

THE PETER BARR MEMORIAL CUP 2009

Awarded to Ron Blom

Noel Burr

This prestigious trophy is awarded annually by the RHS on the recommendation of the Daffodil and Tulip Committee in recognition of 'good work of some kind in connection with daffodils.' The recipient in 2009 was well-known specialist nurseryman and bulb merchant Ron Blom.

Ron is probably best recognised by gardeners for his magnificent Chelsea displays of tulips, for which his company has received an amazing



RHS President Giles Coode-Adams (right) and Malcolm Bradbury, Chairman of the RHS Daffodil and Tulip Committee (left), presenting the Peter Barr Memorial Cup to Christopher Blom, who received it on behalf of his father, Ron (*photo Sarel Jansen*)

58 RHS Gold Medals. However, the award of the Peter Barr Memorial Cup is for his work on daffodils, for which he has had a lifetime interest and enthusiasm. He was an obvious candidate for the RHS Daffodil and Tulip Committee and has been a keen and dedicated member for more than 30 years. As a member of the Trials Sub-Committee, he has played an important role in assessing daffodils for the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

At a time in the 1980s when the trials at Wisley were in decline, Ron, together with his compatriot Dick de Jager, promised to send sufficient bulbs each year to keep them going. This generous gesture was gratefully accepted and the trials have since flourished, being well supported by many growers and suppliers, including Ron himself. I know that nowadays growers, suppliers and gardeners set great store by the trials, and an AGM after a plant name is much coveted by the trade as a guarantee of quality and garden-worthiness.

Throughout the years in developing the family business of Bloms Bulbs, Ron has sought out and introduced numerous new and novel varieties through his visits to breeders and growers in England, Ireland and Holland. As a very young man, together with his brother, he visited the Richardsons in Waterford, and as a result introduced such well-known varieties as 'Romance', 'Salome' and 'Pinza'.

He continues to encourage Dutch growers to build up stocks of the latest and best new introductions by both professional and amateur breeders, and specialist breeders have had particular reason to be grateful for the way in which he has promoted their hybrids to a wider gardening public. Otherwise, varieties such as 'Goldfinger', 'Silent Valley', 'Fragrant Rose', 'Gay Kybo' and 'Trena' might have been available only through specialist catalogues. Ron is a most worthy winner of the Peter Barr Memorial Cup.