



Photo: Jo Latimer

Winter 2012

Spring Show 24th March 2012

Calling all members to enter. If you have never exhibited before, just have a go. Yours may be the best exhibit on the day. Make sure you follow precisely the 2012 schedule. All entry details should be phoned through to our Show Secretary Sharon Sperling between 6 and 9pm on the Thursday prior to the show. She will also be accepting e-mail entries to shows@meophamgardeners.co.uk on a trial basis this year. The entry form is available from the Shows part of the website. Please make sure they are received before 6pm on the Thursday. The fee is 10p for each entry.

Exhibits may be staged on the Friday evening between 8.30 and 9pm 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 about 4:15pm.

LATE ENTRIES WILL NOT 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.

For information relating to the Meopham Garden Association go to our website at

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Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

February 19th Snowdrops & Hellebores at Meadow View, Hodsoll Street

Once again Barbara Macknish will be opening her garden to the public between 11am – 3:30pm to view her magnificent display in aid of the Eleanor Foundation. There will be a plant stall and teas will also be available. Entry is £1.

March 12th Winterdales Cheesemakers

March 24th SPRING SHOW

April 16th North London Community Veg Growing Project Naomi Schillinger &
 Note this is the THIRD Monday Nicolette Jones
 The meeting will start at 7:30pm and be held be in the SMALL hall

May 14th Gardening for Wildlife & the Kent Wildlife Maureen Rainey
 Gardening Award Scheme

Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession to the throne and Meopham Parish Council has been holding meetings with representatives of local clubs, businesses and schools to put together a programme of events to mark the occasion. Below is a provisional list of events that are planned over the long holiday weekend in June. There are other events planned so look out for the official publicity.

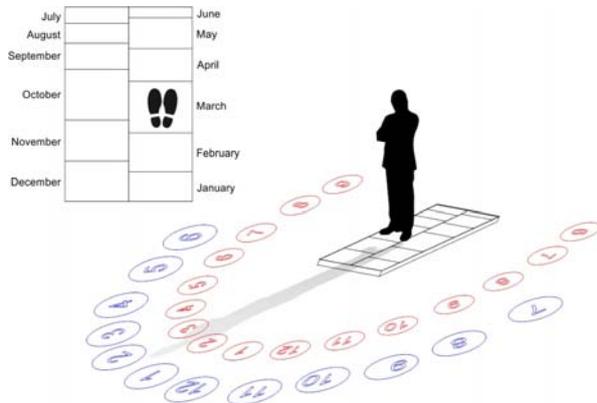
<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Timing</u>
Friday 1 st	Barn Dance	St John's Church	7:30 – 10:30pm
Saturday 2 nd	Cricket Match	Meopham Green	tba
	Harvel Harriers 5 Mile Run	From Harvel Green	12pm
	Tea Dance	Meopham Village Hall	3 – 5pm
	Rock'n'Roll Dance (featuring Chicory Tip)	Leisure Centre	7:30 -11:30pm
Sunday 3 rd	Morning Service followed by BBQ	St John's Church	tba
	Afternoon Service	Nurstead Church	
	Cricket Match	Meopham Green	
Monday 4 th	Parade to Leisure Centre	Meopham Green	12pm
	Festival of Sport	Leisure Centre	Afternoon
Tuesday 5 th	Guided Walk (5-7 miles) with historical snippets	Camer Park	10am

Meopham Windmill will be open on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday afternoons (2-5pm) with free entry.



Meopham Garden Association

Human Sundial



As part of the celebrations, I suggested that a Sunclock/Human Sundial be constructed somewhere in the village as a lasting memorial to the occasion. The diagram shows the general layout. To get the time, you stand on the month marker as close to the centre line as possible and your shadow will point in the direction of the time which can be read from either the inner ring (BST) or the outer ring (GMT).

This is something that could be enjoyed by everyone; young, old, big, small, disabled and able-bodied. It is also supposed to be vandal proof. The Parish Council have adopted this idea and the chosen site is near to the playground in Camer Park. The project has received the

backing of GBC and it seems that funding will also be available. A local has already produced the plans and we hope others will be involved in the design and construction. I hope we will be able to install it in time for the Jubilee celebrations in June but if not October is the deadline. *Jo Latimer*

Recent Events

November 14th Wildlife Through the Seasons John Buckingham

John used some of his excellent photographs to illustrate his most informative talk.

December 12th Christmas Supper

As a storm raged outside, the 48 members and friends who attended enjoyed an excellent meal followed by some lively entertainment by the members of Larkfield Active Retirement Association.

January 9th AGM

Around 30 members attended the AGM. After the business of the evening we enjoyed refreshments and watched a dvd about some of the National Trust gardens. The Chairman's report for 2011 is appended to this newsletter.

Members' Show

The Members' Show starts at the February meeting and details of the classes can be found with the Monthly Programme in the 2012 Schedule. The first class is the 'Selected Item' and is specified but the second item, 'Member's Choice', can be anything from the garden which is perhaps looking spectacular on the evening or is of special interest. The entries are judged by a club member and points out of 10 are awarded for each exhibit. These points are totalled at the end of the year and the entrants with the most points from both classes will each receive a cup and prize money of £2.50.

Plant Stall

If you have plants you wish to sell, please ensure that they are labeled and provide the plant stall with a list of your plants showing the asking price and the quantity of each as you will receive 50% of the takings from the sale of your plants. Please remember to take any unsold plants home at the end of the evening. Members may advertise other items such as garden tools on the notice board without charge, but if a sale is achieved a donation to the Association would be appreciated.

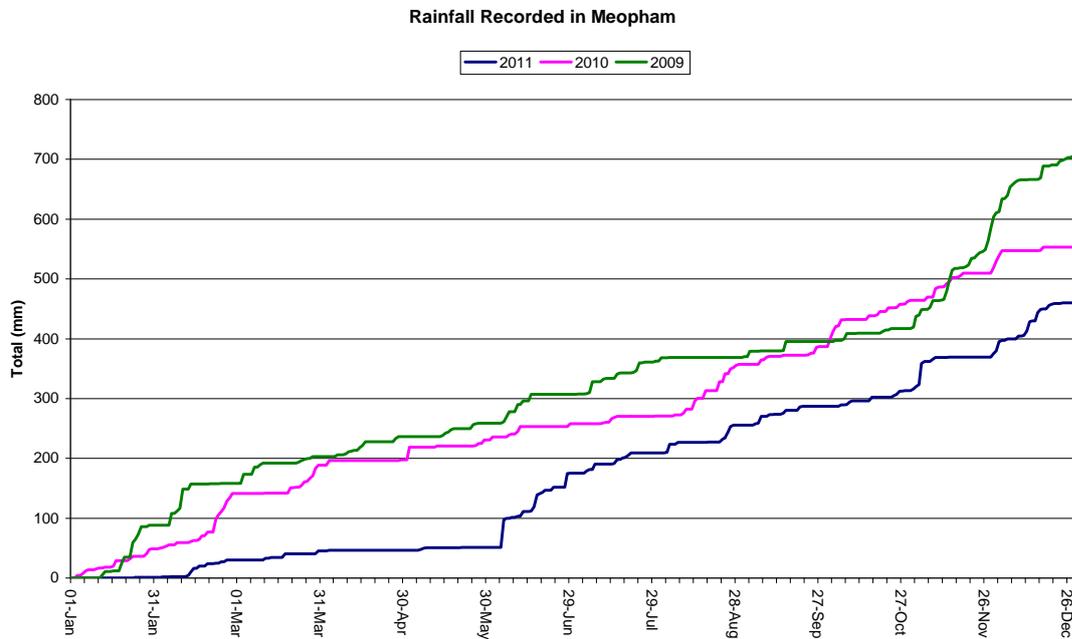
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Climate

The graph displays the cumulative rainfall recorded over the last 3 years. It shows quite how much drier 2011 was compared with the last two years. Total rainfall for 2011 was 470.5mm (18.5") which is 83.5mm (about 3") less than 2010 and 252.5mm (about 10") less than 2009.



2011 started cold with snow but January temperatures were close to average though it was rather dull. February was one of the dullest on record but it was the mildest since 2002 with very few air frosts recorded. March and April were generally warm, dry and sunny with a few very warm nights towards the end of March. April was one of the driest on record and the sunniest since 1929. The UK mean temperature was 6°C above average in the south-east with Wisley recording a temperature of 27.8°C on 23rd. May continued the warm, dry theme with less than 30% of the normal rainfall recorded in the south-east. June began fine and warm but gradually became unsettled with some much needed rain in our area. For the month temperatures were about average and sunshine a little above the average. Gravesend was the hottest in the country on 27th with 33.1°C which was the highest temperature recorded in the past 5 years. The following day brought heavy thunderstorms in the afternoon with almost 1" rain recorded locally.

July also started fine and dry but became unsettled and was rather dull with several chilly nights. Overall it was the coolest July since 2000 with about average rainfall. The highest temperature of 27.3°C was recorded at Gravesend on 5th. There was warm start to August with Gravesend reaching 30.3°C on the 3rd. However the rest of the month was unsettled, dull and cool. It was very wet in Blaenau Ffestiniog on 10-11th with 108.2mm rain. September began wet and windy but ended with record temperatures; 28.8°C recorded at Kew Gardens on 29th and 29.2°C at Cambridge and Sutton Bonington (Nottinghamshire) on 30th. Rainfall was generally below normal. The warm weather persisted into October. Gravesend recorded (provisionally) the highest temperature on record for October at 29.9°C. Other places recorded their highest temperatures of the year during this period and the mean temperature was 2.2°C above average. The end of the month saw some high overnight temperatures (14°C). Rainfall was less than half the average for the south-east. It remained mild into November which is provisionally the second warmest on record and the number of air frosts was one of the lowest in the last 50 years. It was also relatively dry and sunny although there was some persistent fog at times. It was the mildest December since 2006 and over 6C warmer than December 2010. It was also wet with well above average rainfall and a brief snowy interlude on 16th. A 164mph gust of wind was recorded on Cairngorm Summit on 8th, the strongest since November 1996.

Definition: 'average' is for data recorded from 1971 – 2000



Meopham Garden Association

In The News

Once again, there is a lot going on, much of it unwelcome.

We have more evidence of the effect of very low concentrations of insecticides on bees that leave them more susceptible to disorientation and to pathogens.

(<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/01/30-9>)

A decade ago the native two-spot ladybird was the second most populous species, now it is not even in the top ten of the 47 native species. The decline coincides with the arrival of the non-native harlequin ladybirds which feeds on aphids, other ladybirds, lacewings and hoverflies. The last 3 are of course very important predators in our gardens. You might have noticed the harlequin ladybirds sheltering in your home over the winter. You may also have noticed the damage they do to paintwork, wallpaper and other places where they congregate in large numbers.

(<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/invading-cannibal-ladybirds-take-over-britains-homes-6287000.html>)

A study from Stanford University (California) predicts that yields from wheat are likely to be severely depressed as the global temperature rises, making it more difficult to produce the food needed to feed the ballooning population of the world. The study used satellite images of northern India which revealed that extreme temperatures are cutting wheat yields. Two-thirds of wheat in poor countries, and 23% in rich countries – nearly half the world's total crop – is at risk from warming

(<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/01/29-2>)

Monsanto's seed monopoly has grown so powerful that they control the genetics of nearly 90% of five major commodity crops including corn, soybeans, cotton, canola and sugar beets. Monsanto's genetically modified (GMO) seed can contaminate non-gmo fields allowing the company to sue for seed theft. Now 60 family farmers, small and family-owned seed businesses, and agricultural organizations that are challenging Monsanto's patents on genetically modified seed in federal court. The case has been filed to "protect farmers from genetic trespass by Monsanto's genetically modified seed". Occupy Wall Street has come out on the side of farmers and they certainly need all the support they can muster.

(<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/01/31-0>)

A report by the United Nations High-level Panel on Global Sustainability urges a change of course because "continuing on the same path will put people and our planet at greatly heightened risk." Participants, including representatives of the Arab Spring, Spain's "Indignant" movement, Occupy Wall Street, and students from Chile, sharply criticized the concept of "a green economy" that would allow multinational corporations to reap the profit.

(<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/01/30-0>)

A reader of *Permaculture* magazine has been experimenting with "worm towers". These consist of pieces of large diameter plastic tube that are inserted directly into the ground. Worms can enter through the open bottom and through holes drilled in the sides (and I suppose it is not cheating to put those you come across into the top). From time to time kitchen scraps are dropped into the tops of the tubes which are then covered. Presumably it is anticipated that the worms will appreciate your leftovers and convert them swiftly into garden compost.

(<http://www.permaculture.co.uk/readers-solutions/how-make-diy-worm-tower>)

In an article entitled "The Seed Emergency: The Threat to Food and Democracy", Vandana Shiva explains the loss of diversity and other serious problems that have arisen from the patenting of life forms. "Corporations defined a problem - and for them the problem was farmers saving seeds. They offered a solution, and the solution was to make it illegal for farmers to save seed - by introducing patents and intellectual property rights on those very seeds."

(<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2012/02/06-0>)

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Meopham Garden Association

The Chairman's report for 2011

Welcome to the start of our 2012 programme. Apart from the meetings and other events planned, 2012 looks like being an historic year with the Diamond Jubilee and Olympic Games. Before we get too far into the future, lets take a brief look back at 2011.

Our AGM was held in January as planned which meant that the February meeting was devoted to our second Member's Forum which was a success. Sadly I missed our March meeting due to illness but I gather Chris Lane's talk on Witch Hazels was most interesting. I thoroughly enjoyed the talk about the Woodland Trust in April which was a late replacement to the advertised talk.

Our old friend Laurie Manser returned in May, this time to talk about Herbaceous Perennials. In June we spent a very pleasant evening at Green Leas in Wrotham, the garden of our member Jan Meadows. We returned to the indoors in July for our Summer Social. Also in July we held our Garden Safari on one of the wettest days of the entire summer. The club owes a huge debt to those who opened the gardens and it is a shame that so few visitors braved the rain to see the results of their labours. The gardens looked spectacular in spite of the weather and we even made a small profit.

In August, Robert Wiseman provided a timely reminder of what the judge is looking for. For our September meeting Mrs Tallboys returned to talk about using perennial plants to give colour throughout the year. Hardy Geraniums were the subject of our October meeting when Jackie A'Violet returned to speak after a long absence. Our final talk of the year in November was about wildlife when our speaker John Buckingham showed us some of his superb slides.

48 diners sat down to our Christmas Supper as a storm raged outside. The meal was most enjoyable and this was followed by some lively entertainment provided by LARA. I would like to thank Hazel Borrow for organising the evening and Gail King for the table arrangements and of course to everyone who helped with the clearing up which was achieved in record time.

Both of our shows were well supported and thank you to Sharon Sperling and Clare Williams for their efficient organisation of both events.

Looking forward to 2012, we have booked Tom Hart Dyke for our July meeting and to make this meeting pay for itself, we need to have a full hall. Members will not be charged but tickets will be sold to non-members. We also need to have a full plant stall and good raffle. For now though please just put the date in your new diary: July 9th.

I would particularly like to thank all of the committee for their support and efforts during the year. There are others who have helped too: Vera Bingham who ran our raffles, Gail King for organising the Garden Safari and Mike Hughes who has kept us well informed with the quarterly newsletters. I hope members are using the Meopham Garden Association website which I try to keep up-to-date and to make sure any information left by our speakers is made available promptly. The site is still very much under development and I hope to have the time to make further improvements during this year. This site is our advert to the world (we have recently had contact from a school in the USA).

We have two members on the serving committee that wish to stand down and it would be good if we can replace them this evening. As I have said before, we meet 10 times a year for between an hour to 1 ½ so most of the club business is carried out in around 15 hours per year. In addition Janet and Celia have indicated that they would like a change from the plant stall so a couple of volunteers would be appreciated. It would be good to see a regular turn over of committee members in order to keep fresh ideas coming along. Joining the committee should not be seen as a life-long commitment but an opportunity to influence the running of the club in the short term. Another year has passed with Hazel taking on both the secretarial and financial duties and it really is time that she didn't have to do both. I suggest that it would be a good idea for the 2012 committee to look at the work that needs to be done and perhaps redefine some of the 'job titles'.

Finally, I would like to thank everybody for their support during 2011. Believe it or not 2011 was the 5th year that I have been Chairman. If re-elected for 2012 I would like to make it my last year in the role. I believe it would be good to have a change before the club stagnates. I would like to concentrate more on developing the website further.

Jo Latimer
December 2011

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