

Newsletter

of the
**Northern Ireland
Daffodil Group**



Half-yearly publication of the
Northern Ireland Daffodil Group

OCTOBER 1985
ISSUE

The Northern Ireland Daffodil Group



Objects

The purpose for which the Society is established is the advancement of horticultural education through the study of the genus *Narcissus* and in furtherance of such purpose:

- (i) to promote public participation in the said educational purpose;
- (ii) to promote the establishment of public gardens or of display beds in such gardens which include plantings of *Narcissus* bulbs;
- (iii) to provide bulb stocks for plantings within para (ii) above;
- (iv) to promote, or advance scientific or practical research into the breeding, cultivation, and production of *Narcissus* cultivars;
- (v) to promote, or advance the study of *Narcissus* diseases and pests with particular reference to making Northern Ireland an international centre for the production of healthy stocks of *Narcissus*;
- (vi) to promote, or advance the production of new and improved cultivars of *Narcissus* by hybridisation, and the increase of stocks of the best types of existing cultivars;
- (vii) to publish, or assist in the publication of scientific and practical information and to publish a journal in respect of the activities of the Society;
- (viii) to promote, or advance the holding of shows, lectures, meetings, and displays which include exhibits of material relating to the *Narcissus* and to which the public is admitted, and wherever held throughout the World;
- (ix) to promote, or sponsor the promotion of classes for *Narcissus* at any Horticultural Show including the provision of trophies, cups, or prizes for such classes;
- (x) to provide, or nominate suitable qualified persons to judge classes or exhibits of *Narcissus* at any Horticultural Show or at any Show or display having such a class or exhibit;
- (xi) to provide, or nominate suitable qualified persons to give lectures, or to provide exhibits relating to the *Narcissus*;
- (xii) to aid, and to receive aid from the Departments of Agriculture in Northern Ireland, and for England, Wales, and Scotland, or from any body or person whether incorporated or not and whether carrying on activities in Northern Ireland or elsewhere, which has objects which include the purpose of the Society and which aid will advance the purpose of the Society;
- (xiii) to grant financial aid to meet in whole or in part the travel costs of a person provided or nominated by the Society to act as a judge at a Show within para (x) above, or to give a lecture or provide an exhibit within para (xi) above, or to provide a trophy, cup or prize at a Show within para (ix) above, whether or not such person is a member of the Society;
- (xiv) to accept subscriptions and gifts (whether of real, chattel real or personal assets), devises and bequests;
- (xv) to borrow, or raise, or secure the payment of money by mortgage or otherwise;
- (xvi) generally to manage, invest, and expend all the property and monies of the Society;
- (xvii) to affiliate or associate with any body or person whether incorporated or not, and whether carrying on activities in Northern Ireland or elsewhere;
- (xviii) to do all such other acts which lawfully are incidental to the purpose of the Society.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND DAFFODIL GROUP

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2 No. 7

October, 1985

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Editor and Assistant Secretary

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Rules of the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group

1. Title

The group shall be called "The Northern Ireland Daffodil Group Society".

2. Registered Office

The registered office is 1 Glenholm Crescent, Belfast BT8 4LT.

3. Objects

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- (xvi) generally to manage, invest, and expend all the property and monies of the Society;
- (xvii) to affiliate, or associate with any body or person whether incorporated or not, and whether carrying on activities in Northern Ireland or elsewhere;
- (xviii) to do all such other acts which lawfully are incidental to the purpose of the Society.

4. Membership and Subscription

Membership of the Society shall be open to anyone on the payment of a minimum subscription, for the time being, of £4 per annum or £10 for 3 years due on the 1st January. Any member being twelve months in arrears shall be deemed to have resigned.

Honorary Members, who shall be elected on the recommendation of the Committee at a general meeting of the Society shall not be eligible to vote and shall not be liable to pay the subscription.

5. Committee

The management of the Society shall be vested in the committee of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, an Honorary Secretary, an Honorary Treasurer and four additional members, and the committee shall have power to co-opt, and power also to invite a non-member to attend its proceedings.

A quorum for committee meetings shall be four, with the Chairman having a casting vote.

A record of proceedings shall be kept.

The officers and committee shall be elected annually at the annual general meeting, and may be removed from office only by a general meeting.

No member may serve for more than 4 consecutive years on the Committee.

6. Sub-Committees

The committee shall have power to appoint a sub-committee for any special purpose. A sub-committee shall make a record of its proceedings. The Chairman of each sub-committee shall be an ex-officio member of the committee.

7. Annual General Meeting and Other General Meetings

The annual general meeting shall be held in January each year, and other general meetings may be held at any time directed by the committee. Ten or more members may convene a general meeting if the committee refuses their written request for a general meeting. At least 7 days notice in writing shall be given of any general meeting and shall state the agenda.

A quorum for General Meetings shall be fifteen, with the Chairman having a casting vote.

Any member desiring to propose a resolution shall send the proposed resolution in writing to the Honorary Secretary, to arrive not less than 48 hours before the meeting.

8. Amendment of Rules

Rules may only be amended at a general meeting of which due notice had been given.

9. Voting at General Meetings

Every fully paid up member shall be entitled to vote at a general meeting and the Chairman shall have a casting vote.

A record of the business conducted shall be kept.

10. Accounts

A Bank Account shall be maintained in the name of the Society and cheques shall be signed by the Treasurer and the Chairman or Secretary.

An audited statement of the accounts of the Society shall be submitted by the Treasurer to the annual general meeting.

An auditor, whether honorary or paid, shall be elected at each annual general meeting.

11. Disputes

Any dispute between a member and the committee shall be determined by a sub-committee appointed under Rule 6 and the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Society, the Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer for the time being, shall be members of such sub-committee.

12. Dissolution

On dissolution of the Society the assets shall not be divisible between the members but shall be given to a body, whether incorporated or not which has purposes which are charitable in a manner as nearly as may be resembling the purpose of the Society and which is selected by the Society at its terminal general meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

1986 will be a memorable year in the daffodil calendar. To begin with everything was wonderful. We were all delighted when Tom Bloomer was awarded the Peter Barr Memorial Trophy, and was in London himself when the immense cup was awarded, though luckily he did not have to bring it back himself but it was sent on after in a very special consignment.

Sidley Bloomer entertained us all at various times, and we were able to sample her marvellous cooking. Our thanks to her and it was great to see her father, the perfectionist and breeder of so many show winners enjoying recognition.

It was a great excuse for parties, especially as Brian brought home the Engleheart Cup, much coveted award for a breeder of daffodils, and which has not been awarded to a Northern Ireland grower since Guy Wilson's day.

We also found 1985 a year for the first flowering of a tremendous number of exciting new seedlings, though when Geoffrey Smith of "Gardeners' Question Time", came round the daffodils he, being more a gardener than a showman, thought that we as breeders were naming all the wrong varieties! Perhaps he is right.

Since those good days of spring when we occasionally saw the sun, things have deteriorated. Rain, rain and more rain. Let us hope that this is not typical of the new Northern Ireland summers.

Digging the bulbs was bad, but one always hoped for a good "back end" to dry them. Now the back end is here, plus floods and huge daffodil bulbs, some of them (I weighed one to see) of ten ounces, finding no way of getting rid of the moisture between the scales. I suppose all these problems are what make gardeners interesting people!

Good luck to all our members and a successful year in 1986.

September, 1985

KATE READE

EDITORIAL JOTTINGS

Members of the group were distressed to hear of Robin Reade's unfortunate fall from a ladder which kept him in hospital for a period. We hear that he is making an excellent recovery which we hope will be complete in every way.

A suggestion has been received that the Championship of Ireland and Associated Classes should be held in conjunction with the Amateur Championship at a central fixed location each year. The idea is that it should be a Mini-London Show

with a full range of classes in addition to those mentioned. Professional growers of daffodils and other nurseries could be asked to stage trade exhibits. The idea has much to commend it though assistance would be needed – possibly from the Department of Agriculture. Think about it and get the views of your local Societies. It will be on the Agenda for the A.G.M. in January 1986.

As we prepare to go to press the rain continues to fall each day as it has done since early June. My personal sympathies go to our professional growers who have the unenviable task of lifting thousands of bulbs, drying and cleaning them and despatching to their customers. Knowing the difficulties which I experienced in the first three of these tasks makes their lot (like the policeman's) – not a happy one.

Annual Get-Together – Beach Hotel, Portballintrae, Co. Antrim
Friday, 1st November – Sunday, 3rd November
Book direct with the Hotel – Telephone Bushmills 31214

R.H.S. SHOW — LONDON

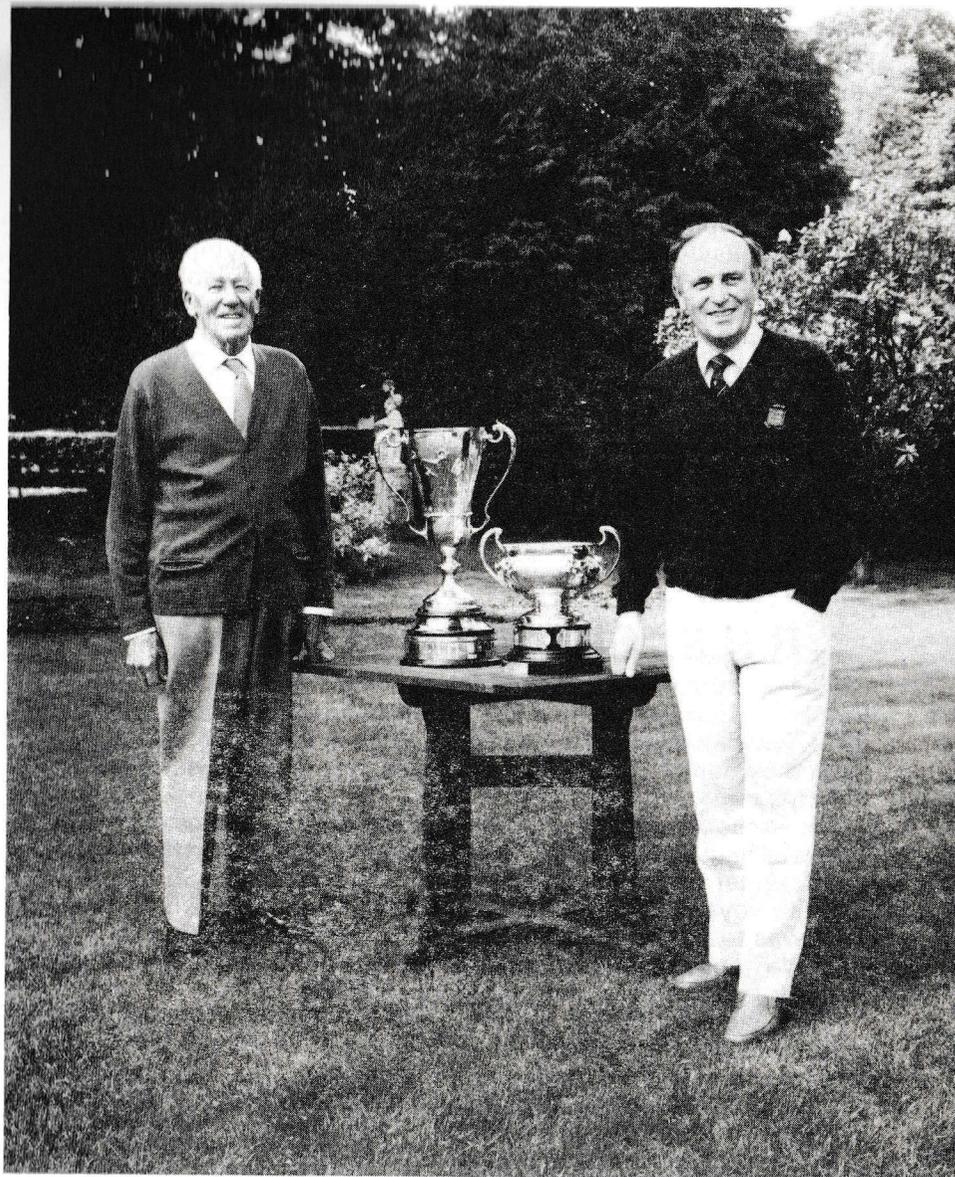
Easter Sunday saw the start of the annual Safari of Northern Ireland enthusiasts to the R.H.S. Spring Show. As is now customary, when the Easter Holidays coincide, we were accompanied by our wives and in some cases, whole families made the trip.

The excitement and anticipation which we experience each year was heightened by the news conveyed by our good friend and founder of Rathowen Daffodils – Tom Bloomer. Shortly into the voyage to Stranraer we were delighted to learn that Tom was to be the 1985 recipient of the Peter Barr Memorial Cup. We hoped that this might prove to be a good omen for our journey – and celebrations commenced early!

These were continued after the judging when Brian Duncan won the Engleheart Cup for the first time with Tom Bloomer in second place. In the winning entry which was well balanced and had good colour, I was particularly impressed by D.525 (3Y-O) – 'Rimmon' (though on the small side), 'Limbo' and D.729/1Y-Y).

Tom's second placed entry contained excellent 'White Star', 'Golden Joy' and 'Ravenhill' (2W-GYR), but with no red and yellow flowers, the exhibit lacked colour.

John Blanchard was awarded third place with an entry of twelve miniatures. I believe that this may have been the first time such an entry has been staged. There is nothing in the schedule to preclude such an exhibit and I consider John deserves a medal for his courage in breaking with tradition.



A "UNIQUE" DOUBLE

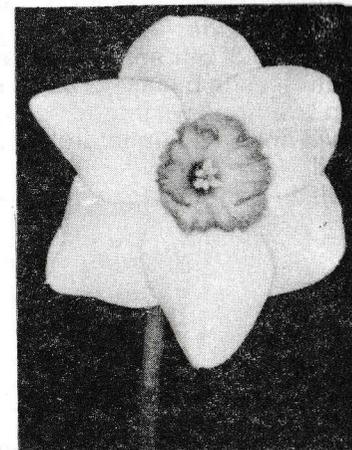
Tom Bloomer and Brian Duncan proudly display the Peter Barr and Engleheart Cups which they were awarded at the London R.H.S. Show 1985. It must be the only time that both Trophies have been resident in Northern Ireland at the same time.

Congratulations!

In Carncairn's unplaced entry I was struck by 'Irish Ranger', 'Gold Bullion' and 3/2/69 (2W-GWW). This seedling had a lovely rounded perianth and I believe is another from that prolific cross – 'Aircastle' x 'Green Island'.

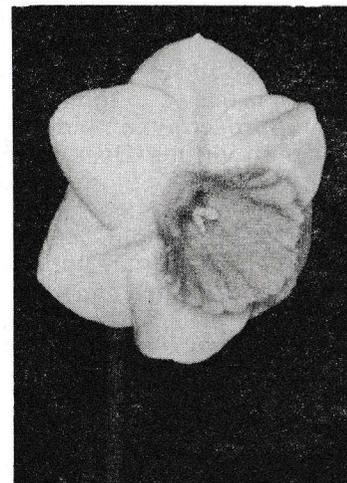
Rathowen were successful in their quest for their 12th consecutive Gold Medal for their Trade Stand. Their orange petalled flowers attracted such favourable comment, particularly 'Bossa Nova' and 'Limbo'. They also showed good vases of the extremely consistent 'Amber Castle' and 'Navarone'. Of their, by now, quite extensive range of pink cyclamineus varieties 'Tiger Moth', 'Bilbo' and 'Gimli' took the eye.

Carncairn were awarded a Silver Gilt Flora Medal for their exhibit which I considered to be one of their finest displays in recent years. Flowers which caught my eye were 'Irish Ranger', 'Birdsong', 'Bunclody', 'Golden Aura' and 8/22/64 (2W-YR) and, of course, 'Foundling' — that delectable Division 6 which is everyone's favourite.



'Ravenhill' (3W-GYO)

T. Bloomer



'Megalith' (2W-Y)

T. Bloomer

Rathowen picked up numerous prizes in the single bloom classes. Their D.729 shown also in the Engleheart won the 1Y-Y class. I believe that they only had two flowers of this variety with them so I will watch its progress with interest. 'Chief Inspector' which was named by and for your Scribe, won the 1W-Y class. 'Limbo' was successful in the 2O-R class and D.763 (3Y-R) also won its class as well as being adjudged Best Bloom Division 3 in the Show.

Tom Bloomer did not let his pupils have it all their own way and stepped in to win the 2Y-Y class with 'Golden Joy' and 'Megalith' (2W-Y).

Not unnaturally we were all extremely pleased with the many successes gained. The male members were perhaps not so happy with the extra luggage which had to be carried home following the numerous taxi journeys made by their wives to Oxford Street! Outside the floral successes, however, the main subject of conversation on the way home was the London price of coffee – £3.27 for 3 cups was a bit steep, ladies!

None of our amateurs was able to compete due to the very late season but as we understand that in 1986 the show will be in late April, we intend being back in force. So let's hope that it will not be an unnaturally early season next year and that we will be joined by several more of our recent converts to keep Ulster daffodils to the fore where they rightly belong.

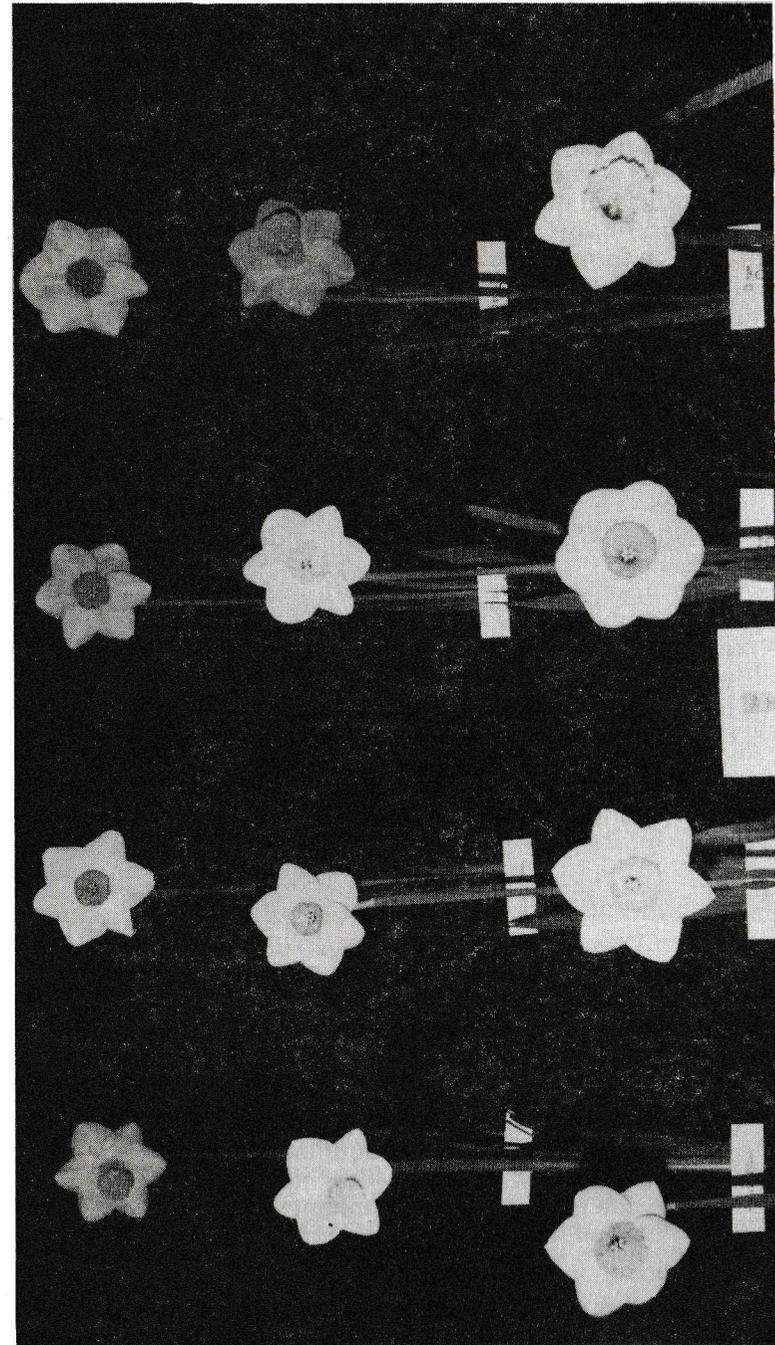
S. McCABE

CHAMPIONSHIP OF IRELAND

A cheerless month of March was brightened for me by an invitation to visit Northern Ireland to judge the Championship of Ireland Show at Gilnahirk. Had the invitation come any earlier I doubt that I would have been able to accept as I would have anticipated my own flowers to be requiring a good deal of attention by April 13th. As it was there was nothing to prevent my being away for a couple of days.

Weather conditions in the North of Ireland were no better than anywhere else and this was reflected in the amount and quality of the entries. However, all credit is due to those stalwarts who managed to get flowers on to the show bench on so early a date in such a difficult season. It is easy enough to fall into the trap of adopting a negative approach when judging and to concentrate on faults rather than virtues. Bearing in mind the problems on hand I tried to concentrate on the plus rather than the minus factors.

My main task was obviously the Championship of Ireland class and there were four quite worthy entries. Brian Duncan was the winner with something in hand with a balanced exhibit most carefully staged. My notes read "Even, neat, clean flowers somewhat lacking in size and substance". Most of them looked young which was not surprising. I was impressed by a flower of 'Silver Surf' even though the cup had not whitened. Carncairn were second with a good selection but again their flowers needed a few days more growth to improve colour and substance. Third prize was a difficult decision and my eventual choice was the exhibit of Gilbert Andrews. He had a reasonable range of cultivars but there was



Brian Duncan's winning Engleheart Cup Group at London – April 1985

Top Row (left to right):	D.719	'Dr. Hugh'	D.745	D.596
Centre Row (left to right):	'Regal Bliss'	D.525	'Rimmon'	D.729
Bottom Row (left to right):	'Limbo'	'High Society'	'Ulster Bank'	D.535

some lack of colour and one or two flowers could have been improved with a little more "dressing". Ballydorn were fourth with some large and mature flowers but there was a preponderance of self-coloured flowers and the presentation of the exhibit was, I thought, rather untidy.

All credit to those who mustered flowers in the following classes and in particular to Sandy McCabe whose blooms were of a very high quality and beautifully presented. He had the Best Bloom with 'Golden Joy' and the runner-up with 'Galahad'. The former was a "super" flower and had a poise, polish and elegance which made it impossible to overlook. He had a very fine 'Amber Castle' in the same class and a very neat 'Cyros' which beat his own 'Newcastle'. 'Cyros' seems to be gaining ground as a show cultivar and has its virtues but to me looks like a pale escape from Division II.

I also noted a good, if pale, 'Shining Light' and a large 'Bit O'Gold'. 'Silver Blaze' looked a good 2W-W and Sandy McCabe produced a couple of very fine 'Unique'. There was also a very fine 'Charity May' staged by Sam Bankhead and in the Intermediate Classes W. Davidson had an 'Empress of Ireland' that was far better than anything in the Open Classes.

It was bad luck that such an early date for this Championship Show should coincide with such a late season but it must have been encouraging to find such good local support for this well-run show.

I am most grateful to Sam Bankhead for meeting me on arrival and to Robin and Kate Reade for all their kind hospitality. The weather relented long enough for me to be able to inspect and be impressed by their large plantings but only a very small percentage were in bloom. Their fields would have been a magnificent sight in a further two weeks.

My thanks to the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group for a most interesting and enjoyable visit.

WILSON STEWART

Hope on, hope ever! by the sudden springing
Of green leaves which the winter hid so long
And by the burst of free triumphant singing
After cold silent months the woods

Hemans

GARDEN OF THE MONTH

April

This host of golden daffodils is part of the world's largest collection, created by Dave Willis. Celia Haddon went to Northern Ireland to meet him.



The Guy L. Wilson Daffodil Garden
at the New University of Ulster, Coleraine, N. Ireland

The thousands of daffodils that dance on a hillside just outside the little Northern Ireland town of Coleraine are a golden museum to daffodils.

There are at least 50,000 daffodils in the New University of Ulster's grounds—in numbers, colours and shapes that would have amazed the poet Wordsworth. For this is the largest collection in the world—about 1,800 different varieties.

The Guy L. Wilson Daffodil Garden was opened 11 years ago as a memorial to a Northern Ireland daffodil breeder who had died 12 years earlier. It had about 160 different daffodils planted between shrubs—and it might have stayed like that but for a complaint at the opening ceremony.

One of the guests wrote to the University's Vice Chancellor to complain that, though the garden was named after Guy Wilson, it contained precious few of the 600 daffodil varieties he had bred. It was a complaint which was eventually to make this charming little garden world famous.

The man who had to deal with the complaint was Dave Willis, then superintendent of the University grounds. He knew and cared little about daffs.

"To my surprise I found out that very few of the Guy Wilson varieties were available in the catalogues, even though he'd been breeding them up to 1961," explained Dr. Willis, a 50-year-old married man with four children. "I began to realise that if daffodils are not bred for commerce, the varieties disappear very quickly." This started him off on a detective trail in search of the missing varieties. His work eventually made him the only Doctor of Philosophy in daffodil history. He became passionate about daffs, so much so that he admits: "I love them".

His first breakthrough came when the Ministry of Agriculture experiment station in Cornwall started giving him the bulbs they had had on trial. Then Dave Willis put the word about that he wanted to rescue any of the old varieties that might still be blooming in gardens or breeders' grounds.

Daffodil enthusiasts round the world started to help. One lady in Scotland asked him to come over and look at some old daffodils she had in the garden. Other bulbs came from the widow of a daffodil breeder. Best of all was a collection of bulbs half the world away in New Zealand. Here were many of the daffodils which had entirely vanished from British gardens. With the help of a special grant, Dave Willis started the slow business of importing bulbs.

His years of dedicated research mean that the Guy L. Wilson Daffodil Garden now has some of the earliest daffodils in Britain. Among the double daffs is 'Van Sion', a spikey flower dating back to 1629. Nearby are two 19th-century survivors—doubles called 'Codling and Cream' and 'Bacon and Eggs'. Another famous daffodil is 'Rip Van Winkle', bred in 1885. The breeder thought it was so wonderful that he sent a box of flowers to the Princess of Wales.

Many of the old blooms have a story attached. "There's 'Falaise', a double bred in 1929. One of the famous daffodil breeders, J. Lionel Richardson, was walking down his garden path when he noticed a double daffodil with a seed pod—something very rare because most doubles can't breed. There were eight seeds inside, from which he got six seedlings. 'Falaise' was the only one which was fertile."

Ireland plays an important part in daffodil history. Monks from Spain and Portugal brought white daffodils to their

religious brothers in Ireland. Because of the soft weather, these survived while similar flowers in England tended to die out. From old white daffodils in monastery gardens come the startlingly white daffodils of today.

Dave Willis left the University last summer and is now a freelance horticultural consultant, but the daffodil garden will go on without its founder. For thanks to his detective work, the Guy L. Wilson Garden is recognised as the national collection for this flower.

More importantly, when the daffodils start blooming, they are a reminder that Ireland's history is not only one of strife and violence. Its special heritage includes the golden petals and white trumpets of thousands of daffodils.

Using Daffodils in the Garden

"If you plant bulbs six inches below the surface you could put bedding plants over them. Or you can grow daffodils *through* other plants like heathers, provided these are not too dense," says Dave Willis. With careful choice of varieties, daffodils will flower from February to late May. "I would choose 'February Gold', one of the earliest varieties. Follow that by 'Golden Aura' for mid-season flowers. Then for late flowering, 'Pheasant's Eye'. Flowering can also be controlled by the depth of the bulbs. The ones you plant last flower first, because they're nearer the top.

"Daffodils like heavy soils and will multiply rapidly in clay. They don't mind moderately acid soil, but don't like either waterlogged or sandy soil, unless lots of peat or manure is dug in. We feed ours in spring with a general purpose fertiliser."

"If you are growing daffodils in grass, allow a month after they've flowered before you mow down the foliage. The best time to dig them up and split them is July, when they are truly dormant."

Useful Information

Catalogues from Ballydorn Bulb Farm, Killinchy, Co. Down; Carncairn Daffodils, Carncairn Lodge, Broughshane, Ballymena, Co. Antrim; Rathowen Daffodils, "Knewehead", Dergmoney, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, all in Northern Ireland. *Societies*: the Daffodil Society, c/o D. Barnes, 32 Montgomery Avenue, Sheffield, S7 1NZ.

Places to Visit: The Guy L. Wilson Garden is open all year, though the daffodils are best in April to mid-May. Entrance free.

NORTHERN IRELAND SHOW REPORT

Following an extremely long cool spring, our show season opened on 13th April when Gilnahirk Horticultural Society hosted the Championship of Ireland and Associated Classes. The London Show had just ended two days earlier and the N.I. contingent had arrived home on 12th April. Consequently it was a mad rush to see what had opened in our absence.

The Championship of Ireland attracted four entries and I was particularly sorry that I had not entered due to the fact that I had felt any entry which I could put up would not have had the range of colour necessary for such a class, viz. 12 varieties – 1 bloom of each from at least three divisions. My regret was compounded when my 'Golden Joy' was awarded Best Bloom in the Show with my 'Galahad' best Division 1 and Reserve Best Bloom. Seven other first places meant that I had more than the nucleus of a good twelve even though it would only have contained one red cupped flower 'Silent Beauty'. However, nothing ventured, nothing gained, though I have learnt my lesson for another year!

'Capisco' – shown by Ballydorn was best Division 2 and 'Pink Paradise' was best Division 4 for Rathowen. The first winner of the William Toal Award – a Silver Spoon – was our Secretary, Sam Bankhead. This Trophy is awarded to the Best Division 5-9 at our Championship Show and Sam was successful with a well reflexed and smooth 'Charity May' which he had picked that morning while I was sounding the horn of my car to get him to hurry!

Back to the Championship which I felt did not have the overall quality of previous years. Nevertheless the entries were sufficiently close to give our visiting judge, Wilson Stewart, much food for thought. Victory for the umpteenth time went to Brian Duncan as did the Royal Mail Trophy (6 varieties – Ulster raised – 3 blooms of each) and the Roesse Bowl (5 American raised varieties). Best blooms on display were 'Dr. Hugh', 'Loth Lorian', 'Silver Surf', 'Old Satin' and 'Eland'.

D.714 (2W-GYY) which was best bloom in Ballymena in 1984, confirmed its promise by winning the Division 2 Seedling Class. The Northern Bank Trophy for best unregistered seedling went to Gilbert Andrews with a seedling from Carncairn – W.1/2/68.

The following week saw three shows in direct competition with Hillsborough, Bangor and Coleraine Societies all endeavouring to attract visitors. Sir Frank Harrison writes of Hillsborough that it was a good, well supported show. This Society initiated two special classes for Schools in which the awards went to Hillsborough Primary School for five single

blooms of seedlings provided by the Society and to Beechlawn School for the best single bloom. The Society is to be commended for the very worthwhile project of endeavouring to attract the younger generation into the delights of daffodil exhibition – maybe other societies will follow suit!

Another innovation here was a class for their members. The Society had specially selected eight varieties and had supplied them to the members at a nominal cost. The class called for three blooms of one of these varieties and was won by J. E. Cranston with 'Golden Amber'. Best bloom in the show was 'Galahad' shown by F. Mc. Anderson who also showed 'Silver Surf' (Best Division 2) and 'Kimmeridge' (Best Division 3), while 'Highfield Beauty' also won for him the title of Best Division 5-9. J. P. McCausland, of whom more was and will be heard, had best Division 4 with 'Tahiti'.

Over in Bangor the N.I. Amateur Championship attracted three entries. It was won by Jack Carlisle from W. Davison and Gilbert Andrews. Our correspondent tells me that in the winning twelve he was particularly impressed by 'Cool Crystal', 'Misty Glen', 'Golden Jewel' and a Carncairn seedling – 'Spanish Gold' x 'Banbridge'. W. Davison's best were 'Merlin', 'Cyros' and 'Strines' and the pick of Gilbert's third placed entry were 'Osmington', 'Van Dyke' and 'Cybele'.

Best Bloom in the Show went to 'Picasso' shown by Carncairn with 'Ben Hee' winning Reserve Best Bloom and Best in Senior Amateur for Gilbert Andrews.

John O'Reilly had a field day in the Intermediate and Novice Sections. He won highest points in both as well as two collection classes. His 'Newcastle' was best bloom in the Novice section and W. Davison won the Intermediate Best Bloom Award with 'Merlin'. We look forward to competing against John in the Senior Section in 1986.

Up north in Coleraine it was obvious that yellow fever has been gaining ground. None of the recognised stalwarts competed but competition among their own members was extremely keen with Dave Willis, D. Turbitt and M. Donnell sharing the prizes. D. Turbitt won the main class for six varieties but you must really remember to use leaves when staging, David. Best bloom went to 'Eskylane' shown by M. Donnell.

The next venue was at Ballymena on 25th April though it was not the success we had hoped for – at least in the Senior Amateur. For one reason or another most of our leading amateurs were not able to compete though competition in the Intermediate and Novice sections was fierce.

The Open Section was a straight contest in many classes between Rathowen and Carncairn. The 12 Variety Class was won by Rathowen and when one considers that their entry

contained 'Silent Valley' (Best Division 1), 'Torrison' (Best Bloom in Show and Best Division 2) and 'Sea Dream' (Best Division 3), it would have been hard to beat. In Carncairn's entry I was impressed by 'April Love' – a very colourful 'Irish Light' and an extremely good 'Saturn'.

In the foreign raised class Rathowen were again successful. 'Sea Dream' was again to the fore in this entry. Other notable blooms in this class were Carncairn's 'Quail' and my own 'Bit O' Gold'.

In the Open Seedling Classes Carncairn showed W.4/7 to win Division 3 class. This flower coloured 2W-YYO has round overlapping petals and could be a winner. It is one for my notebook. Rathowen won the Division 4 seedling class with D.812 (4Y-YR) which was colourful. Best unregistered seedling, however, went to Sam Bankhead with a seedling from 'Golden Aura' O.P. This flower (naturally 2Y-Y) though on the smallish side, was so smooth it could have been ironed and also had good form. This was its first year to flower and it had another success a few days later at Omagh.

As stated earlier, the Senior Amateur was not well contested and I had no trouble retaining the G. L. Wilson Trophy for 12 varieties – I was the only entrant! My best flowers were 'Bit O' Gold' (Best Bloom Amateur Section), 'Silent Beauty' and 'Loch Hope'. I was also pleased to win the 1W-Y class with 'Chief Inspector' and the best 'Northern Light' I have ever grown won the 2W-R class.

Maurice Kerr won the 9 bloom Intermediate Class showing good flowers of 'Red Cottage' and 'Dunskey'. John O'Reilly, however, had another field day sweeping through the single bloom and collection classes winning twelve classes in all. His 'Galahad' was adjudged best bloom in the Intermediate Section and he also showed excellent 'Broomhill' and a well contrasted 'Daydream'.

The afore-mentioned J. P. McCausland easily won the 6 Bloom Novice Section with an excellent set of flowers of which 'Tudor Minstrel', 'Galahad' and 'Irish Light' were the pick. Best Bloom in the Novice Section went to my daughter, Elizabeth's 'Amber Castle'.

If Ballymena attracted few entries the same could not be said for Omagh. This was the show of the season with competitors vying for space on the benches. One fact which augurs well for the future was that in the Intermediate Section I counted six different prizewinners in the first eight classes. Michael Ward from Dublin made his first appearance at this season's shows and he had his customary and well deserved successes. He, George Marsden and John Ennis shared the placings in all the Senior Amateur Classes.

George Marsden picked up the Best Bloom Accolade and also Best Trumpet with 'Comal' and his 'Amber Castle' was

Reserve Best Bloom and Best Division 2. Michael Ward had Best Division 3 and 4 with 'Doctor Hugh' and 'Gay Kybo' respectively and Best Division 5-9 went to 'Joybell' shown by John Ennis. As previously stated Sam Bankhead won Best Unregistered Seedling with 'Golden Aura' O.P.

John O'Reilly and M. Kerr fought out a keen tussle in the Intermediate Section and finished level on points. The former was declared the winner through having more first places. Best Bloom in this section, however, went to Mrs. I. Turner with 'Broomhill'. J. P. McCausland continued his run of success in the Novice Section which he won easily and had the Best Bloom with a seedling from B. S. Duncan.

The official show season ended on 4th May when Enniskillen held their annual spring show. Michael Ward made his second trip north in eight days and had a virtual clean sweep. His 'Gay Kybo' was again in excellent form and won Best Bloom in the Show. Flowers of note in Michael's collection classes were 'Doctor Hugh', 'Fragrant Rose' and three of his own seedlings – 67/9/2 (2W-W), 66/9/4.2 (2W-P) and 72/14/1 – also 2W-P. Sam Bankhead's seedling again won the seedling class and our correspondent also noted 'Misty Glen' shown by John Ennis and 'Rivendell' shown by G. Marsden.

My thanks are due to Sir Frank Harrison, G. Andrews, J. O'Reilly and G. Marsden for their help in compiling these notes.

SANDY McCABE

REPORT OF THE DAFFODIL GROUP SPRING SHOW Banff, Scotland — 27th April, '85

This was the Group's fourth show but the first which had prize monies and National Status. The Championship of Scotland Class of 12 x 1 blooms over three divisions had a creditable six entries. The winner which was awarded the Grampian Television Trophy, a Rathowen Daffodils voucher and £40 was Jim Davidson, Banff. His group of 'April Love', 'Borrobol', 'Daviot', 'Dove Wings', 'Empress of Ireland', 'Fireman', 'Gay Challenger', 'Irish Light', 'Kilmorack', 'Rainbow', 'Shining Light' and 'Soledad' was just ahead of Robin Currie and Mike Roy. Perhaps the Brodie cultivars influenced the judge although the 'Shining Light', 'Borrobol' and 'Fireman' blooms were outstanding and were commented upon by all.

Best bloom in show went to a superb 'Ballylough' by Robin Currie. He won the Grampian Growers Trophy and the Floral Art Society Rosebowl for best bloom Division 1. Added to those trophies was £30 in prize money and vouchers.

Other best bloom awards were:
Division 2 – 'My Love' by Jim Davidson;
Division 3 and Division 6 – 'Irish Ranger' and 'Lavender Lass' by Robin Currie;
Division 4 – 'Tahiti';
Divisions 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 – 'Cantabile' by Mike Roy;
Division 7 – 'Sweetness' by Mrs. E. Gordon,
American origin – 'Aircastle' by Beth Powell.
All best blooms were awarded Diploma of Merit and £20 – £10 in prize money.

The Troup Trophy and The Daffodil Society Bronze Medal (for most points) were won by Jim Davidson.

Other principal class winners were:
Championship Class – 2nd – R. Currie – 'Avenger', 'Ballylough', 'Cantatrice', 'Danes Balk', 'Daydream', 'Drumawillan', 'Empress of Ireland', 'Irish Ranger', 'Kingscourt', 'Shining Light', 'Soledad' and 'Tudor Minstrel'.
3rd – M. Roy – 'Cantabile', 'Bonus', 'Daydream', 'Dunskey', 'Downpatrick', 'Inneswood', 'Rockall', 'Soledad', 'Star Wars', 'Strathkanaird', 'Tahiti' and 'Woodland Prince'.

3 Bloom Classes – Division 1 – 'Inneswood' by G. McCaig.
Division 2 – no red predominant – 'Lemon Sherbet' by Jim Davidson.

Division 2 – red predominant – 'Star Wars' by M. Roy.

Division 3 – 'Aircastle' by Jim Davidson.

Division 4 – 'Tahiti' by M. Roy.

Division 6 – 'Lavender Lass' by R. Currie.

Division 7 – 'Sweetness' by Mrs. E. Gordon.

Any other Division – 'Cantabile' by M. Roy.

Any Division American origin – 'Aircastle' by Jim Davidson.

Single Bloom Classes

Division 1 Y-Y – 'Rowallane' by Jim Davidson.

Division 1 W-W – 'White Star' by Jim Davidson.

Division 1 Bi-colour – 'Drumawillan' by Mrs. E. Gordon.

Division 2 Yellow perianth – 'Shining Light' by R. Currie.

Division 2 W-R – 'Daviot' by Jim Davidson.

Division 2 W-Y – 'My Love' by Jim Davidson.

Division 2 W-W – 'Churchfield' by Jim Davidson.

Division 3 Y – 'Lemonade' by J. Matthew.

Division 3 W – 'Borrobol' by Jim Davidson.

Division 4 Y – 'Tahiti' by M. Roy.

Division 4 W – 'Acropolis' by M. Roy.

Division 5, 7, 8 – 'Martha Washington' by Jim Davidson.

Division 6 – 'Lavender Lass' by R. Currie.

Division 9, 10, 11, 12 – 'Cantabile' by M. Roy.

Division 1 or 2 – Reversed Bi-colour – 'Drumawillan' by Jim Davidson.

Pink Corona – 'Dulcie Joan' by Jim Davidson.

Judge Mr. Leslie Forbes, Fochabers, late of Brodie, commented upon the high standard of exhibits and the resultant difficulty in placing the awards.

Unfortunately there were no entries from "foreign" parts which was perhaps due to show date clashing with the North of England shows. The sizeable prize monies on offer may yet provide enough incentive to enthusiasts "down south". Suitably spaced show dates will also give local exhibitors the opportunity of trying to compete in the English events.

The Banffshire Horticultural Association, the Groups Parent Body is due to celebrate 150 years in 1986 and plans are now being made to recognise this at our Daffodil Show with perhaps special Sesqui-Centenary Awards, etc. – We hope that this added incentive will generate more Daffodil Exhibition and "Yellow Fever" in Scotland.

THE 1985 AMERICAN DAFFODIL SOCIETY CONVENTION

The 1985 convention of the American Daffodil Society was held in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, on April 25-27, where some 200 of those afflicted with yellow fever gathered to discuss their symptoms, renew acquaintances, and sink ever deeper into the clutches of Lady Narcissus.

A week or more of temperatures in the 80s in the surrounding area took its toll on the daffodils, and the hoped for half-dozen Quinn entries failed to materialize. While the quantities may have been lacking, quality was not; and Helen Haskell of Darien, Connecticut (where the heat was **not** a problem) deservedly won the coveted Gold Quinn Medal, with Kathy Andersen and Richard Ezell finishing in that order. The winning collection included noteworthy blooms of 'Glenfarclas', 'Homestead', 'Hambledon', 'Bittern', 'Gin and Lime', 'Lavalier' and 'Golden Joy'. Mrs. Haskell's winning 24 bloom collection also contained the Best Bloom, a large, faultless bloom of John Lea's 'Creag Dubh'. The orange perianth held its colour well, with a minimum of streaking.

The Gold Watrous Medal for a collection of twelve miniatures from at least three divisions went to Dave Karnstedt, who brought his little beauties from Minnesota, and included several triandrus species along with 'Demure', 'Segovia' and 'Chit Chat'.

Dr. William Bender of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, was winner of the Grant & Amy Mitsch Trophy for a vase of three seedlings exhibited by the originator for three faultless blooms of his 1W-Y, 'Pops' 75/77. (See photo in ADS *Daffodil*

Journal, September, 1984); while Roberta Watrous won the John & Betty Larus Award for three stems of her miniature seedling, 611-2 ('Ruby' x *juncifolius*). Roberta's excellent seedlings were much in evidence throughout the miniature section.

The other nine trophies offered only at national shows were won by four people, with Kathy Andersen – who also served as show chairman – winning four; Marie Bozievich, three; and Richard Ezell and Delia Bankhead, one each. Kathy won the Tuggle Trophy (12 x 3 from three divisions) with 'Poolewe', 'Broomhill', 'Avenger', 'Top Notch', 'Goldeneye', 'Green-jacket', 'Old Satin', 'Misty Glen', 'Falstaff', 'Achnasheen', 'Guiding Light' and 'Amber Castle'; while she won the Mains Trophy (9 x 3 from Division 3) with 'Verona', 'Achnasheen', 'Moon Rhythm', 'Witch Doctor', 'Parthia', 'Goldeneye', 'Aircastle', 'Delos' and 'Purbeck'. She captured the Australian Award with 'Kai', 'Cyros', 'Ricom', 'Mrs. David Calvert' and 'Dynamic'; and the English Award with 'Birdalone', 'Torridon', 'Arndilly', 'Armley Wood' and 'Misty Glen'.

Marie won the New Zealand Award with 'Backchat', 'Taplet', 'Sea Dream', 'Refresh' and 'Guiding Light'. 'Backchat' from this collection was also adjudged best Division 6 to win the Fowlds Award, and best from Division 5, 6 or 7 to win the Olive Lee Bowl.

Richard Ezell's winning Carncairn collection consisted of 'Ardress', 'Ireland's Eye', 'Silvermere', 'Spanish Gold' and 'Rhinstone'; while Delia Bankhead's winning Northern Ireland collection included 'Pismo Beach', 'Bossa Nova', 'Light-house', Duncan D.612 and 'Elizabeth Ann'.

The Rose Ribbon for the Best Seedling in the show went to John Reed for his 79-20-1 ('Precedent' x 'Eclat'), while both the Miniature Gold and the Miniature Rose Ribbon went to Roberta Watrous for 691-4 ('Ruby' x *scaberulus*).

The best vase of three stems proved to be 'Rockall' exhibited by Betty Krahmer, while the Miniature White Ribbon was won by 'Sun Disc' exhibited by Nancy Kruszyna.

The Purple Ribbon for the best collection of five in the show was won by a collection of triandrus hybrids – 'Fairy Cup', 'Ice Wings', 'Lapwing', 'Tuesday's Child' and 'Akepa' – and was exhibited by Dave Karnstedt, while the Red-White-Blue Ribbon went to Betty Krahmer for a collection which included 'Old Satin', 'Copperfield', 'Wakefield', 'Lyles' and 'Cool Crystal'. The Lavender Ribbon for the best collection of five miniatures went to Nancy Gill for 'Chit Chat', 'Segovia', 'Hawera', 'Sun Disc' and 'Kidling'.

The displays put up by the commercial growers proved quite interesting, and one could always find someone with whom to discuss the merits of the various flowers. We were delighted to

welcome our old friends Frank and Patricia Harrison, Clarke and Roseanna Campbell and Kate Reade from Northern Ireland, and Barbara Abel Smith from England who brought blooms from across the Atlantic. Elise Mitsch Havens, Brent Heath, Estella Evans and Dave Karnstedt brought blooms from this country, so that we had exciting blooms from around the world to admire.

Thursday evening's formalities began with a rendition on the cornet of our national anthem, The Star Spangled Banner, by Marvin Andersen. Helen Link presided over the business meeting of the Society, and Mrs. Hubert Bourne presented the show awards. Mrs. Link then presented the ADS Silver Medal for service to the ADS to William Ticknor for his long and varied service to the Society.

Friday began with a breakfast session for miniature enthusiasts. Chairman Joy Mackinney fielded the questions and kept the lively discussion going. Friday was also a time for workshops where Ted Snazelle gave us Part 2 of his talk, Pests and Diseases, and Mrs. Bourne discussed writing and interpreting a show schedule. Dr. Martin Mathes then gave us an overview of his project on tissue culture of daffodils. The piece de resistance of the day, however, proved to be a skit put on by Joy and Bill Mackinney and Kathy Andersen. They gave us a delightful presentation of what judges ought **not** to be! Hopefully we didn't recognize ourselves among the characters they portrayed!

Friday evening, in honour of our overseas visitors, Dr. Andersen opened with "God Save the Queen". Sir Frank Harrison delighted us with what he called "his ramblings" about the colonies, daffodils and daffodil people.

On Saturday four bus loads of conventioners (with the last bus reserved for those who had attended the hybridizer's breakfast) left the hotel for a tour of Winterthur and Longwood Gardens, two magnificent estates filled with marvellous horticultural goodies. Unfortunately, the daffodils were over, but there was certainly much else to see.

Saturday evening we were treated to an auction of daffodilia, with the inimitable Bill Pannill as auctioneer. Mr. Pannill managed to persuade us to part with our money in a most enjoyable manner, all to the benefit of the ADS coffers.

Of course, in between all the planned activities there was time to enjoy the show and visit with old friends and new. The exhibits brought by the commercial growers also proved to be of interest to all. These annual conventions become as addictive as Lady Narcissus herself. Having once attended, you're drawn back each year for this gathering. Won't some of you come and join us?

MARY LOU GRIPSHOVER

DIVISION 5 WHERE ARE YOU?

In the accounts of shows in England, Ireland or down under, one seldom reads the names of the triandrus hybrids which are winning ribbons in the American shows. Indeed in some shows abroad, Division 5 does not have a class to itself, being relegated to "N.O.E." (not otherwise enumerated) along with other seldom-seen strangers. Where separate classes are offered, the predictable winners, year after year, are 'Arish Mell' and 'Tuesday's Child'. Of course, these two are beautiful and show-worthy cultivars and I would not be without them, but there are lots of other belles in Division 5.

Among the first triandrus hybrids I grew, many years ago, were 'Yellow Warbler', 'Honeybells', 'Harmony Bells', 'Silver Bells' and 'Ruth Haller'. These are all attractive and floriferous, but are difficult to find in catalogues. I am still growing 'Harmony Bells' and 'Ruth Haller' and use them in shows from time to time. But your editor has asked me to name "the newest and best" so I'll start out with my favourites 'Akepa', 'Mission Bells' and 'Jingle Bells'.

'Akepa' (Mitsch 1980) is a dream come true, a delectable confection in pink and white. The smallish blooms, usually two to a stem, are each of perfect form with starched white perianth and pink goblet-shaped cup. The only drawback is a slow rate of increase.

'Mission Bells' (Mitsch '84) is more vigorous with three florets to a stem and many, many bloomstalks. It is ivory white with a fairly broad reflexed perianth and green-eyed, bowl-shaped crown. When I first saw 'Mission Bells' blooming in the fields in Oregon, it seemed that each bulb had produced a whole bouquet.

'Jingle Bells' (Pannill '83) is a lovely clean white with all the typical grace of the triandrus family, yet exhibits a certain perkiness which gives it individuality. The flowers are larger than those of the above-mentioned cultivars and usually come two on a stem. Like most of Bill Pannill's introductions, it is a very good show flower.

Among other show flowers are 'Lapwing', 'Longspur', 'Saberwing' and 'Waxwing'.

'Saberwing' (Mitsch '76), my choice among these, is a very white flower, one or two on a stem. The perianth is flat and round and the nicely formed cup has a green eye.

'Longspur' (Mitsch '79) is a sister seedling of 'Saberwing' and is similar to that cultivar except that the perianth is slightly reflexed and the cup is goblet-shaped while that of 'Saberwing' is bowl-shaped.

'Lapwing' (Mitsch '76) has a flat, round perianth and lemon-yellow cup of excellent substance. It usually has one good-sized bloom on a stem.

'Waxwing' (Fowlds '67) is notable for very heavy substance. It is creamy white and is larger than most triandrus hybrids. For me it is always borne singly.

I might also mention here 'Sandpiper' (Mitsch '77) which I have not grown, but it is described as being a distinctive bicolor with small, very round flowers.

Two all-yellow triandrus hybrids which are not often seen in shows because of their small size are probably too large to be classed as miniatures. They are charming flowers, however and should not be overlooked.

'Chipper' (Fowlds '71) is a pale greenish-lemon in colour and has a strongly reflexed perianth. There are usually three blooms on a stem.

'Honey Guide' (Mitsch '82) is a lovely flower of lemon-yellow with two to five blooms on a stem. It is very floriferous and increases well.

A group of sister seedlings from the cross 'Quick Step' x N. triandrus albus are notable for the abundance of their bloom. 'Petrel', 'Ivory Gull', 'Silverton' and 'Ringing Bells', all from Mitsch, are similar to each other in many ways. All are ivory white in colour with three to seven blooms on a stem, and all have an abundance of bloomstalks. 'Silverton' differs in that the ovaries are an eye-catching yellow and 'Ringing Bells' is distinguished by a light fragrance. Any of the four make smashing garden plants as well as being fine for show. All are good propagators.

The many exquisite miniature daffodils in Division 5 have not been mentioned. Although they are a popular and delightful feature of American shows, one does not see them in Ireland. Why don't you all try some – they do not require much room? For starters, 'Hawera' and 'April Tears' are easy to grow and the bulbs are widely available for purchase.

What does the future hold for us? 'Lavalier' (Mitsch '80) is a true reverse bicolor. Although the strongly reflexed petals are narrow and the bloom droops its head, the colour is arresting. There are other reverse bicolor triandrus seedlings and one of them, with better form and two on a stem may be introduced before too long. There are also other pink cups in the seedling beds but Elise Havens says that none are better than 'Akepa'. A choice white seedling (HH85/2) with exceptionally good form has been named 'Sunday Chimes' and will be offered next year. Elise says they have made crosses seeking a 5Y-P and one wonders if a 5Y-R can be too far behind.

Although I have my "ups and downs" in growing triandrus hybrids (is it the climate, the soil, cultural methods) still I persevere because of my enchantment with the fairy-tale quality, the grace and beauty of these flowers. I eagerly snatch up each new offering and was delighted, two years ago, to find a source for 'Ice Wings', introduced by Coleman in 1958. I just hope that I can last long enough to be in line when Harold Kooplowitz makes his pink-cupped, three-on-a-stem super triandrus available from **any** source!

MARIE BOZIEVICH

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THORNY PROBLEMS OF AN AMATEUR

RUTH WISHART

They are at it even as we speak. Adverts every thirty minutes on the telly showing hairy handed sons of the soil beaming over their veg patch, or extolling the virtues of motor mowers for which folks the size of me would need a heavy goods vehicle licence just to lift the instruction manual.

Spring, it seems, has sprung. And the grass has certainly riz, judging by that knee length turf idling around where our front lawn used to be. Well lawn is maybe strongish stuff for a 12 foot square patch of greenery which would be bald by tomorrow if we applied the moss remover . . . but it grows, and it has to be cut.

On the credit side grass is predictable which is more than you can say about most matters horticultural.

On our modest contribution to his green and pleasant land we plumped for roses on the grounds that most of the time they just got on with it provided you chucked them a morsel or two and gave them a short back and sides in April.

That was the theory. Only my roses turned out to be literary with it.

My roses are the only guys in town who have worked their way through the disease section of the standard work on growing them. The tender shooted amateur gardener may find it difficult to believe, but my lot can simultaneously spout the symptoms of greenfly, leaf curl and rust.

And take five minutes out to check back on the cure and they'll break out in black spot when your back is turned.

Now this may seem small beer against an outbreak of lassa fever. But in our village, where the annual flower show is an X-rated affair, having no roses to enter for the solitary piece of silverware can lead to complete social disgrace.



Share

Not that the village, and its near neighbour who shares the proceedings, don't keep a sense of proportion they know that some things in life are rather more important than who lifts the rose cup. Like the end of the world, that sort of thing, judges for the show are imported from over the hills and far away not so much to ensure impartiality and preserve anonymity, but to exclude the very real possibility that a local could be run out of his own town by a lynch mob from the women's guild. The eve of our show is a colourful old sight with the gardens twinkling merrily in the pitch black as exhibitors with secateurs and flashlights make nail biting selections.

A surprising number of them will still have the energy for a midnight stroll which may, quite by chance, take them round by the gardens of their main rivals. Few are the sights which warm the late night heart quite so comprehensively as the sight of a rival bud with terminal mildew.

Of course at the more upmarket shows your losing entry is not just ruled out of the running, but publicly humiliated. At the more upmarket shows visiting judges are encouraged to leave little notelets beside your display of floral artistry for your edification and mortification. "Display base far too wide for entry.

Complete lack of colour co-ordination." That sort of billet doux. It's at these grander affairs too that the semi-pro judges strut their stuff. Such is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the top notchers that some of them are persuaded to play a summer season.

Travelling in the grand manner of the hardy annual pop star they sweep into halls and churches and parklands with an adoring entourage of first time growers anxious to touch the hem of their tweeds.

At this level you may be privileged to meet the real specialists . . . the date and walnut loaf lady, the gentleman who knows all about pansies and whose wife doesn't mind. You also get a nap hand of vegetable people and if they have a moment off this spring they might like to pop round our way. Our veg just lay back and grew when we chucked them in the earth and applied a sack of local dung. Flushed with triumph we bought them their very own greenhouse since when there has been a succession of natural disasters.

The problem was diving into all this glass fronted technology without reading it up. If anybody had told me the sex life of the average cucumber was as complicated as this I'd have stuck with lettuce and the great outdoors.

Prime

But nobody told me about the partial vasectomy you have to perform on cucumbers in their very prime when female gardeners of a squeamish disposition are required to deflower the male bits. Now there's a pretty little thought to get them going at the consciousness raising classes.

Neither did anybody mention that cucumbers not so mutilated get all bitter and twisted with it, or that they barely on cross pollinating terms with tomatoes unless they're at least ten feet apart, or that they need wired up and bedded down and a full time blooming nanny to boot.

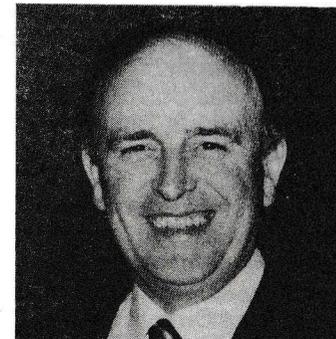
Nor did anybody say anything about trusses. Ho Yes, trusses. What tomato plants use from which to suspend their endlessly green mis-shapen little bodies which respond to neither fertiliser nor verbal abuse.

When we first found ourselves with a real live patch instead of a window box we thrilled to the idea of sitting on the manicured grass, perhaps beneath an understated sun broly, sipping something cool, and smugly eyeing the floral finery in adjoining military style beds. Instead, from March till October, the only chance you get to stop being run off your feet is when you kneel in prayer at the planting season.

All things bright and beautiful, God made them every one, but he left the weeding to lesser beings.

BRIAN DUNCAN

IRELAND'S DAFFODIL MAN



Fortunate is Ireland! W. Baylor Hartland, Guy Wilson, Lionel Richardson and now, Brian Duncan. Great personalities as well as palladins of daffodil culture, these four men have added a new dimension to the Emerald Isle.

How nice to achieve greatness by adding beauty to the World! Many of us in America think of Ireland, first, as a land of daffodils and secondly, as one of our ancestral lands. Those of us who participated in the great World Daffodil Convention of 1979 know Northern Ireland as an outstandingly courteous and hospitable land filled with beautiful scenery and beautiful women – and a strong and determined band of daffodil lovers. The leader of this band is Brian Duncan.

Why in the world is an American writing to tell members of the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group about their own Brian Duncan and his flowers? I was awarded this pleasure so that you might see him as he is seen 3,000 miles away. The Bible tells us that a prophet is not without honour except in his own country. I suspect that Brian is honoured in his own country. If he is not, then send him, his family and his daffodils to America.

In April 1976 it was the uncommon good fortune of Laura Lee and me to have Jack Goldsmith and Brian Duncan as guests in our home. Jack's fame was well known to us – Brian was nearly a stranger. A few hours of daffodil talk and Brian had us, and we became members of his daffodil band. His warm rich personality and modest nature overwhelmed us. That first evening was an event! To become better acquainted we three sipped on a half gallon of Bourbon. With Brian's encouragement Jack poured out his knowledge of hybridizing and Richardson daffodils – as I poured out the Bourbon. I learned an enormous amount about daffodils that night. Unfortunately, I recalled very little next morning!

That year and that A.D.S. Convention was Brian's first appearance in the daffodil milieu of the new world. He gained instant recognition and enormous good will. Since 1976 Laura

Lee and I have got to know Brian and Betty Duncan and their two children quite well and we are well acquainted with Rathowen daffodils.

Brian was born in February 1934, the youngest of five boys and three girls, at Lennymore, Crumlin, Co. Antrim. His family were dairy farmers and that influence has stayed with him. He was educated at Gortnallon Primary School, Friends School, Lisburn and Ballymena Academy. His further education was at Nottingham University. His family background gave him a good head start on his first job as a Dairy Adviser for the Ministry of Agriculture to Northern Ireland. He is presently Marketing Director, Sales Director and one of the leading lights of the Leckpatrick Co-operative Agricultural and Dairy Society Ltd. Laura Lee and I never buy a carton of "shelf milk" without thinking of Brian. I tend to credit him with inventing it.

He began his business career in North Antrim and shortly afterwards was transferred to Omagh. On his first night there he found an Irish Beauty named Elizabeth Ann. Combining his keen eye for selection with his persuasive nature, Brian made Betty his wife. Betty, too, had a farming background. She has served her community well as a teacher. Although more quiet than Brian, she is his match in personality – high praise indeed.

It is uncertain as to what turned Brian to daffodils but he is a natural horticulturist, a perfectionist and a lover of beauty – so daffodils were inevitable. In August 1960 he used daffodils as "fillers" in his shrub border. By 1962 he was ordering fine things from Guy Wilson. On May 6th, 1963 at the Omagh H.S. Daffodil Show, he first staged show entries and a daffodil star had appeared. At that time Tom Bloomer became his mentor and good friend.

Any story of Brian Duncan must also tell of Tom Bloomer, Clarke Campbell and other Ulster friends. Tom was a disciple of Guy Wilson and a friend and neighbour of W. J. Dunlop and he absorbed knowledge of daffodils from both. Entirely likeable, Mr. Bloomer was a thoughtful selector of daffodil parents and children. In 1971 he founded Rathowen Daffodils. His quiet nature and late start have obscured his fame as one of daffodil's great hybridizers. Even to-day, many of his seedlings are recognized as exceptionally fine daffodils.

Roman Emperors passed their greatness on to adopted sons – from Julius Caesar to Caesar Augustus to Tiberius. In some such way Brian, through Tom Bloomer, is heir to Guy Wilson's eminence.

Brian's first success at Omagh in 1963 led him to the R.H.S. show in 1964 where renowned exhibitors passed their staging skills through receptive eyes to an absorbing mind. Pollen from Lionel Richardson at that show began Brian's serious hybridizing.

In 1973 Tom Bloomer felt it necessary to give up his business and his first thought was that only his protege could provide the care that the Rathowen daffodils deserved. Deeply challenged but short of time and without land, Brian formed a partnership with Clarke Campbell, a fellow amateur exhibitor and they undertook the building of an internationally renowned daffodil business. Clarke is, from my experience, a quiet completely reliable person whose obvious good nature obscures great talent as a grower and lover of daffodils.

If Brian Duncan is famous for nothing else, Rathowen's incredible trade displays at the London Shows entitle him to a place in the Daffodil Hall of Fame. For his first effort in 1974 Rathowen was awarded a gold medal and, incredibly, has won the gold medal for ten straight years. Brian ranks as the P.T. Barnum of daffodils. I will never forget my own reaction to seeing their stand in 1979 at the time of the first great World Convention. I was in a state of shock soon after entering the hall. The show was still in preparation and in the busy sea of working persons, many of whose names I knew and whose faces I did not, and the many stands filling with flowers, there was against the wall some stands with an incredibly large number of blooms. I was told that it was the Rathowen Trade Stand but that Brian, Clarke, Sandy McCabe and others were away for the moment and, with elbows lifted, were deliberating on matters of high policy. The staging was being done by their wives. There was great beauty at that stand – and the flowers were lovely, too.

While there was ever so much more to see at the show – all that a daffodil lover could desire – a prolonged study of the Rathowen Stand in itself would have made the visit worthwhile. The Rathowen Trade Stand was great in size yet delicately beautiful in all its parts. It was 30 feet long and four tiers high with a few vases above the fourth tier. There seemed to be countless vases filled with large daffodils of great substance and brilliant colour. A central display of various white trumpets, such as 'White Star' and 'White Empress', surrounded a vase of the pink double 'Paradise'. Beyond the white trumpets were yellow perianths with yellow, red or pink cups. Beyond these were vivid pinks and all yellows. Scattered carefully were various brilliant and spectacular daffodils. Slipped in behind the vases were sprays of grey green foliage of spruce and fir. With an enormous expenditure of energy Brian and his band had contrived a stand that wondrously pleased the eye and seemed naturally to merit the highest award.

Nearly as awesome as his trade stands is Brian's pursuit of the Engleheart Cup. John Lea, with his magnificent yellow reds and marvellous pinks, succeeded Lionel and Mrs. Richardson in the possession of that most prestigious award.

How unbeatable have been John Lea's flowers! His seedlings would have daunted almost anyone but like a hunting dog with his nose to the scent Brian began his pursuit of the cup. As Guy Wilson knew, it is not easy weatherwise for a Northern Irishman to compete for the cup. The Engleheart Cup Class requiring 12 different daffodils exhibited by their raiser, is an enormously difficult class for a hybridizer to seriously enter. Great skill at growing and exhibiting is vital but that is not nearly enough. The exhibitor must have a large stable of his own things to choose from – many blooms of many things and Brian has been hybridizing for a comparatively short time. Yet, he has been in contention for the cup since 1977 getting nearer and nearer to first place. Now that John Lea exhibits at a celestial level it will be interesting to see what will happen at the London Show. Undoubtedly English hybridizers will make renewed efforts but inevitably, in the near future, Brian will return the Engleheart Cup to Ireland.

In the United States, Brian Duncan's flowers are not the daffodils of yesterday or even to-day, but they are the novelties of to-day and the sure winners of to-morrow. As with his Engleheart Cup entries, Brian's own raised cultivars have not yet burgeoned into the quantities one needs for selection for shows and they are just becoming well known. I think this is also true of British shows. I note that his numbered seedlings are frequent winners.

With all of this immense activity what actually has Brian done for daffodils? He has written articles and given talks that show a depth of feeling and knowledge of daffodils and their potential that is hardly matched to-day. With his quiet but talented partner he has made available to us all the fine things of Tom Bloomer – for example, 'White Star' and 'Golden Joy'. He had the willingness and energy to secure and sell to us many great things from the Richardsons and from J. M. de Navarro. Beyond this, though, he has entered the ranks of the great hybridizers and we can grow and exhibit and win with Duncan daffodils. I am fortunate in growing fourteen Duncan cultivars and unfortunate in not having more. While Laura Lee's and my taste in daffodils runs the entire gamut we have a special penchant for cyclamineus hybrids and we grow and enjoy small pink 'Nymphette' and 'Snoopy'. Both do well and are welcome in the house, as bouquets to friends or at the show. 'Delta Wings', 6W-P is something else. It is an aristocrat of flowers and is by no means to be put down as "one of the other divisions". For us it has been smooth, large and colourful and distinct and attractive in form. A mid-season flower it has won for us a single entry and in a vase of three stems. It has won best in show more than once. A tight triple nose bulb in 1980, it was one large triple nose, one large double nose and

one large round in 1982. In the spring of 1984 we were able to pick and choose half a dozen blooms of it.

Two Duncan all yellows have not only increased nicely but they consistently produce good flowers. 'Scoreline', 1Y-Y, is valuable as a late mid-season, smooth, reliable trumpet. 'Joyland', 2Y-GYY is a precise flower but distinctive in colour and form. Both of these are potential single entry winners and are excellent for collections. To date, yellow perianths have been Brian's weakness in major competition. Having said this, and knowing Brian, I expect his seedling beds to explode with blooms that will pale Lionel Richardson's brightest.

Four Duncan pinks make our spring more welcome. The best "doer" is 'Fellowship', 2W-YYP, a rainbow style daffodil with a bright pink rim. Two bulbs in 1978, it is a sizeable clump now. Most impressive and quite different is another rim, 'Pismo Beach', 2W-GWP. Its bowl-shaped cup offers delightful colour contrast and it is a top competitor in pink classes. To see it is to want it. 'Vocation', 2W-P, is a large, smooth, tall, strongly coloured flower and a good doer. 'Violetta', 2W-GPP, is quite different. It, too, is strongly coloured and it is a bit on the blue side of pink rather than on the yellow side. All four of these pinks are good show candidates and we have won ribbons with them.

'Silver Surf', 2W-W, is well named as an eye catching large white. A child of 'Easter Moon' x 'Empress of Ireland' it has the roundness and whiteness of one parent and the majesty of the other.

A red jewel in a white frame, 'Dunskey', 3W-R, is a smooth, consistent, welcome show and garden flower. 'Form Master', 1W-Y, is a sibling of 'Joyland', 1Y-GYY, and both are children of 'Joybell', 6W-Y, x 'Empress of Ireland', 1W-W, all of which adds up to Brian's being a magician. I think he mixes a little hocus pocus in his pollen but he is deriving fine things from this cross. Who would expect the self yellow 'Joyland', or the superb form of 'Form Master', from the cross of a small cyclamineus by a huge white trumpet! In two years elegant 'Form Master' has gone from a very large double nose bulb in 1980 to one triple nose and three double nose in 1982. It will be a large clump when we dig it next year.

There are many Duncan daffodils that we would like to grow but have not done so yet. Awesome and famous are his pink doubles, 'Pink Pageant' and 'Pink Paradise'. A vase of them is as eye boggling as the Topkapi museum treasure house in Istanbul. His new 'Smokey Bear', 4O-ORR, is another breather. One feels that a fire extinguisher should be kept near it. There are daffodil people who don't care for doubles and many do not please me but the Duncan doubles are the wave of the future.

The small cup white with red or orange is a marvellous type of daffodil and they are a large and competitive group. Sir Frank Harrison, with his green-eyed beauties, is a giant in this field but persistent, determined Brian competes strongly here too. His 'Lighthouse', 3W-R, was "Best Division Three" at the London Show and has received rave notices since. Perhaps equally fine is 'Doctor Hugh', 3W-GOO, and both 'Mt. Angel', 3W-YJR, and 'Slowcoach', 3W-GYO, keep them company. 'Rimmon', 3W-GYY, is a fine round small cup and a colour code defier. 'Rivendell', 3W-GYY, is noted as a fine doer and show flower with a richly coloured buff cup.

I mentioned earlier that Brian was weak in yellow perianths. On second thoughts I am not so sure. Aside from 'Smokey Bear' and the others mentioned above his 'Sportsman', 2Y-R, offers a lot of colour in a fine daffodil and is nearly sunproof. 'Ulster Bank', 2Y-R, with its fiery cup and deeply coloured perianth is a consistently good show flower. 'Verdant', 1Y-GYY (another sibling of 'Joyland' and 'Form Master') is large and lovely with a bright green eye and is a show winner. 'Jumbo Gold', 1Y-Y, sounds as though it is a great mass of colour – which it is – but it is also Engleheart Cup quality and another winner. 'Kingsbridge', 1Y-Y, is a consistently good yellow trumpet. Brian's seedling D.745 may well be the leader in the orange perianth race.

Brian has used 'Easter Moon' a lot as a parent and he has not hesitated to use 'Empress of Ireland'. This cross brought him a winner in 'Silver Blaze', 2W-GWW. A soft, smooth appealing flower, it, too, is Engleheart quality. Another fine child of 'Easter Moon' is his 'White Ermine', 2W-W.

Pink daffodils are the order of the day and the Duncan cultivars, 'High Society', 2W-GYP, and 'Modest Maiden', 2W-P (they certainly sound like a contrast) have won top ribbons in America. 'High Society' with its delicate rim and classy form is most impressive. 'Fragrant Rose', 2W-GPP, is in a class by itself. In years gone by sweet aroma was an endearing attraction of daffodils and is a characteristic neglected by hybridizers. Brian, who won't be limited in any direction, has produced in 'Fragrant Rose' not only a colourful show quality flower but also one with a delightful fragrance.

Brian has restrained his hybridizing, so far, to one flower on a stem but he has gone nicely beyond the usual Division 1, 2 and 3. His doubles are phenomenal and his cyclamineus are delightful. We think of Kate Reade and Carncairn and 'Foundling' when we think of pink cyclamineus but here, too, Brian has entered the field. In addition to those named already, his 'Lilac Charm' and 'Lavender Lass', both 6W-GPP, are well known. 'Now Reggae', 6W-GPP, drew a lot of attention at the 1983 London Show. I have not seen Brian's pink cyclamineus,

'Elizabeth Ann', but with such a name it must be a lovely thing indeed. Division 9, restrictive as it is, has drawn Brian's attention and he offers five new poets. 'Campion', 'Chesterton', 'Lyric', 'Thackeray' and 'Webster' are all available for late shows and enjoyment at the end of the season.

So! Brian has already done much for daffodils. Highly imaginative, deeply knowledgeable and with restless energy he seems likely to continue his pursuit of beauty and perfection in daffodils. More power to Brian Duncan – we all benefit from his genius.

WILLIAM O. TICKNOR
Executive Director Emeritus
American Daffodil Society

EDITOR'S NOTE

This article has been in my possession since before the 1984 London Show. Enthusiasts will be aware that Rathowen now have won twelve consecutive Gold Medals and the Engleheart Cup has been returned to Ireland.

And then my heart with pleasure fills and dances with the daffodils.

The Northern Ireland Daffodil Group

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