

## JAMES S WELLS

After a long period of poor health Jim Wells passed away on 5 January 2000 at the age of 84. English by birth, he emigrated to the United States in 1946 to become manager of the Koster Nursery for Seabrook Farms at Bridgton New Jersey. He stayed there for seven years and then after two years at The Hill Nursery in Dundee, Illinois and a year and a half at The Bobbink Nursery, Rutherford, North Jersey he started his own Wells Nursery at Red Bank, New Jersey in 1956. Here he specialised in azaleas and rhododendrons for 35 years until the nursery was moved to North Carolina where his younger son Jeremy took over. Jim stayed on at Red Bank and incorporated part of the former nursery into a splendid garden.

In the wider world of horticulture he will be remembered as founder member and founder president of the Plant Propagators' Society, which a decade later became the International Plant Propagators' Society. He was a great ambassador for the Society, and almost single handed formed five regions of it, covering Great Britain and Ireland, New Zealand, Australia and the United States. For his work, including his book *Plant Propagation Practices* published in 1959, he received many

honours including the International Award of Merit.

On his retirement he rapidly developed his interest in daffodils, particularly miniatures. With his customary dedication and enthusiasm he acquired a large number of species and hybrids and learned how to grow them successfully. He grew his daffodils for his own education and pleasure, not for showing. Consequently, he was not inhibited by the American show rules requiring everything to be grown in the open. He had a small greenhouse, famous for its red carpet, where many of his plants were grown, and some frames as well. These enabled him to maintain a remarkably comprehensive collection.

In 1989 he published *Modern Miniature Daffodils* intended to update Alec Gray's *Miniature Daffodils* written 30 years earlier. Jim never had the benefit of seeing daffodils in the wild and would have been the first to admit that his book has its limitations when he discusses species, but on miniature hybrids it is still far and away the best work available. It is his lasting contribution to the world of daffodils. It is pleasing that in the last year of his life he was awarded the Peter Barr Memorial Cup, an honour which he greatly appreciated.

John Blanchard