

MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Photo: Jo Latimer

Spring 2007

Summer Show 11th June 2007

Our summer social event this year will be a small show with the winners voted for by those present. There is no charge to members but for a mere £2 non-members will also be welcome to come along and take part. There will be a quiz and a raffle and refreshments will be provided. There is no need to pre-book your entries just bring them along on the evening and exhibit. The three classes are as follows:

1. A fragrant rose
2. A bowl of herbs (maximum 30cm (12") in diameter)
3. A vase of garden flowers (Association vases will be provided)

Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

- May 14th Gales, Greenhouses & Global Warming Ian Currie
- June 7th Coach trip to Bardown Oast Farm & Orchard
The coach will pick up from the following locations at the times indicated:
- | | |
|---------------|---------|
| Norwood Lane | 10:00am |
| Camer Corner | 10:10am |
| Village Hall | 10:20am |
| Newlands Lane | 10:30am |
- We will stop at Bewl Water where a Ploughman's lunch will be available, if required, at an additional cost of £5 (to be pre-booked with Elizabeth Thomas).
- June 11th Summer Social as detailed above
- June 21st Visit to the World Garden at Lullingstone
If you are unable to make the club visit on July 11th, this visit is being organised by Kathy McNichol. The cost is £6 and does not include a tour of the house.
- June 23rd Nurstead Fete
This annual event is well attended and has been a good fund raising exercise in previous years. Connie Smith has very kindly offered to co-ordinate this for us so please let her have prizes for the tombola by our Summer Social meeting. She would like to hear from anyone who can help on the stall during the day. If possible, please sow a few extra seeds or pot-on a few extra seedlings so we can have a plant stall fit for a garden association. Please ensure that any plant donations are labelled and deliver them to Nurstead after 8am on the morning of the fete.
- July 5th ARAMAD trip to Le Touquet
Le Touquet is a lovely seaside town with a beautiful beach and many cafes and restaurants where one can buy lunch, also interesting shops. We will leave Meopham at 7am and should be home by about 8pm. If you'd like to go please let Jackie Fullalove know asap.
- WEDNESDAY** Visit to Lullingstone Castle
July 11th Our tour starts at 7pm so please arrive by 6:45pm. The charge of £7 includes a guided tour of the World Garden and the house. Please let Hazel have names and money by the June meeting. Please note there will be no meeting at the village hall on Monday 9th July.
- August 13th Fruit Collections Brogdale Horticultural Trust
- October 17th Coach Outing to RHS Wisley
The society is entitled to make an annual visit to the gardens by coach and obtain free entry. The cost (to cover the coach hire) will be around £8. So put this date in your diary and listen out for further details.

Cobham Gardeners Society

For further details of these events please contact Chris or Di Spree:

June 9th Summer Show at the Meadow Rooms starting at 3:15pm
June 23rd Car outing to Goddington. Depart Meadow Rooms 9:30am.
July 17th Visit to Castle Farm, Shoreham. Meet there at 7pm

Istead Rise Gardeners Club

For further details of these events please contact Arthur Hills:

June 7th Bees Mr March
June 16th Coach trip to Kew Gardens
July 5th Herbaceous Plants Keith Mexter
July 14th Summer Show from 2:30pm at the Memorial Hall.
August 2nd Social Evening

Meetings start at 8pm at the Memorial Hall, Lewis Road, Istead Rise

Recent Events

February 12th Wildlife of the North Downs Robert Canis

Mr Canis from the Kent Wildlife Trust took us on a fascinating slide show tour along the North Downs from west to east showing the various different habitats and the flora and fauna that inhabit them.

February 18th Snowdrops & Hellebores at Meadow View, Hodsall Street

Once again Barbara Macknish opened her garden to the public to view her magnificent snowdrops and hellebores and raised about £400 for the Eleanor Foundation.

March 12th Gardening in Dry Conditions Hillary Newman

Fortunately Mr Newman had recovered from his laryngitis just in time to speak to us. As ever his talk was presented in an informative and entertaining manner.

March 24th Spring Show

Despite the cold snap in the week prior to the show our exhibitors were able to put on a superb show. There were 200 entries from 19 exhibitors and all judges had a hard time reaching their decisions.

The outstanding exhibits of Barbara Macknish had her carrying home a trolley load of prizes. Winifred Hughes won the Oldham Goblet for the best floral art exhibit.

The tea room did a roaring trade as those present enjoyed the refreshments which included delicious home made cakes. Thank you to everybody who exhibited and helped 'behind the scenes' to make a very successful show.



Photos: Mike Hughes

Historical Snippet

BLUEBELL

Common Names: *Virginia Bluebell*, *English Bluebell*, *Spanish Hyacinth*.

Botanical Names: *Mertensia virginica*, *Endymion non-scripta*, *Hyacinth non-scripta*.

Families: *Boraginaceae*, *Liliceae*.

Several flowers, including Canterbury bells and harebells, are sometimes called "bluebells", but the two that concern us here are the American bluebell and the English bluebell. Both, in their respective countries, turn spring woodlands into shimmering sheets of blue, as if the sky itself were reflected back onto earth. They are not related except in their capacity to perform this miracle.

The American bluebell is called *Mertensia virginica* after Franz Karl Mertens, a German botanist and director of a business school in Bremen. The name is sometimes wrongly attributed to his son, Karl Heinrich, for he too was a botanist, though neither has much to do with the damp Virginia woodland where the *mertensia* flourishes.

The Virginia bluebell was first sent back to Europe by John Banister, a young clergyman sent to Virginia by Bishop Henry Compton to be in charge of the spiritual health of the American colonies. Although he specialized in freshwater snails, Bannister was also a botanist who wrote about a world of plants so strange that he feared other might think them "chameras" of his own mind. He died while botanizing, apparently shot by a soldier who mistook him for a wild animal.

William Turner called the native English bluebell "commune Hyacinthus" or "crowtoes" and said that its roots made a very good glue. John Gerard called it "Hyacinthus Anglicus" and recommended the roots as starch for stiffening ruffs. It does not have the "inscription" AIAI on the petals so it was called non-scripta. Another of its names was "scilla" from the Greek for "sea squill". The *Spanish scilla*, which has flower all round the stem, is sometimes confused with the English bluebell, which has flower only along the lowers side of its drooping stalk, because both are found wild and sometimes hybridized in English woods.

The name Endymion comes from the Greek youth Endymion, with whom Selene, the moon, fell in love. He was a shepherd, and she looked down on him in the field and was smitten by his extraordinary beauty. She managed (by her own or Zeus's exertions) to make him sleep forever, so she could always flicker over his body and kiss him where he lay. Actually, bluebells, massed in a wood, bring the whole noontime sky flickering down on them, not just the moon, and like Endymion, they will do it forever if they are left alone.

Adapted from "How to enjoy your weeds" by Audrey Wynne Hatfield

Poetry Corner

Springtime

Oh, spring came to my garden
And caught it unaware
Wearing just a few old leaves
And a dejected air.

But when spring left my garden,
Its work so deftly done,
Many, many Daffodils
Were dancing in the sun.

Velma D. BATES. (Internet)

Rainbow Treasure

I have found the treasure
That lies at the Rainbow's end;
Wealth beyond computing
Is mine to give or lend.

Opals of an April dawn,
Gold of a shimmering noon,
Amethysts of the sunset,
Pearls with the glow of the moon.

Would you like to share it?
There's more than enough for all
In my Iris Garden
Against a grey stone wall.

AGNES HAYES POST (Internet)