

# TULIP TIME

1953

THE FESTIVAL  
OF FLOWERS



## IN SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE

PRICE ONE & SIXPENCE



# ELSOM'S SPALDING BULBS



## **ELSOM'S Early Single Tulip Collection**

One of the several Special Collections from our Bulb Catalogue, the Early Single Tulip Collection illustrated above, combines many distinct features. They are amongst the earliest to flower, thus enabling the bulbs to be lifted and bedding plants set in their place. Several of these varieties may also be forced or grown in bowls indoors. Early Singles are some of the most brilliant and beautiful of all tulips.

*Send for our colour illustrated Bulb Catalogue*

**ELSOM'S (SPALDING) LTD., ELSOM HOUSE, SPALDING**

*(Department 45)*



# FENLAND'S ANNUAL PAGEANT

Dear Visitor,

This booklet is for you and the hundreds of thousands of other visitors who come every year to the tulip fields of South Lincolnshire. In it I trust you will find a lot to interest you and may it always remind you of one of the most wonderful sights of the Fens.

Mother Nature (helped by hard-working bulb-growers and horticulturalists) puts on a spectacular show each Spring. It is there from dawn to dusk and it is quite free.

Nearly all the fields can be seen from public roads. There are so many acres of flowers—between 2,000 and 3,000 acres in all—that you will need to come on a cycle, or by bus or car. They are not altogether, but in patches, making with the black soil and the pushing young crops, a quilt of many colours stretching right to the straight horizon.

You can follow a signposted route which will take you past field after field of dazzling brightness—strips and squares of reds, yellows and blues. Just as though some crazy artist had been daubing the landscape.

When are the flowers at their best? I cannot tell you for certain. So much depends on the weather. But usually you will be sure of a good display during the last week of April and the first two or three weeks of May.

The Editor.

OF COLOUR AND BEAUTY *G.L.B.*





# WHY?

- ★ *WHY can't someone tell me for certain the week when the tulips are at their best?*

So much depends on the weather that even the growers cannot give a long-range forecast. Generally, the last week in April and the first two weeks in May provide the best show. Late information can be obtained from the Secretary, Tulip Time Committee, Spalding, Lincolnshire.

- ★ *WHY aren't the tulip fields together in one area?*

To get the best out of the land and to keep down plant disease, bulbs take their place with agricultural crops in a three-year rotation. Thus the fields that grow tulips this year are not likely to grow them for the next two years. This tends to disperse them.

- ★ *WHY do some of the tulips have their heads chopped off?*

This is an essential part of the production system, although growers try to leave the operation until as late as possible in order not to spoil the beauty for sightseers. The heading is necessary to strengthen the bulb, which is as important to the trade as the flower.

- ★ *WHY don't all the fields come into bloom at the same time?*

Like potatoes, there are early varieties and a main crop. But most are in flower during the three weeks mentioned above.

- ★ *WHY is it the visitor rarely sees bloom being cut in large quantities?*

Growers like to cut their flowers for market in the early morning or late evening, when they are moist and the sun is not on them. Visitors have either not arrived or they have departed when this work is done.

- ★ *WHAT is there to see, apart from the fields of tulips?*

Some of the growers set out lovely show gardens for the visitors to inspect. Others arrange beautiful mosaics of thousands of tulip heads. Local parks, such as Ayscoughfee Gardens at Spalding, are at their best. Some of the churches are decorated with tulips and have special services for visitors.

- ★ *WHERE can I see the best fields?*

If you drive towards Spalding you will see signs indicating the official Tulip Route, 30 to 40 miles long. It is circular so that it brings you back to the spot where you start.







The Tulip Queen, a pretty girl in a pretty dress and a crown, reigns for a year. On each of the three Tulip Sundays she and her retinue tour the fields in a decorated car to receive the homage of the crowds.



# The Legend of the Tulip

**L**ONG, LONG AGO, according to legend, tulips were first grown in the South of Russia. They were then taken across the seas to Turkey. The Sultan was so enthralled with their beauties that he decreed that a Tulip Festival should be held each Spring at the time of the full moon in the gardens of his palace where he planted tulips of every size, shape and glorious colour.

He invited all the court officials and ministers to attend his Tulip Festival. The flowers were seen in their full beauty, lit by glow-worms, fireflies and the full moon's rays. But one year there was consternation when all was set for the Tulip Festival. Alas, the sky was overcast and there was no moonlight. What could be done? For it was ordained that the day of the Tulip Festival might never be changed.

"Gather me all the tortoises in the land," ordered the Sultan. "Let a lighted candle be fixed upon the shell of every tortoise. So shall we hold our Tulip Festival on the appointed day even if the moon does hold his light from us".

As the Sultan commanded, so it was done and the Tulip Festival proved more beautiful than ever.

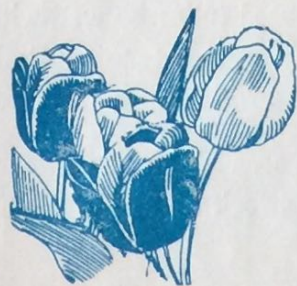
Then, as the centuries passed, the glorious tulip reached the shores of Britain and so much was it admired that a Tulip Festival gradually came into being in this country. It is held every year in South Lincolnshire and is now known as Tulip Time.



# A FIELD OF COLOUR



*A patch of tulips looks pretty. But a field of tulips, stretching almost as far as the eye can see, is breath-taking in its beauty. Some growers have fields in one colour; others grow strips of different colours, as in this photograph. The picture, taken near Spalding, is from a colour photograph by a "Lincolnshire Free Press" staff cameraman.*





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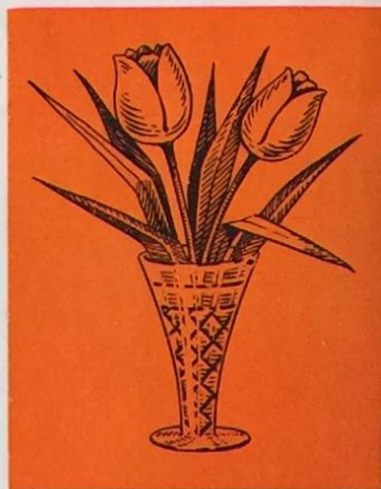
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# COLOUR IN THE GARDEN

*WHEN I bring you coloured toys, my child, I  
understand why there is such a play of colours on  
clouds, on water, and why flowers are painted in tints*  
—Rabindranath Tagore



**T**ULIPS provide bold and brilliant colours in the garden just at the time of year they are most needed. Whether they are grown in masses, in formal beds, or used to brighten up otherwise dull corners, they lend themselves to a variety of treatments.

Their diversity of colours makes them the obvious choice for colour in April and May. The shape of the blooms varies considerably; in Eastern countries vase-shaped blooms with pointed petals were preferred, but the British taste likes a more solid type with a wider base and evenly shaped non-pointed petals. The pointed petals can, however, be very attractive in some situations.

There are now enough colours available in each class of tulip to allow colour combinations to be built up from tulips alone. We have the single and double early varieties flowering about the middle of April, followed by the Mendel and Triumph classes at the end of the month and early May and concluding with the stately Darwins in bloom from early to mid-May.

All tulips arrest attention whether they are grown in small gardens or in wide spaces, and they go well with other flowers blooming at the same time. They can create their own background or can distract attention from ugly backgrounds; but flowering currants provide an ideal foil for them. As for foreground or ground covering plants which set off the colours, we have arabis, yellow winter-flowering pansies, forget-me-nots, yellow polyanthus, aubretias, and white saxifrages. Among the taller flowers which show well with tulips, we have the golden and red wallflowers and the yellow *Doronicum*.

The scarlet and red coloured tulips go well with yellow flowers, the pinks and whites are well displayed by forget-me-nots. Red wallflowers are very effective with the orange coloured tulips, while the purples go with the golden wallflowers.

No flower lover who has seen pink and yellow tulips growing in front of a red flowering currant in a groundwork of forget-me-nots will ever forget the sight!

—HARVESTER.



# FIELDS THAT WERE WON FROM THE SEA

**W**HERE the tulips now bloom used to be a wild, inhospitable tract of country, swept by wind and waves from the North Sea. It was inhabited by Fen Slodgers, as Macaulay called them. They walked on stilts over dreary stretches of reedy pools and lonely morasses, and travelled in wicker boats covered with skins.

Considerable areas still lie below the level of the Spring tides of the Wash. Against both the sea and the rivers, the fields are protected by earthen embankments, some dating to the Roman occupation.

The Romans did a good job in interspersing the marshes with navigable drains and left impressive evidence of their engineering skill. During the Plantagenet period, the fens were mostly well-drained and covered with forests. But by the 16th century they had become waterlogged again and returned to a state of nature. Vast flocks of wild fowl lived on the pools. Some remain to this day, and the fens are still noted for wild fowl (and fish).

In the 17th century valiant attempts to drain the area were only partially successful. Farmers did their best to get rid of the water on their land and windmills were built to drive the pumps.

No scheme was really successful until steam pumps were erected at Pode Hole, near Spalding, in 1824. Only recently, one of the old beam engines, installed 120 years ago and still working at Pinchbeck Marsh, was replaced by an electrically-driven pump.

Between the coming of the Romans and the present day, over 70,000 acres have been reclaimed from the sea. Near Holbeach fresh acres have been won in recent years by building banks against the sea. The fight still goes on, with rich food-producing land as the prize.





ONE OF THE MAGNIFICENT FIELDS  
SEEN IN TULIPLAND



VISITORS MAY INSPECT MOST OF THE FIELDS



# FROM DRAB BULB TO BEAUTIFUL FLOWER

It is from a bulb resembling an onion in shape that the majestic tulip is grown. Seeing the bulb the stranger might find it hard to believe that out of such drabness a fascinating floral carpet could spread across the flat Fenlands in the Spring.

The bulb, carefully prepared in a warehouse, is planted in September or October, generally in ground which has previously been used for potatoes, peas or clover. The soil most suitable is silt land. Throughout the winter months the tulip is being developed. The bulb can withstand the severest weather conditions. At the beginning of March green shoots appear above ground. They develop into leaves, between which the tulip is gradually taking shape on a slender stem.

First comes the neatly patterned bud, which, as the sun gets stronger flutters open to form the cup-shaped coloured flower. The flower is either cropped or "headed." Then in June the bulb is lifted, dried and cleaned, and stored in a warehouse in readiness for the next season's planting.



*ABOVE—Plenty of work can be found in the horticultural industry, not only when the flowers are gathered but when the bulbs are graded.*



*LEFT—Wearing overcoats and scarves, these girls gather tulips in December—after they have been forced under glass.*



# THE BEST WAY TO GROW YOUR OWN TULIPS



*There are some simple rules to follow if you want to make the best of your bulbs. We have asked one of the South Lincolnshire experts for advice.*

**T**ULIPS are associated with formal treatment in the garden. They rejoice in sunlight, but they should not be planted in exposed positions where they may suffer wind damage.

Their beauty lies in the colour of the bloom and perfection of form. Groups can be very effective on their own, and a groundwork of say, forget-me-nots, can be most attractive in a tulip bed. The Clara Butt variety looks well when planted in this way.

There are many varieties for garden decoration. The gardening catalogues give good indications of their colour and time of flowering.

Tulips prefer a good soil, not waterlogged, and they like plenty of lime. An acid soil is fatal to their full development. It is also risky to plant tulips in ground which has not been free from tulips for at least three years previously as they may suffer from a fungus which gives them a measly appearance. They must be lifted each year, as soon as they have died down.

When the flowers are cut with suitably long stalks, the bulbs sometimes fail to develop. When flowers are required for house decoration, it is a good plan to grow a few beds—they need not be large—in the kitchen garden for cutting purposes.

For this use the bulbs are planted in short rows (to enable weeding from the path), which are spaced ten or twelve inches between the rows, and a bulb width between the bulbs in the row. This plan is often the means of avoiding friction between the gardener and the house authority!

Bulbs should be bought from a reliable firm—one which states the size of the bulbs offered. Tulips should be at least ten centimetres in circumference (i.e., the size of a penny).

Good bulbs are not very cheap. Their production involves much care, attention to hygiene, and the employment of skilled workers. Lincolnshire bulbs give better blooms than imported ones of a larger size.

Catalogues are available from almost all the larger firms of bulbgrowers.



# THERE ARE TULIPS ... AND TULIPS

**T**HERE are thousands of varieties of tulips. They range from those found growing wild in some parts of Asia to the latest products from expert hybridists in Europe.

So that growers can have some idea of their shape and growing habits, these varieties have been classified into 16 groups, according to their characteristics. The groups fall into two sections—the early-flowering and the May-flowering tulips.

The first group of the early-flowering varieties consists of the Duc van Tol, which flower very early and hardly ever grow more than six inches high.

The second group comprises the Single Earlies, ten to 16 inches high. It includes the well-known Keizerskroon, Fred Moore and General de Wet. Their flowers are somewhat globular in shape.

Group three is made up of the Early Doubles with their peony-like flowers, such as Peach Blossom and Murillo.

In group four are the Mendel tulips. These have been raised from crosses between Darwins and Duc van Tols. A good example is Mozart. The bases of the flowers usually tend to taper off to the stalks.

Group five has all the Triumphs—produced by crossing Single Earlies with Darwins, Breeders and Cottage tulips. Examples are Crater, Telescopium and Rhineland. The bases of their flowers vary from being acute to almost flat as in Korneforus.

Coming to the May-flowering section, there are, in group six, the Cottage tulips. These are all tulips, including the lily-flowered, which do not fall in the other classes—varieties like Golden Harvest, Grenadier and Ossi Oswald. There is much variation of form among them.



Group seven is the Dutch Breeder class. Most of these have large flowers on tall stems, and have purple, maroon and terra-cotta colours. The flowers are oval or cupped, with white or yellow bases generally stained blue or green to blue black—like Louis XIV.

In group eight are the English Breeders, like Columbine. Their flowers when open form one-third to a half of a hollow ball, and their bases are always white or yellow, with no staining.

The ninth group includes the noble Darwins—good strong, tall plants, with the bases of the flowers almost rectangular in outline. Best example of this well-known group is Rose Copland.

The remaining groups are as follows.

10, broken (i.e. irregularly striped) Dutch Breeders. 11, broken English Breeders. 12, broken Darwins, called Rembrandts. 13, broken Cottage tulips. 14, Parrot tulips, with their feathery-edged flowers like Fantasy. 15, the late Doubles. 16, all the varieties growing naturally in the countries where these wild forms are found, and also first crosses made between these forms or species—varieties like Forsteriana and Kaufmanniana.

Varieties of tulips are identified by their grouping; their height and habit of growth; the shape of their leaves; the colour and shape of their flowers; the colour and shape of the basal blotch, if one is present; and the shape and skin texture of the dry bulb.





TULIP FIELDS NEAR SPALDING





## WHAT TO SEE

**T**HOSE whose travels have never led them into the Holland of Lincolnshire have missed a countryside comparable in interest and novelty to the land of the Dutch. It is not only the bulb fields and the highly organised farming industry that impresses the stranger as he traverses the long, straight roads, but also the many fine churches, notable for their size and beauty.

Spalding Parish Church with its lofty spired tower, is a striking example. The original church was founded by Prior William Littleport in 1240, and built in the early English style.

Close to the church is the picturesque old mansion of Ayscoughfee Hall, dating from the early 15th century, partly restored in the Gothic style but still showing much of the old brickwork. From the charming gardens, which have been developed as a public resort, fine views of the older parts of the mansion are gained, and also of the parish church.

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**I**N Broad-street is the Spalding Gentlemen's Society museum which contains an interesting collection of antiquities.

A magnificent collection of foreign birds is housed in the Bird Museum in Red Lion-street. The British section can be seen at Ayscoughfee Hall.

The Prior's Oven in the Sheep Market, was part of the Priory of Spalding. It was in medieval days, a monastic prison where refractory monks and laymen were kept in the existing arched chamber.

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**F**ULNEY House, near St. Paul's Church, is an ancient building dating in part from Norman times. About three miles from the town centre are the ruins of Wykeham Chapel, built by Clement Hatfield, prior of Spalding, in the early 14th century.

Spalding has a number of ancient inns, including the White Hart in the Market Place, which can trace its existence back to 1377, the year of Richard II's coronation, and the White Horse, with its thatched roof, at the corner of Churchgate and Church-street.

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**V**ISITORS passing through Peterborough will find much of interest in the Cathedral which was begun in 1117 and

not completed till 1530, thus providing a series of architectural studies. A fine general view is on entering the Minster Close through the Norman archway. The first of Henry VIII's queens, Catherine of Aragon, was buried there, also Mary Queen of Scots who was later reburied at Westminster. The Guildhall is an arcaded building of the Renaissance period. The Museum has many local curiosities.

Nine miles ahead, via Eye Green, is Crowland's famous abbey, partly used as a parish church, the ruins being those of a Benedictine Abbey founded in A.D. 714. The triangular bridge in the centre of the village is the only structure of its kind in existence and is believed to date from 1387.

Five miles away towards Spalding is Cowbit Wash formed by the flooding of the River Welland and used for skating contests when the weather makes such sport possible.

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**O**N the way from Leicestershire and Rutland is Stamford, a town in three counties, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Rutland. Burghley House, an old Elizabethan mansion, is the home of the Exeter family. The town is known for its stately stone buildings and beautiful churches.

Travellers from the north-east will encounter sixteen miles from Spalding the historic town of Boston, of special interest to American visitors as the mother town of Boston, U.S.A., and for the 273 ft. tower of the parish church, ascended by 365 steps and forming a landmark for many miles around. Other interesting old buildings include the 15th century Guildhall, old Grammar School and Shodfriars' Hall.

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**T**HOSE coming from the north-west, will see the ancient market town of Bourne, eleven miles from Spalding, with its church incorporating the remains of an Augustinian Abbey. From the Well Head issues a large supply of pure water, through a natural fissure of the limestone. The Red Hall, an Elizabethan manor house near the station, was formerly the home of the Digby family, and is associated with the Gunpowder Plot.

The town was also the birthplace and seat of Hereward the Wake, celebrated Saxon chieftain immortalised by Charles Kingsley.

## IN AND AROUND TULIPLAND



# HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS

COME FROM

ALL PARTS OF

THE COUNTRY



*ADVICE from the secretary of Spalding Tulip Time Committee : Travel on weekdays if you can. The fields and gardens are open and there is far less traffic along the tulip route. ★ Book for meals. It may save you a lot of queuing, especially if yours is a big party. ★ Remember that the tulip route is between 30 and 40 miles long. So if you arrive by train, you will have to find a 'bus or taxi. ★ Use the information centre in the middle of Spalding. It will have advice about travel facilities round the tulip route and about the appearances of the Tulip Queen.*

**T**HE NUMBER of sightseers who are attracted to the tulip fields has grown every year since 1937. The crowds are so large that it has been found necessary to form a committee of townspeople, growers and other interested people, to look after the comfort and welfare of the visitors.

Spalding Tulip Time Committee, as it is called, is an entirely voluntary organisation, with no paid officials. On a small budget, it does a great deal of hard work through the enthusiasm of its members.

It meets regularly for eight months of the year and its activities include : Choosing the tulip route, arranging for the signposting of the route, arranging first aid posts, decorating the town of Spalding, running an information service, advising visitors of catering facilities, choosing three pretty girls as the Tulip Queen and her attendants. All this is done by voluntary work.

The tulip route has to be carefully chosen so as to give visitors the best possible view of the flowers, and it has to carry extremely heavy traffic. On the three Tulip Sundays, the traffic is so heavy that extra police are drafted in from a wide area to handle it. That is why visitors are advised to come on Monday to Friday if they possibly can.

The Tulip Queen is chosen by distinguished judges at the last of a series of dances. She is crowned by a film star in the gardens of the 15th century Ayscoughfee Hall at Spalding and on that night there is a gay Coronation Ball. On each of the Tulip Sundays a procession of decorated cars takes the Tulip Queen and her retinue to receive the homage of the crowds in the tulip fields.

Visitors can use the facilities provided by the information centre at Spalding during Tulip Time. Queries can also be addressed to : The Secretary, Tulip Time Committee, Spalding, Lincolnshire.

*About 250,000 people visit the tulip fields each year. ★ The crowd on a Tulip Sunday may be as large as 100,000. ★ Parties are organised from most large towns in the Midlands. On the tulip route you may see coaches from places as far apart as Bournemouth and Glasgow. ★ Some visitors write their appreciation : "An experience we shall never forget" (from Hertfordshire); "We enjoyed the beautiful show and were greatly impressed by the happy faces of those working in the fields" (Doncaster). ★ Many Women's Institutes and Veterans' Clubs make a visit to the tulip fields an annual event.*



# COME EARLY IN THE WEEK



## TO MISS THE CROWDS

**I**F you do not like crowds, you are advised to come early in the week. You will then be sure of a comfortable trip. On Saturdays and Sundays, the 30 to 40 miles of highway and by-way comprising the official route are often jammed with vehicles, bonnet to bumper, cafes and restaurants are crowded and travel is slow. It is not unusual for 100,000 people to visit the fields on a Sunday.







A PERSONAL  
INVITATION

# WELCOME TO TULIPLAND

Come along and visit my nurseries at Washway Road, Holbeach, and my show gardens on the Spalding Road. (Staff will be in attendance to conduct you round). Here you will find many varieties of Tulips, Daffodils, etc. in bloom. Dry bulbs of the flowers you will see will be available in the autumn and I respectfully solicit your enquiries. Cut blooms may be purchased to take away.

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