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Editorial by James Read



Preparation is everything! Compiling this month's village magazine, I was struck by how many amazing things people are doing across village life. In all these things, making a plan and preparing well are crucial! What are you planning this autumn, and next year?

Our cover shows the very beautiful, very clever knitted model of the church created by Helen and Chris Valentine. Read more about how it was created later in this issue. As wonderful as it is to look at (please go and have a look in

the church!) I am equally awestruck by the planning needed - the underlying materials, the stitches and wool colours chosen. Many people give time to drive the life of our Parish Church. It was wonderful to see the historic renovations celebrated in village events last month, the knitted church a centrepiece.

You can't just 'pop off' to Norway in your camper van. That takes some planning too. If you want to make it to the arctic circle, check the map and make sure you are road-legal for that spectacular country. Denis and Ruth tell us their story of a remarkable journey over several pages later in this issue. Thank you for such an interesting story.

Speaking of the Arctic circle, our festive, reindeer-powered, red-robed, bearded visitor is already making his plans for a visit to rural Bedfordshire. **The Meppershall Christmas tree will be lit at a special event (note brief road closures) on Saturday 29th November.** An excellent event last year, a large, happy crowd came to share in a special village moment and we expect no less this year. Thanks to Meppershall Parish Council and its partners. They need some of our help and are appealing for volunteer marshals to keep everyone safe and well organised. There is also a plan again this year to muster a small choir to encourage some enthusiastic carol singing!

Financial planning helps build you a better future – and we are, as always, grateful to Paul Savuto for his personal finance info later in this issue. The challenges facing the nation's finances are, ultimately, our challenges. Nobody else is paying for it. But with some planning, you can ensure you make the right choices for your long-term future.

This is a joyous issue of the magazine, so we resisted too much worry about planning applications and development proposals. In fact, it was joyous to see the village galvanized into petitions and objections including hundreds of people, to make their views known about a proposal from a local landowner to build on the open field adjacent to the church – the only clear view of the newly renovated historic building, a water-logged location at the heart of the church conservation area. Everyone hopes common sense will prevail. The privilege of owning land includes being a custodian and curator of things far more important than property and financial wealth.

On that note, I end with an ask that you consider honouring the fallen, in the tranquillity of the churchyard alongside that very field, at Meppershall's Act of Remembrance on Sunday 9th November, 10.45AM. In a busy world, with so much to be grateful for, remember that some gave – and continue to give – everything in the name of peace and security for our country. Stopping and remembering them is a small gesture for this ultimate sacrifice. To those who serve today – some in uniform, some not – thank you. We see you, we recognise what you do. And we will remember them.

Letters

Dear Editor,

Taylors Close Trees

Neighbours in Taylors Close have been really upset with the "Plum tree vandalised" letter in last month's issue of The Meppershall Messenger. The pruning was done by expert tree surgeons from Central Beds Council. We did not know they were coming but managed to talk to them before they trimmed the cherry trees. It was done in an attempt to SAVE the trees, drastic though it may seem! We wait every spring for the pink blossoms of the plum tree entwined with the white blossoms of the mirabel tree at the bottom of Taylor's Close. And of course the Taylor's Close Cherry Blossom viewing picnic will take place in 2026, even though there may be fewer branches.

Taylors Close Residents

Other feedback received regarding last month's letter has indicated that the tree work in question was done to assist the long-term health of the tree, as well as managing impacts on buildings and improving safety of the pavement and road (restoring visibility left and right at the junction of Taylor's Close and High Street).

Dear Editor,

I recently completed my dissertation as part of my Masters studies with the London School of Economics. This involved research through conversations with people using and running social media and other local communication in Meppershall. My most sincere gratitude is to the people and spaces that make Meppershall such an incredible place to visit and live. Thank you for your participation and for the support throughout this research project. I also want to acknowledge my partner and his loving family who have taken me in without question and given me a true home away from home in the UK. Thank you for showing me the meaning and beauty in village life. I also want to acknowledge my academic advisor, Charlie Beckett, whose wealth of knowledge of local news environments throughout the UK never ceased to amaze me and spark new ideas for my research project. I will share a further summary of my research in a forthcoming issue of The Meppershall Messenger.

Gillian Rawling

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Did you know that as well as printing 1,100 Messengers each month, the Messenger team can also help with commercial printing services? Didn't think so!

Using our high-quality printer, we can provide a wide variety of print services for local businesses and organisations. We're certainly local, we're always helpful, and we try to be competitive too. Prices start at just 3p per A4 page (single-sided, B&W), and 14p single-sided A4 in colour. Other printing services available include 2-sided printing, and leaflet or booklet printing. For further information, email us at

meppershallmessenger@meppershall.org



Meppershall Christmas Tree Switch On Festivities

2:00pm to 4:00pm - Family Film - Elf

Film free to all on a first come first serve basis

Childrens' goodies bags available on the day

5:00pm - Lights Switch On with Santa and Christmas Carols

5:30pm - Competition Winner presentation

5:30pm to 7:00pm - Santa's Grotto

Free gift to all under 12's

6:00pm to 8:00pm - Childrens' Karaoke

Food served between 6:00pm to 8:00pm

8:00pm til late Mark and Adam

All events held at Meppershall Village Hall (Lights Switch on Walnut Tree Way)

WE NEED
YOUR HELP



Volunteer Marshalls
needed for Meppershall
Christmas Tree Light
Switch On

When: Saturday 29th November 2025

Time: 4:20pm to 5:45pm

No training needed just attendance at pre-event briefing.

To volunteer email:

lovemeppershall@meppershall.org

Meppershall's Christmas Tree Lights Switch on *Competition*



**Guess the
number
of lights**

Meppershall's Christmas Tree will be lit from 29th November.

Make your best guess to how many lights will adorn the Christmas tree, then submit your guess on 29th November on our competition board in the Village Hall entrance.

The closest three guesses will win a prize!

Hint: The star counts as one light!

Prizes donated by Meppershall Messenger.

Competition rules: Competition open to all children 16 and under. One guess per child.

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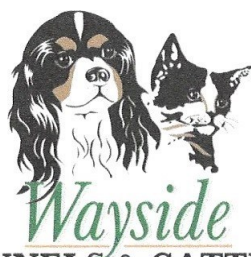
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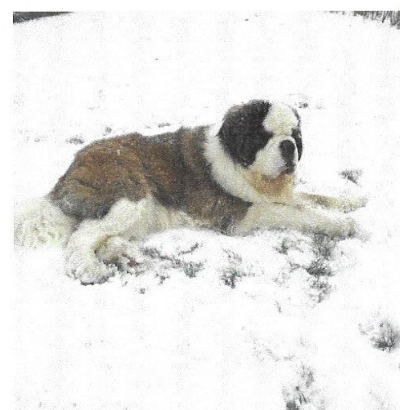
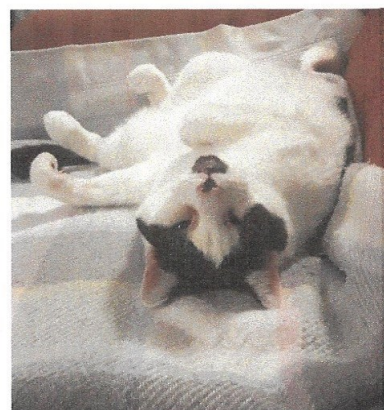


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Knitted Church Celebrates Historic Renovations

Our Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Meppershall, recently celebrated the completion of renovation works, extending over several years. The church held a special public event on Saturday 11th October, and Bishop Richard of Bedford visited on Sunday 12th October. A spectacular knitted model of the church took pride of place and beautifully reflected the incredible architecture of this historic building.



Helen Valentine is the needle-genius behind this woolly creation and we got the chance to ask her all about it.

“My inspiration for the ‘knitted church’ project came after seeing a knitted model of the parish church whilst visiting Louth in Lincolnshire” said Helen. “Chris, my husband, built a base model to scale from hardboard and timber. I knitted the wall/roof coverings section by section, as-and-when time allowed and then added the windows, doors and other details that make St. Mary’s unique.

“It was an interesting project as there was no pattern and I had to rely on photographs and visiting the church to check particular features. For those who are familiar with knitting, I used a range of stitches - both knit and purl variations - together with seeded rib check, quaker ridge, basket rib and moss stitch with some crochet stitches. The work was finished in June this year. By this time, the major restoration works to St Mary’s were reaching completion and it was decided to use the knitted church during St. Mary’s weekend celebration to promote our prayer to help grow our church community.”

“Come to St. Mary’s,” invites Helen. “It is open every day, to view the church restoration and the knitted church. And you would be very welcome to join us on a Sunday when we meet at 11.00am.”

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Booking before visiting CBC recycling centres is now essential. It is easy to do online and it helps to manage demand and costs and it helps make dump trips as smooth as possible. 50,000 bookings made in August alone.

Automated barriers are now in place at each recycling centre and they only open if you've made a booking. Initially there will also be staff on hand to help. The barriers recognise number plates, so be sure to have that info correct when you make your booking.

CBC says booking is quick, free and helps reduce queues. It also ensures that CBC resources are focused on serving Central Bedfordshire residents and not people from other council areas.

Village Recipe: Berry Cereal Bars

Adapted from “DK The Gluten Free Cookbook -Breakfast Berry Bars.”

Ingredients

397g can sweetened condensed milk

300g mixed dried fruit (100g chopped apricots, 100g sultanas, 100g cranberries)

200g granola

160g rolled oats



Method

1. Preheat oven 160C (150C fan oven) Gas Mark 3.
2. Line 23 x 33cm rectangular baking tin.
3. Weigh all the dry ingredients into a large mixing bowl.
4. Gently heat condensed milk in large heavy based saucepan, and slowly bring to the boil.
5. Remove from the heat add in the dry ingredients to the saucepan using a wooden spoon and mix well.
6. Spread mixture in prepared tin, then level the surface with a wetted spoon.
7. Bake cereal bar in preheated oven. Turn off oven and leave cereal bar in oven for further 5 mins.
8. Remove cereal bar from the oven, cool in tin for at least 5 mins, before dividing cereal bar into 16 pieces.
9. Leave cereal bar in tin to cool completely.
10. Transfer cereals to an airtight storage container.

The bars can be stored successfully for 7 days.

Notes

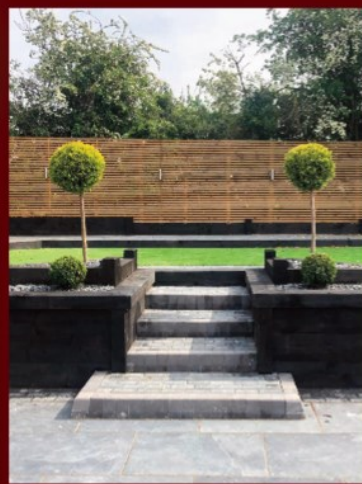
This cereal bar recipe can be easily adapted to suit dietary needs and/or preferences.

Examples of ways you could alter the recipe:

- On a gluten free diet use GF oats and Granola
- Remember dried fruits mix should add up to 300g. Dried fruits could include cranberries, blueberries sultanas, raisins and chopped apricots.
- Cereal part of bar should add up to 360g. If desired some of cereal part could be replaced with eg Hazelnuts or seeds like pumpkin, or sunflower.

***Do you have a much-loved recipe that you think our readers might want to try?
Please let us know (mepp.messenger@gmail.com) – we’d love to share it here!***

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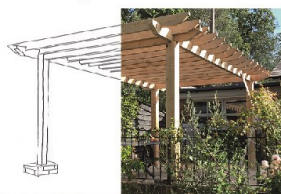
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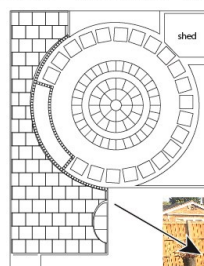
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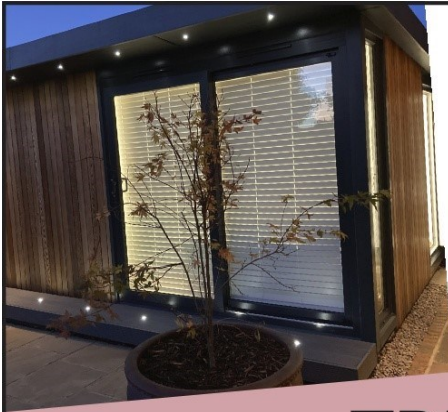
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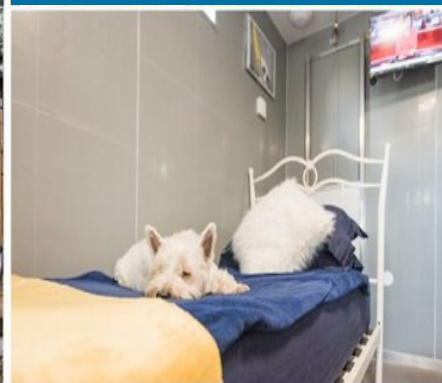
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Dawn's Isle Of Wight Trek For Keech Hospice

In 2023 my mum was sadly diagnosed with an aggressive and terminal cancer. She required constant care and, as anyone knows who has found themselves in that situation, times were tough - especially with 4 children at home as well.

All hospices do amazing work, but Keech Hospice helped our family at a crucial time providing symptom control for mum, and family support for us. I will be forever appreciative.

Hospices only receive around 30% of their funds from the government and so they rely on fundraising and donations to be able to run. You may have seen an emotional post from our local Garden House Hospice recently, drawing attention to the current funding crisis for hospices.

So when Keech announced a fundraising trek around the Isle of Wight, I knew I wanted to help raise funds for them and also attempt the personal challenge for me.

I'd never walked that far or done anything like that, so I had to train and get fitter! A group of 19 of us covered 62 miles over 5 days, sticking as close as we could to the coastal paths around the island, with some diversions due to coastal erosion. Some of the group worked for the hospice, others had lost children or parents, some just wanted a challenge. The weather was beautiful and the views incredible, up until the last day when the rains rained and the wind blew all day. We got to the high point and couldn't actually tell if the needles were there or not as the weather was as so bad!

It was a tough challenge for me. On the morning of day three I woke up not knowing how I could walk any more - but support from my fellow trekkers, and amazing friends kept me going. I'm pleased to say that I've raised over £2000 and the trek raised over £37,000 for Keech.

So I want to say a massive thank you to everyone who supported me, cheered me on and prayed for me, I'm so grateful. It's not too late to sponsor me if you'd like to! Here is the link:
<https://keech.enthuse.com/pf/dawn-abbatt>.

Dawn xx



Two Meppershall Mugs To Norway And Back by Denis Nielson



It all started with a phone call from our eldest grandson very early in 2024. He usually phones us when he is bored and walking from the underground to his flat in north London after work. This time his news was different.

“Ingrid (Norwegian girlfriend) and I have got engaged and we are to be married in July next year!” “Great,” we say, “Congratulations to you both.” He replies, “Thank you, the wedding will be an open air ceremony on the island of Krokholmen in Norway which used to be a fish-drying factory but is now hired out as a holiday retreat or function venue. It is very remote, and you can only get to it by boat.”

The island, it turns out, is among many small ones just off the coast from Bodo, way up north beyond the arctic circle. This prompted many questions covering what the weather might be like at that time of the year, does it get chilly in the evening and where can we be accommodated? The answers were that the daily temperature would be around 17 to 18 C, dropping to around 10C at night, so a cardigan or light coat might be sensible. As for accommodation, a bunk house was available on the island itself or, alternatively, B&B on another island, a 5 or 6 minute boat ride from Krokholmen, named Sorarnoy which itself is accessible from Bodo by regular ferry.

The planning began and it soon became apparent that we could not all go together as a family group because of work constraints and other matters. We had an old dog that was blind and deaf and was unable to settle in places he did not know, so wherever we took him we could not leave him alone. So, our decision was made for us. We would go in our campervan (6m x2m) take our dog and make a holiday of it; complete with two Meppershall mugs in our crockery cupboard (PICTURE 1).



Although it is restricted in size, our campervan does us fine (PICTURE 2). It has a lounge which converts to a king size bed, ensuite with shower, wash-hand basin and toilet, and a kitchen area comprising sink, with hot and cold water, plus a three burner gas cooker with both oven and grill - so we want for nothing. We did not intend to rush the journey and broke it up into stages of no further than 200 miles per day. Estimated length of trip: 3 weeks to get up to the wedding venue and 4 weeks to return home. The family for their part decided to make the trip into a summer holiday of at least a week, which they went ahead and arranged. Over the

following months many hours were spent poring over travel books and the internet in order to decide what was suitable for everyone. We quickly realised that many of Norway's beauty spots are in the mountains with walking and climbing being the highlighted pursuits. As we are in our mid to late 80's we knew that such activities would not be possible for us, so we decided to visit as many accessible places as possible and look around these. This proved to be a winner.

Another stage of the discussion process centred on what to wear, both at the wedding and for the remainder of the stay. Taking into account historical weather data for Scandinavia it appeared that July in the Arctic region would be similar to September here at home. One thing that appeared certain was that there would be rain. So lightish clothes for the day but jumpers/cardigans for the evening - and don't forget the raincoat! How wrong that all turned out to be!

In October of 2024 our little dog's health deteriorated and we had to say goodbye. We contemplated changing our travel plans but eventually decided that we could have a longer holiday and see more of Norway if we used the campervan. With that decision made, we settled on a route which took us through Holland and Germany then into Norway. The ferries were booked and all that remained was to wait for our departure date in July 2025 to come around.

Around May 2025 we started preparing for the trip. To give the van a good test run we went to Scotland and toured around the western isles, especially Mull, cut across the country to Dundee, then headed south and home. A trip of some 1200 miles, two thirds of the distance to Bodo. All went well and all systems worked. Filled with confidence we eagerly looked forward to the trip.

The packing of the camper did not take very long and by American Independence Day we were almost ready to roll. Just the final tweaks: checking we had the our passports, European health cards, travel insurance, vehicle documents, ferry tickets, travel books



and road map. The final check was that we had our bank cards. All checked and on board we set off for Harwich late afternoon on 7th July for the 2200 sailing to the Hook of Holland.

The night crossing to the Hook of Holland was absolutely fine, the North sea was calm. Once we had cleared the outskirts of Rotterdam we were able to make timely progress to our first night stop at Haslunne in Germany. The following day, our campsite was 30 miles south of Kiel and the following morning we had a leisurely drive to Kiel ferry port to catch our Color Line ferry to Oslo (PICTURE 3).

Although it is a vehicle ferry, its cabins, food options, entertainment, and décor

resemble those of a cruise ship. The trip length was 20 hours which surprisingly went very quickly. Disembarking in Oslo took a while but once on our way we were at the mercy of our Sat Nav to get us to our campsite. All of a sudden, we were introduced to the Oslo traffic and had to be very aware of cyclists and electric scooters as well as standard road vehicles. Fortunately, we did not encounter the trams! We found out,

when we had got settled on site, that we had incurred a toll charge for using the ring road. Norway is noted for its tolls and we were prepared for this. We had a device on our vehicle windscreen which communicated with the varying electronic traffic sensors and sent our details through to an agency which then billed us periodically. This worked very well throughout the entire trip.

We spent 3 days in Oslo and went everywhere on public transport, bus, tram and ferry. All very efficient with timetables, tickets, and directions of how to get to the nearest stop, all on an app. The mobile phone became the lifeline. Temperatures, like the UK, were very unseasonable. We were in the 30+ range so it was very tiring walking



around. Thank goodness for the museums which enabled us to get out of the heat. Our favourite museum was the Nobel Peace Prize Museum. Highly informative and thought provoking, closely followed by the Kon Tiki exhibition. This exhibition contains the original balsa wood raft, used by Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl, and tells you all about how he and his crew in 1947 sailed from South America across the Pacific Ocean to Polynesia landing on Easter Island a distance of some 4300 miles. Scattered all over Oslo and surrounds are numerous statues, mostly naked figures, with no explanatory plaques. Denis christened it the "willy city."

Over the next 10 days we travelled north on the A9 to Bodo passing close to many villages and hamlets with their wood clad

houses and red barns. The terrain varied enormously with mountains, plains, grass and moorland. We ran alongside Norway's largest lake, Mjosomradet (PICTURE 4), some 119 kms long and we visited some of the towns on the route including Lillehammer, Trondheim, Dombas (not in Ukraine), Grong, and Mo I Rana, calling in at the Arctic Circle Visitor Centre (PICTURE FIVE) before continuing on to Bodo; all different in style but interesting. Yet again the temperatures were out of this world for the area, so we old folk did not do as much exploring as we had hoped to do. Finding shade was our priority and somewhere flat as everything seemed to be uphill.



Two days before the wedding we took the ferry to Sorarnoy, parking in the garden of the bride's parent's holiday home. Lovely spot, no traffic, one shop with one petrol and one diesel pump a mile away. The shop is usually unmanned except when being re-stocked. Swiping a credit card opens the shop door, then you go in and select what you require, scan and pay using the same card. Obtaining a receipt with a barcode on it allows you to open the door and leave the shop. Sadly, we could not see that working here in the UK. We began meeting up with our family as they arrived on the island from different parts of Norway, many friends of both the bride and the groom arrived having travelled from various parts of the world. It was lovely to have all the family together in one spot (it does not happen very often) and to mix and talk with the rest of the guests and hear their stories. Being together on a small island for three days before the wedding proved to be an excellent way of getting to know people.

The whole event was organised over three days. On the Thursday those that wanted could join the happy couple and hike up a mountain. It was a day's outing with packed lunches and energy bars provided. From the reports of those who did it, it was more of a climb and scramble than a hike. A BBQ and games day was organised for the Friday. This was held on the actual wedding island. There were garden games such as skittles, molke, badminton and axe throwing. Brilliant idea to get guests mixing. The BBQ in the evening was a huge success and the whole party event lasted well into the evening. Being in the land of the midnight sun, daylight did not completely disappear so it was very easy not to notice how late it was getting. The ferry ride back to our island, weaving between small islands, in a fairly bright form of twilight, was just beautiful.

The actual wedding day dawned with the temperature dropping to the low 20s and a little touch of rain (so our raincoats were not in vain). We were taken by a whale watching boat (a rubber contraption with an outboard motor, casually referred to by those in the know as a 'rib') to the wedding island covered with anything to keep the rain off. Needless to say, everyone's hair was tousled after the speedboat ride but nobody cared. The sun did come out and the wedding went ahead outdoors as planned, the bride arriving in a small Viking-style rowing boat rowed by her father. It was a simple yet moving ceremony, conducted in both English and Norwegian. The highlight for us was the priest taking a "selfie" with the bride and groom immediately after declaring them man and wife! The wedding breakfast followed and the festivities began (or in some cases continued) into the very late hours of the following morning. We old fogies took our leave before midnight and were speedily ferried to our island, again on a 'rib'. It was a truly memorable day in such a beautiful setting and among such lovely people.

Wedding over, guests leaving, so again a ferry from the island and our

journey down the west coast to see the fjords began in earnest (PICTURE SIX).



Having travelled up the “backbone” of Norway the road down the west coast was much more scenic and twisty. Mountain passes, tunnels, bridges, sharp bends and ferries epitomise the route. Every bend created a new vista and the “wow” factors just kept coming. Where there was a road around a fjord then there was no scheduled ferry across it. However, not all the fjords had roads around them, so the only way was by ferry, and, in these cases, the ferries were free of charge. The larger fjords had both roads and ferries, because of distances, one had a choice of route and here there was a charge for the ferry.

The weather was overcast but warm when we returned to the mainland and began our trip down the west coast. We passed many little hamlets on our route around the fjords some with a little jetty, others without. As we travelled through the mountains we stopped in a layby to look at our first, and only, Norwegian glacier in the distance. We continued going through a variety of tunnels to a little place called Furoy. Furoy is a small fishing village and ferry terminal, the ferry terminal being the more prominent. We had a stroll around the village in the evening, primarily to find out the departure times for the next day sailings. There was very little there and we did not find a shop or a café.

The ferry from Furoy across the fjord was only 10 minutes so we did not get out of the campervan and soon we were on yet another attractive journey through the mountains to our next ferry which took an hour to cross the fjord and yet again breathtaking views as we made our way to Nesna. Nesna sits on a promontory between two Fjords backed by mountains and is fairly large. High speed coastal ferries stop here both going north and south. We walked around its marina where many boats were moored. It was interesting to read that the charges for mooring in the harbour were based on length in feet and inches and not metres as one would have expected. Our next stop en route was Bronnysund. We camped a little way outside the town and went in the following day. What a nice little town it is. We decided to have a coffee and the lady behind the counter got chatting, and, when she realised we were tourists asked if we had been to Torghatten. No, we had not, so she insisted that we should go, it is (apparently) a pleasant walk into the mountain and you can walk through the mountain using a natural tunnel (or hole). Torghatten is some 15 Kms along a peninsula and one can see this mountain from the town itself. The tunnel is around 35 metres high and 20 metres wide and goes 160 metres through the mountain. Legend has it that a Troll named Hestmannen fired an arrow at a maiden called Lekamoya who was running away from him, with the intent to kill her. Fortunately, the Troll king Somna threw his hat to block it. The arrow pierced the hat and fell into the sea. The following day the sun rose and turned Hestmannen, Lekamoya and the hat, complete with hole, into a mountain. You cannot see the tunnel from ground level. Off we go, get parked, locate the path and set off. It was a

good solid path but very steep and after 30 minutes of continuous climbing we were feeling very tired. We met a couple coming down who told us that there was still a long way to go, disheartened we turned and went back down to the van. As we drove away from Bronnysund around the fjord the towering mountain was always in view as though it was mocking us.

Next stop was Flatt, the worst campsite we had encountered. Pretty rubbishy and the area had very little to offer us. The following day we headed for Trondheim to a different campground to the one we had stayed at on our northbound journey. From this site, we were informed, we could get to a bus stop (parking a campervan in Trondheim looked a little formidable). What the information failed to mention was

that the bus stop was a 10-minute (25 for us) trek up a steepish hill through some woods. However, we did it and had a very pleasant time in the town. The bus went through the outskirts before entering the town and at one point it turned into a tunnel. We thought nothing of this lots of places have underpasses. This one turned out to be more than an underpass for, after about one km it met another tunnel, both connected by a roundabout!

We eventually got into the town centre and came across a beer festival, lots of colourful stalls, various food outlets and music. Quite vibrant. Trondheim (PICTURE SEVEN) is a pretty town with its cathedral (containing wonderful stone carvings) and its old city accessed over an ancient bridge. Very old houses, all painted in attractive colours along the riverbank.



From Trondheim we headed south on the coastal roads to Bergen. The scenery was more varied than we had experienced so far. Not only did we have mountains but waterfalls, cultivated plains, forests and fjords. Three days, numerous ferries and an under-fjord tunnel got us to Bergen. This is the “poster town” of Norway with pictures of Bryggen Wharf (brightly coloured converted clapboard warehouses) in every travel guide. We enjoyed looking around but it was too “touristy” for our tastes. We read in the visitor’s info that the Cathedral was closed but we were able to look around St Mary’s church which is the oldest building in the town.

From Bergen we headed for Kristiansand via Stavanger. It was on this route that we used bridges and tunnels, no ferries, The longest tunnel we encountered was 9kms (approximately Meppershall to Langford) long. At the time it seemed to be never ending. They give you a countdown of how far you have gone and how much further you have to travel.

Stavanger has an old town area too which is very picturesque. The harbour was very commercialised with each venue appearing to need to outdo the other with the loudest music! We believe it to be the jogging capital of Norway for we had never come across so many people jogging. Kristiansand was entirely the opposite. A very practical town sporting a very long traffic free street with a vast variety of shops, restaurants and cafes. It has a fort which is accessed through a very neat garden. A very clean and tidy city from which we caught a ferry to Hirtshals in Denmark.

Arrived at Hirtshals early evening 9 th August giving us 14 days to drive through bits of Germany and Holland to reach our ferry at the Hook of Holland on the 24 th . The scenery on the route south was not a patch on the beauty of Norway. We travelled through Denmark via Aalborg – a charming mix of old and new with flowers and decorative art everywhere, and on to Aarhus where our grandson and his new wife live. Aarhus is a lively city where we enjoyed a visit to the cathedral, the botanical gardens and ‘Den Gamle By’ a living museum telling the story of Aarhus throughout the centuries. Spent the evening with the newly weds who introduced us to liquorice icecream – nicer than you might think. On through Odense, Kolding and Flensburg

(which we loved), and into (PICTURE EIGHT) Germany where we stayed just outside of Hamelin and enjoyed two days of Pied Piper nostalgia.



Apeldorn in Holland was our next resting place, home of the old 'Palace het Loo', once the country palace of the Dutch royal family, now a museum, Not too impressive from the outside but beautifully furnished and decorated inside, with magnificent gardens to rival Versailles. On the following day we visited Arnhem folk museum, which was also a wonderful day out, thankfully providing a tram service to take you from area to area. The next day we travelled to Grevelingen, to be within easy striking distance for the Hook of Holland and our ferry home, arriving in Meppershall at 10.50pm on 24th August.

A truly memorable trip we would not have missed for anything. (PICTURE NINE) Some stats for those interested. Total length of trip was 7 weeks; we covered 3550 miles and used 100 gallons of diesel.



Thank you Denis and Ruth for this wonderful account of an amazing trip! Anyone reading this who wants to share something about a special trip in their life – drop us a line! We would love to share your story. mepp.messenger@gmail.com.



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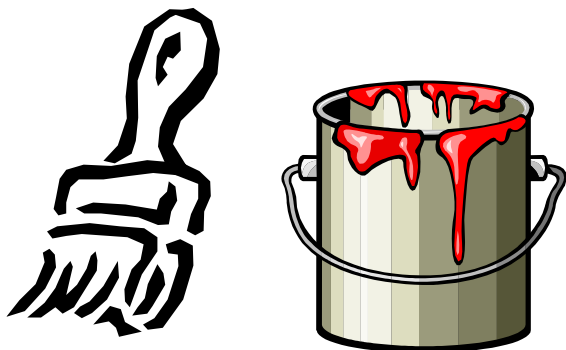
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Meppershall's Christmas Tree will be lit from 29th November.

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The closest three guesses will win a prize!

Hint: The star counts as one light!

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Churchwardens:

Chris Valentine 01462 815971 John Archer

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Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: annie10639@gmail.com

A Message From St Mary's...

At the beginning of November we celebrate All Saints Day. It is a feast day that honours all saints and martyrs, those known to us - whose example of holy living encourages us - and those known only to God.

That is followed by the more personal remembering of All Souls' Day... a time when we remember all those we have loved and see no longer. In England that tends to be a quiet and more private remembering, although in some countries families gather to clean graves, bring flowers and to remember together (this may be a good opportunity for an end-of-season tidy-up in our own Churchyard). Please do check the Churchyard Regulations - and if in doubt feel free to consult Rector Roni. Also please do make sure that when a more permanent memorial has been put in place that the temporary wooden one is removed for ease of mowing.

Then, we move to a remembering which is both personal and communal, national and international, remembering all those who lost their lives in war. According to our promise, "We will remember them," we continue to pay tribute to the millions killed or wounded in battle in both World Wars and those on the home front who struggled amidst pain and loss to help ensure freedom survived and peace returned. We think, too, of those who have offered their lives since - still in protection of those freedoms.

I wish we could now say that we all live in a world of peace and justice, enjoying a fair sharing of the world's resources. During this last year we have seen the devastation of war in so many places fill our TV screens and threaten again to spill into global conflict. We know from experience that wars end when politicians finally come together around the negotiating table. As I write, we are hearing about agreement for the return of hostages in what is being called the first phase of the Gaza peace deal. I know we all hope and pray that this will become a lasting peace.

Behind the reporters we can see some of the 39 million tonnes of concrete debris after destruction of Palestinian homes, schools, hospitals, since October 2023 (from The Guardian, 22nd July 2025). I say again: in our time there are many other causes on which the nations need to work together - care of our shared earth; pollution of the air, oceans and land; the loss of biodiversity and endangered species; the human need for food and clean drinking water; the fight against disease, to name but a few of them. And I believe that this is much more the kind of "tomorrow" for which our brave

service men and women believed they were offering their “today.” Let us remember them... and commit to working for a just future for all humanity.

With love, Rector Roni.

Church Events In November

Usual Pattern of Services

Sundays	11.00am	Morning Worship every Sunday Holy Communion: 2 nd and 4 th Sundays
Every Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion in the Rectory
Church open to visit	10.00-4.00	Private prayer, quiet time – the church is open.
Online services:	9.00am	Morning Prayer using 24-7's Lectio 365 App 7-days-a-week
	9.00pm	Night Prayer/Compline from the C. of E. Daily Prayer App, 7-days-a-week
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Please note '9and9' continues daily on our Facebook page.		

Forthcoming Services and Events

Come and experience the warm welcome and friendly community of St Mary's, your beautiful village church 😊 We hope to see you soon.

Sunday November 2 nd	11am. Morning Prayer - All Saints' Sunday
Wednesday November 5 th	9.45am. Holy Communion in Church – remaining open to visit for Special Memories all day, until 6pm*.
Sunday November 9 th	10.45am. Remembrance Sunday (Holy Communion at St Michael's Shefford, 9.30am)
Wednesday Nov 12 th	9.45am. Holy Communion in the Rectory
Sunday November 16 th	11am. Morning Prayer
Wednesday Nov 19 th	9.45am. Holy Communion in the Rectory
Sunday November 23 rd	11am. Holy Communion - Christ the King
Wednesday Nov 26 th	9.45am. Holy Communion in the Rectory
Sunday November 30 th	10.30am. Benefice Service at St Mary's, Meppershall 6pm. A Christmas Carol - Matt Jones with his inimitable one-man production of Dickens' festive classic!

****A "Special Memories" service will be held on Wednesday 5th November, 9.45am, at St Mary's Church, Meppershall, when we will remember by name those whose funerals or burials we have been privileged to conduct in the past year as well as all the people we have loved and lost. If there is someone you would like to be remembered by name, please add their name to the list available in church from Friday 17th October. The church will remain open for reflection and the lighting of candles for the whole day until 6pm. Do come and be part of it, everyone is very welcome.***

Remembrance: Meppershall's Poppies

A cascade of knitted poppies is being prepared for display at the church's Act of Remembrance in the churchyard at 10.45AM, Sunday 9th November, followed by the Service of Remembrance. An appeal for people across the village to knit poppies received an overwhelming response. Now attached to netting, this cascade of poppies will adorn the Meppershall War Memorial, with a further display inside the church.



A selection of custom-made, embroidered fabric poppies have also been made as a fundraising initiative for both The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal and the Parish Church. Please give £3 for smaller crocheted poppies; for the larger detailed felt poppies it is £5. Card donations are preferred, made on the contactless device at the back of the church, using 'poppy' as the payment reference for church accounting purposes. There, you can see the wonderful 'poppy tree' display, from which you can choose your poppy. Visit the church whenever it is open (10-4 most days) to get yours.



St Mary's Church, Meppershall - Junior Church

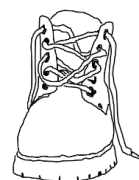
Junior church is on every 2nd and 4th Sunday during part of the church service when the children learn about God through stories and activities. Please come along!

Questions? Contact Gillian on 07778 449051.

The Junior Church Team

Meppershall Second Sunday Strollers

Sunday 9th November 2025: meeting at the church gate in Meppershall at 2.00PM, we plan a hike to Clifton, ending at the War Memorial and Golden Hind after around 4.5 miles by 4.15ish. Our route provides points where you can join along the way if you don't fancy the whole distance. We will pass Meppershall Village Hall at around 2.10PM, and then head across Polehanger Farm to reach St Michael and All Angels Church (Shefford Memorial) in Shefford at 2.40PM ish. From there, we walk beside the River Hit where it comes together with the River Flit and the River Ivel. We follow the Ivel Navigation for over a mile, entering Clifton on Stanford Lane past the Cricket Club and All Saints Church.



For more info or to discuss parking in Clifton in advance and/or lifts back, call James and Miriam on 857836 or message us on Facebook @meppershallstrollers.

News from the Bell Tower

The celebration on Saturday 11th October and Sunday 12th October was a fun and wonderful event! There was a lot of interest in the bells with many having a go. If you tried and want to learn call Gillian on 07778 449051 / meppershall@bacbr.org.uk. If you couldn't get to the celebration but want to find out more about learning to ring, just come on a Thursday evening 7.30pm-9.00pm to see our bellringing first hand or use the contact info above.

Shefford Osteopathic Clinic: Walking For Better Health

Whether it's daily steps or weekly minutes... your activity levels are linked to your health.

Studies suggest that people who increase their walking to 10,000 steps daily experience health benefits. But this could seem daunting at first, so perhaps aim for at least 5,000 steps per day. It's easy to become fixated with your step count!

5 Ways to Increase Your Walking

1. Make it a habit

The easiest way to walk more is to make walking a habit, e.g. walking to work/the shops, or using stairs instead of the lift.

2. Mix it up

Add variety to your walks. You don't have to travel to the countryside to find a rewarding walk.

3. Join a walking group

Walking in a group is a great way to start walking, make new friends and stay motivated.

4. Get your boots on

'Ramblers' promotes walking for health, leisure and as a means for getting around to everyone.

5. Set yourself a goal

Pedometers are a fun way to keep track of your walking... work out your average daily steps and then start adding extra steps.

Remember - don't ignore any niggling aches and pains in your joints! Early investigation can prevent restricted movement, increased pain or a worsened injury.

Our friendly team at Shefford Osteopathic Clinic aims to see you within 48 hours and ease your symptoms quickly. Contact us on 01462 811006 or visit SheffordOsteo.com, where you can book your appointment online.

Birthdays

Sincere, warm birthday wishes to Margaret E who will be 95

And to Stephen N, who will be 89.

We wish them both well in their new homes – best wishes
from the whole team at

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Pumpkins by Donna Cameron

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After a glorious summer, the colder, crisper weather is upon us. We can now enjoy the colours of autumn, the magic that it brings, the fairy-like toadstools, conkers and autumn leaves.

One plant I grew this year was pumpkins. They are a squash and native to North America. Pumpkin comes from the Greek for 'large melon'. They are rich in vitamins, particularly vitamin A, as well as potassium. They are 90% water. All parts of the pumpkin, including the leaves, are edible.

I added them into a customers gardens to see if they would notice!

One was a garden that I designed for a local business.

I planted it amongst Roses, Irises and grasses. I popped it in as a tiny plant! On my return, it had grown three enormous cream and orange pumpkins, spralling among the perennials. It was slightly hidden but to my astonishment an employee of the business came up to me and enquired to what it was and said he had been watching it grow!

I added another one to a family garden I designed – where the three children discovered it. They take a great interest in the garden - tending and watering it. They even have their own veg patch and the other day asked their mum to buy some spring bulbs for me to plant. How refreshing that they are inspired and interested in such a rewarding subject.

It brings me so much joy if I can get others interested in gardening and all it has to offer

Donna x

Jobs In the Garden For November

Clear up leaves from lawns and ponds
Plant Tulip bulbs
Plant wallflowers in gaps of the borders
Prune Roses to protect from high winds by pruning them by a third to half their height
Plant out winter bedding
Clean greenhouse
Put out bird food

Divide herbaceous perennials
Lift parsnips after the first frosts when their flavour will be sweetened
Prune apple and pear trees
Set lawn mower to higher cut and cut if weather mild and grass still growing
Give evergreen hedges final cut
Sow broad beans
Plant Amaryllis bulbs for Christmas

Trugs And Trowels (Campton Gardening Club) – November

Autumn 2025 is a true example of nature experiencing a 'mast year'. This natural phenomena is when certain tree and shrub species produce an unusually large bumper crop of their fruits, nuts and seeds. This year we have seen an abundance of apples, acorns, chestnuts, conkers, pears and plums etc - truly a bumper year.

A mast year is triggered by a combination of factors including:

1. Weather patterns such as temperature, rainfall and sunlight that can influence tree reproduction.
2. Long term climate cycles such as drought or excessive rain that can impact tree growth and seed production.
3. Environmental stresses to trees, like disease, pest or nutrient deficiency that can trigger increased seed production.
4. Some tree species have a generic predisposition and are more prone to mast years due to their genetic makeup.
5. Mast years can be synchronised among tree populations through mechanisms like pollination.

When these events occur they lead to a significant increase in food source for wildlife. This abundance is thought to be a strategy to ensure that more seeds survive by overwhelming seed predators (known as satiation). This year, seed predators are certainly overwhelmed. This has several affects on trees.

1. Increased seed dispersal improves the chance of successful germination and regeneration.
2. Synchronisation between trees of the same species provides an enhanced defence against predators.
3. The production of large quantities of seeds can deplete a trees energy reserves potentially affecting growth and reproduction in subsequent years and potentially resulting in a vulnerability to disease and pests.

Overall this process in nature plays a crucial role in the lifecycle of trees and influences woodland composition and dynamics. Increased seed dispersal provides protection from consumption leading to increased seed establishment for tree populations. The abundance of seeds, nuts and fruit have an influence on population fluctuations in birth and death rates of seed eating animals and consequently on predator and prey relationships. This in turn influences species interaction. These effects ripple through the eco system leading to changes in woodland composition. Mast year occurrence is every two to five years in the UK with variations depending on weather conditions, location and species.

All are welcome to come along to any of our meetings on the first Monday each month (unless its a public/bank holiday). General club admission is £3.50 per person and includes refreshments, a free-and -swap table to pass on your unwanted garden items, plants, seed pots and magazines etc.

Personal Finance: by Paul Savuto

Future proofing your finances this autumn

As the days shorten and the evenings draw in, autumn is a natural time to pause and take stock. As we prepare for the colder months ahead, it can be a good time to hunker down and reflect on your financial resilience. Are your plans in good shape for whatever lies ahead – and are there steps you could take now to feel more confident about the future? Establishing robust financial foundations is essential in times of economic uncertainty and elevated living costs. A recent study found that essential bills, such as energy and food, have continued to increase for most people in 2025, although around a quarter of respondents reported that their housing costs have eased slightly.

Positive signs – but knowledge gaps revealed

Despite ongoing cost of living challenges, retirement planning is back on track for at least half the population. In this year's survey, only 43% of UK adults said their retirement plans and savings had been impacted by higher living expenses compared with 75% in 2024 – a positive shift. Although this bodes well for long-term financial resilience, the report revealed a worrying disconnect. Seven in 10 people don't know the value of their pension pot and 52% have not considered how much money they need to fund their retirement.

Check in on your pension

Reviewing your contributions, underlying investments and whether your strategy still reflects your goals can help strengthen long-term security. Small adjustments today can compound into meaningful differences tomorrow.

Cash savings – need a boost?

The report paints a mixed picture when it comes to savings – the number of people going overdrawn after covering their living expenses has fallen, but at the same time there's a worrying lack of short-term savings. Building short-term resilience, in the form of a savings buffer, is important as this can help you withstand unexpected financial shocks.

Sow the seeds for security and success

Resilience is about balance – not letting current financial challenges derail your long-term planning. By taking time this autumn to review your pensions, savings and investments, you can feel more confident that your financial future is on track. We can provide the support you need to move beyond short-term survival and build lasting financial resilience – helping you thrive with confidence in the years ahead.

Unspent pensions to be included in IHT from 2027

From April 2027, unspent defined contribution pensions will be included in Inheritance Tax (IHT) calculations – a major shift from current rules where pensions typically fall outside the estate. The government estimates 8% of estates will be affected annually, with average IHT bills rising by £34,000. In reality, costs could be higher if people don't review their arrangements. All estates that include pensions will need to check IHT liability, creating potential delays between pension providers and executors.

A further risk is double taxation: pensions inherited after age 75 are already taxed as income and from 2027 could also face IHT – meaning more than half the value could

be lost to tax. Planning considerations Options to reduce exposure include tax-free gifting, using trusts, charitable legacies (reducing IHT to 36%), and whole of life insurance written in trust to cover liabilities. This change underscores the importance of estate planning. With rules evolving, pensions can no longer be assumed to sit outside IHT. Reviewing your estate now will help protect family wealth and ensure it is passed on as intended.

Get in touch

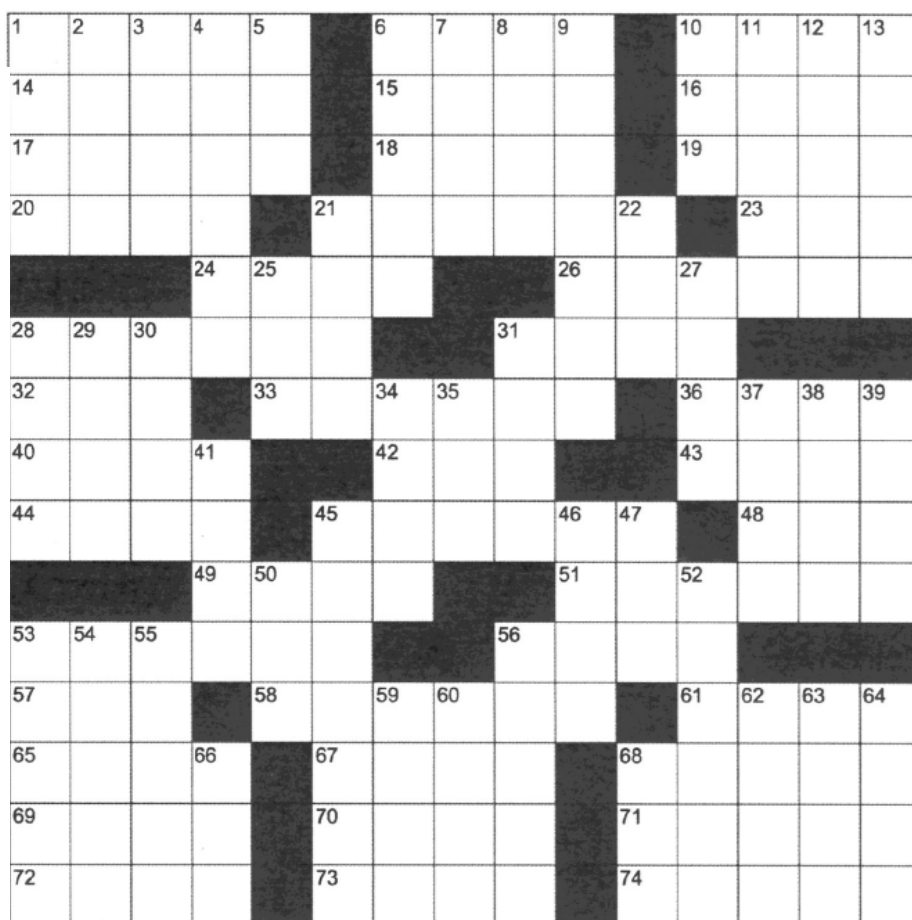
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Crossword Solution For October

1	M	2	E	3	W	4	S		5	S	6	E	7	R	8	F		9	A	10	F	11	T	12	E	13	R
14	A	V	I	S					15	O	P	A	L					16	D	R	O	V	E				
17	F	E	T	E					18	B	I	K	E					19	Z	O	N	E	S				
20	I	N	C						21	S	E	C	E	D	22	E			23	S	E	N	T				
24	A	S	H		25	L	A	R							26	R	U	T									
					28	A	T	E					29	B	E	R	G			31	A	R	C				
		34	A	35	I	R	E	D		36	A	L	E					37	H	38	O	N	O	R			
39	B	E	C	K						40	G	A	L					41	A	T	T	Y					
42	P	R	O	S		43	E			44	E	C	S		45	T	A	T	I	C							
47	M	O	N			48	M	49	A	S	K				50	A	S	H									
					51	D	U	B							52	B	I	S		53	E	54	C	55	T		
56	T	57	U	58	T	U			59	C	60	A	61	B	62	A	L	A		63	R	I	B				
64	A	S	H	E	65	S				66	D	A	M	E				67	D	O	D	O					
68	R	E	E	L	S					69	A	S	E	A				70	A	D	E	N					
71	T	R	Y	S	T					72	M	E	N	U				73	H	E	R	E					

ACROSS

- 1 Liquid dressing or relish used to flavor food
 6 Tel ____
 10 Hook part
 14 Fable writer
 15 Traveled by car
 16 Native ruler in Africa
 17 Australian marsupial
 18 Rampage
 19 Not any
 20 Information
 21 Tons
 23 North American nation
 24 Northwest by west
 26 Made a menacing noise
 28 Egyptian paper (plr.)
 31 Female child
 32 Possessive pronoun
 33 Navy cleric
 36 Frozen form of precipitation formed into flakes
 40 Quit moving
 42 Earnings
 43 Not far
 44 Family residence
 45 Type of star or watch
 48 Her
 49 Snow gliders
 51 Nissan's former name
 53 Cringe
 56 Trail
 57 Time period
 58 Gleaming
 61 Imitated
 65 Opera solo
 67 Poles
 68 What people do in their sleep
 69 Tall cereal plant with ears
 70 Bulb flower
 71 Bundle of yarn
 72 Helen of ____
 73 Dole out
 74 Painter Richard



DOWN

- 1 Rice wine
 2 Long time
 3 U.S. Air Force
 4 Distinet group of people living together
 5 Environmental protection agency (abbr)
 6 Indian weapon
 7 Invalidate
 8 Teen hero
 9 Former member of the armed forces
 10 TV lawyer Matlock
 11 'love' (Italian)
 12 Wash
 13 Baked loaf made with flour
 21 Off-Broadway award
 22 Distress call
 25 Sarcastic
 27 Association (abbr.)
 28 Ritzy
 29 Motor vehicle
 30 Cotillion

31 "You can't eat just one" brand

- 34 Musical composition
 35 Bad (prefix)
 37 Loch ____ monster
 38 Next to Kauai
 39 Small bird
 41 Mexican money
 45 Person who takes a long religious trip
 46 First man
 47 Rodent
 50 Killed in action
 52 Expression of gratitude
 53 Act in response to something
 54 Mistake
 55 Egyptian capital
 56 Old-fashioned
 59 Traditional knowledge
 60 Modify
 62 Bard
 63 Canal
 64 Fox holes
 66 Some
 68 South southeast

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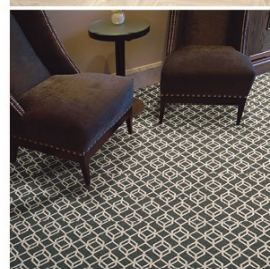
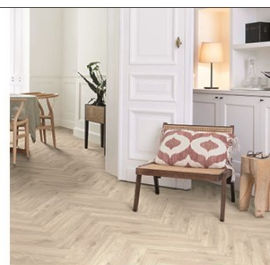
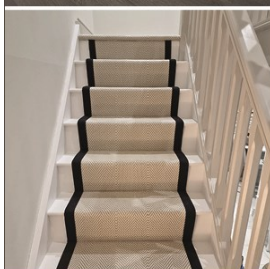


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The Players @ STMA May 2025



We are now putting the finishing touches to our pantomime "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens (adapted by Karen Mitchell). Tickets are £10 & £5 (Concessions under 18yrs/over 60s) and are on sale **NOW** at www.ticketsource.co.uk/themeppershallplayers

Mr Wilkson and his little daughter Emily are at risk of being homeless this Christmas. It's not just that the rent is due, but he also owes Mr Scrooge, a cold-hearted money lender, and cannot afford to pay both. Will Scrooge give him more time to pay, or demand his money and see them out on the street? And what about Tiny Tim and the Cratchit family? Will their's be a merry Christmas or a time of sorrow? Will the appearance of his old partner Marley or the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future be able to teach Scrooge the true meaning of Christmas? Or will Tiny Tim's cry of "God bless us, everyone" fall on deaf ears?

The answer to these questions can be found at the STMA Digswell Main Hall, 10 Hitchin Road, Shefford SG17 5JA on Saturday 6th & 13th December with performances at 3pm & 7.30pm.

Dates for your 2025/2026 diary:

Saturday 6 th December 2025	Panto: A Christmas Carol. Performances at 3pm and 7.30pm
Saturday 13 th December 2025	Panto: A Christmas Carol. Performances at 3pm and 7.30pm
Monday 22 nd December	NO MEETING PLAYERS WINTER BREAK
Monday 29 th December	NO MEETING PLAYERS WINTER BREAK
Monday 5 th January	Players re-open Meeting 7.30pm-9.30pm
Saturday 25 th April 2026	The Big Quiz & Cabaret evening (quiz starts at 7.30pm)

Find the Players on Facebook (The Players @ STMA) and Instagram.

The Players meet every Monday evening at 7.30pm at the STMA, 10, Hitchin Road, Shefford SG17 5JA. Membership is free and we welcome people 18yrs and over who have an interest in amateur theatricalities, whether it be on stage or off indulging in all areas of theatrical performances, set building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance, etc.

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Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336



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Christmas
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TIMETABLE - VALID FROM 2nd September 2024

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As from 2 nd September 2024		“Stops at all Bus Stops on Request”	
W2 BEDFORD	- 2nd Wednesday of Month	OUT	RETURN
Shefford Rd. / High St., / Rectory Rd. - all stops		09.00 / 09.02	RR
Interchange Retail Park		09.40	12.15
St Pauls Square / Corn Exchange		09.55	12.00
W3 BIGGLESWADE	- Every Monday	OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd / High Street, / Shefford Rd., - all Stops		09.36 / 09.40	RR
Biggleswade – A1 Retail Park		10.10	12.15
Station / Town Centre - pick up Church St. Bus Stop o/s Asda		10.15	12.10
W5 BIGGLESWADE - A1 Retail Park/Town Centre	- Every Friday	OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd / High St. / Shefford Rd – all stops		10.00 / 10.03	RR
Biggleswade A1 Retail Park / Station & Town Centre		10.25 / 10.30	
Church St bus stop o/s Asda / A1 Retail Park			12.10 / 12.15
W6A CAMBRIDGE	- 4TH Wednesday of Month	OUT	RETURN
Shefford Rd. / High St. / Rectory Rd. - all stops		08.48 / 08.52	RR
Cambridge, Downing St. – o/s John Lewis		10.15	14.10
W8A ST ALBANS	- 1st Wednesday of Month		
Shefford Rd. / High St. / Rectory Rd. – all stops		08.48 / 08.52	RR
St Peters St. o/s Santander Bank / pickup opp Bank Stop 13		10.15	14.00
W10 ST NEOTS	- 2nd Thursday of Month	OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd. / High Street, / Shefford Rd. All stops		09.18 / 09.20	RR
St Neots - Market Place		10.15	12.20
W11 MILTON KEYNES	- 3rd Thursday of Month	OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd. / High St., / Shefford Rd. - all stops		09.08 / 09.10	RR
MK - Midsummer Blvd / M&S (Stop J3) / o/s John Lewis Stop E3		10.10	13.15
W12 HITCHIN	- Every Tuesday	OUT	RETURN
Shefford Rd. / High Street / Rectory Rd - All stops		09.18 / 09.20	RR
Bancroft Stop D		10.05	
Bancroft Stop G (Outside Oliver Bonas)			12.10
W14 WELWYN GARDEN CITY	- 1st Thursday of Month	OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd. / High Street, All stops		09.14	RR
Shefford Road, All stops		09.16	RR
WGC Central Bus Station		10.00	12.15
W16 STEVENAGE	- 3rd Wednesday of each Month		
Rectory Rd. / High St. / Shefford Rd. – all Stops		09.34 / 09.37	RR
Tesco Extra, The Forum Centre (opp Station)		10.05	12.10
M&S, Roaring Meg Retail Park		10.10	12.05

EXCURSIONS – 4TH Thursday of Month – call For Details – 0300-123-3023

E: Thewanderbus@gmail.com Web: www.wandrbus.org.uk

Buses available for PRIVATE HIRE – Call for Quote.



2025 Excursions 4th THURSDAY OF THE MONTH!

Call **0300-123-3023** or e mail: thewanderbus@gmail.com
for more info or to book your seat.

Full payment is required 10 days before departure. A cheque to Wanderbus, 5 The Pastures, Upper Stondon, Beds SG16 6QB or a bank transfer to: CAF Bank Ltd, Sort Code 40-52-40, Acc No. 00013118 Name: Wanderbus Ltd (Use your name in Reference).
Cancellations must be made within 7 days or refunds will be discretionary.

Date	Programme of Visits (prices correct at time of publication)	Bus Fare and Times
Nov 29 th SATURDAY	Hertford Castle Christmas Market Free Entry	Bus Fare - £10.00 Pickups 10.30/10.45 a. 11.45 d. 15.00.

Come down to Hertford Castle this winter as it hosts its first Christmas market within its spectacular grounds. The event will be free of charge to attend and boast an array of Christmas market stalls on the Castle Lawn.

35 Wooden Chalet Christmas Stalls + food, drink and charity stalls. Offerings include homeware, crafts, jewellery, and much more! Perfect for those who like to shop early and local for Christmas.

In addition, there will be festive entertainment for you to enjoy and food and drink stands providing seasonal treats to warm you up!

2025 Bike & Hike Fundraising Results



Meppershall again made a big contribution to this important fundraiser for the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust. In September. Our hikers and bikers covered the local area,



raising just over £700 (plus Gift Aid). Thank you to everyone who helped, sponsored, participated – especially Trevor Wilkinson who again raised more than half of the total on his own! Read more at <https://bedshertshct.org.uk/bike-n-hike/>.

Useful Contact Details In Meppershall

DEFIBRILLATORS – outside School, Village Hall and Budgens

DOCTORS, DENTISTS, PHARMACIES

NHS Direct 111

Dr Baxter & Partners

Shefford Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive, Shefford SG17 5FS

Appointments 01462 810034

General queries, prescriptions etc. 01462 818620

Lower Stondon GP Practice

109 Station Rd Lower Stondon SG16 6JJ 01462 850305

Shefford Dental Practice, 34 High St Shefford 01462 814020

Shefford Dental Clinic, 99 Hitchin Rd Shefford 01462 648465

Jardines Chemist, 7 High St Shefford 01462 813283

Shefford Pharmacy, Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive 01462 818633

Police:

Emergency 999, non-emergency 101

Hospitals

Bedford Hospital 01234 355122

Lister Hospital, Stevenage 01438 314333

Luton and Dunstable Hospital 01582 491166

Utilities

Gas Emergency 0800 111999

Anglian Water 03457 145145

Electrical (power cuts, overhead cable down etc) 0800 3163105

(Or 105 from a landline)

Central Beds Council

0300 300 8301

CBC Councillor for Gravenhurst, Meppershall, Shillington:

Blake Stephenson blake.stephenson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

hello@blakestephenson.uk

0300 300 8526

Parish Council Clerk

Alessandre Marabese clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk

Member of Parliament:

Alistair Strathern MP

C/O House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

020 7219 6004

alistair.strathern.mp@parliament.uk

St Marys Church

Rev. Veronica Goodman, The Rectory, Church Road 01462 339962

See full details in the church pages of The Meppershall Messenger

Library: High St Shefford

0300 300 8067

Tuesday – Friday 9am – 6pm, Saturday 9am – 4pm, closed Monday & Sunday

Whitbread Wanderbus service

Stephanie Kirby

thewanderbus@gmail.com

Food and Supplies

Budgens Stores, Post Office, High Street

Rogers Bakery, High Street

01462 813398

The Sugar Loaf, 25 High St

01462 239231

Schools

Samuel Whitbread Academy, Clifton

01462 629900

Redborne Upper School, Ampthill

01525 404462

Henlow Academy

01462 813733

Robert Bloomfield, Shefford

01462 628800

Meppershall Academy, High Street

01462 813293

Meppershall Pre-School Village Hall, Ella Carey-Butler

07816 357159

meppershallps@gmail.com

Meppershall Munchkins, Melanie Choonos

meppershallmunchkins@gmail.com

Organisations

The Players @ STMA, Karen Mitchell

01462 816336

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

HATS Drama Group, Linda Winfield

lin.winfield5@gmail.com

Meppershall Village Hall Trustees

trustees@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk

Meppershall Village Hall Bookings

bookings@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk

Bookings Tel.

07485 102727

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 submitted. Contributions should run to not more than one A5 page (except by prior arrangement) and should ideally be received by the Editor not later than the 12th of the month, for publication at the end of that month (or by the later deadline date publicised by email or Facebook). 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.

THE TEAM

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PRODUCTION DATES AND DEADLINES

The table below shows the dates for collation of the magazine. The collation team generally meets at 2.30pm in the Village Hall on the collation date. Printing takes place 7 days prior to collation. The deadline for submissions is two Fridays prior to collation. Please look out for updates and alterations to usual plans when occasionally necessary. Can you spare some time to help produce the magazine? We would love to have you on the team! Use the contacts above to find out more.

Issue date	Collation date	Issue date	Collation date
Dec-Jan 2025-6	Tues 2 nd December	July 2026	Tues 30 th June
February 2026	Tues 27 th January	Aug-Sept 2026	Tues 28 th July
March 2026	Tues 24 th February	October 2026	Tues 29 th September
April 2026	Tues 31 st March	November 2026	Tues 27 th October
May 2026	Tues 28 th April	Dec-Jan 2026-7	Tues 1 st December
June 2026	Tues 26 th May	February 2027	TBC
Contact John Thompson to confirm arrangements (contact information above).			