RAYLEIGH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
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www.rayleighhorticulturalsociety.co.uk
Newsletter NOVEMBER 2026

from the Chairman

Hi All,
It's hard to believe that 2026 is nearly at an end. I hope you have all managed to stay fit and well and have enjoyed this year in your gardens or on your allotments. Despite our very unpredictable summer weather – all our fruit and veggies did extremely well, and, thanks to lots of friends who watered and picked for us, our freezers are now fit to bursting with produce to use throughout winter till next year.
It is now time to renew your membership for 2027 (see form on page 3 if you want to pay by cheque in the post) or you can renew at the Store or Club Meetings.
Ann has been very busy sorting out the Club Meeting schedule of speakers for next year – have a look on page 2 and support them if you can.
I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all those members who used to deliver Newsletters for us – the Society really appreciated your help and couldn't have done without you.
Finally, (with my Editor's hat on), I should also like to thank all the contributors to your Newsletter, without whom we wouldn't have a Newsletter!
With all Best Wishes for a Happy Christmas and a Healthy 2027,

Colin Andrews

A report on the Autumn Show 2026.

Never happened before! I was the first one @ the Mill Hall @ 7.50am. Walked in to an area neatly laid out with empty tables, not for long! Soon after loads of people turned up carrying all manner of items, canes to separate exhibits on tables, laminated cards with numbers & names of the exhibits that many people would use to help them know where to put their items. The setup was almost done in the first hour, how? Because everyone knows where bits have to go & people just get on with the job in hand, its hard work, but very satisfying! Exhibitors arrived, but one lady caught my eye, Nicola, she put out 47 entries, not all show winners, but what a lady. Many other members did the same but not in such great quantity. I told everyone I was going to call out the raffle, as usual, only this time I had 2 young ladies & the Lady Mayor, Elizabeth Brewer helping me, I found it quite amusing, with me only doing a small part of the talking, I loved it!

Again, I would like to thank everyone that helped on the day, it didn't matter if you only did a little bit, it all helps. Best regards to everyone.

Mark Wilson, Hospitality.

JUST A REMINDER

The store opening times are:
TUESDAY — THURSDAY
SATURDAY
10.00 a.m. till 12.30

STORE CLOSURE DATES FOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

The store will close from
12.30 Saturday 12th December 2026
and will re-open at
10.00 a.m. Tuesday 5th January 2027



2027 SHOW DATES



Spring Show
SUNDAY APRIL 4th 2027
Autumn Show
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 5th 2027

The show book with the class details will be available from mid January 2027 from following :

the store / club meetings and on line at www.rayleighhorticulturalsociety.co.uk,
Or post RHS 339 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh SS6 7LH,

PLEASE keep an eye on the website for latest information on STORE - CLUB MEETINGS and NEWSLETTER updates
www.rayleighhorticulturalsociety.co.uk

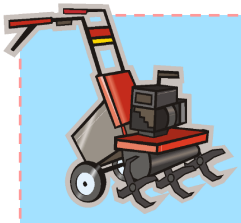
STORE NEWS



Hi Folks, we still have a wide range of Spring bulbs in store, for example daffodils (five different varieties including tete-a-tete), tulips at least 18 different varieties, hyacinths and crocus.
We also have over-wintering onions – Yellow Sensui and Autumn Champion – and Casablanca garlic.
Just remember to bring your membership card every time you visit the store.
The potatoes for 2027 are on order but to date, no confirmation of delivery has been received. We should have them in by middle of January 2027. Keep your ears and eyes open by looking at the website.
Our last trading day for 2026 will be Saturday 12th December to re-open on Tuesday 5th January 2027.
Membership can be renewed from now at the store or by post see page 3 membership fee remains the same - £8.00 per year per family.
I would just like to say a huge 'THANK YOU' to my Merry Band of Volunteers without whom I would not be able to open the store. You are worth your weight in gold and anyone who wants to join our team, just give me or Ann a ring on 01702 527456. Just two and a half hours per week will help the Society and give you a buzz!

Wishing you all a happy and healthy Christmas.

David Baughen *Trading Store Manager*



Einhell Cultivator

B-MT 3336

Petrol 4 Stroke. Bought new in 2015, it has run for a total of 35 hours, with an oil change at 20 hours. The handle has been converted so it fits into a Honda Jazz.

£120

Phone 01268 781232

'Show quality and quantity'

The Autumn Show was well attended, thanks for everyone's support. Considering the very hot and drought conditions this summer I was pleasantly surprised by the quality and quantity of the entries, I don't know how many of you managed despite the adverse conditions.
Thanks goes to Elizabeth Brewer (lady chair of Rayleigh Town Council) for her assistance in awarding the Horticultural prizes and the raffle too.
Thanks also goes to all the Society's volunteers for their hard work running the show.

Regards Shaun Cox
Show manager

Social News

CLUB MEETINGS FOR 2027

5th FEBRUARY **Richard Bale**

COLCHESTER'S GLADIATORS

The Romans both admired and detested gladiators. This talk looks at evidence for gladiators in Colchester, explaining a new aspect of the Colchester Vase and considers where Colchester's amphitheatre might be.

5th MARCH **Paul Hounsell**

LIFE ON BOARD AN 18TH CENTURY NAVAL WARSHIP

Life onboard a British naval ship in the 18th century was hard. Getting from A to B was bad enough, now throw in a lack of fresh food, strict discipline, confusion during battle and Heaven help you if you got wounded or contracted any of a number of diseases.

2nd APRIL **Laura Bayley**

Essex Fire & Ambulance Service

WATER SAFETY keeping safe both in and out of it

7th MAY **Lyndsay Whitehouse**

LIFE IN PRISON

What does a Prison Governor really do? What kept me awake at night? How do celebrities get on 'inside'? And would you beat the system if you could?

4th JUNE **Nick Dobson**

I DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE

Pack your bags for a light-hearted look at holidays from the Middle Ages to the present day. From The Grand Tour of Europe - the earliest Cook's tour - to jetting off to far-away shores, or maybe even the stars!

2nd JULY **Peter Jones**

ESSEX LIGHTS

How lighthouses and light-ships have kept and are keeping the Essex coastline safe

.Admittance £3
On the first Friday of the month
@ 2p.m. Main Hall
Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh SS6 8BB

Club Meeting reports by Pat Hill



'Veteran trees'

Edd Gillan is Southend Council's 'Tree man'. He gave an interesting talk on the value of 'Ancient' and 'Veteran' trees and their importance to nature, the eco system and our enjoyment. Very large trees have many fissures and holes which are important habitats for insects, birds and bats, and even when these trees have died if their branches are trimmed to make them safe they continue to support wildlife. The Woodland Trust has an online map of notable trees, just type 'Rayleigh, Essex' in the search box and you will find Holy Trinity Church has two - the huge Cedar of Lebanon in the churchyard we probably all recognise and a Sycamore in the corner of the car park. In the last 10 years the droughts have stressed and killed some veteran trees, including the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest, believed to be 1200 years old. Maybe we need to plant trees which are more suited to warmer climates rather than our tradition English varieties? However, Edd said fruit trees are incredibly important for insects and relatively quick to mature, so don't get rid of that old apple tree in your garden just because it doesn't produce such a heavy crop now.

'squashy apples'



Our members obviously love the birds who visit their gardens as there was a near record turn out for Graham Mee from the RSPB. He had some fantastic pictures (not surprising, he said his camera cost £5000) and we all made lots of 'oohs' and 'aahs'. He asked for a show of hands who thought robins had red just on their breasts, up to their chins, or over the top of their heads. Sadly only 3 of the audience of over 50 got it right (it's over the top of their heads) so it shows what an unobservant lot we are. We got lots of tips on how to encourage various species of birds into our gardens, including asking the greengrocer for squashy apples in winter to encourage thrushes - not sure how this would go down in Sainsbury's though. He reminded us to keep bird tables and feeders scrupulously clean to avoid diseases and also said birds have an incredible built in sense of time so if you put food out at the same time each day the birds get to know and will turn up. Graham was a funny and engaging speaker and several members who organise talks at other clubs asked Ann for his details.



'stiff collars'

October's Club afternoon talk was entitled 'Victorian Fashions to Die For' which sounds as though it might be of more interest to our lady members but surprisingly several male members said how interesting it had been, which was nice. Several of the pitfalls that weren't realised at the time were purely physical such as corsets aiming to give ladies tiny waist which actually broke ribs and displaced internal organs. Gentlemen wore very stiff collars which came right up to under their chin and could kill if the wearer fell asleep and their head fell forward (more port anyone?) Crinolines fashionable in the 1860's were so huge they got caught in machinery or trapped by the wheels of carriages with dire results for the wearer. That fashion was followed by bustles where the skirt trailed behind the wearer, picking up some rather unsavoury items from the filthy roads. Then, of course, there were the poisons. Arsenic was used to die fabrics, wallpaper and magazine pictures green, which may be why green is considered an unlucky colour nowadays. The phrase 'mad as a hatter' was often true due to the use of mercury in the production of top hats which were 'de rigueur' for aspiring gentlemen and the black liquid used to shine their shoes could produce breathing problems.
And we used to feel sorry for the poor - their richer cousins didn't fare much better!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL POSTAL FORM for 2027



Name……

Address……

……

Post Code……

Telephone number……

E.mail……

MEMBERSHIP FEE £8.00

Per household per annum.

Send this form with a cheque made payable to "Rayleigh Horticultural Society"

To: The membership secretary, **Rayleigh Horticultural Society,**

Mr. & Mrs. C. Andrews, 339 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7LH

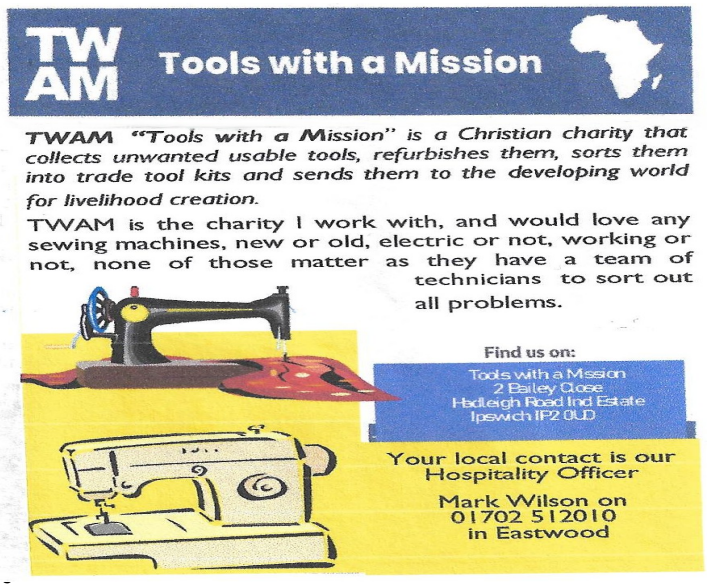
IMPORTANT

Rayleigh Horticultural Society works hard to keep your personal data secure. As a membership organisation we do not and will not share your data with any other organisation or individual who is not a member of our Committee.

PLEASE SIGN HERE to agree to the society contacting you, i.e. Sending newsletters etc.

Signed……

As well as by post, membership may also be renewed at the store or club meetings,



Photos by David Baughen & Mark Wilson











2026 AUTUMN SHOW PHOTOS













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