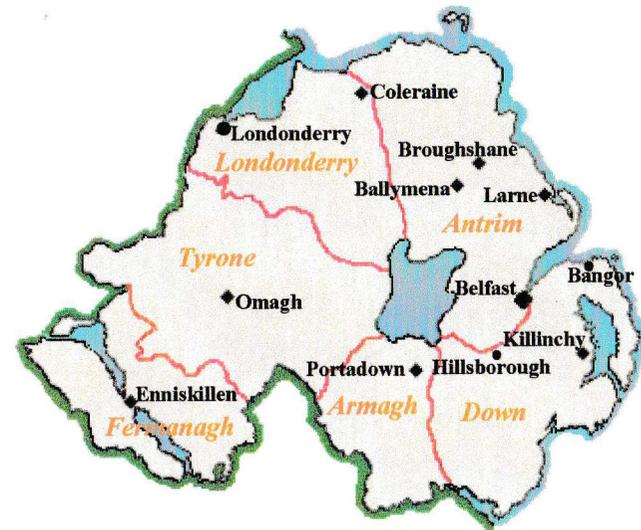


Newsletter

of the

Northern Ireland

Daffodil Group



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Issue

**THE NORTHERN IRELAND DAFFODIL GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

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CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

It was an inspired trip to Malone House last Sunday to pick-up Belfast Show Schedules left for me by Alice that I commenced these notes. I was put into "Daffodil mode", when Pearl and myself went for a walk, we came across a large drift of Tete-à-Tete almost in full bloom, I think this is early.

As usual for my Chairman's remarks I will begin by thanking people that help to chart and broaden our group. James Smyth, who, alongside his two daytime jobs has done an excellent work as our Honorary Secretary, Derrick Turbitt as our treasurer and covering for myself when I wasn't able to attend meetings. The NIDG Committee for direction and not least, our Publication Committee. I really like the way they have sorted photographs on the new paper, just a pity I haven't got better blooms to picture. Also to group members who attend our meetings, it makes it worthwhile when there is a good turnout and to Jill McIvor and her team at Balance House where we are always made welcome. It has been a sad year for Jill with the loss of Basil her husband; we offer her the condolences of the group.

Our programme of events, last year, were varied, a Snowdrop visit, tour of Botanic Gardens, Seedling slide show and NIDG Lecture of the year with Janis Ruksan's to name a few. Many thanks to those that helped organise those events

The Spring show scene was well supported by our group and every bloom staged helps to promote our favourite flower. I give a detailed report on the visit of the RHS Narcissus Committee to Belfast Spring Show in our last Newsletter suffice to say that it was a huge success and how do we follow that? Nial Watson may have ideas for 2008! I would take this opportunity to congratulate Nial on his

appointment to Director-at-Large for the American Daffodil Society.

This years proposed programme is also very comprehensive, a couple of things to note the Amateur Championship of Ireland is going to Dublin, I think for the first time ever so please plenty of support and competition for Michael Ward & Ian Erskine, don't give them too easy a run for it. This season the Silver Thread will be in Ballymena. Later in the year I am looking forward to the visit of Malcolm Bradbury, who among other things will tell us about his work on the 'Daffodils with Snowdrops and Tulip Yearbook. I would also encourage as many exhibitors to stage at Belfast Spring show, we need to bring Novice growers in, please speak to and encourage as many affiliated Society members as possible, don't forget to mention that there is very good prize money. It is also hoped that there will be some Mainland exhibitors attending, now that the cheaper air flights are making Belfast much more affordable and easily accessible.

We are always looking at ways of how we find new growing members. One thing Dan McCormick attempted last year was to give some of the bulbs left from our bulb auction to an affiliated Society for sale at a reduced prices to try and encourage their members to grow more Daffodils. This will be rolled out to even more societies this year. If your society would be interested please speak or write to the NIDG Secretary and or a member of the committee. Of course any money raised will be split.

All that remains for me now is to thank you for your support through my two years of office, it has been a great pleasure and I wish your new Chairman and committee good luck throughout their term.

Richard McCaw

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Belfast Show in 2004 was a roaring success. Its not every year we have the privilege of welcoming the RHS Narcissus and Tulip Committee to 'our show' and to call upon their expertise to judge the show, in record time too, which pleased Alice (The Show Manager) There was a great sense of fellowship between competitor and judge and the RHS committee certainly enjoyed the weekend.

The total number of exhibits at the show was 567, a decrease of 167 exhibits on last year, The biggest decrease was in the Open classes of the daffodil section which saw exhibits fall from 568 to last year to 442 this year. This drop was due to the absence of one of our major competitors. This shows how much we missed him. Amateur exhibits rose slightly but not a single entry was recorded in the Novice section. Where were all the Novice exhibitors from previous years ? We need your support for 2005.

The sun shone on the Belfast Show bringing out over 4,000 visitors over the two day event. That was more than double the 2003 figures for the same event. The Belfast Parks department are to be congratulated on this achievement and also the smooth running of the show itself. We have just one change to the schedule of Belfast Show for 2005 which will affect all exhibitors. When registering entries, individual exhibitors are responsible for filling in their own entry cards before placing them under their exhibits. This system was tried at the Belfast Autumn Show and was successful.

The Amateur Championship of Ireland is moving South this year for the very first time. The Trophy will be competed for at a show hosted by the South Dublin Horticultural Society while Ballymena Garden Club will host the Silver Thread award.

The programme of events for 2004 was very varied with visits to snowdrop gardens and Botanic gardens. George Wilson brought us up to speed on the best new seedlings while Rowland Gilpin reviewed the seasons shows and Brian Duncan tested our daffodil knowledge . The most popular event had to be Janis Ruksan's talk on small bulbs. Thanks to all who gave their time and expertise to take these meetings and thanks to those who attended.

In this year's programme we will have a guided tour of the Rose Trials and our big talk this year will be in November given by Malcolm Bradbury (editor of the RHS Daffodil, Snowdrop and Tulip year book). I trust you will find our programme of interest and boost the attendance at meetings.

Looking ahead to the future, in 2008 we plan to host part of a pan -European Convention. We have the green light to proceed with Convention from the World daffodil Council and have appointed Nial Watson as co-ordinator. Congratulations are also due to Nial who has been proposed the American Daffodil Society Director-at-Large .

Finally may I wish everyone a successful daffodil season for 2005.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Editor's perennial plea more copy please. We need to keep on producing copy for the newsletter if we are to keep publishing two editions per year. I have always contended from my position at the production end that it makes my life much easier if I have articles in store so that when it comes to publication time the editorial team are not constantly asking for copy.

This edition contains some very informative articles and others which are food for thought which I trust you will

enjoy reading. Nial's article on transporting daffodils is full of good information especially for the less experienced exhibitors among our ranks. George has given us his thoughts on that much underrated division and where there is a lot of scope for would be breeders to develop them even further. Ian has produced an article on companion planting which has many good ideas for the planting of daffs throughout the garden as a whole.

Our new chairman feature in a profile which will give you grater insight into what makes him tick and his passion for gardening. Richard has continued the articles in previous editions by giving us an article on his cultivation of daffodils. Included also are part of the notes Brian used when giving a talk on intermediates.

This year I had my first blooms open during the second week in January, a five floret 'Avalanche' and a three floret 'Castanets'. Since then a succession of blooms of these two cultivars have continued to open right up to the present time in mid March. Needless to say the raw biting winds during the first two weeks in this month did not do them any favours but still they bring a welcome foretaste of what is to come.

May I wish you all every success during this season and hopefully you will be reading your copy of this publication in the not too distant future.

Maurice Kerr

USEFUL TIP

To lift hanging heads place flowers with their stems in a basin of water and their heads hanging over the rim, leave overnight and the blooms will be perfect, if not leave a little longer. The nearer to horizontal you can get them the better.

TRANSPORTING STANDARD DAFFODILS

You've picked all your show winning blooms and they are all over the garage in whatever containers available to hold water and daffodils. The show is looming, panic! How do I get these all onto the show bench in as good a condition as they are now?

Before starting there are various considerations to take into account. How far away is the show? How many blooms are there? How will they be travelling, by car, ferry or 'plane? How long will they be out of water? Are they to cross international borders?

When the show is local and a short car journey is all that is required and there are only a manageable number of flowers then they can be transported in water. There are many ways of doing this depending on personal choice. If you are well organised and have your own vases then the blooms can be pre-staged and the vases packed firmly into boxes so that there is no movement and that the heads are not rubbing together. Bikini Vases are good for this as the pointed vases without their bases fit well into foam cut with appropriate shaped holes. Once at the show the vases can be set up and the final touches given to the flowers. A method favoured by some is to have a bucket of water with wire mesh stretched over the top and a tangle of mesh in the base. The stems are threaded through the mesh on top and the mesh in the base of the bucket will hold them upright. The buckets have to be very firmly packed into the car so that they don't fall over! We generally use wine bottles in a bottle crate. Depending on the size of the stem three to four can be fitted into each bottle. The stems are kept firmly in place with moss so that the flower heads are facing away from and not touching each other and the bottles put into the crate in such a way as to keep them apart. The crates fit well

onto the back seat or boot (trunk) of most cars. When travelling keep the temperature low.

If the distance is a bit further and the flowers are not going to be handled by baggage handlers then a cardboard box is ideal. These are freely available from florists who are glad to give them to you and have the advantage that they can be left behind after the show. I line the box with tissue paper then take each stem and wipe it dry before laying it gently in the box. The next one is laid beside the first with the perianths overlapping. This is continued the whole way across one end of the box, the next row is put in at the opposite end and so on until the box is filled. Once full, the flowers are all covered with tissue paper, the lid put on and the box carefully placed into the boot of the car. We carried six full boxes from home to Wisley (London) like this. This journey included an overnight stop and the only problem was a daughter who complained that the car was too cold. Wear more clothes! If the flowers are out of water for this amount of time they have to be treated differently on arrival than those that have only been out of water for a short time. Remove them from the box and cut off the bottom inch (2.5cm) of the stem with a slanting cut and plunge as deep as possible into water. Even wilted flowers should miraculously revive.

Air travel brings a whole new set of circumstances mainly in that once on the plane the flowers are at the mercy of baggage handlers who are notoriously rough as they drop onto the baggage carousel can also be. Here a considerably more robust box is required. We have two types of box. One is aluminium and the other a series of wooden boxes that fit together to form one piece of baggage. When making these boxes it is important to be sure that they are of a size that the airline will accept and that they are deep enough to hold big division 1 flowers. The aluminium box is without doubt the strongest but is very expensive to have

made and has to have wood or wooden strips in its base to pin the blooms down. The wooden ones are easy and cheap to make and have a complete base to pin to. We use the aluminium box if we only have up 100 flowers for show and the wooden for larger amounts such as when we are putting up a trade exhibit. The packing of both is the same, pack them tight and pin them down. The sides of the box are lined with loose tissue paper and at either end two ribbons are attached to the base. Across the ends a soft foam pad made from pipe insulation cut lengthwise and wrapped in tissue to give a semi-circular "pillow" is used. The flowers, with very well dried stems, are placed into the box with the perianths sitting on the "pillow" and packed in tightly taking care that there are no creases in the petals or crushing of the corona. Once a row is completed another "pillow" is pushed in under the perianth of the first row. With care the ribbons are fed under the petals and over the "pillow" and firmly pinned to the base of the box holding that row of flowers in place. Another row is started at the opposite end of the box and when completed the next row is placed on top of the second "pillow" and perianths of the first row and so on until the box is full. At this stage there will be a mass of stems in the middle of the box. These need to be fastened to the base as well. Use ribbons across the box to pin the stems firmly down. Cover the blooms with more tissue and close the box and secure it firmly. Be sure that there are "FRAGILE" stickers on the outside and then check them in as usual. On arrival cut the stems as described earlier and leave in water. We have had flowers checked in at Belfast straight through to the USA that have gone astray, arrived very much later than us and have still been alright,

That brings me to crossing international borders. If possible, a Phytosanitary Certificate from the Department of Agriculture will make life easier at the point of entry. However, the crucial thing is that when packing the

flowers you make absolutely sure that there are no passengers or traces of soil. Even a small pollen beetle or spider could result in the whole lot being destroyed. We hold the flowers up to the light so that we can see through them.

Get all this right and it opens up a whole new world stage for your prize daffodils.

Nial Watson.

MY DAFFODIL YEAR

I was asked to outline in bullet form my list of to do's during a Daffodil year. I have listed below things I try to do, with short explanations if needed. The old adage rings true 'do the right thing at the right time'. I also do things when perhaps you should not, is this a case of experimentation or did not 'do at the right time'? Some points at the end of a month may continue into the next and visa versa. It is a good thing that Daffodils are so undemanding!

January: -

- Check and stake pots.
- Slug pellets.
- First dressing of Sulphate of Potash especially pots.

February: -

- Clean and wash equipment needed for start of show season.
- Bring into glasshouse selected pots
- Liquid slug killer
- Second dressing of Sulphate of Potash.
- Spray with pre-emergent weed killer.
- Send off any entries of to Shows that require pre-entry.

March: -

- Spray with fungicide and spread Temix.
- Slug pellets
- Put up some cover
- Cut flowers for NIDG Early Show.

April: -

- Take a Valium, as this is the month everything goes mad.
- Daffodil crosses made and tied to canes with label so easily seen.
- Cut flowers for show.
- Remove pots from glasshouse as flowering finishes.
- Commence war on weeds.
- Spray with Sineb (fungicide)
- Rouge out virused or diseased plants.
- Attend as many shows as possible.

May: -

- Attend final shows of the season.
- Continue with Daffodil crosses.
- Take down cover.
- Order bulbs from suppliers, from wish list made through show season.
- Continue weed control, winning an odd battle, losing the war.
- Spray with fungicide and spread Temix sparingly.

June: -

- Tie net covers to developing seed heads for collection when I am ready. These are cut pieces of Ladies tights sealed at one end, place over seed head, tied round base of seed head with a wire tie and secured to cane.
- Hoe beds to disturb soil into space left as foliage starts to die back. Also helps with weed control.

July: -

Remove two-year-old seedlings from boxes.
Commence bed preparation.
Harvest seeds as they ripen.
Commence soil preparation.

August: -

Dry and sort bulbs for planting.
Decide which is for replanting in field, pots or give-away.
Replace labels and write new one for new purchases.
Hot Water Treat bulbs for field.
Write labels and allocate number to selected seedling dug this year.
Continue ground preparation.

September: -

Plant out 2-year-old seedlings.
Sow seeds in rows into boxes; these are approximately 24 by 18 inches and 9 inches deep.
Commence planting bulbs in field finish by end of September... hopefully.
Pot up bulbs and place in plunge bed.
Make accurate plan. I have a spreadsheet for each ridge, divided into rows again divided by 8. As I plant 8 bulbs to a row each box in the spreadsheet has a name.

October: -

Finish planting up pots if not completed.
Finish planting of late purchases.
Spray for weeds and pre-emergence. Careful not too late and daffodil noses are beginning to appear.

November: -

Complete tidy up of beds
Check labels in other beds and relabel where necessary.
Start writing up seasons notes, crosses, plantings, etc.
Winter dig new beds.

December: -

Continue/complete writing up notes.
Check beds for disturbance.
Have Christmas Day off if wife demands it.

I am sure there are things you do that I do not but that is where it 'works for you' and allows show exhibitors to stage award winning blooms. Someone once said 100% extra effort 10% extra gain! I wish.

Richard McCaw

COMPANION PLANTS

Daffodils look lovely when in full flower but when as the flowers die off you are left with a mass of green strap like leaves that slowly die back and look untidy. So how can we have the best of both worlds lovely flowers and have the leaves hidden.

Companion planting: Choosing the right plant that will go well both in colour and structure with the daffodils.

As gardens nowadays are getting smaller you have the option of planting your lovely daffodil varieties in bulb baskets. These are about 10 inches round by 6 inches deep and made of plastic riddled with holes to aid drainage and allow the bulbs roots to grow out into the soil. Plant the baskets up with a good well drained compost mix and plant the baskets in your garden border to allow the bulbs to be at a depth twice the size of the bulbs. Mulch your soil with composted garden compost, bark or leaf mould this will help suppress weed growth and also act as an insulator for the bulbs over the cold winter months. Then as soon as the daffodils have finished flowering you can lift the baskets and plant them in your back garden to allow the leaves to die down naturally out of sight.

The other method is to plant herbaceous perennials along

with your daffodils so as when the daffodils are in flower the perennials have started to grow and will soon cover the daffodil leaves from sight. Good examples of perennials to use. In the front of your border use *Alchemilla mollis* this is a very good edger, with glaucous green leaves followed by lime yellow flowers in the summer, and defines your border. You can interplant with *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant' with its silver grey leaves followed by mauve flowers both these plants are very lax in growth and really flow well together. Behind these plants you have a vast choice of plants to use *Heleniums* come in shades of rustic autumnal colours red, burnt amber gold and wine red. Mix along with *Verbena bonariensis* to give height to your border. Behind these plants plant your daffodil bulbs it is best to plant in groups of 5 or 9 of the same cultivar together to get instant impact. Along with the daffodils plant tulips, *colchicum* (autumn crocus), alliums and *gladiolus*. This will give a succession of flowers throughout the whole year. By the time the daffodils are over the *Heleniums* will be up the same height of the daffodil foliage and the alliums will be starting to send up their onion like leaves. The *Verbena* will tower over the *Helenium* and both flower at the same time with the alliums and *gladiolus* out before from mid summer to early autumn. Finally the autumn crocus will be out in flower when the perennials have started to die down. Of course this is only based on a one metre square of a border when planting up the rest of your border try to keep the colours harmonising with each other. Remember Reds stand out in a border along with whites. The mauves and lime greens mellow into the background well but makes the border feel cooler. So mix the colours well if you want to draw your eye to a particular tree in your border use subtle greens so as not to draw attention away from the tree. If you planted like red dahlias your eye is drawn to the red colour and you do not notice the tree. The same goes for daffodils not that the breeders are getting good pink trumpets, dark orange perianths and split coronas that you either like or dislike they stand out from the crowd nearly too much at times. If using these coloured daffodils

in your garden keep them to the back of your garden not at the entrance to the garden as you want to draw people into the garden. If they see these bright colours it will entice them to wander down the garden to see how a daffodil can have pink cups, the general public is still not used to seeing these pink trumpets, in gardens and it is always a good talking point in your garden. Try to avoid using mixed daffodils unless it states the colour range on the packet. If you choose your daffodil varieties wisely you will have flowers from 14th February right up to 6th May. When buying from catalogues you will notice a number beside each bulb this is an indication to when the daffodil will flower although in some years and especially in recent times the winters are getting milder so therefore the mid season daffodils are now flowering earlier.

Companion planting informal in grass below trees.

When planting in grass do not plant in straight lines. Scatter your bulbs over the grass and plant where they fall. Mix the daffodils with crocus, snowdrops, bluebells, cyclamen, deciduous ferns and trilliums. The ferns will grow at the same time as the daffodils and will help to disguise the daffodil leaves.

This is only a sample of what you can use to help disguise your daffodil foliage after flowering. If anyone has any more suggestions please write into the editor all comments welcome.

Happy gardening.

Ian W Scroggy

Join the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

TO J. Smyth, 35 Tullyglush Rd, Banbridge, Co. Down. BT32 3TN

THOUGHTS ON DIVISION 11

Some time ago I penned a somewhat tongue in cheek article entitled 'Division 11 The Debatable Daffodil'. In this I admitted I was most definitely a 'splitophile' being an admirer of Div. 11 both as attractive flowers and as quite valid members of the Narcissus family. Since I wrote this piece the public awareness of these split corona daffodils has increased to the degree where they are now widely available in catalogues such as Walkers or for sale in garden centres. In these catalogues and sale stands they are often described under their old original names, 'Orchid Flowered' or 'Butterfly Daffodils' but in either case the term Division 11 or Split Corona is usually appended to these somewhat exotic descriptions.

What I intend to do in the next few paragraphs is to look at some examples of older but still currently available Div. 11 offerings and examine some of the more recent introductions in an attempt to assess how good or bad the older varieties really were and look at the improvements that have taken place. This will obviously be a very personal review and will deal only with cultivars that I grow or know very well and would like to grow.

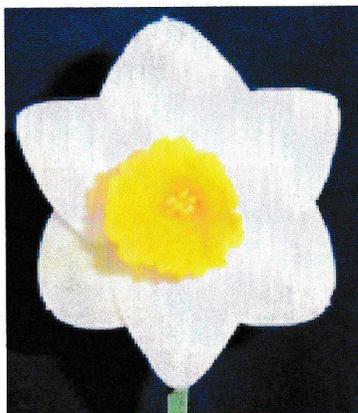
In the past the bulk of the 'splitophobe' comments directed towards this division has concentrated on, poor standard of perianth in regard to form and substance, irregular splitting of the corona and general lack of size. May I state at the outset that I never felt these comments were appropriate en masse to this division any more than they are to any other division. I intend therefore to begin by looking at older Div 11 cultivars where the quality of these supposed suspect areas is I believe at least on a par with their contemporaries from other divisions. In doing this I hope to raise the level of debate above simple admiration or bias and also bring some objectivity to bear on the subject. As I grow only one Papillion (11 b) variety the following

comments refer to Collar (11 a) daffodils with which I am more familiar.

In any examination of split corona daffodils it is impossible to overlook the contribution of Jack P. Gerritsen in the development and supply of cultivars in this division. In fact of the total number of cultivars appearing in various readily available catalogues or on stands in garden centres a high percentage is still Gerritsen flowers, some dating back to 1950. It is therefore appropriate that I should start by looking at a Gerritsen flower not only due to the contribution made by this grower but due to the fact that it is still a fine daffodil. It is now 30 years since 'Colblanc' (11aW -GWW) was first registered and it is living proof of how unjustified many claims are in regard to split coronas. This is a flower with a perianth that has both form and substance to spare, clear green white in tone with broadly ovate main petals that almost touch at the back of the flower. The corona is ivory white, if anything even firmer in substance with a yellow green eye. The pistil, anthers etc. form an erect tapered column in the centre adding a note of formality to the corona which is superbly filled and is almost equal in length to the perianth. In ways this is a pity as the perianth has such good form it deserves to be seen. 'Colblanc' also has size to spare, it is listed as 110mm wide but in my plot I have had it in excess of 115mm. Considering its date of registration and when viewed against contemporaries from other divisions I feel 'Colblanc' gives clear and current proof that blanket criticism of split coronas was never appropriate. Last but not least it is a good increaser, although this is possibly a negative point from a 'splitophobe' point of view!

Most daffodil growers will be familiar with another Gerritsen introduction namely 'Colorama' (11a Y-O) which dates from 1973, this flower has been one of the stalwarts of division 11 for many years and still appears on the show bench in spite of more recent cultivars. 'Colorama' is another flower that usually exceeds it's registered size of 90 mm and while never large it often qualifies

Spring Show 2005



Queen's Guard
Best Bloom in Show
Brian Duncan



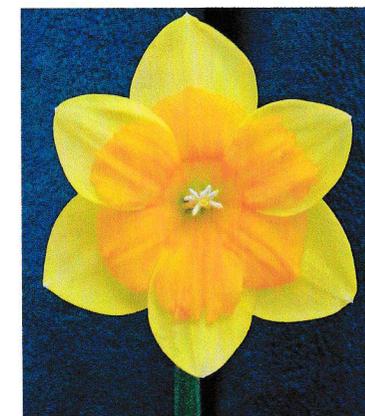
Impeccable
Nial Watson



Some of the Blooms at the Early Show in Colemans Garden Centre
with Betty Duncan, Richard McCaw, Brian Duncan and Derek Turbitt in the
background.



Lennymore
Nial Watson



Maria Pia
Brian Duncan

as a good medium sized bloom of around 95mm. It is lighter in substance than 'Colblanc' but still manages to impress in this regard with bright yellow flat and overlapping perianth segments. The corona is deeply and evenly split, matching the perianth segments in width and slightly more than half the length of the perianth. It also has what I consider to be another essential of a good Div. 11 and that is deep frilling of the corona, more on this topic later.

Fresco (11 a W-GYY) is the last Gerritsen introduction I am going to look at in detail and is in my opinion the pick of the Gerritsen flowers that are still available. I first bought this one from Kate Reade around eight years ago and it was my introduction to this division and indeed to the less than rapturous response that greeted it in the Any Other Division class which was often the only place it could be staged. 'Fresco' is around the same size as 'Colorama' and also has bright lemon yellow colouring only this time it features in the corona. On full maturity the deeply frilled and lobed corona often develops a band of white on the outer edge, this band being a much brighter shade than the perianth which is a more ivory tone. This is another good increaser and with its undoubted form I am not surprised it has been widely used in breeding new cultivars.

On the topic of breeding, many Gerritsen flowers have been used particularly by Ron Scamp who has flown the Div. 11 flag for a number of years and it is some of his introductions I now want to look at in terms of my brief review of more recent introductions. Scamp often made use of the Gerritsen variety 'Brandaris' (11 a Y-Y) and the Mitsch variety 'Paricutin' (2 Y-O) which is a pre 1952 introduction. He also uses 'Colorama' (see Above) and 'Gironde' (11 a Y-Y) another Gerritsen cultivar. Another Mitsch flower used by Scamp is 'Phantom' (11 a W-P) which I simply cannot grow to produce a decent corona, yet the cultivars produced by Scamp using this flower as a pollen parent have excellent coronas but alike with 'Phantom' they often tend to lack size.

However, lacking in size or not I cannot look at Ron Scamp Div. 11 offerings without mentioning 'Langarth' (11 a W-P) which has good N.I. connections as it is a 'Quiet Day' (2W-GPP) x 'Phantom' cross. I don't grow this one myself but I have seen enough examples to be struck both by the form and consistency that it displays. 'Langarth' is on the small end of the medium range just making it into the 90+mm area but what a little gem. The petals are broad and for a Div. 11 are unusually rounded and are a lovely milk white shade. The corona has lobing and frilling to spare and shades from cream/pink at the centre to apricot/ coral pink at the outer edges. This is a flower that would be hard to overlook in a vase of three class.

One Scamp flower I have just started growing is 'Pampaluna' (11aY-Y), and based on one flowering I am impressed by it's form and substance. A uniform deep yellow in colour with flat petals and corona segments about two thirds the length of the perianth it is a very 'formal' flower that should do well on the show bench. It is listed as a mid-season flower but in my plot it flowered very late, perhaps it needs time to settle. Incidentally the parents of 'Pampaluna' are 'Golden Aura' x 'Colorama' which explains the deep colour and the formal poise of the flowers.

One of the best known Scamp cultivars is 'Boslowick' (11 a Y-O) which he registered in 1991. This is a fine medium sized flower with slightly reflexing petals which add to the poise and seem to accentuate the splitting and frilling of the corona, it is also one of Scamp's many Brandaris x Paricutin crosses.

Looking at these three Ron Scamp offerings and comparing them with the Gerritsen cultivars discussed above and other older varieties there is evidence of progress. 'Langarth' is a better flower than 'Colblanc' or the Mitsch cultivar 'Phantom' but it is almost thirty years younger. Similarly 'Pampaluna' has better poise than 'Colorama' but once again there is a thirty year time difference so I am even more convinced that there wasn't a great deal wrong

with the older varieties and perhaps complaints about them were not objective in content. This is also borne out when comparing a good example of Fresco with all but the best of the newer registrations, suffice to say Fresco is still a good flower.

One recent introduction that I admire greatly is Diversity (11 a W-PPW), it must be good for after all it appeared on the cover of the R.H.S. Daffodil and Tulip year book for 2001-2002! This Brian Duncan flower has all the attributes of a good split corona having good consistent perianth substance and form (despite the note in the catalogue). It is interesting that 'Last Chance' (1 l a W-P) is the chosen pollen parent as this David Sheppard registration has a Gerritsen cultivar ('Canasta') as a seed parent and Fresco is a 'Canasta' seedling. So maybe there is mileage for some hybridiser in this area, it can't be coincidence that two such good flowers are closely connected with 'Canasta'. Now, back to 'Diversity', to my mind this is the first recent introduction that really shows really significant development. The perianth shows great improvement in form over even 'Fresco' in the old brigade and while it may lack the weight of substance of 'Colblanc' it still has substance to spare. The corona has delightful shades of pink blending into creamy white and is uniformly lobed and frilled. If split coronas get better than this one then I can't wait to see them. I am growing 'Diversity' for the first time next season but in the past year I have grown a sister seedling 'Vanellus' (11 a W-YPP) which is bigger than 'Diversity' and while perhaps lacking the 'finish' of the latter it is still a fine flower. 'Vanellus' demonstrates what a productive vein Brian struck in crossing 'Movie Star' with 'Last Chance'. The perianth is if anything whiter than 'Diversity' but this may be an optical effect due to the yellow shades in the corona which appears to stand slightly proud of the perianth, altogether a very pleasing and possibly underrated flower.

Incidentally the more observant of you cant have failed to notice that I didn't give honourable mention to 'Tripartite' (11 a Y-Y) in any of the foregoing observations. This is not out of

disregard or indeed dislike but simply that I was attempting to compare like with like and as 'Tripartite' is multi-headed it is outside my self imposed terms of reference. Personally I wouldn't dream of growing daffodils without growing this fine split corona.

So, lets take stock at this stage and see where we have got to in this somewhat personal review of old and new split corona daffodils. As I see it there have been definite advances in the quality of Div. 11 cultivars over the last twenty or thirty years but then with few exceptions this applies to all other divisions. Ron Scamp's offerings show marked improvement in terms of overall form and consistency over many older varieties and are worthy additions to any collection. But perhaps they do not show the advance one would expect given the various registration dates, perhaps his 'next generation' of cultivars will show another level of advancement, and that is well worth waiting for. With Diversity I believe split coronas have in the eyes of many observers 'come of age' as it is hard to fault on any grounds other than splitaphobia!

Now let us attempt to look into the future and express a niggling concern regarding further developments. In his recent article on golden trumpets (Spring 2002 issue) Brian Duncan expressed regret that many recent cultivars had lost the flare at the end of the corona due to breeders striving to produce flowers that don't nick petals or produce 'mitten' marks. I feel there is a similar development occurring in split coronas as hybridisers try to 'tidy up' the coronas of their new cultivars. The logical outcome of this trend would be the production of flowers where the coronal segments would lie flat on the petals with no evidence of frilling or waving. The whole flower would then resemble a flattened out Div. 2 with deep lobing that qualified it as a Div 11. Personally I feel split coronas must have a degree of flamboyance in the corona, not a rigid ordered appearance, that is to me one of their most appealing characteristics. It is also possibly how they got their original

and most common garden centre name, after all who ever saw a flat orchid? So, please by all means strive for better substance, regularity, poise or whatever but don't turn split coronas into bland 'sculptured' flowers.

As I stated at the outset the foregoing is a personal review and is limited to cultivars I grow or have seen often enough to form an opinion regarding form, consistency etc. There are obviously many other candidates both from the older varieties and in the newer offerings, there are also many growers who are not mentioned, this is inevitable given the parameters that I set. I do hope however I have persuaded you to look without bias at all Split Coronas and see them for what they are, attractive and very often well formed members of the narcissus family.

George Wilson

PERSONALITY PROFILE

Derrick Turbitt



To the daffodil growing community outside Northern Ireland Derrick Turbitt is probably best known for his wonderful 2Y-R 'Causeway Sunset'. The rest of us who

compete regularly against him are all too aware that that 'Causeway Sunset' is the tip of an avalanche of excellent flowers that Derrick is raising in his Portstewart (County Londonderry) rigs and in the fullness of time many of these flowers will hopefully be registered and distributed through commercial outlets. A glance at the results from the Belfast show 2004 will give some indication of what lies ahead, in this show Derrick gained awards for Best Bloom Boom Div1 with Sdg. 9909, 1 W-W and Reserve Best Bloom and Best Div.2 with Sdg. 9718, 2W-YYP. These results were gained using his own seedlings and to add icing to the cake they were judged by the luminaries of the R.H.S. Daffodil and Tulip Committee.

To get some understanding of how Derrick became involved in hybridising and developing these excellent blooms and the multitude yet to come we need to go back and follow his interests from childhood onwards. Derrick originally hails from the village of Milford outside Armagh City where he attended the local Primary School. This seat of learning had a curriculum where gardening was encouraged, provided you brought your own spade and gave summer afternoons off lessons to allow use of the spade! Derrick also spent time as a child with a retired gentleman who had been the gardener in the local 'Manor House'. After this idyllic formal and informal education in things horticultural he later transferred to Armagh Royal School where in the fullness of time he gained the grades necessary to enter Trinity College, Dublin. In this historic University he studied Science and was awarded a B.A Degree.

Derrick is renowned for having an understated but sharp and perceptive wit, when asked why he chose Trinity he replied "Well it was farthest from home" (and presumably parental checks on progress) he also claims to have spent a fair bit of time in the glasshouses at Glasnevin because

"They were a lot warmer than my digs". Having completed his B.A. he moved back north again and did research at the New University Of Ulster, Coleraine culminating in the receipt of a Ph.D. Life then got really good in 1972 when he married Barbara and took up a teaching post in Omagh Technical College, where he stayed for two years. After this Derrick and Barbara moved to Portstewart as Derrick had been appointed to a new teaching post in nearby Bushmills. By now Derrick and Barbara had been blessed with the addition of Cheryl to their family and she was followed in due course by Julie and Richard. Even though some of their family have now flown the nest the Turbitt family are still a cohesive and well knit unit who give support to each other in their various pursuits and professions.

After moving to Portstewart Derrick's Primary school background had steered him into growing vegetables and dahlias and this last interest led to him joining the N.I. Dahlia Society shortly after it was founded. Derrick then joined the Coleraine Horticultural Society and as he describes it he came under the influence of David Willis who was developing the Guy Wilson daffodil gardens. Due to this association he sent off for a beginners collection and alike with many who do this he was 'hooked'. Initially his main problems in showing daffodils centered around the fact that unlike dahlias there is no second flush of bloom, as Derrick puts it, "Like many things in life timing is everything and extremely difficult to get absolutely correct". From the outset he sowed seed but as most came from open pollinated flowers in the Guy Wilson gardens nothing special appeared. He describes this period in his hybridising as "a bit of a waste of time", it did however develop the methodology necessary to propagate seeds and nurture them until they flowered.

When asked about his cultivation methods Derrick

describes them as "Nothing organic about my growing methods, I am prepared to 'nuke' any pests that escape the Atlantic gales". He also uses fungicide on foliage and gives a few applications of foliar feed after flowering. Derrick works on a 'two year down' system and any of the 130 varieties that do not produce a few show worthy blooms during this period are given a free transfer! Between 300 and 500 seeds are sown annually, crosses are planned but Derrick freely admits that very often the plans are forgotten by the time that flowering takes place. Seedlings are planted out quite thickly after three years and anything that shows promise during the next four years is marked and replanted to give it more space. Further selection takes place over the next few years with ruthless selection every two years. Anything that survives this routine and shows real promise by perhaps winning a 'best in division' or 'best in show' is chipped in order to produce ten to twelve good bulbs from a single round within a three year time frame.

Derrick took early retirement from teaching five years ago and currently works part time in a local garden centre and due to his scientific background he also carries out testing programmes for a medical supplies firm. Spare time is largely taken up with daffodil focused things although the current big project is a re-vamp of his large back garden as 'Her indoors doesn't like to look out at rigs and other bits involved in daff cultivation'. In addition to work and daffodil hybridising, showing and growing Derrick is deeply involved in Coleraine Horticultural Society and is Treasurer of other local associations. When asked about other interests or sporting pastimes he gave a typical D. T. reply "I played cricket for M. C. C. (Milford Cricket Club) and soccer for a local team. I retired early to concentrate on snooker".

The first seedling Derrick was happy with was the 2Y-R now named 'Causeway Sunset', this carried off best seedling awards on the local show circuit but he considers having it admired on first sight by Brian Duncan to have been the ultimate

accolade. He currently has what he terms 'some useful things' (a phrase often used by the late Sir Frank Harrison) across divisions one to four and possibly a couple in division six. Derrick rates 'Crackington' as a good seed parent and 'Gold Bond' a good pollen parent although he says "More and more of my own seedlings are involved in my breeding programme, hopefully to emphasise their good characteristics". He is also in contact by e-mail with other amateur breeders and hopes to swap seedlings with them.

To date some of Derrick's ambitions have been realised such as Best In Show at Belfast and various Best in Division awards at Belfast and other shows. One ambition he does harbour is winning the Guy Wilson class in London, as he says his initial enthusiasm came from seeing the blooms in the Memorial Gardens in Coleraine and it would be a fitting tribute to win this award. He is currently building up his stock of W-W varieties to achieve this ambition. As the recently elected Chairman of the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group Derrick harbours ambitions to bring 'real' daffodils to the general public. He is enough of a realist to know this is no easy task having put vases of show daffodils on display at his local garden centre and then listened to the exclamations of amazement regarding the variety and clarity of colour on display. To date he has been unable to translate this transient enthusiasm into bulb planting in the autumn. As he says himself "If only bulbs could be on sale during the flowering season!" It would be impossible to close this feature on Derrick and his prowess as a hybridiser and general daffodil enthusiast without reference to The Engleheart competition. For once he is somewhat more reticent in his appraisal replying with a simple "Perhaps, who knows". Those of us who know this generous, capable and determined gentleman believe the answer is 'when' rather than 'perhaps'

George Wilson

Editors Note:- The following article are the notes Brian used to give a talk on Intermediate daffodils and will be of interest to all especially those that are breeding. The notes will be continued in future editions of the newsletter until completed.

INTERMEDIATE DAFFODILS

Introduction

Before starting to prepare for this talk I thought that the concept of "Intermediate" daffodils was relatively new and that the debate and clamour for show classes for these smaller daffodils had arisen primarily in the USA.

Not so!

A quote from the Minutes of the Midland Daffodil relates: - 'The Narcissus Committee of the RHS passed a resolution suggesting that a class for small flowers should be added to their 1916 Schedule'. 'The Midland Society decided to fall in line' and added 5 classes for 'small flowers' in 1917. The simple definition was: - '*No perianth to exceed 3 inches in diameter*'. The word 'Intermediate' was not used - they were referred to as 'Bantam' classes.

Show reports for the next few years recorded famous and revered names of the daffodil fraternity as prize-winners - e.g. Mr. C. Bourne; Rev Joseph Jacob; Mr. A. M. Wilson; F. Herbert Chapman; Dr. Lower; W. B. Cranfield - most were members of the RHS and MDS Committees. I confess that the winning varieties listed mean little to me to-day except some as far out ancestors of some present daffodils - e.g. 'Ruby'; 'Topaz'; 'Icepeak'; 'Strongbow'; 'Fireball'; 'Nyssa'; 'Sunbeam' and 'Bullfinch'.

It seems that after 1922 these classes ceased until their 're-incarnation' as 'Intermediates' in 1990.

Controversy

Over the years there has been much debate about these so-called 'Intermediate Daffodils' i.e. those that are (to quote the **dictionary definition** of Intermediate) "**in the middle between**" Miniature Daffodils and Standard Daffodils.

This debate has raged wherever daffodils are grown and exhibited. So controversial and adversarial have been the views that in some cases the protagonists have threatened to resort to 'hand-wrestling' - or worse!

In 1976, the eminent and revered Dr Tom D. Throckmorton (of Colour Code Fame) referred to a suggestion for the creation of an 'Intermediate Class' by the American Daffodil Society as "like an epidemic virulent flu" arising about every ten years. He seemed pleased to report that the previous concerted suggestion for an Intermediate List in 1966 "was aborted by masterly and prompt inactivity" on the part of the ADS Board of Directors".

However, by 1977 the ADS had responded to the suggestion to which Dr Throckmorton had taken such exception - with great collective wisdom they appointed a co-coordinator - a Mrs LeRoy F. Meyer - a delightful lady as I remember her. In an ADS Journal article in which she makes a plea for input she says: - "**I was not aware of the intensity of feelings, both pro and con, on the issue...**" and later a few words of wisdom, but which further indicated the heat which the subject generated: -

"A workable definition of an Intermediate, as well as an open-ended list of possible candidates, must be determined; only after much deliberation and serious consideration, hopefully in a spirit of tolerance and, possibly, compromise, can this be done."

Dr Throckmorton's words were prophetic and despite 'the masterly and prompt inactivity' proposals for 'Intermediate' daffodils continued to re-emerge about every 10 years.

In 1988 the Middle Tennessee Daffodil society proposed a list of about 60 varieties, about the same number as the previous two proposals.

Then in 2001 Bob Spotts got into the act with a draft list of over 200 cultivars "85 mm or less in diameter" which might in certain USA climates fall within the measurement limits. Controversial stuff again and I confess that I, and several others 'flipped our lids' at this further suggested extension of the size limit which had just been increased from 75mm to 80mm. Before publishing, Bob reverted to inches and proposed a list in two parts: - (1) Those "with diameter 3" or less and (2) Those slightly above 3" (or with no data) which could possibly be satisfactory in ADS shows in the warmer regions of the USA. However, the list still contained 200 cultivars and though I have not checked in detail I suspect it is very similar to the 85mm draft proposal.

However, lets go back and try to answer the basic question -

Why Intermediate Daffodils?

Each time the idea of Intermediate daffodils has come up various reasons and justifications have been given. I think perhaps Brent and Becky Heath's suggestions provided as valid and reasoned a summary as any, when they proposed the 1977 list that Dr Tom didn't like:-

- **There is a group of daffodils neither miniature nor standard in size.**
- **They cannot compete in shows with standards or miniatures and hence are not used.**
- **With the trend to smaller gardens they need recognition.**
- **They are generally more hardy and better growers than miniatures.**
- **They are proving valuable in breeding small daffodils.**
- **Some daffodils now classified as miniatures are too large.**

The Heath's went on to suggest a list of about 60 varieties including all Divisions and said the group should include all daffodils over 6 inches and under 12 inches tall

that didn't fit in with standards or miniatures. No diameter limitations were suggested so their concern was mainly for garden purposes.

Other supporters have pointed out that: -

- They include some of our most delightful flowers;**
- That they are generally reliable garden plants;**
- That they are charming for arrangements;**
- That they deserve to be grown more extensively;**
- That they deserve classes to allow fair competition.**

I think these arguments can now be put to bed - The 'For' and 'Against' argument is, or should be over! The 'For's' have won! **Intermediate Daffodils are now a fact of life** - and classes for them are now included in Show schedules throughout the world and there seems to be ever increasing support.

However, the regulations, standards or qualifications for those classes are **not standard** - and that brings us back to **controversy** and why the debate still rages and why **committees still spend ages wrangling over minutiae!** Let's consider these controversial aspects: -

Size limitations?

England - RHS and The Daffodil Society

1916 "no perianth to exceed 3 inches"

1992 "no less than 2 ins. & no more than 3 ins."

1997 "no less than 2 ins. (50.8mm) & no more than 3ins. (76.2mm)"

This AMAZING introduction to the use of millimetres was, no doubt, a tardy response to Britain joining the EEC and being dragged screaming and screeching towards metrication! But how ridiculous can you get!!! Imagine, if you can, a judge trying to measure to .8 or .2 of a millimetre!!! Mind you - we have some guys so quick with their measuring tools that they might try!!!!

Then common sense prevailed and we quickly moved to

rounded figures so -

1998 "more than 50mm & no more than 75mm."

But this had the effect of **reducing the 3-inch maximum size by that 1.2mm. !!!**

Now this is really serious, critical stuff and it took another 4 years of discussion and debate by some of the greatest minds in the daffodil world to agree that that world would not collapse if the Maximum diameter was raised to 80 mm - and thus allow a greater number of smaller flowers to qualify for these classes!

Great, wonderful - now we might have more than 'Bantam' shown in the Intermediate classes!

So, in 2002 we had ... and still have -

"Maximum 80mm. Minimum 51mm"

But look at that MINIMUM51mm!!! Not 50 as some would have it! Now we really have it sussed - you could not possibly have a Miniature up to Max. 50mm and an Intermediate down to Min. 50mm. You'd have to create another class for those that measured exactly 50mm!!!! Or which list would they go on???

That about paints the picture for the UK! I understand similar deliberations have taxed the minds of 'experts' in other lands! I'm sure our International Panel of experts can help us with the details of where they have been, where they are and where they are going.

Which Divisions to include?

Another thorny subject on which there is not universal agreement!

Early proposals for Intermediates did not specify or limit the classification divisions for inclusion. Indeed the earlier lists proposed in USA included flowers of the multi-headed types and Div.6 - perhaps even Div.9. - I didn't check specifically.

The Northern hemisphere (Britain and USA), after much debate now restricts Intermediates to Divisions 1,2,3,4 and 11 on the basis that flowers within the 80mm size limit in

other Divisions can easily compete on even terms in their appropriate Division classes.

In the Southern hemisphere I understand that the debate still rages - New Zealand has taken the lead with a list - or rather 3 Lists - 'Divs. 1-4'; 'Divs. 5-13' and 'Approved seedlings' - which for the National Show the Australians are adopting in their schedule. I have no doubt that there is much room for debate on those three lists!

Approved lists?

Some people have very strong views on 'Lists' - on whether or not to have them - and if so how they should be applied or used - as guidance only or as restrictive "show only from" lists.

So - Why have lists if we have defined Intermediates by measurement and by classification?

Some people argue this point strongly - but even the best definition does not preclude poorly grown miserably undersized standards from winning prizes - even if the definition says such flowers should not be judged. The trouble is that judges don't always know if flowers put before them are genuinely small - or just starved to diminutive proportions!

In the UK we have long debated this question and it looks like we are moving towards having an 'Approved List' and that entries in Shows will be restricted to cultivars on that list. Joint discussions between the RHS and The Daffodil Society are taking place with a view to unifying definitions and establishing a common list. The Daffodil Society already has an Approved list.

Progress is good but there is a bit of difference of opinion about how to deal with unregistered seedlings: -

The D. S. reckons all on a list should be commercially available.

The RHS reckons seedlings should be encouraged and allowed to compete with recognised named varieties.

To be continued.

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