

PETER BARR MEMORIAL CUP 2000

AWARDED TO SALLY KINGTON



JOHN W BLANCHARD

While Sally Kington was waiting to be interviewed for the post of Daffodil Registrar by Chris Brickell, then Director General of the RHS, she happened to pick up a copy of *Daffodils 1986-7* off a shelf. Her eyes lit on an article by David Lloyd in which he wrote "Meanwhile Kate Donald, who recently took over from Alison Rix the editorship of this journal and who is also responsible for revising the *Classified List of Daffodil Names*, heaven help her....." she asked what it meant and she got the job.

It would not be fair to say that Sally did not then know the first thing about daffodils, because she had always been interested in flowers, but she would be the first to admit that she had no conception of the scale of the task and the interwoven history of plants and personalities. With an Oxford degree in History, her early career had nothing to do with horticulture, but she developed skills in research and acquired editorial experience. She was in fact invited by the RHS to apply for the post of Daffodil Registrar, having previously been interviewed for a different job.

She was quick to learn about daffodils, and soon had the registration system working smoothly. Her first major task, completed in less than three years, was compilation of the *International Daffodil Check List*, a long overdue successor to the series of *Classified Lists*. She then began the monumental task of producing the first *International Register* which took up most of her time for the next nine years. Not only did it involve extensive research, but she also had to learn computer skills. During this time she steered through a revision of the classification system and pioneered work on the boundaries between red and pink and orange in daffodils. And although she was busy enough already she

became secretary of the Narcissus and Tulip Committee (as it was then called) in 1996.

Within a short space of time she gained the respect of and endeared herself to daffodil growers all over the world, both professional and amateur and established valuable links with daffodil registrars overseas. The link with Holland led to her being invited to become godmother to the daughter of Dr. Johan van Scheepen, the National Daffodil Registrar of The Netherlands, a fine example of international co-operation and esteem.

Sally is the most meticulous recorder of information and her passion for accuracy has meant that the *International Register* is a work of great reliability. Most of the few errors which crept into it have been spotted by her rather than others. Anyone who tries to use apocryphal evidence to argue with her about facts is likely to have the ground swept from under them by being quoted chapter and verse.

Her interest in daffodils has developed into something much wider than mere classification. She has made many visits to growers and has been seen bicycling around the bulb fields in Holland as well as searching hedgerows for historic cultivars on Guernsey. But although she has worked far beyond the call of duty, she has still found time with her husband for some sailing as well as converting an old Suffolk cattle shed and developing the surrounding acre of paddock into a garden.

The daffodil world has had great good fortune in having such a dedicated person as International Registrar as well as Committee Secretary. It is extremely fitting that she should have been awarded the Peter Barr Cup for 2001 (Fig. 21). It is awarded annually to someone who has "done good work of some kind in connection with daffodils". Sally most surely has.

