



Photo: Jo Latimer

Summer 2018

AUTUMN SHOW

Saturday 8th September 2018

We are looking for as many exhibits as possible after the extreme weather and the effect on our poor gardens, so please have a go, it only costs 10p for each entry. Make sure you keep precisely to the 2018 schedule on the MGA website. Your entry details may be emailed to our Show Secretary, Jill Pask, before 6pm on the Thursday prior to the show, or phoned through to Lesley Foxwell between 6pm and 9pm on the Thursday. The entry form is available on the Shows part of the website - please follow the instructions there.

Last year's cups need to be returned (polished and gleaming!) to Jill prior to the show. We would also welcome donated raffle prizes, items for the plant stall and homemade cakes for the tearoom.

Please come and help with the setting up if you can on the Friday evening. Exhibits may be staged between 8.30 and 9pm on Friday, and between 10am and 12:45pm on the day of the show. **NO LATE ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED.** The doors open at 3pm and admission to the show is free. Bring your friends, family and neighbours and treat yourself to a nice cup of tea and a piece of cake before the prize giving at about 4:15pm.

If you enter something in the show, please help to clear up afterwards and take your own entries home with you. Even if you can only spare ten minutes at the end of the show, we never turn away volunteers!

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

www.meophamgardeners.co.uk



Forthcoming Events

Monday 13th August - talk by Nigel Gibson from Provender Nurseries

Based in Swanley, Provender Nurseries is an established wholesale trade supplier of plants and horticultural items. MGA members receive a discount and are invited to their open days, so it will be interesting to learn more about their operation and tap into their expertise!

Saturday 8th September – Autumn Show (see above) and Photographic Exhibition

For the first time this year we are including a display of photographs on the theme 'Things you see in the Garden'. Brian Carpenter has made a special purchase of mounts for 10" x 8" photographs, which entrants can purchase for £1 each. Visitors to the show will be asked to select their first, second and third favourites. The winning photograph will be featured in the Meopham Review. Brian has invited the U3A photographers to participate, so we will up against some stiff competition!

Monday 10th September – talk by Christine Bartlett on Successful Orchid Growing for Beginners and Intermediates

Members' Show: a) 3 stems of Dahlia b) Members' choice

Monday 8th October – Harvest Supper, this year's theme to be announced

(please remember to bring plates, cutlery and glasses with you)

Members' Show: a) 3 stems of Chrysanthemum b) Members' choice

October 18th - Inter-Society Quiz hosted by Istead Rise Gardeners

This is a Thursday evening event – we are hoping to have two MGA teams

Recent Events

Monday 14th May – Dr Ann Kneif: 'Italian influences on the gardens of Kent'

Dr Ann Kneif, local historian and keen gardener, started her talk on 'Italian Influences on the Gardens of Kent' by saying that becoming an expert speaker (on a range of topics – Ann's talk on the Women's Land Army is fascinating) was all down to Meopham Gardeners inviting her fifteen years ago to give a ten minute talk! Ann showed examples of Roman and Italian style gardens still in existence today in Kent and mentioned others that are now in ruins, such as St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury, although drawings have survived, also Sayes Court in Deptford, now sadly run down and vandalised.

The garden was seen as an extension to the house, a place of peace and relaxation, small gardens were defined by hedges, with wattle trees. During the Renaissance, the aristocracy had deer parks, e.g. 16th century Knowles House. Popular features which have survived are geometrical layouts, stone steps and fountains – Villa d'Este developed by Lucretia Borgia's son had 600 fountains - topiary, raised terraces from which to look out over the garden, e.g. 13th century Penshurst Place, or from which to view the countryside, e.g. 12th century Chilham Castle. Medieval manor house Groombridge Place, near Tunbridge Wells, has been owned by many Kent families – formal gardens were laid out to be seen from upper rooms, there is also a white garden, and holes in the hedges contain heads of statues – unbelievably it is all looked after by just two gardeners!

Travellers on the Grand Tour were influenced by beautiful gardens, and plant hunters such as Tradescant brought back myrtle, lemons and oranges, inspiring the addition of orangeries. The 16th century shipbuilder Phineas Pett, created an Italian garden in Chatham Dockyard, which was excavated by Tony Robinson's Time Team.



Monday 11th June – Summer Mini Show and Social Evening

June proved to be a popular month for holidays so attendance at our Mini Show and Summer Social was slightly down. However, the number of exhibits more than compensated, with the abundance, variety, colours and scents – particularly the roses - of the beautifully presented flowers. The class winners were:

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| 1. | A single cut rose for fragrance | Enid Lander |
| 2. | A vase of garden flowers (Association vases provided) | Barbara Macknish |
| 3. | A flowering pot plant (pot no larger than 20cm (8")) | Roy Lingham |

We had a change this year for the social evening – in place of our usual quiz, small teams circulated the hall, playing short games (mostly on a garden theme) with a different team each time, the idea being that we would all meet someone new. It proved to be a winning formula and a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Monday 9th July – Regular Meeting in place of our annual Garden Visit

Our July visit to Potash Farm was cancelled at short notice and we therefore invited members to give a short talk on a subject close to their hearts, which made for an interesting and entertaining evening. Anne Nicholson, a long-standing member of Meopham Gardeners, told us the history of her garden, which was originally a neglected market garden and was very overgrown. It contained various fruit, mulberry and walnut trees, including a 100 year old apple tree which used to be laden with apples – the branches have one by one dropped off and it has now become a sculpture! The garden was never landscaped, it was just a case of putting plants 'where it seemed right'. Anne and her husband Douglas found kiln bricks, so they built walls, replacing privet hedges and overgrown Cypresses, so reducing maintenance. First to be established was a kitchen garden and they became almost self-sufficient, growing aubergines against the house wall, which the aubergines preferred to the greenhouse! Grape vines meant joining a club in Meopham when wine-making was all the rage. They grew watercress in between two ponds containing Koi, some of which are now 26 years old. With the house in the middle of the L-shaped garden, at the end of a long Yorkstone drive, it certainly does sound as though Anne and Douglas found the 'Good Life'.

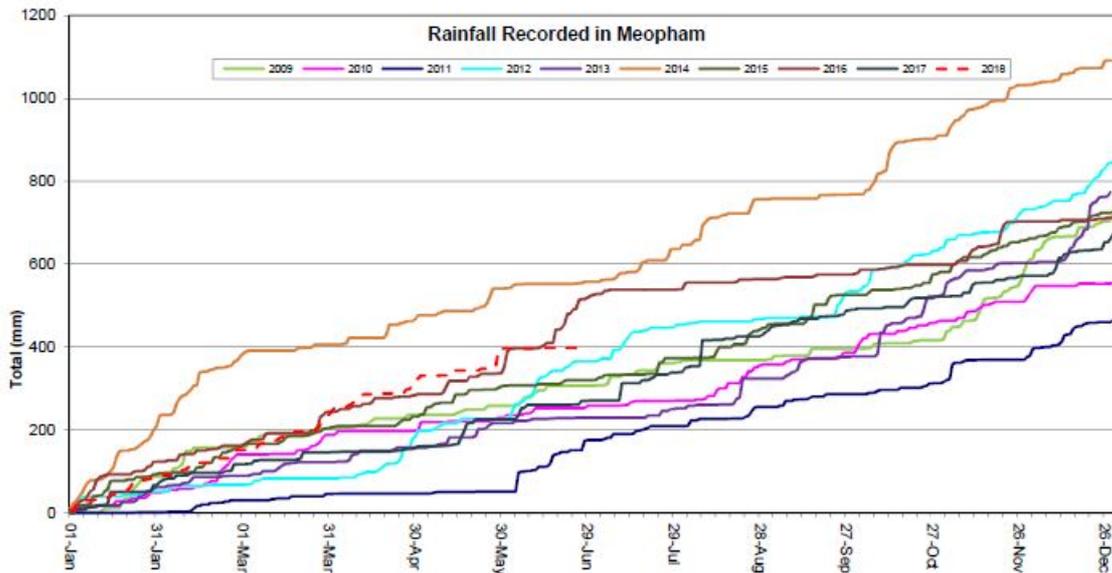
Gill Carpenter spoke passionately about the wildlife in our gardens – Gill has been training as an advisor for the Kent Wildlife Trust so that she can assess whether a garden is friendly to wildlife. People can enter their garden into the KWT 'Wild About Gardens' scheme – this could be a new project for next year, we hope to hear more about Gill's progress and the scheme.

Sue Adams' subject was pests and diseases. We discussed mildew being caused by a lack of air circulation, some plants, e.g. vines, being more prone to mildew than others – plants which get too dry are weakened and are also susceptible. Black fly can be sprayed with soapy water and black spot on roses can be treated with a salt spray – collect all the leaves, leaving the ground clear under the bushes and burn the infected leaves. Nematodes can last six weeks in a watering can and will eat slugs eggs – since the small black slugs come up through the soil, watering with nematodes is more effective than gel and pellets and is an organic remedy.

Brian Carpenter announced that we have been invited by Meopham Parish Council to maintain the flower beds by the public conveniences opposite the cricket green. The beds contain roses and our first job will be to tackle the nettles that have grown up between the rose bushes! If you are interested in taking part in this project, starting from this Autumn, please let Brian know.

Climate Summary January – June 2018

This graph shows the cumulative rainfall from January 1st to June 30th 2018 along with the annual rainfall for the previous 9 years. The total rainfall to the end of June was 398mm (15.7"). During the meteorological Winter (Dec - Feb) 257mm (10.1") or rainfall were recorded and we had 244.5mm (9.6") this Spring (Mar-May). The averaging period mentioned below is 1981-2010.



January was generally mild and changeable. Storm Eleanor (2-3rd) caused some flooding in the south east but caused more problems further north. A maximum temperature of 15.1°C was recorded in Cambridgeshire on the 28th and a minimum temperature of -13.7°C was recorded in Scotland on the 21st. Overall February was colder than in 2013 but not as cold as in 2010. The end of the month was particularly cold with the arrival of 'The Beast from the East'. There was widespread travel disruption with hazardous driving conditions even on major roads. The minimum temperature of -11.7°C was recorded in Hampshire on the 28th. The exceptionally cold wintry weather continued into March. After a brief respite snow returned on the 17th and 18th, though this was not as disruptive as earlier in the month. It was colder than average but not as cold as March 2013.

April started off cold and wet with some snow. There was a brief but very marked hot spell (18th - 21st) which produced the highest April temperatures since 1949. A maximum temperature of 29.1°C was recorded at St James's Park in London on the 19th. It soon became cooler and more unsettled. The 30th was unseasonably cool, wet and windy in causing delays to flights and cross channel ferries. Fallen trees and flooding caused disruption on both railways and roads, with firefighters rescuing motorists across Kent. In Ramsgate, three people were swept off the pier with one fatality.

The early May Bank Holiday was the warmest recorded since the holiday was introduced in 1978. A maximum temperature of 28.7°C was recorded at Northolt (London) on the 7th and overall it was the second warmest May since 1910. Thunderstorms on the 29th dumped 44mm of rain in a few hours in Meopham and even caused flooding on the M2 (J5-6). June was warmer than average. It was also exceptionally dry with only 1.5mm rain recorded locally on the 13th. Northern Ireland Water issued a hosepipe ban and other water companies asked the public to conserve water.

(Source: Met Office Website and locally recorded rainfall)



A Few Reminders

MGA Membership cards – we have a card again this year but we are bringing back the book by popular demand! All information is also on the website: www.meophamgardeners.co.uk

Millbrook Garden Centre – we have been offered 10% discount on all plants so long as your membership card is produced at the till to prove that you are a fully paid up member of Meopham Gardeners. Please note that the discount only applies to plant sales.

We now also have a 10% discount from **Fairseat Garden Centre** as well as **Walnut Hill Nursery**.

Provender Trade Cards – these are held by Hazel, Barbara, Gail, Roy and Claire. Provender Nurseries is in Leydenhatch Lane, Swanley, BR8 7PS.

Monthly Raffle – if you have any gardening-related articles suitable for the raffle, please bring them to any meeting. We will happily accept wine and chocolates too!

Items for Sale – if you have any tools or pots in good condition but have no further use for them why not try selling them? Larger items can be advertised on the notice board. If items are sold, all the club asks is for 10% of the sale price.

Penny Jars – if you wish to take part again for the **Help Raise the Roof** appeal for Meopham Village Hall, as unfortunately the fund still falls short of the total needed – please start collecting now!

Coach Trip to Waterperry Gardens 10th August 2018





In the News

Island Permaculture

An article in Permaculture Magazine discusses the challenges of living on the Channel Island of Sark. Many items, in particular diesel, require double shipping, first to Guernsey and then to Sark. Thus producing electrical power and using tractors is expensive. The article highlights the food and flower production for the Sark Roots Hotel. They employ no dig sheet mulching with wet cardboard and straw, then adding grass clippings leaf mulch and compost topped off with rotted horse manure collected from the hotel's carriage horses.

GLYPHOSATE

Chemical giant Monsanto has been ordered by a court in San Francisco to pay \$289m (£226m) damages to a man who claimed herbicides containing glyphosate had caused his cancer.

Emma Hockridge, head of policy at the Soil Association, said the "landmark" ruling in the US highlighted the problems caused by glyphosate. She added: "It was disturbing in this case to hear that Monsanto had knowledge of the potentially harmful effects, but the court case also really highlights the problem with relying on chemical pesticides globally as so little is known about the long-term environmental and health impacts." The UK Soil Association says glyphosate traces are regularly found in bread.

www.bbc.com/news/amp/world-us-canada-45152546

Toxic Silence: Public Officials, Monsanto and the Media by COLIN TODHUNTER

Environmentalist Dr Rosemary Mason thinks you are being lied to or misled and has provided much supporting evidence. She has been campaigning against the agrochemical industry for many years and has borne witness to the destruction of her own nature reserve in South Wales, which she argues is due to the widespread spraying of glyphosate in the area.

In 2016, she wrote an open letter to journalists at The Guardian newspaper in the UK outlining how the media is failing the public by not properly reporting on the regulatory delinquency relating to the harmful chemicals being applied to crops (link below). Her assertion was that not only humans and the environment are silently being poisoned by thousands of untested and unmonitored chemicals, but that the UK media are silent about the agrochemical industry's role in this. She has now sent a new 'open letter' to some major newspapers with a six-page document attached: 'The British Government and Monsanto should stand accused of crimes against humanity'

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/08/06/toxic-silence-public-officials-monsanto-and-the-media/>

http://www.i-sis.org.uk/How_Roundup_Poisoned_My_Nature_Reserve.php

<http://rinf.com/alt-news/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Open-Letter-to-the-Editor-in-Chief-of-The-Guardian.pdf>

Alien Bugs

A study mentioned in the Daily Telegraph (9th June) examined the visible damage to leaves, stems and seeds caused by leaf miners, stem borers and aphids. The findings show that native and alien did not differ in the total amount of damage, nor in the number of different kinds of damage. "Total damage is probably the best indicator of the quantity of caterpillars, bugs and beetles which is what matters to birds, wasps and spiders. In short, more damage equals more wildlife."

Gardening Which?

In the May 2018 edition expanded on the idea of sowing carrots in seed trays. The seeds can be germinated in a warm greenhouse with the added advantage of being able to thin the seedlings much more conveniently on the greenhouse bench. They can be planted out 'bare-rooted' when they have well-developed roots. Although thinning on the bench will minimise carrot-fly attack, the authors do not comment on the likelihood of attacks when planting out.

Neonicotinoids

The EU banned the use of neonicotinoids on outdoor crops after the European Food Safety Authority confirmed that these insecticides cause damage to the bee populations. They can still be used to control pests in greenhouses.

Soil Health

Everyone stands to gain from a robust agricultural policy to replace the EU regulations. Professor Jane Rickson, president of the Institution of Agricultural Engineers, points out that soil delivers a wide range of goods and services to society such as food production, floodwater storage and support for plants that sequester carbon removed from the atmosphere and reduce the effects of global warming. However, poor management and land use can lead to erosion, compaction, loss of organic matter and biodiversity which cost the UK at least £1.2 billion per year. But soil conservation measures like reduced cultivation and buffer strips can enhance crop productivity while maximising resistance to soil degradation. These ideas and others are supported by the Wildlife Conservation Trust, the Woodland Trust, the Sustainable Soils Alliance and the WWF – (World Wide Fund for Nature).

The Web links can be activated by going to www.meophamgardeners.co.uk and viewing the newsletters.

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