

Monday 11th February - Johnny Walker (Walkers Bulbs) - Every show has a story

About the talk: this is about showing daffodils at Harrogate and Chelsea, what has gone wrong, can go wrong and the challenges of putting on a Gold Medal stand of daffodils at the end of May at Chelsea.

Walkers Bulbs are the mail order subsidiary of Taylors Bulbs the UK's leading supplier of bulbs to the trade.



Leading this division is Johnny Walkers, who is a name synonymous with Daffodils. Some might say he is obsessed but he says it's just because bulbs are in his blood. Johnny's parents were bulb growers who came from Holland in the 1930s and were stranded with the onset of WWII. By the end of the war they decided to stay, settling in south Lincolnshire in a district known as ' South

Holland '.

Johnny worked with his parents and attended Horticultural College before flying the coup to prove his own way in the bulb world. Johnny helped establish a quality assurance scheme for a group of English bulb growers and part of his responsibility involved advising growers from Cornwall, Norfolk and Lincolnshire on bulb production techniques and maintaining quality standards. The work of this group was so successful that by the time Johnny left the group was exporting over 5,000 tonnes of daffodils per annum to countries all over the world.

However, circumstances now meant that Johnny could finally indulge his true passion - Daffodils. So he left his full time career and started his own mail order business selling specialist Daffodil varieties (and other Spring bulbs) to narcissus lovers around the country. He began displaying Daffodils at horticultural shows and became known as the Man with The Midas Touch because he almost always brought home a gold medal or trophy. This year he secured his 23rd consecutive gold medal from the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show.

His reputation amongst growers, and amateur gardeners is unrivalled - the mail order business gives gardeners direct access to his knowledge and as Quality Manager for Taylors Bulbs means the industry also still benefits from his experience and knowledge.

In 2003 Johnny was formally recognised by the Daffodil Society who made him an Honorary Vice-President in recognition of his years of work in maintaining daffodil quality standards and also for his endless efforts in promoting these gorgeous blooms.