



Arms of the de
Meppershall Family

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



VOLUME 27 – Issue 10
MARCH 2012

Meppershall Village Website: www.meppershall.org

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EDITORIAL

Issue 10 means that we have reached the end of another Messenger year. Volume 28 will start April and we will hold our Messenger AGM on 11th April – see page 7. Please take this AGM seriously and come along and tell us what we can do better. Also think whether you could give some time to The Messenger. You know that we have lost one member of our Committee: it may well be that we should not only replace Christine but expand the Committee to bring in fresh blood. I am sure that being stuck in a rut, even a pretty good rut, is the worst risk for any magazine like ours.



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There is not room here for the whole Editor's AGM Report, but I must look back briefly on the year just ending. It has had its high points: the purchase of the new printer thanks to the timely intervention of the Parish Council, and our success in the National competition. Low points were Christine's illness and untimely death. Good points all the way through have been the support of our advertisers and of all our volunteers. Then there are our contributors. Chris Foster notches up the 30th episode of the Polehanger Diaries in this issue, while this month sees the 38th instalment of Roger's Bakery Bees and I have lost count of the Recipes provided by Brenda Putwain, to single out only 3 from many very faithfuls; I can only say "thank you all". And thankfully new contributors are still coming forward, like Paul Smith with his puzzles and Matthew Hepburn with his travel pieces.

Paul has made one of my New Year Wishes come true already: we have a Puzzle Page! Many thanks to Paul Smith for venturing into Crosswords as well as setting our Sudokus. His first crossword effort has a truly local flavour, so test your local knowledge as well as your puzzling.

There is a noticeable and disappointing lack of readers' letters this month; I expect this simply reflects the depressing effect the weather and the time of year but I hope our correspondents will soon Spring into new life!

Dick Bulley

LETTERS

Letter from Maureen Gravell

Hi Richard,

Last week I went for a walk round the village with Colette House. We walked along Fildyke, along the footpath behind the allotments, came out on the Stondon Road, walked along to the water tower and then back down Chapel Road. We collected 8 bags of litter.

At the water tower somebody had dumped entire bags full of cans and rubbish, and a load of asbestos roofing. We have notified the council but thought you may like to mention litter again. Much of the litter was cans of Stella and Red Bull. Either somebody drives through the village regularly, throwing out their litter, or several litter louts have shared tastes.

Maureen Gravell

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.

‘March into Summertime’

With Campton WI

On

Sunday March 25

Meet at the playground at the
top of Crackle Hill at 3 p.m.

&

walk back with Campton W.I.
to the village hall for tea and cakes @

£1.50

Ring 01462 619330 to advise numbers



QUIZ NIGHT

SATURDAY 24th MARCH

2012

MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE

HALL

Quizmaster: Eugene O'Sullivan

**DOORS AND BAR OPEN 7.00 PM FOR 7.30 PM
START**

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

**(Available from the village shop or P.T.A member at
school)**

£3 PER PERSON (maximum 8 per team)

Please bring your own team snacks



Meppershall Bakery Bees *by Roger*

Having seen Bees, Butterflies and Blooms on the BBC, I thought we could talk about some of the flowers bees like to work during the year. Most months have some flowers in bloom. The bees' food, nectar and pollen, is obtained from flowers. Nectar is varied in its composition, consisting mainly of sugars. Pollen is a high protein food: just as we need to eat a variety of foods, bees need to have a range of pollens for complete nutrition. There are flowers naturally available for bees for most of the year.

At the two ends of the season, early bulbs and willows are among the best providers in the spring, whilst at the other end of the season the most universally available source is ivy. It is a hugely important plant for bees. I always prune our ivy in the spring. At the beginning of February, when the snow was lying, the birds were eating the ivy berries; a bonus for birds and bees. Flowers and bees are a perfect match; bees gather nectar and pollen, enabling plants to reproduce. In turn, pollen feeds baby bees and nectar is turned into honey to be enjoyed by the bee and us. Everyone's happy!

We can help in this process by adding some of these flowers to our gardens or by not removing some that are there. Did you know that many weeds actually are great bee plants, including the pesky dandelion and clover? You can grow all kinds of flowering plants in your garden that will not only add beauty and fragrance to your backyard but also give bees handy sources of pollen and nectar. The aster family has more than 100 different wildflowers, ranging in colour from white and pink to light and dark purple. Sunflowers, salvias, mint and thyme are other good plants for bees. The salvia family, with more than 500 varieties, includes the sages and many bedding plants. The sages are good nectar providers and when in bloom, are covered with bees all day. These days the major crops in the UK are oilseed rape and field beans. The mainstay of the English honey crop used to be white clover followed by blackberry. They are still important, particularly the blackberry. Our bees are very lucky, they have willow in the spring, oilseed rape, field beans, horse chestnut, a large field of buttercups and the apiary's own patch of wild thistles and dandelions, with blackberries later on. Not a bad a mixture for some lovely tasting honey. All hives are okay with some egg laying in progress.

Honey available at Rogers Bakery - see you there.

MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER A.G.M

WEDNESDAY 11TH APRIL
AT 7.30 PM
IN
THE SUGAR LOAF

Please come and support the Committee – we
are looking for new members!

Also, tell us how we can come first in those
National Parish Magazine Awards this year.

Meppershall VA CE Lower School

*'An outstanding Church
of England School'*

June 2008 and December 2010



School Report- March 2012

It's half term already and I cannot believe that we are now half way through our academic year! The snow is on the ground but we have kept our school open, even though some of the staff had difficult journeys to work; a big thank you to them for being such troopers.

This term our music teacher is planning a school community sing-a-long on Thursday 15th March after school, where we hope parents, staff and governors will come and join the children in song. If this goes well we will invite more people on another occasion.

The teachers in Key Stage 2 have planned an exciting educational visit to the Eco Centre in Swaffham and our children also continue to take part in local sports events organised by Redbourn School Sports partnership. So far they have competed in Key Stage 1 Gymnastics and are preparing for Key Stage 2 Tag Rugby after half term.

We are looking forward to our class assemblies which take place this term. The children really enjoy preparing them and showing all they have learnt throughout the term. After half term we begin to prepare for Easter and this year the children will be going to St. Mary's for a short Ash Wednesday service so that we mark the beginning of Lent in a traditional way.

Lyn Fairweather
Headteacher

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO The Meppershall Post Office and Stores

“Meppershall Post Office and Stores has been at the heart of the community for well over 25 years. It started life as a green grocery on the opposite side of the High Street from where it now stands, and was only the size of the current post office area, most of the produce being grown in the garden. About 25 years ago, after “*Meppershall’s Great Post Office Robbery*” , where the Post Master made off with the Post Office’s money, the Post Office was moved from what was later known as “*Len’s Garage*” to its current location; well almost - it was a wooden hut in the current Post Office area.

At this time Mrs Connie Lawrence owned the shop, later to be owned by Mr and Mrs Purchase who I believe owned it for 17 years in total.

They extended the shop into what was their dining room and living room. In about 1996 Richard and Hazel Whittaker bought the shop. They did some modernisation and built the new Post Office and shop front. On 28th February 2002 Carolyn and I bought the shop, having never owned a shop before (I was a sales manager and fancied a change!). So here we are 8 years later, having survived most things, even Post Office closures (so far!)”

Steve Ansell wrote the piece above for our silver anniversary issue in 2010. Happily, Ansell’s Stores is still very much with us, and on 28th Feb 2012 they celebrate their own 10th anniversary. The Messenger sends congratulations to Steve, Carolyn and their team, thanks them for being such a crucial part of the “glue” that holds Meppershall together, and wishes them many more years with us.

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 February 2012.

Lisa Antoine, PCSO for the area, sent a report stating that for the Parish of Meppershall only two crimes were recorded in January: burglary of a house where entry was made at the rear of the property and some electrical goods and cash were taken, and a case of anti-social behaviour.

Among various observations Cllr Tony Brown said the Number Plate Recognition Vehicle is now fully operational in policing parking restriction in the Central Beds area. 326 Penalty Notices were issued in January compared with 6 or 7 by the manual method. The new role of police commissioner for Bedfordshire will be contested on 15th Nov.2012 in an election by the general public and the role will become active on 22nd Nov.2012

Planning & Housing (spokesman Cllr. Peter Chapman)

Recent Applications:-

47 Orchard Close - erection of a rear single storey extension – no objections

37 Fildyke Road - land change of use from paddock to garden – should only be granted if a further change of use not permitted within 10 years, as per previous application.

Recent Approvals:-

5 Fildyke Road - Garage conversion with raised roof and dormer windows. Retrospective application which had previously been refused before the work was undertaken.

14 Shefford Road - erection of replacement garage – no objections.

101 High Street - construction of a dropped kerb – no objections.

30 Shefford Rd - alterations to approved driveway/crossover – no objections.

Finance

The Precept for 2012/13 has been held the same as last year but only by reducing the general reserves. It leaves little room for unforeseen expenditure and it is very unlikely to be repeated next year.

Highways & Lighting (spokesman Cllr. Roger Bryant)

Central Beds Highways have a plan to install new road signs either side of Spinney Corner where the footpath to Shefford crosses the road. The crossing at the bottom of the hill is not being done at present.

The additional salt bins were well used during the recent snow and cold weather. Thank you to Parishioners who helped by spreading the grit on the roads and public footpaths but it has been noticed that some householders used the grit on their own paths and driveways which is NOT what it was supplied for and will be considered as theft next year.

Environment & Leisure (spokesman Cllr. Paul Merryweather)

Another inspection of the play equipment has been completed. Only minor items were highlighted and these problems will be resolved before the next inspection.

Allotment Land

Now that the tenancy agreements have been returned a few allotments have become vacant; anyone wishing to rent an allotment should, in the first instance register an interest with myself or the Clerk via e-mail on the Meppershall website or by phone. Our numbers are in the Messenger Who's Who.

Jubilee Beacon

So far a response has not been received from Stondon PC on a joint venture in the area near the water tower, subject to land owners' permission. The Council is looking into some form of traditional beacon on the normal bonfire site if the joint venture is not possible. Unfortunately due to the constraints on the Council's finances some sponsorship will probably be required.

The next Parish Council meetings will be held Mondays 12th March 2012 and Monday 16th April 2012 (**NOTE THE CHANGE DUE TO THE NORMAL DAY BEING EASTER MONDAY**) at Meppershall Village Hall, both commencing at 7.45pm.

Also in April is the annual Parish meeting where Parishioners can ask questions and put forward thoughts and ideas for the Council to consider. The date is Monday 23rd April in the Village Hall at 7.45pm.
Peter Chapman - Chairman of Meppershall Parish Council

YOUR SHOUT with Trevor Thorley



TEA DANCES

I am notified every few weeks with the date of the next of the very popular Tea Dances, which take place in the Village Hall, so that I can advertise the details through the Village News page in the local press. Admission is £2.50, which includes free tea and biscuits and an assortment of extra goodies. Dancing is to Maurice's Music and they usually commence on Tuesday afternoons from 2pm until 4.30pm. Anyone can go along and the opportunity is taken up by senior citizens both from Meppershall and beyond. If you want to know more, please call Maurice on 01462 628656.

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S QUIZ NIGHT

It was extremely nice to see John and Sandra return to Meppershall on January 28 for The Friends of St. Mary's Annual Quiz Night. The evening was a great success with the involvement of 13 tables. A raffle with a variety of prizes added to the enjoyment of the evening. The shield, together with six bottles of wine, was won this year by Duncan Thomas's team. A bottle of whisky and flowers were presented to Quizmaster Graham and his lady. Thank you to all who supported this event and helped with the donation of raffle prizes. Approximately £400 was raised on the evening, which will go into the fund for the restoration and repairs of the Church Tower, which hopefully should be quite soon.

JOHN & SANDRA HARPER

Approximately 40 people enjoyed the sincere welcome from Sandra and Rev John Harper in their 'open house' invitation on Saturday February 11. John and Sandra are now happily settled in their new home in Yaxley, Cambridgeshire, close to their family and grandchildren.

It was a wonderful day and the hospitality was thoroughly enjoyed by all those present, a hot roast meal was provided, with a variety of other dishes and scrumptious desserts.

Sandra has pursued her passion for singing by joining a choir, Peterborough Voices, who are performing jointly with Peterborough Youth Choir and Peterborough Male Voice Choir, in the "Faure Requiem" in Peterborough Cathedral on March 10. John has found the time now to increase his running, and has joined a club where he now runs 7 or 8 mile distances four times a week; he is looking very fit.

OUR MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

It was great to see Dick Bulley and the Meppershall Messenger receive recognition in the Biggleswade Chronicle recently for the magnificent achievement of 5th place out of 620 entrants in the National Parish Magazine competition of 2011. There is now the opportunity for further improvement but it will only happen if you continue to provide your news and exciting happenings that can be reported on and relayed for the enjoyment of others.

KENNY BALL & HIS JAZZMEN

If you want to go to the Kenny Ball concert, which is to be held in St. Mary's Church, on Saturday, March 10, commencing at 7.30pm. It might be well to check ticket availability. Tel: 01462 813357.

REMEMBER IT IS YOUR SHOUT
Call Trevor on 01462 813357 or email:
trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

By Enid Pamment



Our group will end the chilly month of February with a trip to the London Museum which we shall report on in the April edition of the Messenger.

We are looking forward to the Thriplow Daffodil weekend on Saturday 17th March and we hope this spell of cold weather will hold back the daffodils until we get there! Apart from the daffodils there will be much to see including Morris dancers, flower festivals, bell ringing and organ playing at the 12th Century Church. There will also be many plants and book stalls. Hot and cold food is available throughout the day. Proceeds from this event are for local charities. Seats are still available.

Our annual 'Get Together' at The Memorial Hall, Shefford, on Saturday 24th March should be a jolly get together as usual, with entertainment, tombola and of course an excellent buffet. This event is not only held to meet friends and acquaintances but to present our cheque to *Keech Hospice Care for Children*. The money was raised by the generous donation of prizes and the purchase of raffle tickets.

Thursford – Norfolk. We are still awaiting confirmation of our application for tickets for the '*Christmas Spectacular Show*' 2012.

Forthcoming Events 2012

Thriplow Daffodil Weekend	Saturday 17 th March
Get together, Memorial Hall, Shefford	Saturday 24 th March
The Mountbatten Festival of Music –RAH	Thursday 12 th April
River Thames & Greenwich Naval Coll.	Thursday 17 th May
National Memorial Arboretum, Staffs.	Wednesday 20 th June
Cambridge River Cruise with Lunch	Thursday 26 th July
Buckingham Palace + Kenwood House	Thursday 2 nd August
River Boat Cruise(inc lunch & cream tea)	Tuesday 24 th August
Calendar Girls RAH (for Leukaemia)	Sunday 7 th October

Holidays

Images of Poland (Krakow). Flying from Stanstead	3 rd - 8 th June
Chatsworth & The Peak District –Novotel Nottingham	10 th – 13 th August
Warners – Hayling Island (Hotel Accommodation)	1 st – 5 th October
<i>Kindly telephone for more details of any of the above. Bookings now being taken</i>	

London shows currently available (arranged by Stevenage Group Travel) are:

Matinees – Leaving Shefford at 11am – price includes coach:

Crazy for You – Gershwin's smash hit. Novello Theatre – Thursday 5th April (Dress Circle Seats)

Seniors Day Out – leaving Shefford 9.30 am - fish & chips lunch.

Jersey Boys – Tuesday 24th April. Prince Edward Theatre – Dress circle seats.

Singing in the Rain - Wednesday 9th May. - Palace Theatre – Stalls Seats - New Production.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra – Rogers and Hammerstein – Sunday 15th April – Royal Albert Hall – Arena and mid-Choir seats available. Leaving Shefford at 3pm.

For all holidays which include hotel accommodation, Shefford Leisure Group acts as an agent for the Tour Operator, their terms and conditions apply.

Shefford Leisure Group is open to everyone in the local community, who feels they would like to join us on our ventures and see places they would not see under their own steam. We are always happy to meet new friends.

Raffles are held and all the proceeds are for Keech Hospice Care for Children. 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.

Enid Pamment – Shefford Leisure Group

We hear that Enid has to go into hospital: we wish her a speedy recovery - Ed

Financial News Update

with Jon Ingarfill

Well, that's January done and dusted, and February is already hurtling by. The first two months of each year are always the time when people take stock of their finances...

Many will have inevitably overspent at Christmas (again?), and in January the bills roll in. The lack of funds, the gloomy weather and lack of daylight all contribute to January being the most miserable month of the year for many. January and February are also the months in which there is a spike in the death rate – cold weather increases the mortality rate amongst those already frail or ill, it also increases the number of serious road accidents and stress/depression related fatalities. It reminds us of just how fragile life can be and how little importance we place upon protecting ourselves and our families from the unexpected.

It wasn't too long ago that everyone had their mortgage covered against premature death as a matter of course, and probably had additional life and/or critical illness cover on top. Nowadays very few people make sure they have sufficient cover in place, and covering the mortgage is increasingly seen as a luxury. Neither do we check that what we do have is still relevant to our needs.

As I stated above it is understood that family finances are under pressure like never before; however cancelling your life cover to save a few pounds really is a false economy. Imagine how your family would cope if the unexpected happened (and yes, it does happen), knowing that you had cancelled the life cover a few weeks previously?

The cost of life cover has fallen quite sharply in recent years as the various threats of HIV, CJD, Bird Flu, Swine Flu etc., have failed to materialise in any magnitude sufficient to threaten our existence. Therefore life cover is more affordable now than ever before. Despite this, it is often either the first thing to go or be over-looked when finances tighten up. And yet that weekly take-away, the Sky Sports package, the gym membership and so on, are all still in the monthly budget!

I'm not denying we all need some pleasure in our lives from time to time, I'm just pointing out that sometimes we need to get the priorities into perspective a little more. Protecting one's family should be right there at the top of the tree.

Although it's more expensive, critical illness cover needs to be right there beside life cover. It's often described as life assurance for the living because the assured person benefits from the payout. The number one objection I get is always that these policies don't pay out when you claim – that's largely because a very small number of cases make the weekend press. Across the industry, payouts are in excess of 90% from the mainstream companies (always choose a reputable company – ask to see details of their claims payout performance). The tiny percentage that are refused are almost exclusively because the person lied on the application form. A small number are because the condition claimed for didn't meet the criteria for a claim – I've seen claims for broken ankle (skiing), sprained wrist, bad back – not exactly life threatening conditions, and not surprisingly aren't covered. However I've also seen £300,000 paid out for breast cancer (the lady went on to make a full recovery), £250,000 for heart bypass surgery where again the chap made a full recovery and many more instances I could cite. How would they have coped financially without the payout? It's possible the financial worry might have hindered their recovery, when in fact having the cover gave them complete peace of mind. It's not just people over a certain age that suffers serious illnesses and life threatening accidents, so please think about protecting yourselves and your families adequately.

Jon Ingarfill

Tel: 07870 564115 or email:

jon.ingarfill@pocockrutherford.com

Polehanger: A Farming Diary

Episode 30



Weather . . . or not

It's Monday February 6th and the 10 centimetres or so of snow that we had on Saturday evening / night are sitting slushily on the fields and side roads, undecided whether to thaw or freeze. A cold spell either side is likely to be the sting in the tail of a mild winter (I hope). Snow under skis in the Alps is wonderful; at home it is a cause of anxiety around logistics, access, burst pipes and accidents.

Our area is still officially in drought and with a lower than average January rainfall, and probably February too - the ground water / reservoir deficit is certainly not being made up yet.

For those large farms that have irrigation reservoirs as a vital part of growing potatoes and vegetables, it is normal to have winter filling licenses from the Environment Agency. These are not a foregone conclusion this year as the EA juggles with the various demands for limited water resources.

The EA published a 37 page document detailing the drought prospects for winter 2011 / spring 2012. A couple of extracts read as follows.

"We expect the decline in groundwater levels to continue to decline until substantial rainfall infiltrates the very dry soils in the affected areas (the Midlands, parts of East Anglia, Kent and E. Sussex)"

"Impacts from the dry weather include a higher than average number of environmental incidents such as fish rescues, algal blooms, reduced cereal and potato yields, wildfires and navigation restrictions"

"Even with average rainfall over winter / spring there is unlikely to be a full recovery from drought conditions during 2012"

Rhino; a month in the life of an Oil Seed Rape plant

The carpet of snow (as I write) has given some protection from pigeons that really gathered into large flocks with the arrival of the cold weather. (Is there a better collective noun for pigeons than flock?)

As soon as the soil warms up again the rape will start to grow away. From last year's experience, nitrogen will be applied earlier than it might in 'normal' years to make sure it is dissolved into the soil from rainfall and available for the crop at the critical growth stage. Our definition of normality may well be changing in the years ahead!

Elsewhere on (and off) the Farm

Farms and other rural businesses continue to suffer from theft of scrap metal and fuel as the value of these commodities stays at historically high levels.

There has been a spate of straw fires in Cambridgeshire where large quantities of big bales are stacked for later delivery to straw burning power stations. Therapy for pyromaniacs?

Interesting Statistic(s)

The value of insect pollination to farming globally is estimated at £131 billion.

50 Years Ago: Michael Foster's Diary Extract from 1962

March 1 – 8: very cold winds and frost (obviously dry as field work is going on; e.g. rotovating brussell stalks). Sprout picking finished.

March 9 – 31: (still recording frosts overnight: routine jobs with cows, machinery repairs, concreting yards, moving dung from cattle yards to fields for application in autumn. This was / is the nature of farming. Sometimes nothing of note is happening, you just have to keep the 'show on the road' and be prepared for when something needs to be happening!)

Thought for the month:

A farming publication recently surveyed 1300 farmers on a number of topics. One question was; "if you won £5million on the lottery, what would be the first thing you would spend it on?"

Nearly all the respondents had the same idea: paying off the overdraft and mortgage, buying more land and paying for some farm improvements (including the odd hip replacement!). It is an industry that people love once they are in it, in spite of the long hours, so they clearly want to stay. Interestingly, individuals say they are working longer hours than 5 years ago, which maybe isn't surprising as farms expand and the workforce contracts (by 'natural wastage' mainly).

One respondent wrote wryly: "with £5million I would buy a big arable farm so I could get rid of the dairy cows, then carry on farming until all the money had gone"

Chris Foster, 6th February 2012

Please note the number at the head of this item. This is the 30th piece that Chris has composed for us – thank you so much, Chris – please keep them coming! Ed

The History of Meppershall

I am very glad to be able to report that Sandra Read is better, but not yet able to pound her keyboard, so we will have to wait a little longer for our next historic revelation. Sandra tells me that when it comes, it may take a different form, since the source documents will be different.



LIFE ON THE WILD SIDE

By JEREMY HOLDEN

Jeremy has been travelling out of touch, and therefore not able to send in a piece this month. I have urged him to let me have some pieces to hold in stock for the next time he disappears over the horizon.

Aaron Antiques

Stevenage • Hitchin • Luton • Bedford

Collector & Buyer Of

*Clocks, Barometers,
Furniture, Ornaments,
Paintings
Or Any Antique*

For free valuations or
directions to us please call

01462 817218

(anytime)

Meppershall Baby and Toddler Group

Are you looking after a child under five years of age? Are you looking for something local to do on a Tuesday afternoon? If the answers are “YES!” come and join us in the village hall between 1:30 and 3:15pm.

We are a friendly group of mums, grandparents and childminders who meet for a chat and cup of tea while the babies/toddlers/pre-school children make new friends. We always welcome new people at our sessions.

We have recently updated a number of our toys – and have a great selection for the children to play with. We have a separate baby area and a craft table – with fun and exciting things to make each week. The children share a snack time together – all included in the price and your first visit is FREE!

Our sessions end with singing or parachute games. For more information – visit us on Facebook (Meppershall Toddlers) or just turn up and give it a try!

Business Advice – 6: Insurance



Last November, I wrote about Crisis Management and the need to make your business more resilient to the unexpected. However, even the best-prepared companies still have to face crises: extreme weather conditions, computer viruses, accidents...

The list below shows usual insurance types and the protection they offer. Although most of them are not compulsory, bear in mind that having adequate insurance is a key factor for successful crisis recovery.

Your activities may cause harm to third parties

The products you make, repair or sell, may cause damage or injury, because of defects in their design or manufacture, even if you have not been negligent. **Product Liability** covers claims from members of the public against your products.

Equally, if you sell services or advice, you or your employees may cause injury, loss, or damage, through professional negligence. **Professional Indemnity** protects businesses against third party claims. It is mandatory for certain professions, including architects, accountants, solicitors, surveyors, insurance brokers and financial advisers.

Public Liability insurance covers you for claims made against you by members of the public or other businesses for death, bodily injury or damage to their property which occurs as a result of your business activities.

I'm sure you are all aware that **third-party vehicle insurance** is mandatory for the vehicles owned by your business. However, the use of private vehicles for business is usually under-insured. Even popping to the Post Office to pick up a business parcel is not covered by Social, Domestic and Pleasure clauses, so you should ensure that all employees using their own cars have **class 1 insurance (full business use)**.

Insuring your team

Employer's Liability is compulsory if you have any employee. It is also highly recommended for sole traders, if they don't hold a personal life or critical illness insurance. It helps employers to meet the cost of compensation for injuries sustained by their employees while doing their job. You must be insured for at least £5 million and you can be fined if you fail to comply.

In addition, ask yourself how your business would be affected by the death, serious illness or disability of a vital member of your team. **Key Person Insurance** protects your business against the resulting loss of income.

Insuring your assets

Your **business premises** should be insured for the full rebuilding cost (including professional fees and the cost of site clearance) and not just for the market value. Note that landlords are usually responsible for insuring the premises, but tenants are usually responsible for shop fronts.

Premises insurance only covers the physical building, so you will also need separate cover for **stock, machinery and contents**.

Note that, if you work from home, your standard household policy will not cover any loss of equipment or stock. It may even be invalid if you work from home.

Insuring everything else

The list of extra insurances you may wish to take is endless: partners and key shareholders, goods in transit, cash loss, trade credit (bad debt), employee's travel, business interruption...

For further information, I highly recommend the Business Link website. In addition, their interactive online questionnaire is an excellent tool to assess your insurance needs (Google: Insurance Business Link).



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 - 10

The art of matchmaking according to The Wine Society

Think of wine as a sauce. This can either complement flavours or contrast with them to accentuate different tastes. The key word is balance. A powerful Châteauneuf-du-Pape would match a venison stew but might quash the delicate flavours of trout with almonds. River fish cooked in butter, however, or the rich flavours of crab may be balanced nicely by a crisp Sancerre. Smoked foods need something with flavour. Oaked white Burgundy is traditional with salmon, or try a full-bodied, off-dry Pinot Gris from Alsace.

Regional pairings are usually very successful. A rich, sweet and fairly high alcohol late harvest gewürztraminer is delicious with Alsace Munster cheese; or copy the Bordelais' predilection for Roquefort with a glass of luscious Sauternes or the Loire pairing of Sancerre with goats cheese. The natural, slightly sweet nature of honey-roast gammon complements the medium-dry style of German Riesling, and Beaujolais is delicious with sausage.

Having the courage to experiment can be rewarding, but bear the following in mind:

Consider the relative 'weights' of wine and food. Frequently, full-bodied wines, with relatively high alcohol, suit full-flavoured dishes; lighter, less alcoholic styles, suit more delicate flavours. Red wine usually accompanies stronger-flavoured food, but don't discount, for example, ripe, flavoursome, weighty new-world chardonnay. Puddings are matched well by rich, alcoholic, sweet wines like Beaumes de Venise, although a lighter-style, slightly sparkling Moscato D'Asti may usefully refresh the palate between mouthfuls of chocolate sponge.

Acidity in wine is particularly useful for clearing the palate when eating oily or creamy dishes. Try Muscadet with mackerel or shellfish, Alsace Riesling with chicken in a creamy sauce. Certain reds - those from Italy and Portugal, for instance - are also known for having relatively high acidity: balance them with olive oil-dressed pasta, oily sardines or mackerel. Be cautious where dishes contain lemon juice, wine, vinegar or fruit (including tomatoes), as all make wines with low acidity appear dull and flat. Look to the Loire, England, and Mosel valley for crisp whites with good acidity.

Tannin in wine can be felt in the mouth in the same way you feel tannin in strong, cold tea. Mostly found in red wine, it has the same, helpful, cutting effect as acidity on oily dishes and gives wine the substance to make it a natural partner to food. Decanting wine and bringing it to room temperature before drinking can make tannins in robust wines appear softer. Comparatively tannic wines, including Chinon and Claret, are particularly good with fatty food such as duck or rillettes.

A 'balanced' wine has roughly equal amounts of tannin (in red wines), acidity, fruit and alcohol, which come together in the mouth. A wine with lots of fruit is generally one which will appeal to many. The ripeness of fruit can make white or red wines appear sweeter than they actually are. Fruity wines can bring out the fruit flavours in dishes such as duck with morello cherries or sweet and sour pork. As more vigorous fruit is present in young wines, these are often the best choice for such dishes.

Full-flavoured or aromatic wines are best with spice or herb-based recipes: mature Alsace Riesling with dill sauces and mustard; chilli with rustic *vins de pays*; spicy sausages with an Australian shiraz; Chinese or mild Indian dishes with gewürztraminer from Alsace or Chile.

Sweet whites are often at their best when served with cheeses or even fish dishes in creamy or cheese sauces. Matching them with the pudding can be difficult: if the wine is sweeter, the pudding will taste less rich; if the pudding is sweeter, the wine may appear dry and dull. Try Madeira with plain sponge, an old Sauternes with a French-style apple tart or Vin Santo with figs.

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.

Calendar of Meppershall Events

March 2012

Friday 2nd		
Women's World Day of Prayer	2.15 pm	All Saints Ch, Campton
Monday 5th		
Charity Coffee Morning	9.00 am - 4.00 pm	51A High Street
Saturday 10th		
Police Surgery	9.00 – 12.00 Noon	Shefford farmers' Market
Kenny Ball in Concert	7.30 pm	St Mary's Church
Monday 12th		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
Saturday 24th		
PTA Quiz Night	7.00 pm	Village Hall
Shefford Leisure Group – Annual Get-together	7.00 pm	Memorial Hall, Shefford
Sunday 25th		
March into Summertime	3.00 pm	Fosters Field

April 2012

Thursday 12th		
MGC Open Evening: "Edibles as Ornamentals"	7.30 pm	Village Hall
Monday 16th		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
Thursday 19th		
Annual Parochial Meeting	7.30 pm	St Mary's Church
Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd		
Biggleswade & District Art Society Spring Exhibition	10.00 am – 4.00 pm	Northhill Village Hall (opposite the church)
Monday 23rd		
Annual Parish Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
Saturday 28th		
Pre-school Table-Top Sale	1.00 – 5.00 pm	Village Hall

Jazzco Presents
Mr Kenny Ball
 AND HIS JAZZMEN

in Concert



St. Mary's Meppershall – SG17 5NA

On Saturday – 10th MARCH, 2012

At 7.30pm (Bar open from 7pm) [Numbered seating at £20 and £15]

TICKETS available from Trevor on Tel: 01462 813357 Email: trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com

www.jazzco.co.uk Tel: 08450 008 007

THE LUCY PAGES

By Lucy Standbridge

Aged 10



A few pupils from Henlow Middle School and I were chosen to go on a trip to Cambridge University Department of Archaeology. The day was lead by Dr Carenza Lewis, best known from Channel 4's Time Team. I have interviewed two pupils of Henlow Middle who went and who live in Meppershall:

How did you feel when you found out you were going to Cambridge University?

Georgia Thomason (age 10):

I was excited but nervous. I was hoping it would be really good.



Maya Derrick: Excited!

My opinion: I was also excited! At first, archaeology wasn't really my thing but now it is!

What was your favourite thing about the Cambridge University visit?

Georgia: Doing all the activities and working with my friend Lucy!

Maya: Everything!

My opinion: My favourite thing was when we were able to handle artefacts and findings that Dr Carenza Lewis and her team had dug up.

How high would you rate this trip?

Georgia: 9 out of 10!

Maya: 8 out of 10!

My Opinion: I would rate it nine out of 10!!!

I have also interviewed Mr Leavey who works at Henlow Middle, who organised this brilliant trip.

Mr Leavey said:

Mrs Lewis, a teacher who is interested in archaeology, was looking at the website and found out we could go for a discovery day, so she passed the details to me, as head of Key Stage 3 history. I met with all the other history teachers and we selected some pupils who were good at history to go on this trip.

MEPPERSHALL'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Many thanks to John Chapman for spotting an item on the web giving the report of a survey conducted in 2010 into Green Issues now and for the future. John alerted me to the report and provided the web link. David Foskett has kindly added a link to the website on to the Village website. The address of the Village website appears (as always) on our front cover. Hands up if you have never looked at that site! Shame on you! Go on – Take a Look!

PUZZLE PAGES

SUDOKU PUZZLE - MEDIUM

	3			8		4	6	
	7							
							2	7
	4			5	9			
6							7	
9		2	4		7			6
		5			4		3	1
8			5					
			9			5		

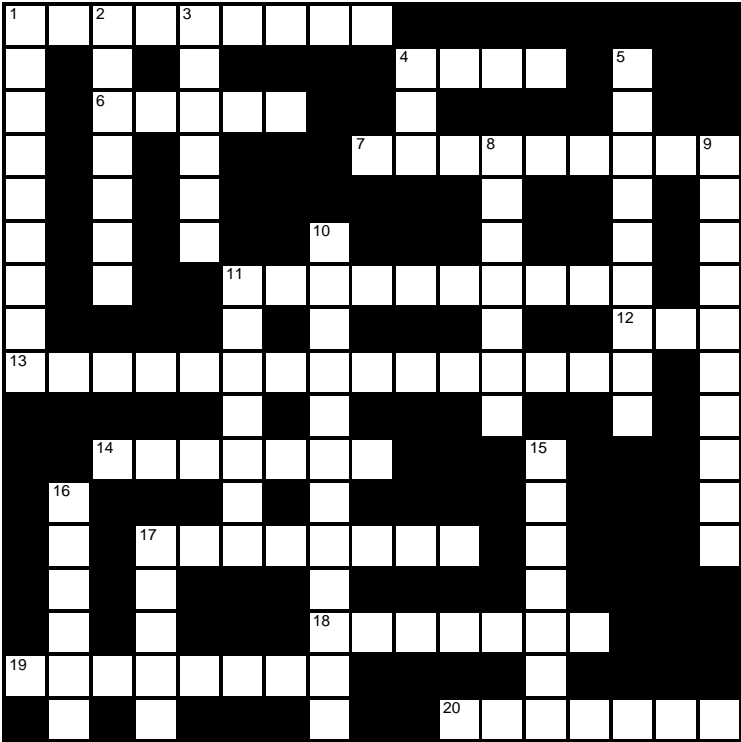
The objective is to fill a 9×9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3×3 sub-grids that compose the grid contains all of the digits from 1 to 9

Paul Smith 07715-572362

And opposite, our first Meppershall Crossword, also set by Paul Smith. All the answers are connected with Meppershall or Shefford.

Setting Crosswords is a new venture for Paul, so I am very grateful that The Messenger is benefitting from his experimentation. If there are any more puzzle setters out there I would be delighted to hear from you. Ed

Solutions on page 37



Across

- 1 Day the gardening club meets (9)
- 4 Stephen _____ checks your eyes (4)
- 6 he owns the bakery (5)
- 7 supermarket in Shefford (9)
- 11 cottages opposite Crackle Hill Road (10)
- 12 Beer sold in the "Loaf" (3)
- 13 local college (6,9)
- 14 they act a lot (7)
- 17 off Coneygate (3,5)
- 18 stay here with breakfast (3,4)
- 19 bank in Shefford (8)
- 20 name of the kennels (7)

Down

- 1 volunteer transport (9)
- 2 MP (7)
- 3 first name of chimney sweep (6)
- 4 the Barley Mow used be on the corner of this road (3)
- 5 road on the edge of a small river? (9)
- 8 road where the rector would live? (7)
- 9 at the end of the village hall (6,4)
- 10 presumably they used to grow fruit here (7,5)
- 11 you can leave on this road (7)
- 15 felines stay here (7)
- 16 Day the parish council meets (6)
- 17 express shopping and fuel (5)



RINGMASTER
COMMUNITY MESSAGING PORTAL

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

Residents are asked to be vigilant, and to report any suspicious activity in back gardens, after a burglary took place off Coneygate, in Meppershall. The offence took place between 5:00 p.m. on the 22nd and 4:10 p.m. on the 23rd of January. The offender gained access to the rear garden, forcing open the back door. A plasma TV, computer games equipment and some money were taken. It appears that the offender left through the front door.

Bedfordshire Police ask residents to review the security of all fences, gates and outbuildings. Your boundaries are your first line of defence against criminals. Always secure garden gates, keep fences and walls in good repair and consider defensive planting, or trellis. Avoid leaving garden

tools out where they can be used by an offender to force open a door or window. Keep property like bikes locked away in a shed or garage. 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, access a first floor window or access neighbours garden.

Report any suspicious activity, or vehicles, in the area.

If you have any information about this crime or other suspicious incidents, please call the Force Control Room on 1 0 1, and quote crime reference, J D / 2 8 6 4 / 2012. Alternatively text your message to (07786) 200011, or e-mail your message to chc@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk. Alternatively you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0 8 0 0 5 5 5 1 1 1. or online at www.crimestoppers-uk.org. No personal details are taken, information is not traced or recorded and you will not have to go to court.

Bedfordshire Police are urging motorists to take some simple measures to reduce the chance of their cars being broken in to.

Over recent weeks there has been an increase in theft from motor vehicles, with opportunist thieves targeting property which has been left inside the car and in full view, with items such as satellite navigation systems, mobile phones, wallets and handbags being particularly attractive to offenders.

Detective Constable Michelle Sears of the Vehicle Crime Unit said:

“Over half the incidents of car crime are ‘opportunistic’ with thieves spotting something that could earn them a quick buck. Vehicles with property on display are more likely to be broken into because thieves will risk setting off an alarm if there is an obvious pay-off. Even an empty carrier bag or a coat on the back seat is attractive to a thief as it may contain items of value. By the time the thief has realised there is nothing of value, your vehicle has already sustained damage which may be expensive, inconvenient and time consuming to repair.”

Bedfordshire Police has increased patrols in areas of high vehicle crime across the county, and has implemented many successful initiatives in the areas of prevention, intelligence and enforcement. However, in order to assist us in reducing the risk of vehicle crime, we ask that you take these simple steps:

- Close the windows and sunroof, and lock the doors and boot.
- Only take what you need on your journey – whenever possible, leave personal and valuable items at home.
- If you must take valuable items with you, keep them out of view and take them with you when you leave the vehicle – even if you think you will only be a minute.
- It's better to store items in the boot at your point of departure, not the point of arrival – you don't know who may be watching.
- Laptops and satellite navigation systems are currently being targeted – keep them out of sight.
- Remember to remove your stereo fascia – this is the best way to make your stereo unattractive to thieves.
- Even small items like loose change and a packet of cigarettes are incentives to the opportunist thief.
- Items with your personal details – such as letters, bank statements, vehicle documents, etc – also leave you at risk of identity fraud.
- If you have a remote locking system, always double check the car is secure by trying the door handle.

Bedfordshire Police and Crime Reduction Officers continue to actively target the problem at the moment but anything that can be done to prevent the problem in the first place is invaluable. For more information on crime reduction please contact the team via email on crimereduction@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk.

Surf Safely' – Police Support Staying Safe Online

Follow Bedfordshire Police top 10 Internet safety tips:

1. Visit <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> to find out more about keeping safe online.
2. Look at installing security products that allow parents / carers to block certain websites, implement time limits and monitor activity.
3. Help your children to understand that they should never give out personal details to online friends they do not know offline.
4. Explain to your children what information about them is personal: e.g. email address, mobile number, school name, sports club. Small pieces of information can easily be pieced together to form a comprehensive insight in to their lives and daily activities.
5. Make your children aware that they need to think carefully about the information and pictures they post on their profiles. Inform them that once published online, anyone can change or share these images of them.
6. It can be easy to forget that the internet is not a private space, and as a result young people sometimes engage in risky behaviour online. Advise your children not to post any pictures, videos or information on their profiles, or in chat rooms, that they would not want a parent or carer to see.
7. If your child receives spam or junk email and texts, remind them never to believe their contents, reply to them or use them.
8. It's not a good idea for your child to open files that are from people they don't know. They won't know what they contain—it could be a virus, or worse – an inappropriate image or film.
9. Help your child to understand that some people lie online and that therefore it's better to keep online mates online. They should never meet up with any strangers.
10. Always keep communication open for a child to know that it's never too late to tell someone if something makes them feel uncomfortable.

To get up to date advice about staying safe online visit <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>. If you are concerned about any content or activity on your child's internet and social networking sites then please contact Bedfordshire Police by calling 101. If you have information relating to online crime call Bedfordshire Police in confidence on the non emergency number 101, or text information to 07786 200011. Alternatively contact independent charity Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111, or online at crimestoppers-uk.org

Police Report for the Meppershall Messenger

Meppershall crime and anti social behaviour during the month of January 2012 are as follows: there was one recorded crime, a residential burglary and one anti social behaviour incident.

Over the last few weeks, within Central Bedfordshire there have been a number of thefts of catalytic converters. These appear to be from 4x4 and commercial vehicles. Bedfordshire Police are promoting a crime deterrent specifically designed for catalytic converters. The kits help to deter theft and aid identification and are available for £6 + VAT (free P&P). Please contact Retainagroup on 01233 333000. If you see anyone suspicious hanging around vehicles please contact control room on 101.

Speedwatch – 2 volunteers have now come forward. One more is required to start a Speedwatch scheme in Meppershall. Please contact the local policing team on 01234 842515 if you are interested in supporting your local community.

Contact details for the local policing team have changed slightly with a new number: 01234 842515 (voicemail facilities available) Email: LPT.SheffordStotfold&Arlesey@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

PCSO Leigh Iddon.

I knew I was right – two volunteers to play speed cops! Will the third volunteer please step forward! - Ed

**. 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

**Advanced Notice: Sponsored Bike and Hike 2012
Saturday September 8th, 2012**

A great day out that celebrates this beautiful part of England where we live, and it won't cost you a penny? Fun and relaxation, with a little bit of exercise, and you won't even have to get in the car to get there? Really?!

The annual Sponsored Bike and Hike is a chance to amble on foot or ride your bike through our lanes and footpaths, from village to village. The event is based on sponsorship for each church you visit, where your sponsorship form will be signed and (often) refreshments offered. Choose your own route – from here to Gravenhurst and back, or the length and breadth of Beds and Herts – the choice is yours! Might this appeal to your family or friends ... do you fancy getting a team together...?

The event raises funds for Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust, which helps with the restoration and repair of churches and chapels in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Barnet. It is a wonderful outing for all ages - occasional cyclists or walkers, or serious sportspeople! For more info see www.bedshertshct.org.uk or to be part of the Meppershall team call James on 857836 or email Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com.

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES FROM PAGE 30 & 31

SUDOKU

5	3	1	7	8	2	4	6	9
2	7	9	3	4	6	8	1	5
4	6	8	1	9	5	3	2	7
1	4	7	6	5	9	2	8	3
6	5	3	2	1	8	9	7	4
9	8	2	4	3	7	1	5	6
7	9	5	8	2	4	6	3	1
8	1	4	5	6	3	7	9	2
3	2	6	9	7	1	5	4	8

CROSSWORD

[illegible]



The Meppershall Players



Although we are not rehearsing for a Spring/Summer production we are keeping busy. We will be doing a little something in the arena at the Summer Fair on the 30th June and we start rehearsing for this on Wed 7th March, so if you're interested in joining in, come along at 7.30pm.

The Players A.G.M is on Wed 27th June at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome.

Is there anyone out there who fancies directing this years Pantomime? If you think you may be interested, contact the Players. The dates have already been booked: they are Fri 30th Nov, Sat 1st Dec, Fri 7th Dec, & Sat 8th Dec, with matinees on both Saturdays. Curtain up Matinees 3pm, Evenings 7.45pm.

We are still looking for someone to co-ordinate the running of the front of house at our shows. We always get plenty of volunteers, who give of themselves unstintingly and most of them know what station they man: we just need someone to ensure this all runs smoothly. If you are interested, contact the Players

We still live in hope of acquiring a pianist for the Pantomime. Although we have proved we can manage without one, it's still much nicer to have one. If you are interested please contact the Players

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)

Meppershall Garden Club

Some of our members visited Anglesey Abbey for the Winter Walk. They had a lovely cold but bright day, seeing lots of snowdrops, cyclamen, winter flowering scented shrubs and even some very early daffodils!

In February we met at Mount Pleasant Golf Club. Our discussions included plans for our next guest speaker on **Thursday 12th April.**

Following the success of our 'Gardener's Question Time' evening last year we are delighted to announce that **Keith Hichisson from Langford Garden Centre** will be returning for another evening. He will be giving a talk on "**Edibles as Ornamentals**". We have also requested that he allows time at the end of the session to take questions from the floor. More details to follow in the next edition of the Meppershall Messenger.

Well, the days are much longer, those snowdrops were earlier than usual but just as beautiful (until the snow covered them!) and by the time you read this we should have lots of daffodils and other Spring flowers to enjoy.



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

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?

MARCH INTO SUMMERTIME

Campton W.I. would like to invite you to join us for our "March into Summertime" walk on Sunday 25th March, to celebrate the clocks going forward. We will meet you at the playground, at the top of Crackle Hill about 3.15pm. You are cordially invited to walk back to Campton Village Hall with us for tea and cakes (£1.50 per head). For those who may wish a longer walk, Campton W. I. will leave Campton Village Hall at about 2.30pm, to walk along the river, past the farm and then up Crackle Hill to Meppershall. It would be lovely to see our neighbouring villagers, so bring the family.

Anna Maudlin (Secretary, Campton W. I.)

BIGGLESWADE & DISTRICT ART SOCIETY

13th Spring Exhibition

Northill Village Hall (opposite the church)

Saturday 21st April + Sunday 22nd (10.00 - 4.00 both days)

Original Paintings for sale.

Free Admission. Refreshments

MEPPERSHALL FESTIVAL 2012

MUSIC, ARTS AND CRAFTS

26 MAY 2012



CALL TO ALL ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS

For the 3rd edition of this great festival,
we will be once again promoting and showcasing YOU,
the amazingly talented people of Meppershall.

MUSIC AND LYRICS

Instrumentalists and singers
Beginners to experts
Classical, jazz, pop, opera...
Solo or as a group
From Britain or abroad

ARTS AND CRAFTS

From clay to canvas
From flowers to photography
Glass, textile, wood, metal...
Useful craft and beautiful art
Original work and replicas

To exhibit Arts and Crafts in the afternoon, please contact
Jacqui Plumley, 01462 844510, barry.plumley@tiscali.co.uk

To perform in the evening concert, please contact
Colette House, 07831 111062, colettehouse@gmail.com

Both by end of March

**ALL PROFITS WILL GO TO
MEPPERSHALL PRE SCHOOL**

COVERS BY REQUEST

Yet again I have John Chapman to thank for this month's picture. It dates from last year rather than this, but to me it manages to suggest a hope of spring as well as the crisp cold of winter. It was taken at the top of Shillington Hill: people with very sharp eyes will just make out Shillington church rising above the trees on the horizon.

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

Evelyn Jepps will be 92 on 3rd March

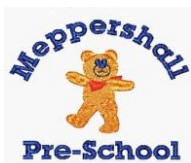
Peter Longland will be 80 on 11th March

David Niven will be 92 on 15th March

Congratulations to all of the above.

St Mary's Parish Registers:

No new entries this month.



Meppershall Pre-school Ponderings

This half term we will be looking at different types of animals, their habitats and how they move. We will have an animal topic table so the children can bring different types of animals in to talk about (Pretend ones!!!)

If anybody has any toys or books that they wish to donate for the table top sale on April the 28th in the village hall from 1-5pm, please contact the Pre-School, as we will have a table to go towards raising money for the Pre-School.

We will be collecting the Sainsbury's Active Kids vouchers again this year and suggest that if anybody collects them and wishes to give them to the Pre-School that would be fantastic.

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

CHARITY COFFE MORNING



Contrary to what you may think if you have seen us walking and jogging around the village recently, our fitness campaign isn't just a New Year's resolution; we have both got a place in the 2012 London Marathon and are representing CMA (Cardiomyopathy Association), TeamPB (The Prostate Cancer Charity), and Breast Cancer Care. Cardiomyopathy is a heart muscle defect that is the biggest cause of sudden death in the under 35's and Prostate and Breast cancer are the most common cancers in men and women in the UK.).

To raise extra funds for our charities, we are having a coffee morning on Monday 5th March at 51A High Street, Meppershall and will be serving tea, coffee, soft drinks, cakes (some donated by Pink Cow Parties) and cookies from 9.00 am until 1.00pm. There will also be a Pampered Chef and Forever Living Products consultants present, a book stall, jewellery etc. We will also be holding a raffle.

We'd love to see you on the 5th, but if you can't make it and would still like to support us, we both have on-line sponsor forms, <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/KarenLucas> and <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/VivienneThorne>, or you can drop a cheque payable to 'CMA', dated 22nd April 2012 into 51A High Street or to 'Team PB' into 17 Hoo Road.

Thanks for taking the time to read this and we really hope you can support us in some way, whether it's joining us for coffee, sponsoring us or even giving us encouragement when you see us in the street!

Best Wishes, Karen & Viv

St Mary The Virgin

Meppershall Parish Church (Church of England)
Church Road, off Campton Road

Contact information during interregnum

Churchwardens:

Brian Bellamy 01462 815944 (Pastoral Assistant);

Brenda Wright 01462 816446.

Lay Reader (Licensed Lay Minister):

Pam Halliwell 01462 817069 pamhalliwell@talktalk.net

(usual day off – Monday)

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 annie10639@gmail.com

PCC contributions to The Messenger, Parish Records CD etc:

James Read 01462 857836 meppershall.pcc@gmail.com

SERVICES – MARCH & EASTER 2012

Date	Time	Service
Sunday March 4 th Second in Lent	11.00am 10.30am	Parish Communion with Rev. Austin Smith Junior Church at the School
Sunday 11 th Third in Lent	8.30am	Holy Communion with Rev. David Powell
Sunday 18 th , Fourth in Lent Mothering Sunday	8.30am 11.00am	Holy Communion with Rev. Wendy Heaney All Age Service
Sunday 25 th Fifth in Lent Passion Sunday	11.00am	Family Communion and Junior Church with Rev. Linda Washington
Sunday April 1 st Palm Sunday	11.00am 10.30am	Parish Communion Junior Church at the School
Maundy Thursday April 5 th	7.30pm	United Benefice Service
Good Friday April 6 th	11.00am 2.00pm	Walk of Witness in Shefford Meditative Service, St Mary's
Sunday April 8 th Easter Day	11.00am	All age Easter Service

St Mary's Weekday Service:

A Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer), each Wednesday at 10am.

Confirmation Opportunity

A Deanery Confirmation will be held at St Mary's Henlow on Thursday 7th June 2012, 7.30pm. Any children (secondary school age) or adults who may be interested in Confirmation are warmly invited to contact Pam Halliwell on 817069.

Women's World Day of Prayer

This year, the Women's World Day of Prayer service will be at 2.15pm, in All Saints Church, Campton, Friday 2nd March. The speaker will be Mrs Silvia Thomas from the Methodist Church, Ampthill. If transport is required, please contact Brenda Wright or phone 816446.

Advanced Notice: The Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Service of Thanksgiving at St Mary's Tuesday 5th June, 2012

Official celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee will culminate with the national Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral on 5th June. A service of Thanksgiving will be celebrated at St Mary's in the early evening and will include the Jubilee Prayer being used across the country on that day, as well as a selection of British hymns and readings. We hope you will make a date to be there!

A message from St Mary's...

When I wrote a month ago we were rejoicing in signs of Spring. As you read this, snow and ice *should* be a thing of the past - in Lent, looking forward to Easter. During the snow, I had two wonderful experiences. On the worst day, I heard scraping outside and discovered a neighbour, come to clear my forecourt. Then a friend brought me a bunch of daffodils in tight bud; they are just opening. Both things really lifted my spirits (at a time when everything can seem gloomy). They were simple things to do and perhaps during Lent we will be blessed with more acts of kindness.

So, how should we keep Lent? I think giving something up is not always productive - our resolution can quickly falter. But deciding to do something *extra* for someone else can bring great blessings. If you have an elderly neighbour, a bunch of flowers or an offer of help will bring much pleasure. Maybe we should take a carrier bag and pick up some litter. Or just join us for Easter – you might even get an Easter egg! Plans for a new kitchen and improved toilet facilities are well underway, as is the process for appointing a new Rector, so watch this space!

With every blessing,
Pam Halliwell, Reader.

Junior Church

As I write, the children have enjoyed two lots of snowfall. The first lot came on Sunday 5 February, our first Junior Church session for 2012.

It did cross my mind to cancel the session and stay in the warmth of my home, but then I thought to myself 'what would have happened if Jesus hadn't bothered when things didn't look so favourable?' So the car was loaded and off we went. Met by Julie, my fellow JC leader, we went ahead and prepared for the session praying that at least one child other than my own would turn up.

Just before 11am children began to arrive and we were pleased to welcome new children as well as regulars to the session. So as always, our Lord was busy and had stopped me from 'not bothering' which would have been a big mistake. We mimed in front of two judges X Factor style and a good time was had by all.

In March we look forward to our session in School which takes place on 4th March. Plus the wonderful Mother's Day service on Sunday 18th March when there will be a Mini SPARKS in Church from 10am to 11am.

We look forward to welcoming children to our exciting sessions.

Blessings

The JC Team (Gillian, Julie, Alex and Morag)

LEMON CURD**MARCH 2012**

Grated rind and juice of 4 lemons

4 eggs

1 lb granulated sugar

6 ozs butter

METHOD

- 1) Beat up the eggs.
- 2) Add all the other ingredients to the beaten eggs.
- 3) Stand the bowl over a saucepan of hot water.
- 4) Heat stirring occasionally until the mixture thickens,
- 5) Pour into warm jars
- 6) Tie down and stores as for jams. (use shop jam pot covers.)
- 7) This recipe makes 2 lbs of lemon curd, but I put it in smaller jars as it does not keep for as long as jam.

Recipes are kindly supplied each month by Brenda Putwain.

GARDEN TIPS FOR MARCH

(With acknowledgements to the RHS)

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

LAST CHANCE

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

GET AHEAD

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

A very happy birthday to those of you celebrating birthdays in March

Archie Underwood who will be 8 on the 6th
Tyler Ball who will be 14 on the 7th
Alexanda Cocks who will be 10 on the 7th
Genevieve Cocks who will be 9 on the 7th
Dylan Caddick who will be 7 on the 8th
Marcus Hart who will be 9 on the 12th
Ella Bryant who will be 7 on the 12th
Emma Burr who will be 15 on the 14th
Katherine Gower who will be 14 on the 14th
Emma Horsford who will be 10 on the 14th
Aaron Vernon who will be 8 on the 16th
Gracie Sue Bavister who will be 6 on the 18th
William Roberts who will be 15 on the 19th
Daisy Lucas who will be 10 on the 27th
Chloe Scott who will be 15 on 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.

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Collating Dates for your diaries - 2012					
			August	No	
April	30		September	24	
May	29		October	29	
June	25	(Tue)	November	26	Double
July	30	Double	December	No	