

# MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



## Winter 2005

### Spring Show 2<sup>nd</sup> April 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 page 4 of the 2005 Programme. All entry details should be given to our Show Secretary Jayne Macknish between 6 and 9pm on Thursday March 30<sup>th</sup>. 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.*

## **Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events**

- March 14<sup>th</sup>      Container Planting – Mrs Carole Ross of Millbrook Garden Centre
- April 11<sup>th</sup>      Bee Keeping – Mr Brian Wood
- May 9<sup>th</sup>          Domestic Gardens of Nearby Continental Europe –  
Mr David Way
- June 11<sup>th</sup>        Woburn Abbey Garden Show/Bletchley Park  
Jackie Fullalove is organizing this trip where you can visit either the garden show at Woburn Abbey OR travel onto Bletchley Park where the Enigma code was broken during WWII. Please contact her for more details.
- June 13<sup>th</sup>        Visit to Southover, Grove Lane, Hunton, Maidstone.  
This garden, featured in The National Gardens Scheme, is the home of Mr David Way our May speaker. The 1.5 acre prize winning garden is in a delightful country setting with an ever expanding plant collection in wide range of situations and wildlife habitats. We will be provided with directions and parking will be no problem. We will meet there at 7pm. If anyone needs transport please let any committee know. The charge for garden entry and refreshments at the nearby Hop Pole will be £8 per person.
- July 11<sup>th</sup>         Visit to Castle Farm at Shoreham  
Following our talk by Mrs Caroline Alexander last year, we will visit the lavender fields and be shown the process of drying flowers on their premises. We will meet there at 7 pm and let a committee member know if you need transport. The charge which includes coffee and biscuits will be £4 per head.
- June 25<sup>th</sup>        Nurstead Garden Fare  
The Gardeners will be having a stall and Jennifer Ward has kindly offered to co-ordinate the club fund raising efforts this year. She will be asking for people to provide tombola prizes, plants and help on the day. This annual event is well attended and has been a good fund raising exercise in previous years. Start thinking about this now and sow a few extra seeds or pot-on a few extra seedlings so we have a plant stall fit for a garden association.
- August 9<sup>th</sup>        Outing to Higham Park Stately Home & Gardens  
The house is located at Bridge near Canterbury and we will run a coach to transport us there. The cost will be £13 per person for entry and coach seat. Vera Bingham is collecting names and money. Details of times and meeting place are yet to be arranged.

## **Recent Events**

November 8<sup>th</sup>    Badger Watch    Mr Derek Pettit

Badgers are present in many of our gardens so it was a pleasure to learn more about their habits and preferred habitats. They are omnivores who can live for between 12-15 years and weigh up to 30lbs. With their strong claws, which are used only for digging, they have been known to move rocks up to a hundredweight. Many farmers, who have had to fence against rabbits, are annoyed to find their fences destroyed by badgers where these fences cross their runs. Fortunately a simple solution similar to a cat-flap means that the badgers can use their runs whilst the rabbits are kept off of the crops. Badger setts are protected by law and can only be moved by licence after 28 days.

### December 13<sup>th</sup> Christmas Supper

Once again members and their friends enjoyed an excellent meal followed by our after dinner speaker Mr Maurice Tripp who entertained us with anecdotes from his many years in amateur dramatics.

### January 10th AGM

Prior to the serious business of the evening, Ann Knief gave an illustrated talk about the Italian influence in British gardens. After a short refreshment break the AGM was held.

### February 13th Snowdrops at Meadow View

Once again Barbara Macknish opened her garden to the public to view her magnificent snowdrops. In spite of the bitter cold over 120 visitors came and £260 was raised for the Eleanor Foundation. Barbara took many orders for snowdrops and expects to raise an additional £100 when these are filled.

### February 14th Vegetable Growing Mr Richard Bailey

With the Spring Show looming, Mr Bailey, a National Vegetable Society speaker came to give hints on growing and showing vegetables. Although he obviously grows vegetables to a high standard, he was also able to explain how he grew vegetables to feed his family of six and passed on many useful tips on getting good yields, the best varieties to use and when to plant.

Following the talk, the annual prizes for the Selected Item and Member's Choice classes were both presented to Maureen Parnell. The members' show starts in February and exhibits for the Member's Choice can include own grown plants, flower arrangements or home made wines or jams. The classes are normally judged by a member of the committee and points are awarded out of 10 for each entry. If a member enters more than one exhibit in a class, then the highest score is taken.

Each entrant's total points are taken from the points awarded at the nine members' shows. By entering something every time your chances of winning the overall prize are greatly enhanced. The winner of each section will be awarded a prize of £2.50 and a cup at the AGM. It could be YOU!

### **Plant Stall**

Members are reminded that they may bring along to the plant stall any surplus plants, labelled and priced for sale. They will receive 50% of the takings from the sale of plants. Members are asked to provide the plant stall with a list of plants showing the asking price and the quantity of each. A higher percentage from the sale of gardening equipment may be received. Members may advertise on the notice board without charge, but if a sale is achieved a donation to the Association would be appreciated.

## Historical Snippet

### Zinnia

Botanical Name : Zinnia.

Family : Compositas

The zinnia like the cosmos (from the Greek *cosmos*, "beautiful"), was sent from Mexico by Professor Casimir Comes de Ortego to his friend the Marchioness of Bute in Madrid.

The name "zinnia" comes from Johann Gottfried Sinn, who was a medical professor at Gottingen University. He wrote a description of the flora around Gottingen and, in 1753, he also published a book on the anatomy of the eye. He was the first to describe the iris of the eye in detail, a description that is accurate even now. He also discovered that the eyeball of a man is larger than that of a woman, regardless of their height. He is said to have written his book under severe but unspecified "domestic difficulties". Could his wife have been jealous of his passion for eyeballs? He died in 1759, aged only thirty-two, from a "most consumptive disease", and is remembered by a part of the eye called "Zinn's zonule", as well as our garden flower.

The zinnia in its native Mexico was called mal de ojos by the Spaniards, because the flowers were small and considered ugly to the eye. In fact, although they were named for Sinn by Linnaeus, nobody took much notice of them for two hundred years.

Sinn might have been pleased to see how nicely zinnias strike the eye these days. They were not really improved until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when one flower in a whole field of experimental zinnia, grown by Burpee, was used as the basis for breeding most of the hybrids we know. It was the in the sixty-sixth row and known in the trade as "Old 66".

The Marchioness of Bute who had sent the seeds to London was wife of the British ambassador to Madrid and daughter-in-law to John Stuart Bute (for whom the stewartia tree is named). Bute was the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. When Frederick, Prince of Wales, died "by standing in the wet to see some trees planted" and getting pneumonia, his widow Augusta continued to supervise the Kew gardens closely. In 1785 Bute had published a nine volume Botanical Tables, "composed solely for the amusement of the fair sex". One hopes they appreciated it. His admiration for the fair sex included Princess Augusta, and "as soon as the Prince was dead, they

walked more and more, in honour of his memory".

Bute died an appropriate botanist's death. He fell off a cliff while reaching for a rare plant and never recovered from his injuries. In the language of flowers, zinnia stands for "thoughts of absent friends".

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

## Poetry Corner

### The Garden

You go into the garden. It's a good place to grow. You pull out a little weed and some nasty little worry leaves your mind. How fascinating! And there! A tiny ant. So bright and brave. It could be you. Could it?

And look at that rose! You are reminded of your true love. So beautiful and with sharp thorns.

Now contemplate the compost heap. It's just like your mind, your memory. Breaking down, but getting richer.

Aha! The trellis. Full of beans and peas. You need a trellis sometimes. We all need a little support.

Oh dear. A stem has broken. Something has come to nothing. A hope is dashed. But it's okay. You will grow back. The sun will shine again.

But look at that beautiful luxuriant fern! You are reminded of the book you want to write. Some sort of fabulous unfurling from some exotic part of your mind.

A bird sings and flits by. It scratches in the soil. Your heart is a bird. It flies up towards the sun. The creeper needs cutting back. The petty worries, the nagging inhibitions, the nasty and the narrow. Those who drag you down. Cut yourself free.

Oh, look at that! A new leaf! You can always turn over a new leaf. It will turn itself back again of course.

Ah yes, the garden. The fruits, the shoots, the blooms. The fragrance. The light and shade. And you - you are in love and growing.

(Contributed by Vivian Simms to whom it was sent by a friend of hers in Australia)