

**WAKEFIELD
&
NORTH OF ENGLAND
TULIP SOCIETY**

ESTABLISHED 1836

NEWSLETTER



**NO 23
AUTUMN 2011**

WAKEFIELD & NORTH OF ENGLAND TULIP SOCIETY

OFFICERS 2011-2012

PRESIDENT The Duke of Devonshire KVCO, CBE, DL

PATRONS K N Eyre, J L Akers MBE

HON LIFE MEMBERS Mrs A Turner, P Turner

VICE PRESIDENTS P Emmett, T Mills, T Clark, J Ollerenshaw,
Dr Kate Swift, Jane Green, Bob Bingham,
Anna Pavord, Wendy Akers, Sarah Akers,
Anne Smales, Carole Gude, Barbara Pickering,
Malcolm Hainsworth, John Wainwright.

CHAIRMAN M Hainsworth

HON SECRETARY Mrs T Clements

Harrogate
North Yorks

Telephone

HON TREASURER Mr J Clements
details as above except email:

COMMITTEE J L Akers, Mrs W M Akers, J Clements, Mrs T Clements,
K N Eyre, J Gibson, Mrs J Green, Mrs C Gude, M Hainsworth
Ms. J Higginson, T Mitchell, Ms M Murray, J Wainwright.

EDITOR Mrs W M Akers

SOCIETY WEBSITE www.tulipsociety.co.uk

Annual Subscriptions – Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2012 become due on the date of the Annual Show May 2012 and are for the sum of £5 per Member, £6 for Family Membership and £50 for Life Membership

Contents

Officers and Committee		inside front cover
Editorial		2
Chairman’s Report	Malcolm Hainsworth	3
Secretary’s Report	Teresa Clements	4
Library Report	Margot Murray	6
Treasurer’s Report	Jason Clements	7
Minutes of the AGM 2011	Teresa Clements	9
Dates for your diary - Events 2012		11
Harrogate Spring Show	James Akers	12
The 176th Annual Show	James Akers	14
Tulips from Sweden	Teresa Clements	20
The Society’s Garden Visits 2011		
Sweden	Jean Higginson	22
Newby Hall	Sue Dawson	27
Tulips, old flames and feathers!	Teresa Clements	32
The day we went to the Borthwick	Keith Orrell	34
Whitby’s William Willison	Linda Chapman	36
Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan	Wendy Akers	44
Some memories of Rory McEwen	Valerie Eyre	51
The Tulip Competition at Wisley	Wendy Akers	53
Book Reviews		55
Keukenhof Dates 2012		56
Challenging Times	Morris Robinson	57
Rosecarpe Horticultural Society Show	Morris Robinson	58
Jottings	Frazer Henderson	59
The British National Carnation Society		60
Miniature Bulbs		inside back cover

The photograph on the front cover is a parrot-tulip in marquetry at Newby Hall taken by James Akers

Editorial

Wendy Akers

What a year. Robert Frost captured the early weather in a verse from one of his poems :

The sun was warm but the wind was chill,
You know how it is with an April day
When the sun is out and the wind is still,
You're one month on in the middle of May.
But if you so much as dare to speak,
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,
A wind comes off a frozen peak,
And you're two months back in the middle of March.

Two tramps in Mud Time.

This wasn't the quiet year that Malcolm often hopes for. The articles reflect the many and diverse activities of the society in 2011. As if it wasn't exciting enough worrying about flowers for the show we had the added anticipation of the outcome of our Heritage Lottery application, a garden visit that involved trains and boats and planes plus a second autumn garden visit in Yorkshire. But if you thought Sweden was long distance, how about the silk road to Samarkand, Joanna and Robin will take you there. A new society book is in preparation and a working party has been formed to help with the society's archive which is being installed at the Borthwick Institute at York University. All these activities are covered in this Newsletter and I would like to thank all the contributors. We are very fortunate to have enthusiasts in the society who are prepared to spend time writing for the Newsletter so that members who cannot attend every event can be informed and enthused about ongoing activities through the year. Hats off to one member who has caught the research bug, which means we finally know all about the raiser of 'Sir Joseph Paxton' and 'Juliet'.

An excellent show and an outstanding AGM are described, the Swedish visit was one of the highlights of my year, only rivalled by the tour of the Borthwick Institute prior to starting sorting and conserving the archive. Standing in the massive and chilly strong-room being shown a book from 1560 which was a collection of documents from the court of Elizabeth I concerning "popish recusants" in the area made my hair stand on end. It is pleasing to know that the archive is coming out of our spare bedroom, being conserved and access to it made available for future research and future members.

I hope you enjoy this Newsletter, and that you might think about writing something for next year. It's your society and your Newsletter.

Chairman's Report

Malcolm Hainsworth

What I enjoyed most this year was seeing new members – and old friends – both at the show and our AGM. I do miss those members we have lost and also those who now find it difficult to reach us. But, for those who were able to attend these were two special occasions. Both clearly displayed the Society's quality and strength.

At the show new exhibitors showed plenty of evidence of care and commitment. More members showed their capacity to enter challenging classes and those well established growers were pleased to feel the enthusiastic pressure from new competition. At our AGM the level of support is heartening. The generous gifts, the attentive service on our stalls, the attendance of members from great distances and the legendary feast from our unrivalled catering team proved that we are a fine society. Furthermore, we are able to attract both experts of international standing and provide from our ranks our own hardy explorers, the Spencers. We were fortunate to have Jan Pennings award the show prizes and equally pleased to see the entries from our Swedish members. Some lucky few were able to enjoy their hospitality on a return visit.

Like others last season I had to clear snow from my plot before planting and it was far from easy. This year I have almost completed planting in easier conditions. Still, I laboured under a cloud. The contamination of my Julia Farnese by a blue stained base intruder was a blow to my pride. If you find such a bloom it comes from me. It is not an English Florist's tulip, even though it has a pretty flame. Do not be seduced by it, as I was, and do not keep it as, alas, I did. Do not bring it to the show unless to rebuke me. It will take a while to eliminate this flower. If the Society had a disciplinary committee I would be up in front of it as a notorious incorrigible.

My own persisting failings have not inhibited me from being extremely critical of those members, old and new, who have lost their stored bulbs to mice. I have now lost most of my stock of "Lemon Paxton", not to mice, but to a storage rot. The bulbs discoloured, becoming almost translucent and soft. I was left with only three flowering sized bulbs and a few offsets which I hope will remain healthy. This vulnerability of our bulb stock is a cause of continuing anxiety as indeed had become that of our largely paper-based records. Teresa's hard won success in gaining a Heritage Lottery Fund grant will enable us to address this problem through the archive project she has devised.

Were it not for the stewardship of recent secretaries, much of our heritage would have vanished. Dr Johnson wrote that "Lives can only be written from personal knowledge which is growing every day less and in a short time is lost

forever.” This stricture came to mind as we faced rows of the Society’s files laid across Teresa’s floor. Amongst these, members found much which was absorbing and intriguing, even at this initial sift through selections of material. It was, however, only with the help of Keith and James that a good deal of the content could be understood. This underlines the importance of our archive project. Despite the difficulties, both conceptual and practical, and over which we have had lengthy discussions, we have made a good start.

It was so pleasing and reassuring to see members willing to tackle the tasks of transcribing our minute books and begin to assemble and order papers for our archive. The value of our papers will be apparent in James’ new handbook which will further and more properly delineate our heritage. We are indebted to him. Alongside these activities will run extensive efforts to assemble as many as possible of the narratives that make up the Society’s oral history. Similarly, we hope to identify and collect artefacts related to the Society. The generous gift of Maurice Evans’ superb photographic collection is a splendid accession for which we must thank his children, Suzanne Grummett and Stephen Evans..

I would like to record my heartfelt thanks to Barbara Pickering for many years of committee support. As soon as she joined the society Barbara set up the idea of having a plant stall and over the years an amazing number of members’ plants have appeared to the benefit of our finances. The committee have coped with another exceptional year and Anne Smales has risen like a phoenix from her major operation to again run the catering team who produce our “feasts”.

These are uncertain times and we may well discover through our archival research that the past is just as unpredictable as the future. We can be certain of the pleasure we will have from our blooms.

Secretary’s Report 2010

Teresa Clements

This year’s AGM agenda has an item on the society’s archive, which unfortunately means that this year I get two chances to stand up and speak. Looking back through some of the archive material shows how the society has changed over the years. This occasionally gives me cause for concern. While I am Secretary I would like to maintain the traditional nature of the society, I like it just as it is. However, we have to accept some change, at each AGM we remember members we have lost and try to make new members welcome and so the society gradually moves along with the times to best serve the current membership.

Showing English florists’ tulips is the main aim of the society, distributing bulbs and promoting their cultivation is essential to that purpose. All the other

things I am going to talk about now are additional to that. I hope that those of you whose interest lies in that primary aim alone will accept that we now have many members who want to share other aspects of their interest in tulips, such as their history, science and art. While we respect the traditions of the society, our members now form a large, diverse group who take us beyond what the original members intended.

Shows and meetings

The committee met three times this year. We were concerned that the freezing weather before Christmas 2010 would hold back the planting and growth of bulbs. The frozen ground was then waterlogged for weeks after Christmas which meant that some people planted late in January or even into February. Harrogate Spring Flower Show was as early as it ever can be and it didn't look good for the tulip show until we had the warmest spring on record. There was no rain, lovely warm sunshine and the early flowering tulips that were bought to show at Harrogate were suddenly finished before the show began! However, the tulips grown for the Dutch classes in the Annual show benefitted the showbench at Harrogate.

That meant there were very few Dutch entries at the 176th Annual Show on 14th May, which was opened with great style by the red dragon himself, our very own Peter Royles. The exceptionally warm spring also had a dramatic effect on the entry for the English classes, which was significantly down as many growers were unable to hold back their flowers. Those tulips that made it to the showbench had either been in the `fridge for two weeks or had been planted very late.

Our members in Sweden sent flowers for the show by courier. The warm Spring brought the flowers to just the right stage and a plan to pick, pack and post was in place when the flowers were struck down by a hailstorm only hours before they were due to be dispatched. Ulf and Emilie ran out in the storm to salvage what they could and sent a box of flowers that Judy Baker staged for them and they won a second and three third prizes.

One beneficiary of the warm spring weather was the Constable Burton Tulip Festival. The tulips were the best I can remember, despite the bulbs being planted in January.

The season was over very quickly and the bulbs could be lifted much earlier than usual. We expected very little increase in the size and number of bulbs due to the short, dry season, but somehow the bulbs responded well to the conditions and in general growers seem pleased with the results.

Uzbekistan

After the suggestion last year that the society should visit Uzbekistan to see tulips growing in the wild, Joanna and Robin Spencer made a trailblazing trip on behalf of the society, which they will tell us about later today.

Sweden

In June, nineteen of us went to visit Sweden in response to an invitation from our Swedish members to join them on a trip to see the place where Linnaeus was born. We also saw the lovely town of Halmstad, the forest, the coastline and the very first IKEA! Our Swedish hosts gave us the warmest of welcomes, provided coffee and cake at every opportunity and introduced us to the Swedish custom of eating herring, singing and drinking Schnapps before dinner. We all agreed it had been a great success, we had a delightful trip and made many new friends. The society had such an influx of new Swedish members that we briefly considered changing its name to the Wakefield and North of Europe Tulip Society. You will be able to read more about the trip in our newsletter but I think all of the participants would like us to put on record a big vote of thanks to our Swedish hosts, we look forward to being able to return their hospitality here in Yorkshire.

Website

Have you looked at the society's website lately? (www.tulipsociety.co.uk) John Wainwright has put a lot of hard work into updating it and it has done a great job! Thank you John. Let's all try to make good use of it for news and updates and to check those important show dates and venues.

I want to keep the report short this year, so I'll not say much more. Amongst us there are people whose personal preference will always be to focus on the main purpose of the society, growing and showing English Florists' tulips, and thank goodness we have them. At the same time we have specialists and enthusiasts who present us with opportunities that prove irresistible. Whatever your particular requirements are, do bear in mind that this is the one and only tulip society. As members, we have a common interest, let's encourage and support each other in that, as for all the other stuff, well, it's there for those of us that like it!

Library Report

Margot Murray

Rather than list the books which have been added to the library over the past twelve months, a complete list of all the books available within the society library will be added to the website, together with details of how members can borrow copies.

Treasurer's Report

Jason Clements

Once again, I am pleased to be able to report the financial health of the Society. In fact, we made a small operating surplus (£145.98) this year, as opposed to last year's deficit (£180.80), although this is partly accounted for by payments made in one financial year for items received in the next (see below).

I will briefly mention a few points which may be of interest to those few of you who are still reading this part of the newsletter!

Firstly, the income from subscriptions remains steady. This directly reflects the health of the Society's membership, which I find particularly encouraging.

You can see that the Sales table income has dropped a lot from last year. This is partly because we attended fewer events this year, but also because we had little new stock. This has now been remedied: those who attended the AGM may have seen some excellent new greetings cards we have had printed from members' photos.

There is an income item of £111.00 for Dutch bulbs sold at the 2010 AGM – for which we apparently paid nothing! Of course we did have to pay for them – but this was done in July 2010, which fell in the previous financial year. As I mentioned above, this largely explains the surge in our operating surplus from the that year.

Despite the Royal Mail's continued price rises, you will see our postage bill has dropped considerably. We achieved this feat in two ways. Firstly, more and more of our members now use email, so communications can be sent at no cost. The Secretary is also grateful for this trend, as a large number of emails can be sent at the touch of a button, which compares very favourably with the time taken to print, fold, envelope and stamp letters! The second postage-saving measure is that our new newsletter printers offer an inclusive mailing service, which is a huge boon as we enjoy bulk postage rates and also avoid the task of packing and posting the newsletters ourselves.

Finally, James Akers very kindly purchased a shed for storing the Society's collection of beer bottles (empty, for the Show!) and donated it to the Society. In order to recognise his generosity, I have shown this as a cost under 'Purchases', but it is offset by the same amount, included under 'Donations' on the income side.

Statement of Accounts for Year ending 31st July 2011

Receipts	2011	2010	Payments	2011	2010
Subs & Donations			Administration		
Subscriptions	1,080.00	1,056.00	Newsletter (printing)	546.48	550.00
Donations	184.23	179.50	Insurance	187.00	186.00
			Stationery & software	134.63	113.16
			Photocopying & printing	68.02	122.22
			Postage	213.36	365.68
			Internet registrations	81.82	
Total	1,264.23	1,235.50	Total	1,231.31	1,337.06
Sales			Purchases		
AGM	120.65	36.80	Harrogate expenses	48.70	46.50
Harrogate	122.93	228.22	Library Books	12.99	33.00
Constable Burton	88.55	185.60	Display stands and material	0.00	216.15
Main Show	162.40	256.30	Storage shed	136.98	
Great Yorks Show		160.51	Sales table	167.47	417.54
Postal Sales	71.82	213.45	Calendars		237.70
Calendars	0.00	240.00	Total	366.14	950.89
Total	566.35	1,320.88	Bulbs		
Bulbs			Annual distribution	100.24	84.15
Hortus bulb sales	443.00	621.00	Breeders from Hortus	273.10	467.63
Dutch bulbs, AGM	111.00	288.28	Dutch bulbs for AGM	0.00	381.69
Total	554.00	909.28	Total	373.34	933.47
AGM & Shows			AGM & Shows		
Raffle	235.20	292.15	Hall hire	186.00	451.00
Refreshments	307.43	285.66	Crockery, Table Hire, Food	162.86	77.61
Plant sales	124.85	57.80	Trophies	335.30	202.00
Prize money	90.00	237.00	Prize Money	103.75	90.00
			Speakers' expenses	160.25	
			Other		209.75
Total	757.48	872.61	Total	948.16	1,030.36
Bank			Other		
Interest	3.47	3.43	Misc expenses		5.00
Dividends	37.00	37.39	RHS Books from last year	117.60	
Total	40.47	40.82	Total	117.60	5.00
Special Events			Special Events		
Tulip Feast		1,425.00			1,728.11
Total	0.00	1,425.00	Total	0.00	1,728.11
			Operating surplus/deficit	145.98	-180.80
Grand Total	3,182.53	5,804.09		3,182.53	5,804.09

Statement of Assets

	2011	2010	Change
Cash Assets			
Current Account	3,780.17	3,648.58	131.59
Abbey Account	3,495.80	3,455.33	40.47
Unpresented cheques		-117.60	
Cash in hand	147.56	173.64	-26.08
Total	7,423.53	7,159.95	145.98
Other Assets			
Banco Santander Shares	570.27	736.70	-166.43
Sales table stock	1,032.63	1,092.79	-60.16
Total	1,602.90	1,829.49	-226.59

Auditor's Statement

I confirm that I have examined the Receipts and Payments. The Cash Amounts appear to be in order.

I. Fox 26/09/2011

Minutes of AGM 1 October 2011

The meeting was held at Wrenthorpe Village Hall starting at 12 noon.

Chairman's welcoming remarks

Malcolm Hainsworth welcomed members to the meeting. With a very full agenda before us, he hoped the business of the meeting would be completed swiftly. There was a minute's silence to remember Dorothy Lindop and Joan, the widow of Maurice Evans. Dorothy was with us at the AGM last year, her daughter donated Dorothy's gardening books to the society. The family of Joan and Maurice Evans also donated books and a large collection of excellent slides to the society.

Apologies for absence were received from twenty members and a record number of 79 people said they would attend. Notice of the high attendance helped when planning the catering.

Minutes of previous AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM had been published in the newsletter and were taken as read and were approved.

Matters arising. None

Secretary's Report

Teresa Clements. The Secretary's Report appears previously on page 4.

Treasurer's Report

Jason Clements. The Treasurer's Report appears previously on page 7.

Jason proposed a £5 joining fee for new members. This would mean new members paid £10 in total in their first year and a subscription of £5 per annum thereafter.

In their first year of membership, all new members are automatically sent a pack of bulbs, a copy of the newsletter and three additional letters. The main cost to the society is postage for the bulbs and printing and posting the newsletter, whenever possible email is used for the other letters. If no further payments are made, the member is sent at least one reminder and, meanwhile, may receive a second or third newsletter.

Q. Trevor Myers: Are we out of pocket for members who only pay once? (Yes.)

Q. David Day: Could we make an exception for the unwaged?

Q. Cynthia Day: Could we reduce the joining fee to £3?

Q. How many people lapse after one year?

Q. Tonnevane Wiswell: Instead of a joining fee, better to be harsh with a one year cut-off.

Q. Judy Baker: The value of the bulbs sent to new members needs to be considered. There is no charge for them but they represent the work of the grower and are unobtainable elsewhere.

Q. Ivor Fox: £5 is very good value indeed for bulbs and postage alone. Also included are a full colour newsletter and access to shows, a garden visit and other events.

The Chairman ended the discussion in order to move on and asked the meeting to vote on the joining fee by a show of hands. The joining fee was approved by a majority.

Election of Officers

President	The Duke of Devonshire KCVO CBE DL
Patrons	Mr Keith Eyre, Mr James L Akers MBE
Vice	Mr P Emmett, Mr T Mills, T Clark, J Ollerenshaw, Dr A K Swift,
Presidents	Mrs Carole Gude, Mrs Jane Green, Mr R Bingham, Mrs Anna Pavord, Mrs Wendy Akers, Mrs Anne Smales, Ms Sarah Akers, Mrs Barbara Pickering, Mr J Wainwright, Mr M Hainsworth.
Chairman	Mr M Hainsworth
Secretary	Mrs T Clements
Treasurer	Mr J Clements
Editor	Mrs W M Akers
Auditor	Mr I Fox

Committee James Akers, Wendy Akers, John Wainwright, Terry Mitchell, Jane Green, Keith Eyre, Malcolm Hainsworth, Marguerite Murray, Jason Clements, Teresa Clements, Carole Gude, Barbara Pickering, John Gibson.

This year Barbara Pickering retired from the Committee, Jean Higginson was nominated to join. The Chairman suggested that Jean was elected and all other officers, listed as above, were re-elected in a single vote. This was proposed by Tim Lever, seconded by Trevor Myers and approved by a show of hands.

9. The Archive project.

Teresa Clements announced that the society had been awarded £10,900 by the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project called "Tulips, old flames and feathers!" This was to ensure the society's archive was safely conserved in the Borthwick Institute in York and provided funding for equipment to create a talk and a display to take to local people and professional expertise to help set up a website and sound

archive. The project runs for 18 months and will end with a Tulip Heritage Day on the day following the annual show in 2013. The project is aimed at sharing the society's fascinating history with the local community and members are encouraged to take part.
(More about the project later in the newsletter.)

Show dates 2012.

See later in newsletter.

Any Other Business

In order to enable everyone to have lunch before the first speaker began at 1.45pm, there was little time for other business. Ivor Fox wanted to record the thanks of the society to the Heritage Lottery Fund for their generous award and thanked those who worked on the application.

The meeting closed at 12.35 for lunch.

Dates for your diary - Events 2012

These are the dates that have been confirmed so far, news of other events will be available later.

RHS Tulip Day – Wednesday 11 April 2012. Vincent Sq., London. Our Patron, James Akers is Chairing the day. There will be talks by James Akers, Anna Pavord, Richard Wilford and Lady Skelmersdale. The society will have a stand at this event with a sales table for cards and books but we don't expect to have any English Florists tulips to display on 11 April.

Harrogate Spring Flower Show – Thursday 26 to Sunday 29 April 2012. We hope to have a slightly new layout for our stand this year and will enter a display in the competition for specialist societies. Tulips for showing can be set up from Wednesday afternoon, 25 April, and judging will take place at 8am on Thursday 26 April 2012. Do come along and support the society, the show is for Dutch tulips and exhibitors receive a ticket for free entry to the show, which is a great day out. Contact the Secretary for the show schedule.

177th Annual Show – Saturday, 5 May 2012. Primrose Hall, Green Park Avenue, Horbury, Wakefield. WF4 6EG. Staging from 10am to 12noon. The classes will be called at 12noon, immediately followed by judging. Open to the public 2.30pm to 4.30pm.

Constable Burton Tulip Festival – Saturday 5 May – Monday 7 May 2012. Constable Burton Hall, Leyburn, North Yorkshire. DL8 5LJ. The first day clashes with the Annual Show, but the society will have a stand for all three days at Constable Burton Hall.

Annual General Meeting – Saturday 6 October 2012. Wrenthorpe Village Hall, Wrenthorpe, Wakefield. Details of the timing for the day will be supplied nearer the occasion, but the day will include slides and discussion of historical information revealed by our archiving project.

Harrogate Spring Show

James Akers

After several years of declining support and entries at this show it is nice to report a good show. Because the date was so early we tried to ensure we had early flowers by encouraging members to buy Fosteriana and other early flowering cultivars and this paid off. It is also pleasing to record another first-time winner of the Tulip Championship of Great Britain class. Morris Robinson hasn't been showing tulips very long and he was 'over-the-moon' with his success. In second place was Jenny Orrell, with her first attempt in this multi-vase class, an encouraging result, and Chris Bone was third.

Wendy Akers won the second class with a vase of nine 'Honeymoon' which attracted a lot of attention from visitors. A very white, fringed flower which flowers earlier than the majority of flowers of this type, 'Honeymoon' could become a 'banker' at Harrogate where it can be shown in the white and fringed classes as well as being able to hold its own against late and Darwinhybrid cultivars.



Morris Robinson with trophy and 'World Peace'
photo Teresa Clements

Other exhibitors who had a good show were Linda Chapman, Barbara Pickering, Linda Van Lopik, Teresa Clements and Christine Yeardley.

Results

Class

1 Tulip Championship of Great Britain 3 Vases of 9 Tulips, 3 different varieties, one per vase (3) 1. Morris Robinson Yokohoma, World Peace, Unknown 2. Jenny Orrell Perestroika, Christmas Dream, Toyota 3. Chris Bone World Peace, Forgotten Dreams, Marit

2 9 tulips - one variety (8) 1. Wendy Akers Honeymoon 2. Linda Chapman Not named 3. Teresa Clements Casa Grande

3 3 Lily flowered tulips, one variety (5) 1. Barbara Pickering Moonlight Girl 2. Linda van Lopik Maytime 3. Linda van Lopik Pink China

4 3 Parrot flowered tulips, one variety (2) 1. Jenny Orrell Apricot Parrot 2. Teresa Clements Salmon Parrot

5 3 Double flowered tulips, one variety (3) 1. Barbara Pickering Sunlover 2. Teresa Clements Miranda 3. Teresa Clements Montreux

6 3 Fringed tulips, one variety (4) 1. Wendy Akers Honeymoon 2. Jenny Orrell Davenport 3. Linda van Lopik American Eagle

7 3 Yellow flowered tulips, one variety (7) 1. Jenny Orrell Mrs J T Scheepers 2. Linda Chapman Purissima 3. Teresa Clements Bellona

8 3 White flowered tulips, one variety (5) 1. Jenny Orrell White Dream 2. Linda van Lopik Purissima 3. Chris Bone Purissima

9 3 Pink or Red flowered tulips, one variety (14) 1. Wendy Akers Negrita 2. Roy Mitchell Apeldoorn 3. Wendy Akers Forgotten Dreams

10 3 tulips any other colour, one variety (9) 1. Linda Chapman Not named 2. Jenny Orrell Perestroika 3. Linda van Lopik Burning Heart

11 5 Kaufmanniana, Greigii or Fosteriana cultivars (5) 1. Jenny Orrell Casa Grande 2. Wendy Akers Purissima 3. Wendy Akers Yellow Purissima

12 3 multi-headed tulips one variety (1) 1. Teresa Clements *Tulipa praestans* 'Fusilier'

13 3 tulips any other colour, one variety - restricted entry (3) 1. Harold Brooke World's Favourite 2. Morris Robinson Pink Impression 3. Roy Mitchell Ad Rem

14 3 cut flowers from one species tulip (7) 1. Christine Yeardley Not named 2. Linda van Lopik *Tulipa whittallii* 3. Teresa Clements *Tulipa urumiensis*

15 5 cut flowers from one or more species tulips (6) 1. Christine Yeardley Not named 2. Teresa Clements *Tulipa clusiana* 'Tinka' 3. Teresa Clements *T. urumiensis*

16 A Bowl or pan of species tulips containing not less than 5 bulbs (5) 1. Terry Mitchell Not named 2. Linda Chapman *Tulipa clusiana* 'Tinka' 3. Roy Mitchell Bronze Charm

The 176th Annual Show

James Akers

What a difference a year makes. In 2011 I was unable to enter even one flower at the 175th show because of the lateness of the season. This year with the show just one week later I had had some flowers in the fridge for three weeks in order to compete, the longest period that I had ever had to resort to with this process.

The vase classes were particularly hit by the earliness of the season. In 2010 there were a total of 97 entries with a total of 639 flowers; this year 12 entries and 90 flowers; possibly the fewest number of flowers in this section since the vase classes were introduced in the 1930s.

Surprisingly, and therefore a credit to the ingenuity of our showing members, the florists' tulip section was remarkably well supported. Two of our most successful exhibitors who regularly show through the Open section, Judy Baker and John Snocken were completely flowered out, however there was at least one exhibit in each of the collection classes.

Usually breeders flower a few days after the broken bulbs but on this occasion were in shorter supply. Teresa Clements won her first major trophy at this show with her twelve breeders, the only exhibit but a worthy winner nevertheless, and likewise Bob Taylor and Mike Higgins were sole competitors when winning the nine and six breeder classes respectively. Barbara Pickering, a regular winner in this class, won the silver plate for three breeders with Beryl Royles second, and Teresa third. The final breeder class saw another winner, five classes five different winners, John Wainwright being successful with 'Casius' a flower of his own raising.

The Needham Memorial Cup class for twelve rectified and the Challenge Cup class for six rectified were two-horse races, James Akers winning the former with Malcolm Hainsworth second, and the positions reversed in the latter. In the Local Challenge Cup class Teresa Clements was the only entrant, the three breeders in addition to the six rectified flowers being the downfall for the other potential exhibitors. Nevertheless it was a good entry and well worth the first prize.

The Novice and Extra Open classes were both well contested, and the exhibitors much better at producing breeder flowers on the day than their more experienced colleagues in the Open section. There were no less than seven entries in the Gina Roozen cup for three breeders, surely a record, won by Jean Higginson. Jean's entry included a 'James Wild' which was best bloom in the Novice section. The single breeder was won with 'Gloria' shown by our furthest travelling exhibitor, Don Palmer from Kent. Some of the flowers travelled even further than Don, all the way from Sweden, but more of that later in the newsletter.

Linda Chapman won the Novice stages class, where there were four entries, and the double points awarded in this class, together with two single bloom thirds, were enough to win her the Novice Cup.

Mike Higgins, last year's leading Novice, continues to make progress winning most points in the Extra Open section, in which John Wainwright had the Premier Bloom in the section with a feathered 'Judy Baker', again one of his own raising. This flower was eventually chosen as the Premier Feather.

It has often been said that bad winters produce good feathered flowers and many exhibitors queried why there were so few good feathers this year. The answer I believe lies in the fact that the large amount of snow we got was in the early part of the winter, in fact well before Christmas. At this time the tulips are effectively dormant and unaffected by the weather. In fact the weather was relatively mild in the latter stages of the winter, resulting in the unprecedented earliness of the flowering season. We need a long cold winter to prove whether or not I am right.

'Constable Burton' flame was overall Premier Bloom for the second year in a row, and Teresa Clements had the Premier Breeder with 'Goldfinder'.

One flower also worthy of mention is the newly named 'Tom McRae'. It is unusual to name flowers after their raiser, but as the seedlings were passed by Tom to James Akers at a very early stage, and this selection is breaking well, it seemed appropriate.

The show was opened by Peter Royles who has been a great servant to the society in recent years and Beryl presented the prizes.

Results

1 The John Hardman Memorial Vase of 18 Tulips (One variety not English Florist) (1) 1. Ken Bacon (Sutton in Ashfield): Maureen

2 Vase of 12 Tulips (Any variety or varieties not English Florist) (1) 1. Malcolm Hainsworth (York): *Tulipa sprengeri*

3 Vase of 6 Tulips (Any variety or varieties not English Florist) (2) 1. Ken Bacon: Maureen 2. Malcolm Hainsworth: *Tulipa sprengeri*

4 Vase of 3 Tulips (Any variety or varieties not English Florist) (4) 1. Ken Bacon: Maureen 2. Teresa Clements (Harrogate): Insulinde 3. Four Seasons (Hull): Ice Cream

5 Vase of 12 English Florist Tulips (1) 1. Malcolm Hainsworth: Mixed varieties

6 Vase of 9 English Florist Tulips (2) 1. Teresa Clements: Mixed varieties 2. Teresa Clements: Mixed varieties

7 Vase of 6 English Florist Tulips (1) 1. Not awarded: 2. Not awarded: 3. Teresa Clements: Mixed bybloemens

8 NORMAN EYRE MEMORIAL GOBLET Stand of 12 Breeders (different varieties) (1) 1. Teresa Clements: Judy Baker, Juliet, Mabel, Gloria, Talisman,

Albert Tear, Music, Bessie, James Wild, Arcadia, Goldfinder, Sam Barlow

9 NEEDHAM MEMORIAL CUP Stand of 12 rectified English Tulips (all dissimilar) (2) 1. James Akers (Wrenthorpe): Wakefield Fe, Mabel Fe, Argyre Fl, Wakefield Fl, Agbrigg Fe, Adonis Fe, Constable Burton Fl, Columbine Fl, Lord Stanley Fe, James Wild Fe, Tom McRae Fl, Lord Stanley Fl 2. Malcolm Hainsworth: Wakefield Fe, Not named Fe, Mabel Fl, Julia Farnese Fl, Columbine Fe, Not named Fe, Bessie Fl, Adonis Fl, Lord Stanley Fe, James Wild Fe, Sir Joseph Paxton Fl, Lord Frederick Cavendish Fl

10 ROYLES JUBILEE CUP Stand of 9 Breeders (different varieties) (1) 1. Bob Taylor (Bailston): Juliet, Mabel, Gloria, Wendy Akers, Albert Tear, Columbine, Lord Stanley, James Wild, Sam Barlow

11 LOCAL SILVER CHALLENGE CUP Stand of 9 English Florist Tulips (all dissimilar) (1) 1. Teresa Clements: Mabel Fe, Julia Farnese Fl, Mabel Br, James Wild Fe, Lord Stanley Fl, Goldfinder Br, Columbine Fe, Columbine Fl, Bessie Br

12 SILVER CHALLENGE CUP Stand of 6 rectified English Florist Tulips (2) 1. Malcolm Hainsworth: Julia Farnese Fl, Mabel Fe, Columbine Fl, Constable Burton Fe, Paxton Fl, James Wild Fe 2. James Akers: Wakefield Fl, Wakefield Fe, Talisman Fl, Adonis Fe, Lord Stanley Fl, Sir Joseph Paxton Fe

13 THE G.S.HUNTER MEMORIAL CUP Stand of 6 Breeders (different varieties) (1) 1. Mike Higgins (Harrogate): Lunae, Juliet, Albert Tear, Music, Goldfinder, James Wild

14 STAGES CUP Pan of 3 stages - One Breeder, one Flamed, one Feathered (3) 1. James Akers: Talisman Br, Constable Burton Fl, Constable Burton Fe 2. Bob Taylor: Albert Tear Br, Columbine Fl, Agbrigg Fe 3. Not awarded : James Wild Br, Lord F Cavendish Fl, Lord Stanley Fe

15 SILVER PLATE Pan of 3 Breeders - One Bizarre - One Bybloemen - One Rose (3) 1. Barbara Pickering (Newmillerdam): Music, Mabel, Goldfinder 2. Beryl Royles (North Wales): Columbine, Juliet 3. Teresa Clements: Music, Judy Baker, James Wild

16 Three Flamed (4) 1. Keith Eyre (South Cave): Talisman, Mabel, Sir Joseph Paxton 2. Malcolm Hainsworth: Columbine, Wakefield, James Wild 3. James Akers: Bessie, Wakefield, McWH6

17 Three Feathered (3) 1. Not awarded : 2. Not awarded : 3. Teresa Clements: Bessie, Julia Farnese, Lord Stanley

18 Pair of Flamed (7) 1. Malcolm Hainsworth: Columbine, Sir Joseph Paxton 2. James Akers: Rosie Wainwright, Columbine 3. Barbara Pickering: Columbine, Sir Joseph Paxton

19 Pair of Feathered (3) 1. Not awarded : 2. James Akers: Tom McRae, JW-L92-1 3. Malcolm Hainsworth: Lord Frederick Cavendish, Columbine

- 20** One Breeder (16) 1. John Wainwright (Wrenthorpe): Casius 2. Teresa Clements: Judy Baker 3. Beryl Royles (North Wales): Juliet
- 21** One Flamed (9) 1. Mike Higgins: Lord Stanley 2. James Akers: Wakefield 3. Teresa Clements: James Wild
- 22** One Feathered (8) 1. James Akers: Tom McRae 2. Barbara Pickering: Sir Joseph Paxton 3. Malcolm Hainsworth: Not named (Bybloemen)
- 23** SEEDLING CUP One Seedling Breeder or Rectified raised by the exhibitor (4) 1. John Wainwright: CC-92-20 2. Not awarded : 3. Not awarded :
- 24** Three Seedling Breeders (one from each colour) (0)
- 25** Pan of Three One Breeder, one Flamed, one Feathered (4) 1. Linda Chapman (Pickering): Goldfinder Br, Lord Frederick Cavendish Fl, Lord Frederick Cavendish Fe 2. Trevor Myers (Wilmslow): Juliet Br, Akers Fl, Wakefield Fe 3. Ulf Hansson (Sweden): Lord Stanley, Br, Fl, Fe
- 26** One Breeder (18) 1. Don Palmer (Brabourne Kent): Gloria 2. Jean Higginson (Menston): Talisman 3. Ulf Hansson (Sweden): Casius
- 27** One Flamed (15) 1. Trevor Myers: Lord Stanley 2. Roy Tetley (Keighley): Wakefield 3. Linda Chapman: Wakefield
- 28** One Feathered (9) 1. Christine Cudworth (Horbury): Adonis 2. Roy Tetley: Unknown (Bybloemen) 3. Linda Chapman: Columbine
- 29** THE GINA ROOZEN CUP Pan of 3 Breeders - One Bizarre - One Bybloemen - One Rose (7) 1. Jean Higginson: James Wild, Columbine, Juliet 2. Ulf Hansson (Sweden): James Wild, Albert Tear, Casius 3. Emilie Wellfelt (Sweden): James Wild, Albert Tear, Mabel
- 30** One Breeder (22) 1. John Wainwright: Casius 2. Jean Higginson: James Wild 3. Jenny Orrell (Wrenthorpe): Juliet
- 31** One Flamed (12) 1. Mike Higgins: Julia Farnese 2. Joanna Spencer (Newport Shropshire): Wakefield 3. Trevor Myers: Sir Joseph Paxton
- 32** One Feathered (5) 1. John Wainwright: Judy Baker 2. Beryl Royles: Seedling IV 3. Not awarded :
- 33** Pan of Three One Breeder, one Flamed, one Feathered (2) 1. Mike Higgins: Talisman Br, Talisman Fl, Adonis Fe 2. Trevor Myers: Columbine Br, Adonis Fl, Adonis Fe

Premier Bloom awards

Premier Bloom	‘Constable Burton’	James Akers
Premier Flame	‘Constable Burton’	James Akers
Premier Feather	‘Judy Baker’	John Wainwright
Premier Breeder	‘Goldfinder’	Teresa Clements
Cochrane of Cults Vase	‘Casius’ breeder	John Wainwright
Premier Novice Bloom	‘James Wild’ breeder	Jean Higginson
Premier Bloom Extra Open	‘Judy Baker’ feather	John Wainwright



Left - Premier feather 'Judy Baker'

Centre left - 'Tom McRae' flame

Centre right - 'Tom McRae' feather

Bottom - Judging at Horbury
from left to right Richard Smales,
Judy Baker, Teresa Clements,
Carole Gude and Jane Green

photos James Akers



Right - Peter, Beryl Royles, Carol Gude
Centre right - Jean Higginson and Beryl
Bottom right - Linda Chapman, Peter
and Beryl
Centre left - James Akers, Beryl and
Malcolm Hainsworth
photos Teresa Clements

Bottom left - Beryl, Peter and Teresa
Clements
Photo James Akers





The story unfolds—clockwise from above

Ulf and Emilie with flowers when picked

Flowers on arrival in the UK

Perking-up in water

Judy, the master (or should it be mistress) stager

Ready for the show table

Emilie's prize card in the Gina Roosen cup class

photos (except the first) Teresa Clements



The Society's Visit to Sweden 2011

Jean Higginson

We arrived on Friday 17 June by extraordinarily varied and sometimes circuitous routes, in sparkling sunshine interspersed with torrential rain. By late afternoon, most of our contingent of nineteen were exchanging travellers' tales and enjoying the warm hospitality of the Norre Park Hotel at Halmstad. There was time for a stroll by the river Nissan, which flows into the port from the Kattegat Bay, before an excellent buffet supper at which we were joined by some of our Swedish hosts, led by Ulf Hansson.



A stranger might have wondered what this animated group had in common, and failed to guess. There was a clue if you knew where to look: a pair of 'James Wild' breeder tulips displaying their dusky beauty in *Tuborg* bottles. They were in amazing condition for the third week in June. Bizarre indeed!

Halmstad (left)
'James Wild' (below)
photos Teresa Clements

On Saturday morning, armed with rainwear, cameras and, in one case, watercolour kit, we set off by coach for Råshult, the birth-place of Carl Linnaeus of taxonomic fame. Our hosts and their friends had now swollen our number to 43. Soon we were engulfed by dense spruce trees, a one-time source of our pit-props. On a more contemporary note, we passed through the headquarters of *Ikea*. Deep in the forest, a stop for coffee was announced. Where? Surely not even *Starbucks* had penetrated here? To our great delight, Ulf's Aunt and Uncle had laid on this unexpected treat, and we took refreshments in their garden, solemnly regarded



and loudly ‘commented upon’ by the most photogenic herd of cattle ever seen. We also encountered the sole hazard of the trip: recurrent offerings of delicious cake.

Ulf’s forward planning was again in evidence at Råshult, where he had engaged the services of a guide, Nils Svensk, who gave us an introductory talk which took us on a journey back in time. The Södregård (south farm) was once the residence of Lutheran pastor Nils Linnaeus, father of



Cattle (above) photo Jean Higginson



Nils Svensk with grass-roofed timber house (left) photo James Akers

Carl. A grass-roofed timber house, built slightly later, has been conserved as a museum. The low door and high threshold were testimony to the prevailing cold weather and there was evidence that life was lived in the kitchen (below), close to the fire.



The garden is a recreated eighteenth century rural landscape, cultivated by time-honoured methods. Sections were diligently planned for maximum utility. Fruit trees, medicinal herbs, a cabbage garden (the old term for kitchen garden) and animal fodder were vital for survival. Hop poles were an interesting feature, beer being considered a good source of nutrition.



The Hop garden (left) and Christina's ornamental garden

photos James Akers

Although the soil appeared light and sandy, records show that Nils Linnaeus grew potatoes as a rarity at a time when they were regarded with suspicion. This environment gave rise to the young Carl's fascination with plants and, keen-eyed as a WNETS judge, he later developed his famous classification system based on the number and arrangement of reproductive organs. Sexing-up botany did not, of course, endear him to everyone.

Considering the practical imperative of those times, an ornamental garden was highly unusual. Built as a wedding gift by Nils for Carl's mother, Christina, the centrepiece was an allegorical setting which described a round table set for dinner for eight guests. Clipped box represented plates, shaped rosemary mimicked stemmed glasses and alliums stood in for tall candelabra. One might perhaps have seen it as an early prototype for the floral clocks and coats-of-arms beloved of present day municipal schemes, but somehow it had much greater charm.

After a fresh and tasty lunch – by now we had taken to photographing the cake – we were invited to 'take a walk in the landscape', as the itinerary phrased it. The meadows were idyllic, supporting a wide range of wildflowers and insects to delight the most ardent naturalists among us.

Cairns of stones remained from the back-breaking toil of clearing the land. Linden trees were pollarded, their leaves used as winter fodder, the bark painstakingly turned into rope. The tree which was hated was the oak. Taking up precious land, they were legally the property of the king because of their ship building potential. They could not be cut down, although they could be 'discouraged', so *Quercus* rage ensued, resulting in stunted specimens! After our walk we took tea outside, marvelling at our luck with the weather, before gathering for a group photograph. The pleasures of the day are written on our faces.

The *Marinstugen*, crammed with maritime artefacts and memorabilia and some rather fine marine paintings, was the unique venue for the evening dinner,



which was full of surprises. The feast laid on by our hosts was the finest imaginable and was apparently produced by some miraculous combination of home-cooking and logistics, rather like lunch at the AGM. Our Swedish friends brought forward their mid-summer celebrations by a few days and introduced us to some of their traditions, which involved herring, schnapps and hearty singing. Having only a smattering of *Wallander*, the subject matter was a mystery, but I was offered a translation of their favourite song, which was along the lines of: “When the sun goes down behind the outside lavatory...”



Don Palmer (left), Tim and Elaine Lever at the *Marinstugen*
photo James Akers

A response seemed to be called for, so Wendy led us in a chorus of “On Ilkley Moor Baht ’At” which James translated as “On Ilkley Moor without a hat.” I had previously misinterpreted “baht ’at” as “baht ’owt.” Such are the perils of being born in Gloucestershire! The evening progressed with much hilarity. Emilie Wellfelt was handed a yellow card signifying achievement for an entry at the Annual Show rather than a misdemeanour on the football pitch. Ulf was presented with a copy of ‘A Tulip Anthology’ as a token of thanks to him and the

Swedish committee for superb organisation. He looked a little puzzled by an additional gift of Yorkshire tea.



Presentation of book and tea

photo Tim Lever

Everyone seemed in good order on Sunday morning when we had a breakfast presentation by Anita Ireholm, and returned to the more serious business of conservation and documentation. Thorny issues concerning the identification and naming of historic tulip varieties were discussed at length. Slightly reluctantly, my companion and I departed for Copenhagen at this point, but those with the foresight to arrange a longer stay had further sight-seeing in store.

It was a memorable get-together, and thanks are due to Ulf Hansson for inviting us and organising the trip and to Teresa Clements for liaison, publicity and communication at this end. We are keen to encourage a return visit and the 2013 show has been suggested. Hospitality and entertainment of the standard which we encountered will be very hard to match. Then again, no-one becomes involved with English Florists' Tulips unless they relish a challenge. We also have several members who make exceedingly good cake!

Further Information.

Historic gardens: www.linnesrashult.se

Linnean Society of London: www.linnean.org

POM Programme for Diversity of Cultivated Plants: www.pom.info/english/index.htm

A Lovely Day at Newby Hall

Sue Dawson

A letter earlier this year included an invitation for society members to visit Newby Hall near Ripon on 10 September 10. I am a new member, so after a bit of humming and herring I asked whether I could bring a friend and we set off bright and early for our day out. The weather had been a bit changeable and quite cold in the days leading up to the trip but we kept our fingers crossed that at least it would be dry.

My home at Melton Mowbray is about three hours drive from Ripon and friend Gill is half an hour from me on the Lincolnshire borders. We agreed to set off at 7.45a.m. to allow for hold ups, but as the journey was trouble free we arrived at Newby Hall half an hour early. Good excuse to take a stroll around the village and survey the scene. Very pretty cottages and a most unusual church, but it was the original large natural stone troughs displaying flowers at strategic points along the village street that surprised us. We exclaimed almost in unison "They must be a trusty lot in Ripon. These would disappear in our part of the world!"



Once the gates opened we made our way to the tea room for refreshments and a welcome from Teresa the secretary. The tour of the house was to be at noon so we took our time to walk up through the garden, congregating eventually on a bench in the courtyard by the main entrance for a group photo. Someone asked where we came from and when I said Melton Mowbray the President responded immediately "Didn't you bring any pork pie?" I hadn't, so it's a promise for the AGM in next October.

Top - Newby Hall from the gardens

Bottom - Team photograph

photos James Akers

At various times I have heard about the gardens at Newby Hall, most recently on BBC Gardeners World, but I had no preconceived idea about the house. What a treat in store. Sir Christopher Wren was the architect of the original building. The result of the symbiotic relationship between Robert Adam and Thomas Chippendale who together created the interior is significant.

Occupied as a family home by Richard and Lucinda Compton and their family, Richard's mother was responsible for the authentic restoration of the interior some years ago. Mrs. Compton senior was renowned for her interior design skills. Consequently everything is clean, bright and appropriate, with authentically reproduced bed drapes and hangings and fresh new curtains, no doubt woven by the Gainsborough Silk Company to order. Beautiful glazed cotton and moire cloth at windows and on upholstered furniture acquired from eminent traditional cloth merchants such as Marvic and Zoffany.



The Tapestry Room

photo James Akers

Original furniture by Thomas Chippendale is not uncommon in this part of the world because Chippendale was "a local" but to see such exquisite decorative pieces produced from the combined talents of Adam and Chippendale was a treat. Influenced by Robert Adam's return from his Grand Tour, ornate delicate items in his almost feminine style, cross banded and strung and in delicate satin wood, are a million miles from the general concept of Chippendale, who most usually expressed himself in Mahogany. Chairs in the tapestry room were ornate

and gilded in French taste, endorsing the diverse skill of this famous craftsman.

Most stately homes have a fine collection of things acquired over time but here all was commissioned for the house and more than 200 years later the collections are still entire. Motifs in marble floors were echoed in chair backs, mouldings on doors mirrored those on the picture frames. Staffordshire pottery commissioned to match the décor of the dining room was displayed on the buffet. Adam friezes in the entrance hall decorated in the special blue shade synonymous with Josiah Wedgwood, who was also in his prime at the time. The tour guides enthused with good reason!



Some items of tulip interest noticed within the house. Also see front cover.

photos James Akers

The sunshine was beautifully warm as we walked in the garden towards the famous double herbaceous borders. Their massed planting of colourful and unusual things was splendid. All around mature conifers and tall hedges provided shelter. Not the time of year for tulips of course, although the enthusiasts found one or two depicted in the marquetry furniture and tapestry in the house! Several garden "rooms", some mirror images of each other, peeled off the main avenue providing attractive displays of different plant groups; water features brought softness, movement and gentle sound. Bold willow sculptures placed throughout the garden added extra interest; a large group of playful willow hares was especially good.



Views in the gardens

photos James Akers

For me the most outstanding show was in the Salvia garden. Gill and I are still wondering how such mature and lush specimens of tender varieties are overwintered this

far north! The "well cared for" feeling in the house was echoed throughout the weed free garden. A small neat plant centre sold plants representative of the gardens which is an unexpected pleasure these days. The Plant Heritage National



Collection Cornus is held at Newby Hall incorporated in the shrubberies, and plants propagated from the collection were for sale too.

Someone will have taken a great deal of trouble to arrange this day out for us all and Gill and I extend our thanks for a super day and for making us so welcome.

More views of the garden

photos

(top) Malcolm Hainsworth

(bottom) James Akers



Tulips, old flames and feathers!

Teresa Clements

In October I sent a letter to everyone about the archive project, thank you to all of those who have offered to help, there has been a great response.

A group of volunteers went to the Borthwick Institute in York in November to look round the facility and learn a little more about the process of conserving documents. Keith Orrell has written about the day in this newsletter. Since then, small groups of volunteers have met to sort through the old correspondence and copy and transcribe the minute books. This process of working through the material before it is deposited in the Borthwick will take some time, it is slow but interesting and it is revealing some interesting facts and stories to use in displays and talks.

During the next few months we hope to make some recordings that will become part of the online sound archive. We aim to look especially at the social history of the society, to get people started we have a few questions;

- What is/was your day job?
- Is/Was gardening a contrast to work?
- How important is the competitive aspect of showing?
- Are you interested in other tulips, or just the English varieties?
- Why did the society endure in the North of England when all the rest disappeared?
- Did people feel they were conserving something?
- Who introduced you to English florists' tulips?
- Was there competition or collaboration between generations in your family?
- Current growers and younger people, - are they attracted for different reasons than in the past?

The conversations will not be restricted to answering these questions, they are intended to prompt memories, current ideas and opinions. We plan to have the audio recorder at the Annual Show in 2012 so we can make some recordings away from the crowds during the day. We can also arrange to meet elsewhere if you are keen to take part before then, do let me know.

It would be interesting to know how everyone would answer these questions. If you are shy about making a recording and would like to answer some or all of the above in writing, your replies would be very welcome, either on paper or by email to the usual address. Feel free to say as much or as little as you like, tell us

about how you came to join the society, the first show you went to, your experience of growing English Florists' tulips and what it is like being a member of the society. (Don't *all* say that the best bit is the lunch at the AGM!)

The society will have a stand at various shows and events in 2012 and we hope to set up a little quiz to get people thinking and talking about the society. It need only be a simple questionnaire to encourage people to read our displays and chat to us about the answers.

Equipment purchased to enable us to record and publish our thoughts.

- Colour laser printer.
- Slide scanner
- Digital Audio recorder
- Voice amplification for talks
- Digital projector
- Laptop PC

photo Teresa Clements



It is intended to be fun and educational for the participants and will help us to learn about our audience for the talks and website. If you want to suggest a question or a particular tulip or society related topic, please do.

Finally, our members have been busy finding material that might have a place in the archive, photographs, letters, newspaper reports of shows, old show schedules, books and pamphlets. If you have anything of this nature, do let me know, we are bound to turn up a lot of duplicates but we might find something unique. You don't have to donate it if you want to keep it, knowing it is there or having a copy could fill in some of the gaps in the society's history.

The day we went to the Borthwick

Keith Orrell

Do you have a room grandly called a 'study', or perhaps a 'den', 'snug', or just the 'spare room' which is the last resting place for the flotsam and jetsam of a busy life? I do. It is referred to as 'my study' largely because its walls are hidden by bookshelves, box files and old photographs, and not because a good part of the floor space is taken up by a Z bed and an exercise bike, both rarely used. As I sit here in my 'study' at my computer my eye is regularly caught by several box files labeled 'BP'. This is my shorthand for a project in which I was involved for 30 years. Now when the great house clearance expert in the sky finally calls, these files will be meaningless to him or her and will be skipped. If they are to be preserved and made accessible to researchers, they need archiving. It was then with a double agenda that I went along with the WNETS team to York University's Borthwick Institute for a day long course on archiving to prepare us for the work on the Heritage Fund Project.

The university campus is massive but we did have a beautiful map, and a SatNav to help us reach our destination, So surprise surprise, right at the end of our journey, we had to resort to asking the way, and even then we were frustrated by building works and a genuine fire alarm in reaching our destination. But we made it in the end and were ushered into our conference room for the day. How refreshing it was not to be welcomed by the usual health and safety talk or a cup of institutional coffee. The archivist, Chris Webb, told us a little about the institute and took us on a tour of the building, explaining how archive material is kept safe from visitors and hostile environmental conditions. You can only take a pencil into the viewing rooms which are maintained at a safe light levels, temperature and humidity, and the seats are arranged so that users are under constant surveillance by the staff, and each other. The archives are kept in a special secure vault with thick concrete walls and air conditioning. The strongboxes in which materials are kept move silently at the press of a button in order to economise on aisle space. And at the centre of the 'bunker' we found the staff having their morning coffee and chatting away about whatever archivists chat about when they are not protecting their archives. So who uses this amazing facility? Well apparently, 60% of enquiries are from people researching their family history.

The highlight of the morning and perhaps the day was a talk from a charming young conservator Catherine Dand who took us through the intricacies of how she and her colleagues go about conserving, preserving and storing valuable items. She demonstrated to us how to take books off shelves without damaging their spine, how to use a soft brush to remove dust from documents, and how to

clean dirt from them using a sponge-like substance with a texture similar to that of sliced bread plus lots of other tricks of the trade.

In the afternoon, after a sandwich lunch in a nearby coffee bar we got down to applying our new found insights to the task ahead. Like many such seminars some of our questions were answered such as; what makes an item suitable for archiving, what copyright issues are involved? While other questions were raised which can only be answered when we start sorting through old files. Most useful of all was the brainstorming session. Chris Webb gave us the task of identifying a way in which we could sort our materials into categories which could form the basis of an index to help future researchers to access information. He used his skills as a tutor by never answering a question, only redirecting or rephrasing them to help us reach conclusions which were ours.



From left to right (seated) Teresa Clements and Catherine Dand
(standing) Jean Higginson, James Akers, Wendy Akers, Margot Murray, Valerie Eyre,
Keith Eyre, Mike Young, Keith Orrell, Carole Gude, Chris Webb, Malcolm Hainsworth

Now we have begun the task of looking through the materials we are realising the size and complexity of our task. What should we throw away? Even the smallest bit of paper can hold some crucial information. Do you file a letter in date order, or according to its content? Who will consult the archive in the future? Social historians may outnumber the tulip enthusiasts. Oh by the way, we did have a team photograph taken. Everyone looks so young on it so perhaps it should be included in the archive, but genuine archive material has to be at least 15 years old. Another chance of immortality missed.

For the journey home to Wakefield we did not need the SatNav although we were so busy discussing our day out at the Borthwick that we had to go round at least one roundabout twice!

Whitby's William Willison

Linda Chapman

When I first joined the Wakefield & North of England Tulip Society, I remember James Akers telling me that the tulip 'Joseph Paxton' was bred by Willison of Whitby but nothing much was known about Willison. This summer I tried to find out about him. The Society still shows 'Sir Joseph Paxton' as a flame and feather, and did show the breeder until the Second World War. 'Juliet', also bred by Willison, is shown as a breeder. It now breaks only as a very poor flame.



Richard Willison December 2011

All photos Linda Chapman

William Willison was born in 1806, in Whitby. He was the fifth child of Alexander Willison, a Scot, who was a gardener/nurseryman and who had established a greengrocer's business in Whitby in 1800. The greengrocer's shop is still in existence and is now managed by Richard Willison, a descendent.

Alexander moved the family to New Gardens in 1812. New Gardens is something of a misnomer as the garden on the site was established

in 1652 by the Cholmley family. The Cholmley's family home was at Abbey House, located, as its name implies, adjacent to Whitby Abbey on a

very exposed site. Abbey House did not have any land suitable for growing vegetables and flowers, so, Sir Hugh Cholmley established New Gardens a mile to the east of the house. The new gardens were 'walled' for protection against the elements. The wall is now a listed building and bears a plaque with the inscription "I Sir Hugh Cholmley Kt and Baronet and Elisabeth my dear wife (daughter to Sir Will Twisden of Gt Peckham in the county of Kent Kt and Baronet) built this wall and planted this orchard Anno domini 1652".



The plaque of 1652

When the Cholmley* family ceased to consider Abbey House as their primary residence, New Gardens was leased out. Alexander Willison became superintendent of the garden (possibly extending to 9 acres) and, along with others, established a Botanical Garden in part of the walled garden. He became curator.



(*Cholmley is used throughout this article, Cholmeley is an alternative spelling)



Above - New Gardens house where William lived and died

Left - The original wall at New Gardens

In 1814 Alexander Willison and Rev. Young published *A catalogue of the plants in the Botanic Garden*. The catalogue was arranged according to the Linnaean system of plant identification. This publication can be viewed in Whitby's Pannett Park museum. The collection of plants catalogued was not huge, however, it did contain many very rare plant specimens.

William Willison was only a boy at the time of his father's work in the Botanic Garden, however, it would appear that he was influenced by the work going on there, and so began his life-long love of, and fascination with, plants. In later life he talks about working in a nursery in Middlesbrough when he was young. It is possible he did an apprenticeship there.

In his early twenties, William began to cultivate roses and appears to have paid considerable attention to growing seedlings. He worked alongside his father at New Gardens nursery and became solely responsible for the roses. *The Florist & Gardening Miscellany* of 1849/50 states that, at this time, it was the only rose nursery in the North of England, and that it was the only nursery in England where roses were cultivated for sale on a significant scale.



Left - Original back/
front walls and inter-
nal path of vinery

Below - Original
vinery wall



Left - New Gardens
ground where the
tulips and dahlias
were grown

In the 1830's, instructive and interesting horticultural periodicals had started to become popular and cheaply available to the general public. As early as 1836, William was writing and contributing articles to such periodicals. This was an activity that he continued for the rest of his life. He wrote mainly about roses, dahlias and alpine auriculas, but would send baskets of interesting plant specimens for the editors to examine and write about and for readers to discuss. He was a keen observer of all plants and their development and, as such, was a successful breeder of a variety of plants. He appeared to be passionate about sharing his acquired knowledge with other people who had similar interests. As early as 1838 he wrote an article about moss roses, he knew the crosses were not stable and some plants could exhibit characteristics of previous generations. If only he had known about genetics!

At this time many Floral and Horticultural Societies were rapidly being set up. In 1832, the Whitby Floral and Horticulture Society was established, records show that, initially, the society held five shows a year, with the Willison family winning prizes from the outset. In 1834, William Willison offered five shillings for the best *Erica* in bloom. Tulips were shown in late May of this year, with prizes for seven classes. The tulips of 1834 appeared to exceed all expectations, with the finest being grown by Mr Francis Hogarth. No tulips at this time were shown by the Willisons.

At this time William endured a personal tragedy. He had married Jane Dunning in 1831, they subsequently had two children. Records show that Jane died in 1836, leaving William to raise the two children as a single parent. William remarried in 1838, to a widow, Mary Sandor-Turner, who already had a son. William remained with Mary for the rest of his life and they had four more children together. Tragedy struck a second time, when between 1853 and 1855 four of his six children died.

The first definitive record of William showing tulips relates to the Whitby show of 1840, where William won six prizes. A feathered rose tulip, named 'Mr J Sanderson' (a Whitby florist), and bred by William, was shown here. Later, this tulip was to do very well at national shows and in 1856 gained a premium award at Crystal Palace. In the 1840 show, William was also awarded prizes for double anemones (3 prizes), pelargoniums (5 prizes) and greenhouse plants in pots (1 prize).

The year 1841 was the last time William showed at this Society. The article in the *York Herald* for this year did not give any results it just said "suffice it to say the Willison family walked off with a great many of the prizes". There were obviously tensions between the amateur and the professional growers, the amateurs had to pay ten shillings annual subscription, the gardeners only five shillings, but they won the prizes. The society later reformed as the Whitby Amateur

Horticultural Society with only three shows a year and not one at all in the Spring. William did still judge for the Society.

William soon became established as a judge at floral shows throughout the North and East of Yorkshire. The opening of the horse-drawn train service from Whitby to Pickering, in 1836, enabled easier travel from Whitby to these other areas of Yorkshire.

The Willison family, including William and his father and brothers, were enthusiastic supporters of the showing and judging of dahlias. This was one of the flowers that the Willison nursery specialised in cultivating. There was something of a 'dahlia mania' in the 1830's and 1840's. Good prices were paid for the new types of dahlia being bred by Willisons. William was particularly successful with the breeding of new, previously unknown, dwarf varieties of the flower.

In *The Garden* April 1840, an article mentions "excellent seedlings of polyanthus at New Gardens" and in 1848 reference is made to "a splendid collection of alpine auriculas".

It must have been during this decade (1840s) that William developed his tulip collection and started to breed from it.

The steam railway from Whitby to York opened in 1845, and William started to travel more. In 1849 he was judge at the Ancient Society of York Florists. Also in 1849, the newly formed National (later, Royal National) Tulip Society held its first exhibition in York. This Society subsequently held its annual exhibition in a different town, the arrangements being conducted by a local committee appointed for the purpose. William travelled to these and other national shows throughout the rest of his life.

In 1850, Alexander Willison died, aged 75, and William took responsibility for management of the entire nursery. During the next decade records and articles indicate the extent and diversity of William's interests in flowers and horticulture. He shared his expertise with readers on subjects ranging from growing roses from seed, growing alpine auriculas, raising seedling potatoes of a hardier character and the cross-breeding of carnations. Articles show how methodical he was, making meticulous records for himself and also detailed instruction for the reader.

In 1850, the tulip 'King' (described as a seedling of Mr Willison's) was shown at the Ancient Society of York Florists. By 1860 this tulip, along with 'Queen', 'Juliet' and 'Sir Joseph Paxton' would sweep the board with prizes at regional shows (including Wakefield) throughout the Midlands and North of England

He wrote an article for the *Midland Florist* entitled *Best tulips in each Class*. In order to write this article he asked the principal growers of tulips in Great Britain to each submit to him a list of their six best tulips for each class i.e. eighteen in total from 3 classes; bizarres, bybloemens, and roses. The results of ten

such growers (he included himself) were published in the magazine in 1852. The only tulips bred by William listed were the ones he chose himself, 'King' a bizarre and 'The Gem' a rose. The *Midland Florist* repeated this in 1858, although William himself did not take part. Many more growers chose his tulips as their best, and their lists included 'Sir Joseph Paxton', 'Juliet', 'Gem of Gems', 'J. Sanderson' and 'King'.

In another article of 1852, he does mention people coming to his nursery to buy 'Juliet' but as yet it does not seem to appear on the show bench. I have found no reference to the tulip, 'Sir Joseph Paxton', in my investigations through to this date, but it could have been named in 1851 as this was the year Paxton was knighted.

His tulips were often described in the *Midland Florist*. After the National Exhibition of 1853 : *We must allude to three bizarres raised by our friend William Willison and named: 'Sir Joseph Paxton', 'King' and 'J.F.Wood'. We liked the last best, a short cup with distinct feather. It is a notable flower. The breeder had a very slight tinge but in the rectified flower it had disappeared. With us 'Sir Joseph Paxton' was purity itself with a stout, well formed, cup that is heavily barred and feathered. 'King' was not a good specimen but had a good flower in it.*

Although he had been a judge at Ancient Society of York Florists, William did not show here until 1854, when he showed 'Juliet' for the first time and took the President's prize. 'Sir Joseph Paxton' was not shown here until 1856, and then not as a broken flower.

In 1855 William wrote an article in the *Midland Florist* entitled *The Breeder Tulip*. This article is slightly confusing, as he goes on to say*Again fine as the rectified flower of 'Sir Joseph Paxton' was, as shown by Mr Wood, at Regent's Park in May last (which is the only break of it yet known, and for which Mr. Wood asks ten pounds, full sized roots), who can tell what shall break from the breeders of that superb flower, which are now in distribution?* It is widely reported that William broke Sir Joseph Paxton, and it was described as a feather in the 1853 article. Here William casts some doubt.

The *York Herald* of 1856 announces *Mr. Willison of New Gardens, Whitby has just opened for inspection for the season. He has an extensive selection of tulips, 1,200 varieties of the highest class of tulips.* Also in *The Garden* of 1856 *Mr. Willison should not be overlooked as a polyanthus grower.*

A report of the tulips after the National Exhibition of 1859, describes William's tulips:

'Gem of Gems', - fine feathered bybloemen- too long in the cup but Mr. Turner gave 20 guineas for five roots. It is inappropriately named as its form will always mitigate it being even a gem.

'J. Sanderson' - a feathered bizarre of excellent qualities. Ground colour rather pale but feather is good round all the petal, it has purity and may be classed as a first rate bizarre and one of the most desirable in cultivation.

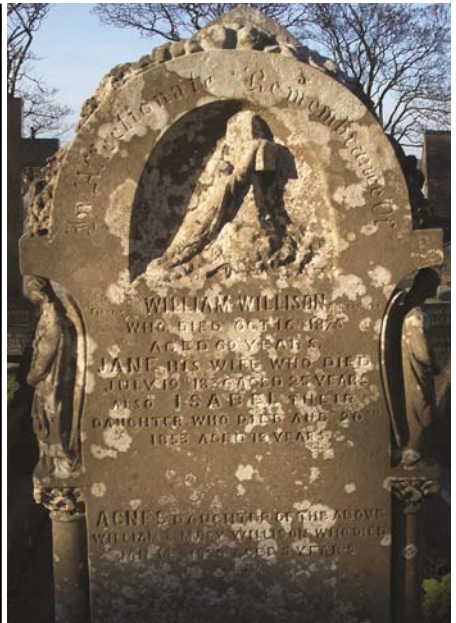
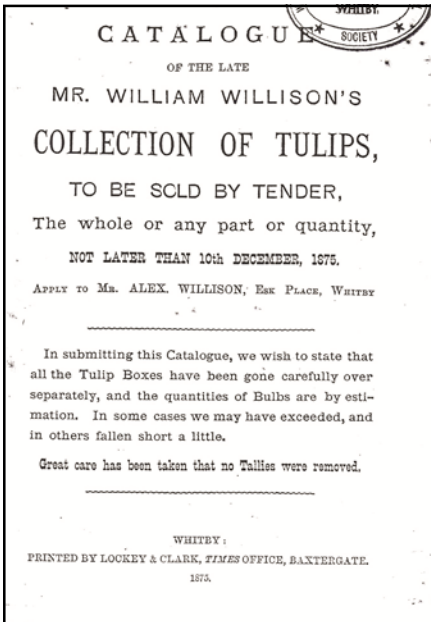
'Juliet' the finest rose breeder, feathers well, first rate cup and quite pure, ought to be in everyone's collection.

'Sir Joseph Paxton' – first rate flame and broke from a breeder as fine a feathered bizarre as we have seen.

In 1869 the National Exhibition was held in the grounds of King's College, Cambridge. The *Gardeners Magazine* thus describes the appearance of the tent during the process of staging the flowers. *"Meanwhile the tent in which the tulip growers were arranging their flowers had been, for some time, a scene of great activity. There were veteran growers, with grey hairs, failing sight, and stooping gait, and yet as full of fire and enthusiasm as ever they were in the whole history of their cultivation of these gorgeous flowers. To stand at the entrance to this tent and watch what was going on within was a study of human nature, and well worthy the attention of a philosopher. For several hours the one absorbing passion was the best arrangement of a stand of flowers so as to win a prize: the value of the prize was of small moment – it was the winning the prize for which all strove. At length, and not till the sun had reached its meridian, was the tent cleared, and then only by the exhibition of some authority, as each exhibitor seemed extremely loathed to leave the flowers he had tended with so much care and regard."*

William, aged 63, did very well here, gaining prizes in all but two of the classes, some of his prizes being for numbered but nameless seedlings. He did particularly well in the breeder classes, winning three out of the six prizes.

William was still busy and writing articles in 1875, the year of his death. He died very suddenly, of a heart attack, on 16 October. He was 69 years old. There were obituaries in *The Gardener's Chronicle*, *The Florist and Pomologist* and the *York Press*, the latter saying he was one of the best botanists and most successful gardeners of Yorkshire. Probate was granted in November. His effects amounted to under £450. His collection of tulips was put up for sale. The catalogue, of the late Mr William Willison's collection of tulips, asks for tenders to be received not later than 10 December 1875 and describes *"250 distinct varieties of unnamed seedlings which have never been distributed to anyone, running from 2 to 30 bulbs of one kind, between 3,500 and 4,000 in all. These would be highly prized by tulip lovers. The collection has been formed with the greatest care and knowledge during a period of 40 years and is one of the most valuable ever offered"*. The collection included 41 varieties which were Willison named seedlings.



After William's death the family left New Gardens. Detailed diaries and records of the plants and garden catalogues were kept by the family, tragically they were all lost in a fire in recent times.

Other plants bred by William, not mentioned in this article are *Clematis willisonii*, hybrid *Spiraeas*, *Euonymous*, *Ruscus*, *Calceolarias*, *Potentillas* and *Fushcia willisoniana*. In later life, William became very interested in ferns, some of which he collected in the wild, others he bred. The 1865 edition of *Our Native Ferns* includes a colour plate of *Lastrea felix mas* var 'Willisonii'

The horticultural accomplishments of William seem to have been forgotten now, but his contribution to breeding and developing not only tulips but many other plants cannot be overstated.

One final legacy of William. This was planted by William in 1864. After visiting New Gardens I discovered that cuttings were taken from this rose and it still exists locally and is called the New Garden rose.

AN ENORMOUS ROSE BUSH.—There is now growing at the **New Gardens, Whitby**, a rose tree which is attracting a great deal of attention from florists and horticulturists as well as from the general public. It is of the description known as the Marshal Niel. It was planted about eighteen years ago, and the extreme growth horizontally is no less than 102ft., 48ft. to the left and 5ft. to the right of the parent stem respectively. The average depth of the tree is 5ft. or 6ft. Last year no less than 2500 roses were plucked from it, and this extraordinary quantity will be greatly exceeded this season, no less than 3500 distinct flowers having been counted already.

photos at top of page
left - sales catalogue
right - Willison's grave in Whitby cemetery

above cutting from *The Dundee Courier & Argus*, Wednesday, May 10, 1882

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan 2011

Wendy Akers

At the Annual Show this year Joanna and Robin Spencer looked a little different. They had made a trailblazing visit to Uzbekistan earlier in April and had obviously bought hats and clothes in the bazaar on their trip; Robin was looking magnificent in a quilted all enveloping garment and embroidered pillbox hat. I had already read their account of their adventure entitled *Exploratory Tulip Tour - Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan via Russia* which captured some of the highs and lows and was looking forward to seeing the display they had kindly agreed to put up at the show. The high point was yet to come though. This was Robin and Joanna's illustrated talk at the AGM 2011. You know what they say: "you had to be there", well if you missed it you missed a wonderful treat. I hope I can capture a little of the spirit of Robin's presentation, alas, not his Russian translations.

They had set forth at the end of March, flying to Moscow and spending three days there before taking the Moscow – Tashkent train, arriving three days later in Tashkent on 4 April at night and beginning their tulip tour the following morning. The original suggestion for making a trip to Uzbekistan to see wild tulips had come from Professor Alexander Orokhov, a member of the society who lives in Moscow. Eventually Robin and Joanna decided on a private trip using an experienced tour operator, Sitara. They provided a safe reliable driver (Zhenia) and a friendly and experienced cultural guide (Dilya), plus excellent mid-range accommodation. With hindsight, they also needed a botanist who knew where to see tulips, because it soon became obvious that just stopping by the roadside in the mountains and being told "look for tulips here" was not going to work. At the end of the trip they met such a guide, in the person of Professor Komiljon Tojibaev of whom more later.

As ever, looking for spring flowers is very dependent on the previous winter, which had been extremely cold and included a cold snap a week before they arrived, leaving a foot of snow in and around Tashkent. The result of this was that the spring was 7 to 10 days later than usual in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. They found themselves in an unusually dry and warm spell, temperatures varying between 15°C and 25°C for the whole period. The first day was spent travelling to Samarkand, a five and a half to six hours journey with no stops until "*the car pulled into a hilly area on the outskirts of Samarkand, when the tour guide suggested looking there for tulips. This was clearly not a likely spot to find wild species tulips (the idea seemed rather daft)*". Later, after a two hour cultural tour of beautiful Samarkand, including a visit to the Gur Emir Mausoleum (Tamburlaine's tomb), they finally relaxed in their overnight accommodation, a

charming and rustic family guest house, Hotel Legend, which they had found in the Lonely Planet Guide.

Next morning, another longish drive, to the Kysyl Kum desert yurt camp, via the Sentyab Mountains. This time with two stops in the hills, but no tulips, possibly leaves. However they saw a total of forty eight tortoises on the hillside (Robin won 29:19). The yurt was clean and



sound with a lockable door. Made of camel hair which is an effective insect deterrent. Opinions were divided on the beds. “Rocks” according to Joanna and Dilya, “fine” according to Robin and Zhenia. The evening sounded lovely, the host related a local folk story about the wishing tree and they duly tied strips of cloth to the tree and made their own wishes, followed by a tasty, homely

meal and then folk tales and Kazakh folksongs round the campfire with sparkling stars above. They were more hopeful of seeing tulips soon, because the yurt camp and surrounding desert was covered by thousands of tulip leaves which they were told would be in flower in ten to fourteen days.

Next morning, after a ride on a camel in the warm morning sun, on to Bokhara by way of the Nurata Hills. This time, at two stops en route they saw some tulips, the dark red *Tulipa korolkovii* scattered on the hillside in the dry, sandy and shaly



top - Tamburlaine's tomb at Samarkand
middle - yurt in Kysyl Kum desert
bottom - *Tulipa korolkovii*

all photos Robin Spencer

soil. Joanna “*I will never forget finding that first tulip on that rocky hillside, it was like finding gold dust*”. In Bokhara another tour which included the 10th century Magok-I-Attari mosque. “*Bokhara was our favourite city of the tour – it just had a magical atmosphere, which is hard to explain, but try to image ancient medieval buildings, Tsarist period structures and early 1920’s Communist ‘edifices’ cheek by jowl but each lovingly restored, plus the odd 600 year old olive tree and you’ve got it . . . otherwise you have to go there yourself*”. Overnight in hotel Zargaron in the centre of town (which was delightful and in the lee of the 15th century Madrassah), enjoying the bazaar stalls “*the quality of the bazaar goods were the best we saw in Uzbekistan, especially the silk scarves, and the astrakhan fur jackets and hats!*”.

Next day, on to Baisun, with several stops in the Gissarsky Hills/mountain pass. Many more *T. korolkovii*, after some scrambling and climbing. Robin “*I met a local shepherd and asked him in my rather dodgy Russian ‘Dobre Denya, Gde tulipani?’ (sic good morning, where are tulips?). Tulipani? He replies. Da (yes) tulipani. Shepherdly shrug of the shoulders (no translation required for that!). I show him a photo of tulips on my cell phone – Ah Lola! (the rouble has finally dropped) OK, da, gde lola? (you should be getting the gist of our extensive Russian conversation by now!!) and my nice friendly shepherd points to the far range of higher hills in the distance saying tam, tam lola!*”. A group of workmen later on that day also pointed to the same range of hills, smiling and saying – you got it – “tam lola!”. Sadly, Robin and Joanna could not persuade the guide and driver to find a route over to the hills, but they are convinced “*Thar be tulips in them thar ‘ills*”. Robin’s comments on their Siraj guesthouse in Baisun: “*Host extremely welcoming and hospitable (but there was no sign of his wife throughout our stay). Food fairly basic, but quite tasty. Bedrooms basic, but perfectly clean and comfortable. Bathroom very basic (no running water – a problem throughout Baisun, just a barrel of cold water). We survived OK.*” Men are masters of understatement.



T. michaeliana

From Baisun to Shakhrisabz next day took them through higher ground, with the temperature dropping noticeably. They were glad of their warm coats. Finally , near the Gissarsky Pass a new tulip, *T. michaeliana* along with the ubiquitous *T. korolkovii*. As dusk was falling in Shakhrisabz they had a short tour of Ak Serai

Palace, Tamburlaine's crypt and a statue of Tamerlane which was the scene of musical send offs for two wedding parties. The hotel in Shakrisabz was a bit tatty, but apparently much better than the only other one in town – the former soviet hotel beyond Tamburlaine's statue (*Robin “glad we didn't stay there then!”*). At the guesthouse where they had their evening meal they noticed that the ceiling in the dining room was covered with paintings of tulips.

Ultimate destination next morning was Tashkent via the Takhtakarcha Pass. Here was the third tulip *T. fosteriana* which was the good news. The bad news was that they were almost all picked and being sold by the roadside. Robin: “*One lad selling the tulips in the Takhtakarcha Pass had picked all the tulips lower down and offered to take us up to see those left but the terrain was too difficult/time consuming to do it. The other lad, higher up the pass, claimed (with a big grin) to have picked every single tulip this week, and sold all but those he was holding*”.



(above) A tulip picker at the Takhtaharcha pass

(left) *Tulipa bifloriformis*

Tulip picking near the roadside is common throughout Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and a major threat to wild species tulips. Another serious problem is animals grazing the land (tulip leaves must be a delicacy for them), mainly vast flocks of sheep, goats and the occasional herd of horses.

Next day Sitara's itinerary said they would visit the Chatkal Park and Pskem areas on the way to Chimgan but disappointingly this was not possible. Apparently the former has a dacha belonging to the President of Uzbekistan and the latter because it's too near the border with Kazakhstan. So the first stop was the ski lift at Bildersai near Chimgan, the top of which was still under a foot of snow. At the bottom of the lift a single plant of *T. bifloriformis* at



Horse riding in
the Chimgan

the roadside, so some compensation. As they left Bildersai they saw two local girls selling armfuls of *T. kaufmanniana* by the roadside. At Chimgan locals said tulips “were not flowering up the mountain as spring is late”, and there was much more snow up the mountain here than at Chimgan. However, they were assured that tulips were flowering ‘a few’ kilometres away across the moun-

tains. This obviously brought out the bulldog spirit in Robin and Joanna, in their words: “so we hired horses to try and find them. After about an hour and a half the guide indicated where we could find tulips- two valleys away (we estimated about one to one and a half hours by horse) and as we were already aching (not having ridden a horse for fifteen years) we declined and had to turn back. Pity, it would have been fun, but could have spoiled the remainder of the trip (we are pretty ancient, and body not same age zone as our brains! However, the horse ride (the most responsive horse I have ever ridden), the scenery, the warm spring sun, the shashliks and beer afterwards . . . Aaaaaah, such were the days)”.

Next morning didn’t start too well, Robin: “No breakfast as tour guide didn’t think it was on offer (I thought the cook had offered blah blah blahski and omelette and I said ‘nyet’ I’d wait. Oh well, I should have said ‘da’). This was the day they were to cross the border into Kazakhstan with a short tulip hunt in the morning. They chose a cleft in the Chatgal hills and a good deal of climbing. Robin found a single *T. kaufmanniana* a third of the way from the top, Joanna was still about 300 ft down the slope but they had to leave hastily for the border crossing. “Enjoyed pleasures of customs and passport control at the Uzbek border, then the Kazakh border, taking about two hours in 30C heat” I think he’s joking, but Robin assured me he wasn’t joking it was PRAVDA (TRUTH in Russian) and also said the officials were very jovial. Everything improved when they got to Sara and Genia’s guest house. Just what you need after a hard day at the border crossing. Lovely food, welcoming hosts and a comfortable bed. They didn’t know it but a truly magnificent tulip day was coming up.

Tulip hunting day in Mashat gorge and areas surrounding Aksu Djabagly village. Travelling was much shorter because they were staying for a second night at Sara’s. They saw extensive drifts of *T. kaufmanniana*, *greigii* and *biflori-*

formis and a newly described tulip; *T. lemmersii*. Excitingly they were only the third group (in the world) to see this new species. I'll let Robin describe the entertainment: "That evening we watched a local game of 'Buzkashi' in the warm Kazakh evening sunshine (think of 10 a side rugby on horseback with a dead goat rather than an oval leather



above *Tulipa lemmersii*

left Buzkashi



ball, no referee, and two trees about 100 yards apart instead of goal post (with a backdrop of snow capped mountains) played by outdoor hardened men (ages ranging from 15 up to 75) – all expert horsemen as

strong as oxen and tough as nails, no holds barred! . . . and you've got it). Tremendous! Genia and Sara's guesthouse even more lovely in the evening sunlight than yesterday and the light golden Kazakh beer was cool, refreshing and delicious.

Next morning they returned to Uzbekistan and Tashkent via the aforementioned border crossing. Not before a final roadside tulip spot by Robin (*T. greigii*) while the driver stopped for a smoke, following which they had seen a couple of lads selling large bunches of *T. greigii* by the roadside as well. Their Kazakh guide Erik chided them but they didn't seem to care much. Once back in Tashkent a shopping opportunity in the Chorsu Bazaar. This is where they bought their traditional padded Uzbek coats. These coats look amazingly familiar and you realise they must be worn everywhere in this part of Asia, so in every film you've ever seen of nomads, they are wearing these coats. Next day they were to visit the Tashkent Botanical Gardens and its present Senior Scientist Komiljon Tojibaev. Some years ago I was browsing through the bookshop at Wisley, looking for a birthday present for James and found a book called Tulip

by Z P Botschantzeva. I could hardly believe my eyes, a book covering the species tulips of Central Asia with wonderful illustrations, where had it come from? It turned out to be the life's work of Zinaida Botschantzeva who worked at the University in Tashkent. It had originally been published in Russian and had now been translated into English by H Q Varekamp in Holland. This botanical garden was to be the final visit of Robin and Joanna's trip and it proved to be a bitter-sweet one. After speaking to Komiljon they realised that he should have been with them from the beginning of their search for tulips and indeed he agreed to act as a guide for any future trips. The unique and world renowned collection of tulips had declined since Professor Botschantzeva's death in 1973 and now needs urgent help if it is to be recovered. (Komiljon Tojibaev has since written an account of the history of the Tashkent collection of tulips and Professor Botschantzeva's involvement and the possibility of restoring it. This was published this year in the Royal Horticultural Society's 2011 Daffodil, Snowdrop and Tulip Yearbook). Meeting Komiljon was one of the highlights of their trip and Joanna's comment was: "*Robin was inspired to help him – RHS, Prince Charles et al – beware!*".



(left) Komiljon with Robin



(right) Joanna presenting copies of the society's publications

This is a condensation of the very detailed report that Joanna and Robin wrote at the end of their trip, for the benefit of members of the society, with a lot of practical information about making such a trip. They have kindly offered to provide any further information if you contact them at : Robin and Joanna Spencer, Wellbank Farm, Pickstock, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 8AH.

Some Memories of Rory McEwen

Valerie Eyre

"Rory McEwen, I know that name. He is a tall, slim, handsome Scotsman who I used to watch regularly in my youth on black and white TV. It was on a current affairs programme called 'Tonight', introduced by Cliff Michelmore in the 1950's. He would sing Scottish ballads either alone, or with his brother Alex. It probably isn't the same person."

This was the conversation I remember having with Keith when we had both been invited by Hubert Calvert (then Secretary of the WNETS) to meet our Patron. It was the Spring of 1974 and Keith had been elected Chairman in the February. Rory arrived at Hubert's home - it was the same Rory McEwen - so was quite a surprise! From our conversation that sunny afternoon walking around Hubert's back garden, admiring his English Florist tulips, I discovered that Rory still had a great interest in music, which was demonstrated in his keen pleasure at the guitar which Hubert had made by hand. However, he was also an artist, and he described work he had produced in the past, and spoke of his work on a screen in glass and acrylic, which he had done for the Liner QE2. As a struggling artist myself, the conversation flowed very easily and I felt a real connection with this creative and interesting man.

Keith took on the task of Secretary of the Society from Hubert in January the following Year, 1975. There was regular contact with Rory, most of it by telephone, and 'Tulip' business aside, I would then have conversations about what he was working on, and how I was progressing with my painting.

Rory sent me some past preview literature and catalogues of exhibitions he had held in the last few years. One of these was for a travelling exhibition entitled 'From Sowerby, Bauer, Hooker and Fitch' Botanical illustrations 1800 to the present day. I noticed that this exhibition was still going and would be in Glasgow in early June. As this coincided with our family holiday on the Isle of Arran, I persuaded Keith to take a detour on our homeward journey to visit the grand Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum at Kelvingrove. This huge red sandstone building was a great delight for our two small daughters to explore, and meanwhile Keith and I made our way to the upper gallery and there we found the four pieces of work by Rory McEwen, one of 'Sam Barlow'. It was at this point, standing spellbound in front of this amazing, glowing painting, that I realized Rory McEwen was no ordinary talent. The tulip appeared real and living behind the glass - astonishing!

From that time, our friendship grew and we would meet at Rory's previews and his exhibitions held in the U.K. Our conversations continued by telephone in

and amongst 'Tulip' business. I especially remember 1976 a most memorable year. It was an exceptionally sunny year and I was indoors frantically painting in oils for my one woman exhibition to be held in North Yorkshire. At the same time, Rory was busy painting English Florist tulips, most of which Keith had grown in our garden the previous Spring of 1975, and then taken to Leeds/Bradford Airport to fly to Prestwick in Scotland for Rory to collect. My exhibition was held in August, and I still have the telegram Rory sent, wishing me well at the preview, and how sorry he couldn't attend, but was still busy working hard.

The Rory McEwen 'Tulip' exhibition was held in the October and besides his wonderful watercolours on vellum, he had also done some very large paintings on canvas of individual tulip petals. The watercolours were done on a much larger scale, because some of the work was

to be used as plates to illustrate Wilfrid Blunt's book *Tulipomania*.

After his very successful exhibition in London, Rory very kindly made available a quantity of prints of the English Florist tulip, taken from his originals works. These he requested be given to the members of the Society. He also attended the 1977 Annual Show held at The Duke of York Hotel at Sandal, Wakefield. Here he presented the Manager and his wife with one of the prints, in recognition of their hospitality on meeting nights and show days at the hotel.



Tulip petal by Rory McEwen
photo Society archives

We continued our friendship over the next five years, and I can still recall

conversations we had about his trip to India and to Afghanistan when he was searching for fritillaries and many other exotic locations he had visited.

It was with much sadness that we learnt Rory had cancer in April of 1982. Later that year in early October, Rory telephoned me from his hospital bed in a London Clinic at the time Keith had climbed up the apple tree in our garden, and was gathering the last of the apples - this made Rory laugh I remember. He was saying goodbye, but I hadn't realized this was so at the time.

When I pick up my paintbrush to begin a new piece of work, I often think of Rory and I feel very privileged to have known such a talent, a kind and lovely man, a real 'super star.'

More can be learned about Rory McEwen by looking on the internet for Christian McEwen's piece - Music Hiding in the Air.

The Tulip Competition at Wisley – a show too far

Wendy Akers

Alan Shipp has reinstated hyacinth competitions at the Royal Horticultural Society Early Daffodil Show and this year (I think the third) he had rather lost hope because of the very few entries. I was able to give him a word of encouragement along the lines of – keep going, when the tulip competition was restarted (along with the Late Daffodil Competition) it took quite a few years for any meaningful numbers of tulips to be exhibited. For a while it was just members of the WNETS who travelled down to London with their tulips. Nowadays, there are plenty of local to Wisley or southern growers, which is just as well. The strangely overheated spring weather this year meant that the tulips I had grown for Harrogate (all early flowering varieties i.e. fosteriana hybrids, because we'd struggled to get Darwins out in time for the previous two years) mainly flowered too early. After Harrogate there were twelve days when the sun shone relentlessly down on our dry gardens. All the rest of the tulips now came out in a rush. Leaving them out in the garden in these conditions isn't an option, their petals, after opening and closing for a few days would fall. The accepted wisdom is to cut them and put them into deep water in cool and dark conditions. This can hold them in good condition. So, my basement utility room was blacked out and filled with lovely tulips. The only problem with this is that they continue to grow. Their stems can elongate alarmingly. The lily flowered varieties particularly, I had 'Red Shine' and 'Ballerina' which grew like Topsy. After ten days in the basement, came the date of the Wisley show, 26 April. Our plan was to drive down and stage them in the evening of Monday so that they would close up overnight in the dark ready for judging the following morning early. The best laid plans.....We shaded the car windows, wrapped each jug-full in paper, they looked amazing in the back of the car. Four hours later, as they came out of the car and were unwrapped in the Hillside Centre my heart sank. As soon as they were released from their wrappings, they bent over. Anyone who has suffered this effect knows how dreadful they look. I could have put them in the bin but I decided to put them on the bench and hope that the high windows might bring them up when it got light. There were two varieties that stood up and these were the two that had particularly strong stems, 'Honeymoon' the all white fringed variety and 'Flaming Parrot', but the rest looked literally shameful, like someone looking at their boots.

Next morning local growers arrived with better specimens and I resigned myself to humiliation. I think you can spot my flowers in the photograph. The winning vase of nine was shown by Mr and Mrs Hollingdale with 'Maureen'

arranged in their own unusual style of five at the back and four at the front, rather like a fan. There was something to salvage however, my exhibit of 'Flaming Parrot' had some additional flowers added, was looked at by the committee and awarded a PC, no, not politically correct, a certificate of preliminary commendation, which arrived in December in a large envelope. I love 'Flaming Parrot' and for some reason always pronounce the name with an Australian accent! What did I learn from this? That flowers can be kept in reasonable condition in the dark and cool. However, they will grow in water which presumably weakens the stems, so that a further session of four hours in the hot conditions of a car must affect the stems in some way that causes them to collapse. Sometimes, you have to accept that it's a show too far.



top - "Mine are the head-hangers" Wendy

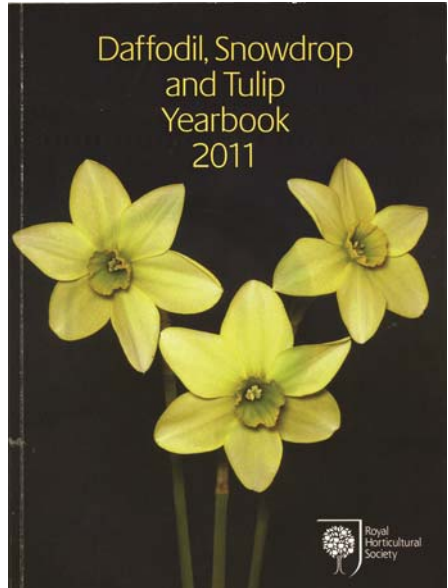
bottom 'Flaming Parrot'
photos James Akers

Book Reviews

Daffodil, Snowdrop and Tulip Yearbook 2011 (128 pages Royal Horticultural Society)

My favourite articles in this annual publication are daffodil *and* tulip related, so I shall wear both my hats. The daffodil one is the 'Wright' way to grow small daffodils in pots. Written by Anne Wright, a Yorkshirewoman and alpinist it is simply the most practical way of going about your potting. In fact, I took the book out into the garden to have at hand while doing said potting this autumn. You know when you've found the real thing, and this is it.

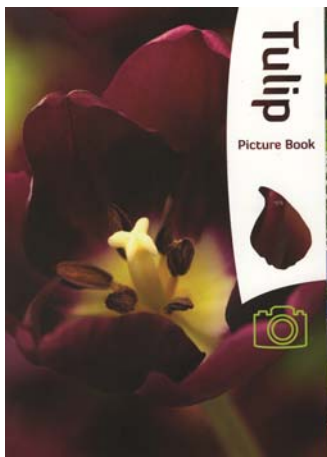
Tulips have two major articles, the first a truly gorgeous trawl round some stunning plantings by John Page, who is usually somewhere on a plain in Central Asia photographing wild tulips with one eye on the distant mountains. This time he's wandering around in England, which must have been a nice change, and the tulips are inspiring. The other article is also referred to elsewhere in this Newsletter, and is the result of the visit by Joanna and Robin Spencer to the Tashkent Botanical Gardens in Uzbekistan, the celebrated creation, now sadly in need of help, of Professor Zinaida Botschantzeva. The Senior Scientist at the University of Tashkent, Komiljon Tojibaev, has written an account of its rise and fall (gardens are such fragile entities really) and the possibility of restoring it. To my delight, there is a photograph of Zinaida Botschantzeva.



If you wish to obtain a copy of this yearbook, please send a cheque for £10 (made payable to RHS Publications) to John Gibson, 14 Waverley Road, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 6NT. Do not forget to include your address when making your application.

Wendy Akers

Tulip Picture Book
International Flower Bulb Centre



We have had the previous incarnation of this book for several years. When we first got it I couldn't see that we would use it much, how wrong I was. During the tulip season it is in demand all the time, for identifying tulips. We always ask that exhibitors put a name label on their tulips, for the benefit of the public, but a surprisingly large number have no idea what the name is. The new book is the same format, an alphabetic list of photographs of tulips currently being sold. There is a slight qualification here, to qualify for inclusion the hectareage grown in the Netherlands is used. So for Viridiflora, Fringed, Fosteriana, Greigii and Kaufmanniana it must be 0.5 hectares. For all others it must be 1.0 hectares. So one of the cultivars I have planted for Harrogate

next year, 'Aria Card', a fringed variety, is not included, presumably because there are so few grown. Plenty of information is included with each variety, including height, flowering period and importantly, classification.

Our old book disappeared this year after several shows, and meeting Sue Dickinson at Eythrope and finding that hers had gone the same way became the tipping point for ordering some replacements. The new book has stunning full page photographs sprinkled throughout, wonderful to behold but also annoyingly unnamed. Perhaps it's a challenge; seek and ye shall find within the Tulip Picture Book.

If you would like a copy of this book then please send a cheque for £16.50 to the secretary Teresa Clements whose address is shown in the front of this publication.

Wendy Akers

Keukenhof dates 2012

We are asked many times for the opening dates of the Keukenhof Gardens in Holland. I usually make an educated guess, but because it has such a short season you could easily miss it at either end. This year we have the dates for 2012 in advance: opening 22 March, closing 20 May 2012.

Within that period there are special events such as a Chopin weekend, the Easter Hat Parade, Summer bulbs market and many more. Special activities for groups include guided tours in many languages, bicycle tours of the bulb fields and whisper boat tour through the bulb fields. All this information and much more at www.keukenhof.nl or info@keukenhof.nl

Challenging Times

Morris Robinson

I often state gardening is a challenge whether as a general gardener, but more so when being an exhibitor, and from last winter to this spring so it was.

Planning my planting of daffodils and tulip bulbs for the 2011 shows in ten inch plastic pots (Morrison's flower containers 99p for eight, fantastic value, usually found under the flower display benches. Don't forget to drill holes in the bottom, I use a 16mm wood drill bit to put four holes in the bottom which gives good drainage) starting late September with the daffodil bulbs, ending with tulip bulbs early November. I don't like planting the tulips until the weather is cooling off. All pots had a good watering and were placed outside in a sheltered part of the garden, I don't have space to plunge the pots. Then disaster, I did not get time to cover the pots against severe frosts straight away, the severe frosts came and stayed for weeks (-9 degrees registered on the thermometer in the greenhouse, so what temperature outside?) then the snow covered them, over a foot. When the snow finally melted, I managed to cover all the pots with Leylandii branches, but too late was the cry, as spring arrived checking for signs of growth, some daffodil leaves appearing all brown, other pots nothing, emptying some, found bulbs rotted away, the only pots looking good were the tulips, in fact the growth was looking too long and growing rapidly, never seen tulips grow so fast. They must have enjoyed the severe weather, then the warmth as I won the Tulip Championship of Great Britain at Harrogate with 3 vases of 9 tulips, 27 blooms in all and followed on winning the Rosecarpe Horticultural Society Open Tulip Championship with 3 vases of 3 with "World Peace"

The only daffodils I had to exhibit with were bulbs growing in the ground for building up in size, which grew really well and gave me some excellent blooms for the shows. So really everything was not all gloom and doom.

On reflection next time I will make sure all the pots are covered as soon as bulbs are potted up. I must say I was not alone many exhibitors were in the same predicament on talking to them, some not having a daffodil to show. Yes gardening is a challenge.

The Midland Tulip Society's report was eight pages, too long to include with this Newsletter. If you are not a member but wish to see a copy, or join that society, then please contact Trevor Mills, Millmaison, Rugeley Road, Burntwood, Walsall WS7 9HQ

Rosecarpe Horticultural Society Show

Morris Robinson

The Rosecarpe Horticultural Society's two day spring bulb show was held at Lamesley Garden Centre (formerly Silverhills Nurseries) Lamesley, Gateshead on Good Friday and Saturday 22-23 April, with record entries in the 74 classes. The Tulip Open Classes had 41 entries, the most exhibits we have ever had by a long, long way. Most of the blooms throughout the two day show stood up well in the very hot weather, this was due to the nursery putting shading onto the glass section where our show was being held, with plenty of cool air circulating.

The Tulip Open Championship Class for 9 Blooms/Stems any variety or colour, 3 stems to a vase, kindly sponsored by Wakefield & North of England Tulip Society went to yours truly with 9 'World Peace' colour pinky red shading to yellow at the edge. This followed my success at Harrogate in winning the Tulip Championship of Great Britain with 3 vases of 9 Tulips, a different variety in each vase, 27 blooms in all. A great year!

In the other tulip classes every class was entered and a great variety of cultivars and colours could be seen, it really made the benches colourful. Colin Cochrane of Bill Quay and Paul Holmes of Wickham and numerous other exhibitors put up some tremendous displays. Well done to everyone who entered these classes it was a joy to behold



Morris Robinson's winning entry of three vases of 'World Peace'

photo - Morris Robinson

Jottings

Frazer Henderson

John Reid

I recently acquired a facsimile of *The Scots Gard'ner* by John Reid (1683) which is probably the first horticultural book published in Scotland for the gardener. It contains a wealth of general information particularly about planning and managing a garden. Though the advice may be over 300 years old it remains relevant today. His short section on tulips caught my attention -

“Of bulbo and tuberous roots there is Tulipas of great varieties, increases them by offsets when their stalks withers, which is generally June, July, August; this is also the season for other bulbo and tuberous roots; keep then in a cool but dry place till September or October and then plant them in a light sandy earth with fat soil an inch below the bulb, so that the roots may reach it, remove every three years or oftener if thy affect not the soil: they may be raised by seed but its tedious.”

Alas, Reid never discusses varieties in his writings as he is more interested in practical skills to ensure the success of plants.

The life of a single bulb

I decided last year when I received a bulb of 'Julia Farnese' that I would record its 'life' in order to understand better the lifecycle of a tulip bulb.

The bulb, or Julia as it rapidly became known, was pot planted 17cm below soil level in a mix of proprietary compost, sharp sand and grit in a 2:1:2 mixture with added bonemeal on 3 November 2010. The bulb rested on a sharp sand base of less than 1cm of sharp sand. A single leaf emerged on 4 March, which eventually grew, with a maximum basal width of 3.2cm, to a tapering length of 21.2cm before it withered completely on 8 July. The bulb at the time of planting had a circumference of 8.6cm and I tried to weigh it but the kitchen scales were not sensitive enough. On 30 July 2011 I tipped out the bulb and found that where previously there had been a singleton two bulbs of circumference 7.2cm and 6.1cm had been created, together with a smaller daughter grain-bulb of 2.6cm. I'm unsure as to whether it was weather – we had temperatures as low as -20°C over winter followed by an early spring when temperatures reached 19°C – or other stress factors connected with watering or nutrients which caused the bulb to separate. That might be a mystery to seek to solve next year when I shall start recording the watering!

Lille Station

In the course of my work I came across a photograph of Lille railway station. Aside from the hideous architecture note the gaudy representation of tulips, spotted rather than streaked.



The British National Carnation Society



The British National Carnation Society
welcomes all who are interested in the culture of the
Dianthus family of Carnations and Pinks.

Its aims are to encourage endeavours to expand and improve the
cultivation of these beautiful flowers and to promote their uses in
Gardens, Floral Decoration and Exhibition.

Acting Secretary ; Mr Ray Ingram
5 Newtown Road,
Uppingham,
Rutland, LE15 9TR
Tel: 01572 - 822472 or email: ingram12rd@tiscali.co.uk

The Societies Web-site is at : www.britishnationalcarnationsociety.co.uk

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