



midahl2008

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Presidents Page

Dear Friends,

Our new venue for holding our show (which was forced upon us last year due to the closure of the Town and Country Festival) proved to be quite successful. There was ample room for staging and the lighting was excellent. The facilities for both the catering and parking were also good. It's a pity the school isn't a little more central to the town as it would be nice to see more of the public coming to see our wonderful blooms. I believe one day is not enough time for a show such as this, but I'm sure this will be rectified in the future.

2007 was certainly not a vintage year for the dahlia due to the weather conditions but the blooms that were shown were second to none. Our 50th year is now upon us and your committee have been collating various events for this special year.

The main show, which we hope will be supported by you all, will have double the prize money for each class. On top of this an additional prize will be awarded to the winner in all the Championship classes and also a few other classes. It is hoped that a small memento to commemorate the occasion will be presented to each exhibitor, judges and helpers. A social evening will be held at the Kenilworth Sports and Social Club for members and friends, with probably skittles etc, along with a Buffet type meal for which there will be a small charge.

It was hoped to arrange a trip to Holland but at present there hasn't been a lot of interest shown.

Our Annual dinner will be held once again at the Kenilworth Golf Club in the form of a carvery meal, which the majority of members seem to prefer.

An extra Midahl will be printed to commemorate the 50th Anniversary which should make interesting reading. As is usual all members will be carded for all the events.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our friend Frank Taylor for his minute interlude on the key board at our Annual dinner; it was very much enjoyed by all. It was noticed that some of the Droitwich contingent were singing well, perhaps we could form a M.D.S. choir! Perhaps not.

Let us hope we all stay healthy, have a great growing season and the prizes are shared out among you.

Good luck to you all.

R.L.Jones.

Chairman's Notes

Well it's finally here. **Yes we are Fifty years old.** We have been doing a lot of talking and a lot of planning, and we hope to enjoy this Golden Jubilee year.

I am not going to go into all the details of events that are going to take place this year as I think they will have been covered elsewhere in Midahl. I think the most important event will be our **Annual Show** which is our Flagship to the rest of the dahlia world. We have been lucky in that we have always been able to attract the top exhibitors from around the Country to come and exhibit, and this has the effect of raising the standards.

This year we have doubled the prize money on offer in all the classes in the schedule, and the winners of the championship classes will be awarded a special prize as well. We have already had people offering donations and Prizes to make this Fiftieth Show one to be remembered. If you feel you can help us with either a special prize or a cash offer towards the cost of the prize money, please ring Fred Wilson or Angela.

As I write this I am pleased to announce, that if all that has been promised, is received we are half way to covering our prize money. Special prizes are lagging behind a little. It's also planned to give every exhibitor, judges and helpers a memento, so they will have something to remember our Fiftieth Celebrations.

I also must mention the proposed trip to Holland in the middle of September. This is planned as a three day round coach trip from Kenilworth to Volendam and taking in three or four of the Dutch Dahlia Nurseries along with the Flower market and the Delft pottery. For this to be a success we do need twenty to thirty people who are interested in supporting this activity. The cost for the flight and two days accommodation is approx £245 to which the cost of evening meals will have to be added. If any one would like more details please speak to Dave Reid.

I should also mention a 50th special edition of Midahl that is going to be produced as part of our celebration year (I hope the editor will have enough ink left in his pen). This will be mainly, as I understand a History of the Midland Dahlia Society. If any one has a picture or a story about a member that will be of interest to us all. I am sure our editor will be glad to receive it.

Finally I must say how privileged I have been to have been associated with the past and present executive committees. I am just a youngster with only 44 years on our council along side the likes of Les Jones, Fred Wilson and Gabby Hayes.

Lets all hope that someone younger will come along and keep it going for another 50.

Ron Guest

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2007

Minutes of the 48th AGM of the Midlands Dahlia Society, held at Kenilworth Sports and Social Club, on 21st February 2007.

Present -the president Mr L Jones supported by members of the executive council of the society.

Opening the meeting the president asked all present to stand for a minutes silence to remember those members who had passed away during the past year.

ITEM 1 - the secretary read the notice convening the meeting.

ITEM 2 -Apologies - Mrs A Guest, Mr R Guest, Mr R Turrell, Mr F Newbery, Mr F Taylor.

ITEM 3 - the minutes of the 47th AGM had already been circulated to all members via publication in Midahl. The president asked if they could be taken as read. - Carried

ITEM 4 - Matters Arising - none

ITEM 5 -Chairman's Report - Mr T Williams the vice chairman read the attached report to the meeting. It was proposed by Mr W Chapman and seconded by Mr N Johnson that this report be adopted -Carried.

ITEM 6 - Secretary's Report - the secretary stated that the programme of events for 2007 was printed in Midahl. Owing to the cancellation of the Town and Country Festival the society has had to look for an alternative venue for 2007 and has decided to hold The Annual Show at Kenilworth School, Leyes Lane, Kenilworth.

Matters Arising: Mrs. J Davis asked about the venue for the annual show? Mr. C Wragg asked if we had looked at other venues? Mr J Brooks asked if we had considered a 2 day show? **The president replied** that we had looked at numerous venues and had also considered a 2 day show, but had decided on a 1day show at Kenilworth School on the availability, parking, size of hall and costs.

ITEM 7 - Treasurer's Report - the treasurer stated that we have an excellent balance sheet and thanked all members for their generosity with donations and raffle prizes. He did however, express a note of concern with the loss of the Town and Country Festival and stated that we would have to be more prudent in the future.(see attached balance sheet). It was proposed by Mr. A Hayes and seconded by Mrs. J Davis that the balance sheet be adopted - carried.

Matters Arising - Mr. T Williams queried why the amplifier had depreciated by £50 in such a short time? Mr. K Smart asked why the cost of the show is not shown on the balance sheet? Mr. M Crump asked the cost of the 2007 show? **The treasurer stated** that the cost of the show is estimated to be £250 for the hall plus £500 for prize money. Other items are decisions made by the accountant.

ITEM 8 - Election of Patron -Mr F Wilson. Proposed by Mr. B Caswell and seconded by Mrs. M J Roberts.

ITEM 9 - Election of President-Mr R L Jones. Proposed by Mr F Wilson and seconded by Mr M Roberts.

ITEM 10 - Election of Officers:

Chairman - Mr R Guest- proposed by Mr N Johnson seconded by Mr J Brooks.

Vice Chairman - Mr T Williams- proposed by Mr W Chapman seconded by Mr M Woodfield.

General Secretary - Mr B Caswell - proposed by Mr T Williams and seconded by Mr K Smart.

Assistant Secretary - not filled.

Treasurer - Mr B Watson -proposed by Mr A Hayes and seconded by Mr C Wragg.

Show Secretary - Mrs A Guest - proposed by Mr F Wilson and seconded by Mr D Reid.

Midahl Editor - Mr R Turrell -proposed by Mr N Johnson and seconded by Mr D Davis.

Publicity Officer - not filled

ITEM 11 - Election of Council Members :- Mrs A Jones, Mr. P Clubb, Mr W Chapman, Mr A Hayes, Mr N Johnson, Mr D Reid, Mr K Smart, Mr R Reeder, Mr M Woodfield - proposed by Mr B Watson and seconded by Mr M Crump.

ITEM 12 -AOB

Mr F Wilson informed the meeting that there are 3 vacancies for council members who can be co-opted onto the council.

Mr F Wilson also stated that the society is looking for sponsors for the Golden Jubilee show in 2008.

The president thanked everyone for their support over the past 12 months.

Meeting closed 21.10 hrs

Gabby Hayes 2007

MDS Single Bloom Show

Midlands Dahlia Society single bloom show was held in Kenilworth Sports and Social club, on the evening of Tuesday August 14th 2007, for members only.

Only first prize was awarded in each class.

There were twelve exhibitors in attendance who staged one hundred and thirty containers of dahlias, a very good turn out considering the weather, i.e. rain.

The best bloom was won by **Brian Caswell** with the miniature ball? MARY'S JOMANDA. He also had most points.

Runner up for best bloom was Marie Roberts with the miniature cactus, SPARKY TWO.

Results as follows:

Class 1 - B Caswell

Class 2 - A Hayes

Class 3 - B Caswell

Class 4 - F Wilson

Class 5 - K Smart

Class 6 - J Davis

Class 7 - J Davis

Class 8 - F Wilson

Class 9 - C Wragg

Class 10 - M Roberts

Class 11 - B Caswell

Class 12 - J Digweed

Class 13 - C Wragg

Class 14 - W Chapman

Class 15 - R Guest

Class 16 - N/a

Class 17 - N/a

Novice Section

Class 18 - M Cotterell

Class 19 - M Cotterell

Class 20 - P Fulford

I would like to thank all of you who attended and helped make this show a success and in particular a thank you to Dave Bates for judging and the press ganged Fred Wilson for stewarding.

K. Smart

Report of the 49th Annual Show

I started last years report by saying that I considered 2006 the most difficult growing season that I could remember, but I take that back, as I think the summer of 2007 is a season to forget. Tropical temperatures in April, monsoon conditions in July with reports coming in that growers had lost plants due to flooding. We had five inches of rain on one July Friday with the fields all round us disappearing under several feet of water, but luckily June's plot stayed afloat. I turned up on Show day not knowing what to expect. The adverse weather conditions obviously affected the number of exhibits and there were a number of our regular visitors missing, but nevertheless it was a very good show. We missed the Town & Country setting but our new venue turned out to be very satisfactory with plenty of room for staging and a very good area for entertaining our visitors.

Frank Taylor from Sale in Cheshire had a good show winning the Sterling Silver Medal for Best Exhibit in Show and the Pam Parsons Challenge Cup with vases of Marston Lilac and Barberry Pip. The latter vase won him the Violet Davies Premier Award for Best Vase in Show together with the Decorative Cup for Best Vase of Small or Miniature Decoratives in Show. He then added for good measure the Pauline Eales Award with two vases of Ruskin Diane.

June Davis won the Midlands Championship for the Mawby Trophy with vases of Kenora Challenger, Eastwood Moonlight, Primrose Diane and Cherwell Goldcrest. Her vase of Cherwell Goldcrest won the Edward Durrant Memorial Trophy for Best Vase of Small or Miniature Cactus or Semi-cactus in Show. **Eddie** and **Marjorie** made us very welcome when we first moved to the Midlands from Surrey nearly 25 years ago and she was very proud to be the first winner of this Trophy presented to the Society by **Marjorie** in memory of **Eddie**. **June** also won the George Woodfield Trophy for Best Bloom of Giant or Large Decorative in Show with a bloom of Sir Alf Ramsay.

Roger Turrell was 2nd in the Championship and his entry included a vase of Ruskin Sunshine which was awarded the Cactus Cup for the Best Vase of Medium Cactus or Semi-cactus in Show. **Roger** won the Lady Godiva Trophy with vases of Grenidor Pastelle, Marion Storer, Sunshine Paul and Kilmorie. **June** was 2nd. **Roger** also won the Friendship Trophy with two vases of Jomanda and the Bruce Watson Trophy which calls for 20 blooms / 20 varieties.

The NDS Bronze Medal for runner-up to the Best Exhibit in Show went to **Brian Caswell** in the John Griffiths Senior Cup with vases of Elmdon Superb and Jomanda, the former variety winning the S. & E. Braddock Perpetual Challenge Trophy for Best Vase of Small or Miniature Ball Dahlias in Show. **Cliff Wragg** was 2nd.

Brian also won the Phillip Damp Trophy with vases of Fairway Spur (2), Hamari Gold (3) and Kenora Valentine and the Leicester Challenge Cup with 3 blooms of Janal Amy one of which was given the Leslie Jones Perpetual Challenge Trophy for Best Vase of Large or Giant Cactus in Show.

The Gordon Steel Trophy was won by new visitor to our Show **Dick Vickers** from Gainsborough with 2 vases of White Charlie Two, **Ken Smart** being 2nd.

A mixture from the Pastelle family won for **Neil Gadsby** the Dennis Watson Challenge Cup with **Ken Smart** again finishing 2nd. **Neil** also won the Stella Trophy with vases of Ruskin Diane and Jomanda. **Frank Taylor** was 2nd.

Peter Clubb won the Styvechale Trophy with vases of Lemon Elegans and Kiwi Trelyn. The George Irvine Perpetual Challenge Cup went to **Frank Newbery** with vases of Noreen, Rhonda and Gurtla Twilight, **Les Jones** coming 2nd.

The Elaine Fenton Trophy for 3 x 3 was won by **Gabby Hayes**.

One thing that has stood out to me over the past few years is the disappearance from the show benches of rows of many coloured Small Cactus dahlias and the

take-over by rows of Ball and Miniature Decorative dahlias all of a very similar colour.

Once again the Members` Classes were well supported with about fifty exhibits and the William Daffern Trophy for Best Exhibit went to **Frank Newbery** with an excellent vase of Mary`s Jomanda.

Ray Cottrell had a good day in the Novice Section winning the Don Brawn Trophy and the NDS Bronze Medal for Best Exhibit with a good vase of Pompon Dahlias which also won him the H. Dunkley Trophy for Best Vase of Pompon Dahlias in Show.

Marie Jane Roberts won the Lilian Hall Rose Bowl with a beautiful basket of miniature dahlias.

Another new visitor to our Show **Les Stothard** won the Midland Dahlia Society Seedling Shield.

Once again the Judges and Stewards did a good job and our ladies kept all of us well watered and fed. As usual Angie and her helpers ran the Show excellently. One thing I appreciated with the new venue was the ease of parking and no hassle with tickets. Now we must look forward to our **Special Year in 2008 - our 50th**.

Don Davis 2007

49th Annual Show Prize Winners

THE MIDLANDS DAHLIA SOCIETY SHOW RESULTS 2007

The Midlands Championship for the Mawby Trophy 1st Mrs. J. DAVIS 2nd
R. TURRELL 3rd n/a 4th n/a

The Lady Godiva Trophy 1st R.TURRELL 2nd Mrs. J. DAVIS 3rd n/a

The Phillip Damp Trophy 1st B.CASWELL 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

The Leicester Challenge Cup 1st B.CASWELL 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

The Irish Challenge Trophy 1st n/a 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

The Christy Brookes Challenge Cup 1st n/a 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

The Gordon Steel Trophy 1st R.VICKERS 2nd K.SMART 3rd R.F.NEWBERY

The Dennis Watson Challenge Cup 1st N. GADSBY 2nd K.SMART
3rd R.GUEST

The Pauline Eales Award 1st F.B.TAYL 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

The Styvechale Trophy 1st P.CLUBB 2nd R.TURRELL 3rd n/a

The John Griffiths Senior Cup 1st B.CASWELL 2nd C.WRAGG
3rd R.L.JONES

The Pam Parsons Challenge Cup 1st F.B.TAYLOR 2nd F.NEWBERY
3rd R.VICKERS

The Friendship Trophy 1st R.TURRELL 2nd F.NEWBERY
3rd N. GADSBY

The George Irvine Perpetual Challenge Cup 1st F.NEWBERY 2nd n/a
3rd n/a

The Stella Trophy 1st N. GADSBY 2nd F.B.TAYLOR
3rd M.J ROBERTS

Section B Intermediate Classes.

THREE BLOOMS GIANT OR LARGE DAHLIAS ONE BLOOM PER VASE

1st n/a 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

TWO VASES MEDIUM DAHLIAS THREE BLOOMS IN EACH VASE

1st n/a 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

TWO VASES SMALL BALL, SMALL CACTUS, SEMI CACTUS, OR SMALL DECORATIVE DAHLIAS, THREE BLOOMS PER VASE

1st n/a 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

TWO VASES, THREE BLOOMS PER VASE, MINIATURE OR POM PON DAHLIAS

1st T.WILLIAMS 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

TWO VASES, THREE BLOOMS PER VASE, ONE VASE MEDIUM, ONE VASE SMALL DAHLIAS

1st. n/a 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

Section C Members classes

THREE BLOOMS GIANT DECORATIVE DAHLIAS

1st J. DAVIS 2nd. R.GUEST 3rd. R.GUEST

THREE BLOOMS GIANT CACTUS AND /OR SEMI-CACTUS DAHLIAS

1st n/a 2nd. n/a 3rd. n/a.

THREE BLOOMS LARGE DECORATIVE DAHLIAS

1st. n/a 2nd. n/a 3rd. n/a

THREE BLOOMS LARGE CACTUS AND/OR SEMI-CACTUS DAHLIAS

1st K.SMART 2nd C.WRAGG 3rd P.CLUBB F.NEWBERY

THREE BLOOMS MEDIUM DECORATIVE DAHLIAS

1st. F.NEWBERY 2nd. N. GADSBY 3rd K.SMART

THREE BLOOMS MEDIUM CACTUS AND/OR SEMI-CACTUS DAHLIAS

1st. F.WILSON 2nd. N. GADSBY 3rd. R.TURRELL

FIVE BLOOMS SMALL DECORATIVE DAHLIAS

1st. A.T.HAYES 2nd. F.B.TAYLOR 3rd. F.WILSON

FIVE BLOOMS SMALL CACTUS AND/OR SEMI CACTUS DAHLIAS

1st. R.TURRELL 2nd. n/a 3rd n/a

FIVE BLOOMS MINIATURE DECORATIVE DAHLIAS

1st. F.B.TAYLOR 2nd. R.TURRELL 3rd A.T.HAYES

FIVE BLOOMS MINIATURE CACTUS AND/OR SEMI CACTUS DAHLIAS

1st. M-J.ROBERTS 2nd F.NEWBERY 3rd. K.SMART

FIVE BLOOMS SMALL BALL DAHLIAS

1st R.TURRELL 2nd R.TURRELL 3rd C.WRAGG

FIVE BLOOMS MINIATURE BALL DAHLIAS

1st F.NEWBERY 2nd J.DAVIS 3rd T.WILLIAMS

SIX BLOOMS POM PON DAHLIAS

1st R.L.JONES 2nd R.TURRELL 3rd F.NEWBERY

FIVE BLOOMS COLLERETTE DAHLIAS

1st R.L.JONES 2nd n/a 3rdn/a

FIVE BLOOMS WATERLILY DAHLIAS

1st C.WRAGG 2nd R.L.JONES 3rd K.SMART

THREE BLOOMS FIMBRIATED DAHLIAS

1st n/a 2nd n/a 3rd n/a

Section D Novice Classes

ONE GIANT OR LARGE DAHLIA

1st R.COTTRELL 2nd. P.DOLBY 3rd. n/a

THREE MEDIUM DAHLIAS

1st. R.COTTRELL 2nd R.CHEETHAM 3rd. P.DOLBY

THREE BLOOMS SMALL DAHLIAS

1st P.FULFORD 2nd R.COTTRELL 3rd. W.NYIRONGO

THREE BLOOMS MINIATURE DAHLIAS

1st R.COTTRELL 2nd. W.NYIRONGO 3rd. R.CHEETHAM

THREEBLOOMS POM PON DAHLIAS

1st R.COTTRELL 2nd n/a 3rd R.REEDER

BRUCE WATSON TROPHY

TWENTY BLOOMS FROM TWENTY VARIETIES

1st R.TURRELL 2nd Mrs. M-J ROBERTS 3rd. A.T.HAYES 4th K.SMART

Section E Special Classes.

EILEEN FENTON TROPHY

NINE BLOOMS THREE VARIETIES THREE BLOOMS OF EACH VARIETY

1st. A.T.HAYES 2nd. F.NEWBERY 3rd M.J ROBERTS

THREE BLOOMS OF DAHLIAS ONE BLOOM PER VASE THREE DISTINCT CLASSIFICATIONS

1st. R.VICKERS 2nd F.WILSON 3rd. C.WRAGG

TWO VASES, WATER LILY FIVE BLOOMS PER VASE

1st C.WRAGG 2nd R.L.JONES 3rd K.SMART

TWO VASES, COLLERETTE FIVE BLOOMS PER VASE

1st K.SMART 2nd R.L.JONES 3rd. n/a

ONE VASE THREE BLOOMS COLLERETTE

1st K.SMART 2nd. R.L.JONES 3rd R.L.JONES

LILIAN HALL ROSE BOWL

BASKET OF DAHLIAS

1st. M J ROBERTS 2nd K SMART 3rd. n/a

Midlands Dahlia Society Seedling Classes

THREE BLOOMS SMALL OR MINIATURE DAHLIAS

1st. L.STOTHARD

THREE BLOOMS MEDIUM, LARGE OR GIANT DAHLIAS

1st R.TURRELL

THREE BLOOMS ANY OTHER VARIETY OF DAHLIAS

1st. n/a

ADDITIONAL AWARDS

M.D.S. SILVER MEDAL

F.B.TAYLOR

PREMIER AWARD

F.B.TAYLOR

N.D.S. BRONZE MEDAL

B.CASWELL

N.D.S. BRONZE MEDAL

R.COTTRELL

THE CACTUS CUP

R.TURRELL

EDWARD DURRANT MEMORIAL TROPHY

Mrs.J.DAVIS

THE DECORATIVE CUP

F.B.TAYLOR

GEORGE WOODFIELD TROPHY

Mrs.J.DAVIS

LESLIE JONES TROPHY

B.CASWELL

S & E BRADDOCK TROPHY

B.CASWELL

H. DUNKLEY TROPHY

R.COTTRELL

WILLIAM DAFFERN TROPHY

F.NEWBERY

THE EVENING TELEGRAPH CUP

R.TURRELL

DON BRAWN TROPHY

R.COTTRELL

THE 72 TROPHY.

N/A

THE BRUCE WATSON TROPHY

R.TURRELL

THE M.D.S. SEEDLING SHIELD

L.STOTHARD

EILEEN FENTON TROPHY

A.T.HAYES

MOST POINTS MEMBERS

R.TURRELL

LIAN HALL ROSE BOWL

M.J ROBERTS

Brian CASWELL 2007

49th Annual Show 2007 Analysis of Varieties

In the following analysis, only vases containing one variety were taken into consideration. As can be seen vases were well down on previous years, this was obvious, owing to the climatic conditions we had this summer.

The most popular variety was Sir Alf Ramsey, followed by Mary's Jomanda.

GIANT & LARGE DECORATIVES

SIR ALF RAMSEY	12
FAIRWAY SPUR	5
HAMARI GOLD	3
GRACE KENDAL	3
KENORA VALENTINE	1

MEDIUM DECORATIVES

TRENGROVE MILLENNIUM	3
BJ BEAUTY	2
WHITE CHARLIE TWO	2
SUNSHINE PAUL	2
CHARLIE TWO	1
CHERWELL SISKIN	1
AVOCA SALMON	1
AVOCA CHEYENNE	1
AVOCA CHEROKEE	1
AVOCA GEOFFREY MOORE	1

SMALL DECORATIVES

RUSKIN DIANE	3
PRIMROSE DIANE	2
MARION STORER	2
PINK SUFFUSION	1

MINIATURE DECORATIVES

RYECROFT JAN	5
LILAC MARSTON	3
LORETTA	2
AMGARD CORONE	1
BARBARRY PIP	1
AVOCA COCHISE	1
ANDREW LAWSON	1
CRYFIELD HARMON	1
BARBARRY BLUEBIR	1

GIANT CACTUS & SEMI CACTUS

JANAL AMY	4
HAPPY BOY	2

DEBRA ANN CRAVEN	1
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LARGE CACTUS & SEMI CACTUS

NARROWS TRICIA	4
KENORA CHALLENGER	3
RYECROFT IRENE	1

MEDIUM CACTUS & SEMI CACTUS

STALEEN CONDESA	5
GRENIDORE PASTELLE	4
PINK PASTELLE	2
EASTWOOD MOONLIGHT	2
CREAM MOONLIGHT	1
KATES PASTELLE	1
RUSKIN SUNSHINE	1
NARROWS TRICIA	1

SMALL CACTUS & SEMI CACTUS

RUSKIN MYRA	3
TRELYNS KIWI	2
LEMON ELEGANS	2
KILMORIE	1
CHERWELL GOLDCREST	1
KIWI GLORIA	1

MINIATURE CACTUS & SEMI CACTUS

WESTON PIRATE	4
WESTON MISS	3
WEST SPANISH DANCER	3
WESTON KELPIE	1

SMALL BALL

JOMANDA	7
BLYTON SOFTER GLEAM	4

MARYS JOMANDA	2
MONIGAN PETE	2
ELMDON SUPERB	1
JUBILIE BOY	1
BRYFIT	1

MINIATURE BALL

MARYS JOMANDA	9
JOMANDA	4
LANGRESSE	1

POM PONS

HALLMARK	2
NOREEN	2
RHONDA	2
GURTLA TWILIGHT	1
MOOR PLACE	1
WILLOS VIOLET	1
GILWOODS VIOLET	1

WATERLILLY

PAM HONDEX	4
MARISSA	2
FIGURINE	2
RED DUSTER	1
RED VELVET	1

COLLERETTES

TEESBROOKE REDEYE	2
WOOTTON WINDMILL	2

The analysis was collated by **R.L.Jones.**

Annual Dinner 2007

The Annual dinner and prize giving was held at The Kenilworth Golf Club where seventy Members and guests welcomed our President Les Jones and his wife Audrey, along with our guests of honour for the evening, Sarah Guest along with her sister Rachel Reed.

A carvery meal was enjoyed by all, after which Rachel and Sarah, instead of the normal after dinner speech and toast to The Midlands Dahlia Society, gave a short Power point presentation of some of the past and present committee members.

Thanking the Society for inviting them to be the Guests of Honour, Rachel explained that they thought they had done every thing possible regarding the Society, she said they started their apprenticeships collecting fallen petals at the shows, to loading and unloading the staging, putting up and taking down the staging, along with tea making and washing up, not to mention driving the van to the National.

The other speeches were performed in the traditional manner. After which the successful winners were presented with their trophies.

A short interlude took place while Frankie Taylor tuned his Key board and then he gave the assembled audience an excellent forty five minutes or so of his musical talents, which was appreciated by all present.

Although they were the Guests for the evening, Rachel and Sarah still performed as usual and went round the room selling the usual raffle tickets.

Midlands Dahlia Society, Time of Year by R A G

"Yes it's that time of the year again".

The phone never stops ringing, "who is it I ask?", "who do you think it is" she replies, "I should have guest!"

It's the editor, "where's this article?", "where's that article?", "whose writing about this?", "whose writing about that?"

"I need the show results!", "I need the show analysis!"

"When are you going to get the A.G.M minutes printed and sent?" "I've had nothing from the President, has his pencil broken?"

"What about the Novices - Is Caswell on holiday again??" "No his computer has gone on strike."

"I try and get a word in".

"I need the dates for next years programme!"

"I need the balance sheet"

"Has Gabby come back from Australia yet I need his story?"

"Tell Dave Reid to get a computer, or a new ribbon for that type writer, he must have had it for fifty years!"

"When's this article coming from Fred??" "He promised it last year".

He finally pauses for a breath, which proves he is human, now its my chance, "I sent you the show results before we went on holiday", I replied, "are you sure?" he retorted, "I've not got them". "Have a look on your Emails", I said, "what day did you send them?" - this was last September and he wanted too know what day???" "I'm just glad I'm not Marilyn!"

For the Novice

It was good to see that the Novice classes at the shows were well supported, the most pleasing thing, however, of 2007 was the improvement of our current group on the show bench. The quality of their blooms and the way they were staged improved with each show. It is fair to say that at the final show some of the exhibits would have held their own in the open classes

CONGRATULATIONS are due to:-

Ray Cotterell who won the Don Brawn trophy and the NDS Bronze medal for the best exhibit for the novice classes at the Annual show with 3 blooms of "RHONDA" pom.

Congratulations are also due to Wendy NYIRONGO, Paul FULFORD, Peter DOLBY, Rob CHEETHAM and Roy REEDER who were all class winners at the various shows.

There is a great tradition at the end of the year to look backwards at past achievements and ignore the fact that the right thing to do is to look forward to the next year and a new challenge and whilst the most of you may again wish to exhibit in the novice classes in 2008 the intermediate section in the Annual show is a route you may wish to consider.

Other thoughts:

I am very sceptical with all the doom and gloom merchants who go on about global warming and all the dangers associated with it, yes I agree our climate is changing but I am a great believer in Mother Nature – no two dahlia seasons are the same but the plants always bloom. The grass has always been cut in June and July and the hay made but in 2007 it was made in August. In 2006 we had one of the driest summers on record the sign of things to come we were told and we all looked forward to a hot summer, what happened it never stopped raining. Now I always thought that dahlias liked water therefore I expected them to take off and my main problem would be how to hold the blooms back for the shows in August. The plants looked great and it looked as though there would be a flush of blooms for the Annual shows but then we had a cold spell and then nothing moved for 2 weeks all the stopping and timing went out of the window.

In any competitive hobby you have to have knowledge, dedication and luck and dahlia growing and exhibiting are no exception, 2007 turned out to be a very successful and lucky year for me. Luck played a major part in this success.

At the Single Bloom show my bloom of MARYS JOMANDA won the best bloom in the show. This came from the only plant that I had of this variety in my garden and being the only boom on the plant which came in a batch of Jomanda plants from none other than our President. This theme continued at every show I went to.

In most cases the blooms I took to the shows were the ones that I staged I had no spares fortunately for me nothing marked or shattered. Hopefully it will continue in our Jubilee year.

Finally going back to the weather I have just been looking at a summary of the weather on TV which recorded average rainfall and above average temperatures for 2007. I am looking forward to a long hot summer in 2008!

Brian CASWELL 2007

Midlands Dahlia Society, 50 years of Achievements

"ACHIEVEMENT" by Frank Newbery

The Annual dinner and prize giving was held at The Kenilworth Golf Club where seventy Members and guests welcomed our President Les Jones and his wife Audrey, along with our guests of honour for the evening, Sarah Guest along with her sister Rachel Reed.

I would describe myself as a peripheral member of the Midlands Dahlia Society, in that I live more than 100 miles from the centre of England which should so delineate the Midlands area of our country. This puts me in the unique position of being able to view many of the societies activities from a distance as an outsider looking in.

My Involvement - How did I get involved with the Society? This came about by the very persuasive powers of Phil Damp who talked me into exhibiting at one of the first shows held in the Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa. Having taken the bait I was then informed by Phil that, if I joined the Society, I would be provided with all of the inside information on cultivation, exhibiting etc contained in the societies publications, adding that I was a very privileged person to be so invited, so who could resist such flattery. At that time Phil also claimed that the society was the premier one in the country and second only to the National society, which was some claim considering it was such a young but admittedly fast growing society. Looking back now over 50 years later, I have to admit that Phil was an enlightened prophet, but even he could not have realised that the society would achieve so much over such a relative short space of time.

Society Shows - With respect to the shows, which are the shop window of any society, these started with a small show in a hall in Leamington Spa. This after the demise of the once prestigious Royal Leamington Spa 3 day flower show. The next year and for several years the show was held in the Sibree Hall in Coventry.

As the show was growing fast it then moved to be held for several years in a tent in the Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa. What a wonderful venue. The smell of newly mown grass and the band playing on the bandstand.

Then came the years when the show was firmly established over the August bank holiday week end by being held in conjunction with the Town & Country Festival at the Royal show grounds at Stoneleigh. For the first few years in a tent but then in various pavilions in the show grounds.

Due to the demise of the Festival, the show has now moved to the Kenilworth school where the 50th Anniversary show will be celebrated. Over all of these years the shows have attracted exhibitors from all parts of United Kingdom. I have been privileged to exhibit at about 40 of these shows, that have always been of a high standard, where it is an honour to win any class due to the high level of competition involved.

Inter-Society Championships - I have always been impressed by the devotion that so many of the members have shown to the society, in the supply of cultivars and staging of society classes, not only at National level, but at many provincial shows such as Plymouth, Hayes, Swindon etc.

From my experience with my Bristol society, it is one thing to organise various growers to contribute blooms only to be let down as the show date nears and be sent to a show with left overs which the maxim "sows ears and silk purses" bring to mind.

As a society Bristol did manage a 2nd in London National Society class, and a 2nd in Harrogate when I was left having to put all of the blooms I could find from my own garden in the class. But even these relative successes did not convince our membership of a future for our society in such classes. This is why I have the utmost respect for the Midlands Society for the way the members have consistently supported the society in these prestigious classes.

Other Activities - When you consider all the other activities that a society and its members can be involved with in the present day Dahlia world, the Midlands is again to the fore.

Hybridisers - When you take hybridisation as yet another aspect of Dahlia culture to list the Midlands members of such a talented group of people sounds like the "Whos Who" of the Dahlia world: George Brooks, Dave Bates, June Davis, John Digweed, Eddie Durrant, Gabby Hayes, Les Jones, Tom McClland, Dave Reid, Roger Turrell, Fred Wilson; and no doubt several more that many of us could include - could any other society list such an array of talent?

Judges and Lectures - Many other activities of the Dahlia World, such as Judging and Lectures, have been nurtured by the Midlands society. They have always had a nucleus of highly respected judges who have given freely of their time to judge at prestigious National shows right down to the grass roots village shows. My own Bristol show has been helped on many occasions by such judges and many lectures over the years given to our members.

Publications - The MIDAHL has become one of the most informative publication of any provincial society in this country and is eagerly looked forward to by its members as every new season gets under way.

Annual Dinner - The Midlands is possibly the only provincial Dahlia Society to have always held an annual end of season dinner, and is the only one that I know of that continues to this day. It makes the award of show trophies and medals a prestigious event, that it should be, but which is certainly not the case in a lot of societies today. My sister Alice and I have always looked forward to the annual dinner as the closing chapter of our horticultural year.

Overseas Adventures - Midlands Society were one of the first to organise trips to the bulb fields of Holland, and the Dutch Dahlia growers in the autumn, when such as Bruidegom, Ballego, and Maarse were world leaders in hybridising new Dahlia cultivars. Phil Damp was the leading light in these adventures and anyone fortunate to participate in these forays must look back with good memories.

The Society - It is sad that many who have made big contributions to the success of the society are no longer with us, however I am sure that all of them would be proud of the many achievements of the society.

Alice and I have been honoured to have been associated with a society that has been blessed by such an array of talent and riches, whose members have worked tirelessly to maintain the high standards set over all of these 50 years.

An "Achievement" beyond questions for such labours.

[Here's to the next 50 years, may they be as good.](#)

So You Want to Grow a few Seedlings?

How do you start?

Well the easy way is to let nature take its course. i.e. let the bees do it for you. Collect the seed heads, dry them out and then shell out the seed for next years attempt. However do not expect too much success as the pollinators, the bees, have been here and there – everywhere and what you are getting in effect are mongrels.

If you want to have a little control over what you are hoping to produce, you have to approach it in a more controlled manner.

My method is as follows, remembering that no matter which way you go, in the majority of cases today, you do not know the parents of the varieties you are attempting to breed with, so luck has a part to play in this process.

Many factors must come into any breeding plan. Do not use any varieties that have known faults, poor tubers, low petal count, weak stems but to name a few. All you are doing is passing faults onto future stock.

Now this is my method. Having decided which I am going to pollinate, wait until the back petals are starting to wilt, then start to remove the petals gradually. Then place a bag over the bloom and secure it with a twist it tie. Carry on removing petals over the next 3 or 4 days until just a few are left around the centre and the pollen has just started to appear.

When the pollen appears, take a bloom of the same age away from a plant that it is intended to use as the pollinator, into the house. Place in water and repeat the previous operation.

With the pollen on both flowers now at the same stage, the all important pollination can take place. This is the most delicate part of the operation.

Take the pollinator bloom you have had in the house to the parent plant, and remove the bag and with a very fine paint brush remove pollen from the pollinator and transfer it to the parent bloom. Having done so, replace the bag for about 4 days. Write the date on the bag to assist you to know when to remove it at the end of the 4 day period. This is to prevent rotting of the seed head on the parent plant.

By now the pollen will have done its job and you will get no interference from any bees or insects.

Next mark the stem of the parent bloom for collection later on and use a piece of brightly coloured wool, so that it is easy to spot when collecting seed heads in late October or early November.

Finally record all crosses in a book for your future reference and best of luck in you breeding a winner.

Gabby Hayes 2007

Timing Dahlias

It is a well known fact that there are many people in the UK that are capable of winning National Championship Classes. However it is equally well known that the ones that do win, do so because they are the ones that have them out in good form on the day or indeed the hour of the judging. It therefore follows that achieving this "timing" is an extremely important part of successfully showing Dahlias.

I would like to start by saying that I do not profess to be an expert but in the following few paragraphs I hope to pass on my thoughts and observations for you to perhaps have a think about.

The length of the process that the dahlia goes through from cutting to flowering is governed by a number of factors:

1. Length of daylight and intensity of light on your particular plot. (Where Wendy grows her Jupiters near Lancaster, the plot is shaded in a morning up to about 11 am and there is a 4 foot wall on the south side which is about 3 feet away from the dahlias.) Jupiters grown here flower 12 days later than they do on my plot in Blackpool which is full sun from dawn till dusk.
2. Temperature and Weather conditions throughout the growing cycle.
3. Feed and watering.
4. Stopping time and the way it is stopped.
5. The variety.

Keeping an up to date diary of your actions from one year to the next is a must I feel to try and achieve this important task. There are a number of different ways to stop dahlias, all with their good and bad points.

Single Stop.

Here the middle of the dahlia or growing tip is taken out thus allowing new growth to start from each of the leaf axes. The reason in all plants that we nip out the growing shoot is that this growing shoot produces a growth retardant hormone that slows down or stops the growth of these "side shoots".

This method is, I think, the most difficult one to achieve a good flower timing from. The reason is that in some varieties the side shoots take no notice of the growth retardant hormone that the growing point puts out.

A good example of this is Kenora Challenger. This is a variety I must grow as a serious competitor in the Individual Championship classes. The side shoots in this variety start to grow (depending on size of plant) way before you stop it so the resulting flowering time becomes a bit of a lottery based on the weather etc. The answer with this one then for me is to go back to the time of the cuttings and I don't root any up that are taken before April 10th.

If you then compare this with the giant red Bryn Terfell, this variety does not show a sniff of a side shoot until after it is stopped.

You can therefore have a stopping regime where you stop plants say two days apart and be fairly sure that your flowers will be two days apart. You can also vary stopping times by which shoots you chose to grow on.

For example, if you are growing a giant and want to grow three shoots up to flower, then stop at three pairs of leaves. This will then allow 6 shoots to grow. You can then take out alternative shoots and end up with 1, 1, 1.

In general then, this is not a good way of stopping because the age of the plant plays such a big part in the ultimate flowering date.

Knock Back .

Dave Spencer uses this method which is a slight variation on the method above.

What he does is single stop but notes the plants as they are coming into bud. As a very general rule it takes about 24 - 28 days from "Pea Size Bud" to flower, so if his plants are going to flower too early he knocks them back.

What this means is cut the flowering stem back one or two leaf joints to let new side shoots come. There will be two come and one will be cut out. I think this adds a few weeks onto the flowering

time.

Now Dave is the only person to have shown in every National Individual Championship Class since it started in 1984 and he has won it, and features in the top three regularly, so obviously this method is good for him.

Double Stop.

This is my favoured method but the only draw back is that the resulting flower has 2 to 3 rows of petals less than a single stop. This is great for Trelyn Kiwi, the Dianes etc. that have tons of petal because often you get better petal lay with less rows. However varieties like Challenger don't look as full bodied as they should after double stopping, in my opinion.

The first thing you need for double stopping is a big plant. I start most of my tubers off on Valentines day (because I love my Dahlias) and find that by the end of April the rooted cuttings are ready for potting on into 5 ½ in pots.

By the third week in May, therefore, they are usually good big plants often with the crown bud showing colour. This is round about when I do my first stop.

Exact dates depend on which shows I am stopping for and which variety I am stopping. I find Trelyn Kiwi to be about a week behind everything else so this is the first one I do. I grow Trelyn 9 up so I will aim for 12 and then pick out the strongest 9 later. The first stop then, I want to grow 6 shoots so I will perhaps stop the plant at 3 pairs of leaves high. 6 shoots will then grow up.

I will plant out at the start of June and by the third week in June I will have 6 very strong shoots perhaps 12 to 18 inches in length (in the case of the Dianes, these can be 24 inches in length).

The next step is, I think, hard to do when you first do it because now is the time to cut nearly all the growth of these plants back to the first pair of leaves on each stem (thus the 6 shoots now produces the twelve I talked about earlier). When you examine the leaf axes (the bit between the leaf and stem) you will see the very start of a tiny shoot. Usually the size of these new shoots is standard for the particular variety and the same size at this point each year.

Basically then, whatever has happened with the weather and other growing conditions before this date we are now starting again from scratch. Under the ground the root system has been growing to cope with the number of stems on the plant and the size of the plant. Suddenly now there is hardly any plant at all but a marvellous root system, the plant now races away and the new shoots that are produced are marvellous. (I think the term "We Have Lift Off" is very appropriate to the way the plants grow after their second stop).

On my very sunny plot I reckon about 60 to 65 days (depending on variety) from this second stop to picking for a show. On the odd occasion when the number of shoots produced after the first stop is not enough, or I don't think they are big enough (this has happened in the past with Mary's Jomanda that I grow 16 up), I will only cut back to two pairs of leaves on the stronger stems so that on these stems there will be 4 shoots on each stem instead of 2.

There is a quite significant difference in size when you double stop, common sense when you think about it. On a single stop only two flowers at most are growing up together but on the double stop that I have described above there are four growing up together so they are bound to be smaller.

The other consideration is "**Overall Flowering Time**" or length of the flush.

With double stopping and letting four flowers flower together they are " Flowered Out" quite quickly but you have more to chose from at any one time (hopefully this will be the same time as a show). You don't of course have to let all four flower, you can make sure that there are at least twice as many shoots as needed and take alternative shoots out so that only two are growing up at one time and the flush will then be longer also.

In conclusion I would just like to say that I don't believe there is a right or wrong way of growing dahlias. We all do things differently and in ways that suit us. It is certain that our wonderful dahlia responds to all sorts of ways of cultivation and always seems to reward us with a wealth of colourful good blooms, unfortunately not always on the right day. So we just keep trying different things until it all comes right, as it did for me this last year.

Barry Kenyon

Dahlia Language

- Daisy Eyed:** Refers to the fact that a bloom is open centred and is showing all or part of the central disc of the bloom.
- Swan Neck:** When the angle of the bloom faces downward, as in a gliding swan.
- Clockfaced:** The bloom angle is such that the bloom is directly facing towards you.
- Top Facer:** When the bloom sits right on top of the stem and looks upwards. Acceptable in pompons and giant decoratives to a degree.
- Plucked:** Excessive removal of damaged petals.
- Short Neck:** A short length between bloom and first pair of leaves.
- Mouthorgan:** A bloom with a broad centre.
- Sleeping:** when petals close up late at night and open up again when daylight comes. It happens mostly to cactus cultivars.
- Tiddler or Pup:** An undersized bloom.
- Bearded :** This means that a bloom is sagging and has a preponderance of petals in the lower half of the bloom.
- Green Eye:** A dahlia that has a middle full of green bracts.
- Shattering:** When all the petals suddenly drop, usually when the bloom has gone over. Some are prone to doing this.
- Egg Shaped:** The bloom has an ovate form as opposed to being circular.
- Closed Bloom:** When the petals reach back right onto the stem as in pompon and ball types.
- Unsuccessful new variety:** B***** ***** compost.

News Item:

Dougie Semple, general in charge of the Tartan Army has announced his retirement as an exhibitor, but I expect he will still be taking an active part in the Monklands Dahlia Society's exhibits. Dougie has been instrumental in raising standards and interest in the dahlia for many years north of the border.

We wish him well in his retirement, but I fear we haven't heard the last of him.

Was it the dahlia that inspired the song, "The Flower of Scotland"?

Dave Reid

Virus in Dahlias

The identification and effect of virus diseases in dahlias is a subject and a problem that growers learn about mainly by experience. As in other virus infections in animals and people, their origins still defy scientific explanation. Virus infected dahlias in this country were first experienced in the early part of this century when it was seen on a variety imported from Holland

The three main virus diseases commonly found in dahlias are **Cucumber Mosaic**, **Spotted Wilt of Tomato**, and **Dahlia Mosaic**, of which there can be a number of strains. The names of cucumbers and tomatoes associated with dahlias might appear unusual, but as viruses defy scientific definition they are identified by using the plant name they were first seen on.

Cucumber Mosaic Has a very wide range of hosts and is spread by aphids and also by leaves being rubbed together with diseased plants.

It can be identified by the light and dark green mottling patterns, on the leaves. The lightening of colour can be more evident along the leaf veins and it is coupled with stunting of the plant growth, depending at which time the infection took place. Plants can be infected but show no symptoms.

Spotted Wilt of Tomato Virus Has a wide range of host plants and can be common in mixed nurseries where it is possible that perennial plants can act as a source of infection. It can be found in chrysanthemums and is mainly transmitted by thrips. Identification is by mosaic patterns and concentric or wavy lines on the leaves. This type can also be symptomless in dahlias.

Dahlia Mosaic Is unlike the other two types and has only very few hosts, zinnias being one. It is readily spread by aphids and is identified by mosaic patterns on the leaves along with vein banding in a lighter green/yellow colour. Crinkling and twisting of the leaves can also occur, along with stunted growth .

The point that all dahlia growers must bear in mind is that virus spreads mainly by aphids and a regular spray programme of an insecticide is required to be carried out from the time that growth first appears on the tubers until the first frost. Plants that show signs of infection should be immediately, safely disposed of by burning or placed in a sealed plastic bag.

When taking cuttings, the knife should be sterilized before going on to the next tuber. Use several knives immersed in a jar of Sterilizing fluid is recommended and change the knife as you pass from tuber to tuber. Seedling dahlias should be grown separately from established varieties if possible.

To maintain virus free stock requires a ruthless attitude and plants that are suspect or in doubt chuck them out.

Also do not over propagate the amount of cuttings from each tuber as it can run down their vitality and possibly make them prone to 'breaking down', the term used by dahlia growers to indicate virus attack.

On particular varieties that are prone to attack, the stock should be rested for up to two years in pot tuber form to help rest the stock and build up vitality.

The last detailed study and research into virus in dahlias was carried out by Exeter University in the early 1960's when was established that certain varieties currently in use at the time were symptom less carriers.

Three years ago, as a result of 100,000 dollar anonymous donation, a research programme has been set up by the Washington State University Foundation USA to provide more information about virus in dahlias, as there has been a lack of information on the subject. As a result of further funds being made available, and a donation from the American Dahlia Society, the project is to be an ongoing arrangement. Donations from dahlia growers worldwide are now being asked for. At the end of the first study, it was established that virus in dahlias was the rule rather than the exception.

Dave Reid

State of the Art

As 2007 is well consigned to the record books, and that is the best place for it for many exhibitors, but despite all the problems and heartaches which were confronted during the growing season, there were still quality exhibits at the major shows and elsewhere. The Harrogate show was considered by many as one of the best ever, where the benches were filled to overflowing with quality blooms, especially the giant decorative classes. The late development of blooms due to the lack of normal sunshine in July definitely slowed them up.

New Releases

Exhibitors are always eager to see how newly released varieties have performed in their first year, and to note their successes or otherwise.

Raisers and releasers have a preponderance to assess seedlings in the volume sales market, the miniatures to mediums, but the acid test is when they get into the hands of experienced growers.

It would appear that we have acquired two very good large semi-cactus varieties, badly needed to bolster that section's flagging choice, both released as mediums. **Narrows Tricia**, from the U.S.A. is a seedling from Hamari Accord and it certainly shows all the characteristics of its parentage, especially the colour. It would not be one you would enter along side Hamari Accord as being a distinct variety. The broad based petals makes it difficult to compete against the 'Moonlight' or Pastelles. The other one, **Ruskin Splendour** is definitely at home as a large semi-cactus and will be a rival to Kenora Challenger as a leader in the class. Both these varieties have been featured in championship winning classes in 2007.

Kenora Challenger has had a long and very successful run, but it has shown signs of age in its usual vitality recently. Maybe it could have been as a result of the two extreme weather conditions. Maybe it likes something more moderate.

I was impressed with the performance of **Eefie's Revenge**, a miniature decorative raised by Carl Hamnett and seen at the Scottish national show. The blooms have excellent form in a light bronze colour. The parentage is from Hillcrest Divine, I am sure we are going to see a lot of this one in the future. Good miniature decoratives are in good supply, but slow to get released, as we have experienced with the excellent ones from Roy Rogers.

Marston Suzanne, a seedling from John Digweed, was in Gabby Hayes's winning championship at the national show and should be on release for 2009. **Barbary Pip** the red one was also in his entry, one that is coming into prominence after a low key beginning.

Blyton Lady in Red was considered to be a miniature decorative, but it appeared in the miniature ball championship at Shepton Mallet, another headache for the classification gurus.

Rycroft Jan has now successfully settled down as miniature decorative, but it still gives growers some palpitations with the consistency of its centres on show days.

Not any **Avoca Kiowa** were seen on the show bench, the ones that I did see had well formed refined blooms, but the stems were a bit on the slim side. Maybe the stems will improve with age.

It is interesting to note that the 'Kiwis' have not been performing as they have done in the past years. Probably another one that has not enjoyed the extreme conditions. Other varieties in the class are gaining popularity. **Cherwell Goldcrest** and its sport **Oakwood Goldcrest** cannot be faulted for form. Not good propagators, (a lot of exhibitors use split tubers) but well worth the effort once you get them going. **Lakeland Sunset** didn't like the hot conditions, but in 2007 it was back to its usual high standard. Produces plenty blooms, but watch the oversize problem. I saw **Oreti Bliss** at the Leeds trials. This New Zealand white variety has good petal form, but lacks the petal count to compete with the best in its class.. It won at the Welsh trials. Available from Hall's of Heddon.

I liked the new yellow small cactus, **Saxon Boy** from Gabby Hayes. I forecast a good future for this excellently formed one. Reputed to have 'Kiwi' genes in its raising, so it starts off with a plus.

Susan Gilliot Impresses

Not many new medium semi-cactus varieties, but I did like **Susan Gilliot**, which won the Leeds trials. It is in pink and cream blends with excellent form, and a much welcome new colour in the class. Raised by Alf Rogers this one will be in demand when released I would expect around 2009.

All's Pastelle, the latest pink sport from the very successful family, has all the good form of the parent, with less fimbriation. It is on release from Cruickshank's in 2009. One that got off to a bad start was **Ruskin Sunshine** which was wrongly entered in the Classified directory as being a medium decorative, is well worth a try if you have trouble with keeping the 'Moonlights' clear of damping off. Available from Cruickshanks.

In the small decoratives, Roger Turrell's, **Marion Storer** completed the double in the National & Harrogate seedling classes. At least it will bring a much needed colour addition to a class that badly needs something different from shades of yellow and bronze. The last good 'reds', was some time ago, when we had John Prior and King Fu, the latter from the late Norman Lewis. Marion Storer is well formed, in bright red and we hope it will avoid the dreaded colour deterioration as a result of sun exposure.

I liked the look of the pink small decorative seedling from Phil Watson of Bishop Auckland, seen at the Scottish National Show. Good form with excellent depth. Phil hasn't named it yet, but it will have his usual prefix of Leopold when released most probably in 2009.

Not many new pompons, but I do like **Will's Ringwood Rosie** in dark brick red with a yellow base to the petals. Seen in the winning pompon championship at the National show. I understand it is available from the Winchester Growers.

Contentious Classification

The classification of seedling dahlias is always a contentious task and a lively topic of debate in the dahlia world. I expect it always will be, due to the ability to change under differing climatic conditions, soil conditions, or where grown under covers. In the cooler northern conditions, blooms develop slower and tend to be larger.

The N.D.S. Classification committee have done the exhibitors no favours by chopping and changing certain varieties. We have had dual classification, then removal from classification and it leaves the whole system in disrepute. The committee are trying to be all things to all people, and in the end they are pleasing only a few, probably those with the loudest voices. It is a classical situation of not having the bottle of making decisions once agreed. Also, do we classify too soon? I believe the show bench will eventually be the acid test. Classification should be to the natural growth of the variety. Exhibitors will always try and push to the margins. There is a case for opinions from across the U.K. At the moment opinions are generally centered in the south.

Giant Decorative Trends

From experience, the trend of showing giant decoratives has changed considerably in recent years. No doubt the great achievement is to be successful in the A.T. Barnes - which calls for twelve different varieties. The entries have been around two or three most years, this is because there are only a handful who are prepared to grow for it. I suppose it is the economics or the availability of space, but I think the reason is that many of the varieties required for this prestigious class will never be used at other shows, except at Harrogate. The most competitive giant decorative class at the national show is where three are required. In 2007 there were over ten entries and the dominant, and successful ones, were the winning bankers of the bigger varieties like Sir Alf Ramsay, Bryn Terfel and Bonaventure. These are the ones you will see winning around the local or regional shows. Maybe there should be a super giant class. Then the lesser varieties would be able to compete on equal terms.

Many Fine Exhibits

Congratulations, to the exhibitors of many fine exhibits seen up and down the country at national, regional and local shows in a very trying year. Especially to Barry Kenyon whose collection of silver medals, championships and awards, which run well into double figures, along with the individual championships at the National, Harrogate and Scottish shows.

My most meritorious exhibit seen was the winner of the Intermediate championship at Harrogate

where Steve Salmon of Darlington put up an all white varieties entry of Kenora Challenger, B.J. Beauty and Ryscroft Jan. A mixture of the old and the new. His B.J. Beauty was outstanding and considered by many experienced exhibitors as one of the best ever seen of this variety. B.J. Beauty has had many critics over the years as to its form being consistent with the ideal decorative form, but this vase displayed a remarkable depth of bloom along with great petal placement.

To all who did not meet with success in 2007, I hope you will take comfort that you will be there again in 2008 to challenge once more.

Dave Reid

Where are we going with Dahlia Classification?

Does it seem to you that there is too much mucking about over the past few years with dahlia classification?

1 Where did the Jomandas go?

Firstly we are advised that this very popular cultivar, one that at many shows had become the most exhibited flower, should be shown as a Min Ball, and now it has been removed altogether from the classified list.

Is this a cop out from the powers that be that they can't decide where its position should be?

It is a pity that Mary's Jomanda ever appeared (wonderful cultivar that it is) because it seems to have caused hesitation with the Classification Committee. Not because it is a genuine Min Ball, but because they feel that its parent must be the same.

Anyone who grows the two varieties close to each other soon realises that Jomanda is a bigger bloom with larger florets and less petal than Mary's.

The two years, whilst they were both classified as Miniatures, were very frustrating for exhibitors in the Midlands and the North, as exhibits containing Jomanda vastly reduced due to a lot of them being too big.

It should be realised that when the cultivar sported to Mary's, not only did the colour change but so did the petal count and the bloom natural size.

Come on committee, let's get them back into the list in their correct places, or scrap the Classified List all together, maybe we can then do away with the rings, or just use them as an indicator to down point rather than to disqualify.

2 Where are the new cultivars?

I think we Midlanders who are raisers, and there are many of them in this society alone, are failing to see their latest raisings listed.

This is particularly true for the past two classified lists, which apart from some rule changes, has barely included any updating of the cultivars.

I know that a lot of work is involved in assessing new introductions, but since Dave Bates gave up the job hardly anything has changed. Committees have been amalgamated to the extent that we now have EC members who are serving on only one committee. If the subcommittees were amalgamated, as we are told, to make sure there are enough EC members at each meeting, why are our elected members not attending?

We have paid our £5 for the last two Classified Lists to see precious little change. Even recognised mistakes have been reprinted (Ruskin Sunshine).

Judges addresses are wrong and some are included who have died some years ago.

Come on NDS, are you taking money under false pretences?

By Dalliance

Growing Giant Decoratives

I have been growing Giant Decorative dahlias since 1990. There is nothing different in terms of culture from growing other classifications, but there is nothing more rewarding than growing Giant Decorative blooms to their maximum potential. This just not only applies to size, although when pushed some Giants have blooms over 15" in diameter, but also quality and formation. When setting up an entry of 12 all different varieties at the National Show at Shepton Mallet there is a real sense of achievement in just being able to enter the class.

No matter whether you intend to grow 5 or 500 plants, it should always be the objective to produce Giant blooms to their true potential. There are no secret potions or magic ingredients to obtain such real beauties however there are some must haves to have any hope of winning at local or national level.

GOOD STOCK

No matter how much time, effort and nurturing you expend on a plant or variety, if the stock is inferior, poor or average blooms will always be the result. A case in hand is some years ago I was growing the old variety Kidd's Climax. No matter what I tried, I just could not seem to produce the quality of bloom seen on the benches at the National Shows. However obtaining fresh stock proved to be the answer, but before discarding all your stock there may be some other under-lying reasons.

SOIL PREPARATION

Much more important than any form of feed is in the ground preparation. Regular soil tests assist and it is vital that the PH balance in the soil is correct. This I have learned from over the years having had too low a PH reading with poor results and a PH of about 6.7 is ideal. It takes a large volume of lime to raise the PH by a single point and if your PH is 6.2 or below it will probably require 2 or 3 applications over a 2 year time frame.

The addition of farmyard manure to the plot is also beneficial and can be done during the winter months or applied direct as mulch in July.

I have utilised both methods and have a preference for using manure as a mulch.

Growing in a polytunnel, it helps retain moisture, keeps the roots cool and restricts weed growth. When it is all dug in at the end of the season it helps to improve the soil condition. Make sure that the manure is old and has weathered for a year or so and do not apply fresh stuff as this will do more damage than good and NEVER apply lime and manure at the same time.

Two weeks prior to planting a top dressing is applied to the plot. This has varied in the past between Growmore, Vitax Q4, pelleted chicken manure and fish blood and bone. There is little difference in what is used as long as there are some nutrients to sustain good growth and if need be then additional liquid feeding can be applied later on in the season.

PLANTING OUT

It is a misconception that, because it is a Giant variety, the plants will naturally be tall growers and yes there are one or two like Sir Alf Ramsey and Bonaventure which produce fairly tall plants. However some of the biggest blooms come from low growing plants and as such as much space as possible should be afforded for Giant Decoratives.

Again in contrast with some other classifications I have seen varieties of Miniature Decorative which have been double stopped and grown 20-up make extremely bushy plants whilst some Giants grown at only 3 up are not nearly so bushy.

However to avoid damage when the plants are in full bloom I would suggest plants be grown 24 - 30 inches apart. I grow in double rows in 4 foot beds with 2'6" paths between.

I like to plant out a plant with as strong a root system as possible. To obtain this requires continued potting on to avoid roots becoming pot-bound, with final potting into 6.5" pots. During the final potting it is prudent especially if using soilless composts, to mix 50:50 with soil from your plot. This will enable plants to continue to make good growth and not receive a check after planting out.

Prior to planting ensure that the plants have had a final spray with insecticide. It is also so much easier to remove large plants from 6.5" pots if they are well watered that morning. I tend to plant

deeper than most as I feel that any stems coming from below or near ground level seem to produce bigger blooms and as I tend to leave the tubers in the ground till December it maybe gives a little more protection.

The timing of Giants is paramount as once you have selected the 3 or 4 breaks required, there is little that can be done to either delay and advance the flowering times. Again it is all about knowing the varieties and experience of your own growing conditions. Known late flowering varieties like Sir Alf Ramsey, Bryn Terfel and the newer Kea Magic require to be stopped at planting out time for the September Shows or Mid-May for the early shows. If possible I would have two stopping dates for the same variety 3 weeks apart to try and cover as much of the show season as possible, with half the plants stopped during the first week in June and the remainder at the end of the month. However very early flowering varieties such as Hamari Gold and Bill Holmberg are not stopped until early July.

A good watering after planting out and slug pellets applied and I am quite happy to leave the plants to their own devices for 3 or 4 weeks. It is the only time during the summer months that I would contemplate taking a holiday. I also believe that regular hoeing during the month of June keeps down weeds but more importantly helps aerate the soil and improves root development.

SUMMER TASKS

At the end of June I apply "Admire" a systemic insecticide to combat greenfly and thereafter try to limit the volume of spraying with insecticide for environmental and health reasons.

By the first week in July the later flowering varieties that were stopped at planting out have now made sufficient breaks to start de-branching.

To try and spread the flowering period and avoid one plant producing 3 or 4 blooms at one time usually one break is selected from near the top of the plant, one from the middle and one near the base. The higher the break the earlier it should bloom.

Some growers believe in leaving all the breaks on as long as possible and only when the buds are in sight are the breaks selected. However I am a firm believer in selecting the 3 or 4 breaks as soon as possible. This allows the growing energy of the plants to be concentrated on the chosen breaks to help create big buds. Big buds will mostly always produce large blooms.

It is only when the breaks have been selected that the hard work begins. Firstly the mulch is applied. I never tie a plant directly to a main stake if avoidable as there is a likelihood of damage to the stem later in the season. The mulch is packed around each plant helping to support it. Only after the mulch is in place will the additional canes be inserted to form a triangle around each plant. Thereafter tying up commences and continues as necessary - usually about 3 ties in total over the season.

During the past 2 or 3 years I have utilised seep hoses to assist with the watering and they certainly help with time saving. However after the mulch has been applied it is difficult to ascertain just how much water has been given. It is not unknown for the seep hose to be left on over-night and then leaving for work forgetting to turn it off.

Watering is so much more important than feeding, especially when growing inside in a tunnel. However the critical time is just before bud formation right through to the first blooms opening. I believe that at that stage the dahlias can take as much water as you can pump into them proving the drainage is adequate. From mid July - mid August when the buds are forming and developing, it is essential to provide as much water as possible. Good bud production and development will yield good blooms. Liquid feed if necessary can be applied fortnightly.

Depending on weather conditions it can take a small bud just disbudded between 25 days in very warm weather, to over 35 days in cool damp conditions, to develop into a full bloom. However an average of 30 days from bud to bloom is about normal.

Growing specifically for the 3 National Shows in September, I am looking to commence disbudding from 28 July onwards. Of course some buds will be slightly earlier and these will flower in August and gets us to the early shows - much better to be slightly earlier than late.

It is at this time of the season that I try to be on the plot almost every night at some stage, keeping a careful eye for insect damage although prevention is better than cure.

Balanced liquid feeds will continue until the buds start to show colour then a granular feed of rose fertiliser is applied. This is said to improve colour and stem. Further potash feeds can also be given to weak - stemmed varieties.

Covering is a must for Giant Decorative blooms as one heavy fall of rain can ruin a year's efforts. To try and avoid damping off, watering ceases prior to the first major show and the lower foliage removed to allow air movement and circulation. Tying up continues and stems and blooms are pulled away from each other to avoid contact damage. Small canes are attached to each bloom using twist-ties 2 or 3 days before a show to support the stem and assist in transportation.

3 weeks annual leave is taken to cover Shepton Mallet, Stirling and Harrogate Shows. Judging appointments are kept to a minimum where possible. Blooms are cut 24 hours before a show and placed in buckets of water and only 3 blooms per bucket to avoid damage.

Alva's Supreme is still the benchmark and if I could only grow one variety it would probably be this or Wanda's Capella. Both are easy to grow, early to bloom with good stems. To grow for the Barnes Trophy at Shepton Mallet, which asks for 12 distinct varieties, then at least 18 cultivars need grown. I will grow 18 plants of 6 banker varieties i.e. Sir Alf Ramsey, Alva's and Cream Alva's, Bryn Terfel, Mabel Ann and Bonaventure. 12 plants of a further 6 varieties e.g. Wanda's Capella, Cream Capella, Mark Hardwick, Kea Magic, Fairway Spur and Kidd's Climax and 8 plants of another 6 varieties such as Amaran Relish, Gemma Darling, Hamari Gold, White Alva's, Bill Holmberg and one or two novelties.

Most varieties are grown 3 - up to get a decent size although Bryn Terfel, Sir Alf Ramsey and Bonaventure can be grown 4/5 up which improves form whilst still maintaining size.

Growing Giant Decorative dahlias will always remain a challenge but the buzz and satisfaction of getting it right on the day makes it all worthwhile.

John Jack

MUD, SWEAT and CHEERS

Show results over the previous two or three years were, on a personal basis, disappointing to say the least. A lack of quality and size in the blooms, scruffy looking foliage and excess marking and damping off were tell tale signs that all was not well in the tunnel or as the wife refers to it - "The Bubble" where she thinks I live in a wee world of my own.

LIME APPLIED

For the 2006 season I sent away soil samples to LAN crop for analysis. When I received the results, the N.P.K. readings were fine however lime was slightly low with a reading of 6.4. As it was I had already applied a large quantity of manure over the plot, so no lime could be added at that time. The addition of the manure did not seem to make much of a difference apart from introducing a plethora of weeds and again the resultant blooms were inferior to the major championship winners.

A 25 kg bag of garden lime covered the 8 beds. Each bed is approx. 75'x 4' = 32.5 sq. yards per bed, or a total of 130 sq. yards. This equates to about 6.5 oz per square yard, slightly less than the recommended rate of ½ lb per square yard. The lime was left on the surface of the soil for a few weeks

Off for a three day week-end at the end of February. On the Saturday made a start to digging the tunnel, to turn in the lime that was put down at the beginning of the year.

Used a new fork that was bought in a sale for £7.00, together with a Wilkinson Sword border spade

for the same price. 3 of the beds were turned over and although most of the soil is now in reasonably good condition, was still managing to remove some fair sized rocks and stones. Whilst digging, thought about a new layout for the tunnel. It seems that most of my "brilliant" ideas come while cocooned in my bubble - although very few ever come to fruition and this one proved to be no exception.

MISTING MYSTIC

About the middle of March decided to try and install and fit the misting system which had been ordered from LBS. Started in the greenhouse at 9.30 am and with only half an hour lunch break finished about 5.30 pm. Initially started by laying out all the feeder pipes on the empty benching and thereafter positioned the 3 mist nozzles spaced equally 2.5 feet apart over the 10 foot bench. The electrical installation proved to be the most difficult, demanding and time consuming. Firstly had to connect the main power cables to the terminal and thereafter the solenoid valve to the unit and finally the magic leaf sensor. Not having the correct tools and only a basic knowledge of electrics caused some difficulty, but eventually all was wired up.

After that followed the laborious task of applying glue to all the feeder pipes and ancillary pieces and what I did not realise was that the glue set almost instantly, leaving little or no time to make minor adjustments, hence some of the mist nozzles are slightly off centre.

The next challenge came about as there is no mains water supply to the greenhouse. To overcome this, a hose was connected to the outside tap at the back of the house, run along the path and out the gate towards the garage. A pane of glass at the bottom of the left side of the greenhouse has been damaged for years and with a minor adjustment, the hose was inserted here and run up to the filter and connected to the system.

Then came the moment of truth. As darkness fell the polythene bag was removed from the leaf sensor and the unit switched on and Hey Presto!! The basic system seemed to function.

Not too aware of the technology, but basically when the magic leaf sensor dries out it sends a signal to the Mist Unit and opens the solenoid valve. In turn this starts the misting cycle. The Unit can be pre-set at various stages and will have to spend some time making various adjustments to the settings to obtain the correct cycle. Too much water can cause rotting and damping off whilst too little will result in wilting and failing to root.

However at this point just delighted to have it all connected and up and running.

Easter week-end and on the Saturday managed to complete the digging in the tunnel.

Things in the greenhouse are starting to get a bit hectic. Normally at this time of year as the sun starts to get warmer, netting is stretched across the roof of the greenhouse to provide some shade. However this year could not find the netting so purchased a packet of "cool glass". The powder is mixed up into a white liquid and sprayed over the glass to provide adequate shade and wipes off with a cloth.

Developed a bit of a problem with the propagating/misting system and unsure whether it was not properly set or if the heat wave thermostat not operating correctly. As it was, lost about 10 trays of cuttings due to rotting at the base of the stem, but it may have been that the rooting mixture was incorrect.

PLANTING OUT

About a week prior to planting out a 25kg bag of Fish, Blood and Bone fertiliser was scattered across the beds. In the greenhouse there were about 500 plants in 5" or 6" pots from which to choose 350, although there is always a shortage of a particular variety or two. There was a further 250 plants in 3.5" pots for pot tuber stock.

Over the Bank holiday week-end, managed to plant out about 300 plants with the remainder put out on 31 May and 1 June. A handful of pelleted chicken manure was thrown into each planting hole and slug pellets applied. This was probably the earliest I have ever planted out and most plants were big with excellent root systems. The late flowering varieties were also stopped at this time. "Admire" was applied at the end of the month.

Throughout the summer months there was little in the way of sunshine and some parts of England suffered extensive flooding.

During the evening of 13 July 07, Frank Taylor and his wife Joyce, who were in Edinburgh visiting relatives, came through to visit. We went to the local pub for a meal and as we drove back to my place about 8.30 pm, the temperature gauge on the car was 8 degrees. Frank could not believe just how cold and windy it was for this time of year. Is it any wonder it was a late season.

Went out one Friday night at the end of July, to drown my sorrows after being transferred to the Family Protection Unit. When I sobered up on the Saturday afternoon, inserted additional canes along each of the 10 rows and about 700 canes were required. This basically means that each plant has 3 canes around it - one at the back and one at each side. With this method large numbers of plants can be secured at the same time. This should have been the week - end that some serious disbudding should have taken place right across the board. Unfortunately that was not the case and there were numerous varieties with little or no buds and this must be put down to the poor summer weather.

FEEDING TIME

Regular spraying with 'Decis' and liquid feeding with 'Miracle-Gro' continued until the middle of August. At this time a 1.2 litre bottle of Tomorite was purchased and approx 120 gallons all applied by watering can was applied, with each plant receiving approx. ½ gallon of feed. This was to try and improve colour and stem.

Seaweed extract was also used on a couple of occasions and I believe this improved the quality of the foliage which was dark and glossy compared to previous years. However looking at the plants I would suggest that they were at least 6" - 12" lower in height than most years and wonder if this will have any adverse affect on bloom size, quality or stem.

This can only be blamed on the poor weather over the summer with little or no sunshine, and the weather forecasters in the past month have commented on disappointing below average temperatures right across the U.K.

An entry had been posted off for Southport Show which is around the 3rd week in August, however there was little or no blooms of any substance to merit attending.

On Sunday 26th August, Ridgeview Nursery held their annual open day in conjunction with Monklands early show. It was noted that their plants were also running late with little or no blooms of Giants in the multi-span. The actual plants looked good, but like everyone else were running later than normal.

There were blooms in the smaller tunnels which retain heat better and noticed that the plants were watered very heavily almost to the point of saturation. Did manage to win the 3 vase class with 8 blooms of Eastwood Moonlight and 1 Winholme Diane, following on from my success the day previous at Chryston where again Eastwood Moonlight featured strongly in the Championship class. At this point there were still little or no Giants in full bloom.

Next was the National Show at Shepton Mallet. Frank Fraser was hoping to have a good cut and enter the Individual Championship so there would be no Inter-Society entry. However even Frank suffered from the abysmal season and did not have any of his beloved Kiwi's ready and could not enter. So with Doug also running late, it was down to Bill Mathieson to come up with the goods and in a combined effort Monklands managed to retain the Herbert Brown Trophy for the 3rd successive year.

Although I did manage to win the GSC Championship, which only had 2 entries, it was not such good news with the Giant Decoratives. In the Maurice Lord class for 9 G. D. it was the poorest entry I have ever put up at National level and Don Mosley's comments concurred with that observation.

CHAMPANGE CHARLIES

So it was back up the road and prepare for the 75th Anniversary Show at Stirling.

By this time all the Giants were starting to come on stream and, in Pink Jupiter, were probably some of the best blooms of that variety grown for years, whilst some of the G. D. varieties also looked the part.

To win 3 out of the 4 Giant Championship classes and have Best Giant in Show with Cream Alva's was superb, but to be awarded Most Meritorious Exhibit in such a momentous year was quite unbelievable.

I had a smile nearly as wide as those chappies from Bishop Auckland who had just won a case of Champagne in the Inter-Society class.

However was brought back down to earth in the Individual Championship class where I was consistently bad with every vase only scoring 18 - must stick to the Giants!

At Harrogate the G. S. C. were still in excellent form, but some of the G. D. varieties were starting to damp off and had to bow the knee in the Championship class to a fine entry by Don.

Was pleased to have 2nd Best Giant in a show where the entries in the 6 bloom, 3 bloom and single vases were phenomenal, with a magnificent bloom of Sir Alf Ramsay shown by Ian Hill taking the top accolade.

Even more pleasing was my vase of Challenger which had been rejected for the Inter-Society class, winning in the single vase class of L. S. C with 14 entries.

Winning entries in the Giant classes at Grangemouth and Monklands late show finished the season off nicely.

Overall, it appears that the **blood, sweat and tears** were eventually all worthwhile!

By John Jack

Welsh Dahlia Society Exhibition Trial results

The Welsh Dahlia Society wishes to thank all participants at this year's trials garden at Pencoed College under Mr Ivor Mace and staff.

In 2007, sixty three new cultivars were trialled in the garden at Pencoed.

The overall winner was **Oretti Bliss** raised by W Jack from New Zealand. It is a pure white small cactus which has classical form and would be one that for someone unable to get the Kiwis as good as the standard, would be worth growing. The flowers have wonderful centres on more than adequate stems, which come at a manageable height. It is a superb addition to the small cactus section.

In second place was **Marjorie J L**, a lilac/lavender miniature decorative raised by Roger Turrell. This cultivar will throw numerous flowers with perfect formation on great stems and healthy dark green foliage.

In third place was **Harriet G**, raised by Jack Gott. This is a truly scrumptious small Waterlily, in cream with a yellower centre. It flowers its head off and it truly lit up the trial garden all season.

Others of note were:

Stevens Vanda, red min dec,

Scarlett Clair, a red Coll,

Jowey Anouscha, a red Min ball and

Narrows Tricia, a yell M/Lsc.

The Welsh Dahlia Society would appreciate your support in the 2008 trials.

You can contact Eric Payne if you would like to enter this very well organised trial with your newly raised seedling.

Pictures can be found on Ivor Mace's web site, via a link on the NDS web site.