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## EDITORIAL

I don't know how you feel, but I feel that the year has recently taken a big step forward. Last month we were speculating about Spring, based upon a few mild days and now, seemingly in an eye-blink, it is on us full-force. If you're lucky to be an early riser you'll know what I mean as the volume of the dawn-chorus has been turned-up a notch. Indeed, that may be the reason for my early rising! Out in the countryside around Meppershall the hedgerows and most of the trees are now freshly clothed in green that wasn't there the last time you looked.



The same seems to be true for village activities. This month's magazine seems crammed with enticing posters for interesting local events. It is as though peoples' creativity and passions have been in hibernation for the winter and are now bursting forth, like the buds on the trees. I feel a little spoilt for choice. There's the Meppershall Festival, The Meppershall Players' production of 'When The Lights Go On Again', the visits from the WI and even an English Wine Week tour on offer this month. Then, just over the horizon, is the prospect of the Meppershall Summer Fair with The Fly-Past and Bake-Off, not to mention the musical events being held nearby in June. All this is in addition to the usual round of village activities. We are very lucky to live where we do.

There's another thing that will be occupying much more of everybody's time as you read this editorial – the Local and General Elections. The media have seemingly followed the same curve as nature – a steady ramping up of activity, as we struggle to understand each party's policies. As you know, the Messenger is non-political, so it doesn't have a view. Nonetheless, it can reflect on what will be a widespread activity this month.

It has just occurred to me that there's another thing we can look forward to this month – the two May Bank Holidays!

All the best to everyone,

Mike McConnell

## Election time in Meppershall

Election time has come again  
 And politicians call;  
 They promise much but little grasp  
 The biggest force of all.  
 Will national projects touch my heart  
 Or mind this fine spring morn?  
 And where in all these big ideas  
 Are great acts truly born?  
 When someone works, or meets with friends,  
 Or helps their family:  
 What I do for my fellow man  
 And what I do for me.    ANON

## Bedford Model Engineering Society Summerfield Miniature Railway

Off the A600 just past Haynes Turn  
 Public Running Days in 2015 from 11 am to 4 pm.

<b>MAY</b>	Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup>		<b>AUGUST</b>	Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup>
	Bank Holiday Monday 4 <sup>th</sup>			Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup>
	Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup>			Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup>
	Bank Holiday Monday 25 <sup>th</sup>			Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>JUNE</b>	Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup>			Bank Holiday Monday 31 <sup>st</sup>
	Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup>		<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup>
<b>JULY</b>	Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup>			Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup>
	Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup>		<b>OCTOBER</b>	Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup>
			<b>NOVEMBER</b>	Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>DECEMBER Saturday &amp; Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> &amp; 6<sup>th</sup> : Santa Specials – booking essential; forms available in September.</b>				



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 – April 2015**

The end of our Easter term was marked by a lovely Easter Service at St Mary's Church. The older children of the school retold the Easter Service whilst the younger children sang songs, recited poems or showed some of their art work. We are so lucky to have such a beautiful church to worship in.

I have been looking back at the log books again and found a couple of interesting entries:

*April 1874 – Six of the First Class absent - kept at home to plait.*

*April 1883 – Received a parcel of new slates.*

*1906 – The boys of Class 1 and 2 were taken to Nun Wood for Nature Study.*

*(The girls were taken separately the next afternoon whilst the boys did drawing and nature study)*

According to my research, this ancient woodland is suspected to be the remains of the woodland referred to in the Domesday Book of 1086, where the woodland is described as having grazing for two hundred pigs. Shown covering a larger area before enclosure of the parish in 1853, these woods later belonged to Chicksands Priory.

This was particularly interesting to read as Years One and Two started this term by having a stunning start to their topic 'An Enchanted Woodland'. We were able to set up our wildlife area for the children to explore and they really enjoyed looking for various woodland creatures and birds, with a few fairies and other magical creatures as well. Later on in the term the children are visiting Salcey Forest as a school trip. I would like to find out more about Nun Wood and visit it myself!

I have added some photos taken of our stunning start on the facing page.



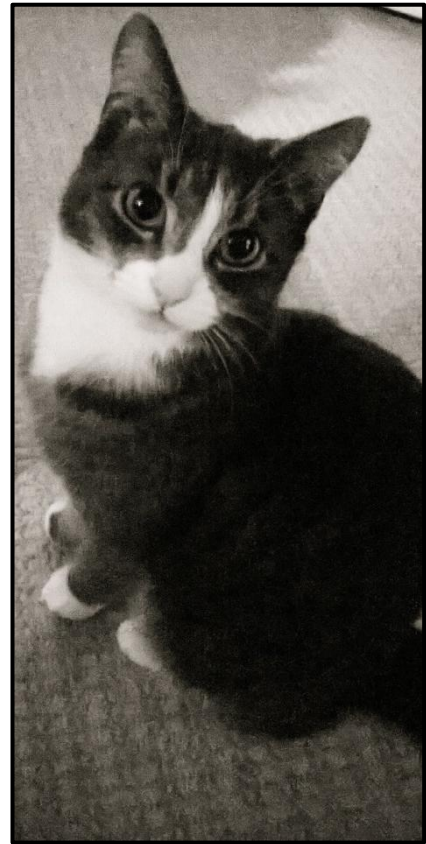
Kind regards

Nickie Moore



## THE PURR-FECT SOLUTION

I was wondering what to do with all my spare time once I retire in May. I have four cats of my own: Duncan (15 years) - I acquired him from the Cats Protection League, he is now blind in one eye but can still keep up with the younger ones and is definitely still the boss; Sapphire, who is Siamese (12 years) and very much a proper lady - she has the most beautiful blue eyes (hence being called Sapphire), and in her younger years was a very good climber. Then comes Charlie, a tabby (6 years) - I found him in an industrial waste bin in the car park where I worked; he was only a few weeks old. I borrowed a pet carrier and brought him home and he was accepted as part of the family straight away. Then finally there is Poppy (3 in June), who is a blue tabby and very spoilt. She was very poorly when I first got her and I thought at one time it was very touch and go if she would survive. She was not accepted straight away by Sapphire, who I thought at one time was going to pack her bags and leave home, but with some perseverance Sapphire is now like her mum and constantly grooms her.



Getting back to why I am writing this article. I look after my neighbour's cats of which have totalled 5 (not including my 4) at one time, which has ended up with me having the nickname of 'The Cat Lady'. Even the cats that I didn't look after would often use the front porch as a sunspot/refuge. It was suggested that I look at taking up cat-sitting as a possible activity once I had more spare time. So whether you have indoor or outdoor cats, if you would like a reliable, caring, and trustworthy person to come in and feed and fuss them and also clean up any bits and pieces, i.e. sick or dead mice, whilst you are away, please bear me in mind. I can give you lots of references so you can relax in knowing your cat will be well looked after whilst you are away. Please see my advert in the advertising pages.

Teresa Richards

# Meppershall Festival 2015

Saturday 16th May  
Village Hall - from 2pm



**Tea & Cake served all Afternoon**



**Children's Street Dance**

1.45 for 2-3pm (0-17 yrs)



For the family.....

**Traditional Folk/Country Dance**

3.30 for 3.45- 4.45pm



**Evening Concert**

7.30pm



**Dance Tickets: Children £1.50**

**Adults £3**

**Concert Tickets: Children (0-17 yrs) £2.50**

**Adults £4**

**Available from Colette House 01462 815585,  
Rogers Bakery & Meppershall Village Stores**



## **Meppershall Parish Council Report**

**13<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

There were no planning applications for the Council to consider at this meeting.

Councillor Bulley and a resident of Shefford Road addressed the meeting about problems with the green footpath crossing points in Shefford Road. Councillor Bulley has had communications with Amey about this, the signing of the crossings and the completion of the traffic calming measures with the inclusion of 30 mph road markings. These matters are ongoing and he hoped to reach a conclusion before the next meeting.

The Clerk reported that the regular inspections of the allotment area have commenced by the village caretaker and that he will be writing to some tenants about the condition of their allotments.

I reported to the meeting that proposals for a new village hall were progressing again and further details are in a report from the Village Hall Trustees elsewhere in this edition. In this project the Parish Council are providing the land on which to build the new hall. On behalf of the village, the Parish Council will be gaining replacement and additional open space land for new playing pitches, shared changing room facilities, cemetery, replacement and relocated play equipment, parish office and storage.

During the meeting I was able to show and give a short demonstration of one of the two defibrillators which are now installed at the Village Hall and the Meppershall Academy. These machines are available if you are advised to collect one by the Ambulance Service after dialling 999. They will give you the lock code number for the yellow storage box. Once you have the machine it 'talks' you through using the machine step by step so you do not need specific or medical training to use one. There will be an awareness event in the village at a future date, please see the advertisement from the Community Heartbeat Trust elsewhere in this edition.

The meeting decided that the overgrown Leylandii hedge at the end of Brookmead will be removed and replaced by fencing as a permanent solution. This will be carried out in September at the end of the nesting season.

It is now the end of the Parish Council's 4 year term and I would like to thank all ten Councillors on your behalf for the time they have freely given to the running of the Council. Retiring members, Roger Bryant, Martin Morris, Tony Sykes and Peter Crossley. Thanks also go to those who have put their names forward for nomination at the elections in May, Dick Bulley, Peter Chapman,

David Foscett, Paul Merryweather, John Parsons, Sandra Read, Paul Smith, Roger Smith and Mark Thomason.

Finally special thanks must go to Roger Bryant, who has served on the Parish Council for 24 years.

Any resident is welcome to attend our meetings to speak about any subject during our open public session at the beginning of the formal meeting. Or you may just wish to come along and see what we do. We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 7:45 pm in the Village Hall.**

David Foscett

Chairman Meppershall Parish Council – [chairman@meppershall.org](mailto:chairman@meppershall.org)

## **Covers By Request**

### **Councillor Bryant Retires After 24 Years**

Our cover this month shows Cllr Roger Bryant receiving a certificate from the Chairman of Meppershall Parish Council, Cllr David Foscett, to mark his last council meeting. Cllr Bryant will not be standing for re-election in May after 24 years continuous service on the council.

Roger was first elected in 1991 and took on the role of Spokesman on Highways and Lighting, a position which he held until he was succeeded by Dick Bulley in 2011. Roger also served 2 terms as the Council-nominated governor for Meppershall CofE Lower School (later Meppershall CofE Academy). In this role he was also the governor responsible for Health & Safety in the school.

Roger's cheerful and common-sense approach, together with his long experience, will be missed both on the Council and the Board of Governors.

(Picture by Colette House)

## SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

By Enid Pamment

May 2015



Earlier this year we held our Annual Get Together at the Memorial Hall in Shefford. This event proved very successful and enjoyable for everyone who attended. Our representative was Steve, who lives in Shefford and was happy to accept our cheque for Keech Hospice Care for Children. This year you have raised £1,000 together with a further £100 from generous donations that have been given to us. Our grateful thanks to you all. Steve gave a very interesting updated talk on the improvements and achievements that have been made during the past year and how very much our contribution is valued. Everyone then settled down to enjoy the scrumptious buffet provided again by our friend May. During all this time members of the Caritas Choir from Luton were arriving – there were thirty-three ladies all with beautiful voices. Their harmonies were superb. There was plenty of humour and our attentive audience were encouraged to take part. We also had a successful Tombola which raised £79 which will go towards our cheque for next year! Another very successful evening. Two days later it was our visit to London to tour the BBC. We were asked to split our group into two as each tour cannot exceed 25 and as we had 50 we were split with quarter of an hour apart. It was explained why the site at Shepherd's Bush had closed which is now being redeveloped with shops and apartments. We were given an insight into the World News and afterwards made our way across the front entrance and into the studio of The One Show studio which appeared to be smaller than it looks on Television. Some of us were asked to read the weather forecast before being taken to the old BBC Radio recording studio to act a short spooky play. This all proved very interesting and all too soon it was time to make ourselves comfortable with a 'cuppa' before making our way to find our 'smiling' driver Gary waiting for us for our return journey home, which certainly was not easy with heavy traffic no matter which direction Garry took!

A few of our party booked to go to Camden Market and I understand they enjoyed their day browsing around the market. It was a lovely day and no doubt some of them took advantage to walk along the tow path of the canal which runs along the back of London Zoo.

In the forthcoming events listed below we hope we have included something to 'whet your appetite' especially now the better weather is just around the corner!



### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS (At a Glance) 2015**

Dubrovnik Holiday	10 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> May
Walton on the Naze – 2 <sup>nd</sup> longest pier in the Country	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May
England's smallest County (with lunch)	Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> June
Ride a Cock Horse (with lunch)	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July
Thursford Collection	Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> August
Anglesey Abbey, Gardens & Lode Mill	Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> August
Mid-Summer Murders Country & Goring Gap Cruise	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> Sept.
Guildford Cathedral & City	Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept.
Thursford Christmas Spectacular	Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> Nov.
John Rutter RAH	Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec.
Weymouth – Russell Hotel (Daish's)	14 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> December

### **LONDON SHOWS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE (organised in conjunction with Stevenage Group Travel)**

#### **MATINEE PERFORMANCES – 2015**

GYPSY — West End's Savoy Theatre – Coach leaves Shefford at 10.45am	Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May
SUNNY AFTERNOON (with lunch at the Planet Hollywood), Harold Painter Theatre, Stall Seats– Leaving Shefford at 9.30am.	Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> June
SINATRA — London Palladium, Royal Dress Circle Seats, leaving Shefford at 11.15am.	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July

#### **EVENING PERFORMANCES – 2015 - Leaving Shefford at 4.15pm (unless otherwise stated)**

LES MISTERABLES — Queens Theatre – Stall Seats.	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June
RPO SYMPHONIC — Rock & Pop hits – Arena & Circle Seats	Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> May
BEAUTIFUL – THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL – Aldwych Theatre – Stall Seats. .	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> June
RPO – FILM MUSIC GALA – at The Royal Albert Hall – Arena and Circle Seats.	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> June

Please telephone for availability and prices of any outings or shows listed above.

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

Shefford Leisure Group is open to everyone in the local community, who 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](mailto:enid.pamment@gmail.com).

Enid Pamment – Shefford Leisure Group

*"Discover the secrets of Bedfordshire's medieval vineyard and this exciting community project"*



## English Wine Week Tours

**Friday 29th May**

**11.30am and 2.30pm**

**Adults £8**

**Advanced booking essential**

**Contact us:**

**[info@wardenvineyard.org.uk](mailto:info@wardenvineyard.org.uk)**

**07981 113714**

**Near Old Warden, Beds**

Tours last 1.5 - 2 hours & include a  
tasting of two of our wines.

Children welcome free

**For more information:**

**[wardenvineyard.org.uk](http://wardenvineyard.org.uk)**

# WARDEN ABBEY

*The community vineyard*

A Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity project



## **Meppershall Summer Fair – Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

### ***Confirmed!***

RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Fly-Past of all THREE –  
**The Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane**  
will be gracing the skies of Meppershall !



**Keep the date free – come along and enjoy an afternoon of fun**

### **FREE ENTRY**

Entertainment Includes:

**Bake-Off & Foodie stalls**

**Cars & Bikes**

**Beer & Tea Tents, Catering for all**

**Children's Entertainment**

**Scruffs Dog Show**

**Lifestyle - Crafts, Skills and Unique Wares**

**And last but not least – The Vikings are coming too!**

**It's your Village Fair; let's make it the best yet!**

Contact: [kim@randall-tyler.org.uk](mailto:kim@randall-tyler.org.uk), Tel: 0795 255 7203

Or Speak to Linda Primett in The Ansell Village Stores.





We finished the spring term with our usual Easter activities. We made fun sheep Easter cards which the Brownies enjoyed as it involved getting messy with paint and we also made faberge chocolate eggs which the girls enjoyed even more as this activity involved biscuits, chocolate and icing – what is there not to like!

We also enrolled our youngest Brownies Piper and Anwen and said a sad goodbye to our eldest Amy Rose and Rebecca.

This term is definitely Snowy Owl's favourite time of year at Brownies, as now we can make use of the lighter evenings to get out and about. This month we have a treasure hunt in Henlow planned and we hope to get out in the play area behind the village hall if the weather allows us to!



Other things we have planned for this term include our virtual trip to Euro Disney with our Toy Story themed evening. We will be doing some fun cowboy themed activities, including decorating horseshoes and lassoing, make some alien cakes and hopefully make a rocket which will go to infinity and beyond – well hopefully halfway across the village hall anyway!

We also have an owl themed evening planned and a fun night playing parachute games.

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



## OFSTED

I am delighted to announce that our Ofsted report is now available via our website and will be uploaded on the Ofsted website on Wednesday 25th March. The overall effectiveness of the academy is rated as 2 (Good) and each of the four key areas of leadership and management, behaviour and safety of pupils, quality of teaching and achievement of pupils were also judged to be a 2 (Good). Since joining Henlow Academy in September, I have enjoyed getting to know the pupils and staff, building on the strengths of the school and striving to make improvements where necessary. Our detailed self-evaluation and improvement plan reflects our determination to focus upon all aspects of every child's learning journey and monitor our progress, taking into account the views of all stakeholders.

The framework for Ofsted inspections has changed since Henlow Academy's 2012 visit and judgements are now more stringent. I hope that you will read our new inspection report in full and join us in appreciating the comments received on our unique strengths. We are ready to follow the advice given regarding areas that we need to improve and pleased that our own evaluation of the school has been validated. Our governors have held us to account and supported as we have sought to build upon strengths and explore different ways to develop.

First and foremost I would like to thank our pupils for the positive and energetic approach they adopt every day in our Academy, in which they clearly take a pride. As parents, I know that you play a vital role in shaping our children's future and I genuinely thank you for your engagement with Henlow Church of England Academy throughout the year as well as during our inspection. - Caren Earp | Headteacher

**Science Week** went with a BANG! Over 160 pupils spent their lunchtimes participating in a fun-filled week of activities set up by the Science department; ranging from making rockets and crystal gardens, to flaming hands and a cloudy Edible Eclipse. Well done to all those pupils who took part in these events.

**Trip to the Science Museum.** Year 7 also had an exciting visit to the London Science Museum. I would like to congratulate them on their outstanding behaviour, which was also noted by museum staff and the general public. We had a lot of fun especially in the Rocket Show. - Mrs Wallace & the Science Department

**Year 8 Boys Football.** Our Year 8 boys made it through to the Bedfordshire County Cup Final, beating 6 different schools to make it there. It was an exciting game against Arnold and at half time boys were winning 4-1. The second half was very tense with both teams scoring more goals! The final result was 5-4 to Henlow and the boys were delighted with their achievement. This was an absolutely amazing result and Henlow CE Academy is rightly very proud of all the boys who took part. Thanks to Mr Gully for his coaching and encouragement of the team this year.

## PTA News

**Thank you** . to everyone that supported the quiz night. We had a fabulous evening and excellent quiz by Mr. Bellamy. Congratulations to 'the slow lorris appreciation society' on winning. Thank you to everyone that helped to make it happen.

## Forthcoming events

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 7:00pm – 9:00pm **PTA BINGO** Everyone welcome. Fish & chip supper.  
 Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 4.00pm – 5.00pm **Annual School Fun Run**

## ICKWELL OAK AND CRICKET ON ICKWELL GREEN



'The Ickwell Oak'

Last year 'The Ickwell Oak', which stands on Ickwell Green, was chosen out of 200 original entries to be one of the ten trees to take part in the final of The Woodland Trust's National 'Tree of the Year' competition. After the votes were counted it was a very creditable third behind the 'Major Oak' in Sherwood Forest, said to be Robin Hood's legendary hideout and 'Old Knobbly' in Essex. The Ickwell Oak is estimated to be about 260 years old and is a centrepiece of this picturesque Green which is surrounded by a variety of old cottages.

Cricket has been played here since 1839 and in 2014; Ickwell Cricket Club celebrated the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first game on Ickwell Green which was against nearby neighbours Old Warden. With its beautiful surroundings this must be one of the most photographed village green cricket grounds in the country. It is a great favourite place for spectators to come and watch a game of cricket or just to relax on a summer's day. More people come to watch cricket here than on any other ground in Bedfordshire.



Celebrating the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cricket on Ickwell Green



Unusually the oak tree stands within the boundary of the cricket ground and four runs are scored no matter where the ball strikes the tree. So a batsman may feel short-changed if he just fails to clear this massive oak. A six can only be scored by hitting the ball over the tree and this is a very rare event. The tree is such a well-known landmark that it has been adopted as the logo for Ickwell Cricket Club.



Young cricketers on Ickwell Green under 'The Oak'

Ickwell Cricket Club is thriving with a first and second eleven playing league cricket on both Saturdays and Sundays. There is midweek cricket during the summer in various cup competitions and in the winter two teams play in the Bedfordshire Indoor Cricket League. For youth players there is youth coaching on Sunday mornings from May until end July and also under-14 and under-16 youth sides. The club has high quality facilities with an excellent pitch to play on.

This is a very sociable club with the bar and pavilion being open all nights throughout the year. The bar has various games such as a pool table, darts and the club runs a crib team as well as a golf section. In addition there are many social functions and quiz nights throughout the year. So if you are interested in playing cricket why not come along and join us! Our membership and match fees are very reasonable.

We are always on the look-out for new players - Youth & Senior – Experienced or Beginners – and with our range of sides we can offer cricket for everyone.

**COME AND PLAY ON PICTURESQUE ICKWELL GREEN**

If you want to know more contact our captains Ross Fensome 07891-690939 or Tom Jackson 07971-504074 or follow us on Facebook & twitter.



*Presents*

*Midsummer Melodies*  
*The Grove Theatre, Dunstable*  
*Sunday 21 June 2015 6pm*



*Guest Soloist*  
*International Baritone*  
*Jeffrey Carl*

*Adults £15 & children under 16 £7.50*

*Tickets available from The Grove Theatre Box Office*  
*01582 602080 [www.grovetheatre.co.uk](http://www.grovetheatre.co.uk)*

**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**



## MEPPERSHALL SOCIAL CLUB

**May 2015**

We hope your all had a good Easter, our Easter bingo proved popular and a good evening was had by all. Our rock n roll night was reasonably attended and the fancy dress outfits looked great.

Unfortunately we received no feedback on what entertainment you would like to see, so our entertainment diary has been filled with a variety of entertainment that will hopefully appeal to you all. We have no entertainment booked for May; however, the Meppershall Players have a fantastic musical play on May 8th & 9th, entitled 'When The Lights Go On Again'. It is a celebration of the anniversary of VE day 70 years ago, and is sure to be a great night.

Our next event will be Almost Abba, Saturday 20th June, 8 till late, 70s fancy dress optional, tickets are on sale now priced at £2 members £5 non-members, available from the bar or contact email below to reserve.

Future entertainment includes a charity quiz, BBQ, country night, variety night & a Blues Brothers night.

Our next karaoke will be May 2nd & our next quiz May 10th, open to all.

Our snooker tournament is going well & I hope to announce the winner next month.

Don't forget we have cash bingo on Fridays, eyes down 7.30pm.

As a reminder our opening times are as follows

Mon to Sat 8pm till 11pm (open from 6.30pm Friday's) Sun 12pm till 4.30pm & 8pm till 11pm (open 7pm on quiz nights) filled rolls are available lunchtime.

Finally, any questions, queries, suggestions or ticket reservations please email address below.

[Sharon1805@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Sharon1805@hotmail.co.uk)



## **WHERE MY CARAVAN HAS RESTED**

**By Denis Neilson**

### **A YEAR TOURING AUSTRALIA**

#### **Part 2 - Selecting a Car and Caravan**

On arrival in Sydney our hosts, Dick and Bev, were there to meet us with a sign which read "Denis and Ruth, welcome to Oz". They are a nice couple and needless to say we have kept in contact with them ever since. They took us along the scenic route towards Woolagong, showing us sights along the way, such as Bald Hill. The area was nice and hilly and it really is beautiful countryside. We went to a hotel in Berry for lunch and met their daughter Leanne, son in law Mat and their 3 children. Following a 'light' lunch we called in to look at some caravans having made arrangements to go to Leanne's for a BBQ that evening. We were not impressed by the build quality that we saw and it also appeared that as soon as they put in a loo and shower the price shot up by around 10000 Australian dollars. It was explained to us that most folk relied upon the facilities provided in the campgrounds and so do not bother with the niceties of having their own loo on board. Anyhow that was our first look and Dick said that he had all the local newspaper adverts for us to look through.

The following morning we made a start at looking for a caravan. We had decided that a caravan was the solution rather than a motorhome. Our reasoning was based upon our experience in Italy where touring around Tuscany in a motorhome had been extremely difficult especially in the mountain villages.

The following day, despite the heavy downpour, we set off in our host's pick-up truck (affectionately referred to as THE UTE) and went around the local caravan dealers. The dealers we visited this time were about 1 hour away and we had a good look at their stock and noted the prices. Once again we were not impressed with the condition of the second-hand vehicles. We decided to return to base. We were almost home when Ruth realised that she had left her handbag in one of the caravans we had been viewing. We phoned the dealer immediately and they said they would stay open until we returned for they had retrieved the bag but had not known who to call. With relief we headed back and picked up the bag then returned to base very relieved because it contained our passports and bank and credit cards and losing those would have made things very difficult to say the least

The same pattern of trawling through the adverts, travelling to view and returning home, without losing the bag, continued for the next 2 days and we were eventually rewarded by finding one that sounded OK to us some 120

miles away north of Sydney. It turned out to be owned by a young British couple who had to sell because they could not get their work permits renewed. In Australia that means departure within days, so they had to leave fairly quickly. The caravan was in good condition and was all kitted out with posts and pans, bedding etc. so we agreed to buy it. One hurdle down the next was to find a car to pull it.

On the following day we fixed ourselves up with a mobile phone connected to an Australian network. The brilliance of the package was that it gave us free access to the internet. This proved to be invaluable and compared with UK prices at the time was very cheap. We also arranged for a transfer of money from the UK. Then we made contact with a local car dealer, told him the weight and length of the caravan and he promised to look out suitable vehicles for us and give us a call. So all in all we felt we were on our way. What we had not encountered yet was British bred Australian bureaucracy!

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2003 was a busy day. It turned out that it was our responsibility to establish that the people selling the caravan were the registered owners and that there were no 'encumbrances' on the vehicle. To complicate things the caravan was registered in the State of Victoria and we were buying in the State of New South Wales, so we needed registration proof from Victoria to present to the Transport Registration Dept. in New South Wales! What had appeared to be straight forward was now beginning to look a little more complicated than we had imagined. Nothing is impossible but out of State dealings in property or registerable items have to be documented and transferred to the new owner's State. On a more promising side the car dealer found us a car so off we went to have a look. We took our host and his son-in-law with us because they were both experienced in cars spending most of their free time tuning up and racing old bangers! The car that they decided was ideal for our needs was a 4 litre, yes 4 litre, Ford Falcon with dual fuel (liquid petroleum gas and petrol) . I was more than a little dubious because of the mileage it had done but with a mere 126,000 kms on the clock, I was expertly informed, that this monster of an engine was hardly run in! So with that confident statement we agreed to buy. Yet again we came up against rules and we could not take it immediately, something to do with advertising and the sales law of New South Wales but we should be able to get it the following evening. Not much else we could do but wait for the bank transfer, the caravan registration transfer and the car. So as the following day was a Sunday it was decided that we should head off with our hosts to Sydney. What a good idea!

...to be continued.

## THE LUCY PAGES

By Lucy Standbridge, aged 13



For my article this month, I thought that I would review the Social Club's Easter Bingo Eggstravaganza and see what other people thought of it.

More than forty people came to the Easter Bingo on Saturday 4th April, and there was a wide age range from about 18-80! Everyone sat at tables (I was told that everyone has their 'own' usual seats!) whilst playing a fun game of bingo with bingo caller Paul Carne and his number machine. Throughout the night there was a very relaxed atmosphere even when all eyes are down. One thing that I did notice was



that there were mostly women there. With their bingo books, there were several rounds played with different rules, and with cash prizes it was a good evening for everyone.

As well as bingo, there was an Easter raffle and their usual meat raffle.

Over the night, I got to ask some of the people what they thought of it and everyone said that they really enjoyed it.

Firstly I asked Judith Carter why she went to the bingo, she said "I like a bit of bingo and I also came to have a chat with friends". Judith goes to bingo about once a month with her friend Helen Burr and they both like coming because they can get together with friends and don't have to drive for a good night out. I also interviewed Dannii, who is from Elstow, and she came because her friend Allison Roberts (from Meppershall) sometimes goes with her family. Dannii said she enjoyed the bingo because it is fun, friendly, relaxed and a good sociable night! Allison told me that she started coming to bingo because her mum (who loves a bit of bingo) moved into the village and they heard about it by word of mouth, and now they go with their next-door neighbour as well.

Debbie Hughes who lives in the village, who went over to the Social Club just for a drink said that she was looking forward to the Blues Brothers Tribute and the Abba night, and has fancy dress in mind!

I also had a chat with the barman Graham Walker who is the chairman of the Social Club. He told me that the Chrissie Cadillac Rock and Roll tribute could have been better supported, and only a few attended in fancy dress. However, just enough people



came to make it an enjoyable night. Graham said that he expects and hopes the Abba Tribute band in June will have more attendees, as people will come specifically for Abba and know what to expect whereas on the Rock and Roll night there was one lady (who was very good) who sang songs from a range of different artists. The most popular events were said to be 1-Bingo, 2-Bands, and 3-Discos but not as many people come to the discos as previously.

The Social Club is open to all ages and it needs more support. Graham said “The Social Club is providing events for the village but the village aren’t supporting them so we can’t have better things until there’s more people supporting us”. It is a village organisation run mostly by volunteers, has reasonably priced drinks and various things for their members such as snooker, darts and dominoes. Each month, they have different events being held like a ‘Treasure hunt and BBQ’ in July and Alabama Hayriders Country Band in October, as well as the regular events like bingo, quizzes and karaoke.

**Local businesses like the Social Club need support from the village. Make sure to check the Social Club’s board and their page in the Messenger.**



## **FINANCIAL UPDATE by PAUL SAVUTO**

**The 2014 Budget has opened doors in the world of UK savings and pensions.  
What does this mean for you?**

As the number of retirement options increases, so does the risk of making a bad choice. The good news is that, by following some simple rules, you should be able to avoid any disasters – and make a confident choice about which retirement strategy will work for you.

Freedom is a great thing in principle, but it does come with responsibilities. The new pension rules will give you almost complete control over how you use your accumulated savings, but they'll also require you to make decisions that – for most people – were never a consideration. The fact that you no longer need to buy an annuity, for example, means that you have an array of choices about how to use your pension pot. But it also means that you'll have to think carefully about how to make the pot last for the whole of your retirement – and have enough self-discipline to stick to your plan!

### **Don't rush into irreversible decisions**

Some retirement decisions are irreversible – using some of your pension pot to buy a lifetime annuity, for example. So it's important to feel completely clear about your options, and comfortable that you're making the best possible decision for your individual needs, before you take any important steps.

As a child, you may have been told to “Stop! Look! Listen! Think!” before crossing the road. And this motto is a good one to keep in mind as the new pension rules come into force.

**Stop** before you make any decision – do not act impulsively, or because you've been told to do so by a friend from the golf club who is an armchair investment adviser.

**Look** at high-quality sources of information about what's now possible and how you can begin to choose which options might be right for you. The Government have set up Pension Wise and also guidance is available from Citizens advice Bureau.

**Listen** to someone who knows what they are talking about. Ideally, this will be a Chartered financial adviser regulated by the FCA.

**Think** long and hard before you make a decision.

### **Don't Use The Wrong Products And/Or Strategies**

You do not need to take advantage of the new rules if you don't want to, and indeed for many people the best option may be to take the traditional option of taking a tax-free lump sum upon retirement – the so-called Pension

Commencement Lump Sum – and then using the rest of their pot to buy a lifetime annuity, to guarantee themselves a minimum income for the rest of their lives.

What's right for you will depend on your individual circumstances and your retirement priorities – and on how much money you have been able to save for your retirement. A flexi-access drawdown product, for example, will generally only be suitable for someone who has a large enough pension pot to cover their essential outgoings for life with plenty to spare. A lifetime annuity, by contrast, could be the appropriate choice for someone who feels that only a secure income for life will give them peace of mind.

### **Don't Treat Your Tax Affairs Lightly, And End Up Paying Through The Nose**

One of the most exciting aspects of the new pension rules is that they could enable you to reduce the tax payable on your pension wealth – especially if you're intending to pass some of that wealth on to loved ones. However, they also raise the possibility of massive, unexpected tax bills for those who act without thinking.

If, for example, you decide to withdraw your entire pension in one go – something that wasn't possible under the previous rules – you'll only get 25% of it tax free, with any extra taxed as income. If it's a large amount, the tax band applied could be higher than you've ever paid before. If you don't have any other sources of income then the money you withdraw will still have to be used to fund your retirement, but you'll have lost a huge chunk of it from the word go.

### **Buy To Let Using Your Pension Fund**

An example of what we have seen already is someone wanting to buy a Buy to Let Property for £180,000 and using their pension fund to do this. Yes, it can be done, but you would need a plan value in excess of £300,000 to provide you with the £180,000 purchase price. Guess who takes the £120,000 difference, the tax man. Then think about all the costs associated with buying the property, the rental fees and the actual return you receive on your investment, the tax you then pay on the rental income and the potential taxes you pay if you sell the property. The property also forms part of your Estate for Inheritance Tax purposes. Leaving the money within the pension plan has so many more advantages.

### **Contact Me For Advice**

For a no-obligation financial health check, please call me, Paul Savuto, Chartered Financial Planner at DGS IFA on 07834 499595 (Meppershall-based).

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### May 2015

<b>Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup></b>		
Karen's Karaoke	8 pm	Village Hall
<b>Thursday 7<sup>th</sup></b>		
Evergreens	2:15 – 4 pm	Sugar Loaf
<b>Friday 8<sup>th</sup> &amp; Saturday 9<sup>th</sup></b>		
Meppershall Players perform 'When The Lights Go On Again'	7.45 pm	Village Hall
<b>Sunday 10<sup>th</sup></b>		
Second Sunday Stroll (to Henlow)	10.30 am	St. Mary's Church
Social Club Quiz Night	7:30 pm	Village Hall
<b>Monday 11<sup>th</sup></b>		
Parish Council Meeting	7.45 pm	Village Hall
<b>Thursdays 14<sup>th</sup> &amp; 28<sup>th</sup></b>		
GNOMES Coffee Morning	10.30 – 11.30 am	New Meppershall. Care Home
Bedfordshire WI Meeting	3.30 - 5.30 pm	Village Hall
<b>Friday 15<sup>th</sup></b>		
Henlow CE Academy Annual School Fun Run	4 pm	Henlow CE Academy
<b>Saturday 16<sup>th</sup></b>		
Meppershall Festival	2.00 – 9:30 pm	Village Hall
<b>Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup></b>		
Meppershall Pre-School Group AGM	8 pm	Village Hall
<b>Thursday 21<sup>st</sup></b>		
Evergreens	2:15 – 4 pm	Sugar Loaf
<b>Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup></b>		
GNOMES AGM	10.30 am	New Meppershall. Care Home
<b>Friday 29<sup>th</sup></b>		
English Wine Week Tours	1.30 am & 2.30 pm	Warden Abbey



Come and meet the WI in our Centenary Year!

The Bedfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes is coming to Meppershall. Have you thought about joining the WI? We are celebrating our centenary this year and we would love you to join in.

Would you like to spend a couple of hours with like-minded women, listening to interesting speakers, trying out crafts, all with tea and cake? If so, come and see us, and find out what we are doing in our 100<sup>th</sup> Year.

We will be in Meppershall Village Hall on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May from 3.30pm to 5.30pm, and again on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May from 3.30pm to 5.30pm.





# The Meppershall Players



Have you got your tickets yet for “When the Lights Go on Again” The Players Spring Production? No! Well don’t despair Keep Calm and Carry On up to Roger’s Bakery, where Mary and her lovely ladies will be pleased to sell you tickets to this definitely not-to-be-missed, uplifting musical play for all ages, alongside yummy bread and cakes (you can never have too much cake).

Come along and join in the street party atmosphere as our cast take you back to the 1940’s and a country at War.

‘When the Lights Go On Again’ Fri 8<sup>th</sup> & Sat 9<sup>th</sup> May 2015 7.45pm at Meppershall Village Hall, Tickets £10 (No Concessions) - includes Supper and much more. On sale NOW at Rogers Bakery 01462 813398.

Players AGM Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 8pm at Meppershall Village Hall, 7.30pm.

Robin Hood Pantomime 2015-Fri 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> December.

The Meppershall Players do have their own page on Facebook (Meppershall Players Community) which will be updated on 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 boards in the front foyer.

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: 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1<sup>st</sup> Aug, 5<sup>th</sup> Sep, 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct, 14<sup>th</sup> Nov, 19<sup>th</sup> Dec & 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2016. 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 currently free and we welcome people from the age of 9 to 90+ to indulge in all areas of theatrical performances, set building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance.

Interested? We look forward to meeting you.

Karen Mitchell (Players Secretary) 01462 816336

## PUZZLE PAGE

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

### Su Doku 1416

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

*Thanks to Paul Smith for the puzzle*

**FILM REVIEW****By Carlie Newman**

It is good to see a film aimed at the adult world rather than teenagers: *WHILE WE'RE YOUNG* (cert.15 1 hr. 37 mins.) is such a film. Sharply directed by Noah Baumbach, it stars Ben Stiller as Josh and Naomi Watts as his wife Cornelia (see picture). They are a couple who can't have children and rely on each other while their friends are caught up in their individual families.



They make friends with a young couple, Jamie (Adam Driver) and Darby (Amanda Seyfried), who begin by flattering documentary film director Josh and then involve the older couple in their activities in a manner that Josh and Cornelia find most flattering. The older couple find, however, that just as they don't fit in with their same-age friends with young children, they don't fit in with the lifestyle of the youngsters either.

The movie also looks at different types of documentary film makers and whether a director should film exactly what he sees or - as young Jamie does - alter scenes to present the viewpoint that the director wishes to put across.

So, a thoughtful film with lots of amusing dialogue; it is well-written and very well acted. It is directed by Baumbach who shows real feeling for the characters as well as the meaning behind the often glib words.

## What'sit?



Solution to What'sit No.9.....  
Sign at entrance to footpath  
off Church Rd

Now where is What'sit No.10?...





The Meppershall players  
*present*



*'When the Lights go on Again'*

*A musical by Karen Mitchell*

***Performed at the Meppershall Village Hall***

***Friday 8th May and Saturday 9th May - 7:45***

*All tickets are £10 (No concessions). Tickets also include food.*

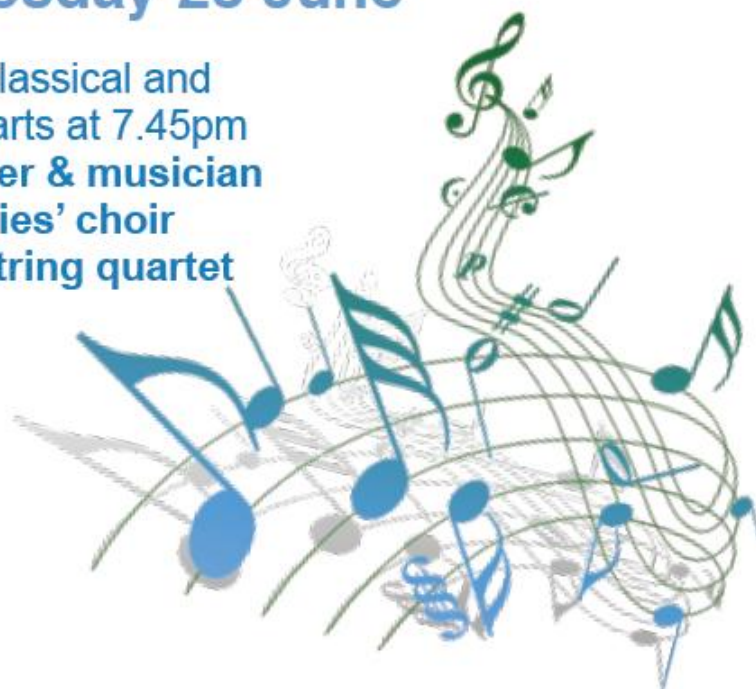
*Tickets are on sale at Roger's Bakery, Meppershall, Shefford and Barton.*

*(01462) 813398*

# Midsummer Soirée

**South Farm**  
**Tuesday 23 June**

An eclectic mix of live classical and contemporary music starts at 7.45pm  
**Adam Protz - composer & musician**  
**Caritas Harmony - ladies' choir**  
**Greenfield Quartet - string quartet**



## Tickets

£25 includes a glass of fizz and canapés.

£35 as above plus picnic

Available on 01763 853696 or at  
[www.abingtonpigotts.org](http://www.abingtonpigotts.org)

Enjoy your own or a delicious pre-prepared picnic in the beautiful gardens from 6pm.

**SOUTH FARM**  
DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT



**All proceeds to Abington Pigotts Village Hall Restoration Fund**

## The Classic Combustion Shed

Words and pictures by Wayne Allen

### DK Engineering

DK Engineering is a family run business. David and Kate Cottingham are the husband and wife team who founded the business in 1977. In true style of a family business this has been supported by their three sons, Justin, Jeremy and James, the sales department being run by both Jeremy and James. Their technicians are very highly skilled, either trained in house from the apprentice stage upwards or have been factory trained at main dealers before coming to join DK.



At DK Engineering they have a dedicated Ferrari sales team utilising their extensive client data base, mass marketing skills and established reputation to source and provide motor cars of all varieties to the next custodian of a particular model. DK has a ten car discreet viewing area on site as part of its core facility. Added to this DK has a twenty car dedicated private Ferrari sales viewing gallery located close by.

Since its inception DK has handled the maintenance of 3000 different important vehicles, totally restored 150 and carried out the sale of over 1300. These figures quantify the expanse of DK's database of vehicles and their potential buyers or sellers.



Although specialists in Ferrari sales other marques including Porsche, McLaren, Lamborghini, Pagani, De Tomaso and Mercedes are also catered for. There were also a few motorcycles on display both stock and customer rides.

On a recent open day (by invite only and contacts are a wonderful thing!) we were fortunate enough to browse what would be some of the most expensive cars in the UK for sale. There were several examples of the legendary Ferrari F40 at a cool £750,000 or you could go for the Lamborghini Mura at a staggering £1,250,000. While taking these photographs, Jay Kay of Jamiroquai pulled up in one of his Ferraris which we believed turned out to be a shopping trip for yet another Ferrari. Not only can DK sell you a car but they also offer services for restoration which was evident by the number of partially assembled cars in the workshop. So if you are lucky enough to be in the position to spend a king's ransom on your pride and joy then DK is the place to head to.





## THE MEPPERSHALL GARDEN CLUB (MGC)



Linda Parker 01462 815114  
Sarah Till 01462 817176  
Kim Lee Tyler 01462 811750

Email address:  
meppershallgardenclub@hotmail.co.uk

Spring is definitely with us now with the early morning chorus of birdsong, the drone of lawnmowers coming out of hibernation, and the beautiful yellow heads of daffodils nodding in the breeze throughout the village.

At the MGC March meeting the topic was very much on the gardens we could visit this year. So many interesting gardens are open with the National Garden Scheme and the British Red Cross Society that the choice is endless.

We also discussed growing early potatoes and growing tomatoes from shop bought fruit. One of our members has been successfully growing Piccolo tomatoes using the dried seeds from shop bought fruit for several years now. Another member suggested a good method to grow sweet peas by cutting off the bottom of a PET bottle at about four inches, turning the rest of the bottle over (neck down), filling with compost and planting seeds and then filling the cut off bottom part with water and inserting the main planted part into it. Sounds like it's worth a try.

For our April meeting we planned to visit Hopleys Plants in Much Hadham where we hoped to enjoy 5 acres of display gardens, plant sales and (most importantly) a tasty lunch in the café. More about this next time.

Sarah Till

If you would like to find out more about joining the Meppershall Garden Club contact details are shown opposite.

## NOTICE BOARD

### FOR SALE

Solid beech wood cot / bed, size 140 cm X 70 cm (55 inches X 27.5 inches)  
with mattress, some cot linen and accessories.

**£35.00**

**Phone 01462814336**

### **SHILLINGTON SERVICES IS UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP THE END OF AN ERA AT SHILLINGTON SERVICES BY RITA AND JOHN CARTER**

Just a note to say that after running Shillington Services for 24 years, we have decided to retire. It has been a pleasure to run our business from Shillington and help out so many of our loyal customers who we will miss very much.

It is our pleasure to announce that Mr Martin Brogan has purchased Shillington Services and can still be contacted on the usual telephone numbers, (01462 711636 – 07850 876280) plus his new mobile number of 07975 944394. He will be operating from new business premises, not in Shillington. Martin takes over Shillington Services 2<sup>nd</sup> April and will be available to take your calls from Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015 onwards, "It will be business as usual".

We have a few people to thank, firstly to our customers, a massive thank you for your custom over the years. Thanks also must go to the Village and Parish magazines for their help in advertising our business and supporting us over the years. Special thanks must go to Bowles Garage, the family have helped us by taking our deliveries when we were not in and repairing our van quickly so we could be back on the road, doing our business.

It is however time to start the next exciting times in our lives and that is retirement. We have lots of plans i.e. holidays and catching up with old friends that we have not had the time to visit as we have been tied to the business, continuing our sports water-skiing and golf. And spending more time with our lovely family and dear friends.

Once again a big thank you to everyone that has helped and supported us over the years.

With sadness it's time to say farewell.

Fondest wishes from both of us

John and Rita

Shillington Services



## It's the 'Baking Part' That Counts...

Our first ever Great Meppershall Bake Off was hugely popular last year and we're delighted to confirm that the Bake Off Marquee will be back again at this year's Summer Fair on Saturday 27 June.

It is clear that Meppershall is teeming with passionate and enthusiastic bakers; all keen to have a go and give it their best shot! In total, there were over 60 entries last year – truly overwhelming. Certainly our two wonderful WI judges thought so too: *"I must say congratulations on such a super first show, your competitors did not let you down"*.

So, what's *fresh* in the Bake Off Marquee for 2015...

- There's a new 'Preserves' section!
- The categories have been modified very slightly to allow maximum participation across every age group.
- We have a biscuit decorating area for the younger chef's amongst us.
- Our two wonderful and highly experienced judges from the Women's Institute are back again to judge and will provide personalised feedback on all entries.
- A sneak peak at categories and classes can be found on the following page...most important if you fancy trying your hand at some Preserves!
- The all-important registration forms will be delivered to your door (if you're lucky enough to live in Meppershall!), or can be collected from Meppershall Village Stores or downloaded from the Meppershall website [www.meppershall.org](http://www.meppershall.org) (from May).
- Bakes need to be taken to the Bake Off Marquee by 9am on Saturday 27 June.



*Go on, have a go...where there's a whisk, there's a way...*



Alli Roberts – Meppershall Bake Off Dojo

([alli.roberts@hotmail.com](mailto:alli.roberts@hotmail.com) for further information/enquiries).

## Drum roll, please. The Bake-Off Categories...

### Cakes.

Victoria Sandwich – set recipe.

Chocolate Fudge Cake – School Y9 and under category

Swiss Roll – any type, filling etc.

### Men Only.

Guinness Cake – set recipe

### Bread.

6 Identical rolls (any sort i.e. brown/white rye)

Flat bread – entrants own recipe – flavours to impress

White loaf (any shape)

### Biscuits.

Chocolate Chip Cookies – school Y9 and under

5 Shrewsbury Biscuits – set recipe

5 identical savoury biscuits...ingredients and flavours entrants' own choice.

### Show Stopper.

“Those magnificent men...” to coincide with our fly-pasts any bake with a connection to aeronautics...get the brain cell's working!

### Preserves.

Jar of raspberry jam

Jar of marmalade

Jar of Lemon Curd

Jar of chutney\*

Bottle of lemonade

### WI Comments:

- Fruit curds should be covered with wax discs and cellophane covers, not twist tops.
- \*Chutneys are best made at least 2 months before opening to allow the flavours to develop.
- All the preserves should be in clean jars with no trademarks as this contravenes the Trades Description Act. The tops should be NEW twist tops, however for the jams and marmalades wax discs and cellophane covers are acceptable. The jars and bottles should be unopened prior to judging.





## Lewis's Further Adventures

### Borneo

The accommodation in Semengo Camp, some two miles off the Airfield, was somewhat primitive compared to Seletar. First priority, the living accommodation was in attap roofed, long houses, constructed of locally sourced timber, with the floors raised up some one metre above ground level. There were two larger buildings, the W.O.s and Sergeants Mess and the Other Ranks Mess Hall, both with kitchens. A Mama-san and her daughter (Alice) looked after the dhobi and had their own quarters. A Chinese contractor provided the messing, paid for from an allowance of 2.4 Straits \$ per man per day. Facilities undercover for maintaining and repairing the equipment were non-existent, this had to be a first priority otherwise we would not be effective.

The next priority was a Workshop area under cover; Semengo Camp had been built on a 15 degree slope to provide natural drainage for the Monsoon rain which deluged the area at least twice a week. I selected one of the long huts in a suitable location and this became our working HQ. Outside I laid out an area some 40 metres square, the upper side and the two sides running down the slope had trenches dug to divert the rain. The RAF quartermaster came up trumps and supplied both rolls of sheeting material and a quantity of 6 metre long scaffold poles: he even threw in rope and long pegs for good measure. There were a number of Gurkhas in the camp who provided outlying security to the Gun Subs and I had a word with the Subadar and recruited them to the cause. After two days of damned hard graft we had an operable area for repairing Equipment and Vehicles under cover.

One of the Odds and Sods who came within my little Command was an Army Air Corps Sergeant Pilot who flew a Scout Helicopter. He had been in Semengo for some three months and described the food in non-complimentary terms. I sat down with him and put together a menu rotatable to cover a two week cycle which would be appreciated by the men and also sourced locally. I then called in three local contractors from Kuching, sat them down with a Scotch and Ginger, gave them each a copy of the menu which they would have to provide for 2 Straits \$ a day, per man, (I wanted to build up a special fund with the 40 cents balance) and requested that they returned the next day with their bids and any improvements they could make to the menus. They turned up on time the next day with the bids and menus typed in English. I went over them with the Pilot and one stood out above the rest, so I took him on for a month's trial and he started the next Monday. He invited me and a couple of other W.O.s down to his substantial premises in Kuching, to kill two birds with one stone; I invited the RAF Quartermaster to join us: he was delighted and the evening was a great success.

Now to the Equipment: I was most fortunate to have a first rate Staff Sergeant Weapons Artificer called Jan Rafalowski, a very competent Pole. As a young teenager he was a runner in the Siege of Warsaw and then escaped via Iran and Palestine. He stripped down one of the 40/70 Bofors Guns and found that the recuperator seals (two per gun), were defective; a second gun was stripped revealing the same problem. Jan assured me these guns would only fire one round and would not reload. Unfortunately the day before the Battery Commander, a rather zealous gentleman, had sent a signal to the Sultan stating that now 42 Battery of 22 Regiment Royal Artillery had moved in, the skies above Kuching would be free of any enemy aircraft! He was not very happy when I apprised him of the actual situation. Having served previously as an Equipment Examiner at 3 Base Ordnance Depot in Singapore, I knew exactly who to contact in the Depot to resolve this problem; I briefed Jan and managed to procure a flight for him to RAF Changi - he flew within the hour. There was a small Army Detachment at Changi and Jan, being a rather forceful gentleman, was soon on his way to the Depot in Alexandria. He made contact with the Examiners and was soon wading through their stock of seals: unfortunately they were also defective. Jan went straight to the Brigadier Commanding the Depot and requested that he appraised 2 Base Ordnance Depot at Donnington in England of the situation and request an immediate stock replacement of the defective seals by the fastest possible means. The Brigadier initiated signal despatches which really set the wheels moving. Stocks at Donnington were checked and within six hours, replacement stocks were on their way to Kuching direct in a Canberra Aircraft. 24 hours later, Jan, having returned from Singapore was fitting the seals to the first gun; clearance was given by the RAF Controller and the gun was fired, a four round burst which functioned correctly. Jan got stuck in and 48 hours later all eight guns had been repaired and test fired, situation recovered! We signalled 53 Battery who were based in Changi to check their 40/70's: they were also defective; however the replacement stocks were available.

In a lighter vein, the showers and ablutions at Semengo shared the same location as the wash-house used by the dhobi ladies; this was the primary water source for the camp. Borneo was also probably the world's major source of ugly green creatures that fly, cling and bite, and which would chew through the rattan screens in the toilets in two seconds flat and then latch onto any unsuspecting body showering there. When this occurred the call would go out for "Alice", she would appear giggling and remove the offending creature between thumb and forefinger with the comment "You owe me coke solda"; the fact that the recipient of her administrations was naked never bothered her! If anyone got out of line with her she would say "Watch out - I tell uncle Louwa" - that was me!

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



This month we have three sessions in May before half term week. Our usual messy play week on 5<sup>th</sup> which will be an aquatic theme and we will be making wavy fish for our craft! 12<sup>th</sup> will be Construction week when there will be a workshop and work bench, Bob the Builder toys, mega blocks and stickle bricks. Our craft will be junk modelling so bring along your budding engineers! The last session of the month on 19<sup>th</sup> will be a sports theme with games and an obstacle course! If we have some lovely warm weather, we may also be lucky enough to use the pre-school outside space at the side of the hall.

We would like to take this opportunity to again send out a plea to anyone who may be interested in taking on a role on our committee. We are very lucky to have parents who offer to help set up and clear away, but we do also need committee members who can take over the running and organisation of the group (which does involve a little more time than what we do on a Tuesday afternoon). Angela and Hayley will be leaving at the end of the summer term and without new members, unfortunately Tots will not re-open in September. Obviously we would hate for this to happen and so are urging anyone who may have a bit of time to spare to get in contact (number below) so we can tell you more about it. **Many thanks.**

**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](mailto:meppershalltots@hotmail.co.uk)

**Please ring Hayley on 07749 970742 for more information.**



At pre-school we are really enjoying all this fine weather. We can now spend more time outside playing in our enclosed area, or at the park, or digging at our allotment. All that exercise and fresh air will invigorate them and wear them out! At the allotment the children will also become more knowledgeable about how different foods and plants grow, and how sunshine and water help this process. Some of the children have already been eating potato's they have grown and dug up themselves.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Laura Hing on board as the new chair of Meppershall Pre-school. She is positive, friendly and dynamic, so will take us far. I, Debbie Jones, recently stepped down to become a member of staff, but will continue to support such a wonderful pre-school and write the ponderings. Laura stepped up mid-term, but we also have our AGM in the Snooker room at the back of the village hall at 8pm on Wednesday 20th May.

Looking forward to the Summer Fayre on 27th June, Meppershall Tots and Meppershall Pre-school will be joining again to create an even bigger 'Stay and Play' area. We may even have our very own marquee for all weathers. There will be activities for all ages! So please do look out for our 'Stay and Play' poster to find the fun. This year's Fayre is building up to be a big one!

We now only have a few places left to fill at Meppershall Pre-school. If your little one has turned 2 and is ready to make new friends and enjoy our stimulating, safe environment, or if you would like them to join our waiting list please ring Tamsin our fantastic leader during session time on the number below for more information. We are open every morning from 9:15 till 12:15, and each Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon from 12:15 till 3:15 (term time only).

**Meppershall Pre-school is a thriving village Pre-school with its very own 'Mini Diggers' allotment. We take up to 24 children in each session from in and around the surrounding areas. Priority is given to funded children, and we have limited spaces for two year olds.**

**Please ring Tamsin on 07816 357159, email [info@meppershall-ps.co.uk](mailto:info@meppershall-ps.co.uk), or visit [www.meppershall-ps.co.uk](http://www.meppershall-ps.co.uk) to find out more about the Early Years Foundation Stage and exceptional care we offer.**

## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

### RIP

We are saddened to announce that

Kathy King died 26<sup>th</sup> March aged 60. Condolences to Bryan and family.

Viv Harvey died 18<sup>th</sup> April aged 68. Condolences to Neil

### Birthdays in May:

Margaret Taylor, will be 82 on the 15<sup>th</sup>

Fifi Simpkins will be 81 on the 27<sup>th</sup>

Mary Mitchell will be 80 on the 27<sup>th</sup>

Doreen Pritchard will be 87 on the 31st

Congratulations to all of the above.

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If you know of a significant event in the village, please let the Editor know: we are looking for things to celebrate! 80<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup>, and 100<sup>th</sup> 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.

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## PUZZLE SOLUTION

### Solution to Su Doku 1416

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



## **A very Happy Birthday to those of you celebrating birthdays in May**

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

If you are under 16 and would like your name added to the birthday page, please call Louise Hutson on 814148 or email at [louhuts@gmail.com](mailto:louhuts@gmail.com)

### **Eugene O'Sullivan**

The O'Sullivan family would like to thank everyone who has cared and supported us during Eugene's illness and subsequent passing at the end of last summer.

We would also like to thank all those who were able to come along and enjoy the quiz night in February in his memory, those who made donations of money and raffle prizes. I believe the tickets could have been sold twice over.

£1300 was raised in Eugene's memory and donated to his favourite charity The Salvation Army.

A very big "thank you" must go to Pete Chapman and Paul Carne for organising the event and a Massive "thank you" to Gemma Chapman for the fabulous ploughman's supper.

Jan O'Sullivan

## Parish Church of St Mary The Virgin (Church of England)

Church Road, off Campton Road, Meppershall

[www.stmarysmeppershall.org.uk](http://www.stmarysmeppershall.org.uk) ✝ [facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall](https://facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall)



**Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman**

01462 339962 – [ronigoodman@gmail.com](mailto:ronigoodman@gmail.com) – usual day off Monday

### **Churchwardens:**

Dawn Abbatt 01462 816962

James Read 01462 857836 Email: [Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com](mailto:Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com)

### **PCC Secretary:**

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: [annie10639@gmail.com](mailto:annie10639@gmail.com)

### **Things to Watch Out For...**

**Second Sunday Stroll** – Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May – Henlow (Five Bells) via Henlow Camp. 5 miles – meet at the church gate at 10.30am.

**SPARKS** – 10-13 August – volunteers needed! Call Dawn on 816962.

### **A Message from St Mary's...**

May arrives - and along with sunshine (hopefully) and the natural world springing back to life, come two more important celebrations.

First Pentecost, when we remember the Holy Spirit coming down on the disciples just as Jesus had promised - and when we pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit in our own lives - again and more! And then Trinity Sunday, the day set aside for celebrating the Christian understanding of one eternal God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (although of course, in reality, we do that every Sunday too!)

Why should we want the Holy Spirit to come? Apart from Jesus' own assurance that we do need the Spirit, let's look at some of the things that the Spirit does in our lives.

The Holy Spirit is sometimes called the 'Comforter'. I am sure that we have all experienced how - when life is difficult, when deeply distressed, when tragedy strikes - having someone there, alongside, can give the strength and the

courage to face the next moment... and then the next. When the Spirit is called our 'Comforter' it is with those difficult times in mind, and with the idea of God-given strength to face our future, moment by moment. Psalm 34:18 assures us 'The Lord is close to the broken-hearted'.

Sometimes the Spirit is called our Helper. He comes to give people the gifts and the energy they need to do what they have to do; to live for God and to share his love in the world.

When I was teaching, one of the commonest mistakes that the children made (and a gift to me!) was to call the Holy Spirit the 'Holy Spirt' which is in fact an old fashioned spelling of 'spurt'. I always thought that is exactly one of the things that the Holy Spirit is about! That 'spurt', that inner power that gives us life and strength, fills us with faith and hope and joy, and allows us to know and to grow in the love of God.

As we move forward after our Annual Church Meeting, into the summer, into tomorrow even, and through whatever each day holds... let's do so always open to God, and to the gift of his Spirit.

Living God

Draw us deeper into your love.

Jesus our Lord,

send us to care and serve;

Holy Spirit

make us heralds of good news.

Stir us, strengthen us,

teach and inspire us

to live your love

with generosity and joy;

imagination and courage;

for the sake of your world

and in the name of Jesus. Amen

*(Living God's Love Prayer - St Alban's Diocese)*

Best wishes, Rector Roni

**Services and Events – May 2015** *At St Mary's unless stated below*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Service / Event</b>
Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 5 <sup>th</sup> of Easter	11.00am 11.00am 10.45am	Parish Communion Junior Church at the School TeenTableTalk at the Rectory
Weds 6 <sup>th</sup> May	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sat 9 <sup>th</sup> May	9.00am	Celtic Morning Prayer
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> May 6 <sup>th</sup> of Easter Rogation Sunday	8.30am 10.30am	Holy Communion Second Sunday Stroll – meet at the church gate for a 5 mile walk via Henlow Camp to the Five Bells at Henlow.
Tues 12 <sup>th</sup> May	2-4pm	Rectory Tea – chat and a cuppa – all welcome
Weds 13 <sup>th</sup> May	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> May Sunday after Ascension	8.30am 11.00am	Holy Communion All Age Family Service
Weds 20 <sup>th</sup> May	10.00am	Holy Communion
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	9.00pm	Silent Together – join friends to sit for a few minutes to enjoy the tranquillity of the church
Sun 24 <sup>th</sup> May Whitsunday	11.00am	Parish Communion, Pentecost
Tues 26 <sup>th</sup> May	2-4pm	Rectory Tea – chat and a cuppa – all welcome This week's topic: 'What is God like?'
Weds 27 <sup>th</sup> May	10.00am	Holy Communion.
Sun 31 <sup>st</sup> May Trinity Sunday	11.00am	United Benefice Service at St Mary's with St Michael's, Shefford, with lunch to follow – everyone is very welcome.
Weds 3 <sup>rd</sup> June	10.00am	Holy Communion.
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> June 1 <sup>st</sup> after Trinity	11.00am 11.00am 10.45am	Parish Communion Junior Church at the School TeenTableTalk at the Rectory



## St Mary's Church, Meppershall

### Junior Church

**JC   JC   JC   JC   JC   JC   JC   JC   JC   JC   JC**  
**JC**

Jesus is risen!

Has someone ever broken a promise they made to you? Maybe they said that they would do something for you and then didn't actually do it. When this happens it can really hurt our feelings. The Bible tells us that we have a friend that is closer than a brother. He is a friend that will never break any of His promises to us. That is wonderful to know because He has given us a lot of promises.

Jesus made a very important promise to His disciples. He told them that He would die and be raised again from the dead. When Jesus told the disciples this promise they were afraid to ask Him what it meant. It must have seemed scary to them that Jesus would die. They didn't want to think about it and didn't listen very well to what Jesus was saying at that time. But later they remembered what He said. They would remember Jesus' words as the best promise He ever made and they wrote it down in the Bible for the whole world to read.

When Jesus kept His promise and rose from the dead, it proved that He really is God in the flesh.

It was a miracle!

Junior Church will be meeting in the School Hall on Sunday 3 May, 11am until 12noon.

Please do join us!

The Junior Church Team

**DANISH-STYLE COD - SERVES 4****MAY 2015**

100g (4oz) streaky bacon, chopped.  
100g (4oz) mushrooms, halved if large.  
100g (4oz) frozen peas.  
4x150g (5oz) cod cutlets or fillets.  
Salt and freshly ground pepper.  
25g (1oz) butter.

**METHOD.**

- 1) Arrange bacon, mushrooms and peas in a greased shallow ovenproof dish.
- 2) Season cod and place on top of bacon and vegetables.
- 3) Put a piece of butter on each cutlet.
- 4) Cover and bake at 180°C (350°F) for 20 minutes. Remove lid, bake for a further 10 minutes.
- 5) Serve with buttered new potatoes.

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

## 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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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<b><u>Collating Dates for your Diaries</u></b>					
	<b><u>2015</u></b>				
May	26	<b>Tuesday</b>	November	30	<b>Double</b>
June	29		December	None	
July	27	<b>Double</b>			
August	None			<b><u>2016</u></b>	
September	28				
October	26		January	25	

***Please note that dates in the above table indicate the month in which the collating will take place, at 2.30 pm in the Sugar Loaf. The issue being collated will relate to the following month.***