

**EVERCREECH  
HORTICULTURAL  
SOCIETY**

**CELEBRATES  
ITS**

**SILVER JUBILEE**

**1977 - 2002**



What reminds you of a village show – prize roses, giant vegetables, the smell of crushed grass in a marquee? Evercreech has a long history of flower shows. In 1904 the Evercreech Mutual Improvement Society held a flower show in the vicarage garden in August and after the success of that a village show was held every year at Rodmore Farm except during the two world wars. After the second war the show was started up again and became bigger and bigger during the 1950's. As well as the usual flower show exhibits there was a baby show, children's sports, motor cycle racing and a gymkana. People with long memories say that it was the high prize money offered for the horse jumping that led to the suspension of the show in the early 1960's.



1951 Baby Show – How many do you recognise?

## 1977 – THE REVIVAL BEGINS

In 1977, soon after the celebrations of the Queen's Silver Jubilee in June, a group of people decided to hold a flower show. The event, held in September in the village hall, was small and hastily put together but the exhibits revived memories of past village shows and perhaps even old rivalries! The idea of having an annual show once again in the village took root. The commemorative Jubilee crown coins, which had not arrived in June to be given to the children of the village, were distributed at the revived show in September 1977.



Dr Lindsay handing out Silver Jubilee Crowns at the Show.  
Twenty five years on – Who, or where, are the recipients now?

After the success of this event it was decided that a Horticultural Society should be re-formed to run a village show and provide talks and visits to places of interest to gardeners. A Committee was formed; the founder members were Fred Acreman, Valerie Acreman, Bessie Ashman, Walter Baber, Fred Billing, David Elliott, May Corp, David Lindsay, Commander Lloyd, Andrew Saunders, Rev Gordon Ridler and Sheila Webb. It is worth noting that although some of these remained on the Committee for over twenty years only Valerie Bath (nee Acreman), who was the first secretary, is still fulfilling that hard working role twenty five years later.

One of the first tasks was to see if any of the original flower show silver cups were still in the village. Three cups were returned and eight new cups and a silver candlestick were donated for the new flower show.



The Original Cups

In 1978 the show was moved to the school, which was then still in the centre of the village, and opened on September 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mrs Dewe whose husband had been the vicar of Evercreech in the 1950's. Village people took up the challenge of showing again and the school hall and classrooms were bursting with flowers, fruit, vegetables, homecraft and handicraft. The show was such a success that plans were made for an even larger one the following year.



Mrs Dewe presenting the  
Paradise Cup  
to Miss S Heal

The Society began running lectures on gardening in the winter of 1978 in the schoolroom attached to the Methodist Chapel. Some of the talks were about growing for showing; many talks were on how to improve your garden or how to grow specific types of plants. In recent years the Society has been fortunate in having a number of talks by Christine Skelmersdale, an RHS Council Member, who has been on many plant expeditions to exotic parts of the world. Her lectures, in memory of her father Roy Morgan, have proved very popular with Society Members.

In October 1979 a group of Committee Members decided to offer practical gardening skills and clean up the village streets. Armed with brooms, shovels and wheelbarrows, the vicar the Rev Gordon Ridler, Fred Acreman and Fred Billing worked with farmer Walter Baber who provided a tractor and trailer to remove the rubbish. Although the results were appreciated this did not become an annual event!



New broom sweeps clean!

In 1979 the show was so successful that it became clear that it was outgrowing the school. An anonymous donor gave £100 towards the hire of a marquee for the following year. After 25 years it can now be revealed that the donor was Mrs Winnie Gould who will be remembered with affection by many older villagers. Mrs Gould was an elderly widow of limited mean but great generosity. She gave the donation towards the hire of a marquee as her personal thanks to a committee member, Fred Billing, who regularly took her to chapel in his car.

## 1980's – THE SHOW IS PROVING A BLOOMING SUCCESS

The marquee, hired with the help of Mrs Gould's donation, was erected in 1980 at Rodmore Farm, site of the original shows, by kind permission of the Cradock family. No tables were hired and the Committee Members had great difficulty in using the borrowed tabletops for which there were not enough trestle supports. In the end the tables were balanced on upended pallets. This was not the only occasion when the creation of staging caused problems. One year some of the tabletops were carefully balanced on hay bales only to tip up when loaded with exhibits! The 1980 Show began with a children's fancy dress competition held around the village cross. Mr John Luff who was opening the show had the difficult job of awarding the prizes to the crowd of children in costume. The Oakhill Silver Band then led the procession down Oxford Street to the showground.



Talk about blowing  
your own trumpet!

During the 1980's the Society organised coach trips to the RHS Headquarters at Wisley, to Kew Gardens, Syon Park House, Compton Acres and Clack's Farm, at that date, the headquarters of the BBC gardening programme.

On a number of occasions the marquee was used for barn dances in the evening on show day and for a church service on Sunday. However, on one famous occasion the contractors arrived much earlier than expected on Sunday morning and the planned church service had to take place in the open air!

In the early 1980's the marquee was always put up on the left side of the road to Rodmore Farm. That piece of ground is exceptionally stony, even by Evercreech standards, and in 1983 this caused a near disaster. The marquee arrived as usual on the Thursday before the show was due to take place on Saturday September 3<sup>rd</sup>. The contractors had great difficulty in driving the tent pegs into the ground and the marquee looked very insecure. Show day was very windy but everyone brought their exhibits which were just being staged when a huge gust of wind made one side of the tent collapse. A lot of people were inside the marquee at the time so everyone grabbed what exhibits they could. Many people were so concerned about removing their prize vegetables, flowers, handicrafts or cookery that it was difficult to persuade them to vacate the tent until it became obvious that it was about to collapse completely. Then in the panic to get out two men were knocked to the ground and

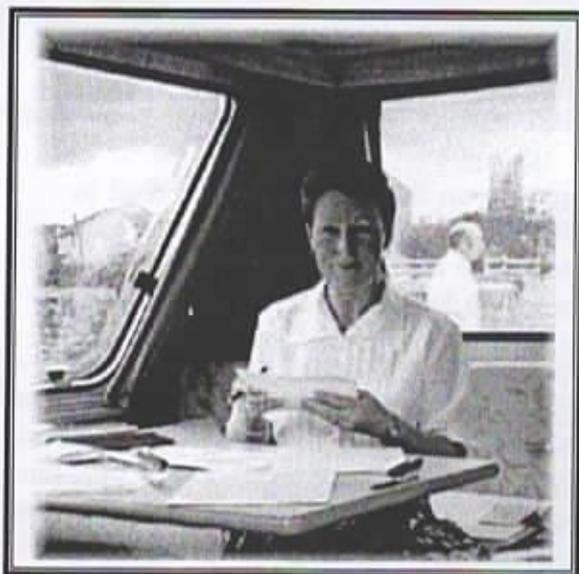
had to crawl out from under the canvas. Luckily no one was hurt although people were shaken and many exhibits were destroyed. There was no show that year.



What goes up must come down!

In November 1983, at the Society's Annual General Meeting, members were given a free cheese and wine party as a gesture to exhibitors who did not reclaim their entry money and to make up for lost exhibits. The cheese and wine party became a regular social event at the end of each Annual General Meeting, as it still is today.

For the first eight years, staging was allowed in the marquee on the Friday evening before show day. This created a security problem with so many items of members' property in the marquee overnight. To guard the entries and the marquee from vandalism or theft, two committee members slept in the marquee on the night before the show. No one relished a cold uncomfortable night in the marquee so after 1988 staging of exhibits on Friday night was discontinued although the tables had to be put up and marked out on Friday ready for the first exhibitors to arrive at 7.00 a.m. on show day. Only those who have done the job of marking out know how many miles are walked up and down the empty marquee measuring and checking the space on the tables. One year vandals got into the unguarded marquee overnight and removed the books in which the items to be entered are recorded. Without the entry books the whole organisation of the show would be very difficult. However, after a long search the books were discovered thrown into a ditch around the show field.



I would rather be on holiday!

To make the marquee safe from collapse a new position was chosen in 1984, to the right of the road to Rodmore Farm on slightly softer ground. There were no problems with the marquee that year. The successful show was opened by Nurse Harrison who had been the village district nurse for many years. The problem of how to weigh the prize pumpkins was solved by borrowing the baby scales from the surgery. The first scales used had an old-fashioned wicker basket; in later years more modern scales were used, as the pumpkins got bigger!



Ah - Will the baby scales be big enough?

Children's classes have always been a high priority for the show committee and entries have never been in short supply. Classes have changed over the years with handwriting giving way to computer-designed posters but perennials like the miniature gardens seem to remain popular with children. The inventive ideas that children have for animals made from fruit and vegetables always raise a smile. The children's classes give the village's younger members a chance to show their skills and take part in a real village occasion.



Stephen Harvey at the 1989 Show



Thirsty work this showing!

As numbers of entries to the show continued to rise the committee decided to hire a larger tent and in 1987 the cost of the marquee was over £1,000. That year rain on the afternoon of the show was so heavy that the silver band had to be moved inside. However, the atmosphere in the marquee was not at all affected by the weather. Visitors coming in from the rain enjoyed a cup of tea provided by the ever faithful W.I. ladies who always provide the teas.



Jerusalem, Jam and Scones!

The array of entries included many wonderful flowers grown in spite of the poor season. Before the judges arrived four superb chrysanthemums were spotted on the show bench wearing paper hats to protect the blooms!



Hats off to the Judges!

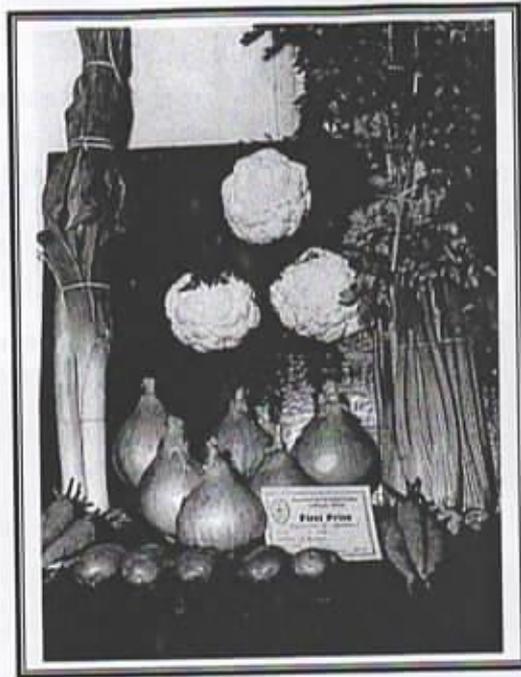


“Well I wouldn’t have given it first prize!”

Mr. Bussell, one of the original exhibitors from Stoke sub Hamdon with his quartet of cups



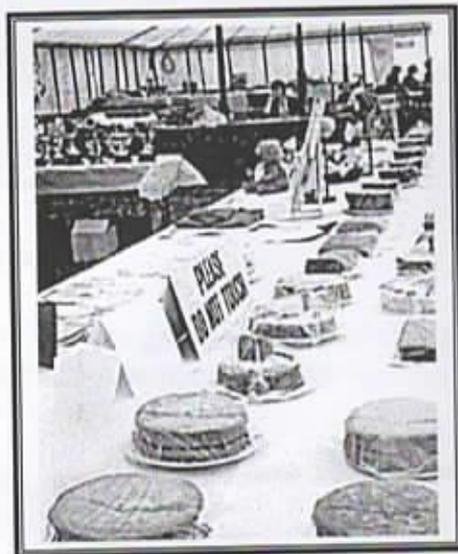
Mr. Luff, President in 1980, presenting Mrs Culley with the British Legion Cup



A collection of Show  
"Giants"



Nimble Fingers!



"If only I wasn't on a diet!"



Fruits of the Forest



The enchanted world  
of  
Floral Art

"Tate" Gallery



Children are:  
Tomorrow's  
Adult Exhibitors

## 1990's – ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL DECADE

Gas was brought to the village in 1991 causing major upheaval when the gas board tried to dig through the Evercreech rock to lay gas pipes. With many houses in Evercreech connected to the supply the Gas Board agreed to put on a cookery demonstration in the village. This was put on in November 1993 as an extra fund raising event. The Society had to guarantee to provide an audience of at least 100 people. However, the event proved to be so popular that tickets were all sold and the main hall of the new school was packed for the demonstration. The Gas Board brought a complete kitchen in an articulated lorry and transformed the school hall setting up a stage flanked by two Christmas trees. Although it began to snow during the evening, the audience arrived and had a memorable evening that raised a large sum of money.

The Gasman  
cometh

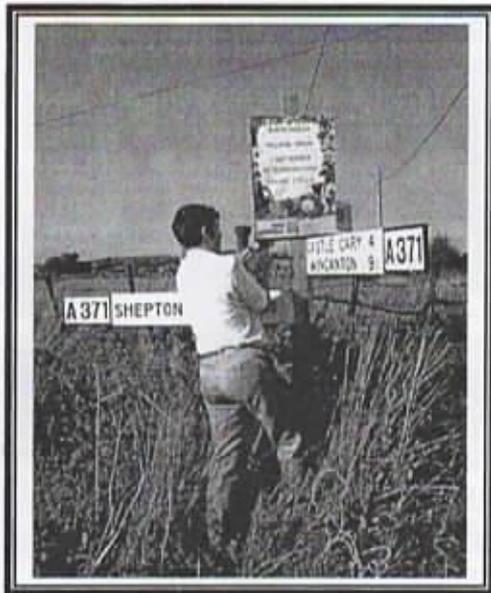


In spring each year the Society has held a plant sale in the village hall in May to raise money for the marquee. The plants for sale, grown and given by the members, have always been of such high quality that competition to buy them is intense. When the doors of the village hall opened on a May Plant Sale hundreds of plants were often sold in the first hour. The money raised was much needed as the cost of hiring the marquee rose steadily.



"I grew them from  
seed"

Signs to the show were always erected during the week before the show. For many years a banner advertising the show was put up across the High Street until insurance to cover this became too expensive. However, committee members have always gone out to put signs up on the approach roads into the village.



"The jobs you have to do when on the committee!"

For three years at the beginning of the 1990's the Society held bulb shows in March, with classes for narcissi, daffodils, tulips, hyacinths, pot plants and floral art using spring flowers. These small shows were held in the Methodist School Room which was perfumed by the hyacinths and narcissi when entries were high. However, entries dropped, and the bulb show was eventually replaced with a competition for a vase of spring flowers.

In the early 1990s an ornamental Crab Apple tree was planted at the entrance to Rodmore Farm in memory of past committee members. A commemorative plaque is sited in the wall to record the event and serves as a reminder of the many shows held at Rodmore Farm.

Evening entertainments in the marquee after the show were a feature of the 1990s. In 1994 the Yetties, a popular folk singing group from Dorset, were booked for a concert. The marquee was specially decorated with bunting for the occasion and two hundred chairs were borrowed from Evercreech, Shepton Mallet and surrounding villages. A stage was created by using a large flat farm cart that was pushed into the marquee with some difficulty. The concert was a huge success.

The following year another Yetties concert was a sell-out in the marquee with the school PTA running the bar to raise funds for the school. For a change, in 1996, the Blue Notes Jazz Band was engaged for a concert and in 1998 a folk group called Tranter's Folly provided the entertainment.



"Out in the Green Fields"

On Show day the Society has always tried to provide a variety of entertainments and stalls outside the marquee. For a number of years, the Mendip Vale Carnival Club set up a roundabout and swings for the children. Wells Morris Men, Castle Cary Scout Band and the Castle Cary Majorettes have also performed on occasions. The local dog-training club began to give demonstrations in 1993 and in 1996 a car boot sale was held on the showground. Stalls have always included village organisations raising funds and local nursery gardens selling plants and other stalls selling crafts. A town crier from Wells attended one show and recently a Punch and Judy show proved popular with children.



A line-up of entertainers

When the Princess of Wales died in 1997 her funeral was arranged on the day on which the show was planned and the Society was faced with deciding whether to cancel the show or continue. After much discussion they decided that the show would go ahead with some committee members wearing black ties. A two minute silence was observed in the marquee. Although attendance was down a little, it was still a good show. Exhibitors were given the opportunity to donate their prize money to the Princess of Wales Memorial fund.

In recent years, a competition for Best Hanging Basket and Containers has been held with sponsorship from the Parish Council. The competition was introduced after many years had elapsed since the Best Kept Vegetable Garden and Best Kept Flower Garden competitions were held when gardens were judged twice during the year and prizes presented at the Annual Show.



High standards often make this a difficult job for the judges

### 2000 - INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM

For the new century, some new family classes were introduced to the show schedule for the first time, including a class for a dressed Scarecrow that attracted some wonderfully humorous entries.



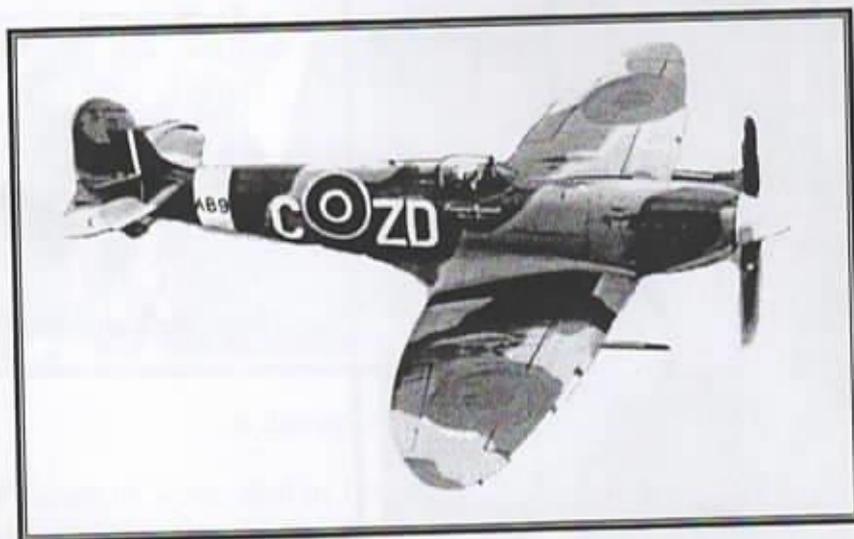
Next year's chairman!

To mark the Millennium the Society decided to have a Parish Lunch in the marquee the Sunday after the Show. This was preceded by a Songs of Praise service in the marquee with music by the Whitstone Community Concert Band. 150 people then sat down to a meal at two long lines of white tables in the marquee. There was a buzz of conversation when everyone was enjoying their meal which marked it a successful village occasion.

A popular method of fund raising has been the Gardens Open Day organised by the Society. Willing members opened their gardens on a Sunday in mid-summer for other members to enjoy. Also open on a number of occasions was the garden of Peter and Diana Bryan where members were able to have a strawberry tea in their beautiful garden at Ravenswood in Westcombe.

The November sale in the Methodist School room became a more elaborate Christmas Fayre, so popular that it was moved to the Village Hall. By the year 2001 the Christmas Fayre had become an important event in the Horticultural Society's calendar.

For the next three years the shows continued as before until 2001 when Foot and Mouth disease caused huge problems to all agricultural and horticultural events held on farm land. For the first time in 24 years the show was moved from its location at Rodmore Farm to a field at Stoney Stratton by kind permission of the tenants Alan and Pam Green, and the owner Patrick Wiltshire. The site proved a great success and people came to the show in their usual numbers, many commenting on the lovely views from the field. Several attempts had previously been made to organise a fly-past of a Battle of Britain Spitfire and in 2001 this plan was finally realised. The Spitfire was a wonderful sight as it flew three times over the marquee rekindling memories for some people of the unmistakable sound of a Spitfire engine.



"Our finest hour"

The future of both the flower show and the Horticultural Society will inevitably involve change. Garden fashions have changed but gardening remains one of this country's most popular hobbies. Show exhibits have changed too, with classes from the past like bottled fruit making way for homemade Pizza. But we hope that there will continue to be an occasion where people who grow plants, paint pictures, take photographs or make handicrafts can exhibit their work for the fun of competing for prizes and for the pleasure of people who come to see the show. Although it is hard work raising enough money for a marquee nothing can compete with the sight of a marquee full of exhibits perfumed with flowers and that indefinable smell of crushed grass.

Let's celebrate 25 years of growing, showing, hard work and fun by ensuring that the Society and the show continue to be an important part of life in Evercreech.



**EVERCREECH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY TROPHIES**

<i>Year of introduction</i>	<i>Trophy</i>
<b>1978</b>	The Tradesman's Cup The President's Cup The Baber Cup The Gordon Billing Memorial Cup The Evercreech W.I Cup The Bessie Ashman Candlestick The J.Green's Cup The Peter Green Haulage Cup The Paradise Cup Mrs Neil's Cup
<b>1980</b>	The Acreman Cup Mid Somerset Flower Cup The Allcock Cup
<b>1981</b>	The J.W Cox Memorial Shield Ough Rose Bowl British Legion Cup
<b>1982</b>	The Kath Chappell Memorial Salver Ashman Memorial Cup The Sellick Cup The Druid's Cup
<b>1985</b>	The Twyford Cup Garden News Top Tray and Vase The C.Neale's Cup
<b>1987</b>	The Mill's Cup
<b>1988</b>	The Green Willow Cup
<b>1992</b>	Mr and Mrs C Cox Cup
<b>1999</b>	The Doble Cup The Foster Cup The Glen Cup
<b>2001</b>	The Roy and Gladys West Cup
<b>2002</b>	The William Cornell Cup Jubilee Cup

# EVERCREECH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT: H. RAXWORTHY TRIMMELL

## 56th ANNUAL SHOW

FLOWERS FRUIT VEGETABLES EGGS HONEY  
POULTRY FLORAL DECORATIONS HOMECRAFT  
COOKERY PHOTOGRAPHY CHILDREN'S CLASSES  
BABY SHOW

AT  
**RODMORE PARK, Evercreech**

(By kind permission of E. D. GRADDOCK, Esq.)

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 29<sup>th</sup>**  
1959

Commencing at 2-30 p.m.

### £150 IN PRIZES

CHILDREN'S SPORTS at 4 p.m. CHILDREN'S FANCY DRESS (local) 2-30 p.m.

**SKITTLING FOR PIG AND OTHER PRIZES**

**HORSE JUMPING & GYMKHANA** - Commencing 2-30 p.m.

★ **PARADE OF SPARKFORD VALE HARRIERS** ★

(By kind permission of the Master)

★ **AMUSEMENTS AND ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR** ★

Admission to Field 2/- Cars to Ringside 3/- (all occupants pay)

CHILDREN 3d. (Evercreech Schoolchildren Free) CAR PARK ONLY 1/- Motor Cycles 3d. Bicycles 3d. (all at owner's risk)

LICENSED REFRESHMENTS AND TEAS OBTAINABLE ON THE FIELD

**DANCING** 9 p.m. - 1 a.m. **IN THE VILLAGE HALL** TICKETS 4/-

LICENSED REFRESHMENTS

Further particulars from Commander F. J. H. Lloyd, R.R., Brook House, Prastling, or Shopton Mead (Tel. Evercreech 311), Hon. General Secretary,  
Rev. & Mrs. H. Lee-Daws, The Vicarage, Evercreech (Tel. 225), Hon. Treas. & Homecraft Sec. J. L. J. Hayes, Esq., 1 Rodmore Road, Evercreech (Tel. 270), Esq.'s Sec.

PROGRAMME WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE SECRETARIES, THE PUBAN AND LOCAL STORES