

## DUNBLANE EARLY BULB DISPLAY 2009



**Bette and Audrey enjoying the display**

There are six things to do at the Early Bulb Display besides talking to your friends, catching up on gossip and generally putting the world to rights.

There can be little doubt that if the first requirement needed to be a politician was a keen interest in plants and gardening then the world would be a better and safer place. Gardeners have a keen instinct for what is right and what is wrong. They know how to get the best from their plots and plants. They will experiment and try new and different techniques but always keep in sight the main aim, which is to find and grow good plants, propagate them and share them with others.

Rock Gardeners in particular are wise, curious [I don't mean weird!], friendly, generous people. All these attributes come to the fore at the early Bulb day.

### **Oh yes, the six things to do!**

As on the day itself, I was distracted! They are :-

1. *Put your show plants on the benches*
2. *Listen to the fascinating lectures.*
3. *Check out and buy some plants from the /club stall and nurseries.*
4. *Look at the plants in the show.*
5. *Buy a new book*
6. *Get a bacon roll. Later go for a soup and a filled roll. Before you go home, it's best to get another cup of tea and a cake!*

### **Food please!**



During all this time you meet old friends, make new ones and spend the time between lectures talking, spending and looking. This year we had the added attraction and excitement of the auction of paintings by Lawrence Greenwood and Keith Brockey. Thank you to Ian Young who handled the auction in a very professional way. All the paintings were sold above asking price. For some there was intense competition. Professor Scott has written to say that these paintings which gave him and his late wife Carol, so much pleasure are now owned by other gardeners who will cherish them. I would like to publicly thank him for the generous

donation which he has made to the club. Thanks also to George Watt who photographed and transported the paintings to Dunblane as well as instigating the auction.

And.....If you want a silver star then help tidy up at the end!





This year's excellent lectures were given by Julia Corden , Rod Leeds and Michael Almond. Members appreciated the different subject and breadth of material covered. Michael took us to Turkey and had everyone laughing when he noted that his presentation was made of 'real pictures' and not digital images! Julia's talk on the SRGC trip to Cyprus last spring reminded me to book a spring holiday for this year. Rod covered Late Flowering Snowdrops in the morning and Colchicum & Codonopsis.



I will now focus on item 4 above, ***the flowers***.

This was undoubtedly the finest show of early flowering bulbs staged so far in the Victoria Hall. We had a record number of pots of bulbs, a record number of different species and varieties and the largest number of superb specimens. Thank you to each and every exhibitor for each and every entry.

In some years particular genera tend to dominate the show. This year all main genera - Galanthus, Crocus, Iris, Narcissus and Cyclamen – were abundant. The flowers scented the show hall and provided a kaleidoscope of colours.

## **GALANTHUS**



Snowdrops are always in flower at Dunblane show time. This year Ian Christie, Beryl McNaughton and Sandy Leven brought the huge number of pots of different species and selections, which they had shown the day before, at the Scottish Snowdrop Conference in Edinburgh. These delicate white flowers with green [or yellow] bits provide hours of fascination for some members who will travel long distances to see them in one another's gardens. To other they are just snowdrops!







**Galanthus elwesii ssp. monostictus [above] and in centre of the picture on the right]**



A very large flowered selection of *Galanthus elwesii* ssp. *monostictus*, known for many years as *Galanthus* 'causicus of gardens' was shown by Sandy Leven. It was given a Preliminary Commendation by the joint Rock Garden Plant Committee. Now I need to find a name for it!

On the right is a poor picture of Alan Thompson's four petalled yellow snowdrop

Ian Christie brought some of the Castle Hybrids from Brechin. His pan of *G. Plicatus* x *nivalis* 'Lady Dalhousie' was much admired.

**Here [left] she is back in Brechin with the Earl of Dalhousie!**



## CROCUS



60 pans large and small sparkled and vied with each other to capture the attention. The combinations of colour available in crocuses must be





second only to Dahlias! It would be invidious to pick a favourite but I'm OK there because I had lots of favourites! The tiny Crocus chrysanthus 'Sunspot' was a wee sensation, with many folk wondering where to buy one and how quickly it multiplies.

**Crocus chrysanthus Sun Spot [left]**

The big pans of Crocus grabbed your attention while numerous smaller pans of rare and desirable cousins winked at you from the side lines. Crocus korlokowii, dalmaticus, chrysanthus Cream Beauty, sieberi Bowles White and C.s. Firefly and C. tommasinanus Lyn's pink were especially noteworthy specimen



**Crocus cream beauty**



**Crocus korlokowii,**



**Crocus dalmaticus**



**Crocus sieberi Bowles White**



**Crocus sieberi Firefly**



**C. tommasinanus Lyn's pink**



**Crocus Dorothy**  
[left and right]  
is new to me







There was a chance[right] to compare three selections of *Crocus sieberi*  
*Crocus sieberi sublimis*  
*Crocus sieberi Firefly*  
*Crocus sieberi tricolor*

**CYCLAMEN**

David Boyd [left and who I know is shown here with an Iris] excels with Cyclamen. I find the spring flowerers much more challenging than the autumn ones. The large pans of *Cyclamen coum* showed great variety in flower colour and leaf pattern.



*Cyclamen pseudibericum* [left]  
*Cyclamen coum* [below left]





## IRIS



They say it is difficult to get Irises to flower on the day of the show as they are just reaching or just past their best! This year more than 8 feet of bench was given over to these fabulous spring favourites. The many different forms of Iris histrioides, histrio, reticulata and winogradowii challenged for Miss Iris 2009. We had Natasha, Clairette, Lady Beatrix Stanley, Katharine Hodgkin, Shiela Ane Germany [I am not happy with this spelling of her last name!] and George.



**Iris Katharine Hodgkin**  
**Iris histrioides major**



**Iris Lady Beatrix Stanley**  
**Iris winogradowii**







From top left clockwise  
Iris Sheila Ann Germany  
iris reticulata Clairette  
Iris Natasha  
Iris reticulata George  
Iris danfordiae

Iris Nicolai [left]  
was Prince of Irises  
or  
Mr Iris Universe.

## NARCISSUS

The Scottish hybrid Don Stead showed what an excellent plant it is and it is nice to remember our old friend and mentor.

**Narcissus Don Stead [left]**



**Narcissus papyraceus**  
is Persil white and generous  
with its tall stemmed flowers



*Narcissus romieuxii* is indispensable in the frost free alpine house from Christmas till March. There are many selections and relations to chose from to build up a wee collection from these alone.

**Narcissus romieuxii [left]**



## OTHER PLANTS

**It is a bit early for the mass of Fritillarias but every year one or two appear**

Jean Wyllie's *Fritillaria eduardii* was well advanced, its glorious orange flowers just about to erupt into full bloom.

***Fritillaria eduardii***







**Eranthis Guinea Gold**

Eranthis 'Guinea Gold' is a regular performer for Dunblane and it does not seem to care about the weather. A must for every garden – as the trade would say! Eranthis seem to like some gardens more than others. There are wonderful expanses of Eranthis haemalis growing with the snowdrops at Cambo in Fife.

This year at Dunblane, we had a lot of Scillas.

particularly liked Scilla mischtschenkoana with its blue streaks on the reverse of its white flowers.



**Scilla mischtschenkoana [left]**

The related Scilla tubergiana and S. rosenii are also good spring flowers.

Leucojum vernum 'Wagneri' was recommended for an award of Merit by the Joint Rock Committee

**Leucojum vernum 'Wagneri'** [right]

Corydalis popovii was first seen at our shows when shown by Fred Hunt many years ago. Then it was known as Corydalis persica.



**Corydalis popovii**







I would love to write about the tables full of Primulas, Hepaticas and other alpines but I do need to send in the report. Here are some pictures of these wonderful plants.



### VISITORS

We were delighted to welcome a coach party of Dutch Bulb lovers to the show in the afternoon. I thought it might turn out to be bit like



'coals to Newcastle' but our visitors were most enthusiastic about the display. They wanted to see the plants and they appreciated them. They did not complain about the crush.

This year the show was as well attended as usual; some would say more people than usual did attend. One would wish for the same attendance and enthusiasm at all our events. As always there were quiet times in all parts of the halls and to answer the question of the venue being too small, I feel it is just right. The buzz is part of the day. As far as I could see there were empty chairs available during all the talks so a few more members could have attended and there was even a few more plants on the benches. Well done SRGC.

Thank you to the members of all groups who worked hard to make the day a success. Anne wants to thank everyone who helped in the kitchen and tea room and those who brought soup, rolls and cakes. The Dunblane shopkeepers noticed all the visitors and many said they had an increase in trade last

year. So we can report that the SRGC is helping trade and pushing back the credit crunch.

**If rock gardeners ruled the world.....!**

