RAYLEIGH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Newsletter AUGUST 2024 www.rayleighhorticulturalsociety.co.uk e-mail peskypixie@supanet.com Tel: 07 572 360 795

# from the Chairman

Hi All,
Hope you have been keeping well, and have now got used to this year's "summer" weather – (a few days very hot followed by dull, chilly and sometimes wet!) I am sure that the weather combined with the imposed change of compost and grow bags to peat-free has contributed greatly to our erratic crops this year – It will not be a good year for some things like Tomatoes, although saying that, I must not complain, as I have had brilliant crops of Redcurrants, Blackberries, Cabbage, Lettuce, Beetroot and Runner Beans and, at last, Courgettes, which have just started to take off after a slow start! – and we all know that what does brilliantly one year doesn't always do well the following year!
There are still 3 Club Afternoons left till the end of the year – see Ann's bit on page 2 – so do go along if you can manage it.
Our 2nd Show this year is coming up on 1st September – so do look in the Showbook (available from the Store) and see if there's any classes you can enter from the wide range available, otherwise just come along from 2 pm and support everyone else!
Hope you are all enjoying your gardens and allotments this year.

Colin Andrews

## The day went well!

This is what happened around me & what I did at the Spring Show 2024.

I arrived by bus at the Mill Hall Rayleigh at 8,50am to find not many people but lots going on by those in attendance sorting out all the things needed to make a successful show. More raffle prizes needed to be purchased so Ann & David went out to get them, then Shaun went off to purchase more items essential for the smooth running of the show.

The hall provided a large flask of boiling water for us to make drinks with, not free! Before coming home, I took quite a few photos of the exhibits at the show. I let David take photos of some of the exhibits & people & prize winners. I folded the raffle tickets that Ann sold, while Pat greeted people, as at the last show she did a brilliant job! Nearing the end of the show I was handed the microphone & called out the raffle ticket prize winners ably assisted by my invaluable co-host, Delilah Noble, aged 7, without her invaluable help the day would not have gone well! I hope she can help me at the next show this year & possibly years to come as she did an excellent job of just picking out one ticket at a time & displaying it for all to see. I watched the new show manager Shaun be showed the ropes by the show manager who had worked for the last 18+ years Peter, he will still be around in an advisory capacity in future shows, I hope.

Here is a list of people that helped at the show, if your name is not included, I apologise. Ann Baughen, Carole Noble, David Baughen, Miss Delilah Noble, Janis Williams, Marlene Bates, Nicola Calder, Pat Hill, Peter Collier, Peter Noble, Ron Coutts, Shaun Cox, Viv Irvine. For the moment that's it, I do hope all that came to the show enjoyed it, I did!

*Until next time, Mark Wilson, Hospitality.*

# SUNDAY 1st SEPT
# AUTUMN SHOW
## Mill Hall, Rayleigh

**Open to the public from 2 p.m.**

*Every member welcome to exhibit Flowers, Fruit, Vegetables, Craft & Cakes*



*(Not shown before? — now is the time, if you need help phone a committee member, call in the store or just turn up on show day, we are only too pleased to help)*

*2024 SHOW BOOK AVAILABLE AT THE STORE*

## *Children's Competition*
## Make a model of a Halloween witch

See page 9 of the SHOW BOOK

ALL AGES UP TO 16 YEARS
*Bring them along to Mill Hall on the morning of the show before 11.30*

# STORE NEWS

Once again I am asking if you have two hours to spare a month to help me in the trading store on an ad hoc basis. We already have a wonderful, hard-working team of volunteers working in the store but they need help. We are all feeling the creaky joints and aching backs of our years. If you would like to know more give me or Ann a ring o n 01702 527456 and we can have a chat.

Hopefully those of you that purchased onion sets, potato tubers or Summer bulbs are getting good results. My beetroot is the best crop this year I've ever had, although my parsnips went downwards instead of upwards! By the end of August, we hope to have Spring flowering bulbs in-store together with your usual choices of feeds, weed and slug killers , lawn weed feed and moss killer etc. Our new supply of Humax continues to be of the peat-based variety, now with added sand.

Don't forget to bring your membership card in if you want to buy something. I'm looking forward to seeing you sometime soon. *David Baughen*

# Social News

I hope you are reading your newsletter in a nice sunny spot in your garden, or near a window with the sunshine streaming into the room. No?? Just in case you had not noticed, Summertime is well and truly upon us and we just have to enjoy/endure whatever comes at us weatherwise in the usual way.

My Summer garden looks very colourful still, it has been a wonderful year for lilies and my alstromeria has really shone this year. It still has plenty of flowers on show and the colour blends in perfectly with my orange and peach lilies. As you can probably tell, I like hot colours in my garden. The backdrop for all that hot colour is a beautiful copper beech which is in full leaf now and is practically dancing in the 'breezes' that persist in our neck of the woods.

I hope many of you have enjoyed our social afternoons so far this year. We have had some very entertaining speakers and still have a few more to go. I am now planning my programme for 2025 so if you have any suggestions for good speakers please let me know. You can either ring me on 01702 527456 or speak to me at our social afternoons, or leave me a message in the store.

If you have not been to one of our afternoons yet, maybe you will come soon. We meet on the first Friday of every month, in the main hall at Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh, 2 – 4pm. We have a speaker to entertain us for about an hour and then we have the opportunity to chat over a cuppa and chocolate biscuits. I would love to see you there.

Enjoy the sunshine when it's out! *Ann Baughen*

## Afternoon Club Meetings



**6th September** – Tim Whitelock – Norfolk is a beautiful place and Tim is bringing some of it alive to us with his talk entitled Not the Norfolk Broads.



**4th October** – Mike Davies – a well-known face in Rayleigh area, he will be talking to us about The Rayleigh Museum.



**1st November** - Jane Piper — The weird and wonderful of Christmas.

***Everybody welcome -***

**Members £2.50 - Visitors £3**
**On the first**
**Friday of the month**
**@ 2p.m. Main Hall**
**Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh SS6 8BB**




plus ***ALL YOUR USUAL GARDENING NEEDS-***

HUMAX COMPOST - GROW BAGS - POTTING GRIT - BARK - FARMYARD MANURE - CANES - BIRD FOOD - FERTILISERS - POTS - NETTING - FLEECE - LABELS - LAWN SEED - 6X - CAPILLARY MATTING - CLOCHES - ROCK DUST -SPADES - FORKS - PRUNING KNIVES - VEGETABLE SEEDS - FLOWER SEEDS - HAND TOOLS

# Club Meeting reports by Pat Hill



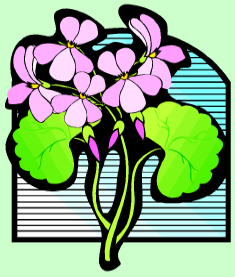
## 'police on bicycles'

The speaker at our March Club Afternoon was a retired Scenes of Crime Officer with the Metropolitan Police. We tend to think of fingerprints, blood analysis and DNA as the beginning of Forensic Science but a murder in China in 990BC was solved when a knife attracted blow flies even though the owner thought he had cleaned it. However, the first recognised Forensic Scientist was Edmond Locard in France in 1810 who established the rule that every contact leaves a trace. A major step forward was the invention of Luminol in 1937 which highlights tiny traces of blood under UV light. We then heard about the 'Tottenham Outrage' in 1909 where two Latvian refugees robbed a factory right opposite Tottenham Police Station. They were spotted but the event descended into farce when the police gun cabinet was locked and the man with the key had gone home. They were chased by police on bicycles who were quickly joined by a growing army of onlookers. Trams and carts were commandeered by the mob, but sadly a policeman and young lad were killed and many injured in the chaos.
It was a very interesting talk.



## 'decent working girl'

Maz Morgan has visited us several times in the past and is obviously popular as we had a good attendance. This time the talk was 'The life of an Edwardian Flower seller. Maz was dressed the part and basically spoke about what life was like as a 'decent' working girl - and assured us she wasn't the sort who had other sidelines to flowers. Did you know the Silly Season in spring is so called because of the flowers coming from the Scilly Isles? Or that the greenery and moss sent to Covent Garden market was picked by gypsies in the New Forest? Various philanthropists worked to improve the life of the flower girls including Lord Shaftesbury who provided funds for the girls to buy stock. The Duchess of Newcastle founded the Flower Sellers Mission which helped girls find jobs in service as this was seen as more reputable although probably was not an easy option.



## 'the answer lies in the soil'

The talk in June was on Pelargoniums and Brian brought some lovely examples, He asked if anyone remembered the phrase 'the answer lies in the soil' (and I think we all did) and he totally agreed. Brian recommends adding grit to your potting compost as this keeps the soil from becoming compacted, and roots near air too. When taking cuttings - which he says is 'dead easy' - remember to cut diagonally across the stem and remove all the tiny leaves before inserting round the edge of the pot. He also suggests adding 50% sand to the compost mix you use for cuttings and said the best type is kiln dried sand which you might have left over if you have had your driveway block paved - it's what they brush into the gaps. For feeding he recommends Chempack 2,3 or 4 which I believe David stocks at the store. The main pest affecting pelargoniums, particularly the Regal variety, is whitefly and Brian finds Provado the best treatment. A final tip was put used teabags round azaleas, camellia and rhododendron plants or making a feed mixture with them. It's cheap but effective.



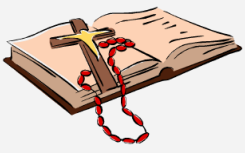
## 'a similar vintage'

Despite on and off drizzle there was a good turnout of members at July Club afternoon. The speaker was Nick Dobson and his subject was 'A good laugh'. He went back to Shakespeare and the humour in his plays and then spoke about Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear and their nonsense verses which we probably all know part of. Then the change in the styles of PG Wodehouse and Noel Coward, not forgetting Spike Milligan and Pam Ayres. He also mentioned Macavity, The Mystery Cat by T S Elliot. I remember this from English lessons at school, and being of a similar vintage, I guess many of the audience did too.

## '27 billion litres'



Despite a scheduled interesting talk at May Club Afternoon, Ann and I weren't expecting many people to turn up as it had rained all morning and was still raining as we set up the hall. Our members are a hardy lot as it was a brilliant turn out. Bill Goldsafe is the only paid staff member of Essex Wildlife Trust at Hanningfield - he has an army of volunteers to maintain and improve the site. The reservoir was completed in the 1950's and supplies water for south Essex, including Rayleigh. When full it holds 27billion litres and measures 6 miles round. It is supplied with water from the Blackwater and Chelmer at Langford and if necessary can be topped up with water from Norfolk. The site has dormice, bats, barn and tawney owls as well as badgers, foxes and squirrels plus the usual array of waterfowl. My personal addition to this information is that the coffee and cakes are much better in the Trust's cafe than the Fishing Lodge!



## *Miss Josephine Hook*

Hi all, I was told of the sad passing of a lovely club member. I first met Josie Hook a number of years ago, like most people, she had been around a very long time. I believe she would have celebrated her 95th birthday this year. One afternoon she recalled to Ann Baughen the various different things she had done in her life; they were many and varied. I had my own dealings with her, being not as mobile as some members I would get her tea, as she liked it! Amongst the many minor tasks that I love doing for all. She even said to me once, "can I kiss you", I believe it was a thankyou for all that I had done for her. I will, like everyone else, miss dear Josie, may your garden never need weeding.

*Best wishes, Mark Wilson (Hospitality)*

# INVITATION TO LOOK AND LEARN ABOUT PERMACULTURE

We have an exciting invitation for all Horticultural gardeners and allotment holders based on PERMACULTURE.

Permaculture is very basically a closed-loop system of using land, resources and the environment in a manner that doesn't produce any waste, and where absolutely everything is used and reused. Flowering plants, vegetables, fruits and trees live in harmony side by side supporting each other, providing food and flowers.

Some of you may already have met Monica Yadav Knight and seen her magnificent gardens at Treetops in West View Drive, Rayleigh on one of the regular Open Garden Trails. The Treetops Food garden has 90 fruit trees and 15 native perennial vegetable varieties and is entirely based on the permaculture principles. Dwarf rootstock fruit trees grow in harmony next to beautiful perennial purple kale, alongside roses and annuals. Monica is keen to pass on her knowledge and enthusiasm to as many people as possible and would like to extend an invitation to anybody who is interested to visit and learn about this simple and innovative method of gardening, either as individuals or in groups, and can accommodate up to 20 people at a time. I have been privileged to see for myself just what she has achieved and it is fascinating – I am very keen to give it a go myself.

We are hoping that Monica will give a talk on Permaculture at one of the future Club Meetings but if anybody would like to visit her before then to see for themselves and learn about this fascinating subject, she would be delighted to see you – give her a call on 07764 902944.

*Permaculture is the growth of edible ecosystems in a self-sufficient and sustainable way. This form of growing draws inspiration from nature to develop farming systems based on crop diversity, resilience, natural productivity, and sustainability*



# What now!

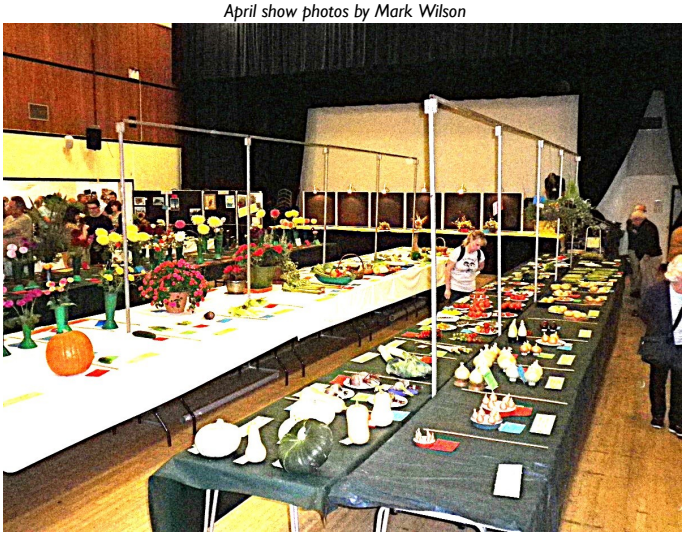
Who was at the show? A lot of club members & a group of ladies selling all sorts, home made jams, cakes & knitted items to name but a few of the items they sell, who are they? The group of ladies go by the name of Country Markets who are associated with the WI. The lady that started the group in Rayleigh is Jean Kebbell, she is very keen, she has been doing it for over 30 years! Other ladies who help are, Gill Clare, Jacky Matthews, Karen Townley, Liz Davies, Ruth Chapman. They all love what they do, the cakes are superb, especially the Carrot Cake

*All for now Mark Wilson, Hospitality.*

# Spring Show 2024



*April show photos by Mark Wilson*











We look forward to seeing your hard work at the next show



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