

# MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Tulip Tree, Bardown Oast Farm - Photo : Jo Latimer

## Summer 2007

### Autumn Show September 15<sup>th</sup> 2007

Calling all members to enter. If you have never exhibited before, just have a go. Make sure you follow precisely the schedule on pages 12-13 of the 2007 Programme. All entry details should be given to our Show Secretary Barbara Macknish between 6 and 9pm on Thursday September 13<sup>th</sup>. The fee is 10p for each entry. Exhibits may be staged on the Friday evening between 9 and 9:30pm and between 10am and 12:45pm on the day of the show. The doors open at 3pm and admission to the show is free. Take the opportunity to buy plants, raffle tickets, tea and a slice of cake before the prize giving 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

September 10<sup>th</sup> Gardener's Question Time Helen Yemm

September 15<sup>th</sup> Autumn Show as detailed above.

October 8<sup>th</sup> Trees & Shrubs for the Small Garden Paul Twyman

October 17<sup>th</sup> Coach trip to RHS Gardens at Wisley

The cost of this trip will be £7.50 for members and £8.50 for guests. We plan to leave the village around 9:30am. If you are interested please listen for further details at our meetings or let a committee member know.

November 12<sup>th</sup> Regeneration of the Forests of Hong Kong & China Alun Griffithis

December 10<sup>th</sup> Christmas Supper

### Spring Show Bulbs 2008

The named bulbs for the 2008 Spring Show are Woodstock (Hyacinth) and Camelot (Narcissus). These bulbs have been chosen as they are expected to be widely available and will hopefully flower at the right time.

### Cobham Gardeners Society

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

September 8<sup>th</sup> Outing to Audley End near Saffron Walden. Depart Meadow Rooms 9:30am.

September 15<sup>th</sup> Autumn Show at the Meadow Rooms in Cobham.  
Starts at 3:15pm and admission is free.

October 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting TBA

October 13<sup>th</sup> Autumn Plant Sale at 'Rozel', Round St, Cobham. Starts 10am.

November 14<sup>th</sup> AGM and presentation of trophies

December 12<sup>th</sup> Christmas Party

### Istead Rise Gardeners Club

For further details of these events please contact Arthur Hills or Sandy Walsham:

September 6<sup>th</sup> Alpines – Mr Wiseman

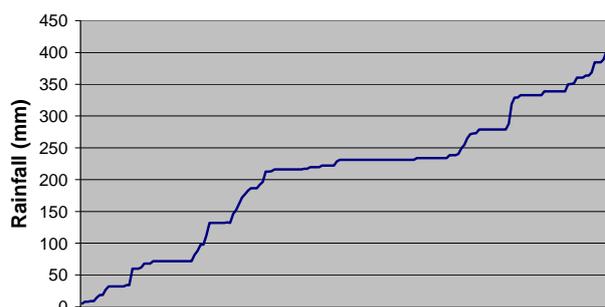
September 8<sup>th</sup> Autumn Show at the Memorial Hall, Lewis Road, Istead Rise.  
Open to viewing at 2:30pm and admission is 20p.

October 4<sup>th</sup> Pruning - Mr Newman

November 1<sup>st</sup> AGM and 'relaxing evening'

December 6<sup>th</sup> Christmas Social Evening

January - June 2007



This graph shows the cumulative rainfall from January 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2007. During this time the total rainfall was almost 406mm or 16". April was particularly hot and dry with the only rain being 3mm on 26<sup>th</sup>. February, May and June all recorded above average rainfall. Temperatures were also between 1° and 5°C above average.

## Recent Events

May 14<sup>th</sup>                      Gales Greenhouses & Global Warming                      Ian Currie

Once again Ian Currie filled our brains full of weather statistics in a fascinating talk.

June 7<sup>th</sup>                      Visit to Bardown Oast Farm

Having stopped at Bewl Water for lunch we were treated to a tour of a most interesting garden by the owners Nigel and Susan Bowie. Nigel showed us some of the livestock they have and the cottage garden whilst Susan took us around the gardens by the Oast House including the magnificent Victorian greenhouse where they have grapes vines and tender fruit. The view across the valley from the potting shed was much envied. Fortunately the weather was good enough that we were able to enjoy our cream tea on the lawn as planned. Thanks to Elizabeth Thomas for organising the trip.



Photos – Jo Latimer

June 11<sup>th</sup>                      Summer Social

Our summer social began with members arranging their exhibits for the three classes. This was followed by a quiz before we were able to enjoy the refreshments provided. During the break those present voted for their favourite entries and the winners were as follows:

- |                             |                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. A fragrant rose          | Sue Appleton    |
| 2. A bowl of herbs          | Val Fairweather |
| 3. A vase of garden flowers | Ann Nicholson   |

June 23<sup>rd</sup>                      Nurstead Fete

The plant stall and tombola raised £334.50 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 Connie Smith for working so hard in organising this event not only on the day but also during the weeks prior to the fete.

July 11<sup>th</sup>                      Visit to Lullingstone Castle and the World Garden

On a rare dry evening, members and their guests enjoyed a guided tour around the house with Guy Hart Dyke before being shown around the gardens by the ever enthusiastic Tom. We also had the opportunity to purchase plants at the plant sales area.



Photos – Jo Latimer

## Historical Snippet

### Petunia

**Botanical Name:** *Petunia*.

**Family:** Solonaceae

The petunia did not come to Europe from South America until the nineteenth century. At the same time it was being imported to France, Napoleon was putting his relatives on thrones all over Europe. His brother was on the Spanish throne, so there was no objection from the Spanish government when a French commission was sent to evaluate resources in South America and, in 1823, sent *Petunia nyctaginiflora*, or the “night scented petunia” (now *P. axillaris*) to Paris. In 1831, James Tweedie sent *Petunia violacea*, or the “purple-flowering petunia” to the Glasgow botanical gardens. All our modern hybrids are descended from these two petunias.

Tweedie had been the head gardener at the Royal Botanic Garden at Edinburgh. But other passions pulled him, for when he was over fifty, he left this comfort and security and immigrated to South America. He supported himself by keeping a small shop in Buenos Aires, from where he went on botanizing trips all over the continent. Once he walked two thousand miles and returned so shabby and dirty his friends did not even recognize him.

Unprotected Europeans out exploring were in danger of terrible, if justifiable, revenge if they ran into the persecuted native inhabitants. Tweedie survived these dangers and political intrigue and still managed to explore Patagonia when he was over seventy (once living on pine cones when he was near starvation). He died in Santa Catalina, aged eighty six. In his life we see the pull of strange passions, and their rewards.

The young Charles Darwin, who was in South America at the same time, must have seen wild purple petunias growing everywhere, as Tweedie did, but there is no record of his sending them back to Joseph Hooker at Kew. By the time Darwin died though, in 1882, they were popular garden flowers. In 1834 John London called petunias “the most splendid ornaments of the flower garden,” and a Victorian gardener is said to have made a petunia bed twenty-one feet in circumference by training petunias over metal hoops to form a “table”.

The name for petunia comes from petun, a Brazilian word for “tobacco”, and petunias can be crossed with their tobacco cousins. Luther Burbank advertised a “nicotunia” plant, which was a cross between petunias and large-flowering nicotianas.

Petunias continue to be hybridized to be stripy, fluffy, frilly, and generally as different as it is possible to make them. However the seeds of these hybrids will revert quickly to the small, aggressive purple wildflower that Tweedie and Darwin saw everywhere on their travels. We nurture the new hybrids, buy them afresh every year, and pluck off their sodden blossoms after

every rain. If we wanted to, we could simply let the old purple petunias seed themselves every year, and they would pretty much fill our gardens, being strong enough to survive everything. But that, of course, probably won't happen – at least not while gardeners are still some of America's best shoppers and gardening is a multi-million-dollar business. So is tobacco, for that matter. Who would have thought that two South American weeds could have had such an influence on twentieth-century commerce and civilization. It only goes to show how little we know.

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

## Poetry Corner

### Will to Live

I think of all things that show a zest  
For life, the dandelion beats the rest.  
The little winged seeds from its white fluff ball  
Settle and grow with no urging at all.  
Settle in most unlikely places  
And soon there's a crop of dandelion faces.

They are man's worst pest, but a child's playthings.  
Sometimes I wish I had light down wings  
Like a dandelion seeds, and could settle at will  
On a velvety lawn or a sun-spread hill,  
And live with the eagerness and zest  
Of the wanton little dandelion pest.

### Mary Triplett

### A Child's Garden of Verses

In winter I get up at night  
And dress by yellow candle-light.  
In summer quite the other way  
I have to go to bed by day.

### Robert Louis Stevenson



Broomrape - Photo: Jo Latimer