

MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Jo Latimer

Summer 2005

Autumn Show September 17th 2005

Calling all members to enter! If you have never exhibited before, just have a go. You may have the best exhibit on the day. Make sure you follow precisely the schedule on pages 12-13 of the 2005 Programme. All entry details should be given to our Show Secretary Jayne Macknish between 6 and 9pm on Thursday September 15th. The fee is 10p for each entry. Jayne requests that you DO NOT leave your entries on the answer phone. Exhibits may be staged on the Friday evening between 9 and 9:30 pm and between 10 am and 12:45 pm on the day of the show. Admission to the show is free, doors open at 3pm and prize giving is at 4:15pm.

NO LATE ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED

If you enter something in the show, please help clear up afterwards and be sure to take your own entries home. Buckets and black sacks will be provided to help with the operation. Please do not expect others to clear up for you.

Some hints for the Domestic classes based upon judge's comments.

Follow any recipes and sizes when they are supplied in the schedule, make sure that ingredients are evenly sized when cut and well mixed where applicable.

Make sure that preserves are set, displayed in a clean jar and labelled as per the schedule. Take care to wipe off any spillages when filling.

Some hints for the Floral art classes based upon judge's comments.

Ensure that all material used is in good condition and coordinate the colours of any containers and material. The focus of the arrangement should be towards the centre and accessories can be detrimental. When staging arrangements make sure that they are within any size restrictions mentioned in the schedule. Remember that any flower or foliage that droops after the arrangement has been displayed and falls outside of the given dimensions could cause the arrangement to be disqualified.

Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

- August 8th Ponds & Water Gardens – Mrs Janet Bryant
- August 9th Outing to **Higham Park Stately Home & Gardens, near, Canterbury**
The coach will pick up from Meopham School at 10am. The cost is £13 per person for entry and coach seat.
- September 12th Hints for Competition Cooking – Mrs Geraldine Sampson
- September 17th Autumn Show as detailed above.
- September 29th Visit to **Highgrove House gardens**
The club has been invited to visit the home of HRH the Prince of Wales. Every member should have already received notification of this event. If the visit is over-subscribed there will be a draw for the 25 places at the meeting on Monday 8th August.
- October 10th The Royal Palaces Gardens Mr James Buttress
- November 14th Orchids & Flower Power Dr D A Griffiths

Forthcoming Events at Cobham Gardeners Society

- September 10th Autumn Show at the Meadow Rooms in Cobham.
Starts at 3:15pm and admission is free.
- October 1st Mushroom & Fungi Recognition at Bedgebury Pinetum
- October 12th The society's treasurer/acting secretary Alan Holland will speak about 'Butterflies, Moths & other insects in your garden'
The meeting starts at 8pm in the Meadow Rooms. There is no charge for visitors but you pay for your coffee and biscuits.

Recent Events

May 9th **Domestic Gardens of Nearby Continental Europe - David Way**

He showed slides of the many gardens he has visited and noted how often the White Garden at Sissinghurst has been imitated.

June 13th **Visit to Southover, Grove Lane, Hunton, Maidstone**

On a fine but chilly evening we visited the Way's garden. Both David and his wife are dedicated gardeners who work an area of over an acre without any help. They have many interesting flowers and shrubs, which they have collected from all over Europe. When David first moved in he was greatly influenced by Sissinghurst and part of the garden is separated into "rooms" divided by yew hedges. Mrs Way's passion is wildlife and nature and she has built an eco hedge from prunings. One tree that may soon become popular is the Swan Cypress as it tolerates both floods and drought. On arrival at the Hop Pole for our refreshments we were informed somewhat tersely that we had arrived too late for food! The committee apologises for this disappointment which happened in spite of phone calls to confirm the date. If anybody has not yet been reimbursed please contact a committee member.



Elizabeth Thomas

June 25th **Nurstead Garden Fare**



Elizabeth Thomas

The plant stall and tombola raised £252.20 for our funds. This was a magnificent effort and the committee would like to thank all those who donated prizes, plants and their time to make this a success. Particular thanks to Jennifer Ward who worked so hard in organising this event not only on the day but also during the months and weeks prior to the fete.

July 11th **Visit to Castle Farm at Shoreham**

Following our talk by the owner, Mrs Caroline Alexander, last year, we had a glorious evening to visit the lavender fields at their peak and be shown the processes of drying flowers and extracting their essential oils which is carried out on their premises. They are keen to develop new applications for the essential oils they produce for example lavender essences for use in cooking. After the tour we sampled some of their produce in the shop.

Update on the wildflower meadow

During June, the red campion was superseded by moon daisies and there are also verbascum, mallow, cow parsley and ragwort in flower.

Jo Latimer (Photograph by Jeff Latimer)



Historical Snippet

Phlox

Botanical Name: *Phlox*. Family: *Polemoniaceae*

Native phloxes are found only in North America, but they belong to the widespread polemonium family, which includes Jacob's ladder. The perennial phloxes from the East coast came to Britain first. Their name was originally applied to another flower, described by Theophrastus but now unidentified, and is derived from the Free *phlox*, meaning "flame". In 1732 a phlox was mentioned by the botanist Joann Jacob Dillenius as one of the many plants in Dr. James Sherard's famous garden at Eltham. Sherard commissioned Dillenius to write a description of his garden, and he also introduced him to Linnaeus, who, Dillenius had said disdainfully, "had thrown all botany into confusion. Linnaeus soon converted Dillenius so well that he was "in tears" when he left, and presented Linnaeus with a copy of his Hortus Elthamensis and several North American plants (which might well have included the phlox).

Sherard's phlox was the *Phlox paniculata*, which gets its name from its formation of flowers in panicles or loosely bunched clusters. It is the ancestor of our perennial border phloxes. Another eastern American phlox is *Phlox subulata*, named by Linnaeus from the Latin *subula* (an awl), referring to its pointed leaves. The name everybody associates with phlox, however, is that of Thomas Drummond, who sent the annual *Phlox drummondii* home to Britain.

Drummond was curator of the Belfast Botanic Garden and went to America in 1831 as an independent plant collector, exploring much of the Northwest by himself. He sent his guide away and spent one winter completely alone in a brush hut. He survived by chewing on an old deerskin when, because of snow blindness, he could not see to shoot game. He deterred grizzlies by rattling his specimen box at them, but this was less effective when he got between a mother and her cub and was nearly killed. He later survived a shipboard epidemic of cholera, nearly starved while wintering

The BIG weed

When I finally remembered to remove this magnificent thistle it was well over 7ft high.

Does anybody want to admit to having a larger weed in their garden?



Jo Latimer (Photograph by Jeff Latimer)

alone on Galveston Island, lost the use of his hand for two months, and suffered such severe boils that he was unable to lie down. In spite of all this, he applied for a grant of land in Texas, intending to bring his family over to America. In the meantime he went to Cuba, but in 1835, he died there from unrecorded causes. One of the last plants he sent home was the *Phlox drummondii*, which Sir Joseph Hooker of Kew named in his honour, to "serve as a frequent memento of its unfortunate discoverer". Soon Victorian gardeners were developing and hybridizing it.

The phlox's beauty was appreciated from the start. Only seven years after Drummond's phlox was sent to Britain it was seen by James Drummond, Thomas's brother, growing in Australia. Peter Kalm included phloxes among the flowers that caused America to "abound with the finest red imaginable". They come in many colours but mostly variation of fiery red and magenta. Few gardeners can resist them, and Vita Sackville-West called the "monuments of solidity," but also said they smelled like pigsties. Whether this is true or not (and most people are unacquainted with pigsties these days), there are few modern gardens without them.

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



Ketley's : Jo Latimer