ROBERTA C. WATROUS, 1904-2000

American hybridizer of miniature daffodils Roberta C. Watrous (Fig. 19), died on 28 December 2000. She had been active in daffodils for more than 60 years, and was one of the founders of the American Daffodil Society (ADS). She was chair of the ADS Breeding and Selection Committee for nine years, and from 1968-1978 was Editor of The Daffodil Journal, which she made into one of the world’s premier publications on daffodils.

Largely through her efforts, miniature daffodils enjoy great popularity in the United States, and in 1963, the ADS recognised those efforts with the creation of the world’s only large collection class for miniature daffodils, the Roberta C. Watrous Award. This is a gold or silver medal for twelve miniature cultivars or species from at least three RHS divisions, one of the most challenging classes in any show.

Roberta began hybridizing in 1944, and continued making crosses until 1984, mainly with miniatures, though her ‘Happy Hour’ 7Y-O is the earliest, and one of the very finest standard jonquils. Her best known miniatures include ‘Sewanee’ 2W-Y, ‘Kibitzer’ 6Y-Y, a quartet of orange-cupped jonquils, ‘Chappie’ ‘Little Rusky’ ‘Loyce’ and ‘Odile’, and the enchanting two-headed ‘Flyaway’ 12 Y-Y.

Roberta Watrous is one of only five people to have won both of the highest awards given by the ADS. In 1972, she received the Silver Medal for service to the Society, and in 1987, its Gold Medal for pre-eminent service to the daffodil. A daffodil legend and a great lady has passed from the scene, one whose like will not be seen again. She will be greatly missed.

Delia Bankhead

W H (BILL) ROESE, 1927-2000

Readers who knew him will be sad to learn of the death of Bill Roese on 14 September 2000. Bill and his wife Rosemary were regular and popular visitors to the British Isles, mainly during the 1980’s. As well as attending the main shows in London and in Ireland they were also very welcome visitors and guests of most of the principal growers and hybridizers of the time. Bill’s infectious good humour, which he maintained despite long term and recurring migraines, and Rosemary’s warm and friendly nature ensured that wherever they went they left a trail of happy memories.

Mr Roese served in the US Navy in the South Pacific in World War II and later was Captain of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. On retirement he and his wife moved north to Santa Maria to grow and breed daffodils and to raise and race pigeons. From being a keen enthusiastic and encouraging member of the Southern California Daffodil Society Bill served the American Daffodil Society in many capacities culminating in the highest office of President from 1974 to 1976. In 1984 he was awarded the Society’s Silver Medal for his many and valued services to the society.

Being a very severe critic of his own flowers he only registered ten cultivars, probably the best known being ‘La Paloma’ and ‘Rio Dell’. His greatest exhibiting success was at the San Francisco Convention when he won The ADS Challenge Cup for twelve varieties raised by the exhibitor.

My wife and I shared many days and travelled many hundreds of miles in the delightful company of the Roeses (including three trips through California to Portland). There was never a dull moment or a dreary mile as we enjoyed the ever changing scenery, checking
Fig. 19 (left): The late Roberta Watrous (see p.44).
Fig. 20 (above): Brian Duncan (Chairman of the Daffodil and Tulip Committee) presenting the Engleheart Cup to Noel Burr (see p.66).
Fig. 21 (below): Sally Kington (International Daffodil Registrar) receiving the Peter Barr Memorial Cup from Brian Duncan (see p.40)