Volume 31 OCTOBER 2015

Issue 6





The Planters in front of the Village Hall—A superb display courtesy of the Meppershall Garden Club

Meppershall Village Website: www.meppershall.org

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Volume 31 Issue 6

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the autumn edition of the Messenger. I hope that you enjoyed the summer; very nice but as always a bit too short for me! With the change in the weather, I expect activities to move back indoors and, with the autumn equinox behind us, the evenings will start getting shorter till we end up coming home in the dark. It doesn't sound attractive after the long evenings of summer, but to me Guy Fawkes' night and Halloween would not be the same without the darkness.





This month's edition includes an important piece from the Village Hall Committee regarding the negotiations they have been having with a developer, to provide the village with a splendid new village hall. You may recall that the Messenger published a plan for the building in the June edition (available now at Meppershall.org, if you have mislaid your copy). Lucy Standbridge has devoted her pages to the same topic. I can see the matter of the hall and the associated housing development appearing in the Messenger many times over the next year, as the planning process goes forward. I know that our print deadline means we will miss out on reporting significant decisions, so by the time you read this, the story will have moved on.

Elsewhere in the Messenger you will read that our schools and clubs are back in action, though may not be fully up to speed yet. The Shefford Leisure Group seems to have had an excellent summer and is offering further autumn temptations! The Meppershall Good Neighbour Scheme (GNOMES) report on their Welcome Packs for new residents and on new initiatives, missed out being published in August and the piece from Roger Smith has clarified my understanding of the role of the Parish Council.

The Messenger is still looking for help in managing the advertisers, particularly in obtaining new business. This is an important role since it is as a result of the advertising that we can continue to publish.

We are also interested in hearing from keen cooks who would be interested in sharing their favourite recipes in the Messenger. After many years of contributions, Brenda Putwain will be missed when she stops writing shortly.

Mike McConnell

Letters to the Editor

It was with genuine amazement and gratitude that, on leaving hospital and returning home, Elizabeth presented me with a wonderful pile of beautiful cards and messages.

I could never express adequately my appreciation for your thoughtful and kind words. It was a terrific boost to my morale and will go a long way in helping me recover from this set-back.

Without any exaggeration the last few months have possibly been the most difficult my family and I have experienced since moving to Meppershall.

However, it will help enormously in overcoming my dilemma knowing that I am surrounded by such great friends and neighbours, whose spontaneous acknowledgement of my illness will never be forgotten.

Peter Lambley

Trundle Towers
Shefford Road

Just a missive to notify my neighbours that for a couple of days later this month, it could get a bit noisy in our vicinity. This annual event takes place when the Meppershall herd of Red Poll cattle return from their summer hols (and close encounter with the bull) in Gravenhurst. They are then 'yarded up' and separated from their offspring, which is when the bellowing starts.

The last thing I want is for some incomer to pick up the phone and for me to be confronted by some jobsworth from Central Beds clutching an ASBO.

Now, this is not an apology on my part; if you move into the countryside you put up with what the countryside has to offer, be it vocal cows or keen cockerels (our local bird kicks off at 1am).

Whilst on agricultural matters, over the water in the land of the free a farmer calls on his neighbour and is greeted by his neighbour's ten year old son. The conversation goes like this –

"Hi son is your Paw in?"

"No sir he's gone to market"

"Well is your Maw in?"

"No sir she's gone with Paw" - a slight pause,

"Well is your brother Howard in?"

Regards,

Mick Trundle

Cinnamon Trust Tea Party
Kim, Martin & Ben would like to say thank you to all
of you who were able to support our tea party in
August.

It was a lovely afternoon with many friends old & new, including some four legged ones!

We are pleased to say that we raised over £350 for The Cinnamon Trust – The National Charity for the elderly, terminally ill and their pets.

Thanks again

Kim, Martin & Ben xxx

[&]quot;No sir he's gone Shootin' " - a long pause,

[&]quot;Can I help you Sir? If it's tools you are wanting to borrow, I know where everything is kept"- a much longer pause.

[&]quot;Your brother Howard has got my daughter Becky pregnant and what's your Paw going to do about it?"

[&]quot;Well sir I know Paw charges fifty dollars for the hog (boar) and five hundred dollars for the bull, but I don't know what he charges for Howard".

MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE FORUM

Building on the responses received at the Meppershall Summer Fair, the Parish Plan Review Group will be following up with some more questions.

Starting in November, we will be seeking the views of the residents on the following topics:

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT
COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND RECREATION
COUNTRYSIDE & ENVIRONMENT
HOUSING & EMPLOYMENT
RETAIL, GOODS & SERVICES

Short, topical questionnaires will be distributed with The Messenger over several months, with additional copies available from the Bakery, the Stores and from the Review Group members.

Questionnaires will also be available electronically via the Village Website (meppershall.org), the Facebook group (Meppershall Village Forum) and the Twitter feed (@mepvilforum).

The members of the Parish Plan Review Group are (in alphabetical order):

Dick Bulley
Neil Chambers
Albane Lester
Paul Smith
Roger Smith.

Village Hall Development Update

A series of meetings were held in early September regarding the proposed development.

On Saturday 5th September residents were invited to a drop-in session to view the plans and for informal discussions with Councillors and Trustees, and on Monday 7th September, there was a presentation by Croudace Homes and a further opportunity to ask questions.

Croudace confirmed that the current proposal is for 76 houses to be constructed, of mixed types to suit market demands and needs, including 12 for social housing, and they emphasised that they are looking to provide a quality development. Examples of other recent developments can be seen at http://www.croudacehomes.co.uk. Croudace emphasised the importance of Health & Safety within their corporate culture, which is why they were not prepared to access the site past the current Village Hall, and had insisted on a Temporary facility.

Croudace further confirmed that work was unlikely to start before Summer 2016, after the Village Fair, and the new Hall should be ready within two years. The work will be phased as follows:

- Two months to install temporary village hall.
- One month for site clearance.
- Two months to build a new access road including services.
- Fifteen month build programme for new hall and facilities.
- Three month contingency.

The largest number of concerns raised in the questionnaire responses related to vehicle access to the site, the effect on traffic flow around the village, and parking. Several concerns were raised about the number of houses in the development and the mix of housing, and there were a number of individual concerns.

These concerns, together with other matters raised were subsequently discussed at some length by Councillors and Trustees.

- It was recognised that there are genuine and important concerns about the traffic flow/congestion/safety, both during the construction phase and as occupation of the planned 76 new houses progresses and the use of the proposed facilities increases. It will be essential to address this with Central Beds Highways Department as part of the planning application process. It was noted that the indications received were that these were seen by the Highways department as issues to be addressed, but not something that would stop the development from proceeding. Once Croudace has submitted a planning application, all members of the public will be able to make their views known directly to the Planners at Central Beds.
- Parking for the Temporary Village Hall was acknowledged to be a concern, and it was understood that some form of car park adjacent to the temporary hall should be available within four months of occupancy. It was agreed that parking prior to that would be inconvenient, and it was noted that various alternatives were being considered.
- Whilst under the Bloor deal the existing Village Hall would have been open
 whilst the new one was constructed, it would have been difficult to access
 the new Hall for a period of two to three months whilst the access road was
 constructed.
- One of the main improvements of the proposed Village hall over the current one is that the total space is divided up for multiple lettings, thus enabling the hall to pay its way. If space were set aside for the snooker tables, that space would not pay its way unless there was a huge increase in the charge per hour, and the space could never be used for anything else; additionally, there would be the cost of moving the existing two tables twice, once to storage then to the new hall. There will be other indoor sports/games available in the new hall including Pool tables, Carpet Bowls, Darts and Table Tennis.
- The layout drawing of the sports pitches that has been on display is purely indicative, and the PC will decide at a later stage on the precise location of the cricket square and what markings will be required.
- The draft conditional contracts which the Parish Council and the Village Hall
 Trustees will enter into provide for performance bonds, which on the advice

received are considered sufficient to enable the development to be completed in the unlikely event that Croudace is not able to do so. The Council and Trustees will retain a first legal charge over the land, so it cannot be sold, or used as security without their agreement.

- During the construction phase both the Parish Council and the Village Hall Trustees temporarily sell land to Croudace and they have been professionally advised by Robinson & Hall, that they are getting full value for that land. The contracts provide that the land reverts back once construction is complete, and the VH Trustees end up owning the land that the new hall sits on while the PC will own all the sports pitches and the new burial ground; the PC's land will include the strip at the top of Foster's Field that currently belongs to Polehanger Farms.
- The Trustees and the Parish Council have retained Park Woodfine Heald Mellows LLP Solicitors to advise and assist in relation to the proposed agreements.
- Croudace are taking all the risk of the building work, and in the event a
 problem arises e.g. adverse ground conditions, it will be up to them to
 provide a remedy and at their cost. It was noted that Croudace have already
 done a number of soil investigations and other tests, which suggest there is
 a low risk of unexpected problems. Robinson & Hall will be carrying out
 regular checks to ensure the work is completed in accordance with the
 agreements.
- In the Bloor contract none of the new houses could be sold prior to the new Village Hall and Sport Pitches being constructed and handed over. The Croudace deal does not have an equivalent provision as the Temporary Village Hall is being provided and the access road constructed whilst the new Village Hall is being built.



Love for God, Life, Learning and for Each Other

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all the new families that have joined us this September. Our newest members have all begun to settle in and are getting used to school life. It is a big change for children, but they all quickly adjust under the guidance and care of our amazing Early Years teacher, Mrs Gunn and Mrs Sibley our Teaching Assistant.

We are delighted that we now have 5 classes and no longer have mixed aged classes. Welcome to our newest member of Staff - Mrs Adams.

We are pleased to be part of this school community. Meppershall CE Academy is a happy and successful school where everyone is encouraged to be the best they can be. We offer a family environment, with small classes and a beautiful outside environment. We are fully inclusive and have a good reputation as being a caring school that supports many types of needs and this is something we are very proud of.

We have a busy school calendar already for this term. Upcoming events this month include our Harvest Festival in Church, a visit by the Bishop of Bedford to bless our beautiful window and the school as it enters a new school year.

The transfer to Middle School window is now open for parents/carers to apply online. Paper application forms are also available via the website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooladmissions, school or by contacting School admissions on 0300 300 8000.

The closing date for applications for the transfer to Middle School is 15th January 2016.

We will be holding two open mornings on Thursday 5th November and Wednesday 18th November for prospective parents and children to visit us who are due to start school in reception in September 2016. Please come to the school between 9.30am and 11.30am and we will be happy to show you around. If you are unable to attend but would like to visit, please call the school office on 01462 813293 and make an appointment. Nickie Moore

THE PARISH COUNCIL: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Having recently been elected to Meppershall Parish Council, I attended induction training in the form of a presentation given by the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils. The aim was to explain my role and responsibilities, and those of the council. From discussion at the Summer Fair, it appeared that many parishioners were unclear what a parish council can and cannot do, so the committee driving the village plan asked me to relay what I had learnt for the benefit of the community.

A parish council is a statutory body that must work within the law. Its members serve in public office, and must conduct themselves accordingly. Each member has a duty to represent every elector, and to act in the best interest of the village, irrespective of any personal view. However, no individual councillor has any executive power; that resides solely in the council, acting as a corporate body.

Parish councils have tax raising powers. Ideally, a council should have a plan of what it seeks to achieve in each financial year. Then, the plan will defines the budget which, when divided amongst the parishioners according to their council tax banding sets the precept for that financial year. Whilst it is reasonable for councils to provide for contingencies, they should not hoard a substantial reserve.

There are a few duties with which a council must comply: to hold regular meetings, open to the general public, and make decisions in accordance with legislation; as far as possible, to satisfy the demand for allotments; to take crime and disorder into account, and to consider biodiversity in the exercise of its powers.

At each meeting, there should a period set aside for parishioners to state a view on an Agenda item, or to raise any other matter. However, this is not the time for debate, and the session should not be allowed to detract from the primary purpose of the council meeting. Moreover, the council may only discuss items on the published agenda; any new issue must be taken forward to a subsequent meeting.

Councils also have wide-ranging powers, but these are discretionary; there is no obligation for a council to use any particular power. Thus it can make byelaws in certain defined areas and issue fixed penalties. In many areas, however, executive authority resides with the next tier of government, in our case Central Bedfordshire Council, which is a Unitary Authority (UA).

Thus, although a parish council has the right to be consulted on a planning application, and the UA must consider its views, they are not binding. Material considerations that must be taken into account include: any development plan, the site's planning history, accessibility, traffic, roads and parking, archaeology, and any community plan.

There is one exception: under the community right to build set out in the Localism Act 2011, local councils and community groups have the right to propose small-scale, site-specific community-led developments without going through the normal planning application route.

As well as council meetings, there has to be an Annual Parish Meeting, which is a meeting of the electorate, not a council meeting. Local electors may vote on an issue, but their decision is not binding on the council. And ten local electors, or one third of those present may demand a parish poll. An extraordinary Parish Meeting may be called to discuss and take a view on any particularly contentious issue.

Cllr Roger Smith

NOTICE BOARD

WANTED: GARAGE/STORAGE FOR A MODERN CLASSIC CAR

Do you have an unused garage, outbuilding or other storage space which could securely and safely house a car? I'm looking for somewhere to keep my MG out of the worst that the forthcoming British winter has to offer, preferably locally within the village.

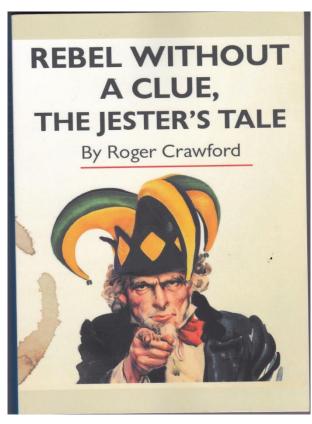
I do not anticipate driving the car every day but due to my unusual shift patterns I may be returning the car to the garage at odd hours; therefore to avoid disturbing you a facility not attached to a residential property is preferable. A garage in a block would be perfect!

Happy to negotiate a fair rental rate for both parties.

Please contact Iain Turner at 2 Campton Road or via telephone/email - 07867972022 - itcaptainslow@gmail.com to discuss further.

Your help in giving a chilly MG ZT a warm home is appreciated!

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE - THE JESTER'S TALE



Local nurseryman and coach driver Roger Crawford is now a local author too!

Many will know of Roger through battles with the **Planning** system in Bedfordshire and with his Fathers 4 Justice activities in Oxford. This entertaining and thought-provoking book details his early life, from his adoption at birth to his entering agriculture and horticulture and forming a charitable who group took deprived city children on free country holidays in the seventies. He also founded and ran successful youth club in Harrow,

Middlesex and taught gardening at evening classes. Roger moved to Woodview Nurseries in Meppershall in the mid-eighties when Meppershall was still predominantly a horticultural settlement.

There are many laugh-out-loud moments in this book, which contrast vividly with the pathos of his losing his only child, a daughter, through the infamous family court system. His experiences there are poignantly described and they led to his years of protesting on various roofs dressed as a Court Jester 'because the whole system is a very bad joke'. He thinks much the same of the current planning laws which allow swathes of new homes to be built in the countryside whilst penalising individuals who wish to live a sustainable lifestyle on their own land.

The book is published by new Generation Publishing and is available from Amazon at £8-99 and in all good bookshops, and as Roger says, probably from some not-so-good ones as well! Roger says he is happy to talk to groups such as bookclubs where his book will be available at a lower price. Copies are also available for £6-99 from Roger on 01462 814575.

'Rebel Without A Clue - The Jester's Tale' ISBN 978-1-78507-389-2





OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

As Brownies doesn't meet over the summer holidays I haven't much to report on what we have been up to recently at brownies, so I thought I would use this opportunity to remind everyone about Operation Christmas Child and how you can help.

Every year Operation Christmas Child sends over a million shoe boxes from the UK to children in hospitals, orphanages, homeless shelters and poor communities in other countries. The shoe box is often the only Christmas present the children will receive.

For years and years, Meppershall Brownies, with the help of lots of lovely people in the village, have been filling and sending shoe boxes. Last year we sent an amazing 100 filled shoe boxes to needy children in Belarus. Sadly, each year we hear about new children affected by poverty and war as the current crisis in Syria has so clearly shown us.

So, what do we do?

- We collect empty shoe boxes
- We cover them with Christmas wrapping paper (or sometimes they arrive already wrapped)
- We sort the toys and clothes donated into age groups and suitable for a girl or boy
- We fill the shoe boxes at brownies with the donated items.
- We include a Christmas card from the brownies
- We send each box with £3.00 to cover the transportation costs
- Boxes are collected by the Samaritans and after receiving a further check at their depot they are transported to the children
- The children all get together and open the boxes amidst much joy and excitement!

As in previous years, we would therefore be really grateful of any donations of money, shoe boxes (if possible wrapped in Christmas paper), wrapping paper and items for the shoe boxes, such as small children's toys, jewellery, hats, gloves, stationery, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap and flannels.

If you would like to help in any way, then please contact Snowy Owl (Suzanne) on 07817 392325. Any help would be greatly appreciated. For further information about the work of this charity, please visit www.samaritanspurse.org

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP OCTOBER 2015

Keech Garden Fest. - This event was promoted to show Alan Titchmarsh's garden, which he created with the help of his team, and was televised a week



before on the programme 'Love your Garden'. A small number of us were transported by the Whitbread Wanderbus, ably driven with Jenny Gilbert of Meppershall at the wheel. Little did Jenny realise what was in store for her as when they arrived we found so much traffic and people walking; at one point the A6 was blocked all the way to Barton roundabout! Cars were directed to Sainsbury's, Asda and Barnfield College car parks, like a temporary 'Park and Ride' and the people were transported to Keech along Bramingham Lane by an Arriva bus. Everyone arrived in bright sunshine and the CEO from Keech, Mike Keel spoke, explaining the 'natural garden and pond' that Alan Titchmarsh and his team had created. By lunchtime the clouds had gathered and a few spots of rain was followed by a downpour for a short time. Everyone needed to take cover, and Jenny saw the predicament the Arriva bus was having so voluntarily joined him in ferrying people backwards and forwards. Afterwards Mike Keel heard of Jenny's very kind gesture and quick-thinking and asked me to thank her on behalf of everyone. The staff at Keech were certainly taken unawares with the public response they received. There were numerous stalls and side-shows. Also, part of the building was open to the public to see some of the rooms and their equipment which included the hydrotherapy pool. But of course, everyone wanted to see Alan Titchmarsh's Garden!

The Festival of Flowers organised by NAFAS was held at Ingatestone Hall, Essex, a Grade 1 Listed 16th Century Manor House. The beautiful flowers were arranged in many rooms and were a delight to behold. The theme of the event was 'Down Memory Lane' and the proceeds were in aid of Farleigh House Hospice. The day was

beautiful, sunny and warm for this event, this gave us the opportunity to walk around the extensive grounds and view the pond, which was the size of a small lake and covered in lilies!

Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross – we first made our way to Sulgrave Manor where we were met by two guides who split us into two groups for our tour around the extensive herb gardens, all carefully maintained by voluntary workers. The gardens were quite unique as they were designed on two levels. There was time to refresh ourselves in their country house restaurant before reboarding our coach. Our Guide then took us all around the sleepy lanes and villages explaining little bits of local knowledge before taking us back to the Dedington Arms for lunch. Some of our group managed to visit the Church before returning to the coach. On our way to Banbury we were regaled with myths and legends of 'Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross' The statue of the lady in question was not on a white horse but on a black one! We were set down by the bus stop where some made their way to the canal, and others took advantage of a little therapy shopping before returning to the coach for our homeward journey to Shefford.

The sun shone all day when we visited **Anglesey Abbey**, a National Trust property. Most of us stopped on arrival for a coffee where we could sit outside on the veranda. We went our separate ways, some to visit the house, others to visit Lode Mill which unfortunately was not working due to low water levels and, of course, the beautiful Gardens. The weather allowed us to partake of our lunch, again outside on the veranda. After lunch some of the group decided to take the sign posted 'Walks' the extensive grounds are all kept beautifully, The history states 'it was one man's passion for tradition to transform the run down country house attached to the desolate landscape'. 114 Acres offer vibrant colour, delicious scent and the simple pleasures of nature. There was still time to enjoy being outside with a cuppa before making our way back to Shefford.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS (At a Glance) 2015

Lord Mayor's Show – 800 th Year	Saturday 14 th Nov.
Thursford Christmas Spectacular	Friday 27 th Nov.
The Last Tango starring Flavia & Vincent, Matinee at MK Theatre	Wednesday 25 th Nov.
John Rutter celebrates his 70 th birthday at RAH	Monday 7 th Dec.
Weymouth – Russell Hotel (Tinsel & Turkey)	14 th -18 th December

LONDON SHOWS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE (with Stevenage Group Travel)

MATINEE PERFORMANCES – 2015 (unless otherwise stated)

MAMA MIA — Novello Theatre – Stall Seats – Coach Leaving	Thursday 22 nd Oct.
Shefford at 11.15am	
CATS — Andrew Lloyd Webber – London Palladium – Stall Seats –	Wednesday 28 th Oct.
Leaving Shefford at 10.45am	
DISNEY ON ICE – WORLD OF ENCHANTMENT — Barclaycard Arena	Sunday 1 st November
(Formerly The NIA Birmingham) Block 4 (lower) Rows D E F & G –	
Leaving Shefford at 8.30am.	
THE LION KING — Lyceum Theatre – Stall Seats – Coach leaving	Wednesday 4 th Nov
Shefford at 10.45am	
THE SNOWMAN — Peacock Theatre – Stall Seats – Coach leaving	Wednesday 2 nd Dec.
Shefford at 10.45am	
GUYS & DOLLS — Savoy Theatre – Stall Seats - Coach leaving	Tuesday 12 th Jan. 2016
Shefford at 10.45am	

EVENING PERFORMANCES 2015 - Leaving Shefford at 4.15pm (unless stated)

CVDCV AV LE V.C. TI L. CLUC L	Thursday 13 th August
GYPSY – West End's Savoy Theatre Stall Seats	I Inursday 13" August
Girst West End 3 Savoy Theatre. Stan Seats	marsaay 15 magast

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.

Enid Pamment – Shefford Leisure Group

Rehearsals are now well underway for 'Robin Hood' our Pantomime for 2015. Performance Dates are as follows:

Fri 27th Nov 7.45pm & Sat 28th Nov 3pm & 7.45pm

Fri 4th Dec 7.45pm & Sat 5th Dec 3pm & 7.45pm

Ticket prices:

Matinees (3pm) - £6; Concessions £5;

Evenings - £8; Concessions £7.

Last Night Performance - £9. No Concessions.

Tickets on sale from the 3rd October from Roger's Bakery, Meppershall only.

This is a 'fun for all the family' show, big entertainment at amazingly low prices.

The Meppershall Players do have their own page on Facebook (Meppershall Players Community) and also a new Web Page which will be updated the first Monday of every month, so why not check us out.

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.

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 3^{rd} Oct, 7^{th} Nov, 19^{th} Dec & 2^{nd} 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 include in all areas of theatrical performances, set building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance. Interested? Then we look forward to meeting you.

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336

NEWS FROM THE GNOMES

WELCOME PACKS

The first six welcome packs have now been given to recent arrivals in the Village but we have more to give out as and when we are made aware. If you have new neighbours, please let us know, using the Gnomes hotline 07760 798921. We would also love to hear from people who have received a pack already: has it been useful? Is there other information that you would have found useful? We would welcome feedback to make this service even better.

NEW INITIATIVES

Central Beds Council, along with other councils, is seeking ways to maintain services whilst under extreme financial pressures. One method of doing this is to utilise the services of charitable organisations and local volunteer groups such as Neighbourhood Watch and Good Neighbour groups such as ours. The GNOMES, therefore are supporting two more initiatives that have recently become available in our area:

First. NOMINATED NEIGHBOUR SCHEME. We have received information that because of the increase in rogue traders throughout Bedfordshire, the Trading Standards Agency (TSA) is introducing a Nominated Neighbour Scheme to assist vulnerable people who might be pressured by cold callers or rogue traders. This might be seen as an extension of the "No Cold Calling Zone", which relies on people getting in touch with the TSA if they are troubled by cold-callers. The Nominated Neighbour Scheme will take the form of displaying a card in the house window that gives the address or telephone number of that person's Nominated Neighbour - several people could nominate the same neighbour. The person being cold-called can simply point at the card and refuse to answer the door. Should the person calling be a genuine tradesperson they can call the designated neighbour who would take all the details and arrange to pass them on to the person who was cold called. Trading Standards expect that rogue traders will not bother to make contact but will look for an easier target. Should anyone believe that they have been approached by a rogue trader, they are advised to call the national helpline on 03454 040506 which is not a premium number. To become a Nominated Neighbour you have to attend a 2 hour training course at the Council Offices in Chicksands. Should you wish to obtain more information, contact Central Beds Trading Standards on 0300 300 8136. The GNOMES intend to have at least one volunteer trained before September.

Second, **ADVICE CENTRAL**. This is a new advice centre, supported by Bedfordshire Council and manned by trained volunteers, that aims to provide a

single means of access to advice and information on all sorts of matters, including but not restricted to: benefit entitlement and application, disability questions and problems, legal issues, consumer rights, housing and health and welfare. If you have any problems in these or any other area simply call the help line 0300 303 66 66 or email info@AdviceCentral.org.uk. Those with computers can visit the website www.AdviceCentral.org.uk and click through direct to any of the agencies, such as the CAB, Relate or Central Beds itself who are providing the information and advice.

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

OCTOBER	Sunday 11 th
NOVEMBER	Sunday 1 st
DECEMBER	Sat/Sun 5 th /6 th Santa Specials-booking essential; forms available
	in September

WHERE MY CARAVAN HAS RESTED

By Denis Neilson

AUSTRALIA TRIP PART 6



Heading to the Sunshine Coast

We had enjoyed Sydney and could have stayed much longer but we headed off for the Blue Mountains some 160Km to the west. I was taken with the names of places we either passed through or saw signs to such as Stanmore, Winchester, Chester, Lithgow, Harley and Blackheath just to name a few. I can only assume that when you are naming

places in a new area that you're hoping to live in you pick the names you know and those with you will associate with. Having said that, we also saw signs to Katoomba and Capertree so my theory does not stand up to deep scrutiny. The Blue Mountains is a magical place and so call as it has a blue sort of haze over it. This is because it is densely populated by oil bearing Eucalyptus trees. These trees give off a very fine oil-spray which, in combination with dust particles and water vapour, makes the air look blue. The gateway into this area is Lithgow a small but tidy town that developed alongside the mining for coal. mountains around here are mainly over a 1000m high and it is a very popular spot for climbing and hiking. One gets some beautiful views from the high points. We stayed in the area for 3 days and enjoyed the scenery, especially those peaks known as the 3 sisters, and of course the birds, again lots of parrots but also black cockatoos with their large wings and yellow tails, absolutely fantastic. We visited an old village called Hartley (which is now a full blown tourist attraction) but when we went only the information centre and a gift shop was open and the buildings were out of bounds, the roads into the village blocked off. I noted in my diary that this appeared to have the potential to be visitor site, I probably should have put my money where my mouth was! We also visited a small town called Blackheath, also known as Rhododendron City, for obvious reasons. They hold a flower festival on the first Saturday of November each year (we were just 3 months too late or 9 months too early

A young lady on the reception desk at the campground spoke to us about a disused railway tunnel that was home to thousands of glow worms and that it was worth a visit. The road, she said, was a little rough, but the girl explained how to get there said that she had driven it the other week. She had a very small car with little wheels so our Ford Falcon, with its 3 litre engine and higher road clearance would have no problem! Needless to say we either took the

wrong road or she was having us on. We had to ask for directions once out of Lithgow and a road service van driver directed us to a dirt track and said simply "Follow that." The road was awful. It took us ages. We stopped in a very remote picnic park for lunch and then carried on for about another 15Km and came to what looked like a car park but it was not where we needed to be so we carried on and the road developed holes and banks and then we went through a tunnel. No signs or lights so we were not quite sure where we should be. We had to struggle onwards because the road was not wide enough to turn the car around. In retrospect I am positive that we were driving on the base layer or what was left of it, of the old single track railroad. We continued with caution over dips and rocks. Eventually we found a space with sufficient room to turn, and exhausted from the tension of the ride decided to give up the quest. It was then that we noticed a rusty, bent and battered barrier across the road in front of us and further behind it another tunnel. So we got out of the car and investigated. On the barrier was a hand painted sign that said "1 Km to Glow Worm Tunnel". So we set off on foot, through the undergrowth, and into this disused tunnel. It used to be part of a railway line for moving coal and ore from the mines in the area. We had been advised to take a torch, and it was just as well because a few yards into the tunnel and it was pitch black. We both thought what a waste of time this had all been. The trauma of the ride, fed up, unsure of where we were and now nothing but a black tunnel. The noise we made and the flashing of the light must have upset the worms because little pinpricks of light began to appear on the walls and roof of the tunnel. The deeper we got into the tunnel the more of these little lights appeared. There seemed to little lights everywhere like a lot of fairly lights attached to trees in a forest. it was amazing and made us forget about the difficult journey to get to them. When we left the tunnel we were treated to a view of a couple of Lyrebirds in the undergrowth, and they reminded us of the road runners we had seen in America. We clocked and timed our return journey actually covered 40Kms in 2.25 hours!

Over the next 2 days we rounded up our visit to the Blue Mountains, visiting as many places as we could and especially liked the genteel town of Bathurst. Very English, with nice parks surrounded by fruit and arable farms. We did ride the Scenic Railway, fools as we were, which is the steepest cable-driven funicular railway in the world, or so I am told. As you hurtle down the steepest incline of 52 degrees for about 300 metres your stomach stays at the top but where its contents go I just would not like to say! Put simply, it is hair-raising. It was originally constructed in 1880 something, in order to haul the coal and shale from the valley floor up to the escarpment above. From 1928 to 1945 it carried coal during the week and passengers at weekends. The coal mine was

closed in 1945 and the railway became a tourist attraction. I understand that it has now been updated and completely refurbished and is now a major pleasure ride!

During this period of our stay there was much anger in the country over Australia's involvement in Iraq. Folk were protesting and some anti-war protestors painted "No War" in very large letters on the roof of the Sydney Opera House. How they managed to do this is beyond me but it proved to be very embarrassing for the security services in Sydney and Australia as a whole. I do not think they realised just how strong the anti-war feeling was.



We moved northwards again passing through familiar names as Windsor and Newcastle to our next stop at Lake MacQuarrie and would you believe, camped in the Swansea Leisure Park. We got everything set up when I saw something that was almost unreal. A cloud form was developing, swirling and moving in

the sky. I have seen a similar effect on television in nature programmes but never in real life. They just swirled around then appeared to lock together into a tight mass that covered the entire sky before the rain started to fall and the lightning, thunder and wind became very evident. It only lasted a short while, under an hour, and the air felt very much fresher when it stopped. Within a very short time the sun had dried up everything and you would never have known it had happened. All the wildlife appeared to wake up too! The small town of Swansea was within walking distance so we decided to have a look. It is a small place with sufficient shops to keep body and soul in place but not much else. What they did have an abundance of was midges, and persistent biters too, the jungle strength anti pest spray did very little to put them off. So walked back quickly to the caravan waving and slapping at these biting bugs and disturbed a pelican that was roosting on a lamppost which made us jump when it squawked as it flew off! In Newcastle, whilst walking along a headland called Nobby's Point, we got talking to a young Australian couple who were very enthusiastic about our trip and gave us plenty of advice of the places to visit and when to go. It turned out that they learning to fly. The lessons were conducted whilst taking part in a flying safari around Australia so it was a different airfield every night and at the end of the safari they should expect to get their pilots licence. Think of a learner car driver driving around UK visiting and seeing places and then taking the driving test at the end of it. Now that is a sensible way to learn whilst having a holiday at the same time.

....to be continued

THE LUCY PAGES

By Lucy Standbridge, aged 13



As you will probably know, there are plans for a new village hall, along with a housing development up behind the current village hall. So, to write this article, I went up to the first two meetings to find out what will be happening, and what some of you thought of it.

The first session I attended was on the 5th September to view the plans for the new village hall and sports facilities, with Parish Councillors and Village Hall Trustees present to answer questions, and discuss the plans. The second one was a presentation by the builders, Croudace Homes Limited, showing what will happen throughout the project.

The project is run by Croudace Homes, who are based in Bedford, alongside Robinson Hall planning consultants, the village hall trustees and the parish council. At the time of the presentations, it is planned for 76 new houses. 64 of those private ownership, 12 affordable housing and 4 bungalows. The new village hall is going to be 3x the size of the current one. Behind the new hall, there will be 2 football pitches and one cricket pitch, some new play equipment as well as the original equipment being relocated. For health and safety reasons, and so the village can hold usual events whilst building is in progress, we will have a temporary hall. It is planned to start in 2016, and the whole project is scheduled to be complete by 2018.

At the first session, I interviewed a few people to see what their thoughts are on the new plans. I interviewed Viv, John Chapman, Jeff Hurst (a trustee) and Roger Smith (a Councillor). Everyone thought that the village hall and sports facilities will be a good idea for the village. Multiuse of the hall will be very useful, so the pre-school can be in one area, and other events going on in different rooms at the same time. The social club will also be able to be used by usual members if there is an event going on. Viv said "I will definitely use a new village hall, for things like community discos. Also, the idea of having more rooms would be good for local clubs because it's better than holding them

around people's houses". The housing development idea was not as loved as the village hall. Traffic problems were mentioned in every interview, as the new junction will add more traffic to what we already have. As for the houses Jeff told me "people have to live somewhere! If we don't have new houses, there will be no opportunity to live in smaller, social, low cost houses, which means that we won't get a mixture of generations. Younger people are good for the village", he also said that although there is some inconvenience, you have to look at the bigger picture. Roger thought that we don't need 76 more houses, especially as he lives near to the development. However, they all said that they would use the new facilities for things like shows, quizzes and maybe some new clubs that might start.

At the second meeting, lots of people turned up for the presentation to see what the plans were for the development. The temporary hall will be up for health and safety, and also so the community can hold its usual events, whilst the building is in process. However, this raised a lot of questions and concerns such as no parking close by for a few months, traffic and congestion, and demolition of the existing hall. The trustees and councillors said "the existing hall doesn't meet the needs of the village, so the trustees visited other halls, noted down the best and worst bits in order to produce the best hall for Meppershall". A lot of the audience wasn't very pleased with the plans, with interest in the fields being closed off for a period of time for the building of pitches, no safe drop off points for pre-school for about 4 months, no snooker tables but pool instead, the contracts not being fully 'set in stone' yet, and even what the presentation was actually about compared to what people were expecting, however Robinson Hall described it as an "exceptional opportunity and a wonderful asset to the village".

Once the whole process is complete, I think that the village will definitely benefit from the new facilities. The housing I'm not as keen on, but you can't have the hall without the houses.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 2015

Thursday 1 st		
Evergreens	2:15 – 4:00pm	Sugar Loaf
Saturday 3 rd		
Karen's Karaoke	8:00pm	Meppershall Social Club
Sunday 4 th		
Harvest Service	11am	St Mary's
Thursday 8 th		
GNOMES Coffee Morning	10:45 - 11:45	Meppershall Care Home
Sunday 11 th		
Second Sunday Stroll	10:30am	St Mary's
Paul Carne's Quiz	7:15 pm	Meppershall Social Club
Parish Council Meeting	7:45pm	Village Hall
Tuesday 13th		
Rectory Teas		
Thursday 15 th		
Evergreens	2:15 – 4:00pm	Sugar Loaf
Saturday 17 th		
Alabama Hayriders	8:00pm	Meppershall Social Club
Saturday 17 th & Sunday 18 th		
Art Exhibition	10:00 – 4:00 pm	Northill Village Hall
Tuesday 27th		
Rectory Teas		
Friday 30 th		
Halloween Bingo & Karaoke	7-9 pm Bingo	Meppershall Social Club
(- fancy dress optional!)	9pm-late Karaoke	

November 2015

Monday 9th		
Parish Council Meeting	7:45 pm	Village Hall

The Festival Committee is delighted to announce the following donations:

Meppershall Tots - £300 towards toys, storage boxes and possible mini outings. Meppershall Village Choir - £184.07 towards a new electronic keyboard. The Need Project - £100 towards the food bank.

Thank you to the people of Meppershall and their family and friends for making this possible.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

PAUL SAVUTO

Investment Market Update...what's going on?

It now seems a long time ago that investors were worrying about Greece. The 24th of August 2015 is being described as China's 'Black Monday', although the original Black Monday in October 1987 was much more severe, as back then the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 22.6% in a day. Nevertheless, the recent market fall out has been dramatic, with share prices tumbling not only in China (which has been a bubble in the process of popping for several weeks now) but all over the world.

At such times of heightened emotion, it is more important than ever to exercise patience as an investor. These are times to take a deep breath and take stock of where things stand and whether reality has actually changed, or whether it is just perception that has shifted. China's published 7% GDP growth rate for the first half seems increasingly implausible, though it is important to remember that its economy is still actually growing, not shrinking. Other data, including imports/exports and the purchasing managers' surveys point to lower economic activity than that reported. Major international companies including BMW, Volkswagen, Burberry, BASF, Siemens and Caterpillar have all reported increasingly challenging trading conditions in China. The knock-on effects for the rest of Asia and more broadly are being felt right now.

Commodity prices, which temporarily stabilised in the second quarter of 2015 (notably oil, iron ore, copper and gold) have once again weakened significantly. All have suffered directly or indirectly as a result of China's sluggish activity; all are priced in dollars and have been affected by the recent strengthening in the US dollar as markets currently anticipate US interest rate rises beginning later this year.

The oil price (Brent has fallen around 28% since the end of June) suffered the additional burden of Saudi Arabia continuing to produce at record levels. This strategy may seem illogical and counterintuitive, especially when global crude inventories are already so high. However, Saudi's motivations are partly to help fund its budget deficit, countering weaker prices with increased volumes, and partly to demonstrate to its competitors that, while it may no longer be the world's largest crude producer, nevertheless it still has significant clout to influence oil markets in its own interests. This must be seen particularly in the light of the Iranian nuclear containment treaty which was signed in July with

the West, which could pave the way for economic sanctions against Iran to be lifted and for that country eventually to resume exporting oil.

How to fund for a comfortable retirement

Taking steps to plan for a better future:

Regardless of the life stage you have arrived at, it is important to receive expert and professional advice on your pension plans and requirements. Yet many people spend more time planning their holiday than their own retirement. Perhaps because planning for retirement seems too complicated to think about. But according to people surveyed for BlackRock's Investor Pulse survey, the biggest financial priority was still 'funding a comfortable retirement'.

We know that we want an active, comfortable retirement but often don't know where to start the savings process. If confusion and a lack of understanding around your retirement needs have caused you to put off planning and saving anything, you're not alone. In fact, over half of people in the UK are in the same position.

New pension rules which give us far greater flexibility over what we can do with our pension pot came into force on 6 April 2015. Understanding these reforms and more informed planning will enable you to consider the changes you could make and take steps towards planning for a more comfortable future.

Know what you need – set yourself a target

The closer you are to approaching retirement, the more you are likely to know how much income you will need to cover your outgoings. If you have longer to go until retirement, it is still good to have an idea of what you are aiming for, and you can review this each year as you get closer.

Know what you already have

The second step is to understand what you have already saved. Knowing what you already have will help you to understand how far you are towards your retirement target. If you have a lot of different pensions, it may be worth considering bringing those all together into one account. Should you consolidate?

What you need to think about

- Are you paying in the right amount?
- Are you invested in the right kind of fund?
- When can you realistically retire?

Be fully aware of the tax implications

The decisions you make can have markedly different tax implications when taking your retirement income, so you should consider these carefully before you choose.

Type of income

How important is it that you guarantee your income for life? Would you like your income to increase each year to offset inflation? Do you need the flexibility to vary your income? These questions and others will help you decide what's right for you.

Taking on investment risk

If you still need to provide an income for your retirement and don't buy an annuity, what will you do with the money? Are you comfortable taking investment risk?

Passing on as much as you can to dependants

The treatment of your fund on death differs depending on the decisions you take.

Paul Savuto (Meppershall based) DGS Chartered Financial Planners on 07834 499595 or email ps@dgsifa.com

INFORMATION IS BASED ON OUR CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF TAXATION LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS. ANY LEVELS AND BASES OF, AND RELIEFS FROM, TAXATION ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. A PENSION IS A LONG-TERM INVESTMENT. THE FUND VALUE MAY FLUCTUATE AND CAN GO DOWN. YOUR EVENTUAL INCOME MAY DEPEND UPON THE SIZE OF THE FUND AT RETIREMENT, FUTURE INTEREST RATES AND TAX LEGISLATION.

WHY WILLS AND POWER OF ATTORNEY MATTER

Paul Savuto

MEPPERSHALL SOCIAL CLUB

October 2015

We hope you all had a fabulous summer and as Autumn moves in we have some fabulous entertainment lined up for your enjoyment.

Our VJ tribute show in August was a huge success. In excess of 100 people attended and thoroughly enjoyed the fabulous show kindly put on for us by the Meppershall Players. A huge thank you to everyone who gave their time to make the evening a great success.

Our next event will be Saturday 17th October at 8pm; the Alabama Hayriders will be our guests providing the music for the evening - they played at the Summer Fair earlier this year. Tickets are £3 members, £6 non-members, and will be available from the social club bar, or can be reserved via the email address below.

We will be holding our Halloween Bingo and Karaoke on Friday 30th October, fancy dress optional, eyes down 7.15, followed by Karen's Karaoke. As usual please see notice boards in and around the village hall/social club for further details of all our events.

Don't forget our regular events - Bingo Fridays, eyes down 7.30pm, £1 entry for non-members plus book cost; Karen's Karaoke, one Saturday each month, see posters for date, and our Sunday quiz is back after a summer break, hosted by Paul Carne, 2nd Sunday of each month; doors open 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start, £1 per player, max team of 6, all open to non-members.

We will be looking to book our events for the first 6 months of 2016 soon, so if you have any suggestions, ideas or thoughts on what you would like to see, then please do contact me via the e-mail address below.

We look forward to welcoming you to the social club and to some or all of our events, children are welcome too.

Sharon1805@hotmail.co.uk

FILM REVIEW

By Carlie Newman

Certainly worth a look is **THE SECOND MOTHER** (cert. 15 1 hr 54 mins.), which is set in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

It tells the story of Val (Regina Case) who has left her own child in a small town in the north of Brazil to be brought up by relatives while she earns money as a nanny in the big city. While she feels guilty at having left her daughter Jessica, she also feels loving towards her charge Fabinho (Michel Joelsas), whose mother has her own busy life and spends little quality time with her son.



Suddenly after 13 years, Jessica (Camila Márdila) now the same age as Fabinho, wants to come to Sao Paulo to study. She is not happy to discover that she has to live with her mother in the house of her employers. Jessica is even less content to learn that she is supposed to share the same small bedroom. She soon makes it clear that while her mother has to do what her employers dictate she is not their servant. She manages to get the guest bedroom and makes a friend of the husband of the family, to the chagrin of the mother. Val realises that her daughter thinks that the family look on her as a second class citizen - she is not allowed to use the swimming pool even in the very hot weather - and Jessica presents her with a second chance to be a real mother to her. Val is forced to make decisions on her daughter and also on her present life.

A very well written film and directed by the writer, Anna Muylaert who manages to inject wider views about the state of workers and how they are forced to work away from their children in Brazil. The changes that are happening today in Brazil are reflected in the film.

There is a terrific central performance by Case who inhabits the Nanny with a real sense of the conflict she faces - being with her charge as a second mother or caring for her own daughter. Good performances from the rest of the cast make this a must-see film.

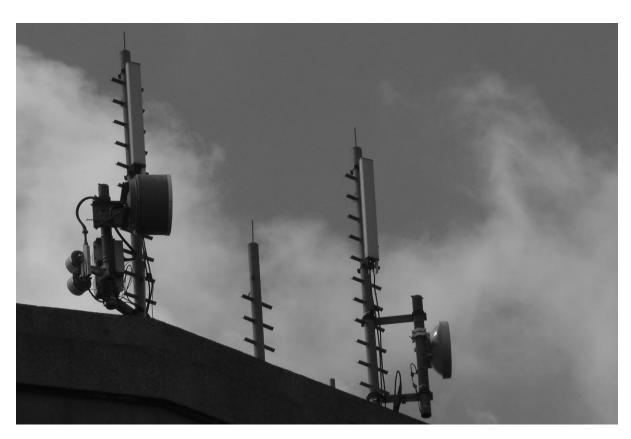
What'sit?

Solution to What'sit No. 13



Kissing gate at entrance to St. Mary's churchyard, Meppershall

Now where is What'sit No.14?...



THE MEPPERSHALL GARDEN CLUB

(MGC)





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

Email address: meppershallgardenclub @hotmail.co.uk So far 2015 hasn't exactly been the best of years for the gardener; wet spring and a dry cold and windy summer. Let's hope that autumn brings us some much needed warmth and sunshine. Having said that, the weather hasn't deterred the Garden Club from pursuing many activities.

In July, we held a vintage tea garden party in memory of Viv and Kathy, two of our members who are sadly no longer with us. The purpose of the tea party was to raise funds for the Sue Ryder hospice at Moggerhanger. Fortunately the weather on that day was glorious and thanks to Marcia's gorgeous cakes and pots of tea and coffee, the event was a great success. A few days later we held our monthly meeting at the Beadlow Manor golf club which turned out to be an excellent venue.

Our August treat was a visit to the Manor House in Meppershall where Mr and Mrs Waldock kindly gave us a tour of their beautiful garden. Even in August, the trees provided a wonderful display of many shades of green. This was followed a few days later with a trip to Hitchin Lavender where we set off with our scissors and carrier bags to collect as much lavender as we could carry.

In between meetings, we continue to maintain the border at the village hall and to look after the planters. Haven't they done well this year? A lovely mix of vigorous plants in vibrant colours. Long may they last.

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

Linda Parker

Tidy Bedfordshire

A man fined almost £3,000 after pleading guilty to fly-tipping.

Gheorghe Tanase, of Russell Rise, Luton, admitted being in control of a van which was used in a fly-tipping incident in Woodside Road, Slip End, in June 2014 – despite not driving or being in the vehicle at the time of the incident.

Tanase was caught out after a passing motorist spotted the fly-tipping taking place and was able to copy down the registration plate of the van, which was traced back to Tanase following an investigation by Central Bedfordshire Council.

He also admitted to knowingly causing controlled waste to be deposited on land without a waste management licence permitting this to take place.

After pleading guilty at Luton Magistrates' Court on 3 August, Tanase was fined £1,000, ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £100 and to pay Central Bedfordshire Council costs of £1,800.

The magistrate ordered Tanase to pay almost full costs after saying that residents should not have to pick up the cost of his offending.

Woman ordered to pay over £900 for discarded cigarette end

A woman from Houghton Conquest has been ordered to pay over £900 for throwing a cigarette end from her car window.

Katie Sharpe, of Crancott Close, Houghton Conquest was spotted discarding the cigarette end from her car window in Wing Road, Linslade by one of Central Bedfordshire Council's Environmental Protection Officers in December 2014.

However, when she was contacted by the council about the offence, Ms Sharpe did not respond despite numerous attempts to make contact with her. Ms Sharpe was given an £80 fixed penalty notice for littering – reduced to £50 if paid within eight days. Despite reminder letters she failed to pay, leading to the council starting prosecution proceedings.

Miss Sharpe also failed to attend her hearing at Luton Magistrates' Court on 25 August. In her absence she was fined £400 as well as being ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £40 and the full prosecution costs of £461.33

If you spot anyone littering or fly-tipping, please call 0300 300 8302 or email our Customer Services team (customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

(Abstracted from Central Bedfordshire Council, Weekly Digest Bulletin)



Art Exhibition

17th & 18th October 2015 10am - 4pm Northill Village Hall (opposite the church)

Free Admission
Original Paintings for Sale
Tea & Home-made Cakes
Raffle

For more information please call Karen on 07957 539594 or visit www.biggleswade-art-society.co.uk

Lewis' Further Adventures

Back to the UK Again!

What a welcome, my parents were overjoyed and our eldest son Stephen who had been living with them for the past year whilst attending a school at Amberley on the Rodborough Common was quite delirious.

I rang up REME Radar Branch which was part of the Royal Radar Establishment at Malvern and confirmed that the married quarter we had been allocated was ready for occupation. I arranged for a take-over the next Monday. Stroud to Malvern was only thirty five miles, a mere stretch of the legs! We made our way to our new home in Malvern Wells, two of the Officers and four of the ASM's living on Wood Farm Camp, were friends I had served with on previous postings. Fran had known two of the wives from Ty-Croes so the old friendships were soon re-established. We were able to get all our children into the local schools, which was a wonderful plus. The camp adjoined the local golf course. I took a number of lessons at the Royal Worcester Club, enjoyed it and bought a weekend set of clubs which served me well for forty years.

I was formally taken on strength by Radar Branch which had quite a large number of senior REME and Civil Service personnel, its responsibilities were producing the Electrical and Mechanical Regulations which were the Bible for the Corps activities and giving advice to the M.O.D. on Radar Design and applications. To my dismay they welcomed me with open arms, I had carried out the Acceptance Trials for the FCE 7 Mk4 at Ty-Croes and then seen it into service in BAOR and Borneo, the EMER's were incomplete and I was given the task of completing them – what joy!

The task took some six months, it was during this period that the QE2 made her maiden voyage from Southampton, for a lark, I had a word with the skipper of a barge on the river Avon which had been converted for pleasure cruises. I booked it for an evening cruise, with a meal and a bar, for a month ahead. I now produced a flyer for distribution around the branch advertising the inaugural cruise on the QE2, a small group was hired and the port for boarding was Evesham. Tickets were modestly priced and within a week were sold out, everyone was talking about the cruise, and the Colonel's wife was quite amazed that I had been able to hire the QE2 – what a feather in our caps Mr Birt! No-one had questioned the QE2 forging its way up the river Avon, which in places was only ten yards wide! The appointed day arrived and the weather was superb, the skipper had dressed the barge overall and the guests were soon arriving, the group was playing Dixieland and the bar dispensing hospitality, everyone soon forgot it was not the real thing. Three hours on the river with lots of dancing and we disembarked having enjoyed a splendid

evening, the only fly in the ointment was the Colonel's closing remark – that I would be organising the Xmas Function for the Branch!

RRE was divided into two sites, North and South, Radar Branch was located in North Site and No 4 Maintenance Advisory Group (4MAG) in the South, having completed the EMER writing, I now joined No 4 MAG, a much smaller sub unit which deployed its personnel to the manufacturers of Radar Systems.

The War Office had produced a General Service Ordnance Requirement (GSOR) which nominated RRE as the Design Authority to produce four 'A' experimental radars for use by both the infantry and armoured units. The project was designated ZB298, this stuck with the equipment throughout its service life. The contract for the pre-production units, was awarded to Elliott Automation Ltd of Borehamwood. I was to join the Company as the Military Advisor for the period of the contract, the design of the special to type test equipment, to be used by REME, became my particular responsibility. I spent some months with the boffins at RRE familiarising myself with the new techniques employed in the system, we all became on good terms which stood me in good stead in the future.

Once more the telephones buzzed to my Aunt and Uncle in Highgate and again my accommodation was assured, lucky me. I now had to make my number with the factory at Borehamwood, the Head of the Development team at RRE, Mike Skinner offered to take me down and introduce me, courtesy indeed. We were in my car and the Security Guard on the gate had a blue uniform with a row of medal ribbons, I was in uniform and a few of our ribbons matched, from then on I always had a parking space! Mike introduced me to Peter Carney the Chief Engineer for the project followed by all the other Engineers working on the project. I was allotted an office to share with one of the team. ZB298 comprised an Antenna Unit with twenty radiating strips formed on printed circuits. A Display Unit which contained all the electronic processing boards and controls with a multi-line visual display and headphones for presentation of audio information. Both units were covered in formed foam rubber and the display unit clipped on to the base of the antenna unit for transportation. The third unit was the Tripod Unit on which the Antenna Unit was mounted, it provided 360 degrees rotation controlled from the display unit. The legs of the unit comprised hollow glass fibre tubes which could be extended to provide the operational height of the radar. Aluminium and Magnesium were used extensively in the construction of the units to reduce the overall weight. Power was supplied from a secondary battery source providing 24 volts d.c. and made up from a large number of magnesium cells.

To be continued. AQMS Lewis Birt. R.E.M.E.



October

This term we have been thinking about autumn and harvest time. We created a treasure basket of fruit and vegetables in season for all the children to explore. Now we have so much choice in our supermarkets, it can be confusing to work out what is in season in Britain. So we have been talking about what is grown where. The children have also picked plums from a local garden, and have then made delicious plum crumble. Thank you Angela for letting children pick the plums from your garden. Visiting the allotment or the park to make the most of the fine weather has also been popular. If anybody who enjoys gardening has a little bit of spare time, we would really appreciate some help digging our beds over, so please get in touch.

We also plan to visit the local nature reserve and talk about seasons, invite Reverend Roni along to read a story to the children, and start thinking about animals that go into hibernation, and how we can make our gardens more hedgehog friendly.

We now have some places available. 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



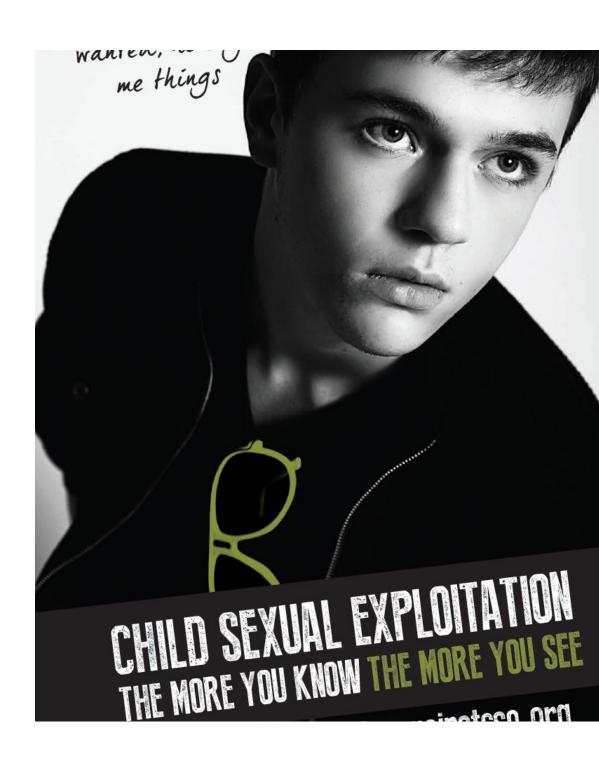
fantastic leader (pictured right) during session time on the number below for more information. We are open every morning from 9:15 till 12:15, and each Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon from 12:15 till 3:15 (term time only).

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, or visit www.meppershall-ps.co.uk to find out more about the Early Years Foundation Stage and exceptional care we offer.

Ofsted Registration Number: 219293

Registered Charity: 1031913





Parents, Grandparents, & Childminders are all welcome!

Angela's and Hayley's awesome efforts are going to be a tough act to follow, but Meppershall Tots is back for a fun autumn term under new management. Amanda & Wendy hope everyone had a good summer and are looking forward to seeing old friends and new this term.

We're looking for one or two volunteers to help us plan activities, set up and pack away, so if you would like to help shape Meppershall Tots, even if you can only commit part time, please get in touch with us as soon as possible. Without help, we may not be able to continue past 2015.

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

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 Amanda on 07973 425063 for more information.

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SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

RIP:

We were saddened to hear that

Karen Simkins passed away on the 18th February 2015, aged 54. Our condolences to Robin and the family.

Katy Scrase passed away on the 21st August 2015, aged 66. Our condolences to Graham.

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

The Messenger Team
would like to heartily
congratulate Amanda and
Wendy for taking the
Meppershall Tots forward

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COVERS BY REQUEST

Our cover picture this month was taken by Colette House and captures the splendour of a superb floral display to be found outside the Village Hall; just another example of the sterling work carried out by our very own Meppershall Garden Club.



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

Orla May Thomas who will be 6 on the 1st
Katie Johnson who will be 15 on the 1st
Samuel Derrick who will be 13 on the 2nd
Caitlin Saunders who will be 14 on the 3rd
Phoebe Brinkley who will be 7 on the 4th
Matthew Geneux who will be 15 on the 3rd
Megan Thomas who will be 3 on the 5th
Harry Plumley will be 8 on the 9th
Isabel Savuto who will be 10 on the 17th
Georgia Nesbitt who will be 13 on the 18th
Kitty Cullen who will be 10 on the 19th
Luke Merryweather who will be 11 on the 19th
Olivia Jones who will be 5 on the 20th
Dylan Woodcock who will be 13 on the 27th
Alexander Davies who will be 13 on the 28th

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

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

Church Road, off Campton Road, Meppershall

www.stmarysmeppershall.org.uk 🕆 facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall



Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

01462 339962 – ronigoodman@gmail.com – 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

Things to Watch Out For...

HARVEST – Sunday 4th October – please bring along your non-perishable items for the Food Bank.

SECOND SUNDAY STROLL – Sunday 11th October - a loop via the Cow Bridge and Shillington – returning to St Mary's for refreshments.

PET SERVICE – Sunday 18th October - bring your pets or a photo of them for a special blessing

SERVICE OF SPECIAL MEMORIES – Sunday 1st November – remembering those we have loved and lost – more information below.

REMEMBRANCE – Sunday 8th November

A Message from St Mary's...

I would like to begin by thanking those who braved rather a wet and windy afternoon to abseil their intrepid teddies from the tower into the donkey field. Although the weather wasn't great, those who came seemed to really enjoy chatting and singing together during the afternoon – and everyone was grateful, as I am, to those who provided the delicious cream teas.

On October 4th do join the Harvest Celebration in Church - giving thanks for the harvest and for the many good gifts of God. This year again please offer gifts of tinned, dried and non-perishable goods, to be shared with those in need via the local food bank.

As we move into Autumn proper, we are coming once again towards the feast of St Francis of Assisi. Francis gained a reputation for his tremendous compassion towards people struggling with illness and poverty. He encouraged many others to reach out with him to those in need. But Francis also saw animals as his brothers and sisters because they too were God's creatures, just like he was. Many stories survive of his great love of nature and of Francis as friend and protector of the animals. Pope John Paul II wrote "It is my hope that the inspiration of Saint Francis will help us to keep ever alive a sense of 'fraternity' with all those good and beautiful things which Almighty God has created."

In the true spirit of Saint Francis on Sunday 18th October we invite your pets to bring you (their owners!) along to praise God at our annual Pet Blessing Service. If you think your pet may not be comfortable in church - or if you want to remember a pet you have loved and lost - please bring a photo of them instead.

On 1st November at 6.30pm we will have our annual service of Special Memories. Please come to remember once again before God those you have loved and lost. We will be sending particular invitations to those families for whom we have been saddened but also privileged to conduct a funeral during the previous year. We warmly invite you to come, along with your family and friends. You are welcome to bring family photos or other small mementos with you to be displayed during the service. There will also be an opportunity for everyone to light a candle. It may be possible to include some favourite hymns, prayers or poems, and if this might be of interest then please let us know as soon as you can. If you want someone to be remembered, please add their name to the list available in church from Friday 24th October or email ronigoodman@gmail.com

And, looking ahead, there will of course be a Remembrance Day Service at St Mary's beginning at 10.45am on Sunday 8th November.

With best wishes, Rector Roni.

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

Date	Time	Service / Event		
Weds 30 th Sept	10.00am	Holy Communion		
Sun 4 th Oct 18 th after Trinity Harvest Festival	11.00am	Parish Communion and Harvest Service Bring food items to donate to the Food Bank; lunch/refreshments afterwards.		
Weds 7 th Oct	10.00am	Holy Communion		
Friday 9 th Oct	9.00-9.30pm	Silent Together – join friends, sit for a few minutes in the tranquillity of the church		
Sunday 11 th Oct 19 th after Trinity	8.30am 10.30am	Holy Communion Second Sunday Stroll - meet at the church gate for a loop walk of 3 miles via the Cow Bridge, Lower Gravenhurst and Shillington.		
Monday 12th Oct	7.45 for 8pm	The Bible Society – meet at 3 Pinhead, Shefford. Speaker: Audrey Brand (Reader at Campton) - Paul's letter to the Galatians		
Tuesday 13 th Oct	2-4pm	Rectory Tea – chat & a cuppa, all welcome		
Weds 14 th Oct	10.00am	Holy Communion		
Sunday 18 th Oct 20 th after Trinity	8.30am 11.00am	Holy Communion PET SERVICE - Bring your pet (or a photo) for a special blessing.		
Weds 21 st Oct	10.00am	Holy Communion		
Sat 24 th Oct	9 - 9.30am	Celtic Morning Prayer		
Sun 25 th Oct 21 st after Trinity	11.00am	Parish Communion		
Tuesday 27 th Oct	2-4pm	Rectory Tea – chat and a cuppa – all welcome		
Weds 28 th Oct	10.00am	Holy Communion		
Sun 1 st Nov 22 nd after Trinity	11.00am 11.00am 10.45am 6.30pm	Parish Communion and Harvest Service Junior Church at the School TeenTableTalk at the Rectory Service of Special Memories		
Weds 4 th Nov	10.00am	Holy Communion		
Sunday 8 th Nov Remembrance	10.45am	Service of Remembrance beginning in church to proceed to the War Memorial in the Churchyard		

JUNIOR CHURCH

The first Sunday of September seemed to arrive extremely quickly!

But of course, this meant that it was time to enjoy our annual Junior Church Nature Walk!

After a day of rain on the Saturday the only thing to do was pray for dry weather, and thankfully those prayers were answered!

The children heard a story in Church, and then the nature walk began.





We all enjoyed God's sunshine and the children had a wonderful time finding the trees, fruits and mini beasts from their lists, and more besides.

Finally, we all had much needed drinks and biscuits in the Church where the children were able to talk about their walk!

Our next Junior Church session will be on Sunday 4th October, if your child enjoyed Sparks and would like to try Junior Church please do come along and join us!

If you have any questions, please call Gillian on 850947.

FRENCH ONION SOUP SERVES 4

OCTOBER 2015

350g (12oz) onions, thinly sliced.
40g (1½ oz) butter.
900ml (1½) pint beef stock.
Salt and freshly ground pepper.
10 ml (2tsp dry sherry (optional).
4 slices French bread. Each 2.5 cm (1 inch) thick.
50g (2oz) English cheddar, grated.

METHOD

- 1.In a saucepan fry onions gently in butter until golden brown.
- 2. Put on stock and, season to taste.
- 3.Bring to boil, lower heat, cover and simmer for 45 minutes.
- 4.Add sherry. Pour into a flameproof soup bowls, float bread on top and sprinkle with cheese.
- 5. Brown under a hot grill and serve.

Recipes are kindly supplied each month by Brenda Putwain. Benda 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 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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Collating Dates for your Diaries								
<u>2015</u>				<u>2016</u>				
			January	25				
			February	29				
October	26		March	29	(Tuesday)			
November	30	Double	April	25				
December	None		May	31	(Tuesday)			

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.