

# MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Julia Jarman's Pond

Photo: Jo Latimer

## Summer 2010

Autumn Show 18<sup>th</sup> September 2010

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 2010 Programme. All entry details should be given to our Show Secretary Barbara Macknish between 6 and 9pm on Thursday September 16<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 13 <sup>th</sup>	Topiary	Judy Older
September 18 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Show as detailed above	
October 11 <sup>th</sup>	Keep Gardeners Growing	Heather Fooks
November 9 <sup>th</sup>	Culture of Vegetables	Mr D J Kemp

### **Cobham Gardeners Society**

For further details of these events please contact Chris Shipway (01474 814131).

September 11 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Show	
October 13 <sup>th</sup>	Paradise to Chelsea	Medwyn Williams
	Pre-booking essential £5 for non-members	

### **Istead Rise Gardeners Club**

For further details of these events please contact Arthur Hills (01474 834284)

September 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mystery Animals of Kent	Neal Arnold
October 7 <sup>th</sup>	Fruit Collections at Brogdale	Jonathon Fryer
November 4 <sup>th</sup>	AGM + A Talk on Port	

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

## **Recent Events**

May 10<sup>th</sup>                      Guerrilla Gardening UK and Beyond                      Richard Reynolds

Richard made a welcome return to update us on the activities of the Guerrilla Gardening movement both in the UK and worldwide.

June 14<sup>th</sup>                      Garden Outing

Around 30 members and their friends enjoyed a look around plantswoman Julia Jarman's garden in Pembury. During the 6 years they have lived there, the garden has been transformed to include a pond, a vegetable garden and fruit cage along with many beds containing interesting plants and shrubs. The garden is on a slight slope and towards the top it is left more to the wildlife.

July 12<sup>th</sup>                      Summer Social

We enjoyed a relaxed evening of table quizzes with cream tea refreshments and a small show. The winners of the classes, voted for by those present, were: Barbara Macknish (flowering pot plant), Tony Thomas (scented rose) and Elsa Small (vase of garden flowers).

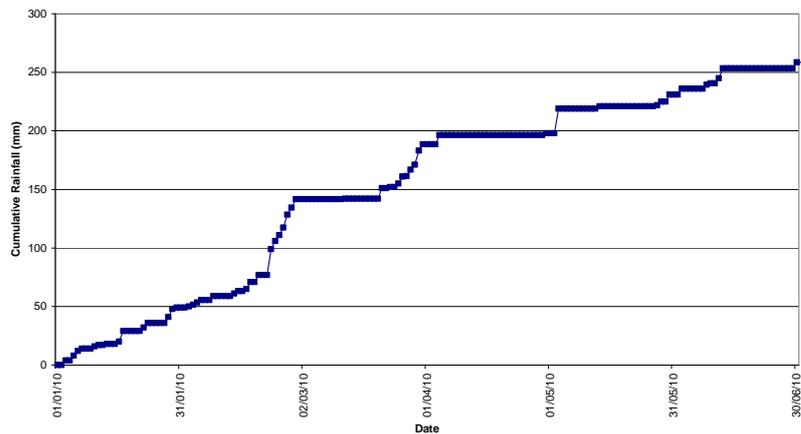
## **2011 Programme**

The 2011 programme is nearing completion although no speaker has been booked for February. As with this year it is proposed to use this meeting for an exchange of ideas and tips between members. We have a vast knowledge of many different aspects of gardening and we hope this will be a lively and interesting meeting for everybody.

The show dates are 26<sup>th</sup> March for the Spring Show and 17<sup>th</sup> September for the Autumn Show. So start planning your entries!

## Rainfall

This graph shows the cumulative rainfall from January 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2010. During this time the total rainfall was 258.5mm or 10.2" which is around 50mm less than the same period last year and 150mm less than 2008.



The year started cold with snow and January was the coldest since 1987. A minimum temperature of  $-22.3^{\circ}\text{C}$  was recorded at Altnaharra in Scotland on 8<sup>th</sup> January. February continued to be cold with above average rainfall and below normal sunshine. A maximum temperature of  $12.3^{\circ}\text{C}$  was recorded at Kew on 5<sup>th</sup>. March started dry and cold but it was windy towards the end of the month with gusts of 75mph recorded on the Isle of Wight. High pressure was in control for most of April which gave us a generally fine and dry month with above average temperatures. May was cool to begin with and 51mm rain fell in Hampstead in a 24 hour period on 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup>. Record temperatures were set in Scotland between 20 – 24<sup>th</sup> and a maximum temperature of  $28.8^{\circ}\text{C}$  was recorded at Heathrow on 24<sup>th</sup>. It was the driest May since 1998 with about normal sunshine. During June we lacked the usual rain bearing Atlantic systems however, 44mm rain fell at Manston in 24 hours to 0900 on 11<sup>th</sup>. The month was mainly dry and sunny with the second part of the month being very warm. Gravesend was the hottest in the country on 27<sup>th</sup> with  $30.9^{\circ}\text{C}$ . It was the third sunniest since 1929.

## Is Decking Causing a Decline in British Butterfly Numbers?

A recent article in the press suggested that the fashion for covering gardens with decking could be behind a recent decline in the Britain's most common butterflies.

More than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the 59 species found in the British Isles have declined over the last 50 years and Butterfly Conservation is launching a campaign to protect the more common species. These use the nectar in our gardens to feed on throughout the summer but the recent trend to 'tidy up' public parks and pave over or lay decking in gardens has put these important feeding sites at risk.

In partnership with M&S, they recently ran a survey asking households to note the species of butterfly (and day-flying moths) that visited their garden over the course of a week. This will show whether the warm, dry summer has allowed numbers to recover and also whether species are moving north as the climate changes.

Sir David Attenborough, as President of Butterfly Conservation, pointed out that butterflies are an indication of the health of the whole environment and their decline is a warning that other wildlife may be at risk.

## Historical Snippet

Evening Primrose  
Botanical Name: *Oenothera*  
Family: Onagraceae

All evening primroses originated from the American Continent. They came to Europe in the seventeenth century and were called "primroses" because their flowers resembled the yellow spring primrose (or "first rose") of Britain. John Parkinson called it the "Tree Primrose of Virginia" and said, "Unto what tribe or kindred might I referre this plant, I have stood long in suspense". Now we know that there are about 124 species of evening primrose, which form a "tribe" of their own.

As early as 1729, the Quaker gardener John Bartrum had twelve different kinds of evening primrose growing in his botanical garden near Philadelphia. His garden formed the first collection of American native plants, and he travelled all over the East Coast to find them. He sent hundreds to the Quaker gardener and botanist Peter Collinson in London and their correspondence is a delight to read.

Bartrum was king's botanist and responsible for most of the American plant introduction of his time to England, but his contemporary Linnaeus called no flower after him. Later a sandpiper, *Bartramia*, was named for him and a moss *Bartramia* was named for his son William, who loved birds and was not a gardener. John said, "I took no particular notice of mosses but looked upon them as a cow looks at a pair of new barn doors yet now I have made a good progress in that branch of botany which is really is a very curious part of vegetation." The honours of nomenclature, as we have seen, are not necessarily appropriate to their namesakes.

Evening primroses do not all open in the evening. Most are recognizable by a cross-like stigma across the top of the style, which John Goodyer called "the nailes of the inner parts." The same formation is shared by the passion flower and was used by missionaries as an allegory to illustrate the crucifixion. The evening primrose could have been used for the same purpose, but seems to have come quietly to Europe with no religious, allegorical or even medical associations. Since oil of evening primrose is sold nowadays by almost all health food stores, with quite extensive curative claims, it is surprising that in an era of plant medicine, Parkinson dismissed it, saying he "never knew any amongst us to use it in Physicke."

Its botanical name is from the Greek *oinos* "wine", *thera* "to hunt". Etymologists seem to think that this name

came from another, now unknown, Greek plant that was used to stimulate the appetite for wine. Why there should be a need to stimulate the desire for wine they do not explain. In any case, both the roots and leaves of the evening primrose are said to be edible and somewhat resemble parsnips in taste. Maybe they need a good wine to accompany them.

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

## Poetry Corner

### Summer Garden

Fruits ripe and heavy  
on branches that bow  
to the music of summer  
the hawthorn and plough

Sunflowers smiling  
through faces of gold  
with delicate petals  
and centers so bold

Butterfly's wings beat  
a breeze to the sun  
busy sipping nectar  
until the day is done

As nights shadows creep  
across the garden lawn  
moths await the rising  
moons silver dawn

Sweet honeysuckle drifts  
its scented treasure  
through my bedroom door  
to give me pleasure

The nightingale's song  
dances on my pillow  
as she sits on branches  
of the weeping willow

Bridget Webber

"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining,  
the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing ...  
and the lawn mower is broken."  
James Dent