RAYLEIGH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Newsletter AUGUST 2026 www.rayleighhorticulturalsociety.co.uk e-mail peskypixie@supanet.com Tel: 075 128 19 19 2

from the Chairman

Hi All,

Hope you have been managing to keep well and cool during our many heat waves this year – we are certainly still not used to such weather and I'm sure most of the plants aren't either! But despite this extreme of weather, the crops have all been amazing!

However, those of you who know me, will know that I have been very poorly for several weeks now and unable to do anything at the allotment or in the garden, but Janet and I want to say a huge thank-you to everybody who has helped us whether it be watering in the heat or picking the many fruit and veggies – you have all been brilliant and we can't wait for me to be well and back at the allotment again!

We still have several queries on emails – so, if you have changed your email, please let us know asap.

There are still several Club Afternoons left till the end of the year – so do go along if you can.

Finally, don't forget the Autumn Show on 6th September, if you are hoping to enter some classes, go to the Store and ask for a Show Book (as these are only available for members wishing to enter a show). If not, just come along to the Mill Hall at 2pm to support everyone else!

Hope you are all enjoying your allotments and gardens this year,

Colin Andrews (Chairman)

from the Show Manager

Firstly I would like to apologize for my absence at the Spring show, I was suffering from acute sciatica and could hardly walk for most of the day. Fortunately l am recovered and looking forward to seeing you all at the Autumn show in September.

I was informed that we only had three entries for the floral art category and not many children's entries either at the Spring show, so if I could appeal for an effort from you all to increase the numbers it would be much appreciated.

However I was also informed that the show was very well attended with a noticeable increase in the numbers of people coming through the doors, that was excellent.

Regards Shaun Cox *(Show Manager)*

CLUB MEETING

4th SEPTEMBER GRAHAM MEE (rspb)

BIRDS IN YOUR GARDEN

Check our website regularly for updates and information on the society

www.rayleighhorticulturalsociety.co.uk

Everybody welcome **-Members £2.50 - Visitors £3**

On the first Friday of the month
@ 2p.m. Main Hall
Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh SS6 8BB

SUNDAY 6th 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)

2026 SHOW BOOK AVAILABLE AT THE STORE

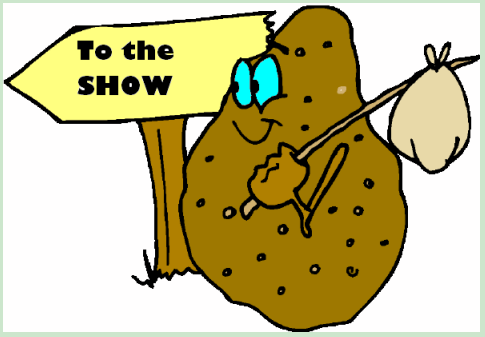
Children's Competition

POTATO CHALLENGE

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

The 2027 Spring Flowering bulbs should be in-store by late August as well as the over-wintering garlic.

We have also renewed our supply of Humax peat-based compost ready and waiting for you. This month (August) we are renewing the lighting in the store so you will be able to see our wonderful volunteers better. Speaking of volunteers - if you find yourself with some time on your hands and would like to do a shift in our store, please let me know. We are always needing help there.

David Baughen

My experience at the Spring show.

My neighbour brought me as usual; the hall was mainly empty except for the tables the staff had put out. No words needed, we all got on with the job in hand, putting name cards down followed by canes. Tables arranged for the ladies that give the cards to the exhibitors. More tables for the people selling tombola tickets, plus the table has to be arranged with prizes, plus chairs, of course, even more action when the items from the shop arrive, lots of stuff comes, hopefully it is all sold so when the show finishes there isn't much to take back! A table in the reception for people to pay their entry fee, a very reasonable £1. Cloth on stage then boards mounted on their bases, at the same time the stands for photos etc being done. Then has anyone got refreshments for the judges! If not its not good form. I take drinks round to those that need them in the morning & definitely in the afternoon, where people are sort of fixed to their post. Chairs placed where needed, for the paying public.

In the afternoon, you walk around looking at who has won what prize for their item/s they have taken, some people take one or two exhibits, two members regularly take over thirty items, well done to them, its hard work knowing where your exhibits need to go. My favourite part of the day is when the Rayleigh Women's Institute ladies bring the cakes, YUM! They do bring other items. Then I tried to call out the tombola tickets, but I was thwarted by two ladies, one being 7 years old & the other being the mayor. I just held the microphone while they did all the talking, lovely. Once that was done it was time to clear up, which needed to be done quickly to allow people to get home for tea. It was amazing all the people helping, thanks to everyone who helped set up & take down our show. As they say, 'We can't do it without you' Many thanks, from all of the committee. Best wishes to one & all,

Mark Wilson, Hospitality.

Lower Wyburns allotments



On the Allotment site there are empty plots that have not been worked all year. We know of at least one Allotment holder who is giving up this year. Another plot which was given up at the end of last year was left in good condition but is now covered in weeds so will take some time and work to clear. If you know anyone who is interested in an Allotment or is on the waiting list, please contact the Town Council on 01268 741880 and keep badgering them for a plot. We are aware that they are not actively promoting the allotments but when someone calls, magically a plot becomes available. Let's try and get the whole site actively being cultivated before the Council turn round and tell us nobody wants allotments so it will be turned into more housing - a real possibility.



Things to do now!!

Keep sowing quick crops of salad leaves etc. for autumn harvest, Plant your Xmas potatoes and keep them well watered, and don't forget to feed your toms, plus now is the time to pick and freeze your herbs for use over winter.

Seeds still available in store



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



'Cloud car'

We had a big turnout for the talk 'Zeppelins over Essex' including some non-members who had seen it advertised. The talk was by Peter Jones and he had a lot of interesting facts and slides. Airships were first used as public transport in 1910 in Germany and due to their size rivalled ocean liners in facilities with dining rooms and lounges. The R101 was actually on route to India when it crashed in France in 1930 with the loss of 48 lives. Zeppelin was a German make of airships but the name has become synonymous with airships in general. They could cruise at 17000 ft, much higher than the rudimentary aircraft of the day, but it was cold that high and the crew were elite navy personnel as the Airforce was in it's infancy. The most favoured job was being lowered from the airship in a 'Cloud car' to see where they were as navigation was a bit hit and miss, and the bonus for the crew member was the chance for a cigarette - not surprisingly banned on the airship itself.

'cheap labour'



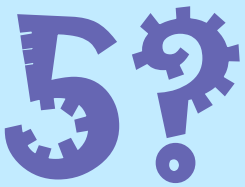
May's Club afternoon speaker was Tim Whitelock. Many years ago he fancied having a go at painting the brightly coloured items you see on narrow boats, which also sparked an interest in their history. When canals were the major way to move goods around the country in the 1700's the boats were merely painted with their name, the name of the company, and possibly a number. 200 years ago railways arrived on the scene, offering a much quicker form of transport and canal boat owners found they weren't making so much money. They drafted in their families as 'cheap labour' and with wives and children living on the boats they made them more homely and colourful. From around the 1940's canals became redundant and many fell into disrepair until they became an eyesore, leading various organisations to work to restore them to the places of leisure they are today. Tim had plenty of colourful slides and brought some examples of his work.



'worst of the winter'

Some members expected to hear Andy Bunker talk about Alton Garden centre at our June Club afternoon but his family sold the business just a couple of months ago - leaving Ann to find a replacement speaker. Luckily Brian Carline, one of her regulars, came to her rescue and I don't think anyone was disappointed. He spoke about Pelargoniums and Fuchsias, with a brief diversion into tomatoes. Pelargoniums love the sun and will stand drying out if you go on holiday for a week or so but his main love, fuchsias, need dappled shade and don't appreciate being left to dry out. If that does happen he stresses just water them, or any other plants, and don't add any feed till they have thoroughly recovered for a couple of days. Fuchsias will lose their leaves in autumn and will survive anything other than extreme cold. He suggested using split foam pipe lagging on the stems of standard plants and a double layer of fleece over any that can't be brought indoors although smaller plants appreciate a spell in the greenhouse in the worst of the winter. He brought along plants for sale, which is always an added bonus at Club afternoons.

'couldn't read or write music'



As suspected, the title of the talk 'Five Famous Eastenders' was nothing to do with the TV programme of that name or the ones we could probably all name - Alan Sugar, David Bailey or David Beckham. Instead all the people mentioned by Nick Dobson were interesting in their own right but would you have thought of Lionel Bart, Mabel Lucy Attwell or Alfred Hitchcock? The real rags to riches story was Lionel Bart who wrote so many songs (remember Little White Bull for Tommy Steele and Living Doll for Cliff Richard, the musical 'Oliver' together with the first Bond film song, From Russia with Love sung by Matt Monro?) He couldn't read or write music but recorded the songs which were then transcribed for him. It was sad to hear that alcohol and drugs took their toll on him and he died bankrupt in 1999. I bet we could all have sung an awful lot of his songs though - but luckily weren't asked.

SUMMER SOCIAL REPORT



As I am writing this, I'm hot, thirsty and exhausted and completely fed-up with these heat-waves we have been subjected to recently. Maybe you recognise these symptoms. They say you can't have too much of a good thing, but when it comes to sunshine brilliance, I beg to differ. But that's enough moaning about something that we can't change – well not overnight anyway.

On the plus side, I have had flowers come up in my garden that have shown themselves in all their glory. My tulips this Spring were outstanding although they were early. The butterflies have been parading around my buddleia plant for the best part of four weeks and still going strong. It looks as if it has come straight out of Jack & The Beanstalk panto, going up up up and away. The lilies were also gorgeous and stayed around for 4 – 6 weeks. I have an alstroemeria which as I write is about to bloom for a second time this Summer. It, and the lilies managed to come out in the same colours, red and orange. It was a really flaming June in my back yard.

Of course there is the usual problem of keeping them watered and happy and this is why I tend to lose a little weight during the Summer months as I am continually walking up and down the garden with watering can or hosepipe in my hands.

As a treat we went to see another rather more grand garden in July, **Sandringham.** For the first time, the Royal Horticultural Society put on the Garden Show there this year. As you would expect, the grounds were immaculate and vast. As well as show gardens and exhibits from plant 'professionals' from all over the country, there were some interesting talks from experts on growing roses and other shrubs etc. Security was discreetly present and their team of volunteers were all very knowledgeable and people-friendly. BBC Norfolk were there broadcasting their gardening show and keeping the crowds amused. We went on the last day and had the opportunity to buy some of the exhibits as they all got packed away or sold off.

As you can see, David had the chance to practise his photography skills and he got a few cracking pictures.

Our Members' Social Afternoon is still going strong and if you haven't been along to join us recently, we meet on the first Friday of the month (except in December). We are still at Holy Trinity Church in Rayleigh and we have a few more 'lively' talkers lined up for you.

Ann Baughen

