



Taken at Great Dixter July 2016

Photo: Jo Latimer

## Summer 2016

### Autumn Show 17<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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 2016 schedule. The fee is 10p for each entry. 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. The entry form is available on the Shows part of the website. Please follow the instructions there and make sure entry forms are received before 6pm on the Thursday. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please telephone Sharon to confirm your entries.

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.

**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.*

For information relating to the Meopham Garden Association go to our website at  
[www.meophamgardeners.co.uk](http://www.meophamgardeners.co.uk)



## Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

**September 9<sup>th</sup> Coach Outing to Runnymede & The Savill Garden, Windsor Great Park**

This all inclusive trip (£43) includes lunch on a boat between Runnymede and the Savill Gardens as well as a cream tea at the gardens. Apart from eating, there will be time to look around these beautiful gardens.

**September 12<sup>th</sup> Full Frontal Gardens**

**Fern Alder**

**September 17<sup>th</sup> Autumn Show**

**Doors open at 3pm**

**October 10<sup>th</sup> Harvest Supper**

**7 for 7:30pm**

**October 18<sup>th</sup> Inter-Club Quiz Night hosted by Sutton-at-Hone Gardening Society**

**November 14<sup>th</sup> Practical: Christmas Hanging Basket**

## Recent Events

**May 9<sup>th</sup> Gardening – More Impact, Less Effort**

**Alison Marsden**

Alison, from Gardening by Design near Tunbridge Wells, also teaches Adult Education gardening courses in Tonbridge and Sevenoaks. We were set the task of redesigning a cottage-style garden to reduce the number of high effort jobs like dead-heading, weeding, digging, watering and replanting, through proper planning. This involved making informed compromises, such as increasing ground cover plants and spacing shrubs for the long term, instead of rushing to fill flowerbeds, causing overcrowding and more work.

**June 13<sup>th</sup> Evening Visit to Peter Cox's Rose Nursery, Cliffe**

This event was cancelled due to the poor weather.

**July 11<sup>th</sup> Mini-Show and Social Evening**

After a brief EGM we had a quiz and refreshments.

The mini-show was well supported and the winners as voted for by those present were as follows:

Sweet Peas	Moya Church
Flowering pot plant	Elizabeth Thomas
Vase of Garden Flowers	Barbara Macknish

**July 15<sup>th</sup> Afternoon Visit to Jeanette Lerwill's Wheelgate Nursery, Marden**

Jeanette, who spoke to us in March, showed us around her garden and answered our many questions about the interesting plants. The garden was featured in the July edition of Kent Life. After 12 years the garden is still under development but even the newest plantings were doing very well and it was hard to resist the large variety of plants for sale in the nursery.



Photos: Jo Latimer

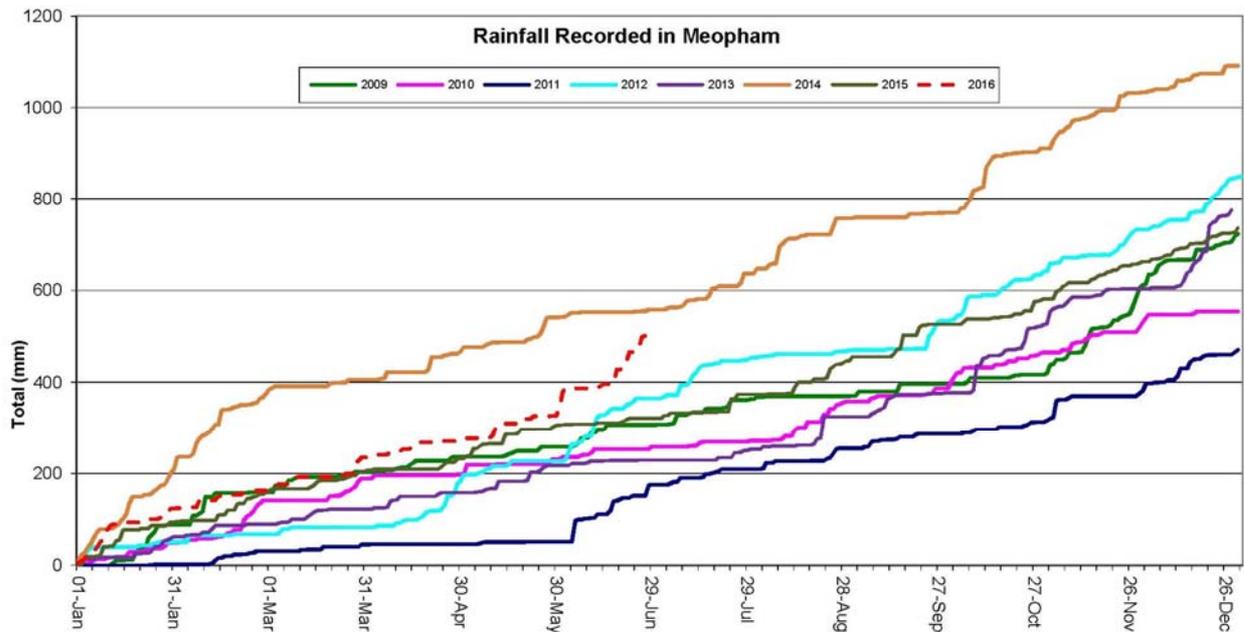
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## Rainfall

This graph shows the cumulative rainfall from January 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2016 along with the annual rainfall for the previous 7 years. The total rainfall up until the end of June was 590mm or 20". During the meteorological Winter (Dec - Feb) 239.5mm were recorded and we had 179.5mm this Spring (Mar-May).



The data below is from the Met Office statistics and the averaging period referred to is the 30 years from 1981–2010.

Although there was only one named storm in January (Storm Gertrude on the 29<sup>th</sup>), the legacy of the exceptionally wet December meant an ongoing threat of flooding, especially the north and by the 13<sup>th</sup>, Aberdeenshire had already recorded its wettest January in a series from 1910. For the UK as a whole rainfall was well above average, however it was generally mild with a mean temperature 1.1°C above the long-term average. The unsettled weather continued into February with storms Henry and Imogen early in the month but conditions became more settled. In spite of a cold snap mid-month, the mean temperature was just above average at 3.9°C.

After Storm Jake on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and another storm on the 8<sup>th</sup>, the middle of March was dry and settled. The unsettled weather returned at the end of the month with Storm Katie bringing damaging winds to the south east on Easter Monday (28<sup>th</sup>) and closing the QE2 bridge for a time. The early part of April was unsettled and the second half was mostly cold, bright and showery with the wind often from a northerly direction. It was generally cooler and wetter with about average sunshine. There were also thunderstorms locally mid-month and on the 15<sup>th</sup> localised flooding caused travel disruption in London during the evening rush hour.

May also began unsettled but by the 5<sup>th</sup> it was warmer and generally more settled for most of the month. Temperatures were about average as were sunshine and rainfall. Heavy rainfall caused disruption to travel and events such as the Royal Windsor Horse Show where the first day (11<sup>th</sup>) was cancelled for the first time ever. More flooding and fallen trees caused problems in the south east on the 25<sup>th</sup> when a landslip blocked the rail line between Strood and Tonbridge causing disruption for much of the day. June began dry and settled but most of the month was unsettled, wet and cloudy. Thunderstorms caused significant disruption in the south east on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and on the 25<sup>th</sup> when localised rain in Kent, caused flooding and submerged cars. The M26 was closed in both directions due to surface water-related accidents.



## In The News

Colin Todhunter has written several articles highlighting the efforts by big agriculture and the biotech companies to prevent people from making healthy choices when buying food, promoting failed strategies and undermining science by parading the support of nobel prize winners with no expertise in agriculture. Agritech firms spent tens of millions of dollars in the US to prevent the labelling of GM foods. The public are being denied the right to know if GMOs are in the food they eat.

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/07/20/in-the-shadow-of-monsanto-gmo-regulation-and-the-right-to-know/>

The pro-GMO lobby relies on fraud, regulatory delinquency, opaque practices, smear campaigns, dirty tricks, slick PR and the debasement of science. It sidelines the root causes of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, regional food insecurity and effective solutions, promoting only techno quick-fixes based on profitable proprietary technology. Prominent advocates of GM attempt to deflect attention from their own self-interest and their hypocritical attitudes towards the poor by smearing their critics and offering sound bites about 'feeding the poor and hungry'. And then there are the wealthy agritech corporations which flex their financial and political muscle and effectively hijack democracy for their own ends by slanting, science, politics, policies and regulation.

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/06/09/false-promises-smears-and-golden-rice-is-this-the-solution-for-disease-poverty-and-malnutrition/>

Members of a scientific priesthood, spout slick PR, funded by the likes of Bill Gates, taxpayer 'aid', the global agritech cartel, the World Bank, IMF and WTO. Over 100 Nobel laureates put their names to a letter urging Greenpeace to cease blocking the introduction of GM 'Golden Rice', which supporters say could reduce vitamin A deficiencies that cause blindness and death among children in the Global South. The truth is that Greenpeace has no means of "blocking" 'Golden Rice' which has itself failed in field trials for 25 years. Better to have a diet including cheap and easily-available vegetables that can provide plentiful vitamin A.

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/07/01/pro-gmo-spin-masquerading-as-science-courtesy-of-shameful-white-men-of-privilege/>

The public is told that GMOs are safe and there is a consensus within the 'scientific community' over this. We are also told there is no difference between crops that have been traditionally bred and GM crops. The message that a trillion meals containing GMOs have been eaten and no one has died or become ill as a result and that 'the debate is over'. This claim is laid to rest in dozens of official reports, statements and independent peer-reviewed research.

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/05/31/the-unique-risks-of-gm-crops-science-trumps-pr-fraud-and-smear-campaigns/>

Wealthy backers of the 'green revolution' have determined what is to be grown and what inputs are to be applied. This, in turn, has adversely affected the nutritional content of food, led to the over-exploitation of water and diminished drought resistance, degraded soil, biodiversity, the environment and destroyed livelihoods. Bhaskar Save, with 60 years' farming experience, cited many of these negative impacts in a letter to Indian officials some years back.

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/05/25/from-the-green-revolution-to-gmos-living-in-the-shadow-of-global-agribusiness/>

A disappointing compromise was reached by the European Commission (under pressure from Monsanto, Glyphosate Task Force and others) that resulted in the renewal of the licence for glyphosate to be continued seven years. This is despite the WHO classifying glyphosate as being "probably carcinogenic" to humans. Campaigner Rosemary Mason to Dirk Detken, Chief Attorney to the EFSA, highlights the regulatory delinquency concerning the oversight of glyphosate in the EU. The evidence provided by Mason might lead many to agree that processes surrounding glyphosate 'regulation' in Europe amount to little more than a "cesspool of corruption."

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/05/18/monsanto-and-the-poisoning-of-europe/>

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/05/16/glyphosate-in-the-eu/>

Some natural and DIY pesticides are effective at helping to rid your crops of harmful critters, but safe enough to keep from poisoning you and your family. Between weather, weeds, and insects, not to mention the challenges of soil fertility, it can be an incredibly humbling experience to try to put food on the table with a home garden - especially when adhering to organic protocols that don't rely on quick, yet potentially harmful, solutions, such as herbicides, pesticides, and conventional fertilizers.

<https://www.permaculture.co.uk/readers-solutions/diy-natural-insecticides>

**Garden Which?** has been urging manufacturers and retailers to print expiry dates on bags of composts. But since the shelf life depends upon how the compost is stored. The Growing Media Association has proposed adding a 'manufactured-on date' along with recommendations on the shelf life of the bag.

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