

## Review of 2025—the society's 165 Celebration Year

The society was formed in 1860 with the intent to improve the quality of produce from Cottagers, Market Gardeners and Amateurs. The society has had many ups and downs through its history, with the effect of wars and of a changing society, it has adapted to circumstances and 2025 has had been a great year, ending with a membership of 97.

**January Special Coffee Social**—we started the year with a celebration cake at our coffee social and presented our three biggest supporters, The Strand Centre, Dawlish Community Transport and the Methodist Church, with cheques of £165 as a thank you for all the support they have given us over the years.

**Ann Swithinbank** at the Shaftesbury Theatre in April—we were delighted to an evening with Ann Swithinbank and her extensive knowledge of horticulture and her garden in East Devon.

**Spring Plant Sale**—a very successful sale again, there were so many plants this year that the society had a table at the Strand Table Top Sale the week before to sell annuals, herbs and vegetables.

**Topsham Open Gardens**—A group of members went by train to the hidden gardens of Topsham, there were 15 private gardens open across the town centre area, from small courtyards to large riverside gardens to visit, on a sunny early summer Sunday.

**Dartmoor Tea Gardens**—following a really interesting talk about growing tea plants and making tea on Dartmoor in 2024, a group of members visited the Tea Gardens for a guided visit and the tea tasting.

**Dartington House Gardens**—a group of members took the train to Totnes and either walked up to Dartington House or caught the bus on a glorious summer's day to enjoy this historic site and gardens.

**Summer Plant Sale**—this year we held this successfully the week before the summer show, and this will be the new pattern to our year.

**Summer Show**—we had the biggest entry for many years across all classes, with many people entering the photographic class Dawlish In Bloom.

**Carnival Float**—we had a flower-filled float at the Carnival Parade, on a warm dry evening for once.

**St Gregory's Flower Festival**—Sally Gidney assembled a lovely arrangement for the flower festival in September.

**Trip to Rosemoor**—a great visit by coach, apart from the rain on the day. The late summer flowers were looking splendid along with the fruit and vegetables. Those who made it to Lady Ann's Garden enjoyed a cup of tea surrounded by flowers.

**Buffet Lunch**—to bring our celebration year to an end we had a members' lunch following our November meeting. With thanks to Shepherds Shack who did the catering and all the support and help from members to put on such as good lunch including the cakes baked by Suzanne.

**St Gregory's Christmas Tree Festival**—having a tree with a garden theme is a great way to round off our gardening year.

See you all in 2026 with a Coffee Social.

