



VE DAY

75TH ANNIVERSARY



**8th May
2020**



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Wild Cowslips, in St. Mary's Churchyard. Picture courtesy of John Chapman.

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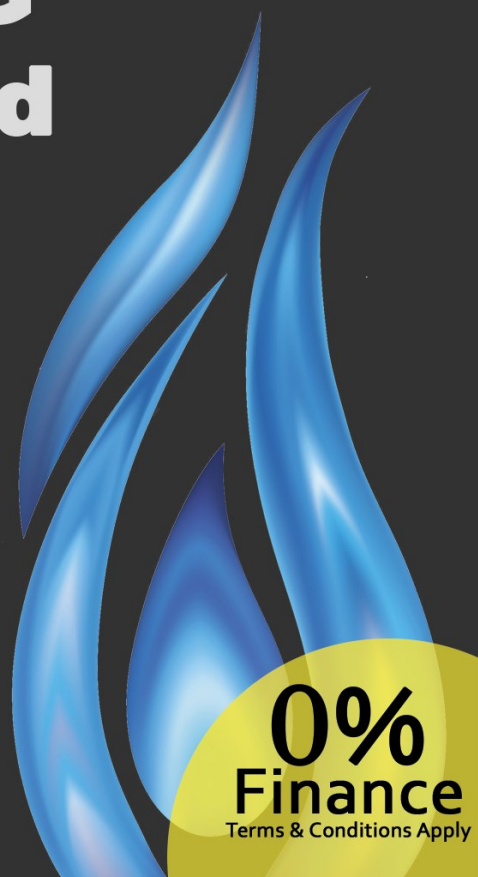
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Editorial by Mick Ridley and James Read

In years to come there is no doubt that the times we are living through will be taught in our schools. The decisions made by those in government will be analysed and judged, and the response of how we as a population coped, came together and I suspect were changed forever will be recorded.



Living in the village, it is heartening to see how we are all playing our part in supporting those who might be struggling or are isolated. The GNOMES (Meppershall Good Neighbours) are providing much needed contact for those in the village who might not see another soul for days. The Meppershall Craft Club made hearts for families split up through hospitalisation or mask adapters for health workers to prevent chafing.

It has been amazing to be part of the fantastic noise we all make on a Thursday evening to let those who are putting their lives on the line and providing the services that we all rely on, know that they are appreciated and we are thankful. There is a sense that a thread of community that perhaps does not always show itself in more normal times is coming to the fore across the whole country.

Whilst we are living through these historic times we must also turn our minds back 75 years on May 8th. This marks the end of World War II in Europe and the beginning of a peace that has lasted on this continent ever since. There are few left in this country that fought in that terrible war and even those who were too young to fight but can remember that time are now in their 80s. In these pages you will find some reminiscences of those that do remember or those passing on the stories of people now long dead but who should not be forgotten.

The war took a terrible toll on our country both in lives lost and people shattered by their experiences - suffered through fighting but also being separated from families, being bombed from on high or from the economic deprivation that was wrought.

However, as we are seeing now, the country drew together and people supported each other. They were simpler times in terms of the way that people learned their news and how they were able to entertain themselves. Children did not have the devices that we are all so reliant on now for play and entertainment. These more simple activities can bring equal joy and we have an article that details a few of them – why not give them a go with the younger members of your household to give them a break from the ever-present screen!

You will also find some ideas for turning your windows red, white and blue to mark the occasion. The Messenger team would love to see, alongside the many rainbows that have appeared, the village's windows displaying bunting and flags to celebrate and remember those that gave so much on May 8th.

Perhaps in a month like this, it is especially fitting to have the privilege of including the life story of Penny Trundle in the pages of this issue of The Meppershall Messenger. She and Mick were the essence of British village life in these parts and would have been at the heart of a national event such as VE Day 75. Thanks to Howard for the wonderful account of a very special and much missed lady.

From all of us at the Messenger, stay safe, stay well and we look forward to a time when we can get together as a village and celebrate together!

Letters to the Editors

From the editors... Recently, Captain Tom Moore has become a famous British figure because of his sponsored back-garden laps on his walking frame, raising many millions for the NHS. Captain Tom, a Bedfordshire resident, received many expressions of appreciation and we are pleased to confirm that one card came from Meppershall, on behalf of the whole village, kindly posted by Jean Holden. Thank you Jean!

Dear Editors,

Well done to you and your team for maintaining the monthly missive that is The Meppershall Messenger: thank you!

I was recently rummaging through some old photos from my parents collection (pre-digital of course) and came across the one attached. I think it must have been taken in about 1946, and I'm sure it is of a Meppershall cricket team, given some recognisable characters in it.



My father, Michael, is seated centre with blazer, and his apparent age is giving me a steer as to the date. He was a great lover of playing cricket. He was part of a Hexton team in the early years of the war, but told me that the team disbanded when there were ructions among villagers about precious rationed petrol being used for the mowing of the square when some players were travelling from outside the village to partake of 'their' sporting facilities!

I can recognise several of the characters and I hope that by publishing, some names will be forthcoming from aged memory archives!

Another photo, this time of Meppershall Sunday School, circa 1956-7. I think it must have been taken in the village school (a special event?) although we all met in the old (now demolished) Methodist Chapel on normal Sundays...



I'm not identifying which character is me!

Best Wishes,

Chris Foster

Meppershall Book Club

A year ago this month Annemarie started up a book club in The Walnut Tree Café at Meppershall Village Hall.

A huge thank you to Annemarie for keeping this group going, particularly during the current lockdown. Members continue to read selected books at home and are communicating electronically.

We look forward to a time when the club can once again meet together in their usual place.

Meppershall Parish Council

We are all being affected by the latest COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic and want to assure you that we are doing everything we can to support the efforts of local organisations helping vulnerable residents or those in self-isolation on top of our usual work and that created by the pandemic.

Due to the COVID-19 situation the Parish Council was forced to cancel its usual April meeting. However, the Government has now passed legislation that allows councils to conduct council meeting via video link. Therefore, our upcoming meeting on 11th May 2020 will be held this way.

Details of how the public can participate in the meeting will be available on our website www.meppershall.org at the beginning of May and we would welcome any questions or comments that residents would like to put to the council in advance of the meeting emailed to the Clerk at clerk@meppershall.org

Councillors and employees of the Council extend their best wishes to all residents during this uncertain time. Please keep safe and listen to the Government's updates on the news.

For the latest advice, visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Alessandra Marabese- Clerk to the Parish Council



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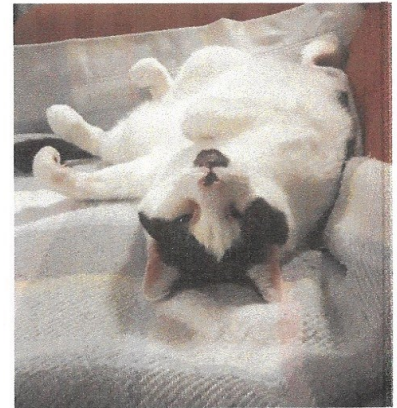
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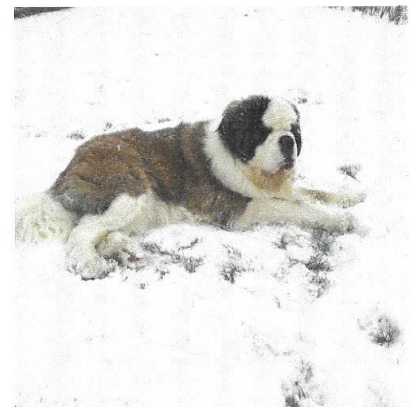


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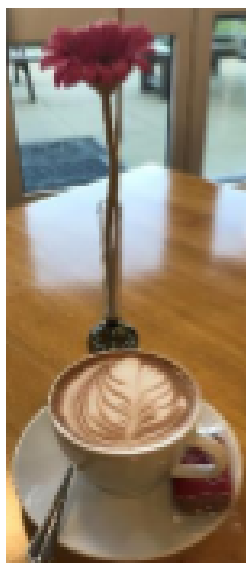
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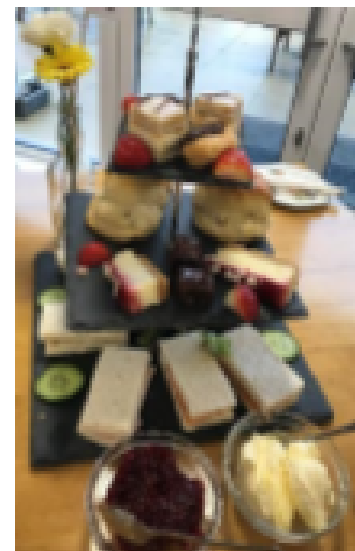
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CBC switches gears to combat COVID-19

Central Bedfordshire Council is re-focussing its resources and staff to help respond to the extraordinary demands created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In these unprecedented times the council's objectives are stark: to preserve lives, support the vulnerable and protect livelihoods.

The council is particularly helping those who are most vulnerable, those who don't have help from family, friends or others in the community. Where residents do not have access to these sources of support, contact the council via the website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/covidhelp or phone **0300 300 8900**.

Pending the mobilisation of a national scheme, the council has been arranging for emergency food supplies to those residents most at risk from grave consequences from the virus because of their underlying health conditions, and who have no one who can shop for them.

Because we're not living in normal times the council has had to take decisions to suspend some non-essential services such as the green waste and bulky waste collections in order to focus resources on much more critical services like black bin collections.

Residents can stay up to date with changes to council services through the council's website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/covidinfo and can sign up for automatic email alerts for when updates are made online. The council is also urging people to follow its social media channels on [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

Council Leader, Cllr James Jamieson, said: "We are having to respond very rapidly to these extraordinary times. This is the health emergency of our lifetimes and we're mobilising every resource we have as a council. It's an enormous effort and all of our staff have responded magnificently, as you'd expect. Staff from across the council are packing and delivering food parcels for the clinically vulnerable who must be shielded from the coronavirus while our adult services are working with the NHS to smooth and speed up discharges from hospital.

"But it is also time for us as community to step up too. There are lots of ways people can volunteer and help others. If people are unsure how they can get involved there is information on our website at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/covidvolunteer, or they can contact us through the website, and we'll channel them to the organisations who will be able to make the best use of their talents and experience.

"We should also rally around as neighbours. If anyone is worried about their neighbour, if they are vulnerable because they are elderly for example, and don't have access to friends and family to help them then let us know.

"And please do follow the advice on social distancing and stay at home wherever possible."

If you are concerned for a neighbour let the council know online by completing a form at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/covidhelp. If it is urgent, call us on 0300 300 8900 - this helpline is open 7 days a week (9am-4pm at the weekends).

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Part 1 - World War 2 Survivor – by Elsie Haestier

March 1938, the year I was born in the East End of London.

War was declared in September 1939 so life was a bit tricky! I was 18 months old, and my brother Ted was 6 weeks old, when we had to leave London because of the bombing. It was very dangerous to stay there.

We came to Luton by train and had to stay with a lady who kindly took us in until a house was found for us. My other 11 siblings were evacuated to different parts of the country. They thought it a big adventure: labels with their names pinned on their coats and a cloth bag or suitcase for personal belongings and a few sweets, one biscuit to eat on the journey. The authorities had to sort out where the families were going. Our parents were very upset at having to say goodbye - their children clinging to them and crying. It must have been very sad, especially for the mothers, but it had to be done.

During the years ahead, it was very bad in London. Buildings, shops and churches were all destroyed. People slept in the underground stations; but Londoners faced it all, sang songs and played instruments while planes were dropping bombs overhead! Much praise goes to the Home Guard and rescuers at these terrible times.

We survived it all – and thank God we did, as so many lives were lost. I am grateful that my family survived it all and went on to do much voluntary work for those less fortunate.

Part 2 - Hip, hip hooray – it's V.E. day! – by Elsie Lawrence

In 1945, I was 7 years when the war ended. I ran home from school and people were looking very happy. A boy told me that the war had ended and that meant no more going down into our air raid shelter and that we could take down the blackout curtains and put the lights on! No more wearing of gas masks!

Everyone seemed very happy and there was dancing and street parties all over town. Soldiers, sailors and airmen came home after fighting so bravely. Many didn't come home. My Mum took us to a party and we had spam sandwiches, rock cakes, jelly and ice-cream. There was music and dancing and all the shops opened – what joy! Food was still rationed but happier times were to come.

Evacuation 1939: From Southend to London to Meppershall

By Sam Melnick, WW2 People's War

We were on holiday at Southend, the date was August 31st 1939 when we saw placards announcing EVACUATION TOMORROW. Immediately we returned to our accommodation and while dad and my elder brother settled with the landlady and looked after the luggage, mum took me, sister and my other brother on the next train back to London.

Next morning we were all up early and made our way to our respective schools, I was to go with my sister's school, not my own, and so knew no one. Having marshalled at the school we were marched to Manor House Station and put on a tube train which took us to somewhere with very broken ground. Here were facilities for "relieving" ourselves but I was separated from my sister.

Next we were put on a train which took us to Biggleswade and then on a bus to our final destination - the village of Meppershall near Hitchin. At the village hall we were sat on one side while some locals on the other made their selections. Those that were left were then taken to various houses for billeting. I was taken to a thatched cottage and left with a Mr and Mrs King who had one daughter, one son having been killed at Gallipoli during the first war. At the village hall we were given a goodies bag which was taken from me together with my case in which I had some clothing and other personal articles. Some correspondence with my parents took place, presumably they were given some form of letter for this purpose. Letters to and from them and myself followed but as yet I could not read joined up writing.

The local school consisted of two or three classes and was run by the Church of England. As we were all Jewish it was not acceptable that we attended it and so, as we had a couple of the school teachers with us, school classes were held in a field - fortunately weather was fine all the time.

My hosts had some relatives in the nearby village of Shillington and we went there the following Sunday morning (September 3rd) after they had come home from church. On the way back we were told by the lady from next door (one of the few who had a wireless set) that war had been declared. After a few weeks my parents came to see me and told me the news about the other members of the family - the sister who was supposed to look after me had landed up in nearby Stotfold and being very homesick was taken back home after about a week. Meanwhile both my brothers who were at the Davenant Foundation School were at Chatteris in Cambridgeshire. After some nine weeks in Meppershall and there being no warlike activity in the capital I was taken home, spending my seventh birthday and indeed most of the war there.

Adapted from WW2 People's War - an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC. The archive can be found at bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar



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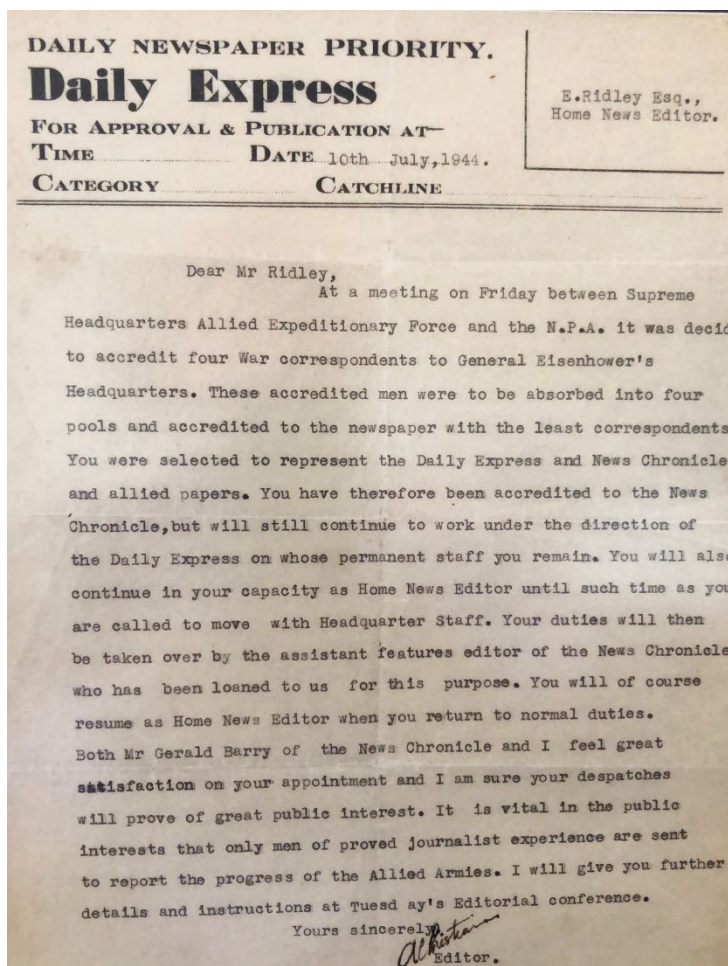
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Edwin Charles Henry Ridley – A Soldier and Journalist's Tale by Mick Ridley

Like so many, I never knew my grandfather, but his life has had a profound impact on my own. As my father likes to say – he was the one who broke the mould and was able to change the direction that his life was destined to take – born into a typical working class family in Hackney, he ended up becoming a respected journalist who fought in both World Wars and became one of a select band of journalists who reported the final months of the war on behalf of the country's press.

His story is so much more than the words that follow but I hope this gives a flavour of a life well-lived that was heartbreakingly cut short at the age of 48, leaving behind a young family. He also wrote a moving poem of his experiences at Dunkirk which conveys the sacrifice of those young men and a love for his country.

Edwin was one of a few people who served in both World Wars. In World War I he joined The Middlesex Regiment which led to him being taken prisoner and escaping. In World War II he joined the East Surrey Regiment and fought with the British Expeditionary Force and eventually Dunkirk after which he was discharged due to war wounds. Prior to World War II he started his journalistic career on the Evening Standard and later moved to the Daily Express as a reporter. He left in 1940 to enlist in the Army after volunteering for a commission in both the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy despite the fact that he was of an age where he was not required to do so. He joined the East Surrey Regiment obtaining the rank of Company Quarter Master Sergeant, aged 41. He was part of the British Expeditionary Force which was famously evacuated on June 4th 1940 - the inspiration for his poem.

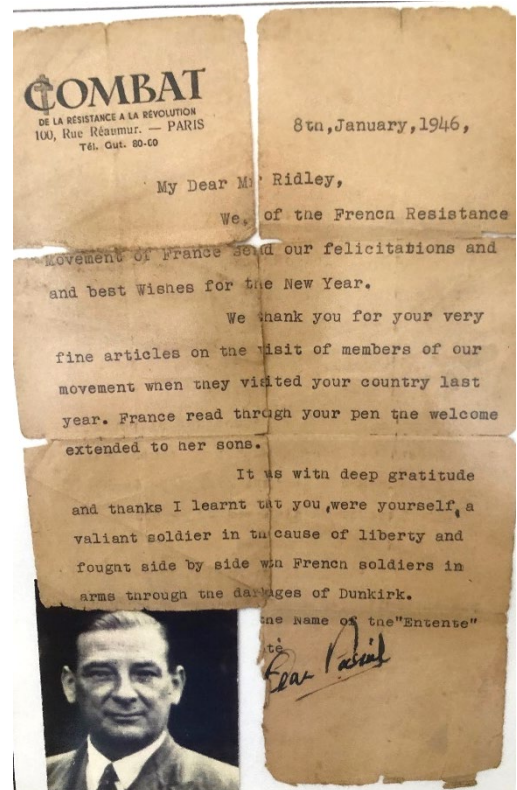


After a year of convalescence recovering from injuries sustained both during and after the Dunkirk evacuation, he returned to the Daily Express and was soon promoted to the position of Home News Editor where he remained until July 1944. During the War he was appointed Deputy Chairman of the National Press Committee. This committee was elected by members of the N.U.J. (National Union of Journalists) to represent the

national press in all negotiations with government for the handling of invasion news and investigation of censorship disputes. The government appointed Sir Robert Forsythe as ministerial advisor to the committee.

In July 1944 at a meeting between Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force and the N.P.A. (Newspaper Publishers Association) it was decided to accredit four War Correspondents to General Eisenhower's Headquarters. Arthur Christiansen, the editor of the Daily Express, nominated Edwin Ridley to be their representative for the Daily Express and the News Chronicle. His task was to report the progress of the Allied Armies for both papers.

After the War, he was offered his old position back as Home News Editor on the Daily Express. He was also offered the position of Chief Crime reporter for the News Chronicle which he accepted. He later moved on to be their Night News Editor, a position he held until he died in January 1948. As this was considered a result of war wounds, his wife received a full war widow's pension.



English and U.S. journalists discuss the Burma campaign with Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Commander in Chief, South East Asia Command. Edwin Ridley is circled.

Preface to Dunkirk Poem - The 1/6 East Surrey Regiment

The story I have to tell is not for glory, fame, or gain, but a story of how the East Surrey's lived up to their name. A story of a Territorial Regiment, Militia, Reservists, Bank Clerks, Business Men and many of kindred kind; who at the nations call filled the gap and became soldiers of the line.

Of how they fought and battered through Belgium and immortalised the name Dunkerque. Of heroism, sacrifice and endurance which even the Guards could not surpass. These were not soldiers, and did not lay claim to the name, they were only doing their duty as those in the past have done the same.

But honour has had reward, and now by Royal Warrant on the County Flag a fresh Battle name has been added - that of Dunkerque. So to that end I start my story in reverse, and like the bards of old tell you in verse the tale of Dunkerque.

Edwin Ridley

Dunkerque - June 1st 1940

We fought our way like heroes, from Brussels to the coast
So they said, and lets believe them, a betrayed and battered host.
We didn't fight for victory, or for glory, but for life
In every march was discipline there was coolness in the strife.
But, through all that bloody struggle, a star above us shone,
It was our nation's honour, upheld when hope was gone.

So after miles of hardship, twas in the dawn's grey murk
We battled through the shell fire, to the beaches of Dunkerque.
Before us stretched those beaches, bestrewn with kit and dead,
La Panne in flames behind us, Dunkerque ten miles ahead.
And in all that weary distance was no cover worth the name
And then like hordes of locusts, the German warplanes came.
Their guns aflame raked o'er us, we scattered neath their storm,
But ere the droning vanished the order came - 'Reform'.

Then on to face the bombers that 'pasted' Bray Les Dunes,
To see our shipping vanish to those missiles spiteful tune.
But they didn't pass unchallenged, for as they zoomed o'erhead,
From desperate men with rifles, they met a storm of lead.
So up in threes we mustered, and on tired blistered feet
We marched along the foreshore, asweat in the evening's heat.

Twas thus we entered Dunkerque, our goal in ruins stood
We couldn't smell the glory, we could only smell the blood,
Of those who'd gone before us, whose labours were in vain
For there in desolation, forsaken lay the slain.

The final phase, the greatest test, before us lay the 'Mole'.
And down it weary warriors trudged towards the ships, their goal.
It lay just a ribbon, just holding four abreast,
Without a scrap of cover we stood there on the crest.
As we stood and waited our turn to go aboard
Oh God, we made a target, our only Shield, the Lord.

God must have compassion, as in the flame-lit dark
Although the jerry shelled us he seldom made his mark.
And so by light of morning, we made the Dover roads
Set foot at last in England, the land of curious codes,
Which made others brand us madmen - but then they're blind,
For the battle had been won for us - by those we left behind,

We were just the lucky ones, we'd played a risky game
And fought a rear-guard action, which bore unheard of fame
For cut off, part surrounded, starving, weary, short of guns,
Of men and ammunition, we had left for our sons sons
The story of a miracle - A truth we almost doubt
Of how by God's great mercy, the BEF fought out.
And now we rest in England, Whose smiling acres roll
And the care of many thankful hearts, revives a shattered soul.





Turn Your Window Red, White and Blue for VE Day 75

VE Day this year is going to be different for us all. Many plans that were made have had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While our situation isn't quite as bad as what the WWII generation went through, there are many similarities. Some families are separated, some families have lost loved ones, some families are suffering financially; all similar to the affect that WWII had on our Country – The United Kingdom.

Our National Flag is a symbol of unity being a combination of the flags of St George (England) St Andrew (Scotland) and St Patrick (Ireland). As it did during WWII, the Country has seen a similar spirit that kept everyone going during the war. We are all in this together.

On VE Day, Friday 8th May 2020 it is the 75th Anniversary of the formal acceptance by the Allies of World War II of Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces. Many soldiers began returning home shortly after, many more didn't return until much later and many more did not return at all. Millions of lives were changed forever.

In a show of Unity, Remembrance, Respect, Commemoration and Celebration the South East Midlands British Legion are asking you to turn your window Red, White and Blue on 8th May 2020. Take a picture of your window and send it to sturton@britishlegion.org.uk (Beds and Herts), ktobin@britishlegion.org.uk (Oxon and Northants) or jstrange@britishlegion.org.uk (Berks and Bucks). Each photograph will be posted to the South East Midlands Royal British Legion Facebook page.

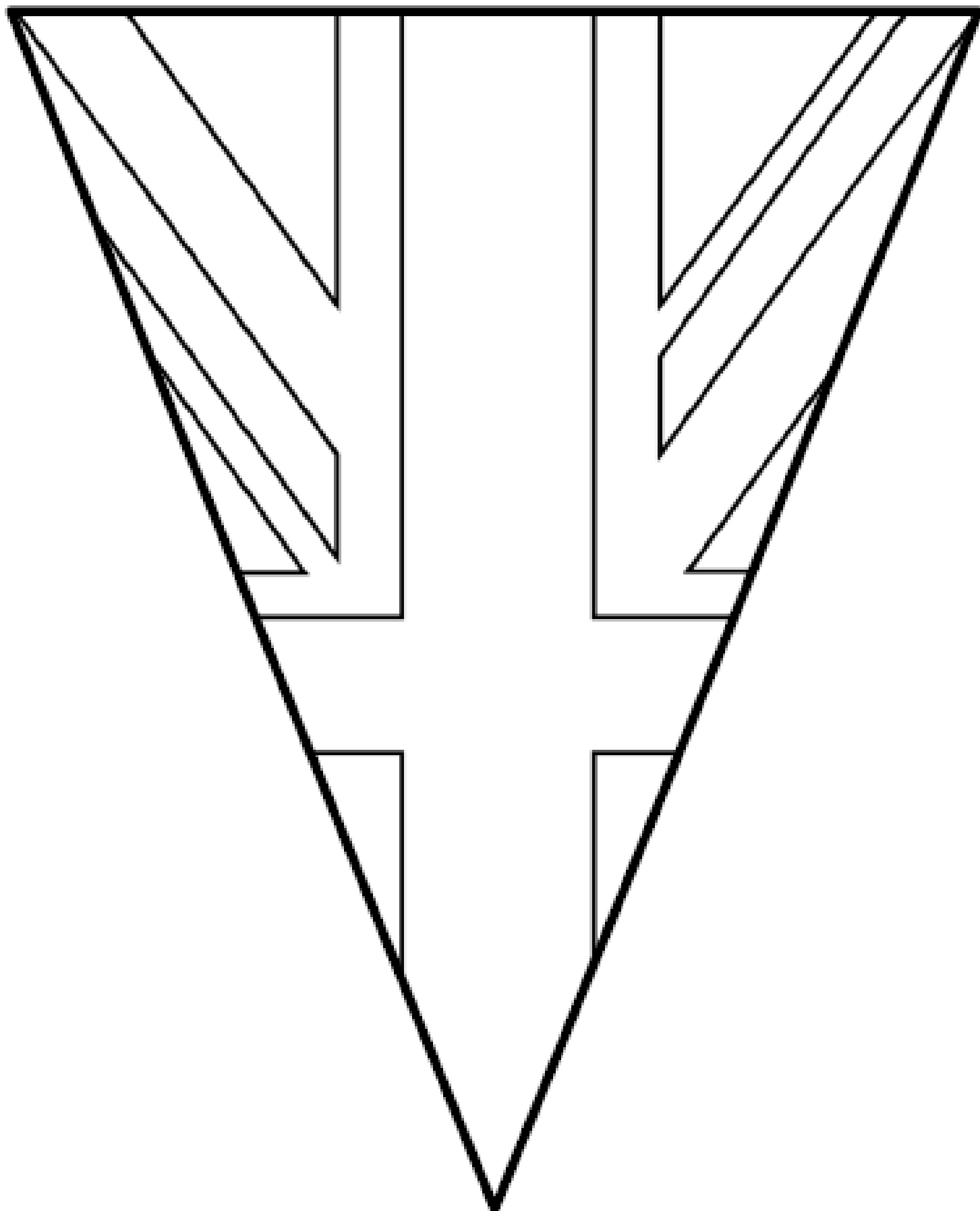
Let's turn Facebook red, white and blue and show that we appreciate and support those who went and never came back and those who went but came back to a different world as different people.

On the following pages, you will find some blank Union Jack bunting shapes. Can you colour them in with felt pens or pencils, paint them or use any craft items that you may have? Perhaps get the whole family to join in and make it a crafting day for your children...

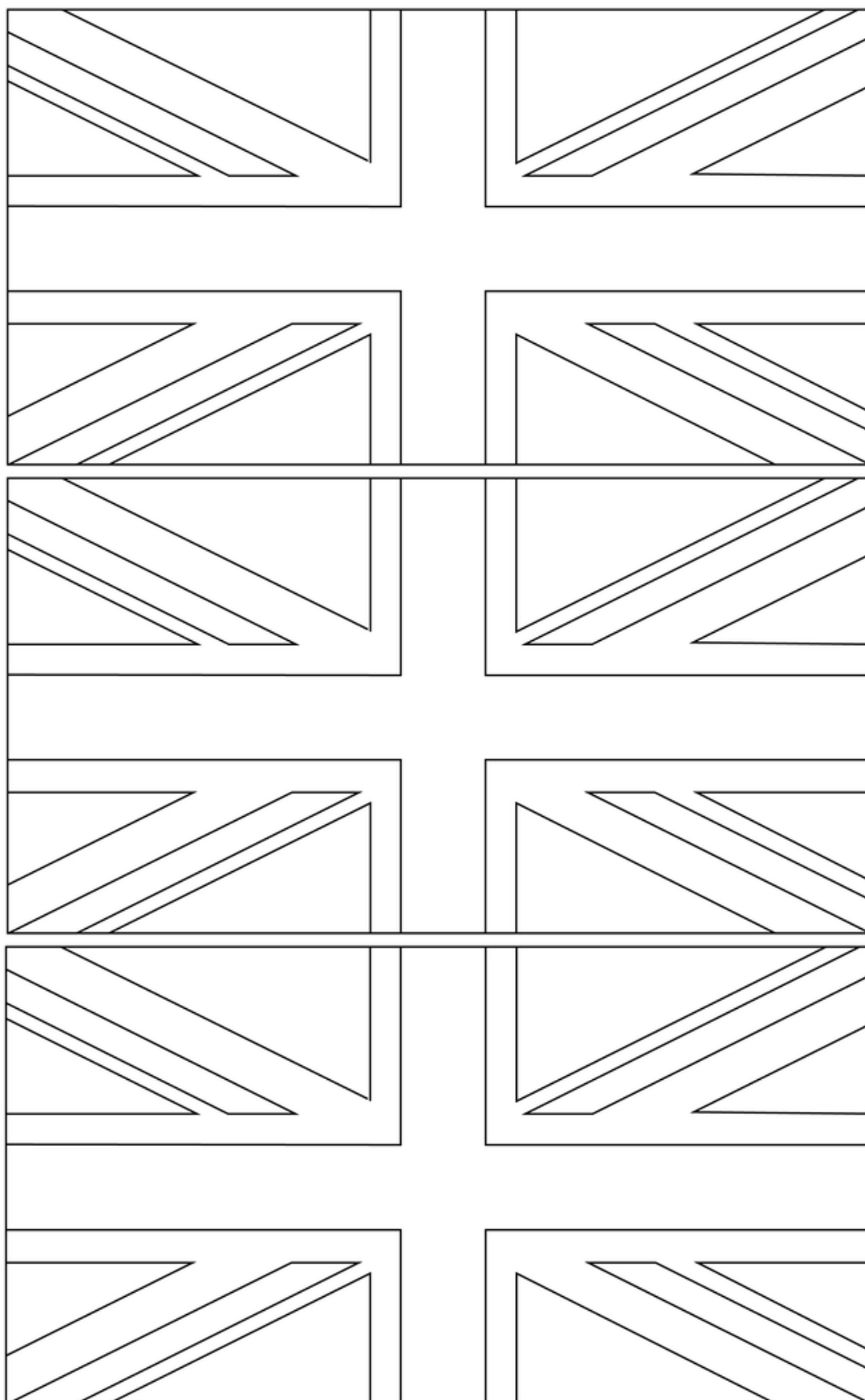
Further on you will find information for Children about WWII and other activities you can get them to do as well as a WWII recipe that really is simple. We hope that you enjoy what we have put together for you and your families.

As it was in WWII – We are all in this together – Stay Safe and Keep Smiling 😊

When you print and cut out the shapes for the bunting, leave a 1cm edge above the top line of the frame so that it can be wrapped over string and glue down on the other side. Use whatever size you want to or mix them up for a different effect.

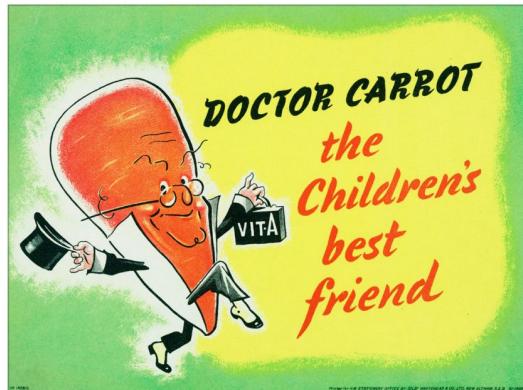


Here's are some Union Flags. Why not print it from our online (PDF) edition? Leave a 2cm space on the left of the flag when you cut it out... Wrap it around a straw or a skewer and glue it to make a flag for your little ones to wave!



World War II – Recipes and Games

During World War II – food was rationed and what little food people had, needed to last a long while. During the war there were 2 Character's created – Potato Pete and Doctor Carrot.



Potato Pete even had his own recipe book. One of the easiest recipes from this book is Potato Piglets. This fed 6 people during the war.

All you need is: 6 medium, well scrubbed potatoes
 6 Skinned Sausages
 Cooked Cabbage lightly chopped

Method: Remove the centre of the potato with an apple corer, so that the potato has a circle all the way through.
 Fill the centre of the potato with the sausage meat and bake in the oven as you would a normal baked potato.
 Serve it on a bed of the cooked cabbage.

During the war, the parts of the potato that were removed, were then used to add to soup. No food went to waste. Children didn't have lollipops or ice creams during the war, as these were rationed. What they did have were Carrots. Many Children didn't get Easter Eggs, instead they got Carrots on sticks. See the picture below – this was a children's treat at the time. Imagine not having chocolate.



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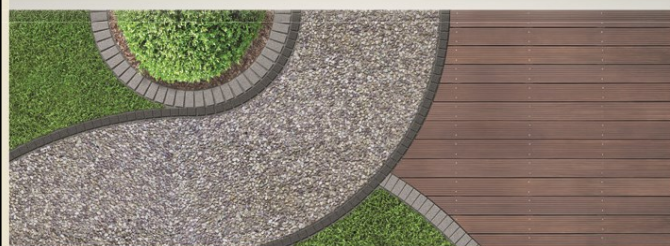
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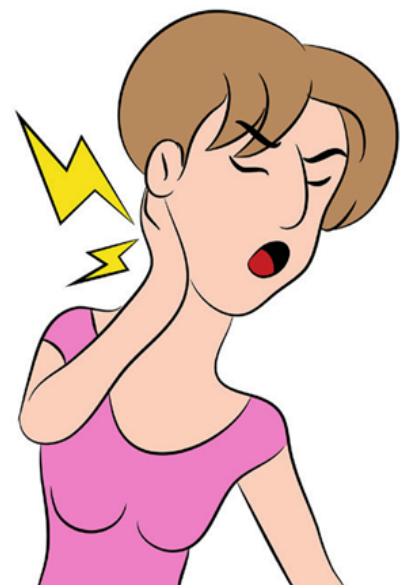
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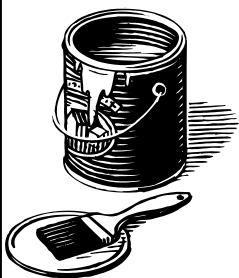
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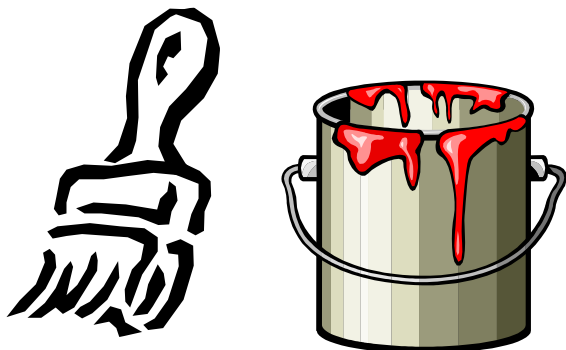
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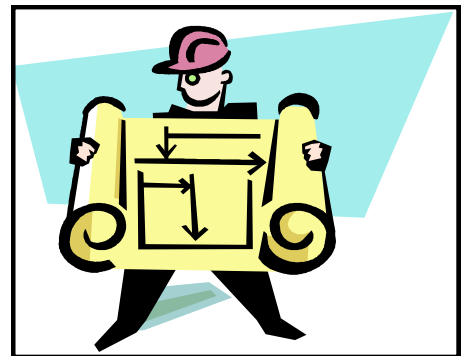
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So, the next time your Mum or Dad tell you to eat your carrots – just think that carrots were once a treat for Children during WWII. Also, remember what Doctor Carrot said – he’s the children’s best friend because carrots are good for you.

Some of the games that children played in the 1940’s were really simple things. There weren’t many toys around in those days.



They collected ‘**Conkers**’ that had fallen from the Horse Chestnut trees and took off the shells to reveal the shiny brown conker. Then they got an adult to poke a hole through the centre of the conker and threaded a string through it. The game of Conkers simply involved two players taking it in turns to try to hit the other's conker and smash it to smithereens! One child would

dangle their conker on its string at about chest height. The other would line up their own conker with the string taut and would get one attempt to hit and damage the other. If a conker managed to smash another off its string, it became a "one-er" then a "two-er" and eventually a "king-er".



Jacks were another popular game – they consisted of a small red ball and some jacks. To decide who goes first, use a method of “flipping”; place the jacks in cupped hands, flip them to the back of the hands, then back to cupped hands. The player who holds the most jacks goes first. That player scatters the jacks into the playing area with a throw from one hand. The first round, “Onesies,” means that the

player throws the ball in the air and picks up one jack then grabs the ball after it bounces once. The player must pick up all jacks this way without missing the jack or letting the ball bounce more than once. If that happens, it becomes the other player’s turn and the first player is back to the beginning of Onesies. If all the jacks are picked up successfully, the player moves on to Twosies (pick up 2 jacks per throw), then Threesies, and so on. The winning player is the one to pick up the largest number of jacks at once to get to the highest round.

Another game was **Red Light, Green Light**.

One person is chosen to be ‘It’ (the traffic light) and he/she stands a good distance away from the other players (5+ metres) with his back to them. The other players stand in a line facing It.

When It calls ‘Green Light,’ the other players move towards him until he spins around, calling ‘Red Light.’ When they hear the red light command the other players must freeze on the spot. Any child seen moving must return to the starting line. The children must remain frozen until the next ‘Green Light’ command is given.

Play continues in this manner until someone reaches and tags it. The tagger becomes the new it and the game begins again.

Can you imagine not having computers, Xbox's, iPads or even a TV and having to make up your own games? That's what all children in the 1940's had to do. Aren't we lucky now? We have so much more than those children and their families ever had.

GNOMES (Meppershall Good Neighbours)

A Key Village Organisation At This Time



At the time of writing the country is to continue with lockdown restrictions.

Whatever stage we are at when you read this be assured the we (the GNOMES) are still around and willing to help where we can.

Following a Parish Council initiative, we have an additional band of volunteers (many thanks to them for giving up their time) at the service of those vulnerable or alone in our village. Whatever your need, just call us, if we cannot help then we would try our best to find someone or some organization that could.

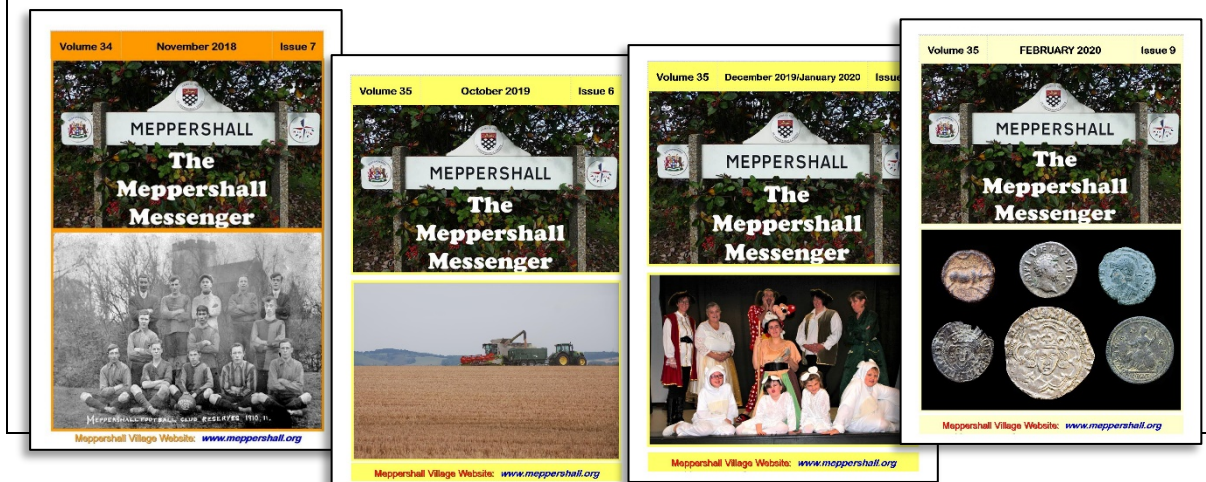
Our number has not changed it remains **07760 793921**. We have not been too pressed with requests which, we believe, is due to neighbour rallying around neighbour. This is fantastic for it means that although we have to keep apart we have become a closer community.

Please keep an eye out for those around you and should you think they need help, but you are unable to give it, please call the GNOMES. **07760 793921**

Can You Help? (Your village magazine needs you!)

We are fortunate to have a very lively and successful village magazine - but we need more help! Do you have spare time to help print, collate individual copies, make deliveries or contribute writing, marketing, photography, writing or other skills...? We need all of that, and more!

Email us at mepp.messenger@gmail.com or see our contact info at the back of this issue. We'd love to meet you! Get involved! It's fun!



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Message from St Mary's

Hello everyone,

These are such strange times. Some are experiencing the very worst of the things that they hoped with every fibre of their being would never happen... fear, anxiety, loneliness, unemployment, sickness and death. And it is the job of all of us to love them, support them, help them, stand alongside them and pray for them as best we can in these circumstances.

These circumstances, this current crisis, however unexpected and unwanted - as Tearfund reflects - are giving rise to a new sense of community:

"There is the potential for communities to come together more than ever before; for families to re-discover themselves; for busy people to slow down and build a rhythm of rest into their lives; for people to reconnect with God and his world; for nations to re-tune into God's word; for churches to learn how to use digital technology to enhance ministry; and for us to develop more local, environmentally-friendly economies.

"One day, we will make it out of this crisis. But what sort of world do we want there to be on the other side? Can we repent of the world we have created, and instead look to build one without such a huge gap between rich and poor – a world where we live in harmony with creation, in which we understand that the well-being of one is bound up with the well-being of all?"

In the terrible pain and confusion around us, there are already so many signs of hope, so many new possibilities, so much new vision and redirected energy. There are so many lovely examples of generous caring on our news - and in the stories circulating in our village. So even as we pray, let us listen and look for the ways in which we can be the answer to our own prayers...

Eternal Friend,
 You are my ever present help in times of trouble
 May your presence be peace to me,
 Your promises fuel faith in me
 and your purpose be fulfilled in me
 throughout the day to come. Amen. *Prayer by 24-7 Prayer*

It is really strange to be writing “from” Church when in fact the doors of our building remain firmly closed. However the living church - its people - remain definitely open for business.

We have had to adapt very quickly up a steep learning curve - to new technologies and new ways of being church together even though we are apart.

I invite you to our LIVE services each day at ‘9and9’ on the website and Facebook. Morning prayer is based on the Lectio 365 24-7 Prayer App (Google “Lectio365” to find it) and evening prayer is from the Church of England Daily Prayer App. Install both, for free, to your phone if you are interested.

You are also welcome to our Sunday services at 10.30 LIVE - now with an Order of Service download link and Family Activities on the website and Facebook. These can be emailed to you or hand delivered if you do not have the technology. A Podcast of our Sermon and Hymn is also uploaded – you can listen and subscribe or just use a local phone number if you don’t use the internet: **01462 559112**.

Please [click here for our Facebook page](#); [here for our website](#); and [here for our YouTube channel](#).

James and Miriam are singing a ‘Hymn of the Week’ with beautiful video accompaniment for contemplation and delight on our sites. Keith and Ruth are doing a superb job keeping in touch with our elderly Rectory Teas group.

Also for those of you who would like to know that you are being prayed for specifically and/or by name - we have a small group of intercessors who will continue to pray **confidentially** for those who ask for prayers. If being held in prayer in that way is something you would like, please talk to Roni 339962 / 07533376880 or Chris Valentine 07701 039324.

As I said last month, we are blessed to have the wonderful GNOMES in our village, and you are welcome also to contact the Church via Rector Roni if you think we can be of any help, if you would like to be added to our email list, or if you would like a call from time to time to see that all is well.

Be safe, be well

And God bless you –

Rector Roni.

Penelope Trundle 3/8/1940 – 17/3/2020 by son, Howard

Michael & Penelope Trundle, Mick & Penny to those who know them, arrived in Meppershall on the 12th September 1970. They had purchased a five-acre smallholding in Shefford Road and began putting down roots, making them part of the very fabric of the village for the next fifty years.

Penelope Dudley was born at home in August 1940 and brought up in Folly Lane in Caddington near Luton. She attended the village school and passed the Eleven Plus, winning a place at Luton High School for Girls. As a child, she was an active member of the Girl Guides with overseas trips to Holland and Switzerland, gaining skills to be able to survive adult life. In 1957, she graduated from school and started work with Hunting Aircraft, at Luton Airport, as a laboratory assistant. Shortly after, Hunting's started an apprenticeship scheme for women and Mum was the first to qualify, beginning in the workshops and then moving on to design. Female apprentices in engineering were, of course, rare at that time however, in 1961, she was to be successful in being awarded the BAC Portal Silver Medal of Achievement along with an HNC and moved into the drawing office at BAC Ltd, the new owners of Hunting's. Mum worked on the design of a new and what was to become a very successful airliner, the BAC 1-11, an aircraft that retired only twelve months ago!

Also in 1957 Penny met and struck up a relationship with Michael Trundle, also of Caddington. The romance did not last but, when in 1959 Dad enlisted for the Royal Navy, Mum asked to keep in touch. Following three years of correspondence from across the world they were married in October 1962 at Caddington Parish Church and set up home in Folly Lane; literally two doors down from where she was born! Five more years of working at BAC ended when the patter of tiny feet from their son was to be heard in the house and Mum gave up work to be a full-time housewife and mother for almost the next twenty years!

Dad had a long-standing desire to do something with agriculture and so it was that the residence at Shefford Road was viewed and purchased with a plan to develop a commercial business in something to do with livestock. As the old adage states, "Behind Every Good Man is a Great Woman" and the ensuing years have very much proven this many times especially where my parents are concerned. This was very much a braun and brains partnership, but Mum had just as much braun as she had brains - the first hay harvest in 1971 saw them both carting bales in a Silver Cross pram chassis! They were still carting bales in 2016 but using more mechanical methods by this time. Although the dream of a business in agriculture did not come to fruition and the escape from the rat race did not materialise, they made a determined effort. Almost every farm animal, except goats, found a home at Shefford Road at some point. A single cow provided milk for the table night and morning and, of course, a calf was produced every year which was either sold for breeding or ended up in the freezer along with many sides of pork and lamb. At these times, the work required to deal with the produce increased greatly, and I clearly remember arriving home from school to see Harry the butcher wielding his cleaver above a side of an animal on the kitchen table (when this was still allowed) and Mum working hard to get it all bagged up ready for delivery to their loyal customers. For many years the run up to Christmas meant an incredible amount of work as Mum and Dad reared approximately fifty "capons" (sterilised cockerels) for the Christmas table. They would set up a labour intensive production line where Dad would wring the birds'

necks and Mum would set to, first plucking and then dressing the birds ready for delivery and the oven. There was certainly a sigh of relief on our Christmas Day, knowing that all the work was done and they could relax and enjoy a day off (the cow still had to be milked though!). The smallholding was always Dad's hobby but he could not have been so successful with the amount of different types of animals, along with growing corn and hay for feed, without the unwavering love and support from Mum. The legacy continues today and Red Poll cows can, of course, still be seen at Shefford Road.

As many Meppershall residents will know, another of Dad's hobbies was the Meppershall Players, and, although Mum wasn't on the stage she was very much involved. Most often she would be found on "Front of House" on production nights and when it was panto season she was responsible for many of the costumes that Dad wore. Believe it or not, outfits for Shirley Temple or Humpty Dumpty are a bit difficult to find off the peg for a six foot, nine inch male frame! She was a keen dressmaker and made many of her own clothes over the years, and in her sewing room we have found masses of material and in excess of one hundred zips that she saved for future projects – she never threw anything away!

Soon after arriving in the village, Mum joined the Women's Institute. This was a very big part of the rest of her life as being a stay at home mum was much more common in those days, she needed a diversion for herself. Being a trained engineer Mum was very good with numbers and was for many years the treasurer, but also being interested in various crafts the WI gave her an outlet for developing many craft skills. Jam making was the obvious one, but she could turn her hand to everything from basket weaving to lacemaking and demonstrated her rush work to Her Majesty the Queen at the WI Life and Leisure event held at Olympia in 1984. In 1982 Mum became President of Meppershall WI, something that she entered in to with much trepidation. As with everything else, she was determined to work hard for the good of the organisation and right up until she died she was still treasurer for the Country Market at Shefford which started as the WI Market back in the seventies.

From about 1987, her duties as a fulltime mother had ended and although the smallholding was still active, various new regulations meant that costs for processing and handling fresh meat started to rise making the different streams of produce start to become unviable. The capons at Christmas stopped when the chemical used to sterilise the cockerels was banned in the UK. Mum and Dad had become active members of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and decided to concentrate on one animal and one breed; the beautiful Red Poll cows that you see in the fields today. As part of the Red Poll Society they were active in breeding a small pedigree herd known as the Mepshall Red Polls, and helped to revive old blood lines of ancient Red Poll herds using their own expertise. Of course, this would have been a relatively expensive pastime and so Mum sought employment with the Royal Mail and became the Meppershall Post Lady. For almost ten years she could be seen biking to the Shefford sorting office every morning and then back up the hill with a loaded bike to deliver the mail – such an incredibly important job which we all take for granted.

From an early age Mum loved to sing, she had a clear soprano voice and regularly sang in school and church choir. Once at Meppershall, she did not sing as often – all the other activities saw to that – but once she was released from parent duties in the early nineties, they both joined the Putteridge Gilbert & Sullivan Society and singing once again became a regular pastime. Mum was never keen to be the centre of attention, she rarely sang solo and

the G&S Society was, as with most other things, something that they did together. This changed when Mum joined Pasque Harmony, now known as Caritas Ladies Choir, based in Luton and once again she had an outlet for her creativity in her own right. Actively singing right to the end of her life Mum led the congregation at Meppershall church for Christmas 2019 for what was to be her last ever time. As she prepared to sing the first solo verse of Once in Royal David's City from the pews I said, "Do you need a note from the organ?", she looked at me indignantly and said, "No, of course I don't need a note"!

Together for over sixty years, Mum and Dad's was as strong a partnership as one could wish to find. Dad was always the outgoing one, ready to talk at length, tell a joke and have a laugh with anyone and everyone, but he would have been lost without Mum. Mum had incredible inner strength and determination, could turn her hand to pretty much anything and never gave up. She used to say that Dad was always in charge but they were both in charge in their different ways, they couldn't have worked so well otherwise.

The operative word in the saying is not "Behind" but "Beside" Every Good Man is a Great Woman, which was certainly true in the case of Mick & Penny Trundle!

Together Again

Together, that's how I remember You,
Always there, always around,
Where there was one, the other always to be found.

As years passed, I grew and grew and,
through thick and thin, who kept together? You.
When cross words were traded and all seemed bad,
You were always there in the end.

Always by our side, never a question,
Strong and reassuring, never in doubt.

You never stopped, right 'til the end,
Your devotion was unwavering.

Hardly a day went by for sixty years,
Always together, both.

'Til the day it came to an end,
As all things do.

Your fate intervened, then,
It didn't take long for You to decide too.

Together, that's how I remember You,
So many years; happy and sad, tears and laughter,
And now, of course, You are both Together Again.

<p>We are planning a Celebration of Life for Mum on Saturday 1st August 2020 (subject to COVID19 lockdown restrictions), with a service at St Mary's and a gathering after at 7, Shefford Road. Everybody who knew my parents is welcome to attend, more details to follow.</p>

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Meppershall Craft Club – During Lockdown

Just like everyone else our members are adjusting to the current way of life. We are so very lucky to have such a friendly, caring & sharing group.

We are keeping busy doing our bit making useful things for local hospitals, care homes etc. Our current 'production line' includes:

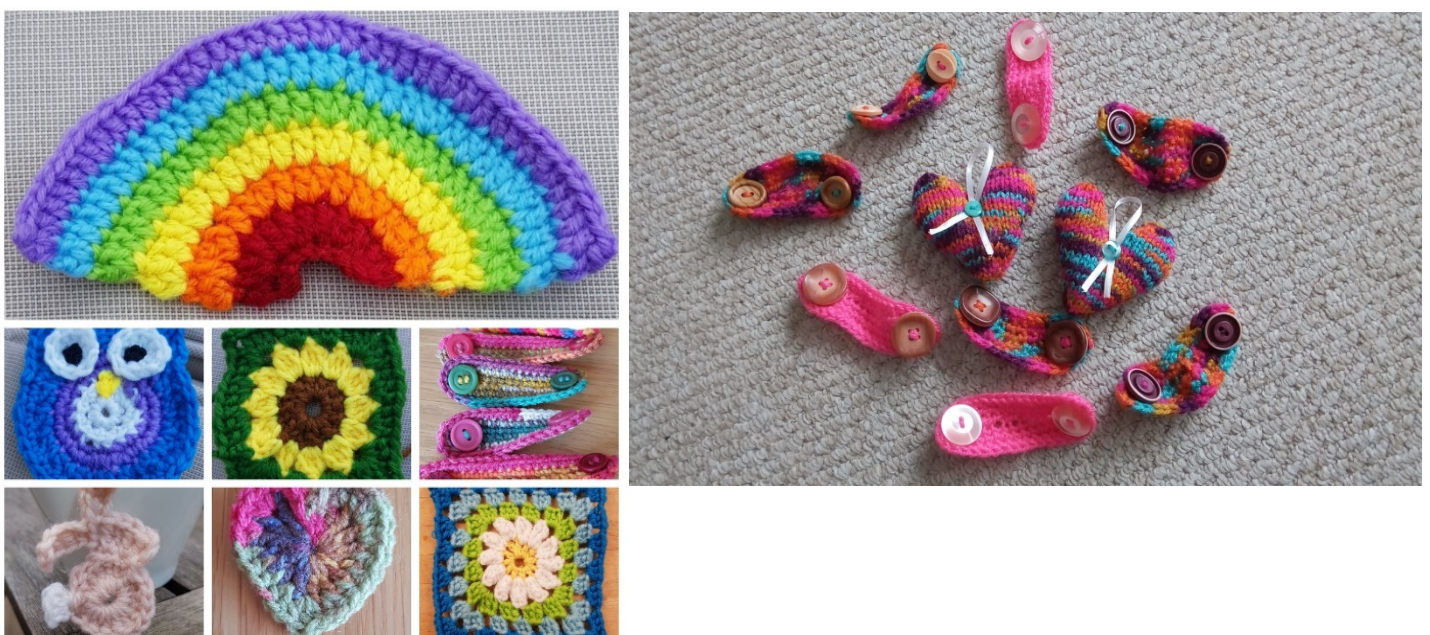
- Knitted hearts - two identical hearts are sent to hospitals. These are handed out, one to an isolated patient and the other to the family at home.
- Knitted or Crochet Mask adapters which staff can use to reduce the chafing when wearing a mask for hours each day.
- Uniform Draw bags for staff to bring home their uniforms. These can be placed directly into the washing machine.

In addition to the above, members are keeping busy doing jigsaw puzzles, gardening and working on various other crafts.

We are keeping in touch by various means including telephone calls, our facebook page and our WhatsApp group where we share ideas, crafts and light hearted humour.

Most recently we have welcomed two new members electronically! We all so look forward to meeting them at The Meppershall Village Hall once our regular meetings are able to start again.

Kim, Lorraine & Diane on behalf of the Meppershall Craft Club.





The Meppershall Players at S.T.M.A.



Well! Talk about the best laid plans! Just as well we didn't have a crystal ball, and if we did we'd never have believed it. But are the Players down hearted.....? Well, maybe just a teeny, weeny bit. We were so looking forward to performing our V.E Production, "When the Lights Go On Again", a new musical play written especially for the 75th Anniversary this month. Alas, due to global circumstances we have had to postpone it. "Oh no!" I hear you cry. But do not be despondent. Once the STMA is open once more we will reschedule this production in all its glory. "Hurrah" I hear you cheer. Unfortunately, we don't know when that will be, but as soon as we know so will you.

Although not able to meet up in our usual Monday evening group meetings, we are all learning our lines and songs, and catching up with one another via Face book on our closed group page for our members. So for now our meetings at 7.30pm on Monday evenings at the S.T.M.A are suspended until further notice. But rest assured the Players will be back and ready to welcome any new members who want to join in the fun of any or all aspects of theatrical performances

We are still looking for a piano player to play for our V.E production, if you love to play piano, we'd love to hear from you. Interested? Contact Karen on the number below.

"When the Lights go on Again" V.E Musical Play at S.T.M.A to be rescheduled

Sat 5th December Aladdin Pantomime at STMA (fingers crossed)

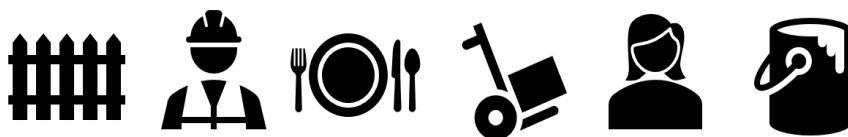
Sat 12th December Aladdin Pantomime at TBC (fingers crossed)

You can find the Meppershall Players on Face book (Meppershall Players Community), Insta-gram and Twitter

The Players usually meet Monday evenings 7.30pm-10pm at Shefford Town Memorial Hall (suspended at present). Membership is currently free and we welcome people to indulge in all areas of theatrical performances, set building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance, etc. Interested? We look forward to meeting you.

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336

Let's Hear It For The Advertisers!



When it comes to looking for good local services, tradespeople and businesses – look first in The Meppershall Messenger. We are proud to carry advertising from a range of local contacts supplying a wide variety of goods and services in our area and **who are often part of the community**. Why not try them out?

Take a moment NOW to look through the useful ads in the centre section and also in the colour section.

Diary of an Allotment by Zoe Cox

Shortly after moving into our new house we took on an allotment. That was 21 years ago!

We have had the normal highs and low of keeping an allotment. We had the first year's enthusiasm and managed to get ourselves the courgette glut that comes with planting up too many. The novelty then wore off and we struggled some years to even keep the weeds down - and then slowly we took control. Each year has its own story.



Some years a crop will grow well and then the following year the same crop will fail and you can't fathom out why. Some crops will always do well for you however much you neglect them (potatoes) and some crops stubbornly refuse to work even if you give them all your love and attention and you can see other people can grow the same crop successfully (peas). Other crops are a one-time-wonder and you can never repeat the success (Brussel Sprouts) and some crops are just good and reliable if you do the basic minimum (onions).

Some years are good years and others are not because life gets in the way. New jobs, exams, old jobs going wrong, new baby, illnesses, training for marathon in the spring and other life events all happen at crucial times for the allotment and in those years you sigh and let the allotment go. You hope your neighbouring plot holders will forgive you for being a weed factory and promise yourself next year will be different. The great thing about the allotment is that every year is a fresh start and every year you can wipe the slate clean, put your mistakes behind you and - with high hopes - plan for better results. There aren't many situations in life where you can do that so easily and quickly.

Other years, the lack of time consuming events mean you can devote time to the allotment and it looks good. Other people admire your plot and you can smile, lean on your spade and with the look of an old vegetable growing sage impart your wisdom to others. This year is obviously one of those years (respecting social distancing) so due to lockdown we have a plot that looks like a supermodel on a catwalk. The greenhouse is bulging with plants to go out as soon as the risk of frost has passed. The optimism in the allotment has been a great antidote for the anxiety around us all and we have felt lucky to have something to occupy our time.

Most years we have had at least one thing to put on the table and it feels good that you have grown this thing of beauty yourselves. Some crops taste so much better than shop-bought ones that you wonder how it is possible for some commercial growers to breed out taste when that should be the main requirement (tomatoes and strawberries being an example).

So if you are inspired to take on an allotment what are my top tips? Take on a starter plot which is smaller and more manageable. Dig up a couple of vegetable beds and get those under control. Cover or mow the rest of the plot to keep the weeds down. When you are ready add another bed to your growing area. You will find great encouragement from other plot holders. Soon enough you will outgrow your plot and be looking for a bigger one or another one!



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Shefford Leisure Group by Enid Pamment

Springtime is so pretty, shrubs and trees are coming to life and the willow trees are beginning to look rather beautiful delicately swaying in the breeze. The lawn mowers are out all ready for lawn cutting during the Summer months. I am trying to ponder on happy times and try not to think of the terrible plight regardless of age or gender we are all in now.



I am sure many of you will remember Mary Lowe who sadly passed away in Lister Hospital on Tuesday 7th April. Mary was originally in our group and kindly offered to help me – that was over 15 years ago and during that time we became great friends, one of the family. We are living in such tragic times that only a few people were able to attend her funeral. Fortunately Mary has a niece who is dealing with everything for her.

Mary had been cared for at Halcyon Days, Graveley - where my husband had been for two years. Terry (my husband) was taken unwell on the 8th April and sent to Lister Hospital where he died on 11th April of Pneumonia. At least neither one is in pain, at rest in a much less hastled world than the one we are living in at the moment.

When I wrote this report last month, we were looking forward to our cruise holiday on the River Seine, meeting our ship in Paris. We had to wait until the last moment to know if our holiday was cancelled, naturally we were all disappointed but at least we were not stuck mid way. We just had to unpack our suitcases and return them to the loft until another time!!

Day trips which were arranged for late April and early June have been transferred to dates in September but even then it has been done with tongue in cheek as it may have to be moved again, possibly to next year. I do have my fingers crossed that the Warner's weekend break in September will go ahead, there is nothing at the moment to say it should be transferred. I will of course be in touch immediately should anything transpire. In the meantime, I am still taking bookings for this weekend.

As you know London theatres are currently closed but some may re-open in September, of course this depends on the safety issue.

Depending on any new rules that are brought into force, hopefully the Hunstanton trip will take place, but of course cannot promise anything until nearer the date.

I know this seems all 'doom and gloom' but the main object is to keep safe; don't take risks - look after each other.

Thank you all for your support and the next newsletter will be available in September (hopefully). Keep safe, keep away from trouble and enjoy the sunshine.

Take care, Enid xx

In Memoriam

Our condolences to the family and friends of John Winter of Shefford Road who has died aged 96.

Terry Pamment very sadly passed away unexpectedly in Lister Hospital on Saturday 11th April after a short illness.

Terry was born in Letchworth where he grew up attending the Letchworth Garden City Grammar School. From the age of 8 years, he loved motor cars and when allowed (or could get away with it) he would take the controls of his father's car, driving it over the local fields. Terry worked in a Letchworth garage after leaving college in the garage motor reception and spare parts division of which later he became a director. After Terry retired he still dabbled in selling the occasional car or escorting a prospective buyer to purchase a new vehicle. It would not have been a first time Terry sold my car before I got home!!

Letchworth Garden City & Baldock Lions were his love and he had the job of 'fund raiser' which he did exceedingly well. He loved his football and knew all the players and their history, also a Wolves supporter! Animals were his passion and had the opportunity to handle some of the animals, including feeding the wolves in their enclosure. A devoted and dedicated member of our family, he will be greatly missed.

The family of Terry would like to thank everyone for their kindness shown to us during this tragic time. Thank you all for your beautiful cards and messages of sympathy. Your friendship and sincerity are treasured.

Enid, Sharon, Dave and Alison.

The whole Messenger team sends deepest condolences to Enid, Sharon, Dave and Alison on the very sad loss of Terry.

Birthdays

May birthday greetings to our readers...

Ken Male

Doreen Pritchard

Mary Mitchell

Gordon Dew

Fifi Simkins

Tony Primett (early June)

'TRUGS & TROWELS' Gardening Club

*"The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature;
To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul"*

— Alfred Austin

I would like to wish all members of 'Trugs and Trowels' well and hope you are enjoying this lovely weather in your gardens. It is an uncertain and worrying time now, but we are blessed by having outdoor space to enjoy. Regular gardening club meetings will return when this horrible virus has been contained; please remain safe and well. Details of forthcoming meetings will be published as soon as this becomes possible.

For more information, please contact... Maryika 01462 851729



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Informal cancer group for patients, families, friends, carers who wish to meet others for support & information. We usually meet on the first Saturday of every month.

However, due to Covid-19 lockdown, we are continuing to provide support via telephone on an ongoing basis. We are in the process of setting up an online 'group meet' and individually for those who wish to connect during this difficult time.

We'd love to talk to you! Daksha & Phil Trivedi,

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Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604). Also operating in Northern Ireland



In light of the current epidemic Wanderbus services are currently suspended. The Wanderbus team will continue to review the situation over the coming weeks.

Bedford Model Engineering Society Summerfield Miniature Railway
Off the A600 just past Haynes Turn

In light of the epidemic social distancing advice, public running days at the miniature railway are postponed and we will publish further information in future editions of The Meppershall Messenger. Please refer to **www.bedfordmes.co.uk**.



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Shefford Pharmacy	
Shefford Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive	01462 818633

Police Emergency 999, non-emergency 101

Report crime online at www.bedfordshire.police.uk/report

Hospitals

Bedford Hospital	01234 355122
Lister Hospital, Stevenage	01438 314333

Utilities

Gas Emergency	0800 111999
Anglian Water	03457 145145
Electrical (power cuts, overhead cable down etc)	0800 838838

Central Beds Council 0300 300 8301

CBC councillors:

Tony Brown	anthony.brown@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Mark Liddiard	mark.liddiard@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Meppershall Parish Council

Parish Council Clerk Alessandro Marabese clerk@meppershall.org

Member of Parliament

Nadine Dorries dorriesn@parliament.uk

St Marys Church

Rev. Veronica Goodman, The Rectory, Church Road 01462 339962
(see the church section of The Meppershall Messenger for full details)

Library

High St, Shefford 0300 300 8067
Opening times: Tues - Fri 9am – 6pm, Sat 9am – 4pm, closed Mon & Sun

Whitbread Wanderbus Service

Stephanie Kirby thewanderbus@gmail.com

Shops

Village Stores, newspapers, Post Office, High Street 01462 811252
Rogers Bakery, High Street 01462 813398
Mobile Fish & Chips, Tuesdays 3.30 -7.00, Sugar Loaf car park

Schools

Meppershall Academy, High Street 01462 813293
Meppershall Pre School (Village Hall) Tamsin Osborn 07816 357159
meppershallps@gmail.com
Robert Bloomfield Academy, Shefford 01462 628800
Samuel Whitbread Academy, Shefford 01462 629900
Etonbury Academy, Stotfold 01462 730391
Henlow Academy 01462 813733
Redborne Upper School, Ampthill 01525 404462

Organisations

Meppershall Players Karen Mitchell 01462 816366
Meppershall Good Neighbours (GNOMES) 07760 793921
Meppershall Brownies, Suzanne Brightwell 07817 392325
Shefford Guides, Angie Griffiths 07957 462519
Shefford Scout Group (Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers)
Kathy Georgiou 01462 629313

The Team and Collation Dates

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editor welcomes contributions to the Messenger, whether as letters, articles or notices. Contributions should preferably be as attachments to e-mail (address below) but handwritten contributions may be sent by post, or left 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 2020			
June Issue	May 26 th (Tues)	October Issue	Sept 28 th
July Issue	June 29th	November Issue	October 26 th
August-Sept Issue	July 27th	Dec-Jan Issue	Nov 30th
Please contact Colette to confirm arrangements (contact information above).			

Please note that dates in the above table USUALLY show when collating will take place, at 2.30pm in the Sugar Loaf, for the corresponding month, displayed to the left. The issue being collated usually relates to the following month. However during the coronavirus social distancing measures, our collation procedures have changed and we will review our plans for the printed magazine in line with government guidance.