

NORTHERN IRELAND DAFFODIL GROUP

**NEWSLETTER**

December, 1980

Vol. 1 No. 8

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C. COCHRANE, Liaison to Ministry of Agriculture

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**MEMBERSHIP FEES**

Individual . . . . . £2.00 per year (4 dollars)

Family . . . . . £3.00 per year (6 dollars)

# Chairman's Remarks

It is amazing how time seems to alter depending on whether one is looking forward or looking back. It seems like only yesterday that I was privileged to be elected chairman. As I near the end of my two-year term of office it is appropriate that I should express thanks to all those whose support, advice and encouragement helped me enjoy a most memorable and worthwhile experience during a very busy period in the development of our group.

It is not my intention to review the events of the past two years, but several significant developments are worth recording. Firstly, the World Convention and Tour in the Spring of 1979 was an outstanding and memorable occasion for both visitors and hosts which helped give our Group some international recognition throughout the daffodil world. It resulted in many friendly international exchanges, it boosted our membership and it gave us confidence to undertake ambitious projects for the furtherance of interest in daffodils. The success of the World Convention was achieved as a result of much hard work by dedicated Group members and I wish to thank all who gave of their time, thought and energy with such unselfish enthusiasm.

Following the Convention, certain limitations and deficiencies in our Rules and Constitution were highlighted and much time and effort was put into a total revision which will hopefully serve the Group well for many years. Especial thanks are due to Sir Frank Harrison and Mr. Gilbert Andrews for their freely-given professional knowledge and expertise in steering the Committee through the legal and financial perils of the exercise.

The most welcome and constantly increasing number of overseas members emphasised the need for more meaningful, attractive and regular contact to ensure that continued membership should remain an essential and worthwhile part of their overall enjoyment and involvement in the daffodil fraternity. Towards this end it was decided to upgrade the standard of our Newsletters both in content and presentation. The first revised issue has resulted in many complimentary remarks from far and wide and I wish to congratulate and thank the Editorial Committee who undertook this job with such energy and enthusiasm.

I am pleased to have been involved during the last two exciting years of development, consolidation and progress. I know there are further ambitious thoughts and ideas hovering in the backs of many members' minds. I wish my successor and his team the same support and happiness which I enjoyed in my term as they develop these thoughts and ideas to practical action and further progress.

May the winter's chill seem short and spring not far away. My thanks to all our members for their support and my best wishes to all for a happy and successful daffodil season in 1981.

# The R. H. S. Daffodil Show

15th/16th April, 1980

In complete contrast to the 1979 season, 1980 saw one of the shortest on record but as the majority of flowers were at their best during the ten days of the main shows the English growers had little cause for complaint.

From the evidence of their contributions to the R.H.S. Show, the Northern Ireland growers found the season to their liking. Their two main trade growers were entrusted with the task of dressing the major part of the most important section of the hall, the end wall, and they succeeded in providing a most impressive setting for the show. Rathowen occupied the central section with a Gold Medal display which exceeded 30 feet, and while they covered the full range of types and colours, to me the main feature was the quality and range of colour now available in the 'pinks' with 'Romance', 'Rose Royal', 'Salmon Spray', 'Tara Rose' and 'Violetta' all in faultless form. The pink doubles, 'Pink Pageant' and 'Pink Paradise' were also very fine and it is unfortunate that they are not more readily available.

The Carncairn display was rather smaller and earned a Silver Gilt award and the brightness of orange and red cups caught the eye with 'Heath Fire', 'Irish Light' and 'Irish Ranger', all very colourful. There was also a good vase of seedlings W1/75, with strong orange colour in the perianth, and this cultivar won the single bloom class for 2O-R's.

Although the major trade displays are always scrutinised very carefully, the exhibitor's first priority is an examination of the Cup Classes as these usually give a lead on which of the newer introductions are likely to make the grade on the show bench. The Engleheart Cup was retained by John Lea with a very fine set of flowers which included an exceptional 'Loch Hope' which was "Best in Show". My notes of the remainder record that 'Badeinloch' 3W-YYO was very large for division 3 with a round, slightly reflexed perianth and a clearly defined pale orange band to the cup. 'Ben Avon' 1W-W, had a broad, rounded perianth and a rather narrow barrel to the trumpet, opening to a nice wide brim, but personally I did not find it very attractive. We have seen 'Creag Dubh' 2O-R on several occasions in the past but this season it was more refined, smoother in the perianth and evenly coloured, but with so many of this colour becoming available, I felt no great urge to acquire it at present.

The runner-up for the Engleheart Cup was Tony Noton who was honoured with Reserve Best Bloom for 'Rutland Water' 2W-GWW, smooth, very white with a deep green eye and a heavily pleated corona. As another vase of three blooms appeared in the Bowles Cup, this cultivar may well be reliable in the production of show blooms, although, of course, there is no shortage of cultivars of this type. In this same collection, I was again impressed by 'Berry Gorse' 3W-GYY, a cultivar of good substance and strong cup colour, and 'Seedling 673' another 2O-R of some promise. Brian Duncan staged a good collection for third prize but my notes did not record detailed comments on individual blooms.

The Bowles Cup— 15 vases of 3 blooms— was more keenly contested than for some years with four exhibits staged. The trophy went to Clive Postles with a most colourful collection particularly 'Torridon', 'Dalhanine', 'Hotspur' and 'Loch Lundie', but he could have had very little in hand over Tony Noton who appeared to have a little more weight in his blooms even if his cultivars were not as colourful.

The highlight of the show was the Richardson Cup with fifteen exhibits staged and many growers assembling the best flowers they had ever grown but still received no recognition for their efforts. The winner was Paul Payne from Norwich, a grower who has made good progress since he first exhibited in the novice classes in 1977, with the first and second prize exhibits staged in adjacent spaces, it was easier than usual to compare their relative merits. There wasn't a weak flower in the winning 12, but for me the pick were 'Ballyrobert', broad and rounded in the perianth, 'Premier', faultless and well coloured and an exceptional 'Doubtful' a cultivar which is rarely up to the standard required for this level of competition. For the third time in the major cup classes at the show, Tony Noton was second and in a good set of flowers I particularly liked 'Edwalton' 2W-GYR, a big improvement on non-predominant cultivars in division 2W, and another fine bloom of 'Berry Gorse'.

With such a wealth of quality in this class, it might have been expected that this single bloom competition would suffer but the classes were well filled and exceptional blooms were required to secure first prizes in most of the classes. In the trumpet classes, Tony Kingdom took the award for the best division 1, with an outstanding 'Empress of Ireland' which beat many blooms of more recent introductions, and Alfred Bradshaw's 'Olympic Gold' was best 1Y-Y from 25 exhibits. From the wide range of division 2, I was impressed with a large smooth and well coloured 'Loch Lundie' from Jack Gilbert, a magnificent 'Strines' and an even better 'Dover Cliffs' (2W-W and Best Division 2) from Jim Pearce, a massive, well coloured 'Rubh Mor' from John Lea, and a very fine 'Tudor Minstrel' from Tony Kingdom which reminded us of a few years back when it was everybody's banker for collection classes.

In the small cupped classes Mrs. Oxtan staged a very fine 'Doubtful' to win a class with several 'Montego' with predominant colour in their cups but no prize cards, and Reg Nicholl took the award for best division 3 with a high quality, well coloured bloom of 'Kimmeridge'. The flower in this section to impress me most was Rathowen's 'Snowcrest', with a lovely smooth perianth and a uniformly frilled cup of a standard rarely seen in this class. The doubles were only of average quality and the classes for divisions 5 to 8 were very mixed in quality in contrast to the rest of the show. There were fine winning blooms of 'Ruth Haller', 'Dove Wings' and 'Suzy' and even an 'Early Splendour' with seven florets but I could find little else to commend it. In recent years these classes have gained in popularity but we still need further improvement in the cultivars available to raise the quality to the same level as that which is now expected in divisions 1 to 3.

## The National Show New Zealand 1980

The North Island National was held at Pukekohe on the 11th and 12th of September. From reports from Len Chambers and Jim O'More it was a very good show and thanks to them for notes and information supplied.

The British Raisers Gold Cup was won by Peter Ramsey with a well-grown lot of older varieties: 'Ringmaster', 'Richardson Seedling', 'Tudor Minstrel', 'Kingscourt', 'Arbar', 'Arkle', 'Preamble', 'Majorce', 'Canisp', 'Viking', 'Acropolis', 'Safari', 'Darnaway', 'Capehorn', 'Bayard', 'Leonora', 'Vulcan'.

Jim O'More was second and Mavis Verry third.

Champions were:

1A 1/80, 1B 'Bon', 1C 'Anitra',  
2AY 'Gold Gem', 2AR x 87/D, 2B x 41, 2BR 'Avenger',  
2BP 'Vahu', 2C 'Canisp', 2D 'Daydream',  
3A 'Tia' 3B x 51A ('Brodden'), 3C 'Polar Imp',  
4 'Gay Challenger'.

'Anitra' was judged Champion.

Champions at the Hutt Show on the 20th and 21st of September were:

1A 'Reward', 1B 'Alton', 1C 'South Pole',  
2A 'Golden Aura', 2AR 69/72, 2B 'Alsirat', 2BR 'Don Carlos',  
2BP 'Mrs. O. Ronalds', 2C 'Canisp',  
3A 'Merry King', 3B 'Rockall', 3V 'Cool Crystal'.

'Rockall' was judged Champion.

Among the Premiers at Johnsonville were 'Empress of Ireland', 'Camelot', 'Air Marshal', 'Hotspur', 'Rockall', 'Verona' and 'Gay Kybo'.

The South Island Show was held at Dunedin on the 27th and 28th of September.

This was not one of the best Nationals, many flowers showing the effect of the hot dry spring experienced in Canterbury. Only 3 mm. of rain fell in September.

Class 1 was won by Darwin Hayes with some good flowers but a mixture of short and long stems, and big and small flowers.

In contrast to Canterbury, Southland had experienced heavy rains and flooding. One of the best classes was one calling for nine blooms doubles and had four excellent entries. This was won by Maurice Butcher with a good even lot comprising three each of 'Gay Symphony', 'Gay Kybo' and 'Acropolis'. D. S. Bell was second with nine of his own raising, 'Matakana' a very good pink and 'Rheingold' a good self yellow being his best.

Champions were:

1A '21/75' — Jim O'More  
1B 'Newcastle' — D. Hayes  
1C '64/73' — Jim O'More  
2AR 'Kasia' — Mrs. D. E. McQuarrie  
2BY 'Dunmurry' — H. E. Dyer  
2C 'Arctic Doric' — Mrs. E. Milliken

2D 'Pryda' — L. D. Chambers  
2AY 'Camelot' — D. Hayes  
2AR 'Dimity' — D. Hayes  
3B 'Purbeck' — L. J. Chambers  
3C 'Joan Clarke' — Mrs. J. H. Harvey  
4 'Unique' — D. Hayes  
Pink '31/79/5' — Jim O'More

Amateur Champions were:

1A 'David Bell'  
Div. 2 'Easter Moon'  
Div. 4 'Gay Challenger'  
'Purbeck' was judged Champion Bloom.

October 1980

ALF CHAPPELL

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## New Members

Mr. Don Barnes, Sheffield, England.  
Mr. C. H. Eastop, Cambridge, England.  
Mrs. H. Farley, Connecticut, U.S.A.  
Mr. R. J. Hill, Palmerston, New Zealand.  
Mr. Tsuneo Kaneko, Kamakuri-Shi, Japan.  
Mr. Joseph Kukla, Okres Hradec Kralove, Czechoslovakia.  
Mr. Wells Knierim, Ohio, U.S.A.  
Mr. M. G. Martin, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Eire.  
Mr. J. Morley, Leeds, England.  
Mr. D. McCreedy, Banbridge, Co. Down, N. Ireland.  
Mr. F. C. Postles, Dudley, England.  
Ms. Carolyn Roof, Kentucky, U.S.A.  
Mr. D. Watson, Leeds, England.  
Mr. G. W. Wayne, California, U.S.A.

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## Northern Ireland Show Dates — 1981

Bangor — Saturday, 11th April.  
Hillsborough — Saturday, 11th April.  
Gilnahirk — Saturday and Sunday, 18th/19th April  
Enniskillen — Saturday, 18th April.  
Portadown — Saturday, 25th April (Championship of Ireland).  
Ballymena — Wednesday, 29th April.  
Omagh — Saturday, 2nd May.  
N.I.D.G. (Late Show) — Sunday, 10th May at Ballydorn Bulb Farm.

## Kiwis and Leprechauns

Kiwis and Leprechauns, what a mixture!

This year through unexpected circumstances we were able to again visit the Emerald Isle. After a very pleasant time visiting people and seeing the shows at London and Solihul we toured Scotland, and eventually we were on our way to Larne. Arriving there we were met by Sam Bankhead and from then on it was Irish hospitality all the way.

After a very pleasant evening and overnight stay at Tom Bloomer's, the show at Bangor, the luncheon (Mini Convention) at Carlisle's and then that very informative and pleasant trip in the company of Tom Bloomer and Billy Toal, we arrived at Omagh.

After arriving at Betty and Brian Duncan's, where we met Rose and Bill Rouse, we were joined by Sandy McCabe who took us home where we stayed for the rest of the week of fine sunny days. We had a very enjoyable time with a night out together at a local restaurant, another pleasant evening with Roseanna and Clarke Campbell and the after-show dinner at Omagh. Altogether a very enjoyable stay and we would like to thank all those who did so much to make it so, especially our hosts Mary and Sandy.

Our only disappointment was not seeing Georgie and Bob Sterling. However we hope that we will be seeing them in New Zealand in 1981 or 1982, the same applies to anyone who decides to make the trip. I think it is time someone came to see our shows and our lovely scenery.

Just let us know when you are arriving and billets, etc., will be arranged. Early September would be a good time to arrive. Remember your £1 goes twice as far in New Zealand whereas it costs twice as much for us over there, so come on, let us have a contingent over here. There is a warm welcome waiting for you. Make it 1982 at the latest, we will have the National Show in Christchurch that year and we could have a Mini Convention.

Hoping to see you then and thank you once again for your wonderful hospitality.

Regards to all our friends,  
JUNE and ALF CHAPPELL

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## N.I.D. Group Championship Class Amateurs Only

6 Varieties from at least 3 Divisions. Staged Singly.  
To be competed for at Bangor, Hillsborough, Gilnahirk, Enniskillen,  
Portadown, Ballymena and Omagh.  
Highest points from four Shows to count for 'Amateur Championship'.

## 2W-Y

Most people like to grow and show W-Y flowers and they do have a peculiar fascination. The flowers of Divisions 2 and 3 are very similar in form and it is not surprising that we tend only to differentiate when selecting cultivars for single bloom classes. Although cultivars are registered as Division 2 or Division 3 many of the blooms are borderline as between the Divisions and it appears that most of the better ones have been allocated to Division 3. Rimmed cultivars are popular and there has been a significant improvement in the yellow 'rims'. However, I have concentrated on those cultivars that show shades of yellow in all sections of the corona.

2W-Y cultivars have widely varying corona shape and therefore our individual preferences as to form must influence any consideration of what is 'best'. The number of new cultivars from Division 2W-Y has been limited to less than a dozen per year and as many have originated from the U.S.A. or the antipodes we have seen the name but not the flower, which means that our judgement is limited.

Most people regard 'Tudor Minstrel' as indispensable. Its faults are well documented, not a bit of wonder it hangs its head, and it is perhaps surprising that it received an Award of Merit (1950) and a F.C.C. (1956) until one considers the cultivars it was destined to replace. To my mind it is too large, too starry, too prone to ribbing, too milky white (except perhaps under glass) and shows too much staining of the perianth. I still persevere (Reserve Best Bloom at Richmond 1980) and use it in collections to match the big Division 1 blooms. In many ways it is a classic and an exhibitor's vice.

'My Love' is a neater flower but is beginning to show its age (registered in 1948). The colour contrast is not so defined as in 'Tudor Minstrel' but the occasional good bloom does reveal a cultivar of ethereal beauty.

Two neat, though small cultivars, which I have come to rely upon are 'Sparkling Waters' and 'Dromona'. Neither is outstanding by present-day standards but both are very consistent and of a size and form to complete a collection (from Division 2 or even Division 1 to 4). 'Sparkling Waters' (registered 1964) is the Division 2 equivalent of Mr. Bloomer's 'Woodland Prince'. When grown to full size it tends to hood the inner perianth segments and to come a little thin. However, it does have a distinctive and clean colour contrast with little staining of the perianth. The flower is well held by the firm stem to show the goblet-shaped corona to advantage. It can do well in single bloom classes and has been ignored in favour of the axicmatal 'Tudor Minstrel'. 'Dromona' (Carncairn 1973) is perhaps an improved 'Sparkling Waters' in-so-far as it has more substance and does not need as much dressing for the show-bench.

'Dundrod' (Ballydorn 1979) bloomed with me for the first time in 1980 and although it is too early to be positive it could become a reliable alternative for 'My Love'.

Of those seen on the show-bench the only one that is being seriously considered, at the moment, is 'Cool Autumn' (Noton 1976) which seems to be capable of responding to the ministrations of devotees.

However, for me the 'latest and best' of this sub-division must be 'Pure Joy' (Mitsch 1971) which has now become acclimatized and is going from strength to strength. Bred from 'Easter Moon' and 'Aircastle' it has retained good points from both sides of the pedigree. The nicely rounded perianth readily comes to a glistening white, needs little dressing and has shown no inclination to tear or nick. The corona is short and straight with regular shallow crenellations and is of a clear and definite primrose-yellow with a slightly deeper rim. A well dressed flower that is nicely held on a strong straight stem. It is a cultivar that I would hate to be without — even the round firm bulbs seem to say that they belong to a cultivar of quality. Hopefully it will not fade into oblivion.

For a Division that is not distinctive one is not surprised that the number of cultivars is limited but it is surprising that since 'Tudor Minstrel' set new standards and had exhibitors wrestling with their bank balances in their haste in the fifties no other cultivar has commanded such universal acclaim.

DON BARNES



Tom Bloomer (left) pictured with Billy Toal.

# The Latest and The Best

## 2W RIMMED

This is not an easy sub-division to write about as there are few really outstanding exhibition flowers amongst the cultivars I grow. I am sure there are some good recent introductions but as I have not yet tried them I am unable to comment on these. No F.C.C.'s have been awarded in this sub-division and only two A.M.'s – one to 'Green Island' in 1946 and one to 'Rainbow' in 1967 – both for exhibition – so there is quite a challenge here to produce a flower worthy of an award.

These are my feelings about the cultivars I grow in order of registration: GREEN ISLAND (J. L. R. 1938) I love this flower – so cool and restful with its lime rimmed cup and I imagine it was extensively used for exhibitions when it first appeared but it is seldom encountered on the show bench now as it is not smooth enough for today's standards. A very strong and healthy plant making enormous bulbs and one of the most famous breeders of all time. An excellent garden flower.

INTERIM (G. L. Wilson 1944). A pretty garden flower and useful for breeding.

FASTNET (J. L. R. 1953). Strong healthy plant with large flowers but when thinking of using it for a show I have always found something else more suitable so I have naturalised it this year.

CASTLE COOLE (W. J. Dunlop 1953). Lovely smooth silken flower with an unusual soft orange rimmed cup but a little flimsy for a show bloom. Too attractive to lose so it has this year been consigned to the shrub border.

INFATUATION (J. L. R. 1954). Another pretty garden flower useful for breeding but not really impressive enough for exhibition and too late anyway.

LYSANDER (J. L. R. 1959). Very large smooth flower of good texture with a most attractive ruffled red and yellow rim to the large bowl-shaped cup. A strong healthy plant, good increaser and excellent show flower although with my very late garden I cannot often use it.

DRUMBOE (G. L. Wilson 1960). A lovely, lovely flower of delicate colouring and strong substance and so consistent that pretty well every flower can be shown. A strong grower and good increaser. What more could one ask?

RAINBOW (J. L. R. 1961). Generally acknowledged as the best of the non-predominant pinks and some people produce good blooms but with me it is inclined to be a little coarse.

CORAL RIBBON (Mitsch 1964). A very attractive flower when grown well but although I have tried it both in pots and the open ground I have not yet had a single bloom free of nicks or blemishes of some sort.

BIT O' GOLD (Mitsch 1965). This is quite a breath-taking large round flower with a large flat cup – something I do not normally care for – but the ruffled lemon rim is scalloped in such a delightful way that the flatness disappears and I think it is a really super flower. Unfortunately it

blooms so late here that I do not often get a chance to show it. I tried it in a pot last year but only had one good bloom so it obviously resented that treatment.

RINGLEADER (Mrs. J. L. R. 1972). This is by far the most eye-catching of the rimmed varieties. Glistening white perianth of great substance – a perfect foil for the brilliant lemon crown widely banded with fire red – but although the crown is neatly pleated and deeply scalloped it still appears flat and rather large for the perianth. I did not care for it at all when it first bloomed finding it somewhat garish. However, it is growing on me and there is no doubt it is extremely showy in a collection. It makes a good plant and bulb and every bloom is perfect or have been so far. I bought one bulb four years ago so haven't a vast number yet but it is increasing quite well and this year I am trying some in a pot as again it is late in blooming here.

October 1980

HYLDA OXTON

## 2W-RO

### THE BITTER SWEET DIVISION

Exhibition quality Division 2 White – red or orange are a rare breed and those that are sun-proof are even rarer. However it is fair to say that they are an indispensable sub-division for inclusion in any major collection class. They are extremely exacting to grow and not for those who require to show every flower. When good, however, they can be very good and give a real edge to any show collection. They are a true challenge and a measure of the multi vases exhibitors' skills.

In the North of England the majority have to be grown in pots to make the major shows since in general they flower on the late side. Those grown outside need side and top protection plus shade when the cup opens.

I believe in studying the records of prize-winners at the major shows during recent years and my personal records indicate that the best 7 to date from a variable lot are as follows:

HOTSPUR (Richardson). 'Kilworth' x 'Arbar'. The current banker if one is possible for 2W-R's. A winner in the single bloom classes. Only of average size with a very good contrast.

RAMESES A.M.(E) (Richardson). 'Kilworth' x 'Arbar'. A tall strong grower of good size and is a 'must'. The perianth can be very smooth, however, the cup can be on the square side. Good in pots or under covers.

RUBH MOR (Lea) 'Borrobol' x 'Seedling'. A very large flower, tall and a good rounded perianth. The perianth is a good white and overlapping – with a good contrasting cup. Not so good in pots and required to be shaded since it needs time to grow on the plant.

NORMAL (Richardson). 'Kilworth' x 'Arbar'. Can be very big with wide inner petals which are a good white. Flowers tend to be coarse and if grown in pots no feed is recommended. Best flowers come from off sets, and it has its years.

SAMMY BOY (Noel Burr). Large flower, tall grower, very good in groups. Not yet well known. The cup is orange and although the perianth is slightly stary it is capable of winning in the highest company.

RED COTTAGE (Carncairn). 'Sylvia O'Neill' x 'Seedling'. Very good value for money and a much under-rated flower which is doing very well in U.S.A. It is early for this division and has a pure white rounded perianth of smooth form and a bright orange-red rimmed cup.

ROYAL REGIMENT (Richardson). 'Kilworth' x 'Arbar'. Only of medium size but a quality flower of good rounded form. The flattish bright red crown is neatly serrated and the perianth is a good white, slightly incurved. The best flowers come from pots and need time to develop.

The majority of the above cultivars are children of that famous 'Kilworth' x 'Arbar' strain and most of them are from the Richardson stable. However, the following cultivars are being tried for the first time this year in the search for more consistent flowers:

HILFORD (Ballydorn) 'Buncrana' x

RED MARSHALL (Richardson) 'Lorenzo' x 'Avenger'

MILFORD (Abel Smith) 'Kilworth' x 'Arbar'

My present short list is 'Hotspur', 'Rubh Mor' and 'Rameses', however, I have a feeling that 'Hilford' could be a flower with a real future, especially in collections.

November 1980

IVOR FOX

## 2W-RO

I have been asked for my comment on these cultivars. Having perused the record books, I have decided to divide them into separate sections, i.e. British raised and those raised in the Southern Hemisphere.

Regarding champions it appears that no particular one comes through strongly but rather the fact that some flowers have their years.

I will list them according to my experience of growing them in the South Island, New Zealand.

RAMESES. Probably the most consistent good form but strains the perianth a little.

HOTSPUR. Good colour and form. Could be a little larger.

NORMAL. Whiter and better coloured, hard to get good flowers. Hooks up badly with me.

ARNDILLY. Very good at best but again tears badly.

AVENGER. Bright, good shape but rather small.

BORROBOL. Has not settled down here as yet. Nice and white. I will try it in a pot next year.

DON CARLOS. Fairly consistent but inclined to hang its head. Better in a vase of three.

There are also some very good varieties in the Non-Predominant Class. The best of these is probably 'Northern Light' although it comes fairly late. Of the varieties raised down under I would list:

MASQUERADE. Very consistent. Sometimes has some white flecks on the edge of the cup. Large.

MATIKA. One of Jackson's seedlings. Very consistent. Early and hard to fault, at \$1.00 (40p) it is very good value.

ULTIMA. Another Jackson raised. Very good form. More orange than red but very good.

CONQUEST. Raised by Brogden. I have not seen this flower but understand it is quite good.

There are also some very promising cultivars still under number which have been gaining Premier Honours.

There are a lot of very good flowers which although not having enough colour are very attractive and good for showing in collection classes. One of the best of these is 'Bandit' of Brogdens. This flower is clean cut, large with a flat yellow cup flushed with orange and looks good in a stand. Another is 'City Lights' of D. S. Bell, hard to beat in the Non-Predominant Class.

There may be others which I have not mentioned but I have only commented on cultivars which I have grown myself. I trust this may prove to be of some interest to you all in the Northern Hemisphere.

ALF CHAPPELL

## Good Seeders

Since 1967 I have kept records of the number of flowers pollinated, the number of pods harvested and the number of seeds obtained from each cross. The average number of seeds per pod obtained in this area is about fifteen when hand pollination is carried out and about half that number with open pollination.

Some varieties used as seed parents have consistently produced more seed than average with 'Easter Moon' and 'Woodland Prince' being the only two varieties to average more than thirty seeds per pod each year.

The following list may be of interest to would-be hybridisers as a guide in planning crosses. The most prolific seeders in each sub-division are shown with average number of seeds per pod shown in brackets.

Division 1Y-Y 'Arctic Gold' (18); 'Golden Rapture' (20); 'Verdant' (25).

Division 1W-Y 2W-Y 'Dunmurry' (26).

Division 1W-W 'Empress of Ireland' (22).

Division 2Y-Y 'Golden Jewel' (22).

Division 2Y-R 3Y-R 'Richhill' (21); 'Gettysburg' (23); 'Sun Magic' (32); 'Chungking' (33); 'Altruist' (22).

Division 2W-W 'Easter Moon' (31); 'Glendermott' (29).

Division 2Y-W 'Daydream' (20).

Division 2W-P 'Interim' (30); 'Polonaise' (19); 'Fragrant Rose' (32); 'High Society' (28); 'Gracious Lady' (23).

Division 3W-Y 'Aircastle' (21); 'Woodland Prince' (40).

Division 3W-GYR 'Merlin' (34).

Division 3W-W 'Chinese White' (40); 'Monksilver' (20).

Division 4 'Papua' (29); R.3509 (30).

Further study of the records would indicate varieties which are consistently poor seeders or almost sterile. It is hoped that Dr. Willis will be able to extend his preliminary work at the University into the viability of the pollen of more modern varieties. Such information would be invaluable to hybridists.

BRIAN DUNCAN

# An extract from a Brian Duncan Letter to Dr. D. Willis

A request to extend my 'Aims on Breeding' article to cover background information, etc., has caused much self-searching to trace the origin of my interest in daffodils. We never do know where a step will lead and my difficulty is in pin-pointing that first step which set me on the daffodil trail.

A simple 'why' can be a most difficult question and when once put to me with regard to my daffodil breeding activities I confess I was lost for a satisfactory answer. My head was a whirl of incoherent and confused reasons. That anyone should even ask such a fundamental question was almost inconceivable and unthinkable. In answer I was only able to say "Just because I likes 'em" and quoted the old gardener's saying:

*"Different people has different h'opinions,  
Some likes carrots and some likes h'onions."*

The question lingers, however, and brings me back to consideration of that first step, the influences, the interest, the personal contacts and exposures to daffodils which might have paved the way to a most absorbing and rewarding pastime.

Though I would not rule out heredity and environment as factors I suspect that being born the fifth of six sons of a County Antrim dairy farmer may be more important. There was no hope of a farm being provided for a fifth son and in any case my interests, as a boy, put bird watching, aeroplane spotting and modelling, football, hockey, cricket and even pressing wild flowers before milking, mucking out and making hay. As a result I went to an Agricultural College, after leaving school, and I took a mild interest in agricultural botany and plant recognition. I was fascinated to learn that man could improve plants by cross breeding. I learnt a little about the famous 'Ulster' varieties of potatoes raised by John Clarke of Ballycastle, the 'Stormont' varieties of oats raised by the Ministry of Agriculture Plant Proceeding Research Station. The people who performed these 'miracles' were regarded with awe – they were Boffins of an unknown mysterious world to which I could never hope to aspire.

Early exposure to daffodils was limited to 'Van Sion' (though I didn't then know it by name) which I only just remember being uprooted from an out-farm and being replanted by the hundred in straight lines and circles around our new farm house, which was completed about 1939. I also have a fairly vivid memory, from about the same time, of finding an 'odd' daffodil in the orchard which my mother told me was a 'Pheasant's Eye'. For twenty years after seeing the 'Pheasant's Eye' I do not have a single recollection of particularly noticing a daffodil of any kind.

The next step which aroused these dormant and barely recognisable grains of interest was undoubtedly my marriage in 1959. I had to find a

house; that house was surrounded by almost half an acre of compacted till and builder's rubble. Pride of home ownership demanded action in that garden so it was ploughed and planted in broccoli whilst I sought information and ideas about layout and plants. My ideas were limited to roses and daffodils – every garden had roses and daffodils! Friends who had any knowledge of gardening were pressed into discussion on the topic and snippets of information on daffodils are vaguely recalled. An office colleague Mr. William Wilson told me about having bought 'Beersheba' when it was £1.00 per bulb and I think he may have mentioned the name of a certain Guy Wilson but the name did not really register except as sort of confusion with a famous creamery manager from Fintona named Wilson Guy who wrote as Mat Mulcaghey for the 'Tyrone Constitution'.

Mr. Alan Smith, a former college contemporary who had studied Horticulture, produced a landscape plan for our new garden with all sorts of unknown botanical names which stirred my curiosity. I had to put faces to those names and as a result developed an interest in trees and shrubs and other garden plants.

In the autumn of 1960 I bought a collection of daffodils to fit into pockets in the already planted shrub borders. In my innocence and ignorance I thought that 'Unsurpassable' was all that its name implied, 'Beersheba' was the peerless white and that 'Fortune' and 'Mrs. R. O. Backhouse' were steps into the future for colour.

These and similar 'wonders' recorded on film were proudly presented to Alan Smith as evidence of my new found horticultural skill and judgement of selection. Alas, deflation followed. With due regard for my pride Alan patiently listened to my exaltations and then he diplomatically, but emphatically let me know that perhaps my flowers might not be quite the world-beaters I had imagined. Still incredulous, I wanted to know just how any daffodils could possibly be better. He then told me about Guy Wilson and his daffodils. He told me about working with Guy Wilson in his student days, about helping to set up daffodil displays at the London Daffodil Shows and about the wonderful new daffodil creations from Broughshane.

Alan Smith illustrated the points of improvement sought by hybridists by criticising aspects of my flowers – form, proportion, substance, texture, symmetry, depth of colour, stem, neck and poise. I began to wonder what kind of monstrosities I had dared to present for admiration. I could not immediately be disloyal to my flowers and I lamely replied that I still thought they were nice and that they were good enough for me. I did, however, accept the list of names and addresses of the specialist daffodil growers which Alan Smith gave me – but without serious intent. It was no good! The damage was done! He had destroyed my enjoyment and pride in my flowers. Each and every one was subject to critical examination – they all had many of the faults which had been detailed.

On reporting this story to our clergyman friend, the late Rev. A. E. C. Rowan, he told me about seeing magnificent daffodils at an Omagh H.S. spring meeting. These daffodils were grown by Major General and Mrs. D. G. Moore, Mountfield Lodge, Omagh – only eight miles away. This seemed to corroborate Alan Smith's remarks. Evidence was building up

and there were links in the chain as on subsequent visits to Mountfield it was found that the bulbs had mostly been obtained from Guy Wilson.

The matter could not rest, I just had to see some of these 'miracle' flowers. The catalogues arrived and in the autumn of 1962 one bulb of each of the twelve varieties at 2/6 each were purchased from G. L. Wilson Ltd. When they flowered I understood; William Wilson, Alan Smith and Rev. Rowan were right. Not only was there improved colour, size and substance but I became aware of beauty of form, texture, balance and proportion – aesthetic qualities not previously appreciated. I was now hooked! I must see more of these better daffodils and learn more about them. I persuaded the local Horticulture Society to introduce an element of competition into the daffodil display evening in May, 1963 and to invite Mr. Tom Bloomer as judge and speaker/demonstrator.

That show and demonstration of 6th May, 1963 and the opportunity to meet and talk to Mr. Tom Bloomer provided the 'coup de grace' and confirmed me as an incurable member of the 'yellow fever' fraternity. To my great surprise and delight, flowers from my twelve bulbs had won eight of the twelve single bloom classes and my 'Cantatrice' was Best Bloom in show. Other winning varieties were 'Kingscourt', 'Galway', 'Polindra', 'Rosario', 'Golden Ducat', 'Charity May' and 'Actaea'. Despite these successes my few flowers were overshadowed by the magnificent selection of the latest and most beautiful daffodils, including some with really pink cups, which Mr. Bloomer brought for his demonstration on grooming and staging for exhibition. Many were seedlings of his own raising and he also demonstrated the technicalities of hybridisation. Here, at last, was a chance to meet a man who had actually bred new varieties of plants.

I am sure I must have peppered poor Tom with a myriad of the most ridiculous questions that evening. He must have recognised some spark of interest and enthusiasm which he fanned and kindled with patient helpful advice, encouragement and a gift of some of his demonstration daffodils. Tom was so modest and made it all seem so easy that suddenly I realised that daffodil breeding was something which I could possibly undertake myself, albeit in a very small way.

My first cross was made a few days later when a flower of 'Kilworth' opened – the last and only remaining bud on my 'big twelve' plants. Pollen from a pink flower ('Interim' or a seedling) in Tom's gift lot was applied to the stigma of 'Kilworth' with such great determination, clumsiness and nervous anticipation that a successful mating seemed highly improbable!

The basic aim of that first cross was simply to find if I could manage the mechanical intricacies of applying pollen and persuading the flower to produce seed. Only three or four seeds resulted which were planted and germinated in a small clay pot. The baby budlets had a tough job surviving the next couple of years as they suffered the hardships of neglect and ignorant care in their confined and often arid quarters. Tom Bloomer had told me that with such parents they were unlikely to amount to much which may account for the lack of loving care. Eventually they died of thirst and malnutrition – but their existence had not been in vain, they had been living proof that, even I, could produce daffodil

seedlings. Fifteen years and many thousands of seedlings later that may not seem important, but to me it was breaking the sound barrier. The seemingly impossible was now possible. I could become a plant hybridist – a daffodil raiser. An old fascination and a new interest could be combined.

Interest developed with this realisation and R.H.S. Daffodil Year Books, catalogues and any other available daffodil literature were begged, bought or borrowed from a wide variety of sources. Pedigrees, cultivation methods and show reports were studied in detail. With awe, I read about and became familiar with the names and achievements of the great daffodil raisers of the past. Incidentally, the first R.H.S. Year Book (1963) which I purchased contained the obituaries of both Mr. G. L. Wilson and Mr. J. L. Richardson. It is a source of disappointment that I never had an opportunity to meet them personally.

The following spring, 1964, was one of reconnaissance; first visits were made to Prospect House, to Tom Bloomer, W. J. Dunlop and even to the London Daffodil Show. I had the audacity to enter flowers in the Novice Section that year and great was the amusement at home as I cut, stapled and joined two shoe boxes and prepared a cotton wool-lined travelling bed for my two flowers – 'Ceylon' and 'Trosseau' which were the only ones open on 6th April. Though the 'Ceylon' did gain a Fourth prize the object of entering was primarily to get an Exhibitor's Pass to get into the show early to enjoy and experience the hurly-burly of show preparations and to have time to study the flowers.

By the end of the 1964 flowering season I had seen many of the best flowers available at that time. Mr. Lea's 'Canisp' which was the Best Bloom in London; Mrs. Richardson's 'Rose Royale' and 'Olympic Gold' seen in Waterford, were flowers of such perfection and beauty that further improvement seemed both unlikely and unnecessary. Nevertheless I was determined to have a go. I could not afford to buy 'Rose Royale' at £35.00 per bulb (as it was at that time) so I would have to raise my own. Mrs. Richardson very generously gave me some flowers to bring home including blooms of 'Rose Royale', 'Rosedew', 'Debutante', 'Salmon Trout' and 'Rose Caprice'. Obviously the idea of breeding pinks had excited my imagination because the previous autumn I had bought single bulbs of all the cheaper pinks from Mrs. Richardson and Mr. Dunlop. Imagine my great excitement and gratitude as I drove home dreaming of crosses to be made with those gift flowers which were laden with pollen of a breeding potential which my pocket could not possibly provide. In that spring of 1964, my first 'serious' crosses were made and seventeen out of twenty-two crosses involved pink parents.

The visits of 1964 became annual pilgrimages during that long five-year wait until the first seedlings flowered. More crosses were made each year and the stock of bulbs for exhibition and breeding was gradually up-graded by purchases from the professional growers and gifts from amateurs Tom Bloomer and W. J. Bankhead.

The competition at the Northern Ireland and London shows became increasingly enjoyable as I got to know fellow-competitors and learned to appreciate the standards required for any chance of success. After some modest success at Northern Ireland shows I managed to win the

Novice Twelve Bloom class in London in 1968. When, two years later I had several first prizes in Amateur Single Bloom classes I felt I was making some progress. I was gaining some confidence for selection of seedlings if and when the time came – I determined from the start that I would be ruthless in selection as all the books advised. In this respect I'm afraid I have failed – I keep too many seedlings in the hope that they will improve in future years. A very few do improve, most do not.

Looking back on those earlier years it is interesting to note how my aims and ambitions changed and developed. From the first basic achievement of carrying out the cross pollination and germinating the seed came the desire to see the first seedlings flower. The need to develop some expertise for assessment of seedlings then became important followed by a desire to check that assessment on the show bench against the best named varieties. Almost unconsciously the sights were raised as targets were achieved. There were many thrills at each stage – the excitement and anticipation of watching the very first flower buds about to open; the disappointment with the throwbacks and the elation as a promising one unfolds. Then the first local show bench success for a seedling, this is the stamp of approval by an expert judge – a heady experience indeed!

My first such experience was at the 1971 Ballymena Show when a pink seedling from that 'Rose Royale' pollen of 1964 won both the single and three bloom classes for pinks. The seedling was later named 'Premiere' because of this first success, because it is the first pink to open each season and because it was to be the first of my seedlings to be registered. 'Premiere' is not a world beater but it has had several more successes, including a win in the pink class at the 1978 London Competition. It is valued for its earliness and has received favourable comment in London Show reports, attracting attention because of its neat perky form and bright green eye.

When 'Lilac Charm', my little pink cyclamineus hybrid with distinct lilac tones in its long and beautifully flanged trumpet, won its class at the 1973 London Daffodil Show another ambition was achieved – to win a class in London with a seedling of my own raising. 'Lilac Charm' repeated this success in London in 1974 and 1975 to complete a 'hat-trick' and show it was no fluke. Yet I feel I can claim no especial credit for 'Lilac Charm' despite the general admiration and acclaim it has received. Its 'cyclamineus' ancestry is in some doubt and though the cross was made in the hope of getting strong pinks and possibly bluish tints I certainly did not expect such a delightful surprise. The characteristics of N. Cyclamineus are so 'clearly evident' that I suspect the intervention of a highly imaginative bee somewhere in its pedigree. It is this chance of a break and the diversity and variation amongst seedlings which is so gripping and absorbing. I was lucky to find these two promising flowers so early which were a great encouragement to continue.

Additional pleasing show successes and milestones were achieved when D.190 ('Mount Angel' 3W-YYR) was selected as Best Unregistered Seedling and Best Division 3 flower at the 1975 Omagh Show; when 'Delta Wings' (6W-P) won the Best Bloom award at Omagh in 1977 and

when my group of seedlings won the major 12 Bloom class against open competition at Omagh in 1978.

The ultimate ambitions of any serious daffodil hybridist still dangle like the proverbial carrot before a donkey – they are to win Best Bloom at London with a seedling and to win the Engleheart Cup for twelve seedlings raised by the exhibitor. To achieve the first of these would be like winning a lottery – you can not really plan to win but you must have your name in the hat. The Engleheart Cup is different and infinitely more difficult – dedication and perseverance linked with hard work and enthusiasm will be required if this one is to be achieved. So far as I know the cup has not been won by any breeder of less than 20 years' experience. Also, it has always remained in the hands of the landed and wealthy where financial and labour resources restricted neither the choice of breeding stock nor the time available for the work involved.

With this knowledge and in full realisation of the enormity of the task it is perhaps foolhardy and presumptuous to harbour even slight hope of ever winning the Trophy, but proceed I will, though I disapprove of the traditional colour balance which seems to demand at least Y-R flowers (inevitably rather similar) in the twelve. I think the widest possible range of types, consistent with a well balanced exhibit, should be shown. However, crosses towards meeting the unwritten obligation have been more recently included in my breeding programme and some promising flowers are emerging. I was encouraged by the standard of my 12 seedlings at Omagh 1978 which were much better than my twelve which came third in the Engleheart class ten days earlier. I think the gap is narrowing but there is still much ground to make up. This ensures that the thrill and anticipation of examining each year's new seedlings will not diminish.

Daffodil Shows are great fun, as the results of the breeder's skill or good fortune are brought together for comparison and appraisal. In addition to the judges' opinions, remarks of admiration or criticism by fellow enthusiasts are helpful in determining the fate of particular seedlings. Important as shows may be as sources of entertainment, as outlets for competitive urges, as public displays of the best in daffodils and as a means of keeping up to date with developments, they are not an end in themselves. Without the shows and the boost to ego which winning and favourable comment give there would be little incentive to hybridise, beyond the purely commercial. So far as I know a fortune has not yet been made by a daffodil breeder so the commercial incentive is not strong. Shows, therefore, through the amateur fun they provide, are the spur to encourage improvement in the Narcissus genus – or so I try to convince myself when beset by a conscience which questions some aspects of the morality, the motivation, the egotism and the selfishness involved in competitive exhibition. This justification begs the further question – is the improvement of the Narcissus genus important, necessary or even desirable? I am happy to remember that John Kendall raised 'King Alfred' about 80-90 years ago. It was a sensation then and has since provided employment for thousands, pleasure for millions and brightened the flower sellers' barrows in the streets of

London for half a century. During all this time, by the hand of hybridists, it was being used as a stepping stone to the beauty and perfection we see today in a host of varieties of different forms and colours, e.g. 'Midas Touch', 'Newcastle', 'White Star', 'Golden Joy', 'Amber Castle', 'Loch Hope', 'Torrison', 'Don Carlos', 'Irish Rover', 'Ringleader', 'Broomhill', 'Achduart', 'Doctor Hugh', 'Purbeck', 'Beauvallon' and 'Gay Challenger'.

All the above flowers, each of which would grace any exhibitor's collection and add beauty to any garden have 'King Alfred' three, four, five or six generations back in their pedigree. All my little show successes fade into insignificance against this record, but the example is one which provides the greatest justification for daffodil hybridising. 'King Alfred' has long since been eclipsed as an exhibition, garden and commercial flower, but, so long as daffodils are grown the influence of John Kendall's 'King Alfred' will remain. The case of 'King Alfred' and other daffodils which have been superseded, even during my own short experience tempt me to quote the lines of Herrick, though extending the thoughts to the life-span of varieties rather than the blooms:

*"Fair Daffodils, we weep to see  
you haste away so soon, . . ."*

and

*"We have short time to stay as you,  
We have as short a spring, . . ."*

Even the very best new daffodil introductions can only have a relatively short run of popularity. Progress seems to be slow yet few varieties survive as top exhibition flowers for twenty years and only a minute fraction of these ever achieve wider acclaim as commercial bulbs or cut flowers.

In daffodil breeding as in most things, the achievements of the past and present are but the stepping-stones to the future. This and the further realisation that this year's perfection is likely to be the mediocrity of the next decade are sobering thoughts which brings the significance of daffodil breeding into perspective. Those of us involved should enjoy our seedlings while we can - and if they are good enough perhaps they may be permitted to influence the future.

The perfect daffodil has not yet been raised, there is scope for improvement in every sub-division and colour combination. I find it difficult to visualise a standard of perfection beyond that which my eyes have seen. I think it is easier to think in terms of combinations of the best qualities of the best flowers available. Sometimes this means simply intercrossing the two best flowers of the type or something going back to one which has a particularly desirable characteristic. One of the characteristics which requires more attention is the general one of consistency of performance - so many varieties produce only a small proportion of show quality blooms. I often make notes of imaginary crosses in the winter evenings. Alas, the temporary loss of these notes, a poor memory, the rush of other springtime activities and the fact that

the chosen parents may not be in flower at the same time all seem to combine to thwart such well intentioned plans.

What are the flowers of my mind's-eye to be like?

*To be continued in next issue*

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It is hoped to use further extracts from the historical research and information gathered by Dr. Willis for his D.Phil. thesis on Daffodil Breeding in Ireland.

It is not every day someone gets a degree for enjoying himself studying daffodils.

Editor

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## 1981 Spring Visitors

Each year we look forward to welcoming an increasing number of visitors from other parts of the world who come to share in the fun and camaraderie of our daffodil season.

Little birds tell us that we may expect Miss Barbara Fry of Rosewarne fame, Miss Delia Bankhead who was a very popular World Convention visitor and possibly two charming stalwarts of the A.D.S. Mrs. Mary Lou Gripshover who is Journal Editor and her inseparable friend Mrs. Ruth Pardue.

If any of these people, or other unnamed are swithering - let this note assure them of a warm and friendly Ulster welcome and help them decide to come and see us and the daffodils we grow.

# Hats off to Doctor Dave!



I have always been an admirer of Dave Willis, not only for his lovely genial disposition and infectious smile, but because of his interest in the horticultural sphere and his great skill in the art of cultivation. And his vast store of knowledge is sportingly shared.

Head groundsman at the New University of Ulster, he and his staff have worked wonders in getting that formerly rough 300 acre agricultural patch into an attractive setting of velvet-like lawns and a blaze of colourful blooms.

Now, with pleasure, I find myself lifting my hat a foot higher to Dave, who has succeeded in taking a Doctor of Philosophy degree at the university of his employment. This is an incredible feat.

Dave's justifiable award came as a result of seven years research into the daffodil, the most widely grown flower in the British Isles. Yet, until his publication "The History of Daffodil Breeding in Ireland" appeared, there was little known about the bloom which never fails to come to enhance our springs. The Irish, who imported it from Europe, 100 years ago improved and enlarged it.

Prominent places in Ulster for the daffodil are Broughshane, near

Ballymena, and the Tamlaght district in South Derry. Famous names associated with the growing of the flower in Broughshane are Kate Reid, Guy L. Wilson and Tom Bloomer. From his manse on Drumagarner Road, between Kilrea and Upperlands, to his church at Tamlaght, one mile distant, the Rev. J. J. A. Rainey, planted rows of daffodils – a golden trail and spectacle looked forward to each year with joy and which will remain as a memorial to a man who really loves God's creations.

Dave, in his long and arduous research, uncovered many facts about the daffodil that the Welsh folk, who proudly claim the flower with the leek as a national emblem, didn't know.

"The daffodil should have been the emblem of Ireland rather than Wales, since the flower is much more prominent here," Dave said. "The reputation of the Welsh daffodil is largely a myth, whereas Irishmen have been experts in the breeding of them for generations. But I suppose the Irish will never abandon the shamrock," he added with a smile.

In saying congratulations and expressing best wishes to Doctor Willis for the future, I know that my readers will heartily endorse my sentiments.

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## The Daffy Doc

It may sound daffy – but gardener Dave Willis's specialist subject has won him a blooming great academic honour.

After seven years' research, Dave came up with a book on "The history of daffodil breeding in Ireland during the last 100 years" – and has been awarded a degree for it.

The Doctor of Philosophy degree is from the New University of Ulster in Coleraine, Co. Derry, where 40-year-old Dave heads the staff that tends the 300-acre campus.

He uncovered some golden facts about daffodils that even the Welsh didn't know.

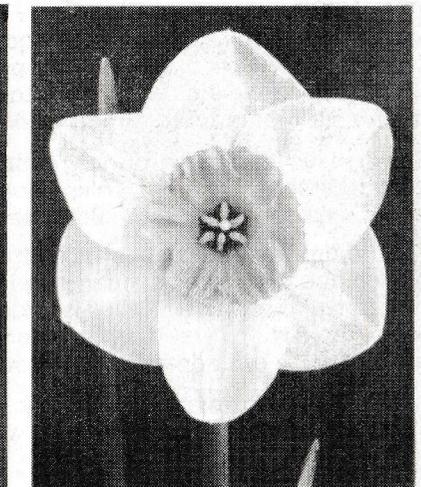
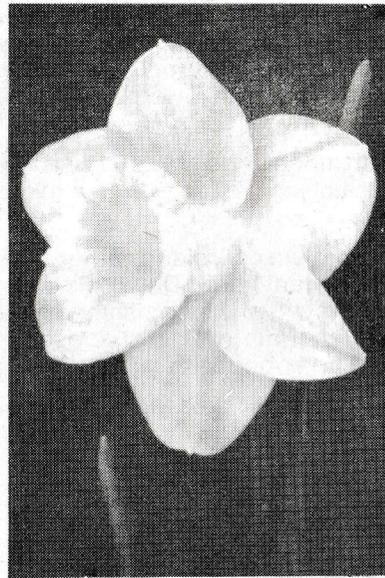
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Dave's degree came after examiners were impressed by his book.

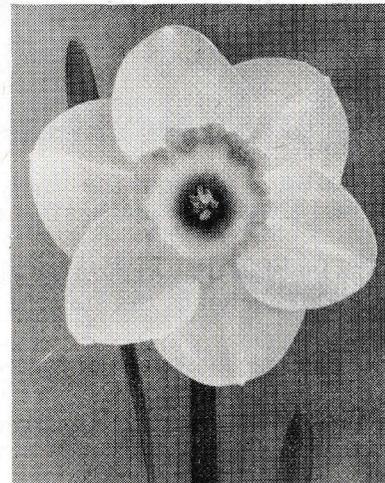
"It's a truly great honour and the crowning achievement of my career in horticulture," he said, "but I suppose I'll now be known as daffy doc."

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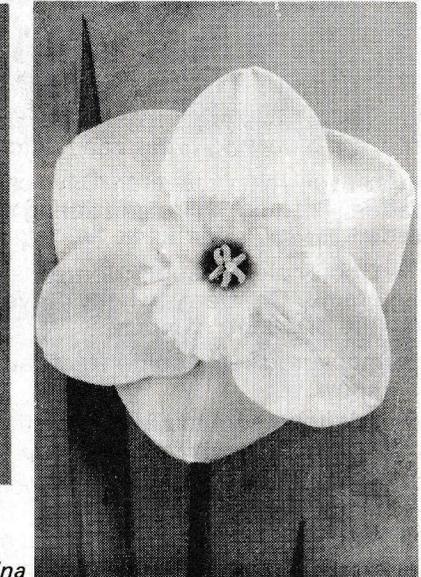


*Irish Rover*

*Arkle*



*Rainbow*



*Pontresina*