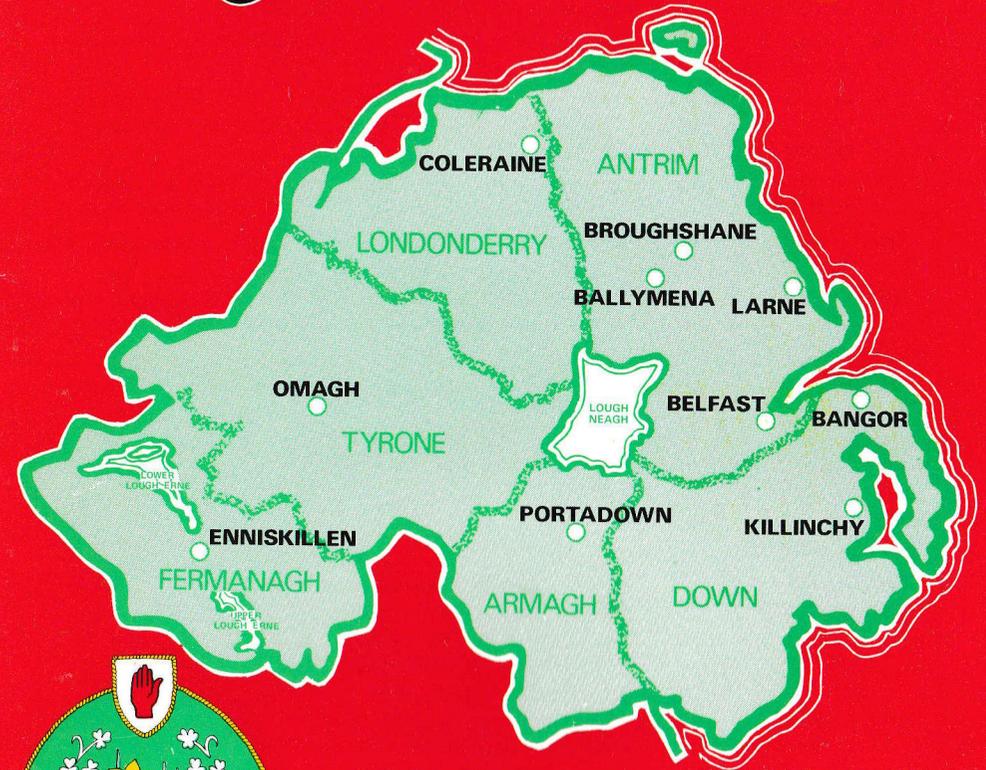


# Newsletter

of the  
**Northern Ireland  
Daffodil Group**



Half-yearly publication of the  
**Northern Ireland Daffodil Group**

OCTOBER 1989  
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. 3 No. 5

OCTOBER 1989

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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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- (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.

## 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 £5 per annum or £12.50 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

H. S. CROSSIE COCHRANE

There is no doubt that in future years the Spring and Summer of 1989 will be looked back upon as a memorable season.

By the amount of home produced sun-tans it was evident that we experienced one of our warmest and sunniest summers for a very long time. Summer bedding plants in the garden have been marvellous with their prolonged colourful displays and practically all the summer bulbs/corms such as *Acidanthera*, *Galtonia*, *Gladiolus*, Lilies, *Eremurus* and, of course, *Begonias* and *Gloxinias* have been simply wonderful with their range of form and colour. I would certainly appeal to all gardeners — including narcissi specialists — to widen their horizons and experiment with at least a few of the more uncommon bulbs/corms next year. I can assure you you won't be disappointed.

I think it is true to say that the N.I.D.G. members were not disappointed either with the outcome of the first City of Belfast Spring Flower Festival held on 29th/30th April, 1989. Mind you with the unusually early spring weather which we experienced there was some concern that many of the blooms for the different classes would be past their best. As it transpired the weather pattern changed just in time to ensure good support in practically all sections. Almost 450 entries appeared on the show benches with 105 in the Open classes, 222 in the Amateur section and a very creditable 118 in the Novice section. It is always encouraging to see such interest among the beginners and I hope that at the next Spring Festival Show — scheduled to be held in the Maysfield Leisure Centre on 28th/29th April, 1990 — there will be even better support. Certainly the Belfast Parks Department and particularly Gillian Jones, Alice Blennerhassett and Jim Edgar are to be congratulated on the organisation of the whole event.

Our energetic Vice-Chairman, Mrs Maisie Jones, unfortunately has not been enjoying the blessings of good health lately, but knowing Maisie's resilient nature I've no doubt she will soon be back to full health and strength again. We all wish her well.

By the time this Newsletter arrives at your door, doubtless much of your bulb planting will have been completed. I hope that as a result of all your thorough preparations — and a little co-operation from the weather — you will be rewarded with excellent blooms next season and many rosettes on the show benches across the Province and elsewhere.

## TOM BLOOMER, 1905-1989



It is with the deepest sadness that we record the passing of Tom Bloomer on 9th March, 1989.

Mr. Bloomer had not been in good health for several years and was largely confined to his home. Nevertheless he maintained a lively and deep interest in daffodils and the activities of the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group and all its individual members. Though unable to attend meetings, which were often held in Ballymena, Tom always enjoyed the de-briefing sessions afterwards in his own home. Those of us fortunate enough to be invited, enjoyed the courteous hospitality which he and his daughter Sidley dispensed so generously.

Much has already been written about Tom Bloomer and his great work and many achievements with daffodils which were recognised and acknowledged at the highest levels — by the R.H.S. award of the Peter Barr Memorial Cup in 1985 and the A.D.S. Gold Medal in 1988. Though his passing and the cessation of his work is such a great loss to the daffodil fraternity, it is as a cheerful loyal friend — with twinkling humour, a wise and tactful counsel, an encouraging and paternal influence and as a model of courtesy that those of us privileged to know him well, will miss him most. Over the years Tom became an ever welcome guest in our home and many of our daffodil visitors enjoyed the opportunity to get to know and talk at length with one of the 'daffodil greats'.

The daffodil 'Mentor' was named in his honour as a personal tribute by the writer and as a reflection of his standing in Northern Ireland daffodil circles. 'Sartoria', in turn, reflects the "true gentleman" Tom Bloomer image, of good taste, elegance and style. Everything about Tom was neat, clean, tidy and well ordered — perhaps even fastidious. Hygiene in his bulb shed was total and his daffodil beds were made up and planted with regimental precision. Such varieties as 'White Star', 'Silent Valley', 'Golden Joy', 'Golden Jewel', 'Vernal Prince' and 'Ravenhill' will provide a fitting memorial of his great achievements in the breeding and development of really beautiful exhibition daffodils.

Tom was predeceased ten years ago by his wife, Flo, who was most supportive in all his work and a constant staging companion at all daffodil shows. He is survived by his son Tom, daughters Sidley and Aileen, and three grandsons, Christopher and Roger Bloomer and Mark Elliott, and to them we extend most sincere sympathy.

B.S.D.

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## LOOKING AT THE GARDEN

Looking through the window at a garden bleak and bare — it's wonderful to think of all the treasure buried there: the dormant life in root and bulb. It is the strangest thing — that, like a vault, the soil holds fast the riches of the spring . . . In a secret hiding place the wealth is stored away — until the moment comes when it is brought out for display.

The day when from an earthy grave, now damp and dark and cold — the sun will bring out crocuses of ivory and gold . . . It seems well nigh impossible that there should ever be — daffodils along the path and blossom on the tree.

*Patience Strong*

## WHY DAFFODILS?

DON BARNES

*Prepared from notes used for a presentation to the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group on 16th October, 1988 — only the names have been changed to protect the innocent and expletives deleted to avoid further offence.*

Some months ago your Secretary asked if I would be prepared to give a talk to the Group and it sounded like a good idea so arrangements were made. However, as time passed the question kept buzzing through my mind — what am I to talk about? I could talk about building the longest suspension bridge in Europe, or building the largest power station in Europe, or, perhaps about a non-scientific study of whiskey using information gained from daily contact with the amber liquid. But I suppose that you really came to hear something about daffodils.

Such a prospect really bears some parallels with Mohamet and the mountain when I see the assembled company and reflect upon the wealth of experience and knowledge within the province. However, I will try: if only I can resolve the issue of where to start and where to finish, with due allowances for the fact that your speaker is one of the few people who has not completed the planting of his bulbs but knows that it should always be done before the end of September.

So to address the subject I take as a theme the question, "Why Daffodils?"

Why indeed did I get involved with the genus. There was no family tradition of growing daffodils though there had been long associations with such things as chrysanthemums and dahlias.

I recollect that the only positive move had been the planting of a job lot of 'Mrs Backhouse' along the side of the garden hedge. Totally inappropriate planting conditions but surprisingly the bulbs thrived and made a bold display each spring — perhaps there was some direct relationship to the fact that all remnants of the liquid fertilisers used in the greenhouse for the tomatoes were discarded along the hedge. Other contact was the sighting of the "weedy" few daffodils in Wordsworth country and the few semi-wild groupings of the Tenby daffodil and the Lent lily in other parts of the Lake District. The only physical contact I recollect was the visits to an aunt whose orchard was a riot of yellow each spring, certainly the reliable oldie 'Van Sion', and the special treat of being let loose to pick some flowers. That was a traumatic experience: my cousin usually accompanied me and snatched handfuls of blooms and leaves whilst I picked each flower stem carefully from amongst the leaves — she got praise for her wonderful bunch of flowers whilst I got the criticism for being too slow. However, it perhaps shows some very early feelings for the plant and its care.

Being into chrysanthemums and dahlias certainly changed when I moved to Sheffield some 25 years ago. Like Peter Fenn, in his article in the October 1988 Newsletter, I at that time found another love; she, I later discovered, knew nothing of gardening and really wanted to know nothing. The point was highlighted when we came to buying a house and there was some serious argument before it was accepted that there should be a bit of garden. We ended up with a garden of a size that matched a pocket handkerchief that would have done a dwarf proud. The garden that first November was really little more than an area of tidy builders' rubbish and a first move was to plant a bag of mixed bulbs, euphemistically classed as naturalising mixture, bought from the local market.

The following April leaves and buds struggled through their covering of broken brick and my impatience resulted in a few buds being brought into the house and forced open by being placed on top of the gas fire. As the buds opened it was clear that there were different colourings and the question was asked "why are they different"? A trip to a local library soon established that there were books on the subject of daffodils and one was taken home and avidly read. So from those humble beginnings all else has developed.

At some point you could say I contacted yellow fever, though it may have been jaundice. I think I have now degenerated and without wishing to appear a racist have now got "White Fever" which I understand is also not fatal. So things have changed largely through a Nell Richardson Catalogue, from which a bulb of 'Orion', at 30s was purchased and suitably nurtured, and a realisation that the options are endless dawned. The daffodils have survived a change of house, or more correctly a change of garden, a change of jobs and other interests for both Carol and I. Carol's babies are her cats, mine are the daffodils.

That last statement is not entirely true. In April 1985 I did cut five super buds of 'Colleygate' (at the time it was under number and about to be listed) and put them in the cloakroom to develop as a potential vase for a de Navarro cup entry. The following evening I returned from work and discarded my coat into the cloakroom and sat down for a drink and reflection on the day. Some ten minutes later we had a bit of a panic as a blue Burmese kitten (all of eight weeks old) had gone missing. He was eventually extracted from the cloakroom where the little claws had reduced the 'Colleygate' to ribbons with each stem sporting dozens of shreds of petals.

He survived, but only just, and now blooms and cats are carefully segregated. The cats and the daffodils are both fascinating and a constant occupation.

So, where next? Keeping with the same question "Why Daffodils?" I would like to look at a few acrostics as this seems to be a present trend. Taking our W, H and Y can lead to a few interesting considerations.

Why have yellow daffodils? A good question as such wonderful cultivars as 'Merlin', 'Dailmanach' and 'Misty Glen' are certainly not yellow. 'White Star' clearly is not yellow and is a superb example of a daffodil. One can easily say what is not yellow. It is not so easy to say what is yellow. If one looks in a dictionary one finds:

"Yellow, *yel* o, adj. of the colour of gold or of the primrose:  
of Mongolian race: (coll) cowardly: sensational — n. the colour of the rainbow between orange and green".

It can be argued that it is a damned poor dictionary or alternatively a very realistic statement. It clearly identifies that yellow is not a single colour a point re-emphasised by the vast number of shades included in the R.H.S. Colour Chart. Equally it is a statement to perpetuate the controversy that exists in perception of colour. Scientifically it is possible to precisely measure the wavelength of light and define a band that is acceptable as yellow but under precise laboratory conditions. In the show hall what happens. Take the case of 'Verwood' at the R.H.S. Competition — a super bloom, well up to size, faultless form and poise but a shading of the corona that some might say was a shade or orange whilst others maintain was a deeper shade of yellow.

Also take 'Achduart'; how often do we hear the comment that the perianth is too pale in spite of the fact that it is a solid colouring and distinct with none of the shading which seems to be favoured in some quarters. We all have mental pictures of things which are yellow and which we use as comparators. We all accept that buttercups, dandelions, laburnum and mustard are yellow. A lemon and a banana are also said to be yellow but if we really look closely, and not listen to what has been said we will have some difficulty in comparing them with say a buttercup. Perhaps some misconceptions have crept in — an egg yolk is always yellow but how much emotion is stirred up about the dark yellow wrongly associated with free range hens and the extra goodness that comes from this darker colour. Why should every colouring have to conform to one preferred shade? Cultivars have a colouring and beauty of their own.

Controversy exists with other colours too. For example when is red truly red and not orange or when does orange become red.

Are we trying to be too precise in a totally unscientific way in describing colour? Are we doing it for the right reasons?

The colour classification system is a wonderful tool provided we do not abuse it. The system, properly used, enables us to create a mental picture of a cultivar that we have not previously seen. However, is the system, with all its nuances of shades, getting out of hand and putting too much emphasis on colour differences to the detriment of other desirable characteristics? By concentrating on all the different colour options are we making our specialist shows too special and creating classes for different colour codes and permutations which do not retain the interest of the casual visitor, the possible convert to daffodil cultivation?

Colour on its own is only one of the criteria which we should be concentrating on. It is easy to say what is not a particular colour, for example 'Misty Glen', 'White Star' and 'Stainless' are not yellow but are they really white? So having yellow daffodils leads to controversy but even so some of them are as individuals extremely attractive and enhance the genus.

If then we take another acrostic. Why Harvest Your Daffodils?

In your Newsletter there was a plea for a beginners' guide to growing exhibition daffodils. The answer really is to grow wonderful bulbs and the good flowers will then come for you. So why do we harvest our bulbs?

The garden writers of the daily press, and specialist magazines, perpetuate the myth that daffodils do not require a lot of fertiliser. They usually suggest a sprinkling of bone meal at planting time and then leave everything else to the well-prepared and previously used ground. However, daffodils do require nitrogen, potash and phosphates at the right time and each at a different time to match the growing cycle. So if we are doing things right we will have low nitrogen until the roots are formed, nitrogen to get the leaves well developed, potash to develop and ripen the bulbs after flowering. If we are getting it right the bulbs will survive and develop well in the ground for a number of years without lifting/harvesting until they either become self-perpetuating and naturalised or become overcrowded and undernourished. So why lift them? If we look at garden hybrids then we lift to:

1. check on our own quality of cultivation. How I love to see big solid healthy bulbs. But how frequently should this be done? At home I lift every year as I tend to plant the better quality bulbs in my restricted space. At the office it is every other year so that the smaller bulbs have had a better chance to develop. It is really governed by space, for storage of bulbs, and time.
2. to treat them with chemicals, the few that are still readily available, to keep them healthy. Disease can spread in the ground but it can also spread much more quickly through lifted bulbs if the storage conditions are less than perfect.
3. to encourage, without resorting to chipping or twin scaling a more rapid rate of division and multiplication.
4. to select the most likely candidates for growing in pots or to pass to friends (or dare I say to sell).

These four points are really giving us satisfaction and are not natural requirements of the bulbs. Once we have harvested the bulbs do we then go too far? Everyone must have experienced "bulb cleaner's thumb" but is it really necessary or does it in fact reduce the bulbs' resistance to pests and diseases. The Dutch growers supply vast quantities of bulbs and rarely clean them in any way. Rathowen, Carncairn, Ballydorn, Clive Postles, etc. all supply beautifully cleaned bulbs but is it pride in the quality of the bulb rather than an essential activity.

**Tyrone Daffodils** Clarke Campbell,  
formerly of Rathowen  
Daffodils, announces the  
establishment of Tyrone Daffodils  
in conjunction with his son Desmond

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Quality of bulb is an essential prerequisite of good flowers. However, different cultivars have vastly different capabilities for producing good bulbs. 'Grand Monarque' automatically produces round, solid clean bulbs, whilst with me 'Arctic Gold' produces miserable looking scaly bulbs, but both cultivars produce quality blooms. Thus, we need to know the characteristics of the cultivars and their particular requirements. Of course we must not forget that the different cultivars will respond in different ways to particular treatment and we may have to get involved in considerations of "ph", etc. to answer the problems of some cultivars not producing flowering size bulbs in a particular cultural regime.

This leads on to another interesting consideration. Why Hoard Yesterday's Daffodils?

I have now a collection of some 500 named cultivars and a host of seedlings, mainly from other people's breeding efforts. Each year I try to be ruthless and discard cultivars, each year I fail miserably. So why do I keep them? Arguably it is for historical interest but there are special plantings that do it far better than I can ever hope to. Arguably it is to keep cultivars as potential breeding stock, but I rarely get around to dabbing pollen on anything.

Really I am living in a dreamworld. I keep cultivars in the hope that one year they might produce the quality blooms. Sometimes it happens, for example in 1988 'Amber Castle' produced a number of Best Blooms for me after five years of nonentities. Keeping that

cultivar in the hope that it may do the same again another year in the future is really wasting space. Equally by passing that cultivar to a recent convert may create some disillusionment that could result in the loss of a potential exhibitor.

The problem really is the existence of too many cultivars. In the last 20 years over 3,000 cultivars have been registered and some we will never ever see on the show bench whilst others might put in an occasional appearance. The exhibition quality of many cultivars is very transient. Indeed most current exhibition cultivars have only been registered within the last 20 years. The exhibition life expectancy of a good cultivar is only about 20 years which is rather different than the English Florist's Tulip where the top exhibition cultivars are about 100 years old.

Commercial considerations must influence the stream of new registrations. However, are we being critical enough? Indeed are we looking at the right things? Are too many exhibitors and judges still looking at a mental price tag when assessing cultivars? Recently I judged a class where the two contenders of any quality were a fairly average 'Dailmanach', down on size, afflicted with some perianth faults, and a slightly hanging head, against an example of 'Drum-boe' well up to potential size, correct poise and wonderfully clean and near perfect perianth. To me the choice was simple. However, the local pundits could not or would not understand that the price of the cultivars was not a consideration — they would automatically have gone for the 'Dailmanach'. They wanted to cast a good oldie into oblivion. We should keep those cultivars that do well for us, that are consistent, if we can be sure that they are given due consideration on the right factors. Some old cultivars can do well but we need to be selective and not just hoard everything.

W.H.Y. Daffodils? Perhaps this comes from Whiskey Helps Your Daffodils. Not a question but a positive statement. Not that I am advocating the watering on of the amber liquid, though I must confess that on occasions it has been done. However, it does seem that vast quantities are consumed at the shows and has some advantages.

It helps to build friendship, it eases the tongue so that we can talk openly about our problems and it keeps out the cold at staging time, or so I am led to believe.

Daffodils are still only a minority specialist interest and therefore we have a lot to do:

- we must increase public awareness of the range of daffodils.
- we must not frighten the average gardener by quoting high prices as if money and success or enjoyment are related.
- we must learn to live with chipping and rapid propagation techniques and the speed with which prices can tumble.

Our nucleus of existing friends should help to tackle these and other problems which should not be the subject witch-hunts. We should recognise when plant health problems do arise and not dramatise them nor seek to hide them or try to pass them on to others.

Staging time usually needs anything that will help get the blooms into their vases. We usually underestimate the time which is necessary to do justice to our blooms: the inducement of liquid refreshments can often find willing hands to help out. Lack of attention to staging can be fatal to our chances of success but equally some of the situations in which we have to do this job are far from ideal. Perhaps the whiskey helps us cope with anything on a resigned attitude of long-suffering idiots. For example we had a Yorkshire Daffodil Mafia late, late Show in 1986 and the bonhomie created by liquid refreshment enabled us to cope with the cold and the volume of sound created by a Championship Brass Band rehearsing in the same room.

Throughout it all we should not lose sight of the fact that we are doing our showing for pleasure: the pleasure it gives us and the pleasure that can be given to visitors to the Show. We are usually good losers, it takes losers and winners to make a show, and the few exceptions don't appear to drink whiskey (or even gin).

So where next? Perhaps a little controversy might be appropriate. Miniature Daffodils I can and do accept provided they are genuinely miniatures and not something that has been neglected or abused to make it conform to a size criteria. There are some absolutely super things amongst the miniatures that can tax the showmanship of any grower. 'Segovia', 'Xit', 'Hawera', etc. enhance any display of daffodils and they certainly catch the eye of the public and help to "sell" our specialisation. Standard daffodils I too accept in all of their different forms and guises. However, we now have a resurgence of interest in intermediates, at one time referred to as Bantams. Where are we going with this apparently arbitrary grouping? 'Foundling' is a super thing and is a yardstick for cyclamineus by registration but to see it also competing as an intermediate makes a mockery of the concept. A bloom of 'Delightful', the Grant Mitsch beauty, appeared at the R.H.S. Competition as an intermediate: it was a very neat bloom but what are we doing? To me that bloom was undersized even for a smaller cultivar and must have suffered a degree of neglect to be so presented. Surely we should be aiming to reward good cultivation and good presentation of blooms. Equally we should be conscious of the ridicule that is directed towards N.A.S. dahlia exhibits which frequently arise from their practice of using measuring rings: a reaction that must lose tolerance and support of the ordinary gardener who is a potential convert to daffodils. Yes, we should be seeking to extend the range of cultivars. Yes, we should give the public what they want in daffodils but we should not seek to deceive. We must be logical and credible in setting our judging criteria.

Can we really live with a simple measurement system, on top of our present system of classification?

A puny 'Empress of Ireland' is a puny 'Empress of Ireland' and we should not allow it to be considered as a likely candidate for a

grouping of intermediates. History shows that the idea was tried and failed. Perhaps our energies and enthusiasm could be re-directed to a re-examination of some other criteria of assessment that cause an annual problem.

Now where am I going wrong? I think that 'Lemonade' is a super flower and each year I gaze jealously at the blooms which appear on the show bench. I have had stock from six or seven sources but I still have no stock that will produce a bloom. Likewise 'Achduart' consistently produces winning blooms for other people but my bulbs just seem to fade away. Some people say that the first five years are the worst and then this cultivar has adjusted to your conditions; however, mine don't last that long. Fortunately, some other cultivars do appear to respond quite well to my conditions and multiply and produce acceptable show blooms. It does lead to a point which cause some concern. Do our daffodil cultivars, in the way we grow them, suffer from a lack of permanence. I do dabble in English Florist's Tulips and there a cultivar such as 'Columbine', registered in the 1920's, is still a top exhibition bloom competing against others that were registered in the 1800's. The old cultivars survive and produce quality blooms. With our daffodils, apart from say 'Merlin' which was registered in the 1930's, most exhibition blooms come from the last 20 years or so. I know that there are improved cultivars introduced each year but are they really improvements or are we moving the goal posts of our perception of a good cultivar. Equally are we discarding things too quickly for the sake of fashion and taking perfection too far.

Perhaps to conclude it will be appropriate to express a comment or two on the perfect cultivar. Like you I keep hoping that I have found the perfect cultivars so that I can limit the number of things that I struggle with each year. I could curry favour by indulging in name dropping from the list of super cultivars from Guy Wilson, Tom Bloomer, Frank Harrison, Kate Reade, Brian Duncan and others. Even then I would not, I regret, really be able to identify that elusive perfect cultivar. Some two years ago I spent time drawing up a list of my 10 favourite daffodils. It was not an easy task but if we just briefly look at those 10 again.

*N. cyclamineus* — naturalises well if you treat it with patience and care and give it the right conditions. It produces seed and is a useful breeder. It does well in pots and in the garden and is above all else distinctive.

'Van Sion' — is virtually indestructible and disease free. It too naturalises well and stands through the inclement weather.

'Grand Monarque' — a typical tazetta and a fickle flower that does, when it appears, have a perfume that lets you know it is there. However, it produces super bulbs even in the most unlikely site that clean-up beautifully to a polished state that oozes quality. It also produces strong, clean and upright foliage.

'Xit' — a genuine miniature with a perfection of bloom enhanced by a particular sparkle to its whiteness. It clearly proves that you don't need to be big and brash to make an impact.

'Gold Convention' — a good strong grower with blooms of a really solid colour. It has good form and in particular a roundness enhanced by the overlapping perianth and the blooms are so well poised. The only problem is that it is really loved by the slugs.

'Merlin' — is a cultivar that responds well to manipulation of day length by use of lights. It "chips" well and can therefore give a good supply of rounds for forcing. As a flower its clarity of whiteness is a true advantage as indeed is its distinctiveness of form.

'Stratosphere' — a good clean grower with the neat blooms held well above the foliage. It does well in the garden and in pots and gives a good rate of increase.

'Cool Crystal' — has an interesting form to the bloom but the poise is not good. However, the poise can be manipulated very easily and exhibitors need to master its strengths and weaknesses.

'Unique' — is clearly a reminder that a seedling can be a late developer. It is a consistent show-bench cultivar and has an attractiveness of form that makes it popular for cut-flower work. It is also a good multiplier.

'Empress of Ireland' — as a bloom it is super but as a bulb it is too susceptible. It is a reminder that in striving for perfection one can have long lived cultivars if we learn to tolerate the obvious weaknesses.

So if we shake all of the ten together we might just get something near to perfection, but then what would we find to occupy our minds? Please keep up the good work and may the perfect cultivar come from Northern Ireland in the near future.

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# NORTHERN IRELAND SHOW REPORT

SANDY McCABE

Our season commenced on 1st April with shows at Hillsborough and Enniskillen. The apparently early season changed its mind and eventually became quite normal — if there is such a thing as a “normal” daffodil season. Some societies advanced their shows by 2 weeks and I think that Hillsborough, who were one such, suffered accordingly.

The Open 12 Collection class was won by Carncairn from Brian Duncan. The winning collection contained very good specimens of ‘Sorcerer’, ‘Bunclody’ and ‘Merlin’ which was adjudged Best Division 3 in the show. Best flower in Brian’s group was ‘Mount Fuji’. The remaining classes in the Open Section were for Cultivars not in commerce and seedlings. There was little to enthuse about though I was taken by Carncairn’s 1/44/75 (4Y-Y) and 1/18/76 (2W-P) which were Best Division 4 and Best Seedling respectively. Brian’s ‘Elfin Gold’ also appealed in the class for Division 6.

I was successful in the Senior Amateur 12 with a group containing ‘Silent Valley’ (Best Bloom in the Show and Best Division 1), ‘Sportsman’, ‘Colourful’ and ‘Silver Surf’. John O’Reilly was runner-up with excellent specimens of ‘Strines’, ‘Sheerline’ and ‘Estramadura’. I was also successful in winning Best Division 2 with ‘Strines’. Willie Davison from Bangor picked up Best Division 5–9 with ‘Dove Wings’.

The classes for schools which feature prominently at Hillsborough were keenly contested and many good blooms were on display. I remember in particular a magnificent ‘Golden Aura’ which made me wonder if the judges were correct in awarding my ‘Strines’ the accolade of Best Division 2.

No report has been received from our correspondent at Enniskillen but on the grapevine, I hear that ‘Silent Valley’ made it a double on All Fool’s Day when a specimen shown by John Ennis also was adjudged Best in Show.

Saturday, 8th April was a blank day as we were off to London, but the rivalry re-commenced on 15th with shows at Ballymena and Coleraine. In an effort to re-ignite interest in the Ballymena area, their show was moved to that world famous daffodil village, Broughshane. The day was also changed from a Wednesday to Saturday and in conjunction with the Village Improvements Committee, a most successful show ensued. They were honoured by the attendance of Mesdames E. Havens and E. Robertson from U.S.A. who were given a rousing reception by the local populace who turned out en masse to support the venture.

The Open 12 Bloom Class went to Brian Duncan from Carncairn and myself; I gained revenge by taking the 6 varieties (3 blooms of each) whilst Carncairn entered the winners frame by taking the American Raised Class. Best Bloom in the Show was awarded to D.1161 (‘Fellowship’ x ‘High Society’). Our reporter has not noted



**A happy group pictured at Belfast Spring Festival.**

Photo courtesy of Belfast City Parks Department.

the other best bloom awards, but he specifically mentioned Carncairn's 'Pueblo' and 'Mission Bells', Brian Duncan's 'Golden Joy', 'Cavendish' and 'Kaydee'. Tyrone Daffodils showed winning blooms in 'Comal' and 'Woodland Prince'.

The Open Classes were truly open with the amateurs and professionals all combining for some excellent competition. Prizes were well distributed with nearly every exhibitor gaining some reward for his or her labours. Mrs. Havens won with 'Alepa' and 'Mitsch 2002'. Ballydorn were successful with 'Ireland's Eye', Sam Bankhead with 'Rio Dell'. Maurice Kerr with 'Ardress' and a seedling from 'Viking' x 'Golden Rapture', Willie Davison with 'Achduart' and myself with 'Fragrant Rose'.

The Novice Section saw a keen tussle between M. Greer and J. Webber. Noteworthy blooms included 'Golden Aura', 'Panache', 'Sputnik' with M. Greer picking up best bloom in the Section with 'Aircastle'.

All in all, the new day and new venue has, I believe, breathed some life into the Ballymena Show which has flagged recently and I hope that the improvement will be continued in the future.

Up at Coleraine where again the show coincided with an Open Day at the G. L. Wilson Gardens, best bloom was awarded to D. Turbitt's 'Cool Crystal' but again no detailed report has been received.

And so to the main event of the year — the Belfast Spring Festival.

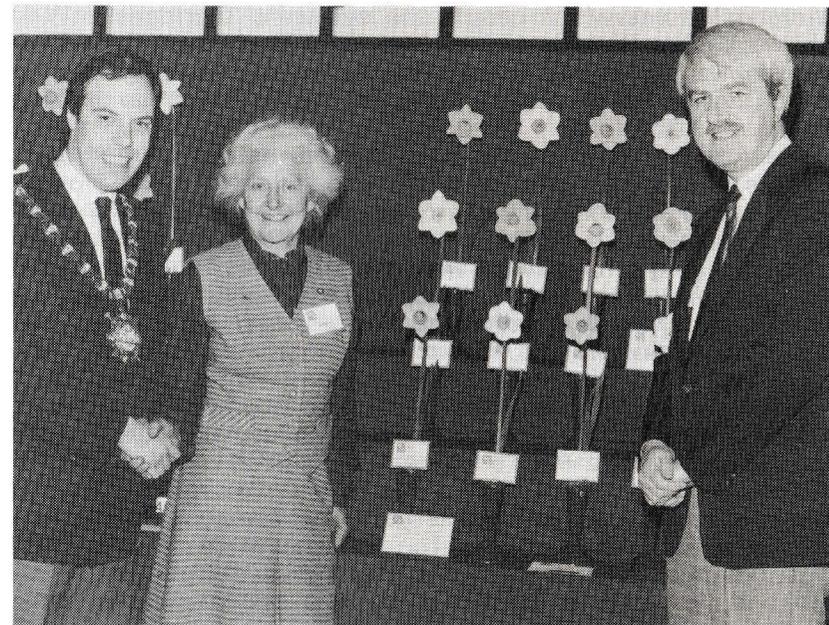
The inaugural Provincial Show was launched on 29th/30th April, 1989 at Maysfield Leisure Centre, Belfast, after many years of planning. The Festival was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Belfast — Alderman Nigel Dodds.

By one of those quirks of fate, the Province was being visited by noted daffodil enthusiasts from all over the globe. Richard and Kitty Frank from Tennessee, Janis Ruksans from Latvia joined forces with Alf Chappell from New Zealand to assist the principal judge — Don Barnes from Sheffield. It is doubtful if we will ever be able to attract as many eminent daffodil personalities at the relevant time in future years.

The Festival was an undoubted success and attracted 1,524 visitors. When one remembers that the many counter attractions included Greenmount Spring Fair, a festival of flowers at Belfast Castle and many other events, this figure is quite remarkable. Local shows are lucky if they can muster 200.

The organisation was excellent. The thanks of the N.I.D.G. are due to the Belfast City Parks Department for their enthusiasm and hard work. For an initial venture it ran like clockwork and while some lessons were learned, by and large it proved to be an outstanding event.

The Championship of Ireland only attracted two entries. The peculiarities of the season contributed to the small field. Michael Ward from Dublin had no flowers left. I, myself, had only sufficient flowers to enter one group of 12 in the Amateur Senior. However



**Kate Reade pictured with her winning Championship of Ireland group.**

Photo courtesy of Belfast City Parks Department.

next year we intend to make the professionals work harder for their success.

Carncairn Daffodils took the honours in the Championship. Kate Reade staged her best group ever to relegate Brian Duncan into second place. Outstanding blooms in Kate's group were 'Doctor Hugh', 'Oykel', 'Achduart' and 'Ashmore'. 'Oykel' was selected as Best Division 3 in the Show. Brian included D.916 (1Y-Y) which was Best Bloom in the Show, Best Division 1 and Best Unregistered Seedling. Other noteworthy blooms were 'Goldfinger', 'Silver Crystal' and D.1161 (2W-GYP).

The Royal Mail Trophy for 6 varieties — 3 blooms of each — Irish raised — went to Brian Duncan. Best in the winning group were 'Silver Crystal' and 'Pink Pageant'. Carncairn were runners-up showing attractive vases of 'Spring Valley' and 1/30/82 (2W-R). Choice of my third place entry were 'Amber Castle' and 'Fair Prospect'.

Carncairn took the W. H. Roese Bowl (for 5 American raised) for the umpteenth time with 'Impala', 'Symphonette', 'Derg Castle', 'Curtsey' and 'Close Encounter'. The remaining classes in the Open Section are for single blooms which must be seedlings or cultivars which are not in commerce. This restriction will have to be eased in the future as it precludes the leading amateurs for the most part.

Ballydorn, Carncairn and B. S. Duncan vied for the honours.

Winning blooms which caught the eye were 'Claridges' (4W-P) which was Best Division 4 in the Show and 'Coromandel' (2Y-Y) — an exceptionally smooth flower. Was Ballydorn's winning seedling in the Division 9 class really a Poeticus? I was not alone in thinking that it was a Division 3.

The Amateur Championship attracted 5 entries from 4 competitors. Maurice Kerr was determined to "fill the benches" for the public to see and entered two groups of 12. His third placing might have been higher if he had concentrated on just one. His better group included a magnificent specimen of 'Midas Touch' and good examples of 'Mentor' and 'Halstock'. John O'Reilly in second place could have done with slightly larger flowers but showed 'Gay Kybo', 'Cairntoul', 'Rainbow' and 'Mount Angel' to good advantage.

The best of my winning 12 were 'Achduart', 'Bright Spark', 'Badbury Rings' and 'Fragrant Rose'. The first 3 named flowers were successfully shown in Omagh the week before and survived the journey home plus a week's refrigeration with no ill effects.

Maurice Kerr, John O'Reilly and Sam Dukelow from Omagh monopolised the collection classes in the Amateur Senior with Maurice winning the inaugural Tom Bloomer Memorial Award for most points in the section. Jack Carlisle, William Dukelow (Sam's son) and I joined these three in some excellent competition in the single bloom classes. Maurice Kerr added to his silver cleaning bill this year by winning the Brian Duncan Award for most points while Sam Dukelow picked up the Don Barnes Award for best bloom in the section with 'Golden Aura'. This flower was also adjudged Best Division 2 in the Show. William Dukelow took the Northern Bank Trophy for best seedling (confined to Amateur) with one of his own flowers bred from 'Silent Valley' and 'Easter Moon'.

Some of the single bloom classes had between 15 and 20 entries. One judge was heard to comment that it was the hardest day's judging that he had ever undertaken.

The Novice Section was equally well contested with Richard McCaw winning the Novice Championship. His group of 9 was extremely well staged with his 'Silent Morn' picking up the accolade of Best Bloom in the Section. Two newcomers to the daffodil exhibition scene filled the minor places. George Jordan from Omagh had fine specimens of 'Unique' and 'Namraj' in his second placed entry while C. Holmes from Carrickfergus showed 'Olympic Gold' to perfection.

In the Novice Single Bloom classes it was gratifying to see Fred White making a comeback. Along with his townsmen Albert Allen and George Jordan the trio from Omagh fought a keen tussle with Richard McCaw. Between the four they monopolised the prizes with Albert Allen picking up the award for most points.

Carncairn and Brian Duncan staged two colourful and well presented Trade Stands while the N.I.D.G. exhibited several blooms on which they asked the general public to vote by placing money in collection boxes. The proceeds were divided between the Save the

Children Fund and Action Cancer. Bunches of flowers and catalogues were also sold and over £135 was raised for the two charities.

For the record, 'Pireaus' (4W-R), 'Golden Jewel' and 'Fragrant Rose' raised most money.

All sections of the show, i.e. daffodils, tulips, floral art, paintings, photography, etc. attracted 883 exhibits. That daffodils were the main feature is borne out by the fact that there were 533 daffodil exhibits. Many spectators were in awe at the differing varieties and specimens on display and I think we were successful in widening the appeal of the daffodil to the general public.

That said, it must also be admitted too many terrible flowers were also shown. However it is hoped that the novices will have learnt from their experience and will gain help and encouragement from the many magnificent blooms on display.

So what of the future? Plans are already under way to repeat the venture at the same venue next year. Dates chosen are 28th and 29th April, 1990 so I'll appeal now to exhibitors on the mainland to prepare to come over. We have supported the mainland shows for years and would like you to reciprocate.

In conclusion may I thank the members of the N.I.D.G. and the Belfast City Parks Department for their help, support and encouragement in making one of my dreams come true.

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## AN OLD BOOK ON DAFFODILS

H. S. CROSBIE COCHRANE

Having just assumed the mantle of Chairman of the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group I was quickly made aware of the responsibilities of my new office by the Editor of this Newsletter. In his very forthright and down to earth manner he informed me that he was short of articles for the next issue. Although he did not say so in so many words, it was patently apparent that he expected me to produce something as soon as possible.

Unlike previous Chairmen who had a wealth of experience in the breeding, growing and showing of daffodils, I am not equipped to pontificate on any of these techniques. However as a retired professional horticulturist I have always been interested in reading up the theory of the various aspects of production, whether it be on peas or paeonies, sage or salsify, dahlias or daffodils.

When I am looking for interesting material to read I invariably find that some of the earlier publications on horticulture matters are the most interesting. In this respect I was particularly fortunate to have had the opportunity to glance through Albert F. Calvert's publication entitled "Daffodil Growing for Pleasure and Profit" which first appeared on the book shelves away back in 1929. Albert Calvert

was a writer of some repute not only on daffodils but since he had travelled widely in Spain and Australia he produced several volumes describing in detail his impressions of both countries.

In the foreword to this particular publication he is at pains to stress that, despite concerted efforts by several recognised daffodil growers of the time to persuade Rev. George Herbert Engleheart to produce a standard work on daffodils, their efforts were unsuccessful and so, somewhat reluctantly, he undertook the task. However he did persuade the Reverend gentleman to write a short introduction in which he referred to the sterling work carried out by earlier enthusiasts such as Parkinson, Herbert, Haworth, Leeds, Backhouse and Barr who were but a few links in a chain four centuries long — all of whom had bestowed heart, brain and hands upon the daffodil.

Not only did Albert Calvert persuade Rev. Engleheart to write a short introduction, he also inveigled such eminent authorities on daffodils as The Brodie of Brodie, Herbert Chapman, Alex. Wilson, F. A. Secrett, Peter Barr and not forgetting our own Guy L. Wilson to contribute a range of articles from "Raising Daffodils from Seed" to "A Few Considerations for the Commercial Bulb Grower". These contributions, together with approximately 200 pages of his own writings in some 20 different chapters and a further 200 pages illustrating varieties of that era, certainly help to make it a standard work on the subject.

Going back to the beginning of the book, Calvert, in his introduction, makes a clear distinction between the bulb breeder and the bulb grower which is still as relevant to-day as when it was written some 60 years ago. To quote, he says "A good breeder is not invariably, indeed he is only infrequently, a good man of business, because the true gardener is almost invariably imbued with the artistic temperament. He is inspired by the desire to produce something that appeals by its beauty rather than its intrinsic value". "The daffodil breeder, like the poet and the composer, the creator in every sphere of artistry, must consider his public or in other words his market. No artist can work for himself alone. He cannot concentrate indefinitely on the production of that which nobody desires to possess".

How true these remarks have proved to be over the years. Mind you, it would be true to say that the breeder has had to become more commercially orientated in latter years simply to ensure that his efforts are economically viable, otherwise it would be extremely difficult to continue in business.

This publication is concluded by a list of daffodil varieties which were grown in the author's own nurseries at Coverack in Cornwall in the 1920's. It is interesting to see varieties such as 'Giant Muticus' (yellow trumpet 1A), 'Golden Flag' (do), 'Harpagon' (bi-colour Barri 3B) and 'Winsome' (Leedsii 4A) — all listed and credited to Guy L. Wilson as the breeder. Varieties nowadays which are probably unknown to many breeders but to some will bring back poignant

memories of glorious blossoms of their day.

For those of you who like myself like to reminisce on days that are gone, I can do no better than suggest that, if at all possible, you should beg or borrow — but not steal a copy of "Daffodil Growing" by Albert F. Calvert. It will give you hours of enjoyable and informative reading.

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## DOING IT MY WAY: THE PRODUCTION OF HIGH QUALITY DAFFODILS

JAN PENNINGGS

A few weeks ago your Chairman asked me if I would write an article about growing daffodils in Holland. I accepted the invitation, subject to my original notes being edited thus ensuring that my broken English would be understood and also that the commercial products referred to would be available on your market.

Before ploughing, all the weeds and grass must be killed off as a clean start is very essential. The start is most important — when that is O.K. the rest is then relatively easy. This means spraying with "Round-up" in May/June and once the weeds have died down followed by ploughing in June/July as time permits. The soil is then thoroughly cultivated in July/August in preparation for making the ridges in September prior to planting the bulbs.

### Hot Water Treatment

All our bulbs are given H.W.T. prior to planting. We start with the small bulbs such as 'Tete-a-Tete' giving them two hours at 42-43°C. We also include 1% Captan and 0.1% Benlate as protective fungicides as well as 1.0% Formaline. The latest advice is 1% Formaline and 0.1% Sportak (Prochloraz). I would stress the importance of not using too high a concentration of Benlate with one year cyclamineous bulbs. I have heard of bulbs being killed with a 2% Benlate solution.

### Bulb Planting

The bulbs are planted on the prepared ridges in September/October and the soil is left as level as possible as this ensures more efficient weed control in the growing season. Fertilisers are applied at the rate of 400 Kg/ha (3.18 cwt/ac) in November of a balanced N.P.K. mix.

Because of the risk of frost damage on our very sandy type soils we find it essential to cover the beds with straw. Once the dangers of frost are past, the straw is carefully removed and before the bulbs emerge we apply a herbicidal mixture of a residual pre-emergence weedkiller consisting of "Round-up" and C.I.P.C., i.e. 2 litres

"Round-up" and 1½ litres C.I.P.C. per acre. No opportunity should be missed for spraying if the conditions are right. The next time may be too late!!

Early in January we apply a further 400 Kg/ha of the same N.P.K. fertiliser mix as much of the original application will have been used up or leached out of the soil.

#### **Future Spray Programme for Weed Control**

In February we spray for the second time with a mixture of 2 litres of C.I.P.C. and 200 gm Siniozine (Gesatop) per acre when the bulbs are ± 10 cm high.

In March before the blossoms appear and there is still visible soil on the ridges a spray of Goltix (Metamitron) at 1½ Kg per acre should ensure freedom from weeds for the rest of the season. Goltix which is a contact and residual herbicide is not specifically recommended for Narcissi, but it does an excellent job. Should there still be a weed problem even after all this work then a final spray of Basagran (Bentazone) after flowering when the leaves are dry and no rain is expected for two days will kill off any weeds present. Unfortunately some spray damage may be caused to the daffodils if the conditions are not right.

#### **Disease Control**

Fungal diseases can spoil a potentially good bulb crop so it is essential to carry out a regular spray programme, starting when the young growths are 15-20 cm high and repeating at 10-day intervals. Zineb at 1½ g per acre will give good control of Stagondspora, Smoulder and White Mould, while the addition of Benlate at and after flowering time (125 gms per acre) will help to control Botrytis. Depending on weather conditions a general rule would be to spray every week **before** flowering and every 10 days **after** flowering. Calm conditions are desirable and hopefully the weather should remain dry after application.

From experience I have found that a spray application rate of 1000 litres/ha for weedkillers and 200 litres/ha for fungicides gives the most satisfactory results. Obviously you should never mix herbicides and fungicides at application time.

Our whole system of production is based on the principle of keeping the ground free from weeds by using as few chemicals as possible and only at the lowest concentration compatible with efficient control.

Conversion Factors:	1 hectare = 2.471 acres
	1 litre = 0.21997 gals
	1 litre/ha = 0.29 fl. oz/100 sq. yds
	1 Kg = 0.4536 lb
	1000 litre/ha = 4 gals/200 sq. yds

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The one good thing about talking to yourself is that you always have a rapt audience.

# Brian Duncan

Hybridist and raiser of  
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# THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DAFFODILS — THE IRISH WAY

ALF CHAPPELL

After a nine-hour trip from Liverpool I arrived in Belfast where I was met by Gilbert Andrews. I was taken to the show venue where the City of Belfast Spring Flower Festival was being held. As usual everyone was busy putting up their display stands and exhibits.

Again I was to meet a lot of old and new friends including Sir Frank and Lady Harrison, John O'Reilly, Jack Carlisle and Florence Bankhead. I had met Sam in London. Janis Ruksans and John Pennings were also there. Janis is from Latvia and John is from Holland. They are two very knowledgeable people and I learnt a lot from listening to them.

This show was a first Spring Flower Festival for the city of Belfast and it is hoped to make it an annual event. I was again entrusted to stage the Carncairn entry for the 12 x 1 Championship of Ireland and I was pleased to see Kate Reade win this for the first time. The flowers were: Sdg. 52/8/82 1Y-Y, 'Doctor Hugh', 'Achduart', 'Oykel', 'Impala', 'Loughanmore', 'Portagolan', 'Emily', 'Bunclody', Sdg. 5/30/69 2W-O, Sdg. 1/30/82 2Y-R, 'Ashmore'.

Brian Duncan's second placing included 'Goldfinger', 'Young Blood', 'State Express', 'Silver Crystal', D1062 2W-P, D891 2Y-R, D1161 2W-P, D916 1Y-Y (Best in show), 'Dilena' 2Y-O, 'Doctor Hugh', D291 2O-R, D967 2W-P.

There were some good flowers in Brian's stand but it seemed to lack balance. I thought D971 2O-R spoiled the stand.

The Royal Mail Trophy 6 x 3 was won by Brian Duncan. 'Smokey Bear', 'Pink Pageant', 'Silver Crystal', 'Goldfinger', D876 2Y-Y, 'High Society' made up a very good stand.

The Amateur Championship of Ireland was won by S. McCabe with 'Cool Crystal', 'Achduart', 'Scarlet Thread', 'Midas Touch', 'Golden Joy', 'Bright Spark', 'Badbury Rings', 'Parterre', 'Fragrant Rose', 'Comal', 'Merlin', 'Ulster Bank'. This was a well staged entry.

The Novice Championship of Ireland was won by Richard McCaw with a very creditable entry. I had been invited to judge this section in conjunction with Kate Reade and Sir Frank Harrison and I must say I enjoyed the experience. Richard had in his entry 'Golden Jewel', 'Silent Morn', 'Parterre', 'Don Carlos', 'Golden Veil', 'Fair Prospect', 'Bunclody', 'Barley Sugar', 'Polar Circle'.

The rest of the Novice classes were well supported and of good quality. It is to be hoped that those who supported these classes are encouraged to continue in their effort to exhibit daffodils.

Premier blooms were: Div. 1, D916 1Y-Y. Div. 2, 'Golden Aura' 2Y-Y. Div. 3, 'Oykel' 3W-Y. Div. 4, 'Claridges' 4W-P.

The Best Bloom Novice was 'Silent Morn' which may have been 'Woodland Star'.

The Champion of the show was D916 1Y-Y with good form and colour but not large.

Other flowers to impress me were 'Silver Crystal' 3W-W, D891 2Y-R, D1161 2W-P, 'Mentor' 2W-P, 'Oykel', 'Athol Palace', 'Cavendish' and 'Megalith' 2W-Y.

This was a very successful festival and was well supported by the public.

The next two days were spent relaxing, taking down the shelters and doing some hybridising at Sandy McCabe's. On Tuesday Robin Reade picked me up and I was taken to Carncairn where I was to spend the next four days. Those who have stayed with Kate and Robin will know the routine. It is very homely and relaxing.

I spent some time helping Kate check her beds and seedlings. The stock looked very healthy and there were some nice seedlings coming on, although many were past their best. On Wednesday Robin took me for a lovely drive around Coleraine, Portrush, to Giant's Causeway and back for dinner. A very enjoyable drive around the Irish coast.

On Thursday Sam Bankhead picked me up and we went to Moyola Park for a game of golf. It was good to get some exercise and after a nice lunch there we returned to see some of Sam's seedlings. He has some very good 2W-Ws and 1W-Ws bred from 'Misty Glen'. It is to be hoped Sam will soon be back exhibiting again. I was taken back to Carncairn and the usual at 6 p.m.

On Friday Sandy McCabe picked me up and we returned to Ballymena. On Saturday morning we set off for Omagh where we were to visit Brian and Betty Duncan for the weekend. It was a beautiful day, around 80 degrees and we were given a warm welcome.

As would be expected, Brian was busy selecting and checking his seedling stocks. He has so many good ones coming on that it is difficult to decide which to keep. One prolific cross 'Pismo Beach' x 'High Society' has produced a very high percentage of 2W-WPs. It would be hard to choose the best.

Although it was getting late in the season there were still some good flowers to be seen. A 3Y-R bred from 'Montego' looked very good.

We also went to Clarke Campbell's, now Tyrone Daffodils, where the bulk of the Rathowen stock is planted. Brian still has some stock there and again the growth was good and clean. We then returned to Knowehead. We were joined for dinner by John O'Reilly and, after an enjoyable meal, we sampled some Saint Brendan's Irish Cream with our coffee. A relaxing evening before retiring.

Sunday morning brought another beautiful day and it was spent helping Brian set up his flowers for photographing for his catalogue, etc. After lunch we were to say goodbye to Brian and Betty and return to Ballymena. It was such a lovely evening we had a barbecue when we returned to Sandy and Mary's. Time was running out and it was sad to be leaving the Emerald Isle.

As Sandy was working, Sam Bankhead again picked me up and we had another enjoyable game of golf. A couple of pints of Irish bitter and a meal at the "Thatch" in Broughshane brought to an end another enjoyable stay in Ireland. That night I was taken to Belfast where I caught the ferry back to Liverpool.

Again I feel humble at the wonderful hospitality extended to me, especially from Sandy and Mary McCabe, who cared for me so well, and Kate and Robin Reade for their kindness in asking me to stay with them. Also to Sam and Florence Bankhead for taking me around and Brian and Betty Duncan for a wonderful weekend.

It was a wonderful stay and some day I hope I can return.

As I have said before . . . daffodil people ARE something special.

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## 1989 ADS CONVENTION

MARY LOU GRIPSHOVER

The 1989 convention of the American Daffodil Society was held in San Francisco on March 16-18. One hundred and eighty-six people attended to learn more about daffodils and renew old friendships. They were not disappointed on either count.

The weekend began with the National Show, with many exhibitors spending Wednesday evening preparing blooms. Bob Spotts exhibited magnificent blooms throughout the show, winning the Gold Ribbon for best in show with 'Creag Dubh'; the Maroon Ribbon for five reverse bicolours with 'Chelan' 2Y-W, 'Rio Dell' 2YW-WWY, 'Wheatear' 6Y-WWY, 'Lavalier' 5YW-W, and 'Swedish Fjord' 2YW-W; the Red-White-Blue Ribbon with 'Bright Angel' 9W-GOR, 'Lapwing' 5W-Y, 'Falconet' 8Y-R, 'Sunday Chimes' 5W-W, and a Mitsch seedling 2049/6; the Northern Ireland Award with 'Lilac Charm', 'Forge Mill' 'Standfast', 'Sportsman', and Harrison seedling 12/8/8; the English Award with 'Craig Stiel', 'Reference Point', 'Loch Loyal', 'Shining Light', and 'Loch More'; the Throckmorton Medal for 15 flowers from 15 different RHS classifications with 'Willet', 'Carib', 'Chelan', 'Lara', 'Lapwing', 'Philomath', 'Cataract', 'Barfly', 'Starlight Express', 'Moontide', 'Sea Green', 'Homestead', 'Gossamer', 'Dubose' 3-6, and Mitsch II 122-1; and the Gold Quinn Medal with 'Trena', 'Durango', 'Bluebird', 'Perky', 'Androcres', 'Brighton', 'Twicer', 'Cataract', 'Craig Stiel', 'Homestead', 'Copperfield', 'Creag Dubh', 'Bright Angel', 'Golden Pond', 'Reference Point', 'Sunday Chimes', 'Golden Aura', 'Princess Zaide', 'Silver Bells', 'Angel Eyes', 'Areley Kings', 'Willet', and two of his own seedlings. He also won the Fowlds Medal (best Division 6) and the Olive Lee Trophy (best Divisions 5-8) with a bloom of 'Trena'; the best pink with 'Delta Queen'; and the best white with 'Homestead', which was also the Reserve Champion.

The Hybridizers' Section is proving to be quite popular. The winner this year of the ADS Challenge Trophy was Californian Bill Roese. Blooms in this section are not eligible for other awards, as blooms for this section only may be grown in any manner appropriate to get them to the show table. In other areas, blooms must be grown in the open.

The Murray Evans Trophy for six seedlings went to Ben Hager for a group of red/yellow flowers, and the Goethe Link Medal for three seedlings went to Helen Link for three charming miniatures.

The Grant and Amy Mitsch Trophy for a vase of three seedlings went to Sid Dubose for his MS 32-40, 2W-Y.

The best vase of three was 'Ice Wings', exhibited by Ted Snazelle. The Miniature Gold went to Nancy Wilson for 'Scabrosa'; she also won the Miniature Rose with a seedling from *bulbocodium nivalis*, and the Gold Watrous Medal. The Miniature White Ribbon went to Christine Kemp for a vase of three *bulbocodium*.

The Purple Ribbon for best collection of five went to Stan Baird for a collection of trumpets which included 'Golden Vale', 'Meldrum', 'Royal Oak', 'Akala', and 'Aurum'. Successful in both miniatures and standards was Steve Vinisky, who won the Lavender Ribbon for a collection of five miniatures and the Green Ribbon for a collection of 12 standards from four divisions. Included in this collection were 'Dimity', 'Backchat', 'Rhapsody', 'Comal', 'Fiji', 'Hambleton', Duncan M52-2, 'Golden Aura', 'Golden Amber', 'Lemon Show', Tuggle 66/49, and Evans 2503.

Not to be overlooked were the commercial displays of Carncairn, Barbara Abel Smith, Clive Postles, Grant Mitsch Daffodils, and the Daffodil Mart. One could always find a crowd admiring the flowers and making "wish lists".

On Friday morning, judges gathered for breakfast and a refresher course on identifying miniatures presented by Helen Link. Following this, conventioners gathered to hear Clive Postles' programme, "Not Yet the End of the Line". Clive told us that he was continuing a programme similar to that of the late John Lea, whose stocks Clive had purchased. Bill Pannill and Father Athanasius Buchholz gave a warm and sensitive tribute to Murray Evans, each sharing with us some of their very special memories of a warm and generous man.

After lunch, buses departed for a tour of "Acres of Orchids", where we got a first hand look at tissue culture and cloning laboratory techniques.

Friday evening's banquet opened with a moment of silence in respect for those three great breeders who had recently gone on to greater glory — Murray Evans, Grant Mitsch, and Tom Bloomer. The business meeting of the Society followed, and then came the highlight of the evening — the auction of many choice cultivars from around the world.

Hybridizers gathered very early for breakfast on Saturday for an impromptu question and answer session. Saturday also brought

the rain which seems as much a part of conventions as the show — always on tour day! Nonetheless, we gamely set out for Melrose Gardens where Sid Dubose and Ban Hager even provided plastic booties so we could tour the fields without getting wet feet. That's thinking of everything! Fortified with coffee and cookies, we set out in the rain, seeing thousands of seedlings and newer cultivars from many growers. Lunch, followed by a tour of the cellars, was at Wente Brothers Wine Cellars.

The banquet on Saturday evening was followed by another programme by our entertaining new friend, Clive Postles. Clive showed slides of his gardens and home; he included slides of Dunley Hall, and slides of new winning cultivars from English shows. Dinner closed with an invitation from "Scarlett O'Daffodil", alias Jaydee Ager, who in full hoop-skirted dress complete with parasol and smooth Southern drawl, invited us to "come on down to Georgia next year". Won't some of you join us?

## WE SAVED THE BEST FOR LAST

KITTY FRANK

Our first spring this daffodil year came during September in New Zealand and Tasmania. Our second spring was in the States: California and the South. Our last spring came in April in Northern Ireland. Loving daffodils as we do we are unable to say one spring was better than another — just different. All the flowers were gorgeous, all the seedlings interesting, especially at the last stop, and the people and the hospitality without equal.

Brian Duncan has created cloth houses covering all sides and angles of his daffodils thereby making them taller and smoother and brighter coloured than those in Tennessee where the flowers are buffeted by sun and hot temperatures, freezes and frost, with little gusty winds and pouring rain scattered about, all in that order. The sun brings out the flowers and burns them. The freezes create rigid sticks that collapse with the thaw and the rain spatters mud on their faces. In spite of all this many flowers manage to be show-worthy, but we are not allowed to do much in the housing department for our daffodils. Oh for permission to protect!

Brian has also found the best way to prevent that summer chore of lawn mowing by placing beds of daffodils all over his yard — front, sides, back and all other corners. Truly beautiful in the spring, but he volunteered no information about the appearance of all these beds in the summer. And oh, the flowers!

Such seedlings, scores and scores of them! How exciting to wander about turning up heads to admire, to evaluate, and to enjoy.

All of which causes me to speculate how that weak 'Doctor Hugh' found its way to the Championship of Ireland class when there were so many others from which to choose. Perhaps it was perfect when it departed for the show, or maybe we looked at too many of the seedlings and really did not see in the beds the perfection that is usually found on the showbench in a major collection, but that flower weakened Brian's entry.

After Brian's brilliant array we were delighted to visit with the Harrisons. Above Strangford Lough with a view of the fallen fort and sailboats and arriving birds are grown some of the toughest daffodils there are. Of course, that is the primary aim of Sir Frank's breeding programme — flowers that will withstand the blasts of strong winds and driving rains. These cultivars certainly stand well in our yard. There is a lot to be said for a clump of, say, 'Witch Doctor' with a dozen stems and all of them worthy of show. Across the drive and down a windy slope to the lough like soldiers marching in phalanx were wind-resistant, tough, bright-coloured daffodils. Not torn by the wind nor burned by the sun are Frank's rich coloured, smooth flowers enjoying the cold while I had hat, scarf, gloves, boots and two sweaters trying to keep warm. (They say thin blood goes with the warm climate of the south, and I believe them.) There were not so many seedlings to choose from, but quality was all about us here too. Both of us were instantly taken by a cyclamineus that appeared to us to be a dramatic colour break in that division. For four days we argued with Sir Frank about that seedling. "No, no, Kitty, it is not a good thing". "But look at the colour". "No, no, Kitty, the cup is too short". "It's shaped just like 'Beryl' and everyone has been calling that a 6 for 80 years", and so on. When we left the Harrisons, we were promised one of the "unpromising" things. The perianth was creamy white with the Harrison substance — Frank said it should be pure white. The small cup was a rich, deep ruby colour, not orange red, not orange, and not a fade to the cup colour at all. Rich, deep, and a real change from the current colours. He must have taken to heart what we said, or perhaps he was teasing us about his plans for this delightful flower because he has named it 'Rubyat' and registered it. Hopefully we will have a bloom of it for the ADS National Show at Callaway Gardens.

For the rest of the cultivars there is the haze of clear whites, crisp cups, but the yellows were pretty much over leaving a very narrow selection for a major collection such as the Championship which no doubt caused the Harrisons to not consider an entry in that class.

Our last visit was with the Reades at Carncairn. The sheep had been displaced from this pasture area to make room for the daffodils. Rows and rows of blooming daffodils stretched along a gentle slope and danced in the gentle winds and breezes. No shielding cloth here, but no piercing and buffeting winds either. Here we saw many favourites from the U.S. — mostly Mitsch introductions — which would explain the ease with which Kate frequently wins the American bred class. Here also was a quantity of seedlings. I spent

most of my time checking the pinks and an amazing yellow trumpet with form, colour and fragrance. This big, clear yellow trumpet sat atop a stiff stem looking at you with a flat, not curled, perianth, a rounded cup slightly frilled at the mouth and with a delicate scent. Also, one must note that it appears to bloom late for a trumpet and could give quite a boost to a major collection when there is enough stock to market it.

Of the pinks I found the delicate pearl shell colour pleasing, but not for the likes of us with our hot bleaching spring sun. Instead I gravitated to the strong pink — all division 2s — with straight cups which may be forerunners of a good pink trumpet. There were very few rims, but instead full colour almost to the base with perhaps a trace of pale pink or white, and often a grey or green eye zone. Not only colour but substance and form were present in almost all of the seedlings.

Kate also had many pots full of pre-bloom miniature sized foliage which leads one to hope that in time many more fine small cultivars will be available in another part of the daffodil world. Here, also were the quantity and variety necessary for a major show entry.

While staying with the Reades we found a room whose window we peeked through but could not enter. What a blow! All those flowers set aside for the Belfast Spring Flower Festival and we could not feel, clean, shape up or anything else that a dedicated showman wants to do!

Comes the day of the show and what happens? We still cannot look at the daffodils. We are to judge and must not help. What we did have was a chance to study the trade stands, and look at the wide range of other flowers, arrangements and plants entered in other competitions. We made a straight line to the charming alpine section. Whereas the miniatures are very popular with the exhibitors and a major focal point for visitors to the ADS shows, perhaps with a larger variety of miniature cultivars currently available from many Dutch growers their daintiness will appeal to more growers. They do very well both in small gardens and in pots.

From these miniatures we found tulips, primulas, and other harbingers of spring seen frequently in your gardens, but are not happy with our climate. Summer heat and short winters seem to discourage many of the primulas and almost all of the late tulips.

The next place we found daffodils and tulips combined with other happy spring things was in the floral art section. All 24 of these entries represent a style of arranging that is no longer popular in the States. The full, happy, evenly balanced arrangements have given way to the more rigid free style, but that is another issue entirely.

Finally, however, we were all gathered up and given coffee and folders and introduced to the other members of the judging panel, assigned two clerks, and sent to the show floor. At last we get to see those chosen few cultivars from all the glorious daffodils we have seen in the fields.

With much trepidation I joined Don Barnes from England to

evaluate the entries for the Championship of Ireland. What a problem. Only two collections to choose from, but what entries. We looked, we studied, we commented. We looked at the backs, we looked at the overall entry. We compared. When all was said and done the deciding factor may have been 'Doctor Hugh'. The comparison was made more obvious by both entries having a 'Doctor Hugh'. (By the way, I did not realize that flower could get so big!) Kate Reade finally won the Championship with 'Achduart', 'Oykel', 'Impala', 'Emily', 'Bunclody', 'Loughanmore', 'Ashmore' and three seedlings — 5/30/69, 1/30/82, and 52/8/82 — and 'Portnagalon', which was a clean and sharply contrasted pink which, in the field, produced a large number of show-worthy flowers.

The balance of the open classes were held to the high standard set by the Championship, and though none suffered by comparison, their quality was constantly measured against that first class. The flower judged Best in Show was one of Brian's seedlings, a yellow trumpet with sparkling colour and impeccable form. If it came from the field and not a pot, this may also be a fine acquisition for late show collections for those of us without the expertise to hybridize. Also, there is no telling how much longer Don and I would have agonized over the Championship if that flower had replaced 'Doctor Hugh'. We might still be there!

Another seedling worthy of comment was a runner-up in another class. Even though this 2Y-R lost out to a beautiful white trumpet it should be noted that the quality of the perianth of this flower was superlative. It was not just a dark golden yellow, it shimmered, and was worthy of growing on and entering again in many shows.

The Amateur section seemed to be limited in the number of single stem entries as were the open Classes. Whether this was a result of the unusual weather (if weather is anything else except unusual) or a general lack of a wide range of cultivars being grown, remains to be seen. Anyone with limited space might be hampered with cultivars selected from the first four divisions, but I am always startled by the dearth of entries in divisions 5, 6, 7 and 9. The triandrus and cyclamineus especially take much less growing space than doubles, and tend to lengthen a growing season just as the poets give colour and fragrance to the end of the season. Some enterprising novice may want to expand his collection into this area and challenge some of the "old hands".

Speaking of Novices, the quality and quantity in this section of the show bodes well for NIDG and may shake loose some of those ribbons from the Amateur section!

By now the crowds were poring over the daffodils and making it difficult to garner exact results, but mention must be made of the Amateur Championship won by Sandy McCabe. The cultivars selected were 'Golden Joy', 'Bright Spark', 'Badbury Rings', 'Parterre', 'Fragrant Rose', 'Merlin', 'Ulster Bank', 'Midas Touch', 'Scarlet Thread', 'Achduart', and Jackson's 'Comal' and finally that perennial

favourite from Grant Mitsch, 'Cool Crystal'. This was certainly a nicely balanced and well staged collection from these three divisions.

The flowers that were favourites hold sway on this side of the Atlantic too. It is hard to challenge the bold colour of 'Achduart', the crisp contrast of 'Merlin'. From the rigid form of 'Daydream' and the placid calm of 'Cool Crystal', to the balance of the petaloids of 'Unique' there is quality and sturdiness aplenty. A collection of this set of cultivars would be a great beginning for a daffodil garden for fun and show. All in all, the quality of the entries I found excellent. After judging and luncheon, and speeches, I returned to the floor and still found fresh flowers for the visitors. This was the one most impressive factor of the show. No one had to panic hoping the judges got to his entry before it collapsed. The quality as well as the variety more than made up for the small quantity that a major show could draw. If the format of the show can continue, the interest will develop. Too many people were exclaiming over the daffodils and critically comparing them to believe that more growers of fine daffodils do not dwell in the Belfast area.

Winston Churchill may have been right when he said we are a people separated by a common language, but he gave no thought to the language of flowers, the willingness of flower lovers to share and help one another making way for friendships that span the globe. After all, the best part of daffodils is the people who grow them.

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## SECRETARIAL SNIPPETS

Normally this issue would carry a report of the London Show. However as this event is widely reported in other Daffodil Publications, I decided to forgo such a report this year. However it must be recorded that Carncairn Daffodils were awarded another Gold Medal for a Trade Exhibit. Our congratulations are extended to Mrs. Reade (ably assisted by Robin) on their achievement. This was a well deserved honour and they rounded off a most successful year by lifting the Championship of Ireland a few weeks later.

The Grim Reaper continues to take his toll. It is with regret that we record the death of R. McD. Coulter, Belfast (who was our Auditor for a number of years), Bob McCormick, Omagh and John Moralee, Kent. Our sympathy to the respective family circles.

The issue was marked by the wealth of copy received. Nevertheless like Old Mother Hubbard — my cupboard is now bare! Articles for inclusion should reach me by 1st March, 1990 for the April issue. Please don't wait until after the Christmas and New Year festivities are over — write to me NOW.

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