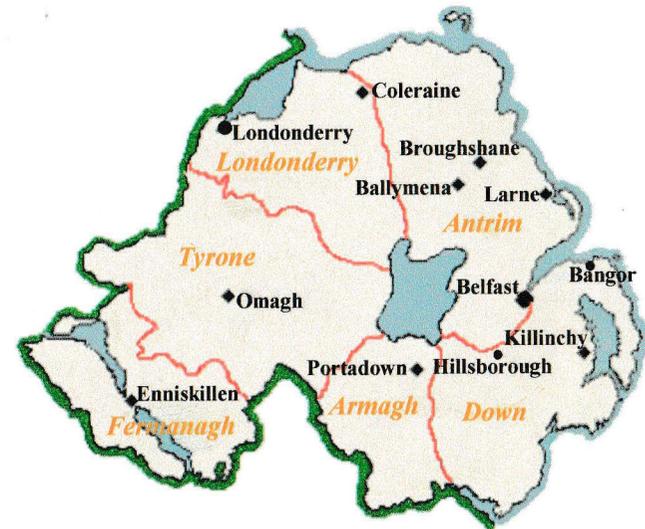


Newsletter

of the

Northern Ireland

Daffodil Group



Half yearly publication

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Issue*

**THE NORTHERN IRELAND DAFFODIL GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

VOL 6 NO. 7

2005

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CHAIRMANS REMARKS

At the end of my first year as chairman it is time both to reflect and look forward. It was at this Annual General Meeting just a year ago that the late Crosbie Cochrane took the chair to conduct the election of officers and committee. We all miss him and extend our sympathy to the family circle. The continued success of the group in 2005 is largely due to the dedicated work of our officers and committee. James Smyth, our hard working secretary keeps us organised with behind the scenes help from Richard McCaw. Despite the devastating problems of a (or several) computer virus the editorial committee produced colourful and informative issues of the Newsletter. The importance of our twice-yearly publication cannot be underestimated, as it is our main contact with overseas members. Well done George and Maurice and all those who contributed articles.

Looking back, for many of us and myself in particular 2005 was one of the earliest daffodil seasons on record. The early show held on the third Sunday in March at Coleman's garden centre had a display of daffodils on the bench that would not have looked out of place in a mid April show. As usual our main show was held at Malone House in Belfast and here Brian Duncan returned with a vengeance taking most of the top honours with his superb flowers. Local shows enjoyed success but flowers were becoming scarce by the end of April. By way of a diversion in July we had a splendid tour of the international rose trials at Dixon Park near Belfast. Our enthusiastic guide, Bob Brooks from the rose society, made this all the more interesting. We had not one but two lectures of the year. Ian Young of the Scottish Rock Garden fame talked about alpine bulbs with emphasis on daffodils. Thanks are due to Brian Duncan for his opportunistic organising of this talk. In November Malcolm

Bradbury was our guest and he gave a thought provoking account of his experiences in the daffodil world.

Most of our meetings are held in Balance House and we owe a debt of thanks to Jill McIvor and the staff for their hospitality and help through the year.

By now you will have received your programme of events for 2006. An innovative event for this year is a winter show at our February meeting. There will be classes for snowdrops, daffodils, and other bulbs. Is this a response to global warming or are members becoming more aware of early flowering species and miniature hybrids? Come along and see. We have also planned a visit to the walled garden at Greenmount and our lecturer of the year next November will be Jackie Petheridge.

I will finish by thanking all those faithful members who attend our meetings, especially those who travel considerable distances. Please support your committee and attend as many meetings as possible. Even better bring a friend with you. Finally I wish you all a very successful and enjoyable growing season.

Derek Turbitt

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Belfast Show remains the flagship of our year's events. Again the sun shone on the Belfast Show bringing out over 4000 visitors in two days. That's two years in a row the attendance number has broken this barrier over the weekend of events. We must be doing something right.

The total number of competitive exhibits at the show was 470, a decrease of 90 exhibits on the last year. The biggest decrease was not down to daffodils but the Bonsai section changing to a non competitive exhibition. This

accounted for 57 exhibits less. The daffodil classes were down slightly on last year but we had two new novice exhibitors at the show. Please encourage more for next year. Total numbers of daffodil exhibitors were only 11. We need your support for 2006.

After exhibitors registered at the show secretary's desk this year they were responsible for completing their own entry cards. The system worked well although one or two exhibitors did not fill in his/ her exhibitor number or class numbers on their cards. There are no class changes to report for the 2006 Belfast Show. The NIDG has been asked to provide 2 demonstrators (one for each day) to take a half hour demonstration each day. Derek Turbitt and George Wilson have agreed to do this so we want the support of the group on their audiences.

The Amateur Championship of Ireland this year will be hosted by Fermanagh Horticultural Society in Enniskillen and the Silver Thread Awards hosted by Hillsborough Horticultural Society.

The programme of events for 2005 was very varied with visits to two snowdrop gardens and a VIP tour of the International Rose Trials. Derek Turbitt took us on a digital tour of the shows in 2005 and Brian Duncan showed us around Spain looking for species daffodils. The most popular month had to be November when we had 2 different lectures by two visiting Daffodil Experts. They were Ian Young from Aberdeen and Malcolm Bradbury from Essex. Thanks to all who gave their time and expertise to conduct our meetings and to their audiences who attended.

In this year's programme we hope to have a winter show to bring new varieties and faces to the show bench, a trip to the Greenmount Walled Garden and our big talk in November will be given by Jackie Pertherbridge on mini daffodils. I hope you will find our programme interesting

and look forward to seeing more of you at the meetings.

The 2008 European Convention is getting closer and bookings have already started to come in so let's all help make this a memorable tour of Holland, England and Northern Ireland.

Finally may I wish you all a successful growing season for 2006.

James Smyth

EDITOR'S NOTES

Where does one go from here? Having been involved in the production of this newsletter for over 10 years it is becoming harder and harder to fill the expected quota of articles without the few we would not have a newsletter. I have exhausted all my ideas and wonder how we will fill this edition. Thanks go to George Wilson for all he has contributed over the years; without his willingness to put pen to paper and the time he spends getting the actual copies produced and bound from my master copy we have managed to meet our deadlines on most occasions. This edition has finally made it to press thanks to his efforts. It is time to take stock—I have no more ideas and am sure George is the same.

Without help and articles from others within the small core that makes up the active members of the group this publication cannot continue. I have made numerous pleas in the past but to no avail. Some time ago a special meeting was held and ideas discussed and decided upon but unfortunately these have fallen by the wayside and copy did not materialise. Is it time we decided to reduce production to once a year? Perhaps someone else is fired with enthusiasm and would like to take over the production.

Maurice Kerr

Obituary.

Derek Bircumshaw

It was with great sadness that members of the NIDG learned of the recent and untimely death of Derek Bircumshaw from Oadby in Leicestershire.

Members who exhibited at the RHS London Daffodil Shows were accustomed to the exemplary winning entries which Derek staged in the major Richardson Trophy class for twelve blooms from four Divisions. His flowers were always grown to the peak of their potential and he seemed to get that little bit of extra size whilst retaining inherent qualities of refinement. In addition his entries were always staged with regimental flair that enhanced the perfection of his flowers.

Derek was a major figure in the Chrysanthemum world for many years, winning all the top awards and writing a gardening column for more than 20 years. He was an almost permanent fixture on the Committee and became President of the Chrysanthemum Society. He was also a long standing member of the RHS Chrysanthemum committee. As many of us have noted, those who have come to exhibiting daffodils following experience in showing chrysanthemums always seem to have an edge when it comes to presentation of exhibits – presumably patience bred of grooming those multitudinous petals! Whatever the reason, Derek was certainly a master stager of daffodils – perhaps it was the quiet influence of Doreen who was his ever-present assistant.

But exhibiting is not all about winning prizes and it is for his personal qualities and friendliness that we will remember him best. Derek had a great sense of humour and was always a pleasure to meet during staging times at shows where ‘staging fluid’ was an essential ingredient and for

many a welcome break and moments of story-telling and hilarity. Derek was a police sergeant in his earlier career, well built for the job, as he was to play in the second row for the Leicester Tigers. He got a trial for England. He tells a story about combining his police and rugby skills to good effect when he had to tackle and bring down a runaway bullock from Oakham market. He claimed it was nothing compared to tackling Colin Meads, the All Black forward! (this story grows with each telling!!!)

In 1996 Betty and I had the pleasure of having Derek as a week-end guest when the NIDG Late Show was being held in our bulb shed. On that occasion the NIDG held its Judging School tests and those who took part will remember that Derek was an invaluable help and a most sympathetic and perceptive examiner.

Alas, yet another personality has departed our show scene. I will personally miss the Bircumshaw presence during staging. I will also miss the phone calls at week-ends when Ireland play rugby against England or when Leicester had a spectacular win – Derek was a supporter to the end! Glad I am that I had an opportunity to meet him in September in Sutton Bonnington – by shere co-incidence I was attending a 52nd Univ. of Nottingham re-union and Derek was giving a talk on Daffodils to the local Horticultural Society at the same time. I travelled a day early and accompanied him to the meeting where he gave an excellent lecture and we retired, with a couple of his friends, to a neighbouring hostelry for an enjoyable but all too short session of gossip and reminiscence. That night he was anticipating his forthcoming operation with great optimism and looking forward to a sunshine holiday. As someone said ‘Bon Viveur’ he was - and as such I shall remember him.

Brian Duncan

THE FIRST TEN YEARS ARE THE WORST

It is general knowledge among my daffodil growing friends that I got involved in this madness due to my wife's prowess as a flower arranger. I used to accompany her to various gardening society shows where there were classes for floral art and as I wandered around the other classes I began to think I could grow better things than those that were on display. In my innocence (or arrogance) I imagined all sorts of wonderful exhibits bearing my name, all with red stickers, covering all the classes and not a single entry as poor as those I saw at these society shows. In this initial burst of enthusiasm I set to and dug a 'vegetable plot' in the centre of the patch of poor grass that served as our back lawn. Needless to say I dug in well rotted manure and did all the things one is supposed to do in order to grow prize winning crops and blooms. Even at the initial planting stage I quickly realised that the plot was much too small for me to fulfill my ambitions and in consequence I had to lower my sights somewhat. However by concentrating on a selection of things that attracted me and by growing my carrots and parsnips in forty gallon drums and dustbins I did manage to grow with moderate success winning a series of small grower's classes sponsored by Sutton's Seeds and winning the Garden News Top Tray at the main show of the year.

Now at many of these local society shows there was a group of people I quite frankly couldn't understand, they spent inordinate amounts of time looking at, discussing, studying in obvious awe, and even making notes about, of all things, daffodils. Surely there was more to life than spending hours on something you put in the ground and it reappeared year after year, come on just what was there to talk about? Then at one of the bigger shows one of these weird souls that I had met briefly collected my prize money for me and in order to

retrieve same I had to go to the daffodil section. For the first time ever I actually looked at the flowers on display and even to an untutored eye there were obvious differences and even stranger there were daffodils without yellow. Not only that, there were shades of red and orange, different shades of yellow and strangest of all some intriguing shades of pink. To put it mildly I was smitten. I enquired tentatively about getting involved and was told that joining for three years entitled me to a starter pack of show varieties, needless to say I joined on the spot. So it came to pass that I joined the NIDG without actually realising what a crazy convoluted world I was entering.

I well remember getting my introductory pack of bulbs, to this day I can recall the varieties, which for me is exceptional as I can barely remember the names of the cultivars I currently grow. Whoever had made up the selection had included three rounds each of 'Smokey Bear' 'Murrayfield' and 'Halley's Comet' in addition they had also included six chips of 'Avenger'. I never did find out who my benefactor was but if they read this and it rings a bell I want them to know that 'Avenger' still grows as a border flower in my back garden and each year I look forward to seeing it just as much as any of my pampered newer varieties. Even with my limited knowledge I knew that this number of show flowers was insufficient so I sent off for a 'competition pack' from a well known bulb supplier in England. Foolishly I hadn't asked for advice and in my ignorance I didn't know that we in Northern Ireland had at that time what really amounted to a centre of excellence in hybridising and growing show varieties of daffodils. Suffice to say my competition pack contained nothing worth remembering and nothing that had been registered in the previous twenty-five or maybe thirty-five years. As the hedgehog remarked after attempting amorous advances towards a scrubbing brush 'we all learn from our mistakes'.

Needless to say my first season as a daffodil exhibitor was not memorable from a results point of view. What was memorable however was the camaraderie displayed by all the experienced exhibitors and by the local daffodil growers that I should have bought my bulbs from in the first instance. There was a continual flow of help and education in staging, advice on what varieties were competitive and reasonably priced, how to keep flowers fresh, how to raise 'head hangers', transporting flowers, in fact the whole gamut of tricks required to get a few red stickers. This was in total contrast to my previous venture into showing, vegetable men tend to treat information as if national security depended upon their silence and without the help of a local guru who ran a gardening club I wouldn't have had the limited success I achieved. One thing I did learn very rapidly was that the same question posed to six different daffodil exhibitors would elicit six different answers some of them poles apart. All answers were given in total sincerity; there was no question of the new boy being given 'duff gen'. This was in itself a great lesson, for all these exhibitors that I continually pestered were successful show people so therefore it appeared one had to find a system that worked and use it until some change in practice proved better.

At planting time another miracle happened, my rivals plied me with loads of bulbs all neatly packaged and labelled and even offered to give me assistance in planting. In addition the bulbs I bought from local growers arrived with a largess of gratis bulbs in fact one grower that I called with to collect my order and get advice on bulb storage gave me a selection of miniatures the existence of which until then I wasn't even aware of. All in all it was a steep but really pleasant learning curve. In my second year I planted my bulbs in rows not clumps, I kept a written record of my planting; I even planted them at the correct depth. Alas however by this date Aldrin was no

longer available and after a much better though still unremarkable second season and after additional planting I was looking forward to further improvement in year three. Imagine my horror to find that many of my now treasured blooms didn't appear and my daffodil plot was full of blank spaces and sparse sets of leaves. What had happened? What possibly could have gone wrong? I carefully dug up one of the bulbs that had only a few leaves showing and found to my dismay a soft feeling lightweight object where there should have been a good solid bulb.

This was the first of many occasions when I questioned the validity of daffodil growing as a hobby or even as a means of getting out into the fresh air and relaxing. However I took the offending bulb to the next NIDG meeting and one of my many mentors examined the base plate and pronounced 'Fly damage'. He then performed a 'bulbectomy' and revealed the classic brown mush in the middle and then said 'You are really lucky, you have the wee ones as well'. He then proceeded to show me some small white grubs high up in the bulb. I was shattered, nothing had prepared me for this, it wasn't even a free or gift bulb, it was a variety I had actually bought. By now obviously I didn't hesitate to seek advice on how to avoid a repetition of this calamity and it was then that I learned of the much lamented demise of Aldrin. Unfortunately I didn't glean much else as others were also coming to terms with the loss of the only effective defence against the fly. I did however hear about companion planting, the use of washes such as Jeyes Fluid as masking agents and a detailed description of the enemy. Armed with this information I planted marigolds among my daffodils, soaked the soil with washes and patrolled my plot with various lethal implements, all to no avail. I never did see a narcissus fly although a few innocent hover flies got clobbered and to crown it all the next year I had lost virtually everything apart from

the new varieties I had planted. It appeared the fly was endemic within the region where I live, therefore things looked bleak as far as any further interest in daffodils was concerned.

My initial and hopefully understandable reaction was to give up and grow something that did survive in my area, after all I had now exhibited for four seasons and apart from gaining experience in staging I was back virtually at square one. What I hadn't allowed for was the reaction of my new found friends and rivals, to say they rallied round is as understated as General Custer saying 'Gosh look at those Indians.' First of all I was given room to create a bed free of charge in an allotment that was used by a fellow enthusiast, and the very mention of payment was met with strong words and the offer of an adjustment in my facial arrangements. I therefore took up the offer of 'free lodgings' with great gratitude. Seven years on I am still growing in the same allotment and my benefactor has moved into two other allotments where he grows superb blooms and still finds time to point out the error of my ways. As well as this new growing location yet again I was overwhelmed with bulbs from all and sundry, and yes even the growers chipped in with large amounts of gratis bulbs when I ordered replacements for the varieties that had impressed me during our brief acquaintance. What a unique and wonderful hobby we follow!

In my first season in my new location I experienced little fly damage and things looked good for increasing my growing and as my 'landlord' was moving out I now had considerable room to expand. It was then that I encountered the other great scourge of daffodil growers *ditylenchus dipsaci* more commonly referred to as bulb and stem nematode. To this day I believe I imported this pernicious pest in bulbs I bought at a society auction and was foolish enough to plant without first putting them in quarantine. Due

to my lack of knowledge the vile creatures got well established as I was conditioned by my previous experience to expect losses. At lifting time however it was obvious something was seriously wrong and when I explained the symptoms and asked what could be amiss it was almost as if I had spoken about cancer! However help was at hand, within our group at that time was a wonderful old gentleman who rarely exhibited but had a deep understanding of plant pathology and as a retired Dept. of Agriculture Inspector he knew remedies inside out. It was he who introduced me to hot water treatment, Basamid and that excellent nematicide Temik. He also stressed the value of fallowing, a procedure I now find difficult to organise as I grow so many varieties that space on my allotment is at a premium. Back in those days however I did have room and I followed his advice to the letter, and it worked. One other gem this great mentor imparted was the reaction of most people who grow daffodils when eelworm is mentioned, typically they will exclaim 'I have never seen any' but then few of them possess a microscope!

Since that first invasion I have been much more alert and I carry out a vigorous roguing of any suspect bulbs and then keep a watch on the area where the suspect was removed. In addition I also use Temik during planting and as a broadcast treatment. In spite of all these precautions however I still have minor outbreaks. Which leads me to a theory advanced by a contributor to a recent New Zealand Daffodil Annual (1) He suggests that not all outbreaks of eelworm can be introduced by infected bulbs, the idea being that such infection may already be in the ground just waiting for someone to plant narcissus bulbs. The analogy the writer uses to support this view is that because there are lions and elephants in Africa does not mean someone took them there. Presumably in the case of eelworms they exist on other food

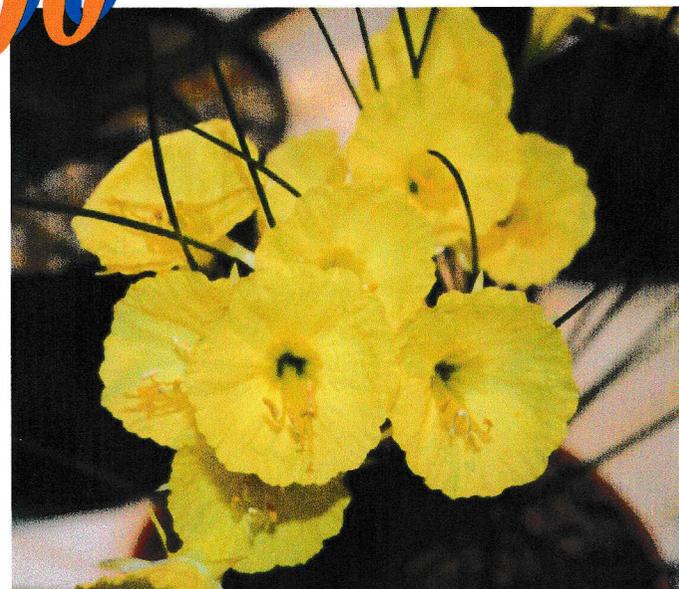
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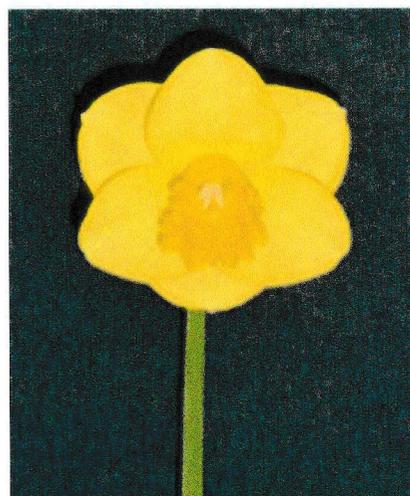
The late Derek Bircumshaw



Judging at the winter show



Miniature pot class 'Cheerful Charlie'

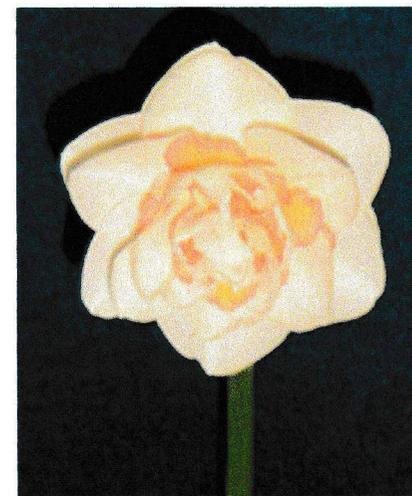


Derek Turbitt's 'Seedling 0606'
Best Div 2 Best in Show
Ballymena 06

14



One of the benches at the 06 show in Omagh showing
some of the many entries



15 Ian Scroggy's 'Dorchester'
Best Div. 4 at Ballymena

sources until the main course arrives. An interesting and alternative view of the vector path of infestation. Enough of these theories, back to the continuing saga.

By now I was quite happy that the regime I followed during lifting, storage, hot water treatment and planting together with improvement in general standards of hygiene and sterilisation could prevent any major disasters. So now I all had to do was produce blooms of quality in sufficient quantities to stage competitive entries across the whole range of classes, surely I was now on the home straight. The unfortunate thing however was that just as I had arrived at a situation where I could be competitive my mentors and rivals had also upped their standards and I was still having great difficulty getting into the winners enclosure. Eventually however I did manage to win some Twelve bloom classes and other bits and pieces and it is still a great thrill to see the red stickers on the entry cards. The camaraderie and put down comments from my rivals continue to arrive in equal measure and I wouldn't have it any other way. With any luck they may all forget to enter the Amateur Senior Championship and give me a chance of winning but maybe that is too much to ask!

Throughout the foregoing paragraphs I did not mention people by name as I didn't want the article to become too anecdotal, so to those listed alphabetically below I am eternally grateful for helping me through the first ten years, here's to the next ten.

The late Percy Bell	Rae Beckwith
The late Crosbie Cochrane	Robbie Curry
Brian Duncan MBE	The late Sir Frank Harrison
Sam Jordan	Maurice Kerr
John McAusland	Richard McCaw
James Smyth	Derrick Turbitt

Dave Vivash

Nial Watson

References.

- (1) Fred Silcock, Using Nematicur for Eelworm Control, New Zealand Daffodil Annual 2005.

George Wilson

The Winter Show

With increasing interest in species and miniature daffodils, many of which bloom early in the season, it was decided to hold a winter show at our February meeting (26th). This was really a matter of testing the water to see what would happen and it was decided to keep things simple. The show consisted of three sections; each consisting of a class for 3 cut flowers and another class for pot grown plants. Naturally the first section was for daffodils with another section for galanthus and the third for any other bulbs. This simple schedule was distributed to our members, the local alpine society, and some known galanthophiles.

The show was held at Balance house near Lisburn, our usual venue for meetings. A total of 66 entries surpassed our expectations and those present had a chance to see many less well known, but none the less beautiful species and varieties of early spring bulbs. Best exhibit was an upright, large, and very floriferous bulbocodium type narcissus seedling under the pet name of 'Cheerful Charlie'. Everyone present enjoyed the show and suggestions were being made for more classes at next year's show, even before the exhibits were cleared away.

RESULTS

Section A Miniature and species daffodils

Class 1	3 blooms	12 entries
1 st	B. Duncan	N. jeanmondii, N. graellsii, n. cantabricus monophyllus
2 nd	N. Watson	'Small Talk' OP x minicycla
3 rd	B. Duncan	n. asturensis sdg.
Class 2	1 pot miniature / species daffodil	11 entries
1 st	B. Duncan	bulbocodium sdg 'Cheerful Charlie'
2 nd	D. Turbitt	n. cyclamineus
3 rd	B. Duncan	n. lagoi

Section B Galanthus

Class 3	3 blooms	21 entries
1 st	D. Turbitt	unknown
2 nd	B. Duncan	'Compton Court'
3 rd	H. McBride	'Mrs Backhouse'
Class 4	Pot galanthus	8 entries
1 st	R. Maye	galanthus nivales
2 nd	B. Duncan	'Compton Court'
3 rd	M. Smyth	'G.F. Handel'

Section C Any other bulbs

Class 5	3 blooms	5 entries
1 st	H. McBride	leucojum vernus
2 nd	B. Duncan	crocus 'Snowstorm'
3 rd	R. Curry	crocus

Class 6 Pot any other bulb

1 st	D. Cairns	leucojum vargiari
2 nd	B. Duncan	crocus siberii 'Michael Hoog's Memory'
3 rd	B. Duncan	iris 'Harmony'

Best exhibit was 'Cheerful Charlie', Brian Duncan's entry in class 2.

The judges were Richard McCaw, Jim Price and Joan Dogherty. (bet they will bring entries next year).

The NIDG are grateful to Jan Pennings and Nial Watson who generously donated prize vouchers.

Derrick Turbitt

*The following article is reproduced by kind permission of
Farm Week*

Hope springs from mountain daffodils

Welsh scientist, Professor Trevor Walker, wore his Saint David's Day daffodil with special pride on Wednesday of this week in the knowledge that the national flower of Wales was a source of new hope for struggling hill farmers and for people battling Alzheimer's disease.

He has just announced the successful conclusion of tests carried out at the Institute of Grassland & Environmental Research (IGER) at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, on daffodils grown- last year on the uplands of Mid Wales.

Now he is optimistic that the bulbs can be grown on a commercial basis to provide a compound useful in the

treatment of the disease that causes memory loss. "Initial results are encouraging. We were testing the theory that if we stressed the plants by growing them at altitude, they would produce more of the plant alkaloid Galanthamine, which is proven to be effective in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease," he said. "The tests showed that the compound was generally found in much higher levels in the daffodils grown at 1,400 feet in the Black Mountains compared with the same varieties planted in Pembrokeshire at sea level. 'If looks' as though if we grow these particular varieties in this particular high altitude environment it will be commercially advantageous.

"Our' elderly population will benefit by having this substance available to them at affordable prices. It will also help the local economy by giving Welsh hill farmers, some of whom are pretty desperate to eke out a living, something else to farm other than upland oats or sheep."

Professor Walker is a founder of Alzeim, a company based in Talgarth, Powys, which is involved in research and development related to plant compounds with medicinal or toxic properties. Already, on the strength of his now proven theory, a sizeable acreage of land in the Black Mountain region of Wales has been turned over to the production of daffodils.

Some varieties are starting to come into flower now, and the months of April and May will see Professor Walker and his team busy perfecting the harvesting technique and the extraction process. The intention is that local farmers will commence full-scale commercial production in 2007. Historically, natural Galanthamine has been available from sources in Eastern Europe and lately, China, where it is extracted from members of the snowdrop family, which includes the Narcissus or common daffodil. Although its use in the treatment of Alzheimer's is approved in more than 40 countries, up until now it has been too expensive to make

Galanthamine available as a widespread remedy for early-stage sufferers. The field trials, and the biochemical analysis that has just been completed by scientists at Aberystwyth, were part-funded by Glasu, the LEADER+ rural development programme for Powys.

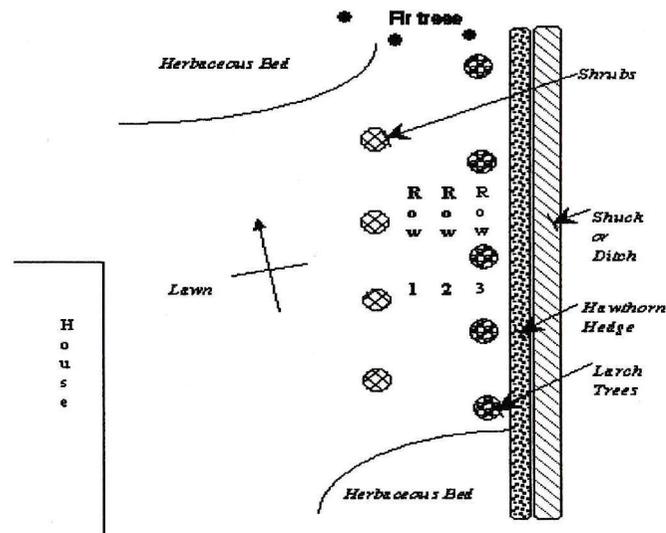
Said programme manager, Lee Price: "The success of the field trials is wonderful news. It could be a godsend for our upland farmers as well as a breakthrough in the treatment of the symptoms of a terrible disease, which' already afflicts more than 650,000 people in the UK."

NATURALISING DAFFODILS

Over the years having acquired many different varieties of daffodil the time came especially when I started breeding that the inevitable decision had to be taken as to what to keep and what to dispose of. Ground for growing show daffodils was needed so as to maintain my rotation policy and as seedlings were taking up more and more space. The decision was taken rather than dispose of some varieties that they should be planted out along a bank where larch trees grow along an east hedge in the front garden and where I had had some Christmas trees taken out. The soil was poor having supported the aforementioned trees for many years. Some shrubs had been planted in holes which had new soil imported and enriched with well rotted manure to give the shrubs a reasonable chance to establish themselves. This left a strip of ground some twelve feet wide by about fifty feet long which was going to be hard to mow and maintain. As the shrubs and trees provided little interest early in the season the decision was taken to use this area to plant out some of the daffodils which I no longer wanted to have growing in my cultivated beds. Forty five varieties in total were chosen made up in the main from named varieties and a few seedling which had been acquired from

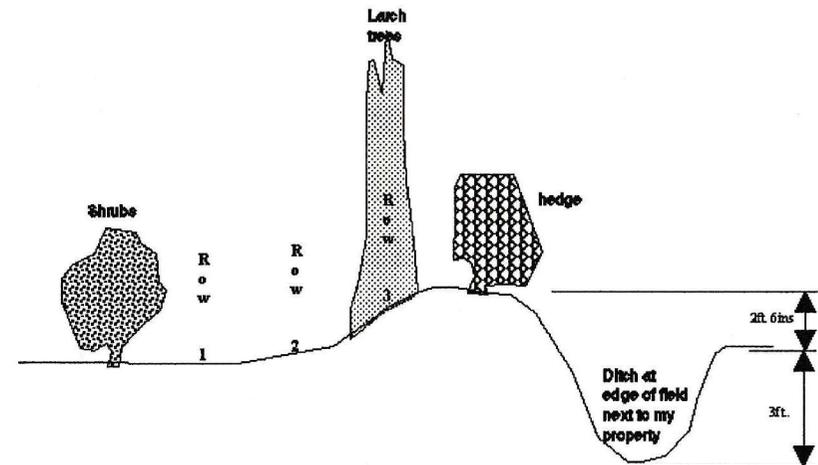
specialist breeders in earlier years and was no longer taking to shows. The varieties that I used are as follows

<i>Middle Row</i>	<i>Back row</i>	
'Bunclody'	'Ringmaster'	73 3W-GYY/6/16
'Hotspur'	BSD 1230 2W-P	86 2Y-Y
'Patabundy'	93 3W-GY	'Ben Vorlich'
'Moneymore'	'Roselight'	88 2Y-OOR32
'Cyros'	86 2Y-R	'Beersheba'
'Golden Rapture'	'Don Carlos'	'Round Robin'
'Golden Halo'	'Pale Sunlight'	'Vulcan'
'Woodland Prince'	'Westholme'	'Loch Hope'
'Golden Aura'	'Sunapee'	'Festivity'
'Trelay'	'Merlin'	'Royal Regiment'
'Verdant'	'Border Chief'	'Birdsong'
'Bryanston'	'Accent'	2W-W seedling
'Northern Sceptre'	'Preamble'	'Lilac Charm'
'Woodland Grace'	'Dickcissel'	
'Glacier'	2Y-YPP 'G. Halo' x 'Rose Royale'	
88 3W-YY09		
3W-R 'Comcrake' x		



Seven bulbs of each were chosen except for 'Lilac Charm' which were a few that had been tried in a pot to see if potting conditions and the lighter soil suited them better than being planted out in my rather heavy, cold wet soil. Position of holes were marked and then 'excavated' using spade and pick as there were a lot of tree roots. From the old Christmas trees. Care was taken when excavating holes on the bank so that main roots from the larch trees were not cut. Some fresh soil from the vegetable plot was mixed with well rotted horse manure and used to fill the holes to planting depth. One variety of bulb was planted in each hole and the soil firmed down.

Section through area where bulbs were planted



The grass in this area is not cut until the middle of July when it is cut down roughly with a strimmer and the grass is raked up and then mixed with lawn mowings and any other coarse material on the compost heap to ensure that a high heat is obtained so as to destroy any maturing grass seed. Over the years the planting holes need top dressed as depressions form. This is not done to any preplanned length of time but rather is

dictated by the fact that the mower tends to bounce quite a lot when trying to mow rows 1 and 2 which are behind the bushes and not on the bank. Occasionally the planting holes are sprinkled with some bone meal but generally the bulbs have been left to their own devices. Considering the lack of care and attention that these bulbs receive they put on a nice show in the spring when there is little of interest in that area of the garden. No sprays have ever been applied to these bulbs since they were planted. Some varieties have not fared as well as others but I have been pleased with the overall effect given to this area in what can only be described as not the most promising of situations.

I have given each variety a star rating ranging from four stars to one star. Four stars are those varieties which have multiplied well, are growing strongly and put on a good display. One star has been given to those varieties which can still be found there but have diminished in numbers in the case of 'Lilac Charm' to four and 'Verdant' only three flowers showing this season.

'Bunclody'****	'Ringmaster' ***	73W-GYY/6/16***
'Hotspur'***	BSD 1230 2W-P*	86 2Y-Y*
'Patabundy'***	93 3W-GY*	'Ben Vorlich'***
'Moneymore'****	'Roselight'***	88 2Y-OOR32*
'Cyros'***	86 2Y-R *	'Beersheba'****
'Golden Rapture'**	'Don Carlos'***	'Round Robin'***
'Golden Halo'***	'Pale Sunlight'**	'Vulcan'****
'Woodland Prince'****	'Westholme'***	'Loch Hope'*
'Golden Aura'****	'Sunapee'***	'Festivity'**
'Trelay'**	'Merlin'**	'Royal Regiment'**
'Verdant'***	'Border Chief'***	'Birdsong'*
'Bryanston'*	'Accent'*	2W-W seedling***
'Northern Sceptre'**	'Preamble'*	'Lilac Charm'*

'Woodland Grace'*** 'Dickcissel'****
 'Glacier'** 2Y-YPP 'G. Halo' x 'Rose Royale'*
 88 3W-YY09*
 3W-R 'Comcrake' x*

Considering the fact that this has been done on the east side of the front garden that the hedge and bank shelter the flowers from the sun for a considerable part of the day and that the soil was not the most promising it has been well worth the initial effort.

Maurice Kerr

Northern Ireland Daffodil Group			
<i>Summary of Income & Expenditure Year Ending 31/12/2005</i>			
Income		Expenditure	
Balance B/F	£13,886.60	Journal	£284.49
Subscriptions	£369.19	Sec. Expenses	£60.86
Bulb sale (Belfast)	£124.00	Balance House	£210.00
Bulb sale (Derry)	£30.00	Visits	£70.00
Bulb auction	£185.00	Ulster Bullion Co	£193.03
Omagh Meeting	£76.00	Speakers	£325.00
Interest	£207.77	Coleman's G C	£30.00
		Belfast Parks	£30.00
		Chest/heart/stroke	£20.00
		Bank Charges	£7.54
		Balance C/F	£13,647.64
	£14,878.56		£14,878.56

OLD FRIENDS ARE BEST

At a recent NIDG quiz the participants were asked to list the three most successful daffodils at the five main UK shows in 2005 as collated by Tony James and published in The Daffodil Society Newsletter. Only one daffodil officianado answered the question correctly and when the answers were read out quite a few were surprised to find that 'Silent Valley' first registered in 1964 was top flower. Not only that but 'Gay Kybo' registered in 1980 was next most prolific winner, in fact of the top ten winners in the Tony James list only 'Crowndale' in sixth place and 'Ombersley' in ninth place was registered in the nineteen nineties. Now I fully realize that it takes a while for new registrations to become widely available and be established as winners but surely there is more to the continuing success of older varieties than a simple lack of distribution of the newer varieties.

Looking in detail at 'Silent Valley' it impresses as a Div.1 of traditional form with the classic flanged trumpet yet it seems to avoid nicking the perianth segments during development and opening. For some observers the corona is somewhat narrow at the base for perfect balance with the overall width of the perianth and it can take some work to get the petals flat enough for judging. It is however undeniably white when mature and the bright green eye adds to the overall appeal, definitely an eye catching flower on its day. It is however over forty years since it was registered so why is it topping the poll in 2005? It would appear that the bulb growers in Holland may be responsible for a lot of the successes enjoyed by 'Silent Valley' as they are rumored to have supplied most of bulbs the winners came from. It will be interesting to see how these bulbs perform next year and if they are still producing winners then we need to find out just what is going on beyond

the dykes.

In comparison 'Gay Kybo' is a mere youth having been registered 'only' twenty-five years ago yet in the Div.4W section of results it was streets ahead having literally as many wins as the rest of the contenders added together! Although it has good overall form and substance even G.K.s greatest fan would acknowledge that it rarely is as white as driven snow and I have seen lots of examples (including winners) with extra petals in the back row. Undeniably however for any 4W to succeed overall it has to beat 'Gay Kybo' and as yet that flower has not been produced or has not achieved the necessary bulk of entries to become top flower in this section. It would also appear that the winners came from home produced bulbs, if that is the case are we in for another few decades of 'Gay Kybo' dominance when the Dutch growers start producing 'super bulbs' of this variety?

There are other long term stalwarts in the top ten list such as 'Dailmanach' (1972) and 'Dr. Hugh' (1975) and oldest of all 'Ice Wings' (1958). The full list with names and dates of registration is reproduced below. Thanks to Tony James who compiled the list and to The Daffodil Society for permission to use the results which are a very small part of the analysis published in their Newsletter.

'Silent Valley'	1W-GWW	1964
'Gay Kybo'	4W-O	1980
'Altun Ha'	2Y-W	1987
'Dr. Hugh'	3W-GWOO	1975
'Ice Wings'	5W-W	1958
'Crowndale'	4Y-O	1995
'Dailmanach'	2W-P	1972
'Pol Crocan'	2W-P	1989
'Ombersley'	1Y-Y	1996
'Rainbow'	2W-WWP	1961