

MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2006

Christmas Social Monday 11th December 2006 at 7 for 7:30pm

Tickets priced at £17 each will be on sale for our Christmas supper until the end of November. Please make your choice of main course and dessert from the menu on the next page. Again this year we ask that you bring you own 'wine' but water and glasses will be provided. Our speaker this year will be Lt Col M J Martin, Retired who will talk about his experiences in the Services.

Christmas Menu

Starter

Tomato Soup with Basil Pesto

Main Course

Roast Turkey with traditional trimmings & seasonal vegetables
or
Roast Red Pepper with Lentil & Rice Stuffing

Dessert

Caramel & Chocolate Mousse
or
Blackberry & Apple Pavlova
or
Ginger Pudding with Toffee Sauce
or
Cheese & Biscuits

Tea/Coffee & Mints

Recent Events

14th August

House Plants & Plant Clinic

David Godden

Mr Godden gave us a very informative presentation on looking after house plants. Topics covered included watering, positioning, feeding, pests and repotting.

11th September

Protecting Garden Wildlife

Simon Crosland

Mr Crosland runs a company called Growing Home and he brought examples of the many products he sells from bird feeders to insecticides. He explained how to attract beneficial insect into the garden by providing the right environment for them. He demonstrated some of the wildlife houses he'd brought with him before showing us some of the other products such as plant supports and unusual hanging basket designs. Those present were able to purchase products at a discount rate.

13th September

Visit to Lullingstone Castle and the World Garden



Thank you to everyone who came on the visit. In spite of the rapidly fading light we were able to enjoy Tom Hart Dyke's tour of the World Garden he is creating in the grounds of the old walled garden. As it started to rain we retreated into the house for a tour lead by Guy Hart Dyke before being treated to an amazing show of thunder and lightening as we all left.

Kathy McNicol & Jo Latimer

16th September

Autumn Show

There were 196 entries to the show (201 in last year's Autumn Show) from 17 entrants (15 last year). All classes had entries and all exhibitors won a prize.

The judges were impressed not only the number of entries but also by the quality of the exhibits. The trophies were awarded as follows:

Championship Cup	Barbara Macknish & Doug Nicholson
Townsend Vase	Anne Nicholson
Goodwin Cup (best exhibit classes 1-3)	Barbara Macknish
Stevens Cup (best exhibit classes 4-17)	Gloria Kinch
Hill Cup	Winifred Hughes
Coronation Cup	Claire Williams
Harvel Floral Bowl	Di Spree
Garden News Shield	Chris Spree
National Vegetable Society Medal	Chris Spree
Garden News Top Tray Gold Award	Douglas Nicholson

Thanks go to everyone who helped set up and dismantle the show, those who baked wonderful cakes to sell and who ran the refreshments and to Vera for running the raffle.

The show dates for next year are 24th March and 15th September. The specified bulbs for Classes 1 & 2 of the Spring Show are **Blue Delft** (Hyacinth) and **Las Vegas** (Narcissus).

Barbara Macknish (Show Secretary)

9th October

Irises the Year Round

B. Baughan

As President of the British Iris Society, Mr Baughan was well qualified to speak on the subject. He showed many slides of exotic looking irises showing their variety of forms and colour and the fact that there are varieties that flower at most times of the year. There was a great deal of interest in the plants that he had brought along for sale.

Forthcoming Events

15th November 2006

Meopham Village Hall Management AGM

All are welcome to attend the meeting which starts at 8pm in Meopham Village Hall.

11th December 2006

Christmas Supper

8th January 2007

AGM with Cheese & Wine and a talk by Barbara Macknish about 'Creating a Vegetable Garden from Scratch'.

11th February 2007

Wildlife of the North Downs

Mr R Canis

18th February 2007

Garden Open – Meadow View, Hodsoll Street

Come and enjoy the display of snowdrops and hellebores between 11am and 3:30pm. Refreshments available and plant stall. £1 entry in aid of The Ellenor Foundation

12th March 2007

Gardening in Dry Conditions

Mr H Newman

Summer Garden Visit:

A date to put into your new diary!

7th June 2007

**Visit to Bardown Oast Farm & Orchard Cottage gardens,
Stonegate, East Sussex**

by kind permission of Nigel and Susan Bowie

Bardown Oast Farm comprises a twin oast house built in 1864 and converted to a family home in the 1970's and Orchard Cottage, plus 85 acres of land in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The estate, which is divided by the river Limden, includes pasture for livestock as well as extensive gardens and many mature trees and shrubs.

In the fields around Orchard Cottage we will see free range chickens, goats, Berkshire pigs, and a pedigree Sussex beef herd. The cottage garden has mixed borders, a rockery, fish pond, and a small orchard, with extensive view across the East Sussex countryside.

Garden rooms surround the Oast; a pool garden, a Rhododendron walk, ornamental duck enclosure, and a walled fruit and vegetable garden. Espalier and fan-trained fruit cover the walls, a large fruit cage protects currants, gooseberries, raspberries and strawberries. Beyond the vegetable beds is a 65ft Victorian greenhouse in working order with potting shed and apple store where two established grape vines, wall-trained tender fruit and ornamental plants are housed.

We will visit the gardens in the afternoon. Weather permitting we will enjoy a cream tea on the lawn. The cost of this coach trip will be £10-£15 (depending on numbers) and the entrance fee to the garden, which includes the refreshments, will be donated to the Hospice in the Weald charity.

Cobham Gardeners Society

6th December Christmas Party at the Meadow Rooms

14th February The speaker is creator of Lullingstone World Garden, Tom Hart Dyke.

Visit to Yalding Organic Gardens 12th July 2006

Photos : Ann Kneif



Historical Snippet

LOBELIA

Common Name : Lobelia, cardinal flower.
Botanical Name : Lobelia.
Family: Lobeliaceae.

The blue lobelia we use most often in our gardens is *Lobelia erinus*, which was imported from South Africa in the 1800s and immediately became very popular as an edging or container plant. Its bright clear blue was much in demand for coloured “ribbon” plantings. In the nineteenth century colour was rediscovered like a new dimension. Bright colours and their juxtapositions interested not only gardeners but also artists and thinkers. Artists began painting our of doors using new pigment paints like rose madder, cobalt blue, and cadmium yellow, for the first time available in handy metal tubes. The theory of colour became a preoccupation ranging from the bedding plans of gardeners to Goethe’s studies.

Newly imported tropical plants from South America and Africa were used to make coloured parterres, of geometric beds with different flowers outlining their design. Strong flower colours, like yellow, red, white, and blue were in great demand. The *Lobelia erinus*, whose bright, clear-blue blooms last all summer and form low, thick carpets resistant to rain and wind damage was included in moist kinds of geometric gardening, and it still is. *Erinus* may be from the Greek *eri*, “early”, meaning “spring flowering”. But although the plant is perennial and will last through the winter if brought inside, we are

more apt to plant it outside in spring and let the frost kill it.

Lobelia cardinalis is a North American plant – supposedly called *cardinalis* by Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I, because the colour reminded her of a cardinal’s robe. *Lobelia siphilitica*, also from North America, was described by Peter Kalm as a cure for the pox (syphilis). *Lobelia cardinalis* and *Lobelia siphilitica* are both perennials that grow well in American borders. They are clear patriotic red and blue, respectively.

Lobelia was named by Charles Plumier for Matthias de l’Obel, who corrected John Gerard’s famous *Herball* (and accused him of pilfering material). He also attempted a new classification system of plants, subdividing them by leaf characteristics. He wrote a history of cereals, a description of roses, and instructions for brewing beer. His own name, Obel, comes from *abele*, the white poplar, and his family crest was *Cadore et Spe*, symbolized by the with undersurface of poplar leaves, demonstrating candor, and the green upper surface, hope.

Lobelia erinus comes in white and pink too. But like most good blues it really defeats its purpose to have it in other colours. Its wonderful blue fairly shimmers, and pots of it look like dished-up summer sky, of howls of glinting Mediterranean sea that, even on dreary days on noisy town terraces, we can keep right there beside us.

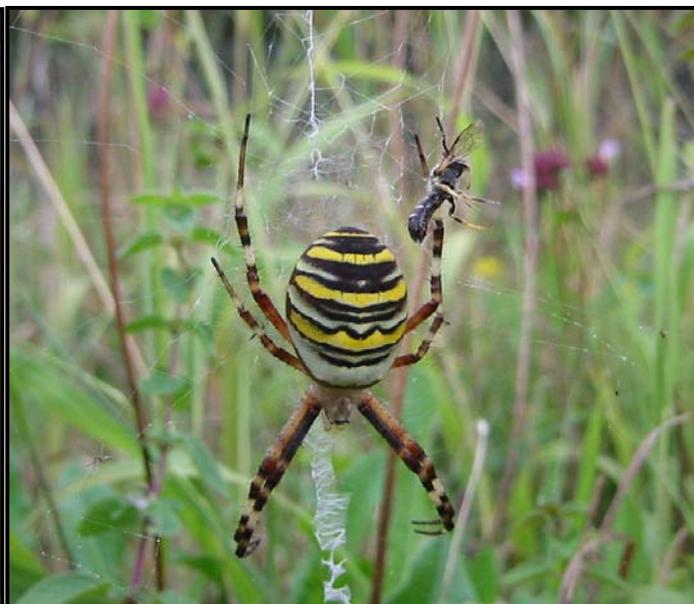
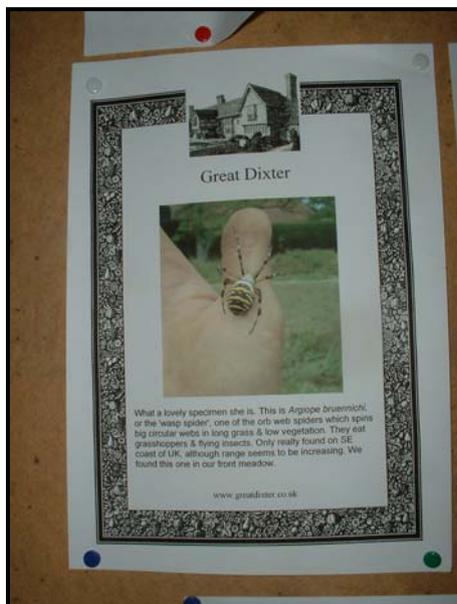
(Adapted from *100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names* by Diana Wells)

Argiope Bruennichi (Wasp Spider)

As mentioned in the picture from Great Dixter (below left), the range of this spider appears to be increasing and from the picture below right we can attest to its appearance in Meopham. Our picture was taken in an area that we had purposely left un-mown this year. We shall be looking very carefully for descendants in 2007. The spider’s increasing range may well be another manifestation of global warming/climate change. The fact that we are well into November with green leaves on the trees and with ladybirds and lacewings still active is perhaps further evidence.

Photo : Mike Hughes

Photo : Jo Latimer



Visit to Great Dixter 23rd August 2006

Photos: Mike Hughes

