

## **Proposed Plant Heritage National Collection of Noel Burr Narcissi Cultivars**

**Gary Firth, Chairman, Sussex Group, Plant Heritage**

Noel Burr was a well known amateur breeder and exhibitor of daffodils who lived in Mayfield in East Sussex but who sadly passed away last year.

Despite growing all his plants in a small plot in his back garden he managed to register no less than 58 new cultivars with the International Daffodil Register over a period of many years. He published a small annual catalogue of surplus bulbs for sale for a number of years. A few months before his death the Sussex Group of Plant Heritage was approached by one of its members who was concerned that much of this heritage could be lost because of his failing health.

Plant Heritage is the leading conservation charity for cultivated garden plants in the UK with over 630 National Plant Collections registered with it. These collections may be held by horticultural institutions, individual amateurs, schools, council parks departments etc. More recently it has introduced the concept of Dispersed National Collections. This enables a number of individuals to work together to hold a single collection across a number of different sites. This has a number of advantages including issues relating to availability of space, shared interests, avoidance of disease and succession arrangements.

Many of Noel's daffodils were named after local Sussex towns and villages such as DaneHill, Chelwood Gate, Five Ashes etc. so this was yet another good reason why a Sussex National Collection of his daffodils was so appealing. After consulting with Sussex members we soon had eight volunteers willing to participate in holding a dispersed National Collection and despite being rather late in the year by this time we were nevertheless able to obtain no less than ten of his cultivars from two leading daffodil suppliers (Cherrygardens, Cinder Hill, Cotchford, Finchcocks, Five Ashes, Fletching, Isenhurst, Ladymeads, Rushlake Green and Southease). These have been distributed between the eight volunteers and are now growing on in pots or beds.

An Initial Application for recognition of a National Collection of Noel Burr cultivars was made to the Plant Conservation Committee of Plant Heritage in the Autumn of 2017 and received very positive support hence we will now be attempting to source as many of the remaining 48 cultivars as we can.

I am already in touch with several of the main daffodil suppliers in this country and am eagerly anticipating the new season catalogues however we would be very pleased to hear from anyone else who might be able to provide a source of reliable material. We are also very eager to have any information, stories or images of Noel and his cultivars as sadly there is only rather limited information that we have so far managed to find on the internet. I should add that although all of us are keen plant growers and several of us hold other National Collections few of us would claim to be narcissi experts.

If anyone can help with information my address is [themyrtleman@gmail.com](mailto:themyrtleman@gmail.com)