28th

*If you are under 16 and would like your name added to
the birthday page, please call Louise Hutson on 814748
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.

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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	

Meppershall Summer Fair

Saturday 25th June 2011



Souvenir Picture Supplement

(l-r from top: Nadine Dorres MP opens the Summer Fair 2011; Half of the Master of Ceremonies duo, Paul Carne (trying to hide); our special guest with the programme cover winner Elise Simpkins; the other half of our Master of Ceremonies duo Mick Trundle (& Mrs. Penny Trundle); Village Hall Chairman Steve Ansell, with organising committee members Linda Primett and Mike Till and Jean Holden and our special guest.

Summer Fair 2011



(l-r from top: Welcome to the Fair; The Fair in Full Swing;; Ice Cream Anyone?; Pragathi Dance Troupe—Sri Lankan Dancers; St. Mary's Church Choir; Meppershall Lower School Association; Fairground Rides and 1st Meppershall Brownies Tombola.

Summer Fair 2011



(l-r from top: Adult Flower Arranging Entries; Children's Vegetable Competition Entry; Sue Ryder Appeal; The Bouncy Slide; Kiddies Play Place; A Family Day Out; Kestrel's Archery Club and the Meppershall Messenger—Snap and Horseshoes.

Summer Fair 2011



The Meppershall Messenger would like to express its sincere thanks to the following who so generously agreed to supply pictures of the Summer Fair for this publication: John Chapman, Colette House, Trevor Thorley, Martin Randall, Kim Lee-Tyler and Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association.

(l-r from top: Face Painting; Village Hall Bottle Stall; Trophy Pet Foods; A busy St. Mary's Tea Tent; Roger's Bees; The Beer Tent; Lifestyle-Spinning; Tug-o-War and finally "Balloons Away!"

Summer Fair 2011



(l-r from top: Bedfordshire Police Neighbourhood Policing Team; Your Shout's Trevor Thorley Enjoying a Cuppa; A Busy Lifestyle Marquee; The Rev'd John Harper in the Tea Tent; Classic Vehicles—Motor Bikes and Cars; The Choir Leader, Sandra Harper; The Chair of the Parish Council Enjoying the Sunshine.)

Summer Fair 2011

The organising committee would like to express its sincere thanks to all the generous organisations who donated prizes for the various raffles that took place on the day. Many competitions also took place, with the following available results:

The roll of honour for **Scruffs** is as follows – with many thanks to the Judge, Louise (*"The Post"*) Bryce: **Prettiest Bitch**—Zeba (Jack Russell), handler Alison Ryan; **Handsomest Dog**—Stanley (Mini Schnauzer), handler James Parrot; **Waggiest Tail**—Bertie (Basset Fauve de Bretagne), handler Gary Moules; **Most Like Owner**—TJ (Yorkshire Terrier), handler Trevor Wilkinson; and **Best Child Handler**—Bella (Mixed), handler Izzy. The **Pots of Art Competition** was won by: **(Under 6 years)** - Keira (5); **(6—10 years)** - Cailin Prior (8); and **(11 years and over)** - Jadie Larham (11). The winning **Tug o' War** Team: Super Seven (Lucy E, Kelsie P, Jadie L, Charlotte P, Sarah P, Charlotte Y and Amy H.) The **Children's Vegetable Animals Competition** was won by Sam & Sophie Germann (*Multi Vegetable Dog*); Second Place went to Olivia Mardell (*Cauliflower Poodle*) and third place went to Abbie Bradshaw (*Field of Grazing Sheep*). The **Adult Flower Arranging Competition "Afternoon Tea"** was won by Mandy Hollingsworth and the runner up award went to Jan Thomas & Lorraine Jarvis. The **Balloon Race** and **How many Things in a Smarties Tube** will be declared in the October issue of the Meppershall Messenger.



(l—r from top: Scruffs and some of the participants; Meppershall Gardening Club; The Tea Ladies; Meppershall Players and Seasons Fruit & Veg.)