

The Pioneers of Daffodil Culture in Canterbury

WHEN the late Peter Barr, Esq., the Daffodil King of Great Britain, paid his visit to the Dominion some 30 years ago, he was astonished to find that the culture of Daffodils in Canterbury was so popular. For some years previous to his visit, Sir Joseph Kinsey, Sir Heaton Rhodes, and W. Carey-Hill, Esq., had been importing at considerable cost the best Daffodils of the Homeland.

Sir Heaton Rhodes was fortunate in having at that time as head gardener the late Mr A. E. Lowe, a Daffodil enthusiast who has left behind him an honoured name in the Daffodil world. The master and the gardener, fired with enthusiasm and love for the flower, set to work to raise seedlings from the imported stock, and they achieved remarkable results. Year by year an array of seedlings was produced at "Otahuna" of such quality as to earn an enviable reputation for Mr Lowe, who was responsible for the cross-fertilisation.

In this connection it is gratifying to record that in the spacious grounds at "Otahuna" there are to be found at the present day, both in the formal beds and naturalised in the grass, hundreds of delightful varieties raised by Mr Lowe. The work has been carried on with judgment and skill by his successor, Mr A. K. Wilson, and it is safe to say that the thousands of Daffodils in bloom at "Otahuna" to-day are the admiration of all lovers of this delightful flower.

Sir Joseph Kinsey and Mr Carey-Hill maintained their interest in Daffodil culture for many years, but the pressure of public and private business eventually caused them to drop out of the race and to leave the work in the hands of the younger generation.

Sir Heaton Rhodes, however, is still as keen a grower as ever, and in addition to the number of choice varieties added to his collection every year by the skilful operations of Mr A. K. Wilson, he neglects no opportunity of securing the best seedlings of other Dominion raisers and the latest and best from Home.

Every season during the flowering period Sir Heaton extends an invitation through the Canterbury Horticultural Society to all Daffodil lovers to visit his garden to see for themselves his unrivalled collection. The date of the visit for the present year has been fixed for Saturday, 26th September, and there is every indication that all roads will lead to "Otahuna" on that day.



The late Peter Barr, Esq., photographed with the pioneers of Daffodil culture in Canterbury. From left: W. Carey-Hill, A. E. Lowe (standing), Peter Barr, Joseph Kinsey.

—Photo by courtesy of Lady Kinsey.