



WHAT'S IN YOUR MESSENGER THIS MONTH?

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EDITORIAL

As this is issue 1 of a new volume it is appropriate to think about the future; that is why I asked Lyn Fairweather to help with a cover picture of smiling children. The weather is hardly co-operating, with the occasional outbursts of sunshine separated by snow showers driven by icy winds, but there are snowdrops in abundance. We know that “the hounds of Spring are upon Winter’s traces” – we just hope that they catch up rather quickly!



As Spring is a time of hopeful transition, so this issue has some marks of transition. I am sorry to have to tell our crossword addicts that Paul Smith is taking a prolonged break from the rigours of setting, while two of our other regular contributors are preparing for the future but are not able to contribute this month: we hope that Jeremy Holden’s travels and Jon Ingarfill’s change to his own business will lead to greater things to come.

And other great things are already on the horizon: the Players’ Spring offering in April, the Meppershall Festival of music, arts & crafts in May, and the Summer Fair in June – see their respective advertisements for more details. We have shown in past years that we love to attend these events as spectators but now is the time to think about being more active and being a participant: the organisers of all of these events would love to hear from more people willing to exhibit or perform.

And we at the Messenger would love to hear from you, and even see you at our AGM on 9th April. The Messenger Committee would love to see as many of our readers as possible, to get feedback and suggestions for making your magazine what you want it to be, and I would welcome more Letters to the Editor, because they give us a clue each month about whether what we are printing actually interests you!

Dick Bulley

LETTERS

A Thank You from Dorothy Bellamy

My words can never fully express how grateful Brian and I have been for such kindness and support as we received from many people in Meppershall and surrounding villages.

This small corner of the country has shown such love and caring to many people who have got to know each other, and made new friends through it also. I hope it will continue in the years to come for us all to know that if we need help it will be there.

Thank you to everyone; it has been truly amazing.

Dorothy

Letter from Tracey de Vere White

I thought this may be of interest; I own two dogs myself, one of which is nervous and liable to jump up and bark if a person or another dog gets too close in his space, and so thought I would forward this link to you:

<http://www.yellowdoguk.co.uk>

I know there are other dog owners in the village that would appreciate the fact that they can give prior notice to others that their dogs need space and shouldn't be approached, as it's often the "Oh my dog's fine" owners that can cause a problem by allowing their dogs to approach a dog on a lead and then get irate when the dog that IS controlled and on a lead lashes out through fear or for another reason. This situation could be easily avoided if owners that can see a yellow ribbon dog ahead can then recall and control their dog so a confrontation doesn't occur.

I know this relies to a certain degree on responsible dog owners (of which we have many in Meppershall), as does 'poop scooping' for your dog, but if we can get the message out there, then non-dog walkers and dog owners alike can be aware and give space to those canine residents that are likely to have an 'off-day' if approached too closely or suddenly, whatever the reason may be.

Many thanks, Tracey de Vere White

Letter from Gillian Thomas

I would like to say how much the tributes to my beloved husband, Duncan Thomas, printed in last month's magazine, meant to me. It was heartwarming to realise the extent to which he had been valued and the impact he had made on so many people in Meppershall. I would particularly like to thank Trevor Thorley, John Thompson, you Dick, and Jenny Gilbert of the Wanderbus for the kind words you all wrote. Duncan would have been amazed to know how much his efforts were appreciated. I would also like to tell Mr. de Vere White that it was a great comfort for me to read that Duncan was not alone when he collapsed, and to thank him for taking the time to let me know that via the Meppershall Messenger.

May I also say thank you to all the people who have 'phoned, visited, invited me for coffee, taken me out to lunch, written, done my ironing, remembered my birthday last week and generally supported me with their kindness, compassion and love. In particular, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my dear friends Sheila Rossi and Jan Thomas. Also, I should like to say that I am indebted to Val Moules (Duncan's piano teacher), for the trouble she went to so that at Duncan's funeral we could hear a recording of his last practice piece.

Finally, I should like to thank the Editor and everyone who has anything to do with producing The Meppershall Messenger. We, as a village, are so fortunate to have this professional, informative, and lively magazine as a means of communicating with each other in happy as well as sad times.

Warmest regards, Gillian (Thomas)

Thank you Gillian for those very encouraging words; it really is nice to be appreciated. Readers might like to know that we printed six extra copies of the March issue for distribution among the Thomas family. - Ed

MEPPERSHALL BROWNIES



This has been a crafty month at Brownies. The girls enjoyed painting and decorating jewellery boxes and making cards for Valentines Day. They also made a flower display and card for Mothers' Day.



We have continued doing activities for the 'Friend to Animals' badge. The girls worked extremely well as a team in their sixes, creating their own new animal, made up of four existing animals, and enjoyed telling us all about their new creature.

We were joined after half term by three new brownies, Aima, Leah and Ella, making a total of twenty-three brownies this term.

The brownies spent a busy meeting decorating over 120 cakes and we raised over £60 for this year's Red Nose Day at our Brownies Bake Sale (Mary Berry would be pleased to know that there wasn't a soggy bottom in sight). Thank you to all the parents, visitors and members of the Parish Council who came and supported us by buying cakes, and to the Brownies for working so hard to make them look so 'yummy'.



Snowy Owl and Tawny Owl have been busy with preparations for the Easter-themed District Brownie Sleepover, for our current Sixers and Seconders.

If you are interested in your daughter joining Brownies, then please contact Suzanne (Snowy Owl) on 07817 392325.

MEPPERSHALL NEWS IN BRIEF

OLIVER ZIMMERMAN

One of the younger residents of Meppershall, Oliver Zimmerman, who lives in Hill Top View, has been selected to represent England in the sport of petanque. On Sunday 2nd March Oliver travelled to Whittlesey Petanque Boulodrome and competed against thirty other juniors (under 18's), from which eight were selected to make up the National Junior Squad for the year. The juniors had to complete a number of challenges and were observed on their skills, team-play, tactical awareness, mental approach and attitude. I am very pleased to say that at the age of 13 years old Oliver has been selected to be a member of the English Petanque Association's Junior Squad. He is, in fact, the youngest member of the squad with the other seven members all being 16 or 17 years old. Oliver has now been invited to play in Holland over the Easter weekend, at an international Junior petanque event. The event is being held in the biggest indoor boulodrome in Holland.

Oliver has been playing petanque on and off since he was 7 and regularly for the Hen and Chickens Petanque Club based in Baldock for the past two years. Last year he represented the Chiltern Region*, part of the English Pétanque Association, at various competitions.

Oliver will spend the next few months working with local coaches to carry out the training program he was given by the EPA for making the national squad. Later in the year the squad of eight will be reduced to four, who will go on to represent the country at the Junior World Championship in France, the home of petanque. I am sure the whole of Meppershall will wish Oliver all the best for the coming months.

Sharon Fane

Chiltern Region EPA

Coaching Coordinator

*Chiltern Region Petanque covers Herts, Beds, Bucks and some of Northampton. If anyone would like to find out more about the sport, to have a try at it, or wants to find where their closest club is, please take a look at our website www.chilternregion.com or contact us by email on chilternwebmaster@btinternet.com and we'll help in any way we can.

MEPPERSHALL BAKERY BEES by Roger

Hi. The first week in March felt like Spring was on its way but for the second (as I write this article) the wind is blowing, the temperature has dropped below zero, and it's snowing. Well, that's the British weather! If it warms up later this month before Easter, I will have a quick look inside the hives. This definitely is where all the fun starts in beekeeping. Leaving the theory and having sociable evenings with beekeeping friends is great, but there is nothing quite like opening a colony of bees and seeing what's going on in their world.

I have never lost the thrill of opening a hive of bees. I don't think we should have the colony open for longer than necessary, but if the weather is good it is such good fun to be able to watch what the bees are doing, observe their dances and watch Madam with her entourage as she parades around her kingdom laying eggs all day long. You are about to enter one of the most wonderful insect worlds we know. So, although honey may be important to me, I never lose sight of the wonder of one of the masterpieces of God's creation.

There is never a set time for this inspection as it really is governed by the weather. The aim is to see if the Queen is present and laying viable brood. There is no particular reason to see the queen physically, as sufficient proof would be if there are newly laid eggs at the bottom of the worker cells. Has the colony enough room? This is to see if the frames next to the brood nest are full of honey. If they are, we need to remove them and replace with drawn comb or a frame of foundation. Are there any signs of disease? Should any larvae have a discoloured or misshapen appearance or any capping have a sunken, moist or perforated appearance, then advice should be sought immediately from the bee inspector. There are notifiable conditions which we are legally bound to report to the government and bee inspectors.

All hives are okay. I fed the bees with fondant in the beginning of March but after the inspection I will feed with sugar syrup which helps them to draw comb. This year we have a new treatment for the varroa. A press release of Feb 27th 2013 said that MAQS Beehive strip has received registration in the United Kingdom for beekeepers use. This will mean we will have a new tool to combat the most serious threat to our honeybees.

Honey available at Rogers Bakery- see you there.

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

At the Parish Council meeting held on 11th March we welcomed PCSO Gill Richardson back to Meppershall. Many of you will know Gill as she has worked as a PCSO in this area for 10 years and has recently been reallocated to Meppershall. She spoke of her concern about the recent spate of burglaries, not only locally but across the wider area covered by the Biggleswade Police team. She stressed the importance of keeping all doors and windows locked when you are not at home, and of ensuring that any side or rear access to your property is well protected. She is also aware of other problems that have occurred in the village and is there to help us all if required. The easiest way to contact her is by calling the non-emergency number 101 and leaving a message for her to contact you.

During the meeting the Councillors reviewed a couple of planning applications and their comments will be forwarded to the Planning team at Central Beds.

In the section where we deal with Highways and Lighting there were strong comments made about the poor state of the roads in the village especially the road surface outside the Village Stores. Central Beds Councillor Tony Brown offered to contact the area Amey officer and pass our comments on. I am pleased to report that the next day he reported to the Clerk that immediate action was taking place and repairs would be completed before the end of the week. Thank you for your prompt action Tony. Unfortunately we have still not had any feedback from the Central Beds Head of Highways regarding the warning signs at the footpath crossing in Shefford Road; I hope Tony can persuade him to sort this out quickly.

Our three year contract for grass cutting with John O'Connor Grounds Maintenance is coming to an end. The Council have been very satisfied with their work in their first contract period with us and we agreed to offer them a 12 month extension on the same terms.

Future Parish Council Meeting Dates

Monday 8th April and Monday 13th May 2013– 7:45 pm in Meppershall Village Hall.

The Annual Parish Meeting where I present our annual report to you, the Parishioners, will be held on Monday 15th April at 7:45 pm in the Village Hall everyone is welcome.

Please remember that you are welcome to attend our meetings to speak about any subject during our open public session. Or you may just wish to come along to see what we do. Maybe you are thinking about becoming a Councillor at the next election. We look forward to seeing you.

David Foscett

Chairman, Meppershall Parish Council – chairman@meppershall.org

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER AGM

The Annual General Meeting of The
Meppershall Messenger will be held on
TUESDAY 9TH APRIL 2013
AT 7.30 PM IN
THE SUGAR LOAF

Please come along, choose the Messenger
Committee for the coming year and make
your suggestions for how the magazine can be
improved.

YOUR SHOUT with Trevor Thorley



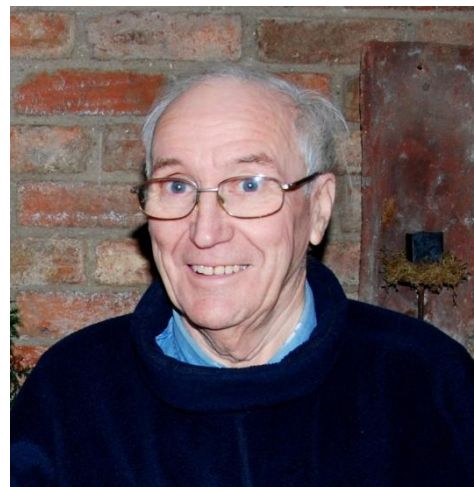
BRIAN BELLAMY: 1932 - 2013.

A Tribute by James Read

Brian, late churchwarden of St Mary's, was a Northamptonshire boy and middle brother of three. He loved the rural way of life, and the peace of quiet country lanes in summer lined with cow parsley. That was the environment of his boyhood. Recalling that different age of the 1930s, he used to tell of the visiting preachers who would come to his village, pitch tents in fields and bring their Christian mission to all. His mother would take him along, his knees dirty from playing outdoors somewhere. Brian heard and experienced something in those days that would last his whole life. While still a boy, his family moved to Luton. His national service came after WW2 and he was posted to the Medical Corps, serving in Germany. His early career was in purchasing with Jacksons in Luton. It was there that he first caught a glimpse of his beloved Dorothy. They married in 1959.

Many in Meppershall know Brian either for his green VW Polo or for his bike. Always active and having fun, cycling was a big part of Brian and Dorothy's life many years, through the Beds, Herts and Bucks Cycling Club. Local rides would see them covering hundreds of miles each week; they had some adventures. For a tour of Devon and Cornwall, realising it was too far to cycle, the club used the railway. But only after cycling from Bedfordshire to Paddington to board the train!

In those days Brian and Dorothy made a home in Flitwick. Biking was not just a leisure activity for



Brian: he cycled 13 miles from Flitwick to Newport Pagnall every day for years, even in deep snow, to his job at Aston Martin. His next job gave him the chance to move back to his much-loved Northamptonshire, and to Earls Barton, to take a job at Plessey (AB Electronics). Outside work, church life in Earls Barton and Wollaston was very important to Brian and he and Dorothy committed much time and effort to their faith and to the church community.

Next, Brian's work took him north to Burnley in Lancashire. They were able to nurture connections with friends and family there, and it was in the 1990s that Brian and Dorothy moved back to be nearer to family in our region, and to Meppershall.

Many knew him for his gardening. He gardened for himself, and for others, and he really did have green fingers. There was nothing he liked more than a trip to a garden centre. He also loved a bit of shopping: it was precisely planned, carefully executed and usually involved tea and cake at some point. He was always on his bike around the village carrying something for the garden or from the garden. It would always lift the spirits to see him quietly pedalling along the street – or, even better – leaning his bike against a wall to come in and say a quick hello. Home-grown produce was often dropped off here and there for other people to enjoy.

Brian was a craftsman and the home he made here in Meppershall speaks for itself: elegant, beautiful, and simple. He was a reader and especially loved Christian bookshops. He had an interest in all kinds of music – from the kinds of rousing hymns that we heard at his funeral through to very modern music.

To coin a phrase Brian knew what he liked, and liked what he knew. He was a man of few words, but what he chose to say was firmly delivered and clearly conveyed. If something needed to be done, it would be done. But he was also open to change, and - as an example, - in his time here he came to accept and value women as priests. As a relative newcomer to computers, he wasn't going to be kept off-line and he became adept with e-mail, the web and computer production of church materials.

Brian was driven by as deep a Christian faith as any will see in a lifetime. He was a real rock, not only as a fastidious and hard-working Churchwarden, as a precise and conscientious steward of this church, but also in this church's Monday-night house group, for which he served as a truly excellent leader. Many of us owe him a great deal for what he has created in that group, as well as his contributions to the Sparks Club, the Alpha Course, his work as a School Governor, and more besides.

His joy and warmth were extended to everyone. With his sense of fun, he played Santa numerous times for Christmas celebrations at the toddler group and school. Families came to love Meppershall - and truly call it 'home' - in significant part because they came to love Brian (and Dorothy).

Despite natural fear as his health worsened and became uncertain, he met his recent illness with dignity and patience. His bravery and stoicism in his final weeks were an example that fills anyone who knew him with great pride. And the seeds of his generosity and love for those around him have sprouted into strong shoots as others have pitched in to help him and Dorothy manage in some very tough recent times.

There is still a thing called village life in England, and it is here: Brian was (and is) its face. His welcome will greet people for a long time to come because he was an immense example for us all to follow. He was unpretentious and took a humble approach to life, yet he was the unshakable voice of a lifetime of experience. Not a showman, Brian didn't play to the crowd – yet every member of the church in Meppershall and many in the village more widely knew his welcome and friendship in

a personal, individual way. Brian was not a speaker and he didn't seek a high profile, yet his intense, absolute commitment to do the work of Christ here on earth, was profoundly, movingly clear to everyone. Truly, he was a servant of God; and God has called him home. Rest in Christ Brian, and rest in peace.

LONDON MARATHON – APRIL 21: Karen Lucas of High Street, Meppershall, is closing in on her second successive London Marathon, raising funds for the Cardiomyopathy Association. She has held a number of fund raising events for her sponsorship as detailed in the last issue of the Messenger. This year's marathon is on April 21. If you can get down to London to support her how about a few banners to support Meppershall's very own and this good cause, as well as telling the world where she hails from. Good luck Karen, all Meppershall is behind you!

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

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.

Contact: Brenda Wright on 816446.

Meppershall C of E VA Lower School

'An outstanding Church of England School'
June 2008 and December 2010



School Report – March 2013

The Spring term this year is very short but we have managed to fill it full of interesting activities to encourage learning.

The children are busy preparing for Easter, which began with a church service on Ash Wednesday. Reverend Roni organised a very interactive sermon on the subject of how we could use the period of Lent to practice being good people. Each child was given a small booklet called Love Life, Live Lent to give them daily ideas of how we can make our world a better place to be. My personal favourite is “give lots of smiles away today”. This is particularly difficult during the current snap of cold weather! Mrs. Allen, our music teacher, has been revisiting our Easter hymns with the children, and the other teachers are getting each class’s contribution ready for our Easter service, which is on Wednesday 27th March at 2:00 p.m. in St. Mary’s Church. All families are welcome to join us. We are also making an Easter Prayer Tree for our school reception area; the children on the front cover are showing some of their cross designs based on Jesus’s words, ‘Father I commend my soul to thee.’

Our class assemblies so far have been very informative and show the very high standard of writing the children produce in their Creative Curriculum work. We have been treated to exploding volcanoes, World War Two dramas and a version of the Three Pigs in French to the tune of Poker Face by Lady Gaga! Cedars class are excited about their visit to Duxford to complement their knowledge of the Second World War. We have also been very lucky to have some of our parents coming into school to answer the children’s questions about their professions; well done to those Dads!

This term we are celebrating World Book Day, Red Nose Day, and have had mufti days to raise funds for our PTA. Next week we are basing our curriculum around science, design and technology and Maths as we go to Space, the Final Frontier! Each class will be studying the planets in our Solar System all week and be presenting their findings to each other at the end of the week. Already, there is a telescope in one classroom which one of our families has lent us to cloud watch.

We are providing more sporting activities this term too, football coaching from the FA, cricket coaching from Bedfordshire Cricket as well as the usual sports lessons from Sport Support. In spite of the cold weather the children love these extra opportunities.

The children, staff and I wish you all a blessed Easter.

Lyn Fairweather
Headteacher

VILLAGE VERSE

Whilst pondering the recent nuptials of Mr Paul Carne & Miss Jo Williams (09 03 13). I came across the following poem—

THE NEWLY WEDS' LAMENT

He doesn't like my casserole,
He doesn't like my cake,
He doesn't like my biscuits hard,
Like his mother used to make.

I do not perk the coffee right,
He doesn't like my stew,
I do not darn his socks
Like his mother used to do.

I pondered for an answer,
I hadn't got a clue,
So I turned round and I slapped him.....
Like his mother used to do!

I do love a good a good piece of doggerel, don't you?

Anon. (Trundle Towers)

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

By Enid Pamment



Our last trip in February was to Mickie Driver's Palace of Varieties at Wood Green, North London. After availing ourselves of liquid refreshments from the bar, we sat down to a roast beef lunch freshly cooked by the chef, followed by a sweet, tea or coffee, after which the entertainment commenced. The theme was 'Songs from the Musicals' and some of the most popular songs from the shows were sung. During the interval the staff sold raffle tickets for the three charities which Mickie Driver supports, and drinks and ice cream were also on sale. The second half saw artists dressed in costumes of the period and in particular the drag artist gave a fine interpretation of Bette Davies and Judy Garland.

Before leaving the Palace of Varieties, we were bid a fond farewell by Mickie Driver in person together with some of his artists.

Forthcoming Events 2013 (Kindly telephone for details)

Camden Market	Sunday 7 th April
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra plays Tchaikovsky	Sun 7 th April (matinee)
Lunch & Cruise from the Marina, Huntingdon	Thursday 11 th April
Mountbatten Festival of Music – RAH	Friday 12 th April
Westminster Abbey, with Guide	Saturday 27 th April
Household Cavalry & Windsor	Wednesday 29 th May
Medway Mosaic – Rochester, with Guide	Wednesday 12 th June
Centenary Floral Fanfare (NAFAS) - Central Hall, Westminster	Saturday 7 th September
Lord Mayor's Show	Saturday 9 th November
Ely Cathedral Christmas Gift and Food Fair	Saturday 16 th Nov
Thursford Christmas Spectacular	Wednesday 27 th Nov.

Holidays: 2012 & 2013 (Kindly telephone for more details)

Lochs & Glens, staying in Dunoon	7 th – 13 th July
Austria by Coach (overnight in Cologne), including 4 superb excursions.	18 th – 25 th August

London Shows currently available (Arranged by Stevenage Group Travel) are:

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

Top Hat – Aldwych Theatre – Dress Circle Seats	Thursday 11 th April
Mama Mia – Novello Theatre - Stalls Seats	Thursday 18 th April
Let it Be (Beatles) – Savoy Theatre – Stalls Seats	Sunday 28 th April
Chorus Line – New London Palladium	Wednesday 8 th May
Singing in the Rain – Palace Theatre – Dress Circle	Wednesday 22 nd May
Phantom of The Opera – Her Majesty’s Theatre – Royal Circle Seats. (Includes fish & chips lunch)	Thursday May 28 th May (Coach leaves 9.30 am)
Lion King – Lyceum Theatre – Stalls Seats	Wednesday 5 th June

Evening Shows - Leaving Shefford at 4.15pm - price includes coach:

The Body Guard – Adelphi Theatre – Dress Circle	Thursday 9 th May
RPO – Vienna’s Finest – Royal Festival Hall	Wednesday 29 th May

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 all in the local community who feel 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

FINANCIAL NEWS UPDATE

with Jon Ingarfill

This month Jon is rather preoccupied with setting up his own wealth-management business, but he hopes to be able to contribute again in the near future.

POLEHANGER: A FARMING DIARY

Episode 41



The past week (middle of March) has seen a temperature high of 17 deg. and a daytime low of – 4 deg. Plants are confused (and so am I) as to if and when Spring is truly here. It must be by the time you read this, surely? At the very earliest opportunity, and occasionally before, work has begun in fields as soon as they can bear the weight of a tractor. In some areas this will have been the first time since October. Even so, you can see wet spots in tramlines where tractors have made unwelcome ruts now collecting water.

Big Subject: TB and Badgers.

The Facts (as I understand them):

Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection spread via inhaling droplets from the sneeze or cough of an infected person. It mainly affects the lungs (the infectious form) but can affect any part of the body including bones and the central nervous system.

If the immune system fails to kill or contain the infection then antibiotics will usually cure it. Sometimes the immune system only contains the infection, preventing it from spreading to other parts of the body, with no symptoms, though the bacteria remain latent. It can become active some years later if the immune system is weakened, e.g. by HIV.

TB is an old enemy and one of history's great killers. Ancient Egyptian skeletons show its tell-tale signs. Before antibiotics were available, TB, sometimes known as Consumption, was a major health problem in the UK, and indeed throughout the world. With antibiotics, treatment became so successful that predictions were made that by 2010 TB, along with Smallpox, would be extinct worldwide.

Human health control has been via vaccination programmes. These have been scaled back in recent years, with only susceptible groups targeted. However, in the last 20 years TB cases have gradually increased, particularly among ethnic minority communities originating from places where TB is more common, such as Africa and the Indian subcontinent. TB cases are now increasingly showing signs of drug resistance. In 2011, 8963 cases were reported in the UK of which 6000 cases affected people born outside the UK.

Animals also catch TB. Cattle in particular can spread the bacterium to other herbivores such as deer, sheep, pigs and goats. Badgers, foxes and ferrets are among other animals also susceptible. Badgers and cows in particular come into frequent contact where reverse infection would seem to occur. Cattle can pass TB to humans via raw, unpasteurised milk and milk products. Because of this potential TB reservoir in cattle, herds are regularly and compulsorily tested in order for the national herd to be TB-free.

If an individual bovine, usually adult, tests positive it will be re-tested. If that re-test is also positive, the animal is compulsorily slaughtered with an element of compensation to the farmer, and the whole herd has movement restrictions placed on it until it is shown to be clear; i.e. no animal can leave the farm. This can have severe financial implications for the farm in question.

In 1998 there were only 6000 cases in the UK but since 2010, 105,000 cows have been slaughtered because of TB. At this rate the annual cost to the taxpayer is around £150 million. The numerical and geographical increase is happening in spite of new, tough on-farm rules increasing cattle controls, pre off-farm movement testing and stricter biosecurity measures. The main areas of infection are in the west and south west of England. Viable animal vaccines are only in trial stages and not available for use for several years.

DEFRA says: *“The Government is committed to a comprehensive and balanced approach to tackling TB, with eradication as the long-term goal. Cattle measures will remain central to the Government’s approach, which needs to be comprehensive, risk-based and staged. Controlled culling of badgers is confirmed as part of the package of measures to tackle bovine TB (14 December 2011).”* (This has now been deferred for a period.)

My comments:

There has been a significant and well organized anti-badger cull protest.

Why was there no backlash when it was suggested that a cull of foxes be held after a baby was bitten by one recently in London?

Do we allow rats to breed unhindered in our gardens?

When is an animal a pest; e.g. mouse, rabbit, wasp, cockroach, magpie?

Do badgers infected with TB suffer as the disease progresses?

Can we afford to lose 38,000 productive cows a year?

Interesting Statistics (according to the Environment Agency):

In 2012, 1 day in 5 saw flooding and 1 day in 4 saw drought!

Michael Foster's Diary April 1963 (*Italics = my comment*)

6th (Saturday): Sunday School Football Match; Meppershall Methodist 7 Shefford Methodist 4. (*From memory the team would have included Mick Addington, Peter Lawrence, Terry Game, Nigel Gudgion, Paul Akenbrook and myself. Can anyone remind me who else played?*)

13th (*Replay*): Meppershall 2 - Shefford 5 !!

19th: Started drilling Spring Barley seed. (*A month late rather like 2013.*)

W/c 21st: Continue drilling barley, harrowing and rolling behind, rotovating up old brussel crop, drilling new brussel, cow cabbage and mangold seed.

27th: A really good week's work: achieved much. (*The sense of relief is clear*)

Chris Foster: 15th March 2013

I have allowed Chris to run over his usual space allocation so that the topical and sensitive subject of badger culling could have a balanced and complete treatment. Please write to the Messenger with your views or comments on Chris's article, as well as with recollections of his 1963 football team! - Ed

Thank heavens for church ladies with typewriters! These sentences (with all the bloopers) actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services:

- Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again', giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
- Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.
- The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.
- This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin. (*With thanks to John Chapman*)

MEPPERSHALL FESTIVAL



2013

MUSIC, ARTS AND CRAFTS
18 MAY 2013

For the 4th edition of this great festival, we will be once again promoting and showcasing YOU, the amazingly talented people of Meppershall.

We have many brilliant artists already lined up: musicians and singers, jewellery makers, painters...young and old, beginners and experts... this promises to be a fantastic day!

<h2>TICKETS</h2>

Entrance to the Arts and Craft Exhibition and Sale is free.

Entrance to the evening concert is
£4.00 per person (£2.50 for concessions)

Tickets will be available from end of April
from The Bakery, The Post Office

and from
Jacqui Plumley, Gill Smith, Carolyn Holmes,
Colette House and Albane Lester.

ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS: IT ISN'T TOO LATE

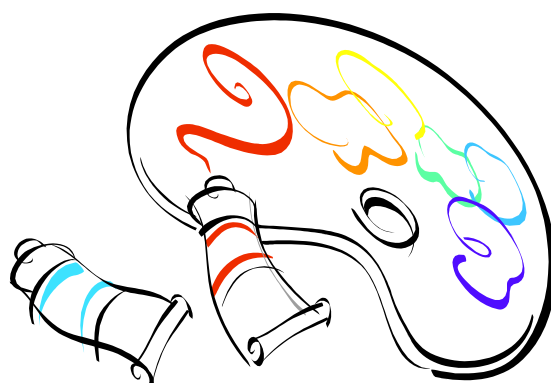
To show off your talents in this year's festival,
contact the organisers as soon as possible.

To exhibit Arts and Crafts in the afternoon,
please contact
Jacqui Plumley, 01462 811510
jacqui.plumley@gmail.com or
Gill Smith, 01462 814090, g.smith90@btinternet.com

Note that it is FREE to exhibit and artists can sell their
work.

To perform in the evening concert, please contact
Colette House, 07831 111062, colettehouse@gmail.com
Albane Lestor, 01462 850518,
albane.lester@yahoo.com

Looking forward to seeing you all
on the day.



This year, all proceeds will be given to the Evergreens,
a wonderful service to our senior citizens.

THE LUCY PAGES

By Lucy Standbridge

Aged 11



I go to Henlow Academy and a few weeks ago we had a Bakeoff Competition. I decided to enter and made some Chocolate Oreo Cupcakes which were my own recipe. Surprisingly, I was told I had won! Afterwards, many people asked for the recipe, so I thought maybe some of the Messenger readers might like to have a go at making some.

Cupcakes

175g self-raising flour
175g butter or margarine
2 eggs, lightly beaten
175g caster sugar
20g cocoa powder
Chunks of Oreo cookies

Method:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees C or gas mark 4 and line a muffin tin with muffin cases.
2. Beat butter and sugar until light and combined.
3. Gradually add the eggs.
4. Sift in the flour and cocoa powder and fold into the mixture.
5. Add the chunks of Oreo Cookies.

6. Mix together and if the mixture is heavy add a teaspoon of milk for a lighter mixture.
7. Spoon the mixture evenly into the cases.
8. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until a skewer poked into a cupcake comes out clean.
9. Leave on a cooling rack until completely cool then decorate. (see opposite)

Chocolate Buttercream Frosting:

1 cup butter, softened
3 ½ cups icing sugar
½ cup cocoa powder
½ tsp salt
2 tsp vanilla extract
4 tbsp milk
Optional- chunks of Oreo to decorate

Method:

1. Cream butter for a few minutes in a mixer on medium speed. Turn off the mixer.
2. Sift the icing sugar and cocoa into the mixing bowl. Turn the mixer on the lowest speed (so the dry ingredients do not blow everywhere) until the sugar and cocoa are absorbed by the butter.
3. Increase mixer speed to medium and add vanilla extract, salt and milk and beat for 3 minutes. Spoon icing into a piping bag and pipe onto the cakes. Add a chunk of Oreo into the top of the icing to decorate.

MEPPERSHALL SOCIAL CLUB

Membership charges:

SINGLE £7.50

FAMILY £15.00

OAP SINGLE: £5.00 OAP FAMILY: £10.00

MEMBERSHIP FORMS AVAILABLE FROM THE BAR.

1st Monday

Games Night

Cards, dominoes, board games

Challenge a friend to game over a drink

2nd Sunday

Quiz Night

With Quiz Master Paul Carne

at 7:30 pm

£1 per person. No Maximum Team size

Half money taken will be 1st prize

The rest will go to Keech Cottage

3rd Wednesday

Food Night

Food served at 8.00 - £3 per person

Ticket available from the bar or by calling Gemma on 07968 529282

April

Steak & Ale Pie

EXTRA THIS MONTH

Karen Karaoke

Saturday 6th April. 8 'til late

In the bar area

PUZZLE PAGE

Firstly, apologies again for putting 8th March as the return date when I meant 8th Feb; this is especially directed at the two ladies whose correct solutions were received too late to be counted last month!

Setting crosswords is a demanding occupation, the more so when all the answers have to have a local significance. I therefore have every sympathy with Paul Smith for extending his break, and look forward to his being able to resume his setting.

In the meantime, here is another of his Su Dokus:

(Solution on page 28)

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

LIFE ON THE WILD SIDE

By JEREMY HOLDEN



Jeremy is away travelling this month: he says he is collecting material for future issues!

Meppershall Village Hall

Linda Primett has been the Meppershall Village Hall Secretary for the past few years on the Village Hall Committee. This, as you are probably aware, is a volunteer position and Linda has now decided to leave us.

During her time on the Committee Linda has played a huge part in organizing many different events for the hall including firework displays, the Village Fair, and other fundraising events. She has also played an enormous part in turning the Village Hall into a sustainable building, instigating the new kitchen, and helping with the decorating.

I would like to thank Linda personally, as Chairman of the Village Hall Committee and as a member of the village. As many of you are aware the job she was doing takes a lot of personal time, so I am sure you would like to join me in thanking Linda for her time and effort and also welcome our new Secretary, Melanie Fergus.

Steve Ansell



Meppershall Summer Fair
Sat 29th June 2013
1 – 5pm Free Entry!

**This popular village event returns with many of your
 favourites and
 some exciting new additions!**

• **Scruffs • Tea Tent • Children's rides**
 • **Arts & Crafts • Classic cars • Beer tent • Much more**

For further details contact Linda Primett 01462 815629
Meppershall Village Hall registered charity number 300052

Solution to this month's Su Doku:

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

CALENDAR OF MEPPERSHALL EVENTS

April 2013

Thursday 4th		
Evergreens	2.15 pm	Sugarloaf
Saturday 6th		
Karen Karaoke	8.00 pm	Meppershall Social Club
Monday 8th		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village hall
Tuesday 9th		
Meppershall Messenger AGM	7.30 pm	Sugar Loaf
Saturday 13th		
Foresters Friendly Soc: Disco	8.00 pm – midnight	Village hall
Spring Art Exhibition	10.00 am – 4.00 pm	Northill Village hall
Sunday 14th		
Spring Art Exhibition	10.00 am – 4.00 pm	Northill Village hall
Monday 15th		
Annual Parish Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
Thursday 18th		
Evergreens	2.15 pm	Sugarloaf
Annual Parochial Church Meeting	7.30 pm	St Mary's Church
Friday 19th & Saturday 20th		
Players' Evening of Entertainment	7.45 pm	Village hall

May 2013

Saturday 11th		
Rock Factor Concert & Disco	7.30 pm	Village Hall
Monday 15th		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village hall
Saturday 18th		
Meppershall Arts, Crafts Festival	Afternoon	Village hall
Meppershall Music Festival	Evening	Village hall

Bedfordshire Police Report

My name is Gill and I am pleased to say that I am your new designated PCSO, although some people may already know me as I've been around for some time! As your designated PCSO I will be attending the Parish Council meetings on a regular basis, not only to advise the council of the crimes that have occurred in Meppershall, but to talk about current trends and Police initiatives.

There was one recorded crime for the period 11/02/13 – 11/03/13. This was a burglary in Fildyke Road.

There are a few simple measures you can take to help prevent your house from being burgled. Please take a few moments to review your home security. Many improvements can be made quickly and without incurring a great cost.

- Use your house lights to make it look like someone is at home. Use timer switches if you have them or make sure lights are switched on before you leave home, even if you are just popping out to the shops or doing the school run. And remember, use the lights in a main room and not in the hallway as this looks more natural.
- You may want to leave your radio on, tuned in to a talk station, so it sounds like someone is at home.
- Ensure your external doors are securely locked at all times. If you have UPVC door make sure you have lifted the handle and double-locked it.
- Ensure your windows are locked when you leave the house. Only use lockable restrictors for ventilation when you are at home.
- Ensure you have the right locks for your patio doors – they need to be secured to the frame top and bottom and not just to each other.
- A visible alarm make burglars think twice – make sure you switch it on when you go out.
- Never leave garages or sheds unlocked.
- Check for weak spots and damage to walls, fences and hedges on your boundary.

- Stop a thief from getting into the back of the house where he can work unseen by fitting a strong, high gate across a side passage.
- Don't hide your keys on the lintel, under the mat or in a flowerpot – these are the first places a thief will look.
- Ask a trusted neighbour to keep an eye on your house while you're away.
- Be alert to strangers loitering in the street. If they are acting suspiciously, call the police on 101.
- Help us beat the bogus caller: always stop at the door, check the chain is on and verify the caller's identification before opening your door. **IF IN DOUBT – KEEP THEM OUT.**
- Don't forget to security mark your property, photograph your valuables and register with **www.immobilise.com**. We have left you a property marking pack to help you get started.
- And finally, make sure your car keys are out of easy reach and valuables are secured out of sight.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about your home security or if you have any other Police related issues or concerns.

Kind regards

Gill

PCSO 3659 Gill Richardson
Bedfordshire Police
Shefford, Stotfold & Arlesey Local Policing Team
Biggleswade Police Station
Station Road
Biggleswade
SG18 8AL
gill.richardson@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

DISRUPTION TACTICS KEEPING BURGLARS AT BAY

11 March 2013

The number of homes broken into across the county in the past three weeks has fallen as Bedfordshire Police continues its campaign of openly disrupting and deterring burglars and handlers as part of its tactic to suppress their offending. Codenamed Operation Sabre it is designed to target offenders and complement other activity in force under Operation Peak which looks at hotspots areas of crime and Operation Vision, the crime reduction initiative that regularly tours the county encouraging residents to 'Stay Safe'.

In the past three weeks 12 people have been arrested for breaking into homes demonstrating the force's commitment to fighting crime and protecting the public. Chief Inspector Jeff Carter who is leading the dedicated squad of detectives, officers and PCSOs said:

"The work the Operation Sabre team is doing is very direct and intrusive on those committing crime and requires a dedicated group of officers to work 24 hours a day making burglars lives very difficult. Having identified different tiers of offenders who we know are committing, or thinking of committing crime, we are now making sure they know we are watching them. We are randomly following them, knocking on their doors and generally making our presence felt. If it is not them it is their families or neighbours who are very much aware of our tactics and so far this is helping to suppress the offenders' activities."

The Operation Sabre team is just one aspect of the force's fight against burglary. In addition local policing, CID, intelligence gatherers, ANPR and the Roads Policing Unit are all united in the fight against burglary with regular and ongoing enforcement activity targeted at this problem. As a result recent figures show an 18% reduction in Domestic Burglary and a 32% reduction in other burglary – the 6th largest and highest reduction respectively recorded in England and Wales.

Chief Inspector Carter added; "We are not complacent and these figures can be reduced still further. Sustaining this level of monitoring of offenders is a massive commitment but one Bedfordshire Police believes is worthwhile. We urge the public to join us in this crusade by ensuring their home security is as good as it can be as well passing on information they have about those people committing crime.

Other ways to deter burglars include:

- * Fit outside security lights and put gates across side passages
- * Leave lights and a radio on when you go out
- * Double check fences and boundaries for weak spots
- * Fit security features such as window locks, patio door locks and a burglar alarm
- * Never leave keys under mats and flower pots; it's the first place burglars look
- * Keep an eye out for strangers in your street, especially if they are selling property door to door. If you are suspicious, call the police.
- * Help protect your neighbourhood by joining Home Watch, or becoming a co-ordinator

WITNESS APPEAL TO FATAL COLLISION

Bedfordshire Police are appealing for witnesses after a man died when his car crashed into a field near Ireland on Friday (March 8).

The collision occurred at 6.38am as the 70-year-old driver was travelling alone in his beige Skoda Yeti along Ireland Road, adjacent to A600 between Shefford and Rowney Warren. It is not known what caused him to swerve off the road and an investigation has been launched. Pc Chris Naughton is appealing for anyone who may have seen the vehicle in the area that morning, or saw others at the time that may have caused the driver to lose control.

Pc Naughton said: "The car was travelling towards Ireland from the B568 and clipped the nearside kerb before leaving the road and rolling into an adjacent field. The collision was reported after the car was seen by a passing motorist. Sadly the driver was pronounced dead at the scene. The time and remote location of this collision makes it very difficult to establish what caused the driver to swerve off the road. Something may have been in the road to cause him to swerve or perhaps another vehicle was involved; whatever the reason, it is right that we understand the circumstances that led to this man's death."

If anyone has information about traffic on Ireland Road on Friday morning please contact the Collision Investigation Unit in confidence on 01438 757506. Alternatively contact the non-emergency number 101, text information to 07786 200011, or contact independent charity Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111, or online at www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Bag it and Bin it!

Dog owners in Central Bedfordshire are being reminded to bag and bin their dogs' waste to keep the area clean.



Dog mess poses serious health risks. It can carry roundworm - containing the parasite *Toxocara canis* which can cause blindness, epilepsy, asthma and infections. So it's vital to reduce dog fouling to protect others, particularly children. Failing to clean up after your four legged friend when in a public space is an offence and Central Bedfordshire Council will issue £75 Fixed

Penalty Notices. Dog wardens are already monitoring areas across the region. So if you're walking your dog please take a doggy bag, pick up after your pooch and use the dog waste bins provided. Remember you can also use normal litter bins for bagged dog waste, so there are no excuses!

For further information about Central Bedfordshire Council dog warden services or how to report an incident of dog fouling please visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

SUSTAINABILITY?

A response from Roger Crawford to an item in last month's Messenger.

It was with something of a wry smile that I read the article on 'Have your Say on Development in Central Bedfordshire' in the February edition of the Messenger.

What particularly made me smile was the paragraph that states 'we appreciate that there are concerns about our local environment but the council is committed to ensuring that we will meet this demand in a way that respects and protects the natural environment and local heritage'. In other words, I think what they are saying is 'don't worry about the 28,700 new homes because we'll protect the countryside'. Can we have our cake and eat it too? I think not.

In the twenty-seven years I have lived on the outskirts of Meppershall I have seen pretty big changes, particularly to Shefford. The catalyst was the building of the by-pass in 1990. Before that was built, the local planning department would have held up their hands in horror if it had been suggested that a housing estate should be built off the Ivel Road, but once the by-pass was open, it seemed 'natural' to fill the space between by-pass and town with houses. Shefford until that time was a 'one horse town' - almost unique in the Home Counties in being largely free of 'development' and of affluent commuters.

Most people tried to avoid using the A507 because the town was such a bottleneck. It really was a sustainable, self-sufficient little community. The town had been asking for a by-pass since the 1930's, but you really do have to be careful what you wish for. That large housing development, and the new road through it, turned Shefford from a rather unprepossessing little town into a very unremarkable suburban satellite. It completely changed its character. No-one was told that this would be the outcome, of course, and no doubt the planners thought it would be 'sympathetic to the local environment and heritage'. For those who remember Shefford as it was, that statement would seem blatant nonsense. And by-pass or not, Shefford itself is now as traffic-filled as ever it was before the by-pass was built. More roads, more houses=more traffic. I used to go outside here and revel in the silence, broken only by bird-song and the wind in the trees. Now, more often than not, the air is filled with the constant background noise of traffic on the by-pass.

'Our priority as a council is to build great communities'. I don't think a council can do that, unless they mean 'great' as in 'huge'. It's up to people themselves to form a community. With the large developments already built or being built in Shefford, Arlesey and Stotfold there's not a lot of room between them

for much development without them all becoming one huge suburb, 1930's style. Having grown up in a North London suburb built in the 1930's, I could call it a few things but never a 'great community'.

I'm not suggesting that houses are not necessary. What I object to is the premise that all these houses can be built without damage to the local environment and the area's 'heritage'. I think a little more honesty would be in order. I drive a school bus every day, and recently the route I was given was changed to start at Arlesey. I couldn't believe the long queues of traffic on the A507 every morning at each of the roundabouts. I don't think the present road system can take much more.

I believe our planning system is completely wrong for our country; it seldom seems to stop some 'developer' from committing the most hideous despoliation of the countryside if he is going to make money out of it. But it hampers, at every turn, any man or woman who wishes to establish a home for themselves and live self-sufficiently on their own land, not in a town; in other words, a 'sustainable' lifestyle.

Sorry to be a wet blanket, but I'm not 'really excited' about the 'regeneration of the whole area'. May I quote from the Manifesto of a land-based group to which I belong:

'Economists define wealth and justice in terms of access to the market. Politicians echo the economists because the more dependent people become upon the market, the more securely they can be roped into the fiscal and political hierarchy. Access to land is not simply a threat to landowning elites - it is a threat to the religion of unlimited economic growth and the power structure that depends on it.

The market (however attractive it may appear) is built on promises: the only source of wealth is the earth. Anyone who has land has access to energy, water, nourishment, shelter, healing, wisdom, ancestors and a grave.

The first and inevitable effect of the global market is to uproot and destroy land-based human cultures. The final and inevitable achievement of a rootless global market will be to destroy itself.

Rome fell; the Soviet Empire collapsed; the stars and stripes are fading in the west. Nothing is forever in history, except geography. Capitalism is a confidence trick, a dazzling edifice built on paper promises. It may stand longer than some of us anticipate, but when it crumbles, the land will remain'.

It may be better to leave some of that land alone. Just in case.

Roger Crawford

FILM REVIEW

By Carlie Newman

Ken Loach's **SPIRIT OF '45** (cert. 15 1 hr. 35 mins.) is truly inspiring.

In 1945 the country was in a bad state, having come through the Second World War which began only 20 years after the First World War finished. People had come together and fought for a better country and they didn't want to give that up. They voted in a Labour Government, under Clement Attlee, with a Socialist agenda. The government set out a plan to build houses, create a health service, transport system and to make goods needed for reconstruction.

The central idea was common ownership and the central electricity system. gas, the health service and other public service were brought into public ownership.



The film points out that today we face the loss of so much with industry after industry being privatised.

Speaker after speaker, including Tony Benn, former miners, GPs, nurses, economists, talk on the film about what the '45 Government gave them in terms of bringing them out of poverty/providing jobs/a free health service and so on. The passion behind the making of the film and those expressing their views combined with the subject matter make this film a must-see for anyone interested in making sure the NHS at the very least remains a National service for all.



The Trading Standards team would like to warn residents of a potential telephone scam whereby the caller offers a large discount off your electricity bill.

We have received a report that an elderly resident in the LU7 postal area has recently received a telephone call, where the caller claims to be from the "*London Electricity Board*". The caller's number was displayed as "*0202227464*". The caller claimed that the resident was "*entitled to 40% off your electricity bills*", if the resident could provide their credit card details.

Based on the information we have received, this telephone call has all the hallmarks of a scam and we would advise anyone to act with extreme caution when receiving such calls. Our advice to residents would be to never give your personal or bank account details to anybody over the telephone unless you are absolutely certain of their intentions. Never be intimidated into making a quick decision, for example, because the offer is available for a limited period only. If you are ever unsure as to whether the offer being made or the call is genuine, do not be afraid to end the call by hanging up.

THE MEPPERSHALL PLAYERS
PRESENT
AN
Evening
OF
Entertainment
AT MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE HALL
ON
19TH & 20TH APRIL
(Bring Your Own Supper. Licensed Bar)
Plus
(Tea & Coffee Bar)

Seating Plan Viewable
At The
BOX OFFICE
ROGER'S BAKERY
Meppershall
01462 813398

All TICKETS £5
(Sorry No Concessions)



The Meppershall Players



We are now putting the finishing touches to 'An Evening of Entertainment' which takes place on Fri 19th & Sat 20th April. Rehearsals have been a lot of fun, the cast as always a pleasure to work with. This is a 'Sit at a table with your family/friends & bring your own supper' event. A seating plan is available to view at Roger's Bakery, where you can also purchase Tickets at £5 each (sorry, no concessions) The evening kicks off with two one act comedy plays, then an interval in which to eat your supper and have a chat over a glass of wine (Licensed bar) or a cuppa (tea & coffee bar) followed by a variety of songs, sketches, jokes etc. All in all, a great way to spend an evening.

We now have a 'Front of house co-ordinator' So if you would like to help at this event please ring Gemma Chapman on 07968529282

Our A.G.M is on Wed 19th June 7.30pm at the Village Hall.

We will be at the Summer Fair on Sat 29th June, with a new arena display following the success of our Synchronised Swimming last year.

The dates of this years Pantomime are as follows:

Fri 29th Nov, 7.45pm, Sat 30th Nov, 3pm & 7.45pm

Fri 6th Dec, 7.45pm, Sat 7th Dec, 3pm & 7.45pm

Still wanted - One pianist and some handy Andy's or Andrea's for set building rooms for 2 & 3 act plays.

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

10 Top Gardening Tasks for April

1. Sow hardy annuals if not yet done, or plant out those raised in pots; thin any already sown in beds
2. Complete planting of summer-flowing bulbs.
3. Prune spring- flowering shrubs when they have finished flowering
4. On sunny days, ventilate the greenhouse and cloches
5. Improve lawns with a 'weed and feed' product
6. Bare or thin patches on lawns can be thickened by raking over the surface and then re-sowing
7. Veg to sow outdoors:
broccoli, cabbage, carrots, leeks, peas, lettuce and spring onion.
Indoors sow aubergines, celery, courgettes, cucumbers, sweet peppers & marrows.
8. Sow annual herbs such as basil & dill
9. Get on top of weeds early – catching them before they seed will save a lot of time and effort later in the year
10. It is not too late to feed borders with a general-purpose fertiliser such as Growmore or pelleted chicken manure.

BEASTS: watch out for:

Slugs and snails will continue to be a problem this month, as they love fresh new growth and damp conditions. Choose a remedy that does not harm wildlife or pets.

Aphids can multiply rapidly this month. Some sprays harm useful insects, so avoid them; if you do not kill ladybirds and hoverflies, they will deal with aphids

Vine weevils and box blight can, also cause problems this month

BEAUTIES: enjoy in, flower:

Shrubs: Berberis, Broom, Chaenomeles, Prunus varieties - early cherries and almonds

Perennials and bulbs: Dicentra, Wood Anemone, Lily of the valley, Leucojum, Scilla, Periwinkle, Primula, Wallflowers.....but above all.....early Tulips. These are often smaller varieties and species tulips that withstand April showers!

Contributed by Viv Harvey

Meppershall Garden Club

The Garden Club had a busy start to the year. In January we had 2 teams at the Friends of St Mary's quiz night. In February we visited Moggerhanger Park to see the snowdrops, and had a group meeting at Frosts Garden Centre, Willington. We also started an additional garden club group learning about plants.

Now is the time to start work on the village hall borders and planters. If you could spare a couple of hours to help with this much needed work, do give us a call - as you know many hands make light work!

Very regrettably, the Open Gardens will not be able to go ahead this year, due to insurance issues. Thanks to all those who kindly offered their help and support for this event.

Contacts for the Meppershall Garden Club:

Linda Parker	01462 815114 or
Kim Lee Tyler	01462 811750 or
Sarah Till	01462 817176 or
e-mail at: meppershallgardenclub@hotmail.co.uk	



Henlow Church of England Academy



“EXCHANGING CLASSROOMS”

As you may be aware, Henlow Church of England Academy has a link with a school in Utange, Kenya.

Utange Baptist Primary School is a private school, but most of the children who go are sponsored to attend. The school manager is Pastor John Kahindi.

This week we have been very fortunate to have Pastor John visit Henlow Academy, thanks to a grant from the British Council. Whilst here, Pastor John will be finding out about teaching and learning in our School, leading some assemblies and telling pupils about Utange and his pupils. On the final day of his visit we will be having a live Skype link where pupils from Henlow will be able to talk with pupils in Utange.

Pastor John will be returning to his School with lots of gifts for his pupils, donated by ours. These include pairs of socks, pencils, rubbers and rulers. The children have also been encouraged to give up one treat a week and donate the money to the Utange feeding programme. Lots of our pupils have given up their morning snack and donated their money to this cause.

For more information about Utange you can visit <http://sure.churchinsight.com/>

Forthcoming School Events:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| • Ski Trip to Bulgaria: | Easter Holidays |
| • Annual Fun Run: | Friday 26th April |
| • P.T.A. Summer Fayre: | Friday 28th June |

**Meppershall Pre-School Fundraising Committee
Proudly Presents
An Evening of "The Classic Rock Covers Band"**



followed by a disco on

SATURDAY 11TH MAY 2013

**MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE HALL
DOORS OPEN AT 7.30PM**



A raffle will be held with a variety of fantastic prizes.

Tickets cost £5 and can be purchased on the door or in advance.
Please ring Kelly on 01462 817507 to reserve a ticket.

For more information about the band visit their website at
www.therockfactor.co.uk or check their Facebook page.
For more information about Meppershall Pre-School visit
www.meppershall-ps.co.uk

**When you think of Scouting,
what comes to mind?**



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



Think again!

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

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

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

For more information, please call Sarah on 01462 813799
or henlowclifton.scoutgroup@virginmedia.com



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



Parents, Grandparents, & Childminders are all welcome.

Happy Easter everyone! This term has gone so quickly. One of the highlights was having along an entertainer called Emma from Little Possums on the 5th March to do Rhyme time during the session, and play with the most gigantic parachute you ever did see. It was a great success and I would recommend her for any tots party. We also managed to treat our yummy mummy's and glorious grandparents to afternoon tea, with delicious scones from the village bakers!



We would like everyone to feel they can input their views and ideas when they come along, and we are always happy to accept more offers of help to set up at 1:15 if you can join us before we start. We would also really appreciate a coffee/snack assistant from 1:15 till 3:15 if anyone has this time available and feels they would enjoy helping out.

We are now planning some exciting things to do after the Easter holidays, including more parachute fun, feet and hand painting on a huge piece of paper, making a photo collage, and a trip to Standalone Farm. Thank you to all our helpers for making it happen.

**Come and join the fun at Meppershall village hall,
every Tuesday in term time from 1:30 till 3pm.**

Under 1's 50p * Under 3's £1.00 * Under 5's £1.50

FIRST VISIT FREE - MAX ENTRY £2 (exc. parties)

Craft, drink & healthy snack included each week

Look for Meppershall Tots on facebook, or email meppershalltots@hotmail.co.uk

Please ring Debbie on 07713 627376 for more information

NOTICE BOARD

Meppershall Pre-school Fundraising Committee

Concert and disco with The Rock Factor
Saturday 11th May at Meppershall Village Hall
Doors open 7.30 pm.

Biggleswade & District Art Society

14th Spring Art Exhibition
Northill Village Hall (opposite the church)
Saturday 13th April (10.00–4.00) Sunday 14th April (10.00–4.00)
Free Admission Original Paintings for sale Refreshments

Foresters Friendly Society

Saturday 13th April 2013 8pm 'til midnight
'Johnny Red' + disco
50's 60's and Rock & Roll music

Tickets available now £6 including buffet
Contact Helen on 01462 812708 or mobile 07989 914941

Do you like to walk in company?

If so, you might want to join an impromptu group who walk from Meppershall from time to time, usually on weekdays.

Our walks are when we feel like it, and we cover 3 – 6 miles. If you would like to be notified of future walks, please e-mail The Messenger or phone The Editor.



Meppershall Pre-School Ponderings

We wish all our children and their families a very Happy Easter! This term the children have been junk modelling, building castles out of huge cardboard boxes, and bringing large scenes to life with shiny mosaic pieces of paper. All the Mummy's also received a very special Mothers Day card. We have also been able to get outside a bit more between hail storms, and use our outside area to hone up on our co-ordination skills. The trial music session was great fun, so much so Judith the teacher has been back to do more. Thank you Judith.

Our fundraising went well this term. The height ex-change, where we filled a tube with 1,2 and 5p's to hopefully reach the height of our tallest child, was so successful we exceeded the height of the tallest child and raised just over £100. Looking ahead we have organised a fantastic live band 'The Rock Factor' to come and entertain the night away on 11th May. Please ring Kelly on 07935 643326 to buy your tickets now, only £5 entry. There will also be a fantastic raffle drawn on the night for prizes including: Personal training sessions, A family pass to Woburn Safari Park, 2 Ball Golf and a nights accommodation at Beadlow Manor, a Reiki session, Beauty treatments, and many more. Raffle tickets before the night are available. Our next bags2school run is on 12th June at the village hall. So if you have any clothing, curtains, bedding, towels you would like to clearout please do bring them along before 9am on the day. With spring in the air, your local Pre-school is a great place for your child to blossom and make new friends. If you have a child aged between two and a half and four who you feel is ready to try something new, please ring Tamsin on 01462 817359(in term time) or Debbie on the number below to book your free taster session. They are welcome to start mid-term.

We open in term time on Monday & Wednesday from 9:30am until 3pm, and on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday until 12:30pm. Lunch club is each day from 12 until 12:30pm.

**For more information please ring Debbie on 07713 627376,
or email info@meppershall-ps.co.uk**



Ofsted Registration Number: 219293 **www.meppershall-ps.co.uk** Registered Charity: 1031913

THE BIKE SHED

SPORTS MOPEDS By Wayne Allen

Look at any time in recent history and certain images of cars or bikes come to mind. In the 1960s and early 70s (for two wheels) it would have been a combination of either Italian scooters, if you were a mod, or the thumping resonance of British bike if being a rocker was your chosen path. The film *Quadrophenia* certainly portrayed this era very well. Like most pursuits you have to start somewhere, especially if you are a teenager wanting to progress in the world of powered transport. Move on to the pinnacle of 50cc mopeds in the 1970s and you hit a sweet spot of nostalgia for many of us middle aged bikers.

So, you are 16 years old and just bursting at the seams with dreams of being the next Barry Sheene: let's examine what choices you had to spend your hard earned apprenticeship wages on.

Most prominent bike manufactures, be they British, Japanese or Italian, offered a taste of their potential wares in the form of 50cc bike to tempt teenagers in their direction, with the hope of progressing their loyalty through the range of larger bikes available on the menu. A few models did stand out and like most things in life were promoted by youth culture myths of performance. One such bike was produced by Yamaha, the FS1E, known affectionately as the 'Fizzy'. Yamaha had been developing this model since 1969 as a result of some pressured feedback from influential dealers in the Netherlands. Couple this with legislation introduced in the UK in 1971 restricting 16 year olds to riding only mopeds, then the stage was set. The 'Fizzy' was powered by a two stroke engine with a disc valve, producing 4.8HP, and was coupled through a 4 speed gearbox. The brakes were very good, especially when hauling up from the mid 40MPH it could achieve. This top end speed was ramped up by the competitive boasting of teenagers with claims of 60MPH +: maybe, with some aftermarket tuning, chin on the tank and a strong tail wind this could be achieved. For its time the "Fizzy" was a great piece of styling which was available in many contemporary colours of the period, including gold, Popsicle purple and Baja brown. Many examples were trashed by their inexperienced riders and suffered general mechanical neglect. Spin on some 40 odd years later and fully restored examples are commanding values of £3 to £4k.

So, if you did not want a 'Fizzy', what were the alternatives? Suzuki had the AP50 which had a design similar to the 'Fizzy', also using a two stroke engine with an open-frame look. The AP 50 did not look as slim as the 'Fizzy' but in terms of specification was pretty damn close, with similar performance (manufactures spec) or slightly exaggerated during chats at the local chippy. Alongside this was the challenge from Honda. This was a completely different approach, with the Honda SS50 using a four stroke engine. What the Honda did offer was some refinement at the initial footsteps of motorcycling. Its small overhead valve engine, although very smooth did not deliver as much performance as its counterparts using two stroke formats and was known as the slowpold in some circles at the time.

For sheer craziness at the time, roll out the Italian options: Gilera, Fantic and Garelli were in the league of highly desirable but high maintenance. The Gilera Trial was good for 42MPH but these could be easily tuned, to self-destruction, to reach 50MPH +. Then move along to the Fantic GT Super Six. This was capable of 65MPH with the help of its 9HP engine and six speed gearbox. Its price tag was twice that of the others mentioned here and so it remained on the wish list for many. Let's not forget the Austrian manufacture Puch. They produced for me at the time a very nice Grand Prix Special. It was finished in the John Player Special paint scheme (the best livery ever to adorn a car, despite the product – pictured below right) as displayed on the Lotus F1 teams of the period.

So what did I get? A Honda CB50J (picture below left), the most civilised moped of the late 70s. Why? It was brand new and it had a rev counter. Although not as fast a 'Fizzy', when you progress from pedal power to twisting the throttle is great fun. Even these are now reaching £2K to £3K in restored condition..... I sold mine for £150!



COVERS BY REQUEST

I felt that this month our cover should be cheerful, so I asked Lyn Fairweather at Meppershall Lower School if the children would be doing anything photogenic this term. The result was the picture of children who have proudly prepared prayer crosses for their Easter Prayer Tree. I think this picture exactly filled the bill. Thank you Lyn.

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 EVENTS

Birthdays in April:

Ron Mitchel will be 80 on 4th April
Kathleen Drummond will be 86 on 7th April
Shireen Longland will be 82 on 10th April
Pam Halliwell will be 85 on 26th April
Pam Sheridan will be 90 on 29th April

Congratulations to all of the above.

If you do know of one in the village, please let the Editor know: we are looking for things to celebrate! 80th, 90th and 100th birthdays we mark with the presentation of a cake from The Messenger.

We would also love to hear about big anniversaries or any other cause to celebrate.

Weddings:

On 9th March, Miss Jo Williams to Mr. Paul Carne

Many congratulations, and may all their problems be little ones!

St. Mary The Virgin

Meppershall Parish Church (Church of England)
Church Road, off Campton Road, SG17 5NA

Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman 01462 339962 – usual day off: Monday

Churchwardens:

Brenda Wright 01462 816446.

Reader (Licensed Lay Minister)

Pam Halliwell 01462 817069 pamelahalliwell1@virginmedia.com - 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 – April 2013

Date	Time	Service
Sunday April 7 th	11.00am	Parish Communion
2nd Sunday of Easter	11.00am	Junior Church at the School
Sunday April 14 th	8.30am	Holy Communion
3rd Sunday of Easter		
Thursday April 18 th	7.30pm	Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)
Sunday April 21 st	8.30am	Holy Communion
4th Sunday of Easter	11.00am	All-Age Service
Sunday April 28 th	11.00am	Family Communion and Junior Church
5th Sunday of Easter		

St Mary's weekday service - Wednesdays:

Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer), each Wednesday, 10.00am.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

This annual meeting is effectively the AGM of St Mary's and it will be held at St Mary's on 18th April at 7.30pm.

A Message from St Mary's...

We have just celebrated Easter, the highlight of the church's year, but not the end of the story. Writing this, I was reminded of the old saying: "March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers," and it struck me that this could be applied to the church's year.

March can be a cold and blustery month but it signals the arrival of spring. Holy Week and Good Friday mirror the cold and gloom but lead on the joy of Spring and the growth of new things. There is a sense of adventure and anticipation.

At St Mary's, the kitchen is finished and being used – and the coffee makers beam with joy at having running water in the church! The toilet renovation is well underway and we have a new notice board. Later this month we will have a new PCC.

We have been working on a Mission Action Plan which will set our priorities for the immediate future and we will go forward in hope. There is the Village Fair to plan for and look forward to and all of us will doubtless be looking forward to holidays.

We will see more of each other as we get busy in our gardens. I am looking forward to taking my new dog for longer walks in the dry and hope to see and talk to many of you then.

Remember St Mary's is here for everyone – come and see the improvements and if you need help or advice, just ask.

With best wishes,

Pam Halliwell

JUNIOR CHURCH

The first Sunday of the month fell just after St David's Day, so we felt that this was a good subject to teach the children. We heard how one day, Saint David was talking to a big crowd at the Synod of Llanddewi Brefi, but the crowd was so big that not everyone could see or hear Saint David. People at the back of the crowd started to complain so he placed a handkerchief on the ground and stood on it and the ground where he stood is said to have risen up to form a small hill so that everyone could see him. It is said that a white dove then settled on his shoulder to show he had God's grace and blessing.

We were very lucky to be able to demonstrate to the children how a Monk would have dressed and also the children were able to dress up in traditional Welsh Dress. Julie very kindly brought delicious authentic homemade Welsh cakes for the children and leeks for them to touch and smell. The children were all able to take some daffodils home at the end of the session as all of these things are associated with Welsh tradition.

Mother's Day Mini Sparks was held before the Mother's Day Church service – all of the children who attended made some wonderful and creative crafts to take home for their Mum's. All of the children who joined us for Mini Sparks were able to stay for the service that followed, when we read stories, completed word searches or simply did some colouring. The children helped throughout the service by handing out posies to all of the female members of the congregation and taking the collection plate round at the appropriate time.

Hope you can join us for our next Junior Church session in Meppershall Lower School Hall on Sunday 7th April at 11am when we look forward to a 'Godly Play' session!

Blessings

The Junior Church Team

ROAST LAMB WITH APRICOTS

APRIL 2013

1.8kg (4lb) leg of lamb or shoulder, boned out
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
110g (4oz) spinach leaves
175g (6oz) ready-to-eat dried apricots, chopped
1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
75g (3oz) breadcrumbs
2tbsp fresh or dried chopped mint
1 egg, beaten
Olive oil
300ml (1/2 pint) lamb or vegetable stock
150ml (1/4 pint) port
Corn flour or gravy granules
Mint sprigs to garnish

METHOD

- 1) Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas 6. Flatten the lamb as best you can, check for tough tendons or bones and remove them. Season well. Wash the spinach leaves and then put them in a large pan over a fairly high heat and let them wilt down for a minute. Cut out thick stalks. Arrange half the leaves to cover the inside of the lamb
- 2) To make the stuffing, in a bowl mix the chopped apricots, onion, breadcrumbs, mint and just enough egg to make a light stuffing. Spread the mixture over the spinach layer on the lamb then cover with the rest of the spinach leaves. Roll it up, securing with string.
- 3) Put the stuffed lamb in a roasting tin, sprinkle with a little oil and seasoning. Cover with foil and cook for 90 minutes. Remove the foil and cook another 15 minutes to brown the meat. Leave to stand, wrapped in the foil, for 10 minutes before carving.
- 4) Bring the lamb stock and port to the boil in a saucepan and reduce it by a third. Add any meat juices from the roasting tin without adding too much fat. Thicken with corn flour or gravy granules. Serve with roast potatoes and parsnips together with some green vegetables and mint sprigs to garnish.

Recipes are kindly supplied each month by Brenda Putwain. Brenda would welcome feedback from readers on her recipes.

A very happy birthday to those of you celebrating birthdays in

April

Rebecca Myers who will be 8 on the 3rd
Teya Warner who will be 4 on the 4th
Amie-Lee Lumbis who will be 6 on the 5th
William Rogers who will be 10 on the 11th
Thomas Boggon who will be 15 on the 11th
Kate Fleming who will be 7 on the 13th
Katrina Brennand who will be 13 on the 17th
Harry White who will be 12 on the 19th
Jemma Dalton who will be 7 on the 20th
Edmund Holmes who will be 15 on the 20th
Charlie Lodge who will be 9 on the 30th

If you are under 16 and would like your name added to the birthday page, please call Louise Hutson on 814148 or email at louhuts@btconnect.com



THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

DISCLAIMER

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

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<u>Collating Dates for your Diaries</u>					
	<u>2013</u>			<u>2013</u>	
April	29		October	28	
May	28	Tue	November	25	Double
June	24		December	None	
July	29	Double		<u>2014</u>	
August	None		January	27	
September	30		February	24	
			March	24	

Please note that dates in the above table indicate the month in which the collating will take place, at 2.00 pm in the Sugar Loaf. The issue being collated will relate to the following month, e.g. on 24th September the October issue will be collated.