



Photo: Jo Latimer

## Winter 2014

### Spring Show 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2014

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 2014 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 accept e-mail entries to [shows@meophamgardeners.co.uk](mailto:shows@meophamgardeners.co.uk). Please use the entry form 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.*

## Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

February 16<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> Coast to Coast – Two North American Gardens Sharon Sperling

March 22<sup>nd</sup> SPRING SHOW

April 14<sup>th</sup> Keeping Chickens as a Hobby Amelia Revel

May 12<sup>th</sup> Blue for All Seasons Julia Jarman

## Recent Events

November 11<sup>th</sup> A-Z of Garden History Russell Bowes

Although he said it was too big a subject to cover in just an hour, Russell did his best taking us from A for Apple (the first letter and first garden – The Garden of Eden) to Z for Zoological Gardens (including animals made from plants) with a set of varied slides.

December 9<sup>th</sup> Christmas Social & AGM

After the business side of the evening we enjoyed warm mince pies and mulled punch whilst struggling to answer a Christmas themed quiz.

## Obituary – Doris James

Doris James died on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013 a few hours before her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday. Doris and her husband, Don lived in the village at Melliker Farm for a number of years. After Don's death, Doris moved to a nursing home for her final years. Doris and Don were members of Meopham & District Gardeners Association (as it was known initially) for many years. In fact it is thought that Doris was a founder member. She served as a committee member and also our President for many years as did Don and they went on to become honorary members.

Doris used to exhibit in most classes at the shows and won many prizes. She was a great sweet pea grower and often won prizes at the smaller summer shows that used to be held. Several of the cups which are presented at our shows have Doris James's name on them. The club held many social evenings at Melliker Farm. Doris also organised the club suppers and eventually introduced her granddaughter Vicki (Hooper) to do the catering for our Christmas Social.

Doris was one of life's characters, what you saw was what you got. She was a great source of horticultural information and willingly helped others. Doris was certainly a stalwart of the Association and her enthusiasm helped the club survive over the decades.

## Members' Show

The Members' Show starts at the February meeting and details of the classes can be found with the Monthly Programme in the 2014 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. The points are totalled at the end of the year and the entrants with the most points from each class will each receive a cup and prize money of £2.50.

## Plant Stall

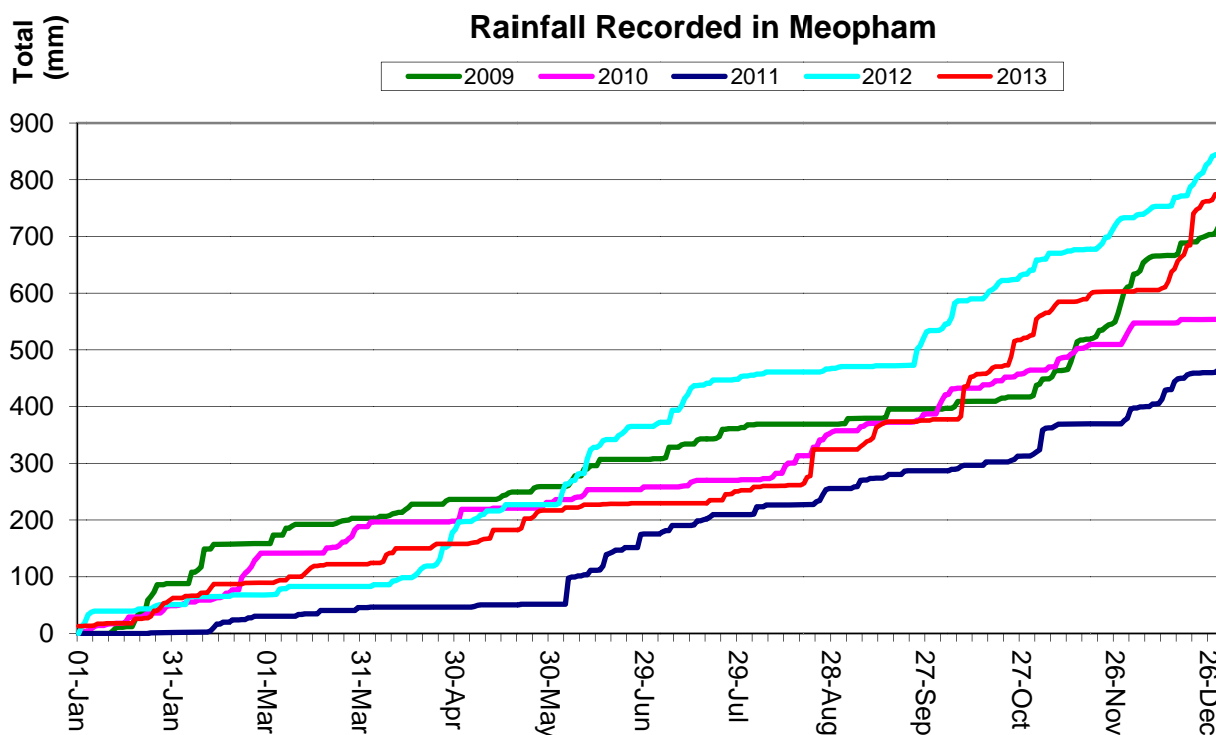
If you have plants you wish to sell, please ensure that they are labeled and provide the plant stall with a list of your plants showing the asking price and the quantity of each as you will receive 50% of the takings from their sale. It is your responsibility to take any that have not sold with you at the end of the meeting. 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.



# Meopham Garden Association

## Climate

The graph displays the cumulative rainfall recorded over the last 5 years. The total rainfall for 2013 was 774.5mm (30.5") which is less than the 849mm (33.4") recorded for 2012.



*Definition: 'average' is for data recorded from 1981 - 2010*

The year began very mild and dry. The longest spell of dry weather of the winter occurred in the second half of February. March was the coldest calendar month since December 2010. Heavy snow on the afternoon of the 11<sup>th</sup> coincided with our monthly meeting which was cancelled. The cold weather continued into April (coldest since 1989), and May (coldest since 1996) making it the coldest Spring in the UK since 1962. June was also cool although it was warmer than the previous two Junes.

Much of July was settled and sunny. Temperatures exceeded 28°C somewhere in the UK every day from 6<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>. This was the most notable summer heat wave since 2006 and the driest July since then. A maximum temperature of 33.5°C was recorded at Heathrow and Northolt (Greater London) on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The highest temperature of the year 34.1°C was recorded at Heathrow on August 1<sup>st</sup>. The month was generally fine and sunny with temperatures near normal. It was the driest August since 2003. The main exception was Bank Holiday Saturday (24<sup>th</sup>) when 30-50 mm of rain fell across parts of eastern England. Shoeburyness recorded 47.6 mm rain in 4 hours.

September began with some fine, warm, sunny weather. A brief stormy period mid-month was followed by more typically autumnal conditions. Temperatures were about average with a maximum of 30.2°C recorded at Writtle (Essex) and Frittenden (Kent) on the 5<sup>th</sup>. October was an unsettled, wet month but often mild. A vigorous storm on the 28<sup>th</sup> caused severe travel disruption, particularly in the south-east, where 4 people died and over 600,000 homes were left without power. The unsettled theme continued into November but high pressure became established and settled the weather down from mid-month. Temperatures were a little below average with Kent slightly wetter than average. Sunshine was above average. December was the windiest since 1969 with a succession of deep Atlantic low pressure systems bringing heavy rain and strong winds (109mph gust recorded at Aberdaron in Wales on 26<sup>th</sup>). The most problematic for us was a storm on 23<sup>rd</sup> which caused damage to power lines and flooding with 56mm rain recorded locally. Some local residents were without power for many days including Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve a mean-sea-level-pressure of 936 hPa was recorded at Stornoway (Western Isles), the lowest such value at a UK land station for many years. It was however relatively mild with temperatures above average.

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

at [www.meophamgardeners.co.uk](http://www.meophamgardeners.co.uk)



# Meopham Garden Association

## In The News

A sweetener we can grow? Stevia is a genus of about 240 species of herbs and shrubs in the sunflower family native to subtropical and tropical regions from western North America to South America. Because stevia has a negligible effect on blood glucose it is attractive to people on carbohydrate-controlled diets.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stevia>

As gardeners we should remain vigilant regarding threats to our ability and liberty to grow safe and nutritious food for ourselves and our families. Damage is occurring on an increasingly massive scale as technology is harnessed in total disregard to the consequences such as the destruction of ecosystems and habitats, the release of toxins and excess radioactivity into the environment, the dangers of GMOs and the consequences of global warming. Unfortunately, we are all implicated in this madness as we all take advantage of the benefits without bearing most of the costs. The brunt of our reckless pursuit of comfort, trivia and stuff will impact future generations and with the high probability of the breakdown of law and order. It is therefore important to be aware of the threat secret "free" trade agreements present to the environment and to the populations of all countries concerned. Recently our government announced their aim of removing thousands of health and safety and environmental laws from the books. Such a move would further empower the already powerful corporations, further endanger wildlife and limit the remedies available to individuals and communities.

It is heartening, therefore, to learn of articulate youngsters who are well aware of the dangers of GMOs, for instance, illustrated by this video clip of 14 year old Rachel Parent debating GMOs with Kevin O'Leary (TV Anchor in Canada) and destroying his lame attempts to discredit her.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvDOYYaZyj4>

And then David Schubert, professor at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, who reports that there is no evidence that GM food is safe for human consumption. GM labeling, fought against by GM companies in the USA, would allow consumers to make informed choices about what they eat.

[http://www.cnn.com/2014/02/03/opinion/schubert-gmo-labeling/index.html?hpt=hp\\_bn7](http://www.cnn.com/2014/02/03/opinion/schubert-gmo-labeling/index.html?hpt=hp_bn7)

[http://www.i-sis.org.uk/Scientists\\_Declare\\_No\\_Consensus\\_on\\_GMO\\_Safety.php](http://www.i-sis.org.uk/Scientists_Declare_No_Consensus_on_GMO_Safety.php)

Even as the United States government continues to push for the use of more chemically-intensive and corporate-dominated farming methods such as GMOs and monoculture-based crops, the United Nations is sounding the alarm about the urgent need for a sustainable, natural and organic system.

<http://www.technologywater.com/post/69995394390/un-report-says-small-scale-organic-farming-only-way-to>

Hawaii Protest Declares Anti-GMO 'Tsunami' is Here

Following legislative successes, North Shore protest calls on land trust to 'evict Monsanto'

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2013/12/17-3>

F. William Engdahl joins Leon to discuss the origins and aims of GMOs. F. William Engdahl is an award-winning geopolitical analyst, strategic risk consultant, author, professor and lecturer.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fxZ6URIRZU#t=11>

The Obama administration expects to approve corn and soybeans genetically engineered to tolerate the toxic herbicide 2,4-D (otherwise known as Agent Orange) despite it being associated with increased rates of immune system cancers, Parkinson's disease, endocrine disruption, birth defects, and other serious illnesses and reproductive problems. A cascade of bad environmental impacts and herbicide-resistant superweeds is predicted.

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2014/01/03-8>

<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2014/01/16-8>

Biochemist Pusztai (fired in 1998 for publishing results showing Bt potato was responsible for causing severe health damage in test rats) says there is a political agenda at work with GM. "Monsanto has not done a proper job [of testing], and they are just using their political and economic muscle to foist it on us."

<http://wakeupcallpage.tumblr.com/post/41866987032/scientist-that-discovered-gmo-health-hazards>

DDT is linked to higher risk of Alzheimer's. Elevated serum DDE (the metabolite of the pesticide) levels are associated with an increased risk for Alzheimer's. More than 5 million people in the U.S. alone are living with Alzheimer's and cases are expected to triple over the next few decades.

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2014/01/28-1>

<http://archneur.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?>

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Can you believe: Approval Given to Make Great Barrier Reef Dump Site for Coal Terminal Project?  
<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2014/01/31-3>

Ancient woodland needs better protection, from development, from 'offsetting' and misinterpretation, from railway lines, road widening and service stations, campsites, car parks and even golf courses. More than 400 ancient woods are under threat across the UK right now.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/campaigning/campaigns/protect-ancient-woodland>

After 20 Years of NAFTA Poverty, Lawmakers in the USA Move to Fast-Track TPP (TransPacific Pact)

The bill would empower the President to sign this trade agreement before Congress votes on it with a guarantee that the executive branch can write legislation to implement the pact and alter wide swaths of existing U.S. law and obtain both House and Senate votes within 90 days. It will not be subject to amendment in committee or during floor votes and only 20 hours of debate being permitted.

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2014/01/09-7>

TransAfrica – the organization founded in 1977 to champion the human rights and economic concerns of African people around the world – is fighting the fast-tracking of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.  
<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2013/12/25-3>

Wikileaks released a draft from the TPP, exposing the "environmental protections" as toothless policies that serve to protect corporate profit not Mother Earth. Our Transatlantic version will also be an investors' charter, therefore the details need to be made available for public discussion.

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2014/01/15>

[www.shoah.org.uk/2013/12/28/transatlantic-trade-agreement](http://www.shoah.org.uk/2013/12/28/transatlantic-trade-agreement)

Friends of the Earth U.S. and Friends of the Earth Europe are deeply concerned that trade negotiations have little to do with free trade and everything to do with corporate power.

<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2013/12/26-3>

DeChristopher (who disrupted an auction of public lands for oil exploration in the USA) takes the president of Harvard, Drew Faust to task, pointing out that she ignores the fact that the fossil fuel industry works to suppress or distort the research into climate change undertaken at Harvard.

<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2013/12/24-4>

The US Environmental Protection Agency failed to measure exactly what risk a potent pesticide, sulfoxaflor, poses to bees. In fact, although the EPA classifies it as "very highly toxic" to honeybees and other insect pollinators—it was approved despite evidence linking it and similar "neonicotinoid" pesticides to the widespread and massive bee colony collapse. And now, an entire industry is being wiped out.

[http://earthjustice.org/blog/2013-december/why-honeybees-matter&utm\\_source=Convio](http://earthjustice.org/blog/2013-december/why-honeybees-matter&utm_source=Convio)

Exposed: The Rightwing's National Plan To Crush Green Energy

From supporting Keystone XL to opposing home solar panels, ALEC is planning an assault on the environment. (ALEC, funded by corporations, drafts legislation that US legislators often pass without ever reading it.) A Greenpeace spokesperson said, "ALEC's guise of 'free market environmentalism' is just a code word for its real mission in our states' legislatures: to allow dirty energy companies to pollute as much as they want, to attack incentives for clean energy competitors and to secure government handouts to oil, gas and coal interests. That's not a free market."

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/04/alec-freerider-homeowners-assault-clean-energy>

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2013/12/05-2>

Ecocide

A law of Ecocide was part of the original draft of the Rome Statute. Such a law can be put in place at the very top, as an international crime, over and above all other laws – to prevent mass damage, destruction to or loss of ecosystems – which means amending the Rome Statute.

<http://eradicatingecocide.com/>

If you happen to come across items that you think would be of interest to members and could be included in the newsletter, please contact Mike Hughes or speak to a committee member. Alternatively e-mail [news@meophamgardeners.co.uk](mailto:news@meophamgardeners.co.uk). The newsletter is published in February, May, August and November.

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## Chairman's Report 2013

Welcome to the AGM and the end of our 2013 programme.

The year began slowly with our January meeting cancelled due to an unfavourable weather report and so the AGM was postponed until February when weather conditions were still not good. Those present voted not to meet in January in future and also to replace the Christmas Supper with a Harvest Supper. The first of these will take place in October 2014.

Also at our February meeting, Caroline Halfpenny, a club member and lecturer at Hadlow College, gave an illustrated talk about the gardens of Cornwall. The club had hoped to run a coach trip to visit some of them in April but there was insufficient support to go ahead.

Sudden snowfall on the afternoon of our March meeting meant that the Garden Forum was cancelled this year. It was April before I attended my first meeting and had for a few weeks been Chairman of a club I didn't even belong to. It was a pleasure to hear an enthusiastic Matthew Biggs speak about the plant hunting Lobb brothers.

Local Pig Farmer, Bev Brown told us about their operation in May. They have won awards for their free range way of pig farming. Later in May on a dull, damp day we went to Goodnestone Park and the Salutation at Sandwich by coach.

In June Mike Austen from Brogdale attempted to explain the principles of pruning fruit trees. At the end of the month we visited a local garden 'Wallingford' in Sole Street on a lovely summer evening.

We were transported to Iran in July when Arthur Nicholls told us about his plant hunting trips there with a group of friends.

Once again our Summer Social was held in August. The meeting began with a couple of presentations; one from the Adult Education and the other from the National Gardens Scheme.

Our September speaker, Colin Moat, suggested plants that do well in shade.

In October we were treated to a look at wildflowers, fruits and fungi courtesy of Sue Buckingham and her excellent photographs.

Our final speaker of the year was Russell Bowes who spoke about Garden History from A-Z whilst enjoying a free sauna in a very warm Village Hall.

Both of our shows were well supported and thank you to Sharon Sperling and Clare Williams for their efficient organisation of both events, to those who entered and everybody who helped out in any way.

I would like to thank everybody for their support during 2013 but after 7 years as Chairman, I have decided to resign and return to the 'back benches'. We will also be seeking a new President to replace Tony Thomas who has done an excellent job supporting me particularly as I muddle through the prize giving at the shows. Fortunately, the majority of the 2013 committee members have indicated that they are willing to continue next year. I would like to thank all of them for their ideas and efforts during the last year as well as Vera Bingham for running our raffles, and Mike Hughes for producing the newsletters. Please speak to him if you have anything you would like included in future editions. The Meopham Garden Association website averaged around 40 visits/day in 2013. The site is our advert to the world and I hope the members make use of it. I would like to continue to develop the site as well as keep it updated. Please don't forget to look at the 'NEWS' section for the latest information particularly if the weather is bad on meeting days.

Looking forward to 2014, as we will not be meeting in January, our first meeting will be on the 10<sup>th</sup> February when the Garden Forum will be held and the seed swapping will begin.

Finally, I'd like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy 2014. Don't forget to make time to enjoy your garden.

Jo Latimer

December 2013