

# MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Summer 2008



The Beth Chatto Gardens

Photo - Mike Hughes

Autumn Show September 13<sup>th</sup> 2008

**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 2008 Programme. All entry details should be given to our Show Secretary Barbara Macknish between 6 and 9pm on Thursday September 11<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 8 <sup>th</sup>	Alpines	Robert Wiseman
September 13 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Show as detailed above.	
October 13 <sup>th</sup>	General Vegetable Growing	Laurie Manser
November 10 <sup>th</sup>	Hop Farming in Kent	Robert Walton
December 8 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Supper	

## Spring Show Bulbs 2009

The named bulbs for the 2009 Spring Show are Aiolos (Hyacinth) and Best Seller (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 13 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Show at the Meadow Rooms in Cobham. Starts at 3:15pm and admission is free.
October 8 <sup>th</sup>	Meeting TBA
November 12 <sup>th</sup>	AGM and presentation of trophies
December 10 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Party

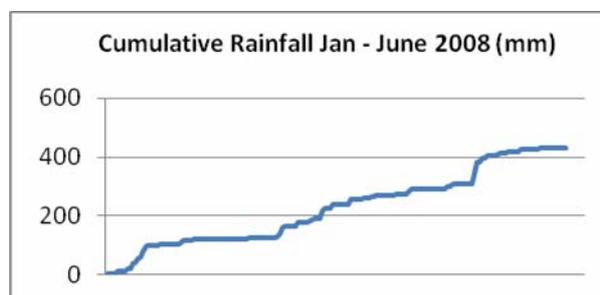
## Istead Rise Gardeners Club

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

September 4 <sup>th</sup>	Sweet Peas – Laurie Manser
September 13 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Show at the Memorial Hall, Lewis Road, Istead Rise. Open to viewing at 2:30pm and admission is 20p.
October 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Growing Vegetables for the Home – Ken Turner
November 6 <sup>th</sup>	AGM and 'relaxing evening'
December 4 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Social Evening

## Rainfall

This graph shows the cumulative rainfall from January 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2008. During this time the total rainfall was almost 433mm or 17" which is above average. Temperatures were generally above average with May being the warmest since 1914. However both April and June were the coolest since 2001 with the snow on April 6<sup>th</sup> causing shock to our unprotected seedlings.



## Recent Events

May 12<sup>th</sup> Aspects of Fuchsias

Ron Holmes

June 9<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 Gloria Kinch
2. A bowl of herbs Winifred Hughes
3. A vase of garden flowers Janet Oxford

June 14<sup>th</sup> Nurstead Fete



The plant stall raised £191.40 for our funds. This was a magnificent effort and the committee would like to thank all those who donated 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.

Photo – Jo Latimer

June 25<sup>th</sup> Visit to RHS Hyde Hall and The Beth Chatto Gardens

On a glorious summer day members and their guests enjoyed visit to both of these top class gardens. Thank you to Hazel Borrow for organising the day out.



Photos – Mike Hughes

## Owletts



Photos – Mike Hughes

Members and their guests enjoyed a stroll around the gardens before refreshments. Thank you to Jennifer Ward for preparing the delicious ploughmans supper and to Chris and Di Spree for opening their garden for us.

## Douglas Nicholson

I first met Douglas when I worked at DRG Sacks in Northfleet early in the 70's. I was a new member of staff and Douglas was one of the Directors on the engineering side. I shared an office with two of the engineering staff hence meeting Douglas. Douglas was always very pleasant, apart from one time when in the corridor of the offices I called him Douglas and was reminded that in the office he was Mr Nicholson. After I left DRG Sacks it wasn't until the early 80's when I moved to Meopham and joined the Garden Association that I met Douglas again. He remembered me and I was pleased to meet somebody I knew at the club.

Douglas was on the committee at this time, although I don't think he held any office. Douglas was also a member of the Meopham wine circle, as were several other members of the Garden Club.

Douglas was a very pleasant man who you could have a laugh with, who would if asked give you sound advice about gardening or even wine making. He was very dedicated to the Gardeners and was always available to help set up tables etc for shows, socials and any fundraising the club wanted to do. Being a very keen gardener he won numerous (I would think over the years hundreds) cups and trophies at the Spring, Summer and Autumn shows.

As well as winning prizes for his vegetables, Douglas also performed the position of Chairman of the Gardeners with professionalism and dedication. He was a well spoken man and well organised, but most of all he could make you feel at ease.

We have had several members over the past two decades that have given a lot of their time to making Meopham Gardeners what it is today a thriving and popular club to be a member of, who have passed away, they have all been missed, but losing Douglas as we have in the last few months will leave a void which will be difficult to fill.

R.I P

Hazel Borrow

## Important Notice

**As from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 Gravesham Borough Council have a total ban on parking on footpaths, kerbs and verges. This will apply to anyone who parks their vehicle outside the hall with their wheels on the curb or pavement and will be enforced with a hefty fine.**

## Historical Snippet

### Myrtle

Common Names: Myrtle, periwinkle.

Botanical Name: *Vinca*.

Family: *Apocynaceae*.

*In a churchyard near the canyon, where  
the myrtle doth entwine,  
There grow roses and other posies,  
fertilized by Clementine.*

What the Americans call myrtle is really vinca or periwinkle. The name is used because the leaves are similar to the aromatic Mediterranean bush myrtle, or *myrtus*.

Mediterranean myrtle was the symbol of both love and immortality, perhaps the two most important human preoccupations. It was used extensively and was considered an essential plant. Some stories said that Adam was allowed to take only three plants – wheat, dates and myrtle – from paradise. The myrtle nymphs taught the Greeks, via Apollo's son Aristaeus, the useful arts of making cheese, building bee hives, and cultivating olives; they used myrtle to tan leather (which retained the aromatic fragrance) and as a black hair dye. The aromatic leaves are perforated (which later made it an important "Christ Plant") supposedly because Phaedra, desperately in love with her stepson, Hippolytus, sat nervously pricking them while she watched him exercising. Unlike some other Greek heroes, he behaved very properly and rejected her love, which turned to despair. It all ended in tragedy when she hanged herself (on a myrtle tree), and his chariot reins caught on some myrtle branches and he was dragged to his death.

The vinca, with its tough, shiny leaves similar to myrtle's (but not aromatic), probably came to Britain with the Romans. "Vinca" comes from the Latin *vincio*, to bind, and the long, tough stalks were used by the Romans to make ceremonial wreaths often associated with sacrifices. In the Middle Ages, vinca wreaths garlanded criminals on their way to execution. "Vinca pervinca", or "creeping vinca", became periwinkle.

The plant retained its associations with love. Albertus Magnus, a thirteenth-century Dominican botanist, scientist, and theologian who was canonized by

the Catholic Church in 1931, said that "beat unto powder with wormes of ye earth wrapped about it ... [it] induceth love between man and wife if it bee used in their meals". Lovers prepared to go to those lengths might, one would think, be on the way to love anyway. Magnus added that if "said confection be put on the fyre", it turns blue – and maybe that is where said convection often ended, while man and wife managed without it. While not insuring, as far as we know, immortality, the Madagascar periwinkle is used to make vinblastine, which successfully treats Hodgkin's disease and childhood leukemia, thereby prolonging life.

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

### Garden Magic

This is the garden's magic  
That through the sunny hours  
The gardener who tends it  
Himself outgrows his flowers.

He grows by gift of patience  
Since he who sows must know  
That only in the Lord's good time  
Does any seedling grow.

He learns from buds unfolding  
From each tight leaf unfurled  
That his own heart, expanding  
Is one with all the world.

He bares his head to sunshine  
His bending back a sign  
Of grace, and ev'ry shower becomes  
His sacramental wine.

And when at last his labours  
Bring forth the very stuff  
And substance of all beauty  
This is reward enough.

MARIE NETTLETON CARROLL

Myrtle in flower



Photo – Mike Hughes