

Shapcott Barton
Syn. Chenutdestana – (Knowstone Manor)
Annual Report 2017

This ancient pre Domesday farmstead takes a lot of looking after, and this last year has been a trying one in more ways than one; but our mission continues for the good of Knowstone's ancient heritage.

The gardens were open again in April under the National Gardens Scheme to raise money for the Cancer Charities. We have now raised over £5,000 and we were sent a certificate in appreciation of this.

The April opening was mainly for the public to see the old varieties of Narcissi which I think are far more graceful, more scented, and long lasting than most modern stiff stemmed varieties. This prompted me to write a short poem about them. It would be nice to see more local people at these events. Most came from great distances and it is always a pleasure to see regulars turning up year after year.

It is costly and time consuming having these events and I often wonder why we bother and I swear "never again"; but then someone spurs me on to continue for "just another year".

Earlier in the year the snowdrop varieties put on a reasonable show and the 'James Allen' snowdrops are increasing slowly. He was one of our ancestors (1821 – 1906) and was known as the 'Snowdrop King' because he hybridised/named over 100 different varieties.

He lived in Shepton Mallet, Somerset and this year a three day Snowdrop Festival was held in the town in his memory. It was organised by the Shepton Mallet Horticultural Society and sponsored partly I believe by Tesco along with many others.

May is always a very green month here at Shapcott and it makes me appreciate the quiet beauty of all its various shades. Other colours are sparse; but the occasional white 'lifts' a dark corner. Soon, June's flowering burst will change the garden again when the roses put on their annual pink show. But the main event is July when all the Shasta Daisies are in flower and the old fashioned Serata hydrangeas, phlox and buddlejas complement them in shades of lilac and blue.

The Fernery here has now much expanded, and some of the natives will be divided up and put in the woodland stumpery before too long.

The farmland has been left fallow this winter but is now showing signs of green again. We endeavour to farm the land as environmentally friendly as possible, leaving areas where all forms of wildlife can survive.

We hope to create two culm measure meadows next year to protect a varied abundance of flora and fauna here. We also plan to plant a lot more trees. One area has been planted with one species of each British native tree (a mini arboretum) – so that visitors can appreciate how different they all are. We even have an Elm which so far is doing quite well, and we hope it won't succumb to the dreaded Dutch Elm disease.

I wish this type of land use was profitable – but it certainly isn't, and farming is unfortunately no money maker these days; – but we live frugally, never go on holiday or smoke or drink! It's all a labour of love. I sometimes wonder 'what am I missing?'

Anita Allen at Shapcott

Attachments:

Garden Certificate

Poem Modern daffodils (In memory of the old narcissi)

Macmillan Cancer Support Marie Curie Cancer Care

The Queen's Nursing Institute

Hospice UK, Parkinson's UK,



MS Society,

Carers Trust,

Perennial

Hotatio's Garden,

Thank you

from the beneficiaries of
the charities supported by

The National Gardens Scheme

to

Anita Allen

Shapcott Barton

and to everyone who has
contributed by visiting this
garden where the total sum
raised now exceeds

£5,000

Edward and Miranda Allhusen
National Gardens Scheme County Organisers for Devon

Charity no. 111264

Modern Daffodils
(In Memory of the Old Narcissi)

Daffodils no longer dance
Or flutter in the April wind.
They stiffly snap when breezes blow,
To feed the hungry slugs and snails.
They are the products of advancement;
That urge to change for something new.
They sit in straight unbending armies,
Each facing us with perfect smiles.
Gone are those graceful dainty wilds;
Those joyous dancing gypsy childs,
That bend and sway
And then recover,
When winter gales and storms subside.
These are the old time scented beauties
Still found on banks of moss and thyme.

Anita Allen at Shapcott