



BULB LOG 03..... 15th January 2014



The picture above shows the glorious colours of the early morning (08.10) sky over the bulb houses the same vision is repeated in the western sky in the late afternoon.

We are greatly restricted as to what we can do in the garden by the weather and particularly at this time of year when the daylight is so short. Sometimes the rain or heavy frost mean there is nothing we can do but sit inside and look out of the window. I took these pictures of the birds eating the berries while sitting in my reclining chair using my Canon compact camera.

They are mostly Field fares and Woodie Doos (a Scottish name for wood pigeons) with some redwings and blackbirds joining in.





I am pleased to see the birds eat the berries as it means that I can get on with the winter pruning when the weather conditions allow however the more time critical task I want to complete is spreading the contents of the compost heap as a mulch. Getting this done before the bulbs are too advanced makes it a much easier task.

The blackbirds can be a nuisance as they love to scatter the mulch I carefully spread all over the paths as they search for food. They often mistake a white shoot rising from a bulb for a grub and I commonly find a poor bulb such as this **Corydalis solida tuber** lying

exposed on the surface. It does give me a chance to observe the growth – two shoots rising from the top will both produce a flower spike and new tubers. A small tuber will also form at the base of the side shoot coming from half way down the right hand side.



Looking up the garden you can see the number of berries that end up on the ground, sadly the birds rarely eat those. Due to the large number of fallen berries Cotoneaster, Sorbus and Holly are among the most common plants that we have to weed out through the year. A heavy mulch does inhibit them germinating but we could still be rich if we had a pound for every Cotoneaster seedling we pull out.



Looking up the garden we can see a red haze indicating that the first Hamamelis flowers are opening.



Hamamelis x intermedia



No matter what the weather is we can always spend time enjoying the Narcissus in the bulb houses. Every year I observe them and try and identify them to type and now I have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to apply specific names to plants we have raised from our own seed. I do keep the names of wild collected plants for reference but this whole complex of *Narcissus bulbocodium* with *N. albidus*, *N. cantabricus*, *N. romieuxii*, are so promiscuous that they will inter-breed unless you go to great efforts to ensure the species remain true. If I find a very good form that increases and I am going to share around I will give it a cultivar name.





There a number of links to the three pictures on this page. First they have all self-seeded into pots of Fritillaria. When we used to replot all our bulbs into completely new compost every year we never had self-seeding like this but now we have so many pots they may go for a number of years before getting fully replotted so it is common to find stray self-sown bulbs. This is not a big problem when a Narcissus seeds into a pot of Fritillaria - they are very distinct as bulbs as well as flowers- but if it seeds into another pot of Narcissus you can get contamination of your plants. Another shared link is that each of these Narcissus has a self-seeded *Tropaeolum azureum* growing up them.



Narcissus seedling



Narcissus eualbidus

Although not a valid name the one I know as *Narcissus eualbidus* is one of my favourites, sadly it was one of the plants we lost in a severe winter freeze some years ago, however we have built up a nice pot full again thanks to a kind friend who sent me some bulbs a few years ago.



Narcissus romieuxii JCA805 and Narcissus romieuxii 'Craigton Clumper'

Two pots sitting side by side on the left the flat faced *Narcissus romieuxii* JCA805 with my prolific free flowering selection *Narcissus* 'Craigton Clumper' on the right.



Narcissus sp. Morocco and Narcissus bulbocodium



One of the tasks I did get done this week was re-building the section of wall above. Over the years since it was built in around 1986, the rocks had collapsed back into the bed as the humus rick soil shrunk so I have made the wall vertical again filling in the void with new leaf mould - I have gained around 30cms of extra planting area.



You can see clearly the slope backwards in this wall of a similar vintage – it was almost vertical when built. A few years ago I rebuilt the end facing you but chose to leave the sloping side, below, as I am utilising the planting opportunities between each of the rocks where I am planting *Trillium rivale*.





Eranthis pinnatifida

I have to share the progress of the beautiful *Eranthis pinnatifida* flowers as they open fully.





The first Snowdrop flowers are open and many more shoots are appearing heralding the start of the season celebrating this ever popular genus. One of the major events over the years has been the ‘Snowdrop Gala’ in the



deep south but much to the disappointment of many there is not to be one this year. However Emma Thick and Pam Cruickshank have come to the rescue and put together a wonderful programme of talks, sales and garden visits on 15th February at Shaftsbury Arts Centre – see below for full details. The SRGC forum is doing all we can to get the word out and I would encourage all who are able to attend- to support this welcome new initiative. There is a wise saying ‘use it or lose it’: Pam and Emma have done a magnificent job in getting these arrangements together in such a short time and the speakers and sellers have also gathered round

in support so please if you can attend and give them the success they deserve book [on line now](#) see below for full details of the day’s events and postal booking form.....



SNOWDROP STUDY, SALE & SOCIAL

A DAY FOR GALANTHOPHILES & SNOWDROP LOVERS

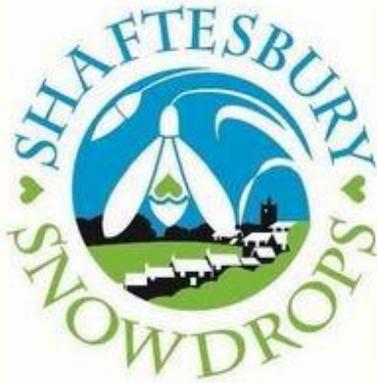
Shaftesbury's Inaugural Snowdrop Study, Sale & Social Day Saturday 15th February 2014 - Programme of Events

- Venue:** Shaftesbury Arts Centre, 13 Bell Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 8AR
- Registration:** From 9.30am Refreshments provided.
- Morning Speakers:** From 10am
- **Andy Byfield:** "A Turkish Snowdrops Odyssey"
 - **Melvyn Jope:** "Autumn Flowering Snowdrops from Greece".
- Sincere thanks to Maggi & the "Scottish Rock Garden Club Forum" for their support: www.srgc.net
- VIP Snowdrop Sale:** From 12.00pm **Matt Bishop, Long Acre Plants, Ivy Croft Plants, Sue & Rodger Norman, keep checking web site for more info.**
- Lunch:** From 12:30pm **Soup and Cake!**
- Afternoon Speaker:** From 2.00pm
- **John Grimshaw:** "Primrose Warburg and her garden at South Hayes".
- Heritage Collection*:** From 3.00pm **Visit our Snowdrops or depart for garden visit TBC.**
- In Addition:** "Where Snowdrops Grow" Shaftesbury Arts Centre's second annual snowdrop inspired arts and crafts exhibition opens on Saturday 15th February.

Ticket £35.00 in advance from www.shaftesburysnowdrops.org or from the address below.

* February 2014 is the launch of our **Heritage Collection of Snowdrops** in the ancient Abbey Museum and gardens. **Avon Bulbs** are working with us to create a publicly accessible collection in a fabulous environment. It is to be built through both individual sponsorship and donations from Galanthophiles' collections. It will be held in Trust for the public benefit and sponsors and donors will be invited to an annual private Family Day. The launch of this collection and its educational aspect is sponsored by **BV Dairy**; this Dorset based manufacturer of fresh dairy products is a fitting local sponsor for the "milk flower". Thank you also to the authors of "**Snowdrops A Monograph of Cultivated Galanthus**" for allowing the use of their words & images.

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SNOWDROP STUDY, SALE & SOCIAL

A DAY FOR GALANTHOPHILES & SNOWDROP LOVERS

Thank you for making our event part of your snowdrop season. This day is organised and hosted by the Shaftesbury Snowdrop Project and Emma Thick the "snowdrop hat lady".

Booking Form

We need a little information to ensure that the time you spend here is the best it can be:

Please tell us the name you would like on your badge and any business or group affiliation you'd like to share.

Name: _____ Affiliation _____

Email Address: _____

Do you have any special dietary requirements? _____

Do you have any other special needs? _____

Our venue "Shaftesbury Arts Centre, 13 Bell Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 8AR" is in the easily accessible and stunningly beautiful hilltop town of Shaftesbury which boasts panoramic views to the North and South (it's the home of the famous "Hovis" advert).

How to find us: Shaftesbury is situated on the junction of A350 (which runs North / South) and the A30 which runs West / East. Shaftesbury is:

- 7 miles south of the main A303;
- 30 miles north-east of Dorchester
- 25 miles north-west of Ringwood, in the New Forest.

Maps and full details of coach and car parking and the garden visit will be sent out by email closer to the time. We look forward to welcoming you. Any event queries should be sent to

pam@shaftesburysnowdrops.org

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[Book online](#)