

PETER BARR MEMORIAL CUP 2010

Awarded to James and Wendy Akers

Malcolm Bradbury

The Peter Barr Memorial Cup is awarded annually by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) on the recommendation of the Daffodil and Tulip Committee to 'someone who has done good work of some kind in connection with daffodils'. This rather archaic wording dates back to 1912 and is perhaps best interpreted as honouring people who have made a significant contribution to the advancement and enjoyment of daffodils worldwide. James and Wendy Akers, the recipients in 2010, will be best known to many readers as tulip enthusiasts. Indeed, it was for 'voluntary contributions to tulip horticulture' that James was awarded the MBE in 2008. However, the award of the Peter Barr Memorial Cup to James and Wendy acknowledges their many daffodil-related activities.

In 1996, the existence of what is now the *Daffodil, Snowdrop and Tulip Yearbook* was threatened by the high cost of RHS staff time devoted to preparing camera-ready copy. This difficulty was solved by James undertaking the task for the thirteen years until 2009, when sales recovered enough to pay for professional help again. James was ably assisted in this task by Wendy's thorough proofreading.

James and Wendy also acted as stockholders and distributors for eight years. These unpaid voluntary commitments involved the equivalent of many weeks' full time work each year and were critical to the survival of the Yearbook. Remarkably, James and Wendy also found the time needed to give many years' voluntary service to the Daffodil Society, as editor or as provider of the 'behind the scenes' computer services and proofreading needed for continued annual production of their journal and newsletter.

Since 1992 James and Wendy have made many journeys searching for wild daffodils, and have passed on their knowledge and experience to other enthusiasts. Importantly, they have



James and Wendy Akers receive the Peter Barr Memorial Cup (photo RHS)

added to our knowledge of the surviving wild distribution of *N. cyclamineus*, and done much to raise awareness of the significant range of wild daffodils to be found in France.

James has been an active member of the RHS Daffodil and Tulip Committee since 1993, and until her resignation due to health problems earlier this year, Wendy was a member of the then RHS Daffodil and Tulip Show Schedule Panel. Both James and Wendy have also served as members of the Daffodil Society's committee on numerous occasions.

The well-deserved award of the Peter Barr Memorial Cup to James and Wendy Akers reminds us all that daffodil interests, and gardening as a whole, are greatly enriched by the varied contributions made worldwide by such active volunteers as these, who do the tasks that too many enthusiasts hope somebody else will do.