

MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Photo: Jeff Latimer

Autumn 2003

Christmas Social Monday 8th December 2003 at 7 for 7:30pm

Tickets are now on sale for our Christmas supper. Please make your choice from the menu. This year in order to keep the price at £15 we ask that you bring your own 'wine'. Water and glasses will be provided. Our entertainment this year 'A Dickensian Christmas' will be provided by Marie Sumner in Victorian costume.

CHRISTMAS MENU

Starter	Pea Apple & Mint Soup with roll & butter
Main Course	Roast Norfolk Turkey with Chipolatas & Stuffing Vegetables & Gravy or Leek Mushroom & Horseradish Pie (V)
Dessert	Red Fruit & Wine Jellies or Iced Chocolate & Almond Terrine or Luxury Bread & Butter Pudding with Brandy & Apricots or Cheese Board
Followed by	Tea/Coffee & Mints

Forthcoming Events

December 8 th	Christmas Supper
January 12 th	Short talk by Ann Kneif on Leeds Castle followed by cheese and wine with the AGM at 21:15
February 9 th	Organic Vegetable Growing – Dusty Miller

Recent Events

August 11th – Exhibiting Having the Edge – Mrs J Wilkins

Coming just a month before our Autumn show, Mrs Wilkins' talk was perfectly timed to inspire us to do just that little bit more to catch the judge's eye. The most important piece of advice was to READ and OBSERVE the schedule. She provided many practical tips on how to ensure that your exhibits arrive at the show in good condition and how to display them to best advantage.

September 8th – Gardens of Kent – Mrs A Toynbee

As Garden Advisor for Kent to the National Gardens Scheme, Mrs Toynbee was well qualified to speak about the gardens in our county that open in aid of charity. She showed slides of some of the many gardens that belong to the scheme, some of which have been opening for many years. All of the gardens have something of interest to others from the most well known such as Sissinghurst to small private gardens. In 2002 Kent raised over £120,000 of over £2 million that was raised nationally.

October – Autumn Hanging Baskets – Mrs L. Jardine

Former club member, Mrs Jardine gave a timely practical demonstration of hanging baskets suitable for the autumn/winter time of year. She was able to give sound advice on the types of containers, liners and compost as well as plants to give different styles of hanging baskets. As she lives locally she was also able to tell us where to get the best deals in our area.

Autumn Show 2003

Despite the hot, dry summer there were 204 entries, 20 more than last year and all classes received at least one entry. The new class 11 *Decorative Foliage and/or Berries* had 6 superb entries. With 5 entries, the 6" floral arrangement was another successful class and the judge was pleased to have a more difficult task than usual.

THE PRIZES, PRESENTED BY OUR PRESIDENT, BILL ROBERTS, WERE AWARDED AS FOLLOWS (SEE SCHEDULE):

Stevens Cup - Barbara Macknish
Harvel Floral Bowl - Jo Latimer
Garden News Shield, Top Tray award and
National Vegetable Society Medal - Douglas Nicholson
The Hill Cup - Elizabeth Thomas
Coronation Cup - Claire Williams

ANNUAL TROPHIES, WON BY ACCUMULATING MOST POINTS
OVER BOTH SHOWS WERE ALSO PRESENTED:

Championship Cup - Douglas Nicholson
Townsend Vase - Claire Williams
Everard Bowl – shared by Gloria Kinch and Sue Gray



Photo: Elizabeth Thomas

Congratulations to *everybody* who entered the show. Whether you won a prize or not, the standard and variety of exhibits was extraordinary especially given the recent weather. The hall was filled with colour, texture and mouth-watering produce – a difficult job for any judge and a pleasure for all our visitors.

Thank you to Vera for running a successful raffle and providing a welcoming face at the door. Thanks also to those busy in the kitchen, supplying refreshments to our members and visitors all afternoon and to those who made the cakes. (There are people who visit the show just for the tea room.) Finally, thank you to those who helped set up on Friday night and those who helped clear away after the show on Saturday.

Jayne Macknish - Show Secretary

Report from the domestic judge:

Mrs Goodyer thought that we had good number of entries and was meticulous in her judging. These are her comments/preferences on each class:

Strawberry jam:

Jars must be sparkling clean with cellophane covers and filled with jam leaving a flat surface. One entry tasted sugary which meant it was under boiled.

Cheese straws:

All were well presented and she broke and tasted one straw for each entry. She described the winning entry as "more-ish, lovely and flaky but with a nice bite to them". Other entries were either too chunky, overdone, underdone or doughy.

Custard tarts:

One entry wasn't set in the middle, so she was unable to cut or taste it. Slices from each of the other entries revealed that pastry in their centres was also slightly underdone.

Fruity Apple Cake:

This was probably the most difficult class to judge as all entries looked good on top but underneath some apples had not mixed in well. Next, she cut them all to check for even fruit distribution. On tasting them all she had great difficulty in deciding places for the winners.

Potato salad:

These were diverse. Mrs Goodyer advised that the salads should be presented in plain dishes and the winner in a black dish stood out for its presentation.

Claire Williams

Historical Snippet

Jasmine

Common Names: Jasmine, jessamine.

Botanical Name: *Jasminum*.

Family: Oleaceae

The name comes from the ancient Persian name for the plant, *yasmin*. The *Jasminium officianale* has been cultivated so long that it is uncertain how it came to Europe. The Persians valued it highly and knew how to extract its scent by steeping the blossoms in sesame oil. In England jasmine was used to cover arbours. Some people found the scent overwhelming, including Gilbert White, who wrote in his journal in 1783, "The jasmine, now covered with bloom is very beautiful. The jasmine is so sweet that I am obliged to quit my chamber."

The Chinese winter jasmine, or *Jasminum nudiflorum*, is so called because the yellow flowers are borne on the naked winter branches. It was introduced in 1844 by Robert Fortune who compared the blossoms to "little primroses." The Chinese used them to make aromatic *Heung Pin* (Fragrant Leaves), which is green tea combined with dried jasmine blossoms.

The American or Carolina jasmine, *Gelsemium sempervirens* ("everlasting jasmine"), is of the *Loganiaceae* family, and isn't really a jasmine. Its name comes from *gelsomino*, Italian for "jasmine". It is evergreen with bold yellow flowers that are poisonous and have no fragrance. Thomas Jefferson grew it and planned to cover large

tracts of unused garden with "Jessamin, honeysuckle, sweetbriar, and even hardy flowers which may not require attention". This was to be "an asylum" for wild animals except, he says "those of prey". He doesn't say how to keep out the animals of prey, or the poison ivy, but it is an alluring concept of cohabitation is as lovely as democracy – and we are still working on both ideals.

The *polyanthum* jasmine, so called because it has many flowers (Greek *poly*, "many", and *anthos*, "flower" was sent from China by George Forrest, who had explored there for twenty-eight years. In 1905 he had survived a massacre when eighty missionaries and other Europeans were waylaid by nationalist Tibetans; all but fourteen were killed or captured. Forrest saved himself by rolling down the steep mountainside. He was hunted for eight days, discarding his boots to elude their dogs and living on a handful of dried peas that were in his pocket. He finally walked to safety over remote mountain paths, in spite of a sharp bamboo stake penetrating his foot.

The only drawback of jasmine is its floppy habit of growth, which John Gerard describes as a "need to be supported or propped up, and yet it claspeth not or windeth his stalkes about such things as stand neere unto it, but onely leanith and lieth upon those things". But adds that jasmine is "good to be anointed after baths, in those bodies that have need to be suppld and warmed" – which surely includes the bodies of all gardeners.

(Adapted from *100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names* by Diana Wells)