

Old Flames

English florists' tulips

Introduction

After the excess of 'tulipomania' in the 17th century, tulip growing became a popular activity across Britain. Standards for judging the flower by its shape and colours were developed and maintained by tulip societies, who grew and preserved the lineage of rare and precious bulbs through the generations.

Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society is the sole surviving tulip society in the UK, established 170 years ago to cultivate and show the English florists' tulip. The bulbs they grow and show are descended from those imported and cultivated in the mid 17th century.

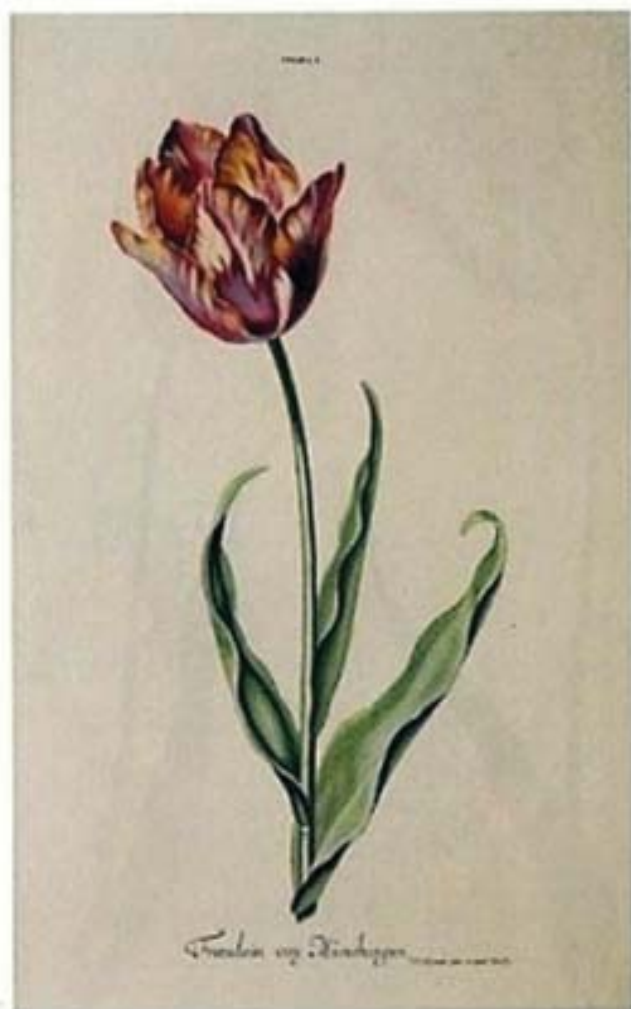
Through beautiful prints, contemporary paintings and photographs, this publication illustrates the fascinating history of the plant's cultivation and how it has come to be defined and judged. It is fitting that this catalogue is being published to celebrate the Society's 170th anniversary year and the Society's own role in that history.

The Bretton Estate, which provides the landscape context for the galleries at YSP, has a long tradition of plant cultivation. The landscape was mainly designed in the 18th century, during which time Diana Beaumont oversaw an extensive planting scheme that included exotic imports. Diana commissioned glasshouses, which were said to be the largest in Europe, and the Estate developed a reputation for producing a remarkable range of exotic plants.

I would like to thank James and Wendy Akers and Marguerite Murray of the Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society for their close collaboration with YSP to realise the exhibition and publication, as well as Celia Fisher for her insightful essay. I am grateful to Lis Hamilton, Private Secretary to the Duke of Devonshire; Charlotte Brooks, Picture Librarian of The Royal Horticultural Society; the lenders of works in the show; and the artists themselves for making this exhibition possible.

I am also grateful to YSP staff Helen Pheby and Sarah Coulson who, with the Society, have organised the exhibition and publication of this book, which will serve as a souvenir of the exhibition and the Society's anniversary year.

Peter Murray OBE
Executive Director, YSP



Tulipa 'Fraulein von Münchingen' (date unknown)
 Artist unknown
 Hand coloured engraving
 138 x 210mm
 Published in *Hortus Nidusinus*, 1768-1786, v.1, pl.2
 Original at the Royal Horticultural Society, Lindley Library



Tulipa 'Kaiser Leopoldus' (c1751)
 August Wilhelm Sievert (attrib.)
 Hand coloured engraving
 155 x 305mm
 Published in *Hortus Nidusinus*, 1768-1786, v.3, pl.125
 Original at the Royal Horticultural Society, Lindley Library



Tulipa 'Talisman' Bybloemen Flame (2003)
Celia Hegedus
Watercolour on vellum
600 x 600mm



Tulipa 'Lord Stanley' Bizarre Flame (2005)
Celia Hegedus
Watercolour on vellum
600 x 559mm