At last, Summer has finally arrived but our thoughts have already turned to the Autumn show, the final one of the year and the biggest. Come along and be amazed at the Rayleigh Whopper's - the largest vegetable to be grown in the area! Hopefully there will be some spectacular dahlias on show, too. The Summer show had a lot more new entrants so why not join the fun and put in an entry - there are classes for everyone, from photography and flower arranging to cookery and crafts and, of course, fruit, vegetables and flowers. You don't have to be an expert to compete so why not give it a go? Please do come along and show your support for the last show of 2013 - doors open for entries from 9 am to 11 am and then open again after judging at 2pm.

As usual, we are desperate for help to set everything up. Just turn up 7.30 am at the store or 8am at Mill Hall and you will be welcomed with open arms!! See you there.

Peter Noble, Show Manager

Hi All,
Well, it's taken all this time to grow a courgette – then 300 turn up at once! Everything in the garden and allotment is now growing at an alarming rate especially after the few sudden downpours like we saw towards the end of July.

We have a great new feature (starting with this newsletter, see page 3), which is highlighting all the Committee Members – so if you didn't know who was who before – you will now! Our thanks to new Committee Member, Jean, for taking this on, and we look forward to others in the series.

Now come on all you younger members – we need you to get more actively involved in the Society. We need fitter and able young people to help, either in the store or setting up on show mornings – we know you are all busy with work and looking after your families, but the Society may not be around in 10 or 15 years' time if the next generation don't start to take an interest now so, look on page 2 and see if there's anything you can do to help.

Look forward to seeing you all at the Autumn Show, on Sunday 8th September.

Colin Andrews
27th August   Maike Windhorst   "Vegetable self sufficiency in a changing Climate"
Maike is a former grammar school teacher, and has lived in England since 1995. She is a member of Ramsden Heath Horticultural Society, and has also won the Banksian Medal. Maike has about 3 acres on the outskirts of Downham is an organic gardener and keeps chickens.

24th Sept   Roger Robinson   "Laurel & Hardy"
Roger was born in Hanwell West London, and one of his pleasures was Saturday morning pictures where he saw his first Laurel & Hardy films. Roger runs the SAPS at sea (the local appreciation society) giving talks about the comedians in the community, and has written a book called "A Spot of Trouble in Southend" based on their visit to the town. Roger was a serving police officer for 30 years, and after retiring, joined Castle Point, and is now with Southend-on-Sea Borough council dealing with anti-social behaviour.

22nd October   David Clarke   "Cuba a Revolutionary Tale"
David worked in international banks in the city until he was 46, he then became a financial adviser to doctors and nurses in the medical profession. His hobbies are travelling, is the treasurer of the University of the 3rd Age in Rayleigh, likes fine wines and real ale, and is a football fanatic supporting Ipswich and never misses a home game.

Everybody welcome — Members £1—Visitors £2

WE MAY BE THE BEST, BUT
WE STILL NEED YOU TO KEEP US THE BEST!!!!!

We need your help...............

1. **Show poster distribution** (especially to local shops)

2. **In the store** - Do you have shop experience, selling, handling money, giving the members a good service, packing up goods and stacking shelves, (some heavy lifting may be required)

3. **Delivering our news letters**, Areas required currently Hockley Road, Rayleigh end - Downhall Road, part - Rawreth Lane, part. Beech Avenue- Station Crescent, London Hill, parts of Thundersley

4. **Our Great Shows** - Setting up in the morning, stewarding and clearing up at the end

Any help, no matter how little goes to make the bigger picture work. For the store 01268 952936 - the show 01268 745925 - news letters 01268 777921 - posters 01268 775027 or the chairman 01702 529000
Domestic's a Winner….

After the Summer Show, the Domestic Judge sent a very nice lengthy letter to Peter Noble (unfortunately, we don't have the space to print it all here), but we have picked out a few comments which might help for the future:

St. Clement Cake: A well-supported item, but many had used too large a fruit causing too much juice under the icing.

Chocolate Viennese Whirls: A good standard.

Individual Egg Custard Tarts: Good texture and flavour.

Open-Glazed Summer Fruit Tarts: All a good standard.

Savoury or Vegetable Bread: Some delicious entries, but watch timings and temperatures.

Savoury Quiche: Some delicious entries, but some bases were undercooked.

Cor, I feel hungry…..

Horticultural shortcomings!!

Anyone who enjoys photos of lovely gardens would have enjoyed May Club Night. The speakers belong to and help organise the National Gardens Scheme here in Essex. Linda Holdaway talked about the beginning of the scheme and how it has expanded from the grand gardens of stately homes to now include many more gardens owned by the general public. She had slides of gardens both large and small, including one on a moored boat. She and her husband Neil had copies of this years Yellow Book which they sold at a reduced price as we're well into the season, and also handed out free copies of their little book of Essex gardens. A nice evening, even though it did highlight our own horticultural shortcomings.

a mass exodus…

I think we were all slightly uncertain what the talk would be about at June Club Night - the title provided to Sandra when she booked it was 'What's in a Name' and as the speaker was on holiday till a couple of days before we couldn't ask him. It turned out to be plant names (and not Genealogy as some of us wondered) and despite John Walker opening his talk by saying a talk on Latin plant names might require the hall doors to be locked to prevent a mass exodus he received very loud applause at the end of the evening. Unless you were there you probably wouldn't believe me when I say it was VERY interesting with quite a few mutters from the audience along the lines of 'Oh, now I understand why that is called THAT'. So even if the title of a talk doesn't sound your cup of tea - come along, you might find it is.

Club Night Reports by Page 3 Reporter Pat Hill

Getting to Know Your Committee

This is the first of a new series to tell members more about the Society’s Committee, starting with its President, Keith Gibbs.

Keith has been the Society’s President for 3 years. He has a keen interest in projects, which encourage children to take up gardening. A wholly Essex man, Keith was born in Southend and has lived in Rayleigh for over 30 years.

When he was 15, he joined the Royal Navy and worked as an engineer with the Fleet Air Arm on board aircraft carriers. His subsequent career was in the police force. He served in both the Essex and Metropolitan forces, but also worked in the British Transport Police where his duties included the Royal train. He also worked with the Fraud Squad investigating stolen credit cards and oil theft. Having attained the rank of inspector, during the years before he retired, he was involved with football fans travelling to matches in Britain and Europe.

His most recent achievement in May was to be elected to represent Rayleigh South on Essex County Council as a UKIP member. Previously he was the councillor for the Trinity Ward of Rochford District Council for 16 years. Until recently he was a governor of Southend University NHS Trust’s Board.

He says that his main gardening interest is growing vegetables. Something he learned from helping his grandfather in his allotment. He has flowers, too, but says he doesn’t know much about them.

You can meet Keith in the shop on Wednesday mornings.

In the next issue keep watching this space.

Feature by Jean Cornell

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Cor, I feel hungry…..
Hello All, firstly I would like to say a big thank you to the two ladies, Ann and Janice who made it possible with all their hard work and enthusiasm for us to obtain the grant from AWARDS FOR ALL - Part of the BIG LOTTERY to improve our store room.

We have now been able to purchase extra racking, and re-arrange our store room so that it works more efficiently and we can hold more lines and products to give you more choice in your purchases. To start with for those of you who have a penchant for Roses we can now provide Toprose in two sizes 1kg plus an economy 4kg for the Real enthusiast. A must for replanting roses and providing a good start for new rose bushes. As many of you will be acquiring bare root stock this autumn this will be an item you must consider.

We have managed to obtain a further consignment of Rockdust at a further discount and now it is selling at £12.25 down from £14.25. Unfortunately not all our products have this benefit, as more restrictions are placed on the production of chemical pest controls and fertilisers, prices are bound to rise and as we see each new consignment come in, we notice a dramatic increase in the prices, but as members of this society you still get the benefit of our lower prices, for instance our Jack's Magic (Westlands) Compost with added seaweed extract sells at £5.00 per 60lt bag and a further discount by getting 3 bags for £14.25. At Wyvale and Home Base they are selling this for £6.99 for 60 and 50lt bags. How good is that?

With the autumn show now approaching it's time to get plenty of feed for those marrows and melons along with all the other big vegetables, we've got just about everything you need.

And to finish off, for a limited trial period starting from the end of August we are going to open from 5.30pm till 7pm Friday evenings for the benefit of those of you who work during the day and cannot get along during the week days, we hope you will take advantage of this and come and have a chat. See Below

Don't forget if there's anything you need to know about the shop, you can get in touch with me 01268 952936. Good luck Fred

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Kentwell Hall
Sunday 1st September 2013
£26 per ticket
including admission to house, garden & farm
Extensive grounds featuring a maze, camera obscura, ice house, walled garden, forge, rose garden, and the rare breeds farm. Plenty of things to see outside & all of the house will be open from 12 noon. There is a Tea room / cafe or you can bring your own lunch, picnic area is available.

To leave Kirby at 9.30am & return there for about 6.30pm

Tickets available from the store, club nights, or call 01268 747418 for tickets or more information

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Did You Know….
That you can freeze raw onion? How many times have you chopped up a whole, large onion, to realise that you don't want to use it all – but don't want to waste the rest of it? The remainder can safely be stored in a freezer container just as it is – then taken out when needed to add to soups, stews, casseroles, etc.

Thanks to our Club Night reporter, Pat Hill, for this useful tip. – Ed.