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EDITORIAL

Following our feature on the school last month I am very glad to be able to report that the clean-up was a great success, with 40 or so volunteers tackling a variety of jobs. Our cover picture from the Easter Bonnet Parade shows that the children are as happy as ever.



So the big push this month is for the Meppershall Festival on 17th May and the Summer Fair on 28th June. Festival details are set out on pages 38-39 whilst four pages (32-35) are devoted to telling you what the hard-working Fair Committee has lined up for us this year, and it really is better than ever. All it needs now is sunshine on the day!

And The Messenger also has some needs:

- It needs you to come along to our AGM on 8th May. This is your chance to tell us whether or not the Messenger is what **you** want it to be. We really do need to know that, otherwise we just carry on doing our thing, blindly hoping for the best.
- It needs new contributors. It is no reflection at all on current contributors to say that we need some new blood. On page 7 you will find a more detailed appeal, and we really would like to receive new ideas, as off-beat as you like. We are making the same appeal to our advertisers because local businesses are the life-blood of any community.

I note that there are no less than 4 AGMs advertised in this issue, so it seems sensible to defer the issue of "Who's Who" until any possible changes of committee have taken place, but will all Secretaries please let me have new details ASAP, please.

Dick Bulley

LETTERS

Message from Penny Bird:

This is to wish a warm “Welcome to Meppershall” to Pam and Jeff and their family, who have moved into High Street.

Penny

Statement from Olly Martins, Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire in reply to last month's letter from John Thompson:

To my great regret I discussed, purely with a close associate, some information that had been provided to me in my role as Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the death of Leon Briggs. Unfortunately, the person to whom I spoke did not appreciate the sensitivity of what had been said, nor indeed completely understand it, and went on to repeat a garbled interpretation of it to a third party.

Every effort was made, I believe successfully, to prevent any further dissemination of these comments.

As soon as Bedfordshire Police was made aware that information relating to the investigation into the death of Leon Briggs had been inappropriately released the Force informed the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) who advised that this should be referred to the Police and Crime Panel for their consideration.

Following this chain of events, earlier today the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel met to consider the matter. I attended this meeting to answer questions posed by members. Rightly, the panel scrutinised my actions carefully before retiring to discuss the matter. I have since been informed that they have issued a written reprimand, which I absolutely accept.

I would also like to thank the Panel for their appreciation of this sensitive situation. The very last thing that I wish to see is a frenzy of speculation surrounding my actions overshadowing the really important issue, namely how and why Leon Briggs died whilst in police custody. I remain totally committed to ensuring that we all learn the truth and any necessary lessons learned.

Letter from Ken Mills:

Dear Dick,

I am hoping that through the Messenger I can request some help on a project that I am working on. I am in the process of rebuilding a 1978 Mini Moke; most of the mechanicals are complete but I am stuck on the wiring (this is not my forte, although it is a simple wiring system as there are no computers involved). I am hoping that there may be someone in the village who can spare some time to help me. As I am retired I am available any day and any time. The car is housed in a large garage at the rear of my house in Fildyke Road and any help would be appreciated.

Regards

Ken Mills

102 Fildyke Road Meppershall Beds SG17 5LU

Tel: 07960375649 or 01462 339696

Message from Reverend John Harper:

Dear Dick,

A name from the past! I hope you are well and that The Messenger continues to go from strength to strength. Sandra and I would be grateful if you would include a rather unusual request in the next edition. We've realised that a saxophone belonging to our daughter did not move with us (we both thought it was subsequently being stored at the other home). We have a somewhat vague recollection that it was lent to a family in Meppershall or to someone connected with St Mary's for a trial, but cannot recall their identity. Would you kindly put a note to this effect asking that if anyone has any clues to the instrument's whereabouts we would be delighted to know.

Every good wish,

John & Sandra (01733 688923) revjohnharper@talktalk.net

MEPPERSHALL NEWS IN BRIEF

This piece from Jill Dickson follows on from a reference in 'Your Shout' last month:

There were some very kind words in the last Meppershall Messenger about the lady who had been at Crufts with her dog. Assuming this to be me I thought that a few words on my experience might be a good idea.

I show my long coat Chihuahua Redrowan Lodge League of her Own. I bought my gorgeous little girl from a dear friend in Finland and could never have been more pleased as she has the sweetest nature, and a heart of gold.

We commenced our showing career together in May 2013 with the Southern Counties Championship show where she was placed 5th which, in the dog showing world, is highly commended. Our next outing was to the East of England Championship show where despite the inconvenience of a handler (me) and from a big class my dear dog was placed 3rd, and qualified for Crufts 2014.

The summer saw us at a variety of Open shows which are a lot less low key! Still my adrenaline pumps though. Gina quickly showed her worth when at one of these shows she took Best of Breed: in order to achieve that she had to win her class 'Junior', then go against all the other chihuahua class winners and finally against the best male chihuahua. Having achieved that wonderful status we had a long wait for the group which is where each of the toy group winners go against each other, and Gina managed a remarkable Group 4 placing; the judge told me that my dog had moved brilliantly in the large outdoor arena. Very soon we had lost the right to enter the Novice class at shows as she had won far too many first place rosettes.

Another important show for us was Boston Championship show, (no, not the one in the USA!). I knew that the competition would not be strong as there were no CC's on offer to the Chi's. CC's are Challenge certificates and given by eligible judges. Three CC's and your dog becomes a champion. That sounds so easy, but believe me it isn't. There were enough dogs in the class to make for worthy opposition, and as we settled in to our class with me becoming far better at my task as handler we were thrilled to be placed first and then to continue on to take Best of Breed, which saw my dear dog knocking out some mighty special opposition in order to do so. That task is dealt with mentally and on beauty rather than blows to the other exhibits! We managed to qualify for Crufts for the second time. We had also entered the Stakes class and managed a credible 3rd place in a large mixed class which is open to all breeds. Unfortunately this precluded us from the Group Class, which was a bitter disappointment. It is a Kennel Club rule that only unbeaten dogs can enter the group and Gina was 3rd

in the Stakes. I had asked if I could withdraw her from the Stakes but that is not allowed. I only enter one class now so that can't happen again.

Crufts loomed ahead of us and by now I knew when to bath my dog for best effect, keeping her well groomed and on the most special diet as we don't want a dog with loose bowels competing! My dogs are on the BARF (bone and raw food) diet which does see changes in their performance. I also packed the Rescue Remedy for me and my dog if she seemed troubled. The energy pills are for Gina although I have threatened to take them at dire times! Also packed were the silver eye spray and special antibacterial eye wipe cloth and all the necessary show passes, most important for Crufts. The treat bag was full of the most exciting goodies possible, as your dog's attention is always needed in the show ring. These are preferably treats that won't choke your dog: I had experience of that stupid mistake, with home-made crumbly treats!

The honour of walking into Crufts with your dog (albeit a small one that I had to mind people didn't tread on!) is just amazing. Gina's breeder from Finland had come to watch and exhibits were from all over the world! With the new regulation on bringing livestock to Great Britain it is so much easier. Gina's class was made up of 27 other bitches of similar age from one to two years old: this is called the Special Yearling Class. I knew our chances of success were slim but I didn't care as we had made it so far and we loved our time in the big ring, with all the big time breeding and showing experts, all of whom were so intent on their performance that I didn't attempt any conversation. The judge carefully picked her choices, and while I might not have agreed, I left the ring happy that we had been there.

Our last show a couple of weeks ago saw my special girl being placed second behind 'Sixpence' who is my boy's sister, so I felt we had kept it in the family! This weekend we are off to Derbyshire to the Midland Chihuahua Club show and that will be our last show for a while as my show dog is due in season at the beginning of May and we have our fingers crossed for puppies, as we want to produce that special winning puppy.

I have made so many good friends on the showing circuit and now travel to shows with Adrian who has become a dear friend. I am truly hoping to be back on the show scene just as soon as possible as it is a great way to be sociable and waste a day waiting patiently for one's class to be called.

Could you write for The Meppershall Messenger?

We hope you have noticed that in recent months several new people have been writing for The Messenger, either with one-off pieces like Alan Rowland's or as mini-series like Denis Neilson's and Lewis Birt's. None of these people were experienced at writing for magazines but they had interesting stories to relate, and I always apply a final check on punctuation etc.

Now we would like to hear from you. There are no restrictions on what you might write about: the people mentioned above drew on their own experience, but we would be equally interested in original fiction; and it does not have to be writing: pictures, poems, photos, or designs would all be welcome, but remember that we cannot afford colour printing in the main body of the magazine.

We are looking for articles between half a page and two pages long - that's between about 100 and 500 words. If you have more to say than that, and it's interesting, we can run it over two or more issues. If you have things to say but you are not sure how to shape or organise your material, please send in even a very rough version and we will be happy to work with you to polish it.

If you don't want to write an article but want to submit photos we'd love to have them, but please remember the point made above about the use of colour. They can be submitted with the minimum of description, but photos must be credited to the photographer or the person supplying the photograph.

We will promise to read anything you send in, but we may respectfully decline to publish it, or save it and publish it in a future issue. We also reserve the right to edit, shorten, or revise your article, and while we welcome controversial opinions we will not publish anything libellous. Mostly we contact authors ahead of time about any changes to ask for their comments, corrections, etc.

If we publish your article, we want to accompany it with compelling images that illustrate your subject. You know your subject best, so we are asking you to provide the images. If others in your community or group like taking pictures, they might already have great images to go with your article. If you would like to submit an article but cannot supply photos, that's fine; however, please give us plenty of advance notice so that if we use your article we can get magazine paparazzi to take appropriate picture, where we can. We would also appreciate knowing in advance that an article is coming, so that we have a better overview of the material we may be considering for publication. And we would also appreciate a 'selfie' to accompany your submission, but this is entirely voluntary!

Please email your contribution to The Editor at richard.bulley@btinternet.com as an attachment in Microsoft Word '.doc' format.

AGM

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

WILL TAKE PLACE ON

THURSDAY 8TH MAY AT 7.30 PM

IN THE SUGAR LOAF

Everyone welcome

Please come and let us have your views

HELP FOR HEROES CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 24th May in the Village Hall

8pm till late

Maximum 6 people per team. Two pounds per player
Table nibbles provided. You are welcome to bring your own
supper.

Attendance by two army personnel.

Please join us for a fun quiz night to help raise much needed funds for our
wounded heroes. For further information

Contact Sharon 07951 561335 or Barry 07943 388205

MEPPERSHALL BROWNIES



Now the clocks have gone back it is lovely that we can venture outside again in the daylight, and we were able to enjoy a fun Easter treasure hunt in the park. We are planning to go to Rowney Warren woods in May for games and a picnic and, if the weather allows, hopefully lots of other out-and-about activities during the Summer term.

Seventeen of our brownies dressed up in their party clothes and attended the Big Brownie Boogie this month. This was a joint event for Henlow and Shefford Districts attended by over 130 brownies. The girls all had a great time dancing the evening away and were very pleased with their lovely Brownie Boogie badge and balloon.

The Brownies are singing at the Arts Festival on 17 May and we are practicing some new songs for this event. This was a fantastic event last year, and it was lovely to see the amazing talent the village has to offer. We are so pleased we have been invited back to sing again.

We are very lucky at the moment to have a number of girls helping us out whilst doing their Duke of Edinburgh Award and also their Year 8 Challenge. The brownies really enjoy having the girls there to help them and their assistance has proved invaluable this term. A big thank you to Georgia T, Georgia R, Jess and Abbie.

We also always welcome adult volunteers. Volunteering with Girl Guiding is a great opportunity to meet new people while making a real contribution to your community. It is also an opportunity to put your talents to good use or uncover talents you didn't know you had while helping girls have fun and learn. As well as helping at brownies we have lots of adult social events which volunteers can attend. We are currently planning an activity day involving climbing, go karting and rifle shooting, a Cocktail evening and a Ghost Walk, as well as a sight-seeing weekend in London staying at Pax Lodge, the London Guiding Centre. There is even the opportunity to travel abroad with Guiding, to the World Guiding Centres in Switzerland, India or Mexico. Volunteers can help as occasional helpers or can become a qualified Guider helping out each week. Please contact me if you feel volunteering in any of these capacities is something you would be interested in. It really is a very fun and rewarding pastime.

If you are interested in your daughter joining Brownies or volunteering yourself, then please contact Snowy Owl (Suzanne) on 07817 392325 or you can register online at www.girlguiding.org.uk. Brownie places are limited at the moment and your daughter may need to join the waiting list.

For the first time in 20 years the April meeting of the Parish Council had to be cancelled because there were insufficient Councillors to make up a quorum.

Meppershall Village Hall
Notice of Annual General Meeting
On 8th June 2014 at 6pm in the Village Hall

AGENDA

1. Approve minutes of the previous annual general meeting held on 5th January 2014
2. Chairman's Report
3. Treasurer's Report and approve accounts for the year to 31st March 2014
4. Update on the previously approved formation of a Limited Company and for all activities to be undertaken through that entity
5. Update on specification and construction of a new Village Hall
6. Election of trustees and specific responsibilities :
 - Chairman
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Users representatives
 - Nominated individuals
7. Any other business:
 - Notified before the meeting
 - Arising at the meeting

Please read this agenda in conjunction with the Notes opposite.

Notes:**Item 1:**

The report of the meeting was included in the January 2014 edition of The Messenger.

Item 3:

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

Item 4:

The approved 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. The current trustees are registered on the Charities Commission website at: <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk> under Meppershall Village Hall Charity number 300052. 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 at the latest delivered at the start of the AGM. A nominee must be willing and able to fulfil 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 by post or email at least two working days before the AGM so that 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

31st March 2014

POP UP CAFÉS

Come along and try our **FREE** coffee mornings!

• Scones	• Tea
• Muffins	• Coffee
• Crumpets	• Children's Drinks

Meppershall Village Hall: 1:30 – 3:00pm

Thursday 1st May

Thursday 5th June

Everyone welcome - Ages 0-99

Toddler and Baby area

Orchard Children's Centre

Shefford Lower School, School Lane, Shefford, Beds

SG17 5XA

Tel. 01462 615115/07504657383

Donations welcomed

MEPPERSHALL GOOD NEIGHBOURS GROUP

The Group is continuing to progress, quietly. On 1st May a team of Gnomes will be joining forces with The Evergreens to help with their annual outing to the Langford Garden Centre and more Gnomes will be helping behind the scenes of the Meppershall Festival.

On 10th May there will be a meeting of the whole Group at 2.30 pm in the Sugar Loaf. This will be our first AGM because the Group has decided that it only needs whole-Group meetings once each year.

YOUR SHOUT

with Trevor Thorley



STEALWORKS: The Friends of St. Mary's 'Spring' concert was delayed this year as the group were not available on the March dates, which were offered to them at that time. It's great news though, that I can now confirm that STEALWORKS will be performing again in St. Mary's Church. This unique group will be coming on Saturday, May 10 and will be performing in St. Mary's Church commencing at 7.30pm. The last time they came there was dancing in the aisles to the popular and rhythmic music that they played. It's going to be one great night. Tickets at £10 (family ticket of two adults and 2 children £25) 01462 813357 trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com and other trustees. The bar will open from 7pm.

CHOIR: Would you like to be part of a choir? St. Mary's Church/Village Choir might just be right for you, performing at times at church services, weddings and other occasions such as the evening concert at the Meppershall Festival in May and visits to care homes etc. Practices are in St. Mary's Church on Tuesdays at 7.30pm. Contact Wendy for more information on 01462 850142 or email wendycorns1950@gmail.com

MEPPERSHALL FESTIVAL 2014: This now established popular annual event is just around the corner and takes place this year on Saturday May 17, in Meppershall's Village Hall.

At 2pm, Afternoon Tea will be served. There is no charge but donations, if you so wish will be welcome in aid of St. Mary's Church. "Salsa Trio" will be dancing while you sip your tea and eat the delicious cakes. There will be a small charge if you would like to join in and learn how to salsa! The organisers look forward to seeing you, and your friends and neighbours.

At 7.30pm, the Festival Concert will take place. There is an abundance of talent waiting to entertain you. This part of the festival is in aid of the Meppershall Brownies and Meppershall Gnomes. Tickets are available now from Colette on 01462 81558, colettehouse@gmail.com

Remember It's YOUR SHOUT! Call Trevor Thorley on 01462 813357
trevor.thorley1@btinternet.com



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- May 2014

Time has rushed past as we approach Easter. The children have all worked hard and much learning has taken place. Our Years 3 and 4 went on a trip to The Green Centre in Norfolk and I hope you will enjoy the report (opposite) written about this trip by Simran in Year 4.

I am delighted to have been appointed as permanent Headteacher for Meppershall CE Academy. Within a couple of weeks of working at the school, I knew that I would love to lead the school, should the opportunity arise. I am sad to leave my previous school as I had worked there for eleven years but am very excited that Meppershall CE Academy is my new challenge. The children, parents, staff and governors have all welcomed me into this community and I look forward to continuing to develop positive relationships with the school and the local community.

On Saturday 5th April the school was treated to an outdoors makeover as parents,



teachers, teaching assistants, governors, children and members of Meppershall Garden Club came together to begin improving the grounds. It was a very busy day, with sweeping, clearing, scrubbing, painting and planting taking place. It was lovely to see how many people were willing to give some of their time in order to add

some sparkle and love to the school. The work has continued and we hope that you will all agree that the school is beginning to look better in the spring sunshine. A BIG thank you to everyone who has been involved!

Our Year Three children performed a Samba Concert for their parents, having been taking lessons for 10 weeks. There is a video on the school website and we would love you to take a look. There are also photos of some of this term's work and fun, including our Easter egg hunt and Easter bonnet parade.

(www.meppershall.beds.sch.uk).

We were delighted to have held our end of term Easter Service in St Mary's Church. What a truly beautiful church!

We hope you all have a lovely Easter break and look forward to sharing our news with you all next month!

Nickie Moore
Head Teacher

Thanks to John Chapman for the picture

KS2 HAD AN ECO-TASTIC TIME

KS2 went to the eco centre in Swaffham. We went because it was part of our topic "Life on a dump". It took two whole hours and ten minutes to get there, but when we got there it looked epic!

Wind Turbines

The very first thing we did was watch a film clip about Green Britain. The first thing my group did was climb the wind turbine. There were 305 steps to climb but it was worth it in the end because there were fantastic views.

Green Vehicles

Next we went to the eco-tricity where they made all the cars and green vehicles. The e-motion was a really cool car, that could only go in straight lines and to brake, two parachutes came out of the back to stop it. The green bird was another vehicle that they made, with two wings, one sticking out of the top and one on the left hand side as a balance wing – and we planted sunflower seeds. We had lunch and went to explore.

Mini Wind Turbines

After lunch we made mini wind turbines that got powered with a fan. We found out that changing the angle of the blades a tiny bit made a big difference. The groups that we were working in chose how many blades we wanted. Then we had another test with the wind turbines. The children were asked these questions:

1. What was your favourite activity (why?)
2. Did you enjoy the eco centre?
3. How would you rate the trip (out of 10)?

Answers from Stacey:

1. Climbing the wind turbine. She found it scary but she enjoyed it.
2. Yes.
3. 9/10 because the wind turbine was a little bit scary because it was moving.

Simran's summary:

This trip was very cool. However, the wind turbine was a little bit scary.

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

By Enid Pamment



The end of March saw us giving our usual presentation of a £1,000 cheque to Martin, representing Keech Hospice Care for Children. He explained to us how the money is used and thanked us for the generous donation to Keech, for your donations for raffle prizes and also for buying the raffle tickets. This was followed by an excellent buffet and this year's entertainment. The tombola raised £85 and a large box of Thornton's chocolates raised a further £62, all of which will be a grand start towards next year's cheque.

We began April with a trip to Essex and after we had met our Guide for the day we were taken to The Swan Pub at Chappel, where we partook of coffee/tea and biscuits and some of us were able to sit in the garden in glorious sunshine. Just across the car park was one of the 'Man Made Wonders of Essex', a grand viaduct with twenty four arches. We then boarded our coach for an Essex guided coach tour, and our guide regaled us with tales of Essex on our way to Finchingfield for lunch. The pub was opposite the green in the picturesque village, complete with duck pond and church on the hill. We were soon tucking into a two course carvery lunch with coffee included, after which we had time to explore the village or just sit in the sunshine and watch the world go by. Soon we were back on our coach for a visit to The Knights Templar where we saw two massive cathedrals of wood built an incredible 800 years ago. We also took in the Tudor walled garden of a manor house, long gone; unfortunately this site has been hit by cut-backs and the visitors' centre and tea rooms were no longer in operation. Once again we boarded the coach to make our way to a very English pub where they served us with tea and biscuits before returning to Shefford.

Forthcoming Events 2014 (kindly telephone for more details):

The London Olympic Legacy Tour	Sat 31 st May
City Cruise, Lunch & The Tower of London	Sat 14 th June
Singing in the Rain – MK Theatre – Matinee	Wed 2 nd July
Bedford River Cruise, with lunch	Tue 29 th July
Harry Potter Studio Tour	Mon 4 th August
Hunstanton and Norfolk Lavender Fields	Wed 20 th August

Top Hat at MK Theatre (Evening Performance)	Wed 3 rd September
Flower Festival at St Albans Cathedral	Sat 27 th September
Waverley Paddle Steamer	Sun 12 th October
Highgrove House garden Tour	Fri 17 th October
The Lord Mayor's Show	Sat 8 th November
Thursford Christmas Spectacular	Wed 26 th November

Holidays: 2014 (kindly telephone for more details)

Scarborough – Hotel Esplanade – inc 2 day-excursions	September 8 th -12 th
Tinsel & Turkey at the Claremont Hotel, Eastbourne	Thursday 11 th to Monday 15 th December

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

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

Tchaikovsky Gala + Fireworks – RAH – Arena Seats	Saturday 10 th May
Les Miserables – Queens Theatre – Dress Circle	Wednesday 14 th May
Thriller Live (Michael Jackson) – Lyric Theatre – Dress Circle	
Brick Lane Music Hall-60s music + afternoon tea. (Coach leaves Shefford at 10.15 am)	Wednesday 4 th June
The Pyjama Game –Shaftsbury Theatre-Royal Circle	Wednesday 25 th June

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

Billy Elliot –Victoria Palace Theatre – Stalls seats	Tuesday 13 th May
Jersey Boys-Prince Edward Theatre-Stalls Seats	Thursday 5 th June
Miss Saigon – Prince Edward Theatre - Dress Circle	Monday 30 th June
Miss Saigon – Prince Edward Theatre – Stalls Seats	Monday 1 st September

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 enid.pamment@gmail.com

Enid Pamment – Shefford Leisure Group

FINANCIAL NEWS UPDATE

with Paul Savuto

Q): I am 62 years old and looking to retire in the next few months. I want to take income from my private pension plans, but I understand that there have been some major changes announced in the March 2014 Budget. Can you advise what they are?

A): Yes there have been some major changes to the way in which you can access your pension money, some take immediate effect, the others proposed from April 2015.

There will no longer be restrictions on how individuals aged over 55 can access their defined contribution pension pots. The government proposes - subject to ongoing consultation - to change the tax rules to allow people to access these savings as they wish at the point of retirement, subject to your marginal rate of income tax.

The consultation on retirement flexibility also includes a proposal to raise the age at which an individual can take their private pension savings under the tax rules from 55 to 57 in 2028, at the point that the State Pension age increases to 67. From then on, the minimum pension age in the tax rules will rise in line with the State Pension age so that it is always ten years below. This change is proposed to cover all pension schemes which qualify for tax relief, with no exceptions.

Ill health early retirement will still be allowed as usual, 25% of the value of the fund will continue to be tax free.

Transitional Measures between 27th March 2014 and 5th April 2015

1. From the next review date for people who are currently in a capped drawdown pension plan or those people looking set up a new drawdown plan, the maximum income level you can receive will increase by around 25%. e.g. if you were receiving £10,000 per annum this is now £12,500.
2. For those over age 60, the trivial commutation limit will rise from £18,000 to £30,000. For example, this means if your combined pension plan values do not exceed £30,000, you can access all of this money as a lump sum, 25% tax free, the balance taxed at your marginal rate of income tax.

3. For those over age 60, the small pots (or stranded pots) rules will be increased from 2 payments of £2,000 to 3 payments of £10,000. For example, this means if you had 4 pension plans, 1 worth £50,000 and the other 3 worth £10,000 each, you can access the 3 plans of £10,000 each. The entire value of these 3 plans, £30,000, can be taken as a lump sum, 25% tax free, the balance taxed at your marginal rate of income tax. During this transitional period you would not be able to access the plan valued at £50,000 and take all of this money as a lump sum.

Due to the complexities that the changes have introduced, it is important to seek advice to find the most suitable retirement option for you.

Q): I have recently had a Barclays Bank Five Year Defined Return Structured Plan mature. It made a 40% return on my original investment, which I was very pleased with. When I went into the bank to re-invest the money, they said that because they do not give financial advice anymore, they cannot help. What do I do?

A): We have received many similar enquires and although these banks are not providing advice for these and other products, there are still ways to get advice on these and other investments.

During March alone, an estimated £1.07bn of Structured Products will be maturing from Lloyds, RBS, Barclays, Santander and others who no longer provide financial advice.

An important point to note is that if your current investment is held within an Individual Savings Account (ISA), it is important to consider retaining the ISA benefits. This can only be undertaken by moving this ISA to a new ISA plan, but you may need to act quickly to retain this status. If the investment is not in an ISA, on maturity of the plan, you may well have tax issues to deal with. You should receive a tax certificate that may be required when completing your tax return.

We would strongly recommend you speak to a qualified independent financial adviser who can advise you accordingly. At DGS we can research the whole of the market to find the most appropriate solution for you.

Paul Savuto, Chartered Financial Planner can be contacted on 07834 499595

WHERE MY CARAVAN HAS RESTED

By Denis Neilson

Part 2 – The Adventure Begins In The Wild West

Climbing behind the wheel for the first time was more than a little daunting: roads are wide in America but they did not look wide from the driver's seat. Ruth declined the offer to drive and was content to navigate and tell me where to go. Fortunately we were parked near the airport, so to exit Phoenix was relatively easy (I understand it can take over 3 hours to drive through the city) plus I was not too confident on the 'wrong side of the road' or of the antics of the local drivers. Six lane highways were new to a driver whose motorway experiences had been limited to 2 lanes and the complexity of spaghetti junction. Then there were the road signs – 'WRONG WAY' and 'GO BACK' were two which made me think a bit. Being able to turn right on a stop light nearly got me in trouble when we came home and the four way halt system at a crossroads reminded me very much of a doctor's surgery before an appointment system was introduced. Still, we trundled out of the Phoenix sprawl and into the open countryside, occasionally touching the kerb or hard shoulder as we got used to the width.

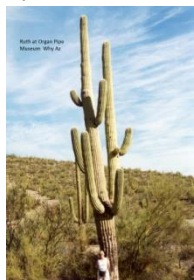


Our first stop was at Casa Grande where we stayed on a magnificent campground with every facility. We soon learned that motor homing in America is standardised and Europe could learn a lot from them. Water and electrical fittings are the same at all sites and on all vehicles, so when you arrive on site you know you can 'hook up' and there will be no surprises. This site was also a residential holiday site with activities going on most afternoons and evenings. We went square dancing, which we had first learned when stationed with Americans in Holland; that was fun as well as making us realise that we could understand most of the language, even the 'y'all' bits. We explored the area on our bikes, through barren desert and cacti, the only cultivation we found was cotton which looked like tall brown sticks with blobs of cotton wool attached to them.

We were, of course, in the old Wild West and the town of Tombstone was not far off. Wyatt Earp, his brother Virgil and Doc Holliday fight it out, twice a day, at the OK Corral. Old wagons decorate the streets and Big Nosed Kate's Saloon is a must visit. The Courthouse is still functioning and in the back yard is a gibbet with two good ropes ready to go! Each local town has its own graveyard

and Tombstone's is on the outskirts, at Boothill. Many of the gravestones have interesting inscriptions. Amongst those that took our eye were: "Here lies Lester Moore, 4 slugs from a 44, No Les No More" and: "Here lies George Johnson, hanged by mistake 1882. He was right, we was wrong, but we strung him up, now he's gone".

Tucson next, and a cycle ride to visit the late artist De Grazia's Gallery in the Sun. A beautiful gallery occupying the isolated foothill property he had built in the 1950s, very modest but absolutely stunning. The floors were laid with cross sections of highly polished cacti making them glow and look warm, helping the stark rock walls to blend in. Onwards ever onwards, we headed off to Why which is a small one horse town on the Mexican Border sporting only one general store with a bar, grill and gas station, and a border post which sells Mexican car insurance and temporary visas. Whilst staying there we were visited by a humming bird and several wild coyotes. The water on the campground had somehow got contaminated from the outflow of some factory site or other and the owners had been waiting for some time for the utility company to sort the problem, but they appeared to be taking their time about it, so we were glad the store sold bottled water. We later learned that we had



been staying on an Indian Reservation and we wondered if this contamination was a common occurrence. This area of Arizona is the place for cacti, not the miniature type that one has on the living room window ledge, but huge 'organ pipes' 20 feet plus in height. We visited a couple of open air cactus museums and found them very interesting.

We left Arizona via Yuma, another border town; it has a weekend market which sold enchiladas that were out of this world. From Yuma it is a fantastic run over the mountains and through the desert on Interstate 8, known as the Kumeyaay Highway, running parallel with the Mexican border to San Diego. We camped at Mission Bay where we encountered a storm: not much wind but torrential rain and hailstones. Thanks to this downpour we found our first leak! Our bed was soaked, it looked like the rain had come through the window seal so it was out with the sealant gun and every joint was attacked. We visited San Diego Zoo to see the pandas which had recently had a new arrival; mum and baby (not so baby sized) were doing fine. There is a walkway and cycle path round much of San Diego Bay and it was quite pleasant to walk along it and people watch. It was here we saw our first rollerblading mum pushing a high tech 3-wheeled buggy with baby contentedly gurgling to itself. We went whale watching but saw only dolphins.

To be concluded

LIFE ON THE WILD SIDE

By JEREMY HOLDEN

Journal entry from Sumatra.

(Continued from last month)



14 February

A beautiful dawn. As predicted, the moon is vanishing behind camp and the sun is rising to take its place. Mist tumbles across the lake surface. We have walked only a few hundred metres from camp before we find fresh tiger tracks in a dried puddle, lobed like black orchid blossoms. I am excited to see these; the presence of a top predator indicates a functioning ecosystem and gives the forest the added static of danger. Is it a resident animal, or just passing through? Over the coming months we hope to learn this, and many more things about this landscape. Further along the trail we find smaller pugs. The narrow plantar and rounded toes suggest clouded leopard. Further still there are even smaller cat prints. The long plantar and spaced toes show these are Asian golden cat.

There are signs of terrestrial birds, too. We glimpse a Salvadori's pheasant and hear red-billed partridge. Both species are endemic to these mountains, and both were once hunted almost to the point of extirpation. Now that there are fewer fishermen and hunters living on the lake and setting traps, the birds are returning – a consequence not so much of protection or education as of changing lifestyles. It is a hard life for the fishermen living up here, and the younger generation wants something better. The move by rural youngsters towards a perceived 'better' life in the cities is one way that tropical rainforest might survive the inevitable onslaught of over population.

Deeper into the forest we disturb a Malay tapir from its daytime resting place. A strange folksy animal, the tapir is half black, half white, with long mobile hooves and an almost prehensile snout. Despite being the size of a small cow, it slips away silently before we arrive, leaving a scattering of short white hairs and a half eaten giant fig, whose white spongy flesh has yet to oxidize. On a ridge above the lake we come across a tapir latrine. Four separate piles of plum-sized pellets. There was a tapir resting nearby, too, which made a mad and probably comical dash down the vertiginous slope. Later we disturbed another sleeping tapir and I wondered if it was the same animal all three times, now feeling increasingly hounded and paranoid. They are obviously light

sleepers; although the signs were fresh, we never heard any of the animals escaping. It pays them to be alert. With tigers on the prowl a lazy tapir wouldn't last long. Although tigers are rarely credited with hunting tapir, on Gunung Tujuh this might not be the case. In the absence of a large prey base of sambar, muntjac, or the heavily hunted serow, tigers might have no option but to hunt tapir. We found some evidence that suggests this could be the case: two locations with a scattering of tapir bones. It is very rare to find animal bones in the rain forest for a number of reasons. Chief among these is that animals tend to retreat into dense cover when they are about to die. Both of the remains we found were close to paths, meaning the animals were more likely to have been killed than to have died naturally. As there were no signs of traps, nor were these locations where hunters would set traps, predation by tigers remains a strong possibility.

15 February

We check the camera traps for the first time this morning. As hoped, we have some good footage of tapirs, moving in pairs. Long believed to be solitary, FFI's camera trapping work in Kerinci has shown they often move in pairs. By the end of the day we have three sequences showing these odd, engaging animals wandering the forests together. One clip shows a pair making a rare daylight outing. I notice the date - naturally it was recorded on Valentine's Day!





Henlow Church of England Academy



FOCUS ON: EXTRA CURRICULAR CLUBS

The staff at Henlow run numerous activities at lunchtime and after school, which give children opportunities to follow a variety of interests, some sporting, including tennis, rounders, cricket and athletics, some intellectual and some social in nature. All pupils are encouraged to take full advantage of the extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

Next term some of the clubs on offer will include:

Access Club: Held every lunch time in the ICT suite, this is an opportunity for students to use computers for homework, study and accessing the learning platform.

Chess Club: A weekly opportunity for pupils to test each other in this strategy board game.

Knitting Club: An ancient craft which has, over recent years, become a popular pastime once again. The club teaches pupils the basics with the aim of producing a novelty item towards the end of the term.

Origami Club: Is an opportunity for pupils to learn the traditional Japanese art of paper folding, sculpting a range of birds and animals.

Photography Club: A popular after school club which provides pupils with the equipment to explore and create images from all things around them.

Warhammer and Card Club: Is a table top game of fantasy battles. Two or more players compete against each other with miniature armies. It is a game of strategy using dice and rulers to generate the different rules for movement, shooting and combat. As well as gaming, pupils can make or paint their models too.

This is just a selection of the clubs on offer at Henlow please see the School website for the extensive club timetable.

Midday Supervisory Assistant

Required as soon as possible to assist with the supervision and care of the children during lunchtimes, from 12.25 pm – 1.25 pm daily, during term time. This equates to 5 hrs per week. Part-time or job share would be considered. Salary: NJC Scale Points 7-10 (£13,044 - £14,153 pro rata). Visits to the School are welcome.

The School operates safer recruitment practices and successful applicants will be subject to a DBS check.

DIARY DATES

Friday 16th May 2014 (4.00pm-6.00pm)

Friday 27th June 2014 (from 5.00pm)

Annual School Fun Run
Yr 4 Soccer tournament
and Summer Fayre

THE LUCY PAGES

By Lucy Standbridge

Aged 12



The annual Meppershall Summer Fair is coming up soon, and Allison Roberts told me about a new event which will be taking place this year.

Allison is currently organising a Bake-Off Marquee for this year's Summer Fair, where there will be food-related stalls and also a Bake Off competition.

The stalls are all to do with food - from kitchen equipment to actual food being sold. To give you an idea, there will be someone from Pampered Chef and also a lady with homemade jams and chutneys.

This year, for the first time, our Summer Fair will be hosting a Meppershall Bake-Off Competition! Anyone can enter: there is an under 5's category (decorated biscuits) and a 13 and under option in some categories. Within each category, there are three options to choose from, although you can enter as many categories and as many options as you like. Set recipes will be given nearer the time. The categories are:

Bread White Loaf – open to all

Plaited Loaf – open to all

Brown rolls (3 in total) – aged 13 years and under only

Pastry Savoury Flan – open to all

Set Recipe Bakewell Tart – open to all

Jam tarts (5 in total) – aged 13 years and under only

Cakes Set Recipe Victoria Sandwich – open to all

Fruit cake – open to all

Set Recipe Banana Loaf, aged 13 years and under only

Men Only Bedfordshire Clanger*

Scones Plain (5 in total) – open to all

Set Recipe Cheese (5 in total) – open to all

Under 5's Decorated biscuits (3 per entry, biscuits may be bought). This category will also involve our pre-school.

Show Stopper Theme: My Meppershall – half points awarded for presentation, half for cut/taste. The showstopper must be a cake, but can be made by a family/group/team of people or by an individual.

To enter, pick up a registration form at either the Post Office or Roger's Bakery. There is a £1 entry fee (Under 5's, no fee) and half the proceeds go to the village hall, and the other half to have fireworks in November. The judges of the competition are Judy Ayton and Bridget Pointing who are WI classified judges from Northamptonshire. Make your entry(s) at home, and then take them to the Bake-Off Marquee by 2 o'clock on the Fair day at the latest. The judges will decide the winners by taste and appearance, and the entry forms will be placed face down beside your entry, so they can fairly choose the winning piece. Allison told me; "although it all sounds very

serious, the main reason we are holding this event is for fun!" So, if you enjoy baking or fancy a challenge, why not enter?

**The Bedfordshire Clanger is a historic recipe which Allison would like to revive! The Clanger is an elongated suet crust dumpling with a savoury filling at one end and a sweet filling at the other, comprising a main course and dessert in one package. The savoury end is traditionally meat with diced potatoes and vegetables (although a filling without meat is also possible), and the sweet end is usually jam, or sweetened apple or other fruit. Traditionally the top pasty is scored with a few lines to denote the sweet end. Historically, the Bedfordshire Clanger was made by women for their husbands to take to their agricultural work as a midday meal, now it's your turn to have a go – plenty of recipes online!*

THE BEDFORD MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY SUMMERFIELD MINIATURE RAILWAY

(Off A600 just past Haynes bend)

PUBLIC RUNNING DAYS IN 2014

From 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

<u>May</u>		<u>August</u>	
Bank Holiday: Sun & Mon	4 th & 5 th	Wednesday	6 th
Sunday	18 th	Wednesday	13 th
Bank Holiday: Sun & Mon	25 th & 26 th	Bank Holiday: Sun & Mon	24 & 25 th
<u>June</u>		Sunday	31 st
Sunday	8 th	<u>September</u>	
Sunday	22 nd	Sunday	21 st
<u>July</u>		<u>October</u>	
Sunday	13 th	Sunday	19 th
	27 th		
<u>December</u> Saturday & Sunday Santa Specials Pre-booking essential			6 th & 7 th

The Scots' Society of St. Andrew, Bedford



The Scots' Society of St. Andrew, Bedford was set up in 1931 by Scots who had left their homes in Scotland to seek employment and better opportunities in Bedfordshire. Many of them came from farming communities and found farming opportunities in the county.

The Society is non-political and has four aims: the promotion of the spirit of Scottish customs and cultures; the annual assembling of the members to celebrate St. Andrew's Day; the commemoration and exchange of Scottish memories and sentiments with fellow Scots and to support local or Scottish charities.

Membership is open to all admirers of Scotland, its history, literature, music and customs upon payment of the modest annual subscription and having been proposed and seconded by an existing member. Its website is <http://www.bedscotsoc.org.uk>.

Office bearers and committee members are chosen from its membership. The current President was born in England but spent some years in Scotland. The majority of the membership is English. Without their support, the Society would be much smaller.

The Society plans to hold an event in each month of the year. These are varied and include 'Tea with President', 'Members' outing', 'Barbecue', 'Race night', 'Skittles evening at a local pub', 'Charity Pub Quiz', 'Coffee morning with guest speaker' and 'Scottish folk evening with Isla St. Clair'.

More formal events include the annual Dinner and Dance to celebrate St. Andrew, The Patron Saint of Scotland and Burns' Night, to commemorate the National Baird of Scotland. A President's Evening is also held at which President's and their consorts from neighbouring Scots' Societies are invited.

If the above interests you why not select an event in which you would like to participate and get in contact with the secretary via the Society's website contact details, or through your Messenger Treasurer, John Thompson, who is on the Society's committee too, and try us out. We are always looking for new members of our friendly and welcoming Society.

There are seven neighbouring Scots' Societies. They have formed the East Midlands Association of Scots' Societies [EMASS] whose primary aim is to foster good relations and co-operation between Scottish Societies in the East Midlands District and to advance their interests. Members of these Societies meet twice a year, once in November to hold an Annual General Meeting and on the other occasion to participate in the EMASS Summer Outing and Ceilidh, which each Society organises in rotation. The Summer Outing includes the participation in games and a quiz. These Societies are located in Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire.

The Society holds one poignant event each year to remember the Scottish soldiers who were killed in the First World War. In preparation for war, thousands of Scottish part-time soldiers received basic training in Bedford. They formed the Highland Division which was later to become the 51st Highland Division. Many of them came from remote areas of Scotland, but some of them never saw action having succumbed to childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, diphtheria and measles. Most of them were repatriated to Scotland for burial, but some are buried in the military section of Bedford's Foster Hill Road cemetery. A Service of Remembrance is conducted by Bedford's Scots' Society on the Sunday before Remembrance Sunday, at the Foster Hill Road cemetery, supported by the Royal British Legion, local cadet forces, Bedford Pipe Band, Bedford Borough Council and members of the general public. If you would like to know more about the Bedford Highlanders log on to <http://www.bedfordhighlanders.blogspot.co.uk/>

The Society has a happy association with the thriving Bedford Pipe Band which meets for practice weekly, in the centre of town. Pipe Major Donald Reid is its "Honorary Piper" and members of the band regularly perform at Society events throughout the year. If you are interested in joining, or becoming a friend of the Band, please contact the Band Secretary through the Pipe Band website. <http://www.bedfordpipeband.org.uk/>

The Society is supported by the Bedfordshire Scottish Dance Group which is affiliated to the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. Its "Demonstration Dancers" perform annually at President's Evening and other significant events under the direction of its "Honorary Dancing Teacher", George Hogg. If you wish to find out more about this Group log on to their website. <http://www.krose.plus.com/scd/bedrscds.html>

Les Barr, Treasurer



The Sparks team are pleased to announce that the dates for this year's Sparks holiday club are **Monday 11th-Thursday 14th August 2014**

10am-2pm

For ages 5-12

@ St Mary's Church

Please make a note of these dates!

Dear Parents,

This year's Sparks sees a change of date from our usual slot, but there will still be the same lively mix of fun and games whilst exploring a bible theme. Please save the dates in your diary and look out for registration forms nearer the time.

Volunteers needed! Please contact Dawn 816962, Morag 643387 or e-mail dawn.abbatt@gmail.com

Best Wishes

The Sparks Team

PAM AYRES Sat Nav

I have a little Satnav, it sits there in my car
 A Satnav is a driver's friend, it tells you where you are.
 I have a little Satnav, I've had it all my life
 It's better than the normal ones - my Satnav is my wife.

It gives me full instructions, especially how to drive:
 "It's sixty miles an hour", it says, "You're doing sixty five".
 It tells me when to stop and start, and when to use the brake
 And tells me that it's never, ever, safe to overtake.

It tells me when a light is red, and when it goes to green
 It seems to know instinctively, just when to intervene.
 It lists the vehicles just in front, and all those to the rear
 And taking this into account, it specifies my gear.

I'm sure no other driver has so helpful a device,
 For when we leave and lock the car, it still gives its advice.
 It fills me up with counselling, each journey's pretty fraught
 So why don't I exchange it, and get a quieter sort?

Ah well, you see, it cleans the house, makes sure I'm prop'ly fed
 It washes all my shirts and things, and keeps me warm in bed!
 Despite all these advantages, and my tendency to scoff,
 I only wish that now and then, I could turn the b...er off!

I do not know if this is a genuine Pam Ayres piece – it came to me by e-mail from 'a trusted source'.

If it is genuine, then full recognition and thanks to Pam - Ed

CALENDAR OF MEPPERSHALL EVENTS

May 2014

Thursday 1st		
Pop up Cafe	1.30 – 3.00 pm	Village Hall
Evergreens - Lunch		The 5 Bells, Langford
Thursday 8th		
Messenger AGM	7.30 pm	The Sugar Loaf
Saturday 10th		
Good Neighbours Group AGM	2.30 pm	The Sugar Loaf
Stealworks	7.30pm	St Mary's Church
Sunday 11th		
Second Sunday Stroll – to Hexton	10.30 am	St Mary's Church
Monday 12th		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
Thursday 15th		
Evergreens	2.15 – 4.00 pm	The Sugar Loaf
Saturday 17th		
Meppershall Festival:		
Tea Afternoon & Strictly Salsa	From 2.00 pm	Village hall
Evening Concert	7.30 pm	Village Hall
Saturday 24th		
Help for Heroes Quiz Night	8.00 pm 'til late	Village Hall

June 2014

Sunday 1st		
Shefford Summer Fete & Music Festival	1.00 – 8.00 pm	Grounds of Shefford memorial Hall
Thursday 5th		
Pop up Cafe	1.30 – 3.00 pm	Village Hall
Sunday 8th		
Village Hall AGM	6.00 pm	Village Hall
Monday 9th		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
Wednesday 18th		
Meppershall Players AGM	7.30 pm	Village Hall
Saturday 28th		
Meppershall Summer Fair		Foster's Field

Meppershall Summer Fair News

Red Arrows at
Meppershall Summer Fair 2013
Photo by Bryan King.



Well, that was last year...and for 2014 an **RAF Spitfire will do a fly-past!**

So put the date in your diary: **Saturday 28th June**

Here is an update on some of our NEW attractions:

PHIL MORRIS RACING – Will be bringing along the Valentino Rossi (9 times world champion) No 46 Aprilia GP 125 bike from the 1997 world championship. Also on display will be two ex race bikes from the Isle of Man TT races.



(This is all thanks to Wayne of 'Down at the bike shed' Messenger fame!)

- Take a look at Wayne's video of Phil's museum on <http://youtu.be/Tasa21ccrfs>

THE GREAT MEPPERSHALL BAKE-OFF - Visit our new marquee 'jam' packed with:



Competitions – Completely fun, for all ages...with even the odd soggy bottom!

Whether you're amateur or novice, 5 or 105 all you need is an interest in cooking

See more details in this issue of the Messenger, and look out for the entry

form coming through your door in early May

Foodie stalls - We have invited a range of food specialists to tantalise your taste buds and assist your baking needs. Stalls include organic home baking, preserves, cakes, confections and cookery equipment.

For more details on the Great Meppershall Bake-Off contact alli.roberts@hotmail.com

More Meppershall Summer Fair News!

NEW attractions continued:

PAINTBALL SHOOTING – This mobile shooting alley will test your skills.

SCURRY – Your dog is asked to jump over hay bales in an alley, fastest dog wins. Classes for both beginners and experienced - Even Ben the Cinnamon dog had a go, he loved it!

[Have you something different you can offer on a stall or in the way of family entertainment? Do you have a skill or craft you want to share with us? It's not too late to join in! Give us a call/Email us:](#)

Linda Primett by email on lindaprimett@hotmail.co.uk Tel 01462 815629

Kim Tyler by email on kim@randall-tyler.org.uk Tel 0795 255 7203

◇◇◇

We are pleased to welcome back many of our regular stalls & entertainments including:

CLASSIC CARS – Thanks to Jean Holden we are yet again expecting a wonderful variety of classic cars. Jean has worked hard over the years to produce this superb display of vehicles for our Fair. We have also been fortunate enough this year to have the addition of a 1953 Bentley R which has been seen on TV. Do come along to the fair and see it in real life!



SCRUFFS – Our ever popular contest where the Diesel's and Henry's of this world can strut their stuff.

[ARK FARM – Will bring along a selection of their range of friendly farm animals for you to meet.](#)

Their range includes sheep, pigs, goats, chickens, ducks, geese, a pony, cow or donkey and a farm dog along with any young they might have at that time.

LIFESTYLE MARQUEE – A chance to try a new craft such as Extreme Knitting or Abstract Art. Take a tutorial, learn some Nail Art and watch Artists at work. See you there!

The Great Meppershall Bake-Off Competition
Saturday 28th June at the Meppershall Summer Fair



Look out for the entry form etc. which will be coming through your door in early May, alternatively visit the Meppershall website to download your copy at www.meppershall.org

The Great Meppershall Bake-Off Competition Saturday 28th June at the Meppershall Summer Fair

Classes & Categories

Bread	1. White Loaf – open to all
	2. Plaited Loaf – open to all
	3. Brown rolls (3 in total) – <i>aged 13 years and under</i>
Pastry	4. Savoury Flan – open to all
	5. Bakewell Tart – open to all, <u>set recipe*</u>
	6. Jam tarts (5 in total) – <i>aged 13 years and under.</i>
Cakes	7. Victoria Sandwich – open to all, <u>set recipe*</u>
	8. Fruit cake – open to all
	9. Banana Loaf, <i>aged 13 years and under</i> , <u>set recipe*</u>
Men Only!	10. Bedfordshire Clanger
Scones	11. Sweet (5 in total) – open to all
	12. Cheese (5 in total) – open to all
Under 5's	13. Decorated biscuits (5 per entry, biscuits may be bought).
Show Stopper	14. Theme: 'My Meppershall' – half points awarded for presentation half for cut/taste. The show stopper must represent what Meppershall means to you and can be any form of bake. The entry may be made by a family/group/team of people.

***Set recipies, entry form etc. will be coming through your door in early May, alternatively visit the Meppershall website to download**

your copy www.meppershall.org

***For any queries with regards to The Great Meppershall Bake Off,
Please contact Allison Roberts on 01462 817393 or alli.roberts@hotmail.com***

PUZZLE PAGE

Su Doku 119 - Hard

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

Su Doku 120 - Medium

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

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

(Solutions on page 40 – with thanks to Paul Smith for a fresh delivery of puzzles)

MEPPERSHALL SOCIAL CLUB

2nd Sundays : 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 charity – see below.

Meppershall Social Club is resuming its Annual Snooker Tournament,

Check your closets and get your cues out and dust them off.

Please contact Luke Harris on 07527 594145 to enter your name into the Draw.

Open to 18+ years of age with a £3.00 entry fee.

Alternatively if snooker isn't your game how about an Annual Darts Tournament? Luke would gladly arrange this for you if you contact him on the above number.

Meat & Fish raffle: Draw every Friday at 9.00 pm, after Bingo.

Saturday 5th April: Karen's Karaoke

The new Committee and Club members have decided that the charities for this year will be:

Bedford Critical Care & Macmillan Uro-oncology Specialist Nurses.
Proceeds from the bottle on the bar and selected charity events will be split 50/50 between the above charities.

Meppershall Social Club now has an email address of:-

meppershallsocialclub@outlook.com for any queries or enquiries.

MEPPERSHALL FESTIVAL 2014

SATURDAY 17TH MAY, VILLAGE HALL from 2pm

In aid of
St. Mary's Church, Meppershall Brownies and Meppershall GNOMES
(Good Neighbour Group)



TEA AFTERNOON and STRICTLY SALSA!!!

Join us for tea and cake and a bit of 'Strictly' action,
with **Salsa Trio**,
the best kept secret **Salsa** club in Bedfordshire.

All welcome – spectators and dancers.
Just drop in at the Hall between 2 and 5 pm.
Tea & Cake – donations to St Mary's Church
Dancers (especially beginners) - tickets from Colette and on the door:
adults £3, children/students £1.50
discount for families and groups of 4 or more

For more info, please contact:
Carolyn Holmes, 07868 530221
carolynmholmes@btinternet.com

or

Colette, 07831 111062
colettehouse@gmail.com

MEPPERSHALL FESTIVAL 2014
SATURDAY 17TH MAY, VILLAGE HALL
at 7.30pm



EVENING CONCERT

Do you sing or play a musical instrument?

Are you interested in showcasing your musical talents?

Everyone is welcome: singers and instrumentalists,
beginners and experts; performing classical, jazz, rock
and more...

For more information, please contact:

Colette, 07831 111062
colettehouse@gmail.com

or

Carolyn Holmes, 07868 530221
carolynmholmes@btinternet.com

FANCY JOINING THE FESTIVAL COMMITTEE?

We would love to hear from you.
Call Colette or Carolyn.

Solution to Su Doku 119

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

Solution to Su Doku 120

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

Here is a scam reported from the personal experience of the Editor!

I had a letter from DVLC telling me that I had to renew my driving licence due to my age and urging me to do it on-line. So I went on-line and found the site that looked totally official, filled in all the requested information and was surprised to be told that a new form would follow in the post and I should transfer to it the information I had just given. There was a charge of £1.00.

After a week or so I received a credit card statement that showed a further charge of £10. I called the contact number given on the website and was told that in the small print I had agreed to take a monthly magazine, but if I did not want it they would refund the money and cancel my subscription. I told them to do that and, for good measure, called the credit card company and blocked any further payments to that organisation.

I then realised that agencies of Her Majesty's Government did not behave like that, so I phoned the real DVLC, who asked with weary *not another idiot* "did your website have ".gov" in the address?" and I realised that it had not. It had looked so official, and yet it was a scam. I did the renewal, on-line, with the real DVLC and received a new licence in about 48 hours!

I was only out of pocket by the £1.00 that I had paid in the first place, but all the information that normally goes into a licence renewal had gone off into the blue, so now I am even more at risk of identity theft. The moral is: look down the list of websites to find the ".gov" one – it will not be at the top because HMG does not pay to have their websites given prominence.

Keep Hold Of Your Handbags

Bedfordshire Police is asking people to be extra cautious when out on the school run or when shopping, now spring has arrived. Officers are reminding the public to keep their handbags, wallets and purses close to them at all times when out and about. It is all too easy to put handbags into a trolley and then leave the trolley unattended while you choose what the family will have for dinner, but a thief will see this as an opportunity to grab your valuables and run. It is also easy to put these valuables into the passenger area of a car whilst dropping the children off at school or unloading the shopping into the boot and this is when the thief sees another opportunity to strike.

On 24th March at 9am in Westbourne Road, Luton a motorist parked her maroon Vauxhall Corsa, leaving a passenger door insecure due to a faulty lock. Returning to the car a few minutes later she found her beige handbag with a large 'G' on the front missing together with her zebra patterned purse containing cash, bank cards and personal documents. This is the type of opportunity thieves are looking for.

Now the days are lighter and warmer the thief may be sitting in a car watching you leave the supermarket with your handbag precariously balanced on top of your shopping - just waiting to be grabbed. The thief will also look for an open car door or window to lean through and grab a bag and its contents while its owner is at the back of the vehicle unaware of what is happening.

So remember these handy tips when you are out shopping – they could help prevent you becoming a victim of crime:

- Don't leave purses, wallets or handbags unattended on top of shopping bags, in prams, in your supermarket trolley or in an unlocked vehicle, even if you are just unloading your shopping.
- Carry your bag close to your body and be wary of people around you.
- If someone snatches your bag don't struggle – you may be injured.
- If you are robbed, get a good description of the offender and tell the police immediately.
- Don't carry excessive amounts of cash in your bag or wallet.
- Don't put your wallet in your back pocket.
- Don't carry your credit cards, bankcards and cheque book in the same bag or pocket.
- When withdrawing money from a cash point machine, be wary of anybody standing close by and put the money straight into a purse or wallet.
- Make sure all your electrical gadgets are security mark and if possible download and use a tracker app.

FILM REVIEW

By Carlie Newman

THE PAST (cert. 18 2 hrs. 3 mins.) is an excellent film, directed by Iranian Asghar Farhadi. I liked it very much and anyone who saw *The Separation* by the same director should particularly appreciate it. My critic friend Derek Winnert has written the following for us:

Ahmad (Ali Mosaffa), an Iranian man has deserted his French wife, Marie Brisson (Bérénice Bejo), and her two children in Paris to return to his homeland. He returns to France after four years to finalise his divorce only to find his soon to be ex-wife's new domestic situation is a minefield.



His wife has started up a new relationship with the young handsome but angry and controlling Arab man named Samir (Tahar Rahim), who also has a son and a wife in a coma. Ahmad is now forced to confront this harsh reality as he re-meets his wife and her daughters from her previous marriage after her request for a divorce. The older daughter thinks her mother is the cause of Samir's wife's comatose state and discloses to Ahmad the details of something heinous she has done in the past.

Subtly, complexly written and intensely directed by Asghar Farhadi, *The Past* is very powerfully and persuasively performed, with all three main actors standing out. This is a very impressive, claustrophobic, disturbing movie. There's a lot of suppressed rage and anger in the movie, but a lot more deep hurt and endless regret.

It triumphed at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival, where Bejo won Best Actress award and the film won the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury, though it lost out to *Blue Is the Warmest Colour* for the Palme d'Or and also lost out as Best Foreign Language Film at the Golden Globes. This is the trouble with prizes. You can make a great film, as here, and go home empty handed every time.



The Meppershall Players



The Players have been busy planning ahead for this year and next, so after much discussion, this is what we hope to do

Wednesday 18th June: The Player's AGM, 7.30pm at the Village Hall. This is open to non-members as well as the usual suspects and it's a great time to come and find out what the Players are all about.

Saturday 28th June: The Players are at the Meppershall Summer Fair, with an Arena Display, a something-for-everyone Tombola, plus Pantomime 2014 tickets on sale. So come and say hello (we're a friendly bunch).

Wednesday 2nd July: Player's Pantomime 2014 is Beauty and the Beast. Read through 7.30pm, at the Village Hall. Come along if you're interested in appearing in this year's Pantomime.

Wednesday 9th July: Pantomime Auditions, at the Village Hall at 7.30pm for children 9-15yrs age group (who must be accompanied by an adult) and at 8.00pm for 16-90+yrs.

11th August -25th August: Player's Summer Break.

Fri 28th & Sat 29th November & Fri 5th & Sat 6th December. Player's Pantomime performances, Tickets: Sat Matinee's £6, Con £5; Evenings £8 Con £7; Last night £9 - No Concessions.

Wed 7th January 2015 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall: read through of VE/VJ celebration/commemoration production (title still to be decided).

Wed 15th January 2015 at the Village Hall, 7.30pm: Auditions for VE/VJ Production

Fri 8th & Sat 9th May 2015 7.45pm at the Village Hall VE/VJ Production Tickets £10. No Concessions. Includes Food.

27th & 28th Nov & Fri 4th & 5th Dec 2015: Pantomime - Robin Hood

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

If you use the Village Hall don't forget to check out the notice boards in the front entrance. We always have plenty of information about the Players on the board.

For those of you who enjoy singing, Karen's Karaoke is at Meppershall Social Club once a month throughout the year on the following Dates: Sat 3rd May, Sat 7th June, Sat 12th July, Sat 2nd Aug, Sat 13th Sep, Sat 4th Oct, Sat 1st Nov. So come along and enjoy a sing song in a friendly atmosphere.

The players meet every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. Membership is free and we welcome anyone from the age of 9 years to 90+. To indulge in acting, singing, directing, choreographing, sound, lighting, set building, scenery painting, front of house, backstage, stage managing, make up, costumes, etc. If you are interested in any of the above we look forward to meeting you. Karen Mitchell (Players Chairman) 01462 816336

Meppershall Garden Club

I am pleased to say that, thanks to the good weather recently, we have been able to have a couple of good practical sessions. The first was an excellent pruning session where we pruned anything from small shrubs and hedges to trees! I most certainly learnt a lot from other members of our group.



The second session was when some of our members went along to the spring clean event at the Meppershall Academy. It was great to see such a good turn out to assist the new Head teacher in the venture. Staff, parents, children, governors, and members of the wider community were all working hard and in good spirits. There was an

amazing transformation in some of the planted areas, outdoor equipment and furniture and the work was continued over the Easter holiday. We wish Mrs Moore all the best in her role as head.

Photo by John Chapman: Volunteers working hard to transform the Meppershall Academy

Many thanks to Maureen Gravell for supplying the above piece on the school.

I have so much enjoyed the beautiful Magnolia blossoms, or Tulip Trees as my Mum used to call them. It is such a pity they fall to the ground so soon. Today, in early April, a huge smile came over my face as I spotted a blue sea of Bluebells under the trees in the woods. We are so lucky!

Now over to Marcia, who has taken a break from 'puppy watch' to write this for us!

The sun is shining and warm, the plants and trees are responding with a burst of leaf and flower. It is a good time to get out and about and enjoy this special time of the year.

May for me is 'Bluebell' time and this month's article is where to enjoy an abundance of them. A walk in bluebell woods is a magical experience that I am sure we all remember from our childhood.

- **Ashridge Estate**, Nr Berkhamstead, HP4 1LX offers a fantastic 'Bluebell Walk' in May. The Estate is National Trust and is open from dawn to dusk; entry to the Estate is free.

Travel time by car: 1hr

The Visitors Centre is open 10 am-5pm

Shop 10 am-5pm, Cafe 8am – 5 pm

There is free parking at Monument Drive, or nearby at Ivinghoe Beacon.

- **Coton Manor Gardens**, Northants NN6 8RQ, boasts a 5 acre wood which is carpeted with bluebells in late April and May (see photo.) This is definitely worth a visit.



Travel time by car: 1hr 20 mins

Opening times are:

Tuesday – Saturday, 12noon - 5 pm

Adults: £7-00 Concessions: £ 6-50

Children £2-50

'Stableyard Cafe' has an excellent menu and there is also a well stocked shop to browse in.

Enjoy the bluebells.....Marcia Bairstow

Contacts for The Meppershall Garden Club:

Linda Parker 01462 815114 or

Kim Lee Tyler 01462 811750 or

Sarah Till 01462 817176 or

e-mail at: meppershallgardenclub@hotmail.co.uk

Lewis's Further Adventures

And the tour rolls on.

I called up Marshalls at Cambridge and established that the Instrument Repair Vehicle was well into its build. Marshalls had a large contract to build Telecommunication vehicles for the Royal Signals. The cabins were screened from external RF sources and were constructed from aluminium. The cabin of my I.R.V. was of similar build, on a Bedford RL platform chassis with built-in air conditioning and a Hiab hydraulic crane to lift the heavy tracker/computer unit fitted to the rear of the platform. I spent the day with them to familiarise myself with the built-in equipment and the idiosyncrasies of the Hiab crane when loaded up with the computer.

At the end of the day I headed north to the Base Workshops at Old Dalby, where I was booked into the Mess and welcomed by another AQMS. As it was by then well into the evening, we repaired to the bar and, with a couple of beers inside, chewed the fat.

The Radar Repair Vehicle was a completely different beast to the I.R.V. It was a Commer five ton vehicle with an integral cabin of 1940s vintage and was fitted with two air conditioning units. Three walls of the cabin were fitted with sturdy racking which housed a set of the radar processing units which resembled dustbins fitted with interconnecting cables. A lower set of cupboards contained simulator loads for the antennae. In addition to the specialist test equipment there was a full set of brand new standard test equipment; essential to keep this away from the predatory hands of my technicians! I would have to arrange a full handover from the contractors and transporting the vehicles and a Meadows generator to TyCroes.

However fate had yet to play its devious hand: returning from Old Dalby to Highgate I heard an ominous rumble from the engine of my Singer Gazelle, and pulling into the next lay by, I applied a screwdriver to the crankcase and confirmed that the problem lay with a big-end, a very cautious return to Ty-Croes was called for. Mulling it over on the run round the North Circular to Highgate I decided the best move would be to give Albert, my AQMS pal a ring and get him to 'loan' an Austin Champ and meet me halfway at Wellington and tow me over the mountains. He could clear it with my O.C. who had sent me on the detachment in the first place. The agreed meeting place was the garage on the A5 at Wellington belonging to Bill Doran and Matt Wright, the former Works Rider and Development Engineer for A.J.S. Motorcycles, (I had purchased my first motorcycle from them). As I drove slowly in, Albert was there to greet me, grinning all over his face. We detoured to Fran's home

where her mother quickly assembled mugs of tea and bacon butties and bustled around attempting to persuade us not to continue the journey, but she was in a no-win situation!

Off we went with the Champ making light work of the tow, but it was approaching 1 a.m. when, as we drove over the bridge in Betws-y-Coed, a member of the Welsh Constabulary flagged us down to enquire why an Army vehicle was towing a civilian car? Albert in fluent Welsh advised him to attend to other matters! We eventually reached TEGWRA about four in the morning.

A couple of hours sleep and I was on the phone to an engineering firm in Holyhead. I established that they could give me a quick turn-around on a crankshaft regrind and the real graft began. The previous year Albert and I with a number of helpers from the WO's and Sergeants Mess had built a row of a dozen rudimentary garages to house our cars away from the salt laden sea spray. This was now invaluable. I drove the car into my space and then ran out a power lead from the WRAC quarters and rigged up lighting with wander leads. The car was jacked up and supported on railway sleepers, a wheeled sledge was borrowed from the vehicle workshop, and the start of long periods looking at the underside of the engine commenced. The Singer Gazelle was unique in that the crankshaft could be removed from the underside of the engine. Oil was drained out, the sump removed and the main and big-end bearings removed. The crankshaft was disconnected from the flywheel and carefully lowered from the engine. This all took time and Fran bless her cotton socks kept the tea and butties flowing. Naturally my two boys were fascinated and spent as much time as possible under the car.

Albert ran the crankshaft into the workshop in Holyhead and they promised a four hour turn-round including supplying replacement shells. Friday morning and Albert returned with the crankshaft and an invoice less than £50.

With the assistance of a Vehicle Artificer, the engine was re-assembled by mid-day, then turned over on the starting handle to check that all was well. A gallon of Mr Shell's best and new sparking plugs, ignition on and a rather sweet engine ran once more.

Thanks to a number of very good friends and the loan of an H.M.G. vehicle, I was able to return to London the next Monday at a very sedate pace, and my detachment continued without interruption.

W.O.2 AQMS Lewis Birt R.E.M.E.

To be continued



Parents, Grandparents, & Childminders are all welcome!

At the beginning of April our animal themed Easter Party was enjoyed by all. Thank you to everyone who helped, and to the face painter who worked her magic.

We hope everyone feels refreshed after their Easter break and are now ready for the summer term. This term we have Shefford Orchard Centre joining us again, who will be bringing along a dietician and some food messy play. We are also planning a joint session with Meppershall Pre-school on 20th May, and another teddy bears picnic at Standalone farm in June.



We would like to welcome Nicola onto our committee, and thank all parents who helped last term, particularly at the beginning and end of our busy sessions. It would not work without their help.

**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



Ponderings

Wow the weather has been kind, and we hope all enjoyed their Easter break. We will be aiming to get our 'Mini Diggers' allotment regularly from now on. We would like to welcome Alfie, Layla and Ruby who will be joining us this term. We really hope they enjoy their time here.

Spring term was busy, and we ended our 'People who help us' topic with a visit from 'Postman Clive'. We did pretty well for visitors with Police, Fire, Farmer, Postman visits to tie in with the theme. Pirates and Princesses this term...mmmmm... visitors may not be so easy to come by!

We are now collecting Sainsbury's Active Kids vouchers. If you have any to donate please do drop them in. We also have a bags2school collection of all unwanted clothes on the 4th June at around 9am in the Village Hall car park. We have plans for lots of fun at the Summer Fair this year with 'Guess The Giant Teddy Bear's Name', 'Hoop A Bottle', and 'Find A Character' games. Our children are also going to enter a cake into the Summer Fair Bake-Off!

With such a busy start to the year we would really like to get a few more qualified relief staff on-board, who could work at short notice. If you are interested in applying, please ring Debbie on 07713 627376. We are committed to offering Equal Opportunities in Employment, and follow strict Safeguarding and Safer Recruiting Procedures.

Meppershall Pre-school has a few places left to fill. If your little one is ready to make new friends and enjoy our stimulating, safe environment, please ring Tamsin our fantastic leader any morning in term time on the number below to book a visit.

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

**Priority is given to funded children,
but we also have limited spaces for 2 year olds.**

Please ring Tamsin on 07816 357159, 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.



NEW SHEFFORD BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Are you a business owner, director, partner or senior manager working in the Shefford area?

If so, have you heard about Shefford Open 4 Business?

This organisation has been created to increase awareness of the diversity of retail, commercial and industrial services available in and around Shefford, and also to become the voice of the local business community when communicating with Shefford Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council.

The next meeting of Shefford Open 4 Business will be held on Tuesday 27th May, 5.30-7pm, venue to be confirmed. The speakers will be talking on the subject of 'the Pension Bombshell' covering the subjects of Auto-enrolment and those pension issues raised in the recent Budget announcements. Come along and ask your questions!

Website

If you have not yet featured your local business on the website, which is www.sheffordopen4business.org – please go onto the site and make your listing, which is currently free of charge for local businesses.

Notes:

- 1. This Press Release has been provided by Carol Sawyers, Business Advisor, who can be reached on 01462 810056 or Casawyers@aol.com Carol is the Secretary for Shefford Open 4 Business.*
- 2. There are currently 137 businesses listed on the directory which are based in and around Shefford.*

Take time to check your water bill

Members of Central Bedfordshire Council's Older Peoples' Reference Group (OPRG) are urging residents to check their water bills to make sure they are not paying too much. The call is backed up by Anglian Water who have been working with the group to show how making small changes around the home can make a big difference to the amount you pay for the water you use.



Following a meeting with one of the company's Water Efficiency Managers, Norma Bartlett, Vice-Chair of the group got in touch with the company to discuss her tariff and to look into the option of her having a water meter. Unfortunately due to the location of her house, that wasn't an option but instead she was advised to carry out an assessment of her water usage to make sure she was paying the correct amount. After completing the assessment it became clear that Norma had been overpaying each month and her bill was subsequently reduced from around £50 a month to under £20 – a significant saving.

Norma, who lives in Harlington, said:

"It was a surprise that I would save so much. It's £400 a year, enough for a holiday or a great weekend in Paris or then again, help to pay my gas/electricity bill!"

Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing commented:

"We are all watching the pennies at the moment so it's really important that everyone checks whether they are on the right tariffs, not just for water but for all their utilities. I am delighted that the OPRG have been working so successfully with Anglian Water, it is just one of many examples of what they do to make a positive difference to the lives of older people locally." The OPRG provides a forum for older people to feedback to the council about key issues, good practice and positive outcomes to inform the development and improvements of services for older people. They are also key members of the Just Ask project – which will be heading to towns and villages across our areas over the coming months to provide information, advice and support on a wide range of health, social care and housing issues to anyone who needs it. For more information go to www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/justask We are always on the look-out for new members, so if you are interested in finding out more please contact Caroline Tate on 0300 300 5744 or email caroline.tate@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

For more information about making sure you are on the right tariff and on how you can save water go to www.anglianwater.co.uk or call 08457 91 91 55



These two scams were circulated by Central Beds Trading Standards Dept in April. For more information on current scams and how to recognise them, visit the Trading Standards page of Central Beds website.

The Trading Standards team would like to warn residents of a potential telephone scam, which is purportedly from the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

We have had a report from a resident following a telephone call they recently received. The caller claimed to be calling from "*Citizens Advice Bureau in Abington*" and was using the telephone number 01235 508447. However, the caller then proceeded to advise the resident on how they can claim for compensation on any mis-sold PPI (Payment Protection Insurance) and a car accident the resident had been involved in five years earlier - fortunately the resident had not been involved in any such accident, so became suspicious of the call. This telephone call has all the hallmarks of a "phishing" scam, seeking to obtain your personal and bank account details.

Our advice to residents is to always act with caution when receiving any type of cold-call. Never provide your personal or bank account details to anybody over the telephone unless you are absolutely sure of their intentions. Always take a moment to ask yourself whether the caller is genuine, if you do have doubts, then do not be afraid to end the call by hanging up.

The Trading Standards team would like to warn residents to act with caution if they receive a telephone call where the caller claims to be able to stop you from receiving unwanted marketing telephone calls.

We have had a number of reports where caller(s) are attempting to sell residents a device costing approximately £90, which, when connected to a telephone wall socket will stop any unwanted nuisance calls.

This type of call has all the hallmarks of a scam; there is no guarantee that this device will work. In addition, the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) is a **free** service which you can use to stop unsolicited and marketing calls. You can register your telephone number by calling 0845 070 0707 or visiting www.tpsonline.org.uk

Our advice to residents is to think twice about paying for something that you can get for free elsewhere. Never provide your bank card or account details to a cold-caller, unless you are absolutely sure of their intentions. Never be intimidated into making a quick decision and if you have any doubts as to whether the call is genuine, do not be afraid to hang up.

THE BIKE SHED

by Wayne Allen

Meppershall Summer Fair

Over the past few years it has been great to be part of the Summer Fair with our live version of The Bike Shed. We have attracted more bikes every year but for 2014 as requested by the committee we added some special attractions.....Our main attraction is in the form of **Phil Morris Racing**. Phil is the founder of the Oswestry Road Racing Museum featured in last month's Bike Shed. This to me and maybe other bike fans is like 10 Christmases in one hit. Phil will be bringing the **Valentino Rossi Aprilia GP 125 bike and two TT bikes**.

Also in attendance will be some very valuable British classic bikes supplied by Studio 434. This collection provides cars and bikes for the TV and film industry and again I am truly grateful for the great support in providing not only the bikes but a 1953 Bentley R to add to the classic car section. The contacts here have also offered some Ducati superbikes for Superbike Rentals to go on display.

We will also have **Steve Cooper of Classic Motorcycle Mechanics** magazine as master of ceremony for the bike parade in the main arena. Steve's extensive knowledge of all things bike and enthusiasm are not to be missed. Don't forget to bring your bikes to show!!!!

Facebook and Facebook Page

I have reluctantly joined Facebook, I say reluctantly because my previous experience was people telling me what coffee shop they were in and what they were drinking! So not only have I resurrected my hibernating account but extended it with a dedicated Facebook page called THE BIKE SHED ENTHUSIAST. Here you will find a wide variety of bike related post from classic bikes to racing machines. The added benefits are the great links to other specialist pages by many well respected people in the bike world to broaden the appeal.

Farewell to a genius – Massimo Tamburini

Massimo Tamburini sadly passed away on April 5, 2014 aged 70. He was an Italian motorcycle designer for Cagiva, Ducati and MV Agusta and was one of the founders of Bimota. Described as the Michelangelo of motorcycle design, you only have to view the Ducati 916 and MV Agusta F4 to see why. He truly was one of the most talented designers of our time. The best way to pay tribute is to view his greatest creations below.

Ducati 916



MV Agusta F4



COVERS BY REQUEST

We have to thank John Chapman for this month's cover picture, taken at the Meppershall CE Academy Easter Bonnet Parade.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Birthdays in May

On 15th May Margaret Taylor will be 81

On 26th May Fifi Simpkins will be 80

On 31st May Doreen Pritchard will be 86

Many congratulations to all of the above.



Since the April issue we have had pleasure in presenting yet another of our Messenger cakes (from Roger's Bakery) to villagers achieving special birthdays:

On 22nd March Richard Ivory achieved his 80th birthday...

(Picture by Colette House)

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.

NOTICE BOARD

Shefford Summer Fete & Music Festival
Sunday 1st June 1pm - 8pm

A fun day for all the family

*Arena Events, barbecue, bouncy castle, beer tent,
pony rides ,classic cars & lots more.*

Memorial Hall Grounds Hitchin Road

Shefford Town Memorial Hall, Hitchin Road

Sunday 1st June,1pm: Shefford Summer Fete, Shefford Memorial Grounds.

Arena events from local schools, stalls, bouncy castles, classic cars, pony rides, barbecue, licensed bar & lots more.

A music festival will start at 5pm till 8pm where you are all invited to picnic in the park. FOC.

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 and Events – May/June 2014

Date	Time	Service
Sunday 4 th May 3 rd of Easter	11.00am 11.00am	Parish Communion Junior Church at the School
Sat 10 th May	9.00am	Celtic Morning Prayer
Sunday 11 th May 4 th of Easter	8.30am 10.30am	Holy Communion Second Sunday Stroll: Meet at the Church Gate for a 5-6 mile hike to Hexton, via Shillington for refreshments at The Raven. Return transport available – call James on 857836.
Sun 18 th May 5 th of Easter	8.30am 11.00am 6.30pm	Holy Communion All-Age Family Service Deanery Evensong - All Saints Church, Clifton
Friday 24 th May	9.00pm	Silent Together – all welcome
Sun 25 th May 6 th of Easter	11.00am	Parish Communion
Sunday 1 st June 7 th of Easter	11.00am 11.00am	Parish Communion Junior Church at the School

St Mary's weekday service - Wednesdays:

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

Things to look out for!

Second Sunday Stroll – Sunday 11th May, 10.30am at the Church

Every second Sunday of the month, join us for a social hike around our beautiful landscape (no mid-morning service – see table of services). Come appropriately equipped (footwear, waterproof coat, warm layers, snack). After four successful outings so far this year, in May we will journey over the big fields of the vale of Shillington to the edge of the Chilterns at Hexton – ready to refuel at The Raven. Call 857836 (James) for more information or just turn up.

A Message from St Mary's...

April is the time of year when Church of England churches have their Annual General Meetings - a time to look back over the previous calendar year and to report on the many aspects of our church life...

It is also a time for me, as Rector, to say a huge thank you to all who have contributed to the life of St Mary's over the past year. There are so many who give so much to make St Mary's tick: the Church Wardens, the PCC, our Sacristan, caterers, churchyard gardeners, choir and organists, sides-people, readers and prayers, rota-makers, Junior Church team, cleaners, launderers, flower arrangers, bell ringers, maintenance team... and I apologise if I have missed anyone! Thank you to all who contribute their gifts generously, quietly, tirelessly...

A special vote of thanks is due to Peter Longland as he retires from being our Churchyard Care Coordinator, a role which he has undertaken faithfully for (too many!) years. In view of this, we would like to thank him additionally on another occasion.

Also, special thanks are due to Christine Bartlett - who has poked and prodded her way around the churchyard and completed an up-to-date plan of the whole churchyard for us. I think she has actually greatly enjoyed this task, but it was a huge undertaking and we are hugely grateful.

A big thank you is due to our toilet up-graders Gary Maddern, Brian and Richard Cole... not forgetting David Bartlett. Thanks to them, we now enjoy a state of the art all-ability facility!

And also particular thanks are also due to David for the Kitchen - and all that it has added to our fellowship and to the possibilities of our building.

Then there are all those who ran the Sparks Holiday Club in 2013 and who are planning for the coming summer. Pirate Bases in Meppershall welcomed all comers and I believe Captains Heave-Ho and Yo-Ho ran a very tight and happy ship. I am so thankful that so many put so much effort into welcoming and enthralling 87 children last Summer. I think we are all grateful to Dawn Abbatt and Morag De Luca for being the driving force on that. Look out for "Infinity and Beyond" coming later in the year (August 11th - 14th). There will be many, many ways of helping if you have time!

I am pleased also to thank the Friends of St Mary's for their generosity in raising funds for the Church building - and for the fun and fellowship their events generate in the Church and the village.

I have heard it said that a village needs a church and a shop or two, a post office, a school and a pub. I certainly know that a church needs people... or rather the church *is* the people. I am so thankful that so many come and pray in it, sit quietly in it, look after it, watch over it, support it in so many different ways. There are some challenges ahead, but I think 2013 was a good year - thanks be to God - and to you. Here's to 2014.

Rector Roni

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI
CATHOLIC CHURCH
HIGH STREET SHEFFORD**

**SATURDAY MASS 6pm RAF HENLOW
SUNDAY MASSES 9am & 5.15pm AT SHEFFORD**

For weekday services and confessions please see notices in the church or telephone:

Parish Priest Canon Noonan on 813436 or
Parish Secretary Rose Boulton on 811547 or email rosedene@talktalk.net

St Mary's Church, Meppershall

Junior Church

Jesus has risen! Easter will have been celebrated and children will have enjoyed egg hunts, hopefully including the one being held at St Mary's on Easter Sunday morning before the Easter Service.

Our last session focused on the time line for Jesus, covering major events in his life from birth through to his betrayal and crucifixion.

Jesus rode on a donkey to Jerusalem and the crowds waved palms and put them on the road before him. But when Jesus arrived in the temple he became angry because it was being used as a market place where much money was being exchanged. This was not how the temple should have been used and Jesus was not afraid to show his displeasure in front of the high priests.

When Judas betrayed Jesus and came with the guards, He remained calm and was forgiving. How many times have we felt betrayed in our lives and not been so forgiving?

Jesus was crucified, he suffered on the cross to take away our sins, so that we might be forgiven and allowed a new beginning.

Even now new beginnings are extremely important and it is good to reflect on how we live our lives. Do we forgive? Do we love our neighbor? Are we selfish? Are we unkind to people around us?

So now, with a fresh start ahead of us, let's try harder to live as Jesus taught us.

We look forward to seeing you on the first Sunday of May from 11am to 12noon in School.

Blessings

The JC Team

MUESLI AND CRANBERRY MUFFINS

MAY 2014

Makes 4 muffins

110 g (4oz) self-raising flour
½ tsp mixed spice
Pinch of salt
50 g (2oz) caster sugar
40g (1 ½) unsweetened muesli
1 beaten egg
40 g (1 ½ oz) melted butter
2 tbsp whole milk
4 tbsp cranberry sauce

METHOD

- 1) Preheat the oven to 190o C /375o F/ Gas 5. Line a deep cup muffin tin with 4 paper muffin cases.
- 2) Sift the flour, spice and salt into a mixing bowl. Add the sugar and muesli, reserving some muesli for sprinkling on the tops.
- 3) Make a well in the centre and gradually blend in the egg, melted butter and milk to form a thick batter. Fold the cranberry sauce into the batter.
- 4) Divide the mixture between the muffin cases (they should be quite full), sprinkle over the remaining muesli and bake in the oven for 30-35 minutes until risen and lightly golden. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.
- 5) Serve warm split with butter and jam.

*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 May

Summer Bridger who will be 8 on the 1st
Grace Finedon who will be 6 on the 3rd
Laura Stock who will be 13 on the 4th
William Brinkley who will be 2 on the 7th
Edward Brinkley who will be 2 on the 7th
Samuel Boggon who will be 14 on the 7th
Sasa Kovacs who will be 14 on the 8th
Harrison Isaac who will be 8 on the 10th
Frank Donachie who will be 15 on the 10th
Louie Curtis who will be 9 on the 11th
Adam Palmer who will be 13 on the 12th
Sophie Palmer who will be 13 on the 17th
Alfie Harris who will be 6 on the 17th
Isabella Lambley who will be 11 on the 17th
James Parrott who will be 14 on the 18th
Darcey Sheppard who will be 13 on the 19th
Jennifer Ridley will be 3 on the 21st
Lily Hefford who will be 6 on the 21st
Rees Davies who will be 9 on the 23rd
Bryony Lowden who will be 14 on the 23rd
Chloe Thorne who will be 12 on the 23rd
Eilis Fleming who will be 7 on the 31st

If you are under 16 and would like your name added to the birthday page, please call Louise Hutson on 814148 or e-mail 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>					
May June July	27 30 28	Tuesday Double	August	NONE	
			September	29	
			October	27	
			November	24	Double
			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 2th September the October issue will be collated.