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EDITORIAL

Writing this in mid-November it is a little hard to get into the spirit of frenetic activity that characterises Christmas, yet lots of people in Meppershall are already doing just that.

Our cover bears witness that Pantomime is here again (oh yes it is!) and on page 29 Lucy tells us about the origins of this long-running Christmas custom.

St Mary's pages, starting on page 54, together with the announcements from St Francis of Assisi on page 49 tell how Christians are planning to celebrate a highpoint of their year,

and on page 12 we can see a picture of the Brownies doing their bit with shoe-boxes to spread the fun of Christmas to less fortunate children.

The spirit of goodwill was not so evident at the meeting of the Parish Council (page 13) where a group of vocal parishioners expressed their dissatisfaction with the consultation about the proposed development behind the Village Hall, and the News in Brief section on page 7 commemorates the passing of two well-loved villagers, Fred Bucksey and Gerald Vintner.

But, as one door closes.....there is good news on the same page from the Good Neighbours Group; thanks to the number of volunteers responding to the leaflet circulated with the Messenger, the Group can open for business on 1st December. See page 7 for details and their phone number.

And the Messenger has its own good news to tell: our never-sleeping Treasurer, John Thompson, tracked down an offer of a new printer to replace the previous one which was already approaching its million pages life span. He found a deal to get the latest version at about half the list price. This issue comes to you from the new machine: thanks very much, John. This is also the moment to say congratulations and thanks to Phyllis Kidger, who will be 96 in January and still does her stint as a printer for us each month.

Which leaves me just room to wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas. I hope that 2014 brings us all a more peaceful world and that our little bit of the world will enjoy its share of peace.



Dick Bulley

LETTERS

Letter from Louise Crouch (alias Louise Bryce and Louise the Post):

My children and I lived in Meppershall for 23 years and we would like to say a big "Thank You" to all our friends and neighbours for their kindness and support.

I was a Postie in Meppershall for 7 years and loved every day of it; I met some lovely, lovely people. Sadly, my Dad died on 1st February and I had a bike accident twelve days later, injuring my ribs and leg, but with physiotherapy I am getting better.

I have decided to leave Royal mail and I would like to say thank you for all your lovely friendship, kindness and support. I am setting up my own dog walking business: as you all know, I love dogs. So if I can help in any way with pop-ins, pet sitting of any small domestic animals or with a boarding service for long or short stays, please call me on 07934 555540. My address now is:

317, Cotton End Road
Wilstead
MK45 3DT

May I wish you all every happiness,
With love, Louise.

(See her ad on page 44)

Pedestrians on Fildyke Road

This is an appeal for pedestrians walking along Fildyke Road at the Sugar Loaf end. Could you please use the footpath next to the pub instead of walking on the opposite side of the road. Cars turning from Shefford Road can't see anyone until they are almost upon them, and if there is a car coming in the opposite direction there is nowhere to go. I have had to stop on several occasions for people of all ages, some with dogs, in daylight and in the dark.

Name and address supplied.

Letter from Karen Long:**Evergreens**

The Evergreens would like to say a huge thank you for the kind donation given to the club from the proceeds of the festival in May. It was gratefully received and we wish to thank all those who participated and supported the festival.

We would also like to thank Ted Putwain who raffled the beautiful table lamp which he had made himself, the proceeds of which he gave to the Evergreens. We are touched by the generosity and will put it all to good use. We have been for a meal which the members had voted for and they all had a wonderful time; they did not want to come away. We are planning another similar outing before Christmas. It will also help with a special Christmas party.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite any senior members of the local community to join us for the Christmas party; we are hoping that the choir will be joining us.

If you feel you would like to come along to our regular gatherings you would be most welcome. We will be meeting as usual on December 5th with the Party on 19th December. We have a break over the winter and re-convene in March. We all meet at The Sugar Loaf and the land lady Jenny kindly makes tea and sandwiches; we also have a small raffle. Come along for one of the meetings and stop for a cup of tea and some light refreshments.

If anyone would like a lift to the club they can give me a call and I would be happy to arrange the transport. Tel: Karen Long 01462 850182.

Many thanks, Karen.

Letter from Angela Ridley:

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Meppershall Pre-School fundraising committee I'd like to thank all you ladies (and a couple of gentlemen) who attended our Christmas Extravaganza shopping event on 8th November in the village hall. Whether you were a stall holder or shopper we really appreciated your support. With your help we managed to raise around £350.

Before I had children, I regretfully say that any fundraising attempts that went on in the village for village organisations completely bypassed me. I could not have dreamed how essential and undervalued the efforts of the likes of Lower School PTA, Pre-School Committee, Village Fair Committee, Social Club, Village Hall Committee (and the list goes on) are.

It can be an uphill struggle to come up with new and attractive ideas for fundraising events that will truly capture the attention of the village and wider communities, the people who these committees rely on for their generosity, without conflicting with other groups' activities. But on occasion clashes occur and while everyone involved knows that it's unintentional, it can encourage some bad feeling. We don't want to run the risk of discouraging the next generation of potential committee members from becoming involved, as a result of pettiness. So let's start working alongside or, where possible, in partnership with, one another.

With this most recent fundraising project of the Pre-School it has forcefully come to my attention that communication is key to not

losing sight of the combined goals into which we put so much effort, time, blood, sweat and sometimes tears. Every single village-based charity/ school/organisation is important to its members individually and to the village as a whole, and together we can work in partnership and harness some true community spirit.

Angela Ridley
Treasurer for Meppershall Pre-School

Letter from Meppershall Village Clerk:

Dear Mr Bulley,

Meppershall Messenger - November 2013 Issue

As Clerk to the Parish Council, an office I took on in April 1997, I am writing to say that I am grateful to you and your distribution team for including me in your distribution list and posting to me a copy of the monthly Messenger. Whilst I may not be resident in the Village, I find this to be an excellent and informative booklet of which you and your team may be justifiably proud.

It is rare that I feel inclined to take issue with anything that is printed, but there is something in the November issue which I feel does require a comment. On page 13, in the 'Your Shout' item from the pen of Trevor Thorley and in the context of the cancellation of the firework and bonfire night, a suggestion is made that "the proposed new housing development plans may have influenced the decision making".

May I refer you back to the October Messenger, in which the Village Hall Trustees spelt out the reasons for the demise of this event. These were entirely economic, financial and factual reasons and I can conceive no connection between Bonfire Night and the proposals for a new Village Hall. Through The Messenger, and on behalf of both the Parish Council and the Village Hall Trustees, I should like to assure residents that such a suggestion is entirely without either reason or foundation.

With my very best wishes to all at The Messenger.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Waghorn

MEPPERSHALL NEWS IN BRIEF

FROM THE FAMILY - TO THE FAMILY - FOR THE FAMILY

As people may or may not know, Gerald Vintner of Fildyke Road, Meppershall was diagnosed with kidney cancer earlier this year, which came as a great shock to all family and friends alike. He was to go into hospital in June for an operation to remove his kidney by keyhole surgery and hopefully be home within a few days. However because of the aggressive nature of the tumour this planned procedure went terribly wrong, resulting in many complications and a very long stay in hospital, of which almost 6 weeks was in an induced coma in the Critical Care Unit at Bedford South Wing Hospital, causing a lot of stress and upset for us all.

We are very pleased to say that in early August Gerald came home to us but still needing some rehabilitation. We would like to thank everybody for their good wishes and concerns during this extremely traumatic time.

This is also a good time to say a very special Thank You to Gerald's daughter Louise Savory and his granddaughter Danielle Savory who were determined to say thank you to the hospital where Gerald was looked after so well during his stay.

On Saturday 26th October they organised a Social event in the Village Hall with music supplied by The Wilsons and a buffet which was prepared by Louise and other family members, also a raffle with in excess of 50 prizes all being donated by friends, family and local businesses some of which have no idea who Gerald is.

Louise & Danielle's aim was to raise as much money possible for the hospital to say a special thank you for saving the life of their 'POPPA'. We believe the amount raised was in the region of £1000, which is a brilliant result. The family would like to thank each and every person involved to make this possible you will never know how much this means to us all.

Maureen Vintner & Family

MEPPERSHALL GOOD NEIGHBOUR GROUP

There was a truly heart-warming response to the flyer that went out with our October issue. By the closing date of 21st October, we had received forms from 37 people; it really is good to know that so many people are keen to help others in the Village who need it.

The Committee (Pam Halliwell, Denis Neilson, Dick Bulley and Kim Tyler) have been working hard to get structures into place to channel the efforts of these volunteers, and in this they have been greatly helped by Beds Rural Community Charity (BRCC) who are sponsoring our new group and others like it all over Bedfordshire. BRCC has provided contacts and model documents for arranging insurance cover, a bank account and guidance notes for volunteers covering a

multitude of different issues. The Committee has also been in touch with other village groups to learn from their practical experience.

The first full meeting of this enlarged group took place on 29th October and Malcolm Batey volunteered to join the Committee. The meeting heard The Treasurer announce that the group already has the phone that will be key to its operation. It is a mobile that will be manned by a different volunteer each week: the number is **07760 793921** and I would ask everyone to make a note of this – put it in your phones now! The group is obliged to Steve Ansell, who has agreed to cover its phone costs.

Before the volunteers can act, they all have to have a current certificate from the Disclosure & Barring service (which used to be the Criminal Records Bureau). The first group of applications are being processed now, and some of the new Volunteers already hold a certificate for other purposes. The meeting on 29th agreed that there should be sufficient cleared volunteers for the group to open for business on **1st December**.

So that means that we now need to hear from anyone in Meppershall who might need our help. This might be a lift to the shops or to collect a prescription; it could be something simple like changing a light bulb or it might be writing a letter or filling in a form. We do not expect to hear only from older people: a younger person who is temporarily housebound by illness or accident might equally need our help. Very importantly, some of our volunteers have asked specifically to be put in touch with people who simply need some company and conversation. There are no rigid rules about qualifying, so if you know of anyone who might need any of these services, remember that phone number.

Volunteers will not charge for their time but a contribution of 45p a mile, to cover the cost of fuel, will be expected from those receiving lifts. Donations would also be appreciated from those residents who have received other forms of assistance and been satisfied with the service we provided. As we are a Not For Profit Group we will be making appeals from time to time for funds to cover our basic insurance and admin costs.

The meeting on 29th adopted a logo in the form of a Gnome, which stands for **Good Neighbours Offering Meppershall Excellent Services**, so if you see any of the little fellows around, you will know that we are in business!

Dick Bulley – Group Secretary

Fred Bucksey

It is with regret that we mark the passing of my father, Fred James Bucksey of High Street on 17th September 2013. The following is modified from the Eulogy read at his cremation in Stopsley on 1st October 2013:

Fred was born in Alverstoke, Gosport, Hampshire on the 9th June 1920, to Bertie Leonard Bucksey who was a groundsman in the local cemetery, and mother Ellen May Bucksey who was in service as a cook. Fred and his brother Jack had the responsibility to tether a couple of goats every day before they went to school. He recently mentioned that as a member of the Boy Scouts he took the ferry over to the Portsmouth side of the harbour and he was given a ha'penny for the tram ride to and from the ferry terminal. To save the ha'penny Fred would walk the, roughly, 2 miles to and from his house. As a boy he helped his father carry potato peelings back from his Grandfather's house to feed the prize rabbits that his father kept. The rabbits won awards in many shows to the pride of all the family. On Sundays he would walk to Alverstoke Church and listen to the fiery sermons from the local Vicar.

Fred had the rare distinction of being in the Navy, Army and Air Force at different points in his life. He was a member of the Naval Cadets at HMS Vernon, and he saw the Schneider Cup race take place in 1929 of which the winning aircraft developed into the Spitfire of World War II.

Through his Grandfather, Fred got an unbound apprenticeship for carpentry and showed such aptitude that after 2 years he was transferred to the joinery shop to learn his trade. At that time he joined the Territorial Army as part of the Royal Engineers and he was manning a searchlight at the time Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain came back from Germany promising peace in our time. Fred joined the Royal Air Force as a carpenter shortly after that, making fins for torpedoes. He was posted to the British Expeditionary Force in France but on arrival was told that the Germans had broken through Belgium and it was a rush to get out through Boulogne just before Dunkirk. He said the sight of the white cliffs of Dover was very welcome at the time. Later in the war he was posted to a Navigation School in South Africa and subsequently to 17 Fighter Squadron in 1946 operating Spitfires in Kuala Lumpur, Malaya (now Malaysia). When Japan capitulated he was sent with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force to Japan and returned to the UK by troopship in 1948.

His subsequent marriage to Kathleen produced a son Andrew in 1952. Some 27 years later, Andrew married Patimah from Malaysia, ironically a place where Fred had been stationed during the war. Sadly for Fred and Andrew in 1976, Kathleen passed away at the early age of 60 leaving Fred a Widower for over thirty years. Happier times were to follow with the birth of two grandchildren Aishah and Abu Bakar. They are now grown up and married in their own right, delivering five great grandchildren for Fred with one more on the way. He obviously had great pride in his family and loved his regular visits to Malaysia and their visits to the UK.

After moving around England, Fred retired from the Air Force at Henlow Camp and took up a job with the TOPS scheme to train young people to become carpenters, first in Slough and then in Letchworth. He bought a ramshackle old house in Meppershall that was not far from falling down and he modernised it himself with a little help from his good friends. During his retirement one of his loves was a game of dominoes, being a member of the Airman, then later the Woolpack's team in the local league. He became very close friends with Ted Gunby, Frank Rainbow and Victor King.

Fred was a blood donor for over 40 years and was a member of many societies, including being a founder member of the Bedford Branch of the National Trust and a strong supporter of the British Legion. He applied his skills to many projects for the Shuttleworth Collection, from repairing old aircraft to making stands for signs. Not one to just sit at home, he enjoyed many holidays and sea cruises all around the world and was always planning and looking forward to future events. He simply did not have time for old age.

Fred was highly instrumental in getting parking bays installed on Crackle Hill for the convenience of the local residents and strongly supported the footpath initiative down to Shefford until the change in Councils quashed the project. He wrote letters to the Messenger on a number of topics as the need arose.

Fred lived by three simple maxims:

- 1) If you cannot say something nice about someone, then say nothing.
- 2) If you cannot afford to buy something, then don't buy it.
- 3) If a job is worth doing then it's worth doing right.

Such a simple approach to life endeared Fred to all he met and he will be sadly missed by family and friends alike as one of life's true gentlemen. He was a father, teacher and friend. His ashes were spread in Stopsley at the same place as his wife Kathleen in 1976. Together again.

Muhammad Andrew Bucksey

UKIP Bedfordshire Returns to Meppershall

The Bedfordshire Branch of the UK Independence Party is making its second visit to Meppershall on Saturday, 18th January. The normal Branch meeting in the Village Hall will be preceded by its Annual General Meeting, which is open to members only. However, after refreshments at 10.45, the Branch warmly welcomes all members of the public.

UKIP Bedfordshire embraces the three Parliamentary constituencies of Mid Beds, NE Beds and Bedford Borough. As well as promoting national issues such as the leaving the EU, controlling immigration, a sane energy policy and defence forces worthy of the name, we are also involved in local issues such as wind farms and gypsy and traveller sites.

So whether you can't wait to join (UKIP is the fastest - maybe the only! - growing party in the country) or are just mildly curious, do come and hear of our exciting plans for the election for the European Parliament in 2014, and the local and general elections in 2015. You may be pleasantly surprised just how normal "fruitcakes and loonies" really are!

The next two years are going to be momentous for this country. Make sure you are well informed, so that you can play your full part in the democratic process.

Roger Smith
Deputy Chairman
UKIP Bedfordshire

MEPPERSHALL BROWNIES



October and November are always very busy months at brownies with lots of community activities. Our three eldest brownies, Alison, Maisie and Megan, helped at the church harvest supper and did a fantastic job. They made table decorations, set tables, made a dessert and helped clear away the plates. Thank you to Christine Foster for her help and allowing us to help – it was a lovely evening.

We also had our table-top and craft sale to raise money for Operation Christmas Child. The event was really well attended and raised an absolutely amazing £390. Thank you to Tawny Owl for all her hard work which made this such a success. Also thank you to all those who hired stalls, baked cakes and all those who came along.

We have been able to buy lots of new toys, toiletries, stationery and sweets to put in the shoe boxes. We spent a hectic Monday evening filling 100 shoe boxes and these have now been collected and are on their way to children in the Ukraine. Thank you to everyone who came along to help us, the church for their boxes, all those who donated items, and to those who wrapped shoe boxes which is no mean feat – it really has been a village team effort.



The brownies also enjoyed a spooky evening with our Halloween themed evening. The girls came in fancy dress and we had great fun apple bobbing, wrapping the mummy and making sand art spooky creatures.

We also attended this year's Remembrance Day service. Thank you to the brownies that came along.

We enrolled Lana, Jessica and Tayla, who were the first brownies in Meppershall to make the NEW promise and we also welcomed Sophie who started with us in November.

If you are interested in your daughter joining Brownies, then please contact Snowy Owl (Suzanne) on 07817 392325 or you can register online at www.girlguiding.co.uk, select the parents tab and make sure you put Monday afternoon and evening as an option. Places are limited at the moment and you may need to join a waiting list.

MEPPERSHALL PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

We welcomed approximately 30 Parishioners to the November meeting of the Parish Council in the Village Hall.

When I suspended the formal meeting to allow the public to put their questions and comments some of the Parishioners addressed the Council about the proposed development behind the High Street. There were concerns that surface water and household drainage problems already affecting houses in Hilltop View could be made worse by the new housing development. The Parish Clerk agreed to investigate the current problems with the relevant authorities.

There were a number of criticisms of the questionnaire that was handed out at the Public Consultation in October. The speakers felt that the 'tick box' questions were biased and therefore any conclusions drawn from them were not valid. I replied that the questionnaire had been approved by the working groups of the Parish Council and the Village Hall Trustees, who thought that providing a full comment page on the back would allow respondents to say exactly what they felt irrespective of the tick box questions, and many did. Councillors have been provided with copies of all the feedback documents to review before they make any final decisions. Others Parishioners spoke in favour of the project to provide a new Community Centre and accepted that this was not possible without a housing development to provide the funds.

Please remember that the housing development and community centre planning permission will be granted or refused by Central Beds and not the Parish Council, whose role will be to provide the land on which to build the new community centre. When it comes to the formal decision to provide the land, the duty of the Parish Council is to act in this as in all matters affecting the village and its residents, for the benefit of the community as a whole.

In the formal part of the meeting I updated the Council on the overall project, advising them that there was no significant change to tell them about as the legal documents were still being prepared and agreed and therefore were not yet ready to be considered by the Council.

In the Planning Section of the meeting the Councillors reviewed two applications that had been sent to us for an opinion, no observations were recorded. Under Finance, the Council was pleased to approve grants to assist a Scout to attend the World Jamboree in 2015; the Village Fair Committee will receive £750.00 towards expenses and the Bobby Scheme £250.00. The Bobby Scheme supplies and fits security devices to the homes the elderly and vulnerable.

Under Highways and Lighting the Clerk was pleased to report that the extension of the Shefford Road permissive footpath in the built up area of Shefford Road has nearly reached the end of the legal process with the landowners. This will enable it to be extended nearer to the centre of the village to provide a crossing to the paved footpath on the opposite side. The Council is also awaiting the fitting of pedestrian warning signs by the footpath crossing at the top of the hill.

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 and see what we do. Maybe you are thinking about becoming a Councillor at the next election. We look forward to seeing you. The next two Council meetings will be on Monday 9th December and Monday 13th January, both at 7.45 pm in the Village Hall.

David Foskett, Chairman, Meppershall Parish Council –
chairman@meppershall.org

Development in Meppershall

Village Hall Proposal

We were delighted that so many people wanted to contribute to the discussions about the proposed new Village Hall, and that over 300 people attended the exhibition. The comments about the proposed Hall itself were largely positive, with over three quarters of the responses confirming they were likely to use it. As Trustees it is our aim, and indeed our legal obligation, to provide the best possible Village Hall facility for Meppershall.

We have had discussions with the management of similar facilities across Bedfordshire, and visited a number of them in order to help establish both what works, and what doesn't, in order to ensure that the proposed development meets both current and perceived future needs of Meppershall. The proposed layout has been developed over a period of many months, following extensive consultation with users of the current Village Hall, and has been specifically designed to provide the facilities identified as necessary and/or beneficial to their particular use.

There is no question of the proposed Hall becoming a 'white elephant' whether as suggested, or at all. The present hall is already pretty much fully booked throughout term time, weekdays and evenings and over 75% of those responding to the questionnaire confirm that they expected to use a new Village Hall. There is currently no shortage of local people wanting to run both more and different events, and which cannot currently be accommodated.

We have naturally considered future running and maintenance costs, and we would expect the proposed Hall to be self-financing, without the need to significantly increase hire charges. A modern building will be significantly more efficient in heating and lighting costs, and we intend to maximise use of green technology where appropriate. The current building costs a surprising amount to maintain and dealing with leaks from the roof is a task similar to painting the Forth Bridge!

A number of very pertinent observations were made about the proposals for the external play and sports fields, in particular the location of the play equipment. These will all be taken into account, and there will be further discussions before any final decisions are made about purchasing and/or siting of equipment.

Village events such as the annual Fair are a vital part of the Meppershall calendar, and we would certainly not expect them to be cancelled due to building work. We have made it absolutely clear to all parties that the current Village Hall will and must remain open during construction of a new Hall, and indeed until the new Hall is fully operational.

We look forward to progressing construction as soon as we can.

Meppershall Village Hall Trustees

Meppershall Village Hall

Notice of Annual General Meeting
On 5th January 2014 at 6pm in the Village Hall

AGENDA

1. Approve minutes of the previous annual general meeting held on 16th December 2012.
2. Chairman's Report.
3. Treasurer's Report, and approve accounts for the year to 31st March 2013.
4. Approve the setting up of a Limited Company with Constitution similar to that of the current trust deed and for all activities then to be undertaken through that entity as soon as this can be organised.
5. Update on construction of a new Village Hall
6. Election of trustees :
 - Chairman
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Users representatives
 - Nominated individuals
7. Any other business:
 - Notified before the meeting
 - Arising at the meeting

Please see Notes opposite

Notes:

Item 3:

The accounts will be available prior to the meeting on request by post or email.

Item 4:

The trustees have been advised by lawyers that similarly to other such organisations, the Village Hall should be operated through a Limited Company registered at Companies House and to which the trustees would become directors but otherwise act in the same way as at present. The purpose of the company is that it has an infinite life and gives protection to the individuals acting as trustees. The proposed Constitution is available on request by post or email.

Item 6:

Details of the existing trustees are available on request by post or email, all of whom are willing to continue. Further nominations for the role of trustee, with a seconder and the nominees consent to act, should be provided in writing preferably ahead of, or otherwise delivered at the start of the AGM. A nominee must be willing and able to fulfill all the legal duties and responsibilities of a Trustee and make the necessary time available to attend at least four meetings during the year as well as assist in the running of a self-help organisation by taking on and delivering specific projects. The appropriate form for nominations may be requested by post or email.

Item 7:

Items for other business should be submitted in writing or by post or email at least two working days before the AGM so that where appropriate research or information that is required or needs to be obtained can be dealt with before the meeting.

Postal details :

FAO Mr S. Ansell
Ansell Village Stores
6 High Street
Meppershall
Beds
SG17 5LX

Email contact details:

Chairman: stephen.r.ansell@gmail.com
Treasurer: dcbirch@btinternet.com

15th November 2013

The Friends of St. Mary's

QUIZ NIGHT

**Meppershall Village Hall
Saturday January 25, 2014
7pm for 7.30pm
(Bar) (Raffle) (Trophy)**

**TABLES OF 6
£5 PER PERSON**

**Contact: Trevor
01462 813357 or any
Trustee**

YOUR SHOUT

with Trevor Thorley



PETS SERVICE: I concluded my November report with a tongue in cheek remark "if I haven't been eaten by a lion I will tell you all about next month". Well I AM still here and NO; there wasn't a lion at the Pets Service that took place in St. Mary's Church on Sunday although there were one or two small dogs who maybe thought they were bigger than they really were!

This was a lovely service, which was jointly officiated by Rev Roni Goodman and husband Rev Andrew Goodman. There was a very healthy congregation of a wide variety of animals and their owners. All animals were blessed individually. There were no scuffles and all of the animals there were on their very best behaviour. I believe that this may well be repeated again next year, if you missed out this year, you may have the chance to bring your pet along in 2014.

EDWARD LANE: In St. Mary's Church on Friday 26th October, a Service of Thanksgiving took place, officiated by the Reverend Roni Goodman, to celebrate the life of Edward 'Eddie' Lane who passed away on 5th October 2013. A Parkinson's sufferer for 5 years, Eddie died from a stroke aged 87 years.

Proud of his military service in the navy, Eddie met and later married Josie in St. Mary's Church in 1947.

Life took them away from Meppershall for several years but they eventually returned to Meppershall in 1992 where they were to live happily together for the last 21 years.

In a lovely church service, the proceedings opened with music of 'I Vow To Thee My Country'. There was an opening prayer followed by the hymn 'The Lord Is My Shepherd'. Eddie and Josie had four daughters Cathy, Patsy, Debbie and Jackie who jointly presented a family tribute. Patsy and Debbie recited a poem 'He Is Gone', Cathy read a passage from 1Corinthians, Chapter 13 and Jackie the Madrigal 'Never Weather Beaten Sail'. After the rendering hymn 'Thine Be The Glory' grandchildren Stephanie, Suzy, Louisa, Bethany and Benjamin read a poem 'Feel No Guilt in Laughter, He'd Know How Much You Care'. The service concluded with music, 'Stranger on the Shore. There was a retiring collection for Parkinson's UK.



The family departed Meppershall for a Family Committal at Bedford Crematorium.

Friends were invited back to the house on the High Street for refreshments.

KEITH BALL AND HIS JAZZMEN: With the passing of Kenny Ball in March of this year, it was understandable for some to perhaps feel that the band would not be the same under his son Keith who followed his father's wish that he should take over the band. Anyone who came to the concert on October 19 was soon to have such thoughts dismissed.

Keith led the band with such energy and vibrancy that he immediately had the audience in his hands. With the singing of 'all the hits', the trumpet and vocals of Ben Cummings, Kenny's successor, the highly energetic piano playing of Hugh Ledigo, John Bennett on Trombone, Julian Stringle on Clarinet and vocals, Bill Coleman on Double Bass and Nick Millward on drums and vocals (the speed was such that his sticks were just a blur), the evening had everything and much, much more.

For the whole of the second half the audience were singing along to all the songs; it was just a great evening! The Friends would like to thank everyone for coming along and supporting the event. Thank you too to Mark Brinkley for opening up his farmyard, with lighting for car parking, which was much appreciated.

As usual Les Davies and his son Jason did a wonderful job with the lighting effects; you would be hard pressed to find better. The sound system came with the band.

Les came along with professionally made disks Kenny Ball's last visit on 10th March 2012. This disk is the entire length of the concert and is probably the last disk ever made of Kenny Ball in concert. All copies were snapped up within minutes but Les is prepared to 'burn' more copies to order, cost £10 or £12 for blue- ray. All profit will go to St. Mary's Church Restoration Fund. (01462 813357).

QUIZ NIGHT: The eagerly awaited Friends of St. Mary's Annual Quiz Night takes place on Saturday, 25th January, 2014, 7pm for 7.30pm. There will be a raffle and the bar will be open from 7pm. Bookings can be taken from myself 813357 trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com or other trustees. Cost £5 per person, 6 to a table. The 'Loafers' will be playing to hang on to the trophy they won in 2013; can you take it away from them?

Have a great Christmas and wishes for a Happy New Year!

REMEMBER, IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Trevor Thorley: Tel: 01462 813357



Love for God, Life, Learning and for Each Other

Meppershall Church of England Academy

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

School Report - December 2013

The weather may be dark and wet outside at the moment but the children of Meppershall Academy will now bring you a little bit of sunshine. As mentioned in last month's school report, I am now handing over to Miss Rebecca Meyers, the first of our very enthusiastic and budding young reporters. Rebecca has been given the responsibility on behalf of the School Council to write about the recent exciting trip to Bedford that our Year3 and Year4 class experienced.

Faith Tour

On the 23rd of October Year3 and Year4 went on the faith tour. We travelled by bus all the way to Bedford. The first stop off was to visit a Sikh Temple called the Gurdwara. Before entering we all had to take our shoes off and cover our hair. Inside the temple it was gigantic and it stored a very special book. After discovering lots of amazing facts about the temple we then headed to our second destination on our faith tour, the Mosque.

Before entering the Mosque we all took our shoes off and this time just the girls had to cover their hair. For those of you who don't know, a Mosque is a Muslim Place of Worship. Like a Church is a place of worship for Christians. The floors were all carpeted and females had their own room for doing things that helped the Mosque. They even had a telly inside the Mosque. This is for when it gets squashed down stairs the people who worship there can go upstairs and still see what is being said and done. We thought this was a great idea. Inside the

Mosque was a very special chair that looked almost like a throne. It was all decorated in beautiful bright and shiny colours.

Our final destination on the Faith Tour was to visit a Church. Once inside the Church we had our lunch. It was a special lunch that our families had to prepare for us. It had to be a vegetarian lunch. The reason we had to have a vegetarian lunch is because some faiths believe that when you die you come back as an animal.

The Sikh Temple was my favourite place of worship.

The colours were so bright and beautiful. Rebecca Myers, Year 4

I am sure you will all agree that Miss Rebecca Myers did a fantastic job in writing her first ever school report. We are very proud of you Rebecca.

Our Autumn Fayre was held on Saturday 16th November. On behalf of all of the staff and the children can we take this opportunity to thank our wonderful, supportive and dedicated PTA for organising and arranging such a super event for the school and our community. They really are a fantastic team and we appreciate all the hard work and fun events they arrange for the children and families of our school.

As I sit and write this report I have just been interrupted by a very excited Year 1 boy, who has just informed me there are only 42 days left until Christmas! My response was 'Wow what great counting skills you have'. He left happy with the compliment and I was left panicking thinking: is this true? I have just checked and as it stands we have, as I type, 42 days, 10 hours, 14 minutes and about 22 seconds left until Christmas day 2013.

The teachers have a great deal planned for our children over the coming weeks and we are all looking forward to the Christmas celebrations in school and at Church. Our school Pantomime trip has been booked for the 16th December and I am unsure of who is more excited by this, the staff or the children! On that festive note I wish you all well and thank you all for your continued support.

Mary Barker
Deputy Head teacher

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

By Enid Pamment



May we take this opportunity to wish the Residents of Meppershall a very peaceful Christmas and a healthy New Year. We have already booked a few day trips for 2014 and we are currently busy sorting other dates and venues which we hope will be of interest during the coming year.

We did leave Shefford in dry weather heading for London and the Lord Mayor's Show. We made our way to Blackfriars Bridge in good time to purchase a welcome coffee before proceeding into Queen Victoria Street where we remained until the procession returning from the Royal Courts of Justice passed us en route towards Mansion House. Although it had started to rain, many of us ventured out to St Paul's Cathedral where the outward procession was taking place; fortunately, by the time the return journey commenced, the rain had ceased and we even saw a little blue sky coming through the cloud. The weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of all of the groups taking part: they were laughing and cheering with the crowds, touching our hands and giving out flags, whistles and advertising details of who they represented. A couple of soldiers even asked if they could thank our people who were sitting on the coach for attending and supporting the occasion! Each year I attend I marvel at the kindness people show to one another. As always the horses were magnificent – likewise their riders, sitting there and keeping their balance while playing and holding musical instruments and reading their music! Also watching where they are going! We had a magnificent view of the gold coach with the new Lord Mayor who is a lady this year. Alderman Fiona Woolf is the 686th Lord Mayor and is only the second lady to hold this office. The Lord Mayor's Show is one of London's annual highlights and dates back to the 13th Century. The theme of this year's parade was 'The Energy of Life'. After the procession and when we were instructed by the Police, we made our way in convoy back to Blackfriars Bridge to take our place ready for the fireworks which were ignited from a barge on the River Thames. Several people who joined us for this event have requested we book again for 2014! How enthusiastic is that! We still have three further trips in December and a 'Turkey and Tinsel' which we will report in the February 2014 edition.

Listed below are a few of the trips we have planned for 2013/14. If you are interested in joining us, please do not hesitate to contact Enid on 01462 851397. The 'Leisure Group' is open to everyone in the local community and a warm welcome awaits you all. London Theatre trips are arranged by Stevenage Leisure Group, but arrangements are made to meet the coach from Shefford unless otherwise informed.

Forthcoming Events 2013/14 (kindly telephone for details)

John Rutter – Royal Albert Hall (Matinee)	Thursday 12 th December
Christmas Celebration (Pasque Harmony)	Saturday 14 th
Essex Highlands Christmas Special	Wed 18 th December
Hampstead & Kenwood House	Wed 19 th February 2014
Ripley's Believe it or not attractions (Inc lunch)	Wed 12 th March
Get-Together, Memorial Hall, Shefford	Sat 22 nd March 2014
Man-Made Wonders at the Heart of Essex	Wed 9 th April 2014
The London Olympic Legacy Tour	Sat 31 st May 2014
Bedford River Cruise with lunch	TBA

Holidays: (kindly telephone for more details)

Bournemouth, staying at The Sands Hotel for a Tinsel & Turkey break. (Fully Booked)	4 th – 8 th December 2013
Jersey – flying from Luton and staying at the Metropole Hotel on half-board basis	20 th -26 th April <u>2014</u>

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

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

John Rutter Xmas Celeb – RAH: Arena & Mid Choir	Thursday 12 th December
Disney on Ice; O ² Arena – First price seats	Sunday 29 th December
Billy Elliot –Victoria Palace Theatre – Stalls Seats (inc Fish & Chip lunch) 09.45 pick up	Thursday 30 th Jan 2014
Dirty dancing – Piccadilly Theatre – Stalls Seats	Sunday 9 th Feb 2014

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

Matilda – Stalls seats – The Cambridge Theatre	Wednesday 12 th Dec
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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 Paul Savuto

Some More Financial Questions and Answers

Q: I am married with 2 small children. My wife and I are taking out our first mortgage. What type of insurances/protection plans should we be considering?

A: The answer to this question will depend partly on what cover you already have in place and what benefits you might be entitled to at work. However, if we assume that you have no existing cover or benefits, then you may wish to consider the following plans:-

Level Term Assurance: this is typically taken out to protect an interest only mortgage whereby your debt to the lender is not ordinarily reducing. Therefore, this type of cover provides protection that remains level throughout the term of the plan.

Decreasing Term Assurance: this is typically taken out to protect a capital repayment mortgage, whereby the cover gradually reduces over the term of the plan broadly in line with your reducing mortgage debt. This is also known as a Mortgage Protection Plan. This is usually lower cost than a Level Term policy.

Critical Illness Cover: this can be taken out on its own or as an extension to a Term Assurance plan. It pays out the sum assured in the event of the assured person suffering an illness that is covered by the plan. As an example, this would typically be a Heart Attack, Stroke, Cancer, Loss of Limb(s), Paralysis, Loss of Sight/Hearing, Alzheimer's, and so on. Around 40 conditions would normally be covered in most policies. However, certain policies can cover a much wider list of illnesses and can also include partial pay-outs for more obscure or less severe illnesses.

Accident, Sickness & Unemployment Cover: this is designed to help you meet your monthly mortgage payments and associated costs for up to 24 months if you are unable to work due to illness or accident, or being made unemployed and unable to find alternative work. The policy is renewable on each yearly anniversary.

Permanent Health Insurance: this is particularly useful if you want to protect your income over the long-term, i.e. as far as your normal retirement age. The policy replaces part of your income if you are unable to work due to long-term illness or injury. The policy cover can be increased to cater for changes to your earnings level.

Buildings & Contents Insurance: this provides cover in the event of your building and/or contents being damaged due to an insured event. This would typically be fire, flood, burglary, and malicious damage. The buildings policy will cover your building structure and any permanent fixtures, such as sanitary fixings and pipe work. The contents cover protects your contents, e.g. furniture, clothes, personal possessions, etc. This cover can usually be extended to cover personal items outside the home, such as money, jewellery, phones and portable computers. A mortgage lender will usually insist that the building is covered on completion of the purchase.

Note: *this is not an exhaustive list of potential protection plans. We recommend that you speak to a qualified financial adviser before taking out any protection plans.*

Competition Time

Simply state where you think the closing level of the FTSE 100 Index (UK largest 100 companies) will be on 16th June 2014 and 19th December 2014. The person closest to the actual level on each of those dates will win two bottles of wine each.

As of 11th November 2013, the FTSE 100 Index level was 6,727.

Here is how the FTSE has performed over the last 2 years, but where next?



Simply contact me by phone 07834 499595 or email ps@dgsifa.com with your closing levels on the above dates and include your name, address and contact number. I'll keep a leader board and will update this in The Messenger, so you can keep track of how you are progressing. Have fun.

Paul Savuto, Chartered Financial Planner, DGS Independent Financial Advisers.

POLEHANGER: A FARMING DIARY

Episode 48



Looking Forward

“ . . . assuming we get some substantial rain before long. Dust is blowing behind the drill in the strong winds today.” That is what I wrote on 10th October. What a difference a month makes!

The dry weather baked the clay in the soil so that the fields left to drill were ‘nobbly’. It was no accident that The London Brick Company set up business at Stewartby! Then it started raining and hasn’t stopped enough to give four or so dry days in a row in order to get machinery back onto the fields without doing any damage to soil structure. The plus factor is that the unwelcome blackgrass seed that I wrote about in late summer has fully germinated now. We have the opportunity to kill it off effectively before drilling these fields, whether in late Autumn (which becomes increasingly less likely as time goes on with shorter days) or Spring. Two of the fields in question are either side of the road down to Shefford once you leave the village. You can watch progress . . . or lack of it . . . and nod knowingly to your travel companions as you pass by. Meanwhile, the wheat that was drilled in early October has germinated well and is looking good for its winter slumber.

A Rubbish Day

Today I have done my fortnightly rubbish pick at the end of the drive and 50 metres in either direction on the road verges. I wish I didn’t have to. I wish I knew why people discard their rubbish so casually. I would particularly like to ask the person who throws an empty Stella can into the hedges on a regular basis (could be daily from the number of cans) if he/she could take it home and recycle it. Too much to ask?

In the meantime I will continue to pick up litter and hope that I may not need to in the future. Is a cleaner environment a deterrent? If so, could we make a difference to the environment, but also the rubbish throw away culture by frequently picking up small amounts of litter as we go about our business. Joan Bakewell did a programme on BBC recently on this subject though I didn’t manage to catch it.

From the News

Food Security

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs select committee released a statement on 29th October stating that the UK is 62% self-sufficient in food production. It will launch a fresh inquiry into food security (I presume

this is not about locking your freezer!). It will also cover the role that can be played by science and GM technology.

Globally, climate change, population growth, energy supply and water security are all putting pressure on food production and food price inflation (currently 4.4% in the UK apparently).

Do you see that as a problem for the future or not? Should we produce a higher % of our food here in the UK? Should available land be built on, or produce renewable energy? How should we, as a nation, prioritize land use in such a densely populated country with conflicting needs?

Driverless Tractors

There are already cars commercially available that can park themselves or automatically slow down if travelling too close to the car in front. Technologically, there is no reason why unmanned tractors cannot perform tasks when GPS autosteer is accurate to 1cm. Certainly there is scope to take on some of the 'boring jobs' but can it (ever?) replace the subtle decision making required in haphazardly shaped or steeply sloping fields? Could robotic machines judge the effectiveness of a particular cultivation pass in our fickle climate?

This level of automation has already happened in the car making industry; it's happening in dairy farming so why not arable operations involving tractors? Will this further reduce the number of people employed in agriculture? What is acceptable?

P.S. A simple mechanical guidance system for tractors was devised with limited success 100 years ago in the US!

Thankful for Rain

Parts of Queensland, Australia currently have an 80% rainfall deficit against long term averages. So we can't complain here about a few wet days.

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

Thursday 19th. Took 3 calves to Wymondley (*where Dad was born and brother Charles farmed*) and lost one when it burst the rear door! (*Temporary or permanent loss?*)

Saturday 21st. Very sharp frost, too sharp for cultivating: (*but not too sharp for*) football match, Meppershall Sunday School: 3 v Shefford Methodist SS: 3, once sun came out late morning.

Christmas Day. After early cup of tea and Christmas stockings, helped feed round cows and young stock, and check no water pipes frozen.

January 1964:

Wednesday 29th. To London for day from Bedford by Birch bus via M1 (*are you old enough to remember Birch buses?*)

Chris Foster: 10th November 2013

THE LUCY PAGES

By Lucy Standbridge

Aged 12



Pantomime

I performed in this year's Meppershall Players' pantomime, *Sleeping Beauty*, playing the part of Little Bo Peep, and it got me wondering how and why did pantomime start? Why are some of the male characters played by women and vice versa? I have looked at the history and how it has changed, then asked some people what their favourite pantomimes are.

Pantomimes are usually performed at Christmas and are based on fairy tales like *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*. They originated from comedy plays in Italy during the 16th century. Pantomimes started to be performed in Britain during the 17th century then, in the 19th century, a famous clown called Grimaldi started using audience participation. He made up phrases for the audience to shout out at times during the play. The two most common phrases are "he's behind you" and "oh no it isn't, oh yes it is", which I'm sure you have all heard at some point! A usual character in a pantomime is a dame, normally played by a man; this was because in Shakespeare's plays all the actors were men. Often, there is a young woman playing a male character, called the principal boy, because in the Victorian era acting wasn't seen as a professional job for men, so women played most of the characters.

Interviews

I asked five Meppershall residents who their favourite pantomimes are. Sam Hefford's favourite pantomime is *Cinderella* because it has a happy ending. Julie Jackson also liked *Cinderella* because of the funny ugly sisters which mean double trouble! John Holloway (my Grandad) likes *Jack and the Beanstalk* because it has big runner beans, while Thomas Clark (age 11) likes *Dick Whittington* because there is lots of action going on. Karen Mitchell said "My favourite is 'A Christmas Carol' because it is the most wonderful story by Charles Dickens".

I also asked them if they could be a pantomime character, who they would be? Karen would be the good fairy because she could grant everyone wishes. Thomas said that he would be *Dick Whittington* because he would get to fight with a sword! Sam said she would be *Cinderella* because she likes the big dress and glass slippers. John Holloway said "I would be *Aladdin* because I would have a magic lamp with a genie for wishes". And Julie said she would also be *Cinderella* because she would have a Prince Charming, have nice shoes and a Fairy Godmother to grant her wishes. Have you got your tickets? There's still time to get a seat.

CALENDAR OF MEPPERSHALL EVENTS

December 2013

<i>Sunday 1st</i>		
Christmas Craft Activities	10.00 – 11.15 am	Meppershall Academy
Christmas Craft Fayre	12.00 – 4.00 pm	Shefford Memorial Hall
<i>Thursday 5th</i>		
Evergreens	2.15 – 4.00 pm	Sugarloaf
<i>Friday 6th</i>		
Players' Panto – Sleeping Beauty	7.45 pm	Village Hall
<i>Saturday 7th</i>		
Players' Panto – Sleeping Beauty	3.00 pm & 7.45 pm	Village hall
Floral Christmas Workshop	10.00 am – 4.00 pm	St Faith's Church, Hexton
Santa Special Train Rides	Timed tickets	Summerfield Railway
<i>Monday 9th</i>		
Meeting of Parish Council	7.45 pm	Village Hall
<i>Friday 13th</i>		
Christmas Bingo	Doors open 6.30 pm	Meppershall Social Club
<i>Sunday 15th</i>		
Santa Special Train Rides	Timed tickets	Summerfield Railway
Santa's Float & Carols	Afternoon	Round Meppershall
<i>Thursday 19th</i>		
Evergreens Christmas Party	2.15 – 4.00 pm	Sugar Loaf
<i>Sunday 22nd</i>		
Nine lessons & Carols	6.30 pm	St Mary's Church
<i>Tuesday 24th</i>		
Nativity Play (open to all)	5.00 pm	St Mary's Church
<i>Friday 27th</i>		
Foresters F/S Concert: Johnny Red	8.00 pm - midnight	Village Hall
<i>Tuesday 31st</i>		
New Year's Eve Disco	8.00 'til Late	Meppershall Social Club

January 2014

<i>Sunday 5th</i>		
Meppershall Village Hall AGM	6.00 pm	Village hall
<i>Wednesday 8th</i>		
Players new play read through	7.30 pm	Village Hall
<i>Monday 13th</i>		
Meeting of Parish Council	7.45 pm	Village Hall
<i>Saturday 18th</i>		
UKIP Meeting	10.45 am	Village hall
<i>Saturday 25th</i>		
Friends of St Mary's Quiz Night	7.00 for 7.30 pm	Village hall

LIFE ON THE WILD SIDE

By JEREMY HOLDEN

Politics



One consolation of living abroad is not having to deal with politics and elections, at least not having to actively take part in them. I have a native suspicion of anyone who seeks to be a politician, and I am glad I don't have to choose which one I want representing my interests. By all accounts the political situation in UK seems farcical, but at least it isn't usually violent.

The recent elections in Cambodia were another matter. Ghost voters, endemic corruption, and voters turning up to find their vote had already been cast by some mysterious other, lead to discontent with the final result – which, as everyone guessed beforehand – saw another victory for the ruling party. Despite the disgruntlement of the opposition, they called for a peaceful protest to decry what they perceived as a rigged election. For the most part it remained peaceful. Ten of thousands took to the streets without the usual violence and looting that often accompanies such things.

As a photographer stuck in Phnom Penh for the week I decided to take some pictures of the demonstrations. Photojournalism isn't my thing, but was something to do, so I tracked the demonstration to Phnom Penh's pleasant waterfront. The roads leading to the Royal Palace and the residence of the Prime Minister were all barricaded with razor wire and guarded by police. This was inconvenient for many of the locals who lived or worked in this area, and it created some mild tension. As a foreigner I was not challenged when I climbed over the wire to get some photographs among the throng of various kinds of security forces. It was all quite peaceful, just as the opposition had requested, until one angry young man began to yank at the barricades with all the ferocity of someone trying to escape a burning house. Others soon followed, and within minutes a swarm of protesters carried the barricades away, like ants with a fallen grasshopper, and threw them into the river. The police response was speedy: a new roll of razor wire was drawn across the street and tear gas canisters were shot into the crowd. I received only a peripheral dose of gas, but that was unpleasant enough – to be engulfed in a cloud of it would certainly be debilitating. Meanwhile, two fire trucks emblazoned with 666 (the emergency number in Cambodia) pulled up

behind the wire, and water cannons were aimed at the most active protestors. The angry young man was clearly the cause of the violence and the water cannon was directed at him. He clung to the remaining barricade for almost a minute the under the full force of the blast until his breathe gave out and he was swept down the street into a tangle of razor wire. At this point I saw a photo opportunity and rushed in to get it. Whether it was an accident or whether the police weren't keen on me taking photographs I don't know, but I was targeted next. I can attest to the effectiveness of both tear gas and water cannons. The blast knocked me over like a skittle and sent me sprawling into a bird's nest of razor wire.

Clothes ripped and camera soaked I went back to get some more pictures of the now comatose angry young man (he had almost drowned under the onslaught of the water cannon). I got some good photographs and experienced some new things, but I must say, politics is not for me.

The photographs I took can be seen here:

http://www.flickr.com/photos/jeremy_holden/sets/72157635537720841/

Below is one of the pictures from Jeremy's set.





Henlow Church of England Academy



Arts Week

The week before the October Half-term break saw the whole of Henlow CE Academy involved in Arts Week. Arts Week is now an annual event which enables the children to participate in artistic and creative activities which further develop the normal daily curriculum. The pupils work in their House groups so that there is a mix of year groups within each smaller working party. The theme for the week was the five continents (Africa, Oceania, Americas, Asia and Europe), with each House group assigned a different continent which they explored through Music, Dance, Drama, Art and Film.



Key Dates for 2014

Spring Term- Pupils return to School
 Travelling Books Book Fair
 KS3 Drama Production
 End of Spring Term

Tuesday 7th January 2014
 Wednesday 27th February 2014
 Tuesday 1st & Wednesday 2nd April 2014
 Friday 4th April 2014

If you would like more information on any of the above please contact the School Office on 01462 813733 email: henlowacademy@schools.bedfordshire.gov.uk

PUZZLE PAGE

Su Doku 111

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

Su Doku 112

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

(Solutions on page 36 – with thanks to Paul Smith)

MEPPERSHALL SOCIAL CLUB

1st Monday

Games Night

Cards, dominoes, board games
Challenge a friend to a game over a drink

2nd Sunday

Quiz Night

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 7.00 – 8.30: £3 per person
Tickets available from the bar or by calling Gemma on 07968 529282

CHRISTMAS BINGO

Friday 13th December
Doors Open 6.30 pm, Eyes Down 7.15 pm
ALL WELCOME
Entrance (non-members) £1 + £7 for books
Includes Supper

NEW YEAR'S EVE DISCO

8 pm 'til Late
£2 per ticket (1st drink free)
Ticket only. Tickets available from Committee members, the bar
or by calling Gemma on 07968529282

ALL WELCOME

For more details see posters or call Gemma

Solution to Su Doku 111

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

Solution to Su Doku 112

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



Incident Type:	Burglary.
Location:	Church Road, Meppershall.
Date and Time:	Monday 4th November, between 5:00 and 10:00 p.m.
Incident Details:	<p>The offender has gained access to the rear garden, smashing a ground floor window.</p> <p>A watch has been taken.</p>
Crime Reference:	J D / 3 9 2 2 3 / 2013.
Crime Reduction Advice:	<p>Keep Doors locked, even when you are in the house.</p> <p>Keep garden tools locked away to avoid them being used to force a door, or window.</p> <p>Don't leave out anything that can be used as a climbing aid, either to reach a window or into a neighbours garden.</p> <p>Keep hallways clear of valuables like vehicle keys, handbags and laptop where they may be seen.</p> <p>Report suspicious activity in neighbour's gardens.</p>
<p>If you have information about any crime or suspicious activity please call the Control Room on 1 0 1</p> <p>Text your message to 07786 200011</p> <p>Alternatively you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111, or online at www.crimestoppers-uk.org</p> <p>No personal details are taken, information is not traced or recorded and you will not go to court.</p>	

Witnesses Sought To Clifton Ram Raid

Bedfordshire Police are appealing for witnesses to come forward after a village store cashpoint was stolen by thieves in the early hours of Friday morning (Nov 1).

The raid happened at around 1.30am at the One Stop Shop in Shefford Road, Clifton, when three or four offenders used a stolen JCB telescopic loader to move two vehicles out of the way of the cashpoint before wrenching it from the wall. The offenders, who were wearing dark clothing and balaclavas, then loaded the cash machine onto a white pick-up truck – believed to have been stolen in Cambridgeshire – before driving away. A significant amount of money was in the cash machine when it was stolen and the JCB caused considerable damage to the shop.

Officers are checking local CCTV footage but are also keen to hear from anybody who may have seen the raid taking place or from anyone who may have seen the offenders fleeing afterwards. Detective Constable Paula Ebdale, who is investigating the raid, said: “This appears to have been a well organised and well executed raid which was carried out in a swift and reasonably efficient manner. I’m keen to hear from anyone who may have witnessed the raid or has any information about the offenders. Even the smallest bit of information could help us with our inquiries.”

If you have information relating to this incident, contact DC Ebdale, in confidence, on 01234 275141, the non-emergency 101 number, or text information to 07786 200011. Alternatively contact independent charity Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111, or online at crimestoppers-uk.org.

FILM REVIEW

By Carlie Newman

Tom Hanks, as the eponymous hero of **CAPTAIN PHILLIPS** (cert 12A 2hrs, 14 mins.), gives his usual good performance as an ordinary man facing unusual circumstances. In this case they are extraordinarily terrifying events. The film had a gala showing at the London Film Festival and is now out on general release.



We first meet the middle-aged, a little overweight, Captain Richard Phillips as he leaves his family (wife Catherine Keener in a mere cameo part here) in Vermont and flies to southern Oman to take command of an

American ship which carries commercial goods and also Humanitarian aid supplies. It is on its way to Kenya. The Maersk Alabama is a large multi-storied ship, with a crew of mixed nationalities, all unarmed. We then meet the Somali fishermen who are to become hijackers.

The men are recruited in Eyl, Somalia and we learn a little of the poverty and the consequent eagerness of the men to enlist for piracy missions under the command of a warlord and his recruiters. Led by Muse (Barkhad Abdi) the men, carrying guns, set off in two small boats.

The skiffs approach the Alabama but one lot of pirates turns and leaves when Captain Phillips makes a pretend call on his radio pretending to be a rescue mission. However, one of the skiffs, containing four Somalian pirates lead by Muse (Barkhad Abdi), returns and, in spite of water hoses turned on them, boards the

container ship. Richard Phillips manages to tell his crew to hide but he is captured and held by the hijackers. His crew are also later discovered and they, too, fear for their lives. Phillips' tries to negotiate a deal and offers \$30,000 in cash if the pirates will leave the ship in the lifeboat. But the pirates renege on the deal taking Phillips with them in the lifeboat and his life is in real danger. But the US Navy is now in pursuit, which makes the pirates even more anxious to harm but not kill their hostage.

While the background to Captain Phillips' journey is given, there is such a brief sketch of the lives of the fishermen back home, who, it is implied, are driven to piracy by the poverty of their existence in Somalia, that we don't really get any true idea of their actual day to day experiences. That the picture was almost all shot on the open water is obvious from the visual look. Experienced cinematographer Barry Ackroyd manages to capture the rolling seas and the very difficult task of the climatic chase in night seas where, in darkness, the US Navy struggles to reach the Maersk Alabama.

Hanks gives a great performance as Captain Phillips, solid under attack but showing emotion from time to time as he faces the peril of his situation. Some of his scenes really do have a strong and even emotional impact. Newcomer Barkhad Abdi, making his first film, excels as Muse, the leader of the pack and brings ferocity as well as a certain humane quality to his performance. Barkhad Abdirahman, Faysal Ahmed and Mahat M. Ali as the other three pirates manage to portray their characters with a certain veracity and the four work well together. The dramatic scenes between Muse and Phillips make one watch without moving a muscle as they are so exciting. Director Paul Greengrass has taken the book, based on the real-life hijacking incident, and turned it into a thrilling and suspenseful story. Even for those who know what happened in the end, the film remains constantly engaging and even shocking at times. It is recommended viewing at your local cinema.



The Meppershall Players



Have you got your tickets for Sleeping Beauty yet? If the answer is “no”, don’t panic, stay calm and proceed straight to Roger’s Bakery, where not only can you buy bread and yummy cakes from the lovely Mary and her girls, you can also buy tickets for this year’s pantomime. This is a show for all the family, so why not give them a treat and start your festive season celebrations with a bang at the Meppershall Players Pantomime 2013 Sleeping Beauty.

Our charity performance this year is on Saturday 30th November at 3pm, and is in aid of Meppershall Pre-School, so please buy a ticket/tickets for this matinee performance to support your local Pre-School.

The dates of the 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

Ticket Prices are: Matinees £6 (concessions £5); Evenings £7 (concessions £6).
Last Night £9 (no concessions).

Concessions - Senior Citizens and Children 16 years and under.

Tickets are on sale at Roger’s Bakery now. Tel: 813398.

If you like to sing Karen’s Christmas Karaoke will be at Meppershall Social Club on Saturday 21st December 8pm till late.

The Players will be having their customary winter break after the pantomime and will meet back in the New Year on Wednesday 8th January 2014 at 7.30pm.

We are still on the look-out for a pianist. The Players have a nice electric piano (which you might have seen at the annual Meppershall Music Festival) so if you like to play a wide range of music, fancy a challenge and have the time to spare (mainly for pantomime and any Summer variety shows) we’d like to hear from you.

Spring/Summer Production: The Players are looking at staging a two-act play; the read-through for this will be on Wednesday 8th January 2014 at 7.30pm. If you are interested in acting and looking for a new challenge in 2014, come along and join the Players. We're a friendly bunch and look forward to meeting new people.

This play will involve a full set, so if you're not really into acting but are handy with hammer, nails, wallpaper and paint, we'd love to meet you.

We have been given a suggestion (more of a challenge actually) for our arena display at the Meppershall Summer Fair. I can't give too much away at the moment, but I can tell you it will not involve aircraft this year (I get altitude sickness).

Now we're already looking at pantomimes for 2014, is there a pantomime/fairy tale that you would really like to see if so let the Players know by Facebook The Meppershall Players or e-mail the Players Chairman, karen.mitchell11@talktalk.net.

Closing date for 'The panto I'd like to see' requests is 31st January 2014. The pantomime/fairy tale with the most requests is the one we'll do, and then we'll put all those names in a hat and draw out two names who will each receive two tickets for the first night of the 2014 Pantomime.

Meppershall Players do have their own page on Facebook, which will be updated the first Monday of every month.

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

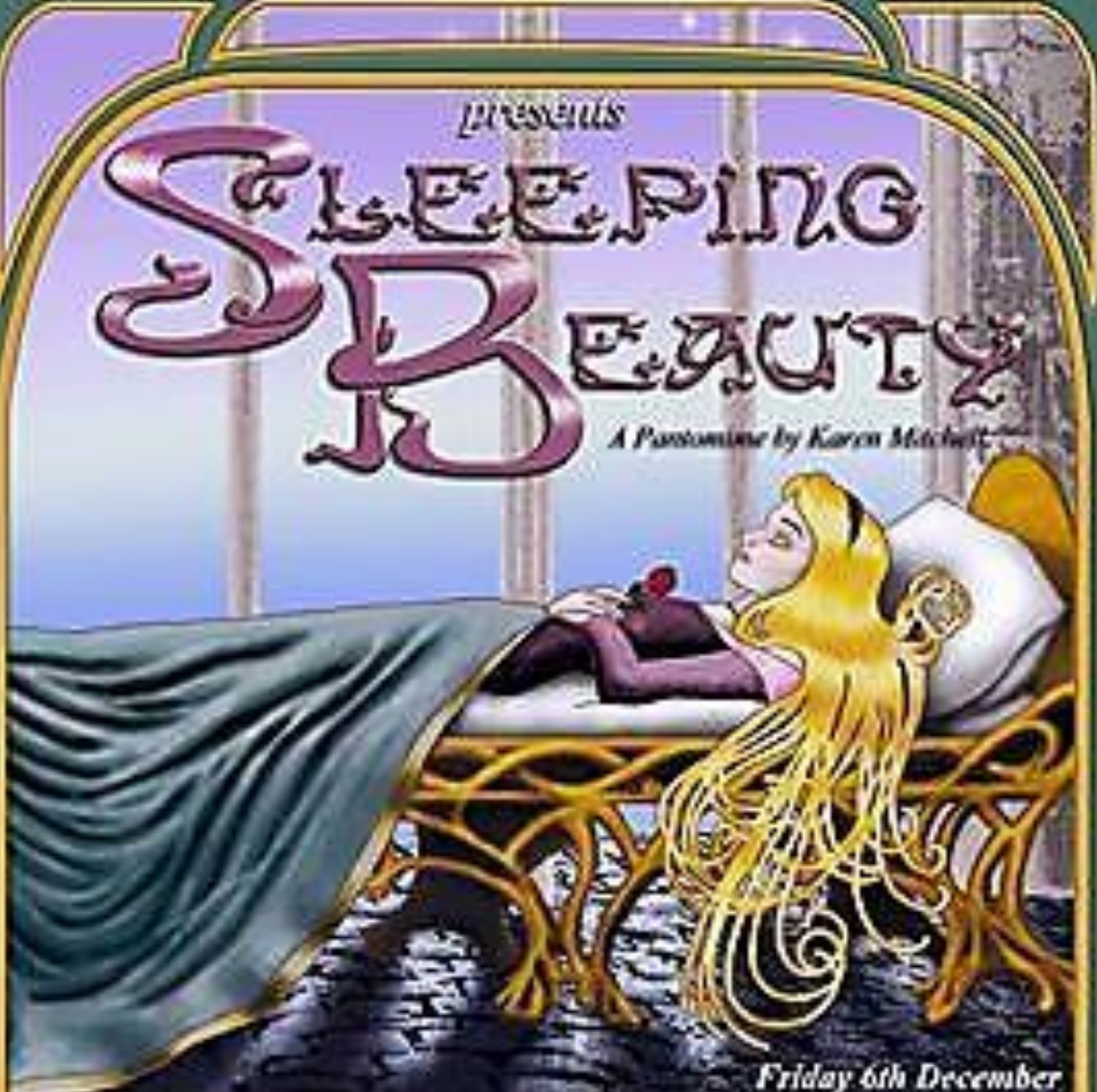
THE MEPPERSHALL PLAYERS

Power to Children's World

presents

SLEEPING BEAUTY

A Pantomime by Karen Mitchell



Friday 29th November
 7:45pm Adults £7, Concessions £6

Saturday 30th November
 3:00pm Adults £6, Concessions £5
 7:45 Adults £7, Concessions £6

Friday 6th December
 7:45pm Adults £7, Concessions £6

Saturday 7th December
 3:00pm Adults £6, Concessions £5
 7:45pm Final Performance £9
 (No Concessions)

Concessions are Senior Citizens and children under 16.
 All tickets on sale at Roger's Bakery, Meppershall. (01462) 813398

Meppershall Garden Club

Activities:

Our recent meetings have given us the opportunity to swap many plants and seeds from our own gardens. It's amazing what a good range we have between us. A number of us spent some time tending to the Village hall border & planters, this included planting some pansies.

We are now looking forward to our December meeting which will also be our Christmas social.

Below is an article on a local place to visit, many thanks to Linda, one of our members, for this – as she says it's something to remember for next year.

Pumpkin and Apple Gala held at the Luton Hoo Walled Garden



I went along to this event with my husband and two grandchildren. The event was advertised as a celebration of the autumn harvest and it was certainly that. There was a wild and wonderful exhibition of hundreds of pumpkins, squashes and gourds that have been turned into all kinds of wonders by children from schools in the local area. In addition there was The London Vegetable Orchestra, Ferret racing, Morris dancing, Face painting, a Beer and cider tent, Dog Show and Live music. Lots of Craft stalls; delicious food; chainsaw carving; children's rides and loads of other activities for all the family. For the grandchildren, the highlight of the event was trying to win a nearly life sized stuffed animal. Unfortunately, they were unlucky in their quest but the money spent trying to win could have bought one! This Event will definitely be in the diary for a return visit next year.

I hope you all have the opportunity to take a break over the festive period. Enjoy!
Kim.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us at The Meppershall Garden Club.

If you are interested in joining the MGC do contact us.

Contacts:

Linda Parker 01462 815114 or

Kim Lee Tyler 01462 811750 or

Sarah Till 01462 817176 or

e-mail: meppershallgardenclub@hotmail.co.uk

WINTER IN THE GARDEN

The garden may appear to sleep in winter, but there is still much to do and enjoy, especially on those crystal clear mornings when the sun shines on frost or snow. Outside is a fascinating world of patterns and shapes, with the garden stripped bare to reveal its bones and structure.

Roses

Although apparently lifeless, roses are merely resting during their winter dormancy. You can plant or move them now and, as winter draws to an end, prune them to concentrate their energy for the coming season.

Climbers

Winter is the time to get to grips with deciduous climbers, for while they are dormant you can see what lies beneath their cloaks of growth. This is the best season to prune certain climbers such as ornamental vines and winter jasmine and service their supports. During very cold spells, evergreen and slightly frost-tender climbers will benefit from protection.

Shrubs and trees

Apart from routine matters such as planting and protection, winter is pruning time for many shrubs and trees and an opportunity for you to use your artistic skills to shape and train them to suit your garden.

Water gardens

Once you have cleared the pond of leaves and plant remains, and taken care of the pump, there is little to do until the frosts arrive. Then it is essential to keep an area of water ice-free, so that fish and other pond creatures can survive the sub-zero conditions.

Lawns

Although we think of winter as a time when the lawn takes a rest, this really only applies when conditions are very cold. During mild spells the grass will often grow, and you can mow, repair turf or even make a new lawn.

Vegetables

Take advantage of mild spells to get ahead in the vegetable garden by digging and preparing seedbeds. There are still some fresh crops to pick to supplement those stored away in late summer and autumn. On dark chilly days draw up plans for next year, so you can get your orders for seeds, young plants and potatoes in early.

In a well planned garden, winter is foreshortened by the appearance of snowdrops or cheery yellow aconites, by fragrant winter honeysuckle and daphne, as well as early flowering rhododendrons.

Spring is just around the corner!

The Messenger would like to thank Viv Harvey for her past contributions. Starting this month, the piece will be contributed by different members of the MGC.



DOG WALKER

DOG WALKER AND PET SERVICES.

INCLUDING DAILY WALKS, POP-INS, PET
SITTING OF ANY SMALL DOMESTIC
ANIMALS, BOARDING SERVICES FOR
LONG AND SHORT TERM STAYS.

FRIENDLY RELIABLE LADY FROM WILSTEAD
VILLAGE, EXPERIENCED, INSURED AND WITH OWN
TRANSPORT.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL LOU ON 07934 555540.



Parents, Grandparents, & Childminders are all welcome.

December is round again and this year seems to have gone faster than the one before, if that's possible. We have had so much fun this term, and it has been very enjoyable watching some visitors change from babies into tots exploring everything around them. The children make all the hard work worthwhile!

Our fantastic Christmas party will be on Tuesday 17th December. We plan to have more dressing up fun, festive music, games and sparkly crafts, not forgetting a special buffet for all the little ones, and homemade warmed mince pies for all the adults.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to make this year such a good one, and the committee who have worked their socks off. It would not work without you!

*We hope you all have a Happy Christmas
and a peaceful New Year!*

**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

Shefford Town Memorial Hall, Hitchin Road, Shefford - Fund Raising Events:
Sunday 1st December - Christmas Craft Fayre 12 noon till 4pm Free Entry to buyers, pitch booking in advance only. Licensed bar, Christmas carols, homemade cakes and lots more.

Bookings or enquiry's for any Fund raising events to Linda 01462814582
 Hall Hire Sheila 01462815495

We are also looking for a booking clerk, Secretary, and any new people that would like to join our Committee to help fund raise or help with the day to day running of the Hall.

Back by Popular demand:

**'Johnny Red' 50's & 60's music and rock and roll
 + Disco and Buffet**

Friday 27th December 2013

Meppershall Village Hall 8 pm until midnight

Tickets available now £7.50

Contact Helen 01462 812708 or 07989 914941

SUMMERFIELD MINATURE RAILWAY SANTA IS COMING TO SUMMERFIELD ON 7TH & 8TH DECEMBER

Booking is essential to see him.

Down load a booking form from our website,

WWW.BEDFORDMES.CO.UK,

or phone 01494 439098

**All Santa Special trains are pre-booked and timed, and we are
 unable to accept bookings on the day.**

Floral Christmas Workshop

St Faiths Church, Hexton

Saturday, 7th December, 10am – 4pm.

Floral demonstrations in the morning followed by a creative afternoon producing a Christmas door wreath. A fee of £35 per person includes light refreshments and a contribution towards the church restoration.

For further details, contact;

Sue Malloy on 01462 812115



ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

CATHOLIC CHURCH

HIGH STREET

SHEFFORD

Tel: 01462 813436

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2013

TUESDAY 24 DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS EVE:

6.00PM : CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS MASS

11.30pm: CAROLS

MIDNIGHT: FIRST MASS OF CHRISTMAS

WEDNESDAY 25 DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS DAY:

MASS AT 9.00am & 11.00am

NO EVENING MASS.



Ponderings

This term has been a voyage of discovery. The children have learnt a lot about themselves, and all the special events throughout this period. They put their hands inside touchy feely boxes for Halloween, made paint wheels for Bonfire night, poppy pictures for Remembrance day, and dressed up for Children in Need. The Christmas season is again upon us, so our children will now be getting very excited about the Christmas party on the last day of term and the magic that then follows.

The staff have worked extremely hard this year to make each week exciting and interesting for the children. So much effort goes in behind the scenes, but the end result is lots of happy children and hopefully contented parents knowing their little ones are safe and settled. Thank you to all the staff for your immeasurable hard work, you make a formidable team!

The committee has also worked hard this term, especially the fundraising team who have yet again organised some super events bringing in more money for valuable resources. We could not have done it without support from parents and the wider community, thank you all for caring and making a difference.

Meppershall Pre-school is now enrolling for the spring term. If your little one is ready to make new friends and enjoy our stimulating, safe environment, please ring Tamsin our fantastic level 4 leader any morning in term time on 817359 to book a visit.

The government now have more funding available for 2 year olds, so if you receive benefits and would like to find out if your family qualifies, please visit your local Children's Centre, or call Central Beds on 0300 300 8119.

Have a very Happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing you all in
2014!

Meppershall Pre-school located in Meppershall Village Hall, can take up to 24 children in each session from in and around the surrounding areas from the age of 2 years 6 months.

We also have limited spaces for funded two year olds.

Please ring 07713 627376, email info@meppershall-ps.co.uk, or visit www.meppershall-ps.co.uk to find out more about the Early Years Foundation Stage and exceptional care we offer.

Ofsted Registration Number: 219293

Registered Charity: 1031913



THE BIKE SHED

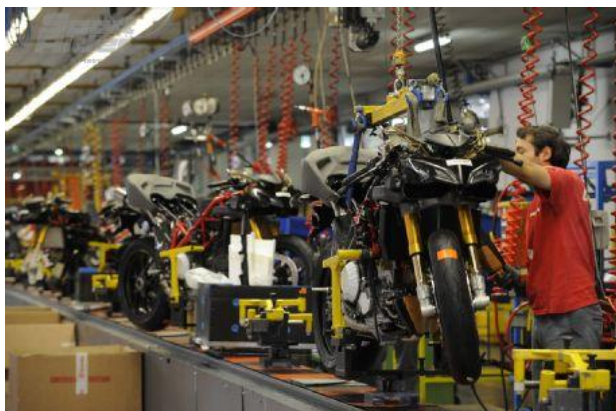
by Wayne Allen

THE ITALIAN JOBS (PART 2)

The Ducati Factory (Bologna)



So, to pick up where we left off last month, we had just completed our tour of the Ducati Race Museum. Before proceeding to the production facility we were told by our guide that we could not take any photographs within that facility for obvious reasons. It is strange though, that when writing this article, I found numerous images of the manufacturing facility available on the internet.



On entering the production facility, again there was a great feeling of pride and passion that is very difficult to describe if you haven't been there. The group was lead through the main production area (pictured left) of the famous 'V' twin engine that is at the heart of a Ducati.

This engine generates a deep growl when fully exercised by the rider and sounds like no other when slowing down from the over run. That's the beauty of bikes, and cars for that matter, they all have something unique and generally the engine sounds are top of the list. All the engines are hand-assembled by an individual operator. One very obvious point was the high quality of these bikes. A very strict quality control at every stage of its build is evident from the intense scrutiny of every component and its assembly. Every engine is tested in a jig to ensuring its performance and its reliability long-term for the customer.

We then moved through the main assembly lines where the frame is married to the engine, this in turn led us to final assembly area where the major components now resembled a bike, albeit without its clothing. I did raise a question with our tour guide, pointing out the



very large indoor plants placed along the lines. She informed me, with a smile, that the plants helped reduce stress for the line workers. It was certainly effective as there were no obvious signs of it on their faces. I was disappointed with the answer, expecting something more technical as I recalled a documentary where the Ferrari plant has an internal forest to regulate air quality, which is said to provide perfect conditions for engine assembly. However further research reveals that this is known as Formula Uomo and was designed to make the workers feel appreciated and therefore generate motivation.

So we came to the end of the factory tour, which renewed access to the museum where we could complete additional pictures of the exhibits. This was a great opportunity because by now my wife and I had the museum to ourselves for the next 10 minutes. I had completely unobstructed views of all the exhibits for my last minute shots. From here to the gift shop where I purchased a book dedicated to the museum collection. The book can be purchased on-line through the Ducati website. Well it makes a change from 'the T shirt'!

There will now be a part 3 for the Italian Jobs in the next issue to cover our visit to the Moto Guzzi museum, a completely different experience, but one well worth attending and another handbag for Bev!

COVERS BY REQUEST

We wanted to feature the Players' pantomime on our Christmas cover, but The Messenger goes to print before the first performance. However, we were invited to take pictures at the Dress Rehearsal and David Turner came away with a mixture of stills from the rehearsal and "action" shots like the one on our cover, which shows Karen Mitchell in the act of drilling some of her colourful cast.

The show will be underway by the time you read this, so we wish the best of luck to all involved, in front of the scenery and behind it.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Birthdays in December

Douglas Powney will be 91 on 15th

Eric Bygraves will be 94 on the 17th

Joyce Smith will be 85 on 27th

And in January

Maurice Horwood will be 83 on 4th

Phyl Kidger will be 96 on 16th

Brenda Wright will be 83 on 20th

Phyllis Corns will be 87 on 21st

Congratulations to all of the above.

If you know of a significant event 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.

St Mary The Virgin
 Meppershall Parish Church (Church of England)
 Church Road, off Campton Road



Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

01462 339962 – usual day off Monday

Churchwardens:

Dawn Abbatt 01462 816962

James Read 01462 857836 Email: Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: annie10639@gmail.com

Services & Events – December 2013

Date	Time	Service
Sunday 1 st Dec	11.00am	Parish Communion
1st of Advent	11.00am	Junior Church at the School
Saturday 7 th Dec	8.00am	Celtic Morning Prayer
Sunday 8 th Dec	8.30am	Holy Communion
2 nd of Advent	4.00pm	Christingle Service
Sunday 15 th Dec	8.30am	Holy Communion
3 rd of Advent	11.00am	All-Age Family Service
Friday 20 th Dec	9.00pm	Silent Contemplation – all welcome
Sunday 22 nd Dec	11.00am	Parish Communion
4 th of Advent	6.30pm	Nine Lessons and Carols
Tuesday 24 th Dec	5.00pm	Family Nativity Service – all angels and shepherds welcome!
Christmas Eve	11.30pm	Midnight Communion
Wednesday 25 th	11.00am	Christmas Day Communion
Christmas Day		
Sunday 29 th Dec	11.00am	United Benefice Service with St Michael's (Shefford) at St Mary's, Meppershall.

St Mary's weekday service - Wednesdays:

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

Services and Events – January 2014

At St Mary's unless stated below

Sunday 5 th Jan Epiphany	11.00am 11.00am	Parish Communion Junior Church at St Mary's
Saturday 11 th Jan	8.00am	Celtic Morning Prayer
Sunday 12 th Jan Epiphany 2	8.30am 10.30am	Holy Communion Second Sunday Stroll – see below for more information
Sunday 19 th Jan Epiphany 3	8.30am 11.00am	Holy Communion All-Age Family Service
Friday 24 th Jan	9.00pm	Silent Contemplation
Saturday 25 th Jan	7.00 for 7.30pm	Village Quiz at the Village Hall <i>Arranged by the Friends of St Mary's</i> Meppershall's premier quiz event back again to brighten a winter weekend! Bar opens at 7pm. Table-teams of 6 people, smaller numbers welcome (extra teams can be assembled on the night), £5 entrance. Trophy & Raffle. More information on 01462 813357.
Sunday 26 th Jan Epiphany 4	11.00am	Parish Communion

Things to look out for in January!

Village Quiz – Saturday 25th January

Now firmly fixed in the annual Meppershall calendar, the Friends of St Mary's Village Quiz is a great chance to get out and have some fun with family and friends in a team – or a chance to meet new people to make up a team of 6. Hope to see you there! (More info in the events table above).

Second Sunday Stroll – Sunday 12th January

Every second Sunday of the month throughout 2014, join us for a social hike around our beautiful landscape (no mid-morning service). Meet at 10.30am beside the Rectory and St Mary's Church on Sunday 12th to try out the first one – Meppershall to Pirton. Come appropriately equipped (footwear, waterproof coat, warm layers, snack, drink, a few quid for the pub at the other end etc). Walk back (Pirton-Meppershall) or share a lift home.

Call James on 857836 for more information.

A Message from St Mary's...

First I would like to say a belated "Thank You" to all who came to our Gift Day in September (visitors and helpers). Thanks to you we raised nearly £1000 towards the work on the roofs and walls that we are currently getting quotes for. We are at the same time trying to obtain a new boiler, and quickly, as the weather and the Church are not getting any warmer!

Next I would like to wish you a **Happy and Holy Christmas** and to invite you to the Christmas Services this year – in December look out for:

8th Christingle Service at 4pm

22nd 9 Lessons and Carols in St Mary's on Sunday 22nd at 6.30pm

24th Family Nativity Service with Carols at 5pm (all angels and shepherds welcome!)

Midnight Communion at 11.30 pm

25th Christmas Day Communion at 11am

Also look out for Santa and his carol singing helpers who will be visiting the village again this year!

Finally I would like to wish you all a **Happy New Year**. None of us know what 2014 will hold, but we all have hopes and dreams and fears. Many of us will begin enthusiastically with resolutions that will probably last about a fortnight, or in the most determined of us maybe three weeks!

The resolution that really matters is the one not to pack the coming of Christ away with the decorations and the Christmas cards. Instead, the poem made famous by King George VI in his Christmas Broadcast of 1939 - at the beginning of World War II - comes to mind.

At the Gate of the Year

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.'

And he replied,

'Go into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!'

(Minnie Louise Harkins 1875-1957)

So in 2014, let's step gladly, courageously, safely, into all the New year has to offer with our hand in the hand of God; the God who has come, and who will always come to those who invite him... Happy New Year Everyone!

Rector Roni.

JUNIOR CHURCH

Junior Church gathered on the first Sunday in November to celebrate the joy of giving by taking part in the well-known 'Operation Christmas Child'.

The children were shown a box beautifully wrapped in Christmas gift paper and asked to guess what was in it. Several guesses later the children got it right.....there was nothing in the box!

So, for a moment we all considered a Christmas without the giving and receiving of gifts, a table overloaded with lots of delicious food and plenty to drink. For many children and families around the world, including the UK, this is a reality and an extremely sobering thought when we consider our own over indulgences at Christmas time when we celebrate the most wonder gift of all time – our Lord Jesus Christ.

With little delay and much enthusiasm the children eagerly set about filling shoe boxes with pens, pencils, toiletries, toys and stationery. We hope that the boxes give some joy to the children who receive them.

Thank you to everyone who donated the shoe boxes and the gifts to go in them.

On **Sunday 1st December** Junior Church meets in the School Hall once again for the **Christmas Craft** morning. This will start from 10am and finish at 11am. If your child would like to join the service up at St Mary's we will be walking up to Church from 11.15am.

Christmas Eve Nativity at 5pm in St Mary's Church. Children are invited to come in **fancy dress** (angels, shepherds, national dress, sheep, cows, wise men) and join in with the play. No need to tell us in advance, just turn up in fancy dress!

Please note that on first Sunday in January, Junior Church will be in Church and on the first Sunday in February we will be back in the School Hall at 11am.

For more details please call Gillian on 850947.

Blessings, The Junior Church Team.

TURKEY IN PAPRIKA**DECEMBER 2013 / JANUARY 2014**

1 large onion, chopped
 1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
 25g (1oz) butter
 10 ml (2 tsp) oil
 15 ml (1 tbsp) flour
 22.5 ml (1 ½ tbsp) paprika
 15 ml (1 tbsp) tomato puree
 5 ml (1 tsp) sugar
 300 ml (1/2 pint) stock
 Salt and freshly ground pepper
 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) caraway seeds (optional)
 350g (12ozs) cooked turkey meat. Cut into bite-size pieces.
 150g (5ozs) natural yogurt

Serve with boiled potatoes or noodles and garnish with chopped parsley.

Method**Serves 4**

- 1) Fry onion and pepper in butter and oil until pale gold and soft.
- 2) Remove from heat and stir in flour, paprika, tomato puree and sugar.
- 3) Gradually blend in stock, seasoning and caraway seeds if used.
- 4) Cook, stirring, until sauce boils and thickens.
- 5) Cover and simmer gently for 15 minutes.
- 6) Add turkey to sauce with yogurt.
- 7) Heat through for a further 5 minutes without boiling.
- 8) Serve with potatoes or noodles, garnished with parsley.

*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 December ...**

Ellie Roberts who will be 15 on the 1st
 Breindel Cullen who will be 4 on the 4th
 Liberty Sheppard who will be 8 on the 4th
 Lee Britton who will be 11 on the 7th
 Darcey Roberts will be 1 on the 7th
 Amber Ridley who will be 4 on the 8th
 Megan Myers who will be 10 on the 9th
 Hugo Norris who will be 11 on the 12th
 Millie Chessum who will be 9 on the 15th
 Lara Morris who will be 1 on the 17th
 Elise Simpkins who will be 11 on the 20th
 Thomas Manning who will be 5 on the 21st
 Benjamin Jarvis who will be 13 on the 24th
 Finlay Caddick who will be 6 on the 28th
 Tommy Ulvert will be 4 on the 28th
 Rose Jones who will be 5 on the 29th

...and those celebrating in January

Dylan Roberts will be 4 on the 1st
 Ben Ulvert will be 6 on the 2nd
 Louis Bradshaw who will be 14 on the 4th
 Harry Rose who will be 11 on the 5th
 Ella Clark who will be 8 on the 9th
 Olivia Mardell who will be 11 on the 12th
 Sam German who will be 10 on the 12th
 Georgia Rose who will be 15 on the 12th
 Jonny Ward who will be 13 on the 25th
 Emily Frost who will be 13 on the 28th

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@gmail.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>2014</u>					
January	27	July	28	Double	
February	24	August	NONE		
March	24	September	29		
April	28	October	27		
May	26	November	24	Double	
June	30	December	NONE		

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.