A peep into

TULLIPLAND
TULIPLAND

TULIPLAND is a picture of unrivalled beauty when the flower season is at its peak. The flat countryside, with its fine churches and intricate system of dykes and canals, takes on a distinctive charm. A patchwork of multi-coloured tulips spreads across a big area of South Lincolnshire and into Cambridgeshire. Each year the number of visitors increases. The average is a quarter-of-a-million. As many as 100,000 come on a Sunday, the favoured day for sightseeing. Roads and lanes are thronged with traffic along a signposted route of about 30 miles. The route is carefully planned by Holland County Council, the Police, and the Royal Automobile Club, and approved by the Ministry of Transport. The time to visit the fields depends on the weather, but generally the last week in April and the first two or three weeks in May produce the best display of flowers.

PICTURES

Heavy traffic along the banks of Cowbit Wash. • The Tulip Queen, who is ceremoniously crowned each year, receives a tribute from a young admirer. • Coaches bring parties from all parts of England to see the flowers.
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3,000 Acres of Flowers

The area covered by tulips is between 2,000 and 3,000 acres. In the years between the wars it was about 4,000, but during the 1939-45 war it was reduced to 25 per cent. to help food production. Now, slowly, the pre-war acreage is being regained. The bulbs are planted by hand in September and October. They are hardy and can withstand the severest of wintry weather.

Visitors will see tulips being "headed" in the fields. 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.

The flowers are cropped in the early morning and late evening. Growers like to gather them in a damp condition when the sun is not on them.

The bulbs are lifted in June and stored in warehouses where they are graded ready for the following season. Bulbs take their place in the planting rotation of agricultural crops, for which this district is also famous. They usually follow potatoes, peas or once-grown clover.

Like agriculture, the flower industry—which also includes daffodils, narcissi and hyacinths—means much to the district. It is estimated that £200,000 worth of bloom is sent away each year. Hundreds of tons go by road and rail, beginning in December with flowers grown by forcing in glasshouses. Chief markets are London, Birmingham, Manchester, Coventry and Leicester.

Many ancillary trades benefit—greenhouse builders, boiler makers, plumbers, box manufacturers, manure firms, and firms supplying paper, string and raffia.

Special trains call at wayside stations for boxes of flowers which must reach the markets as quickly as possible.
How to make the best of your bulbs

(By an expert)

Tulips 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.
The packing and bunching of tulips for sale to the public is a skilled and dainty art. Nimble fingers are required.

There are usually 12 flowers to the bunch. Eight to 12 bunches are packed in tissue paper in each box.
WELCOME TO TULIPLAND

Come along and visit my nurseries at Washway Road, Holbeach. (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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What to see

Spalding: Ayscoughfee Hall is a 15th century mansion. Ancient inns include the White Hart and White Horse. An excellent Bird Museum in Red Lion Street. Prior's Oven. Sheep Market, dates from 13th century.

Crowland is famous for its Abbey and triangular bridge.

Boston has the well-known "Stump." There are also the 15th century Guildhall, old Grammar School and Shod-friars' Hall.

Bourne's Abbey Church incorporates remains of an Augustine Abbey.

Holbeach, the birthplace of William Stukeley and Sir Norman Angell, has a large 14th century church. A few miles away are the Marshes leading to the Wash.

Long Sutton has one of the few leaded church spires in the country.

Wisbech: Described as the "Gateway to the Midlands," with port capable of taking vessels up to 1,500 tons and extensive docking facilities.

King's Lynn: Ancient town and an important port. It has extensive engineering works, beet sugar, fertiliser and other factories.

Peterborough: "Gateway to the Fens." Situated on the River Nene, its magnificent cathedral is a source of great attraction.

Tulip Sundays

The influx of visitors from all parts of Britain, and quite a number from abroad, each year stirs Spalding (population 14,700) from the usual quietude of a country market town to something like a seaside resort at the height of its season, especially on the Tulip Sundays.

The holiday spirit is most impressive, and few of the visitors are disappointed with what they see. The surrounding tulip fields are the first attraction, and many take up vantage points to see the Tulip Queen and her attendants, who tour the route each Sunday.

Spalding itself also provides much interest, with its decorated streets and window displays.

Visitors will find traffic on the Tulip Route is at its slackest on week-ends and at its heaviest on Saturdays and Sundays.

PICTURES

Previous picture page: Tulip-time traffic on a road along the top of a bank. • A typical Fenland scene from the air.

This page: Highly organised lorries collect cut flowers from the fields and carry them to depots where they are transferred to large long-distance lorries. • Every form of transport is used to take flowers to the railway station, including hand carts and horse-drawn trolleys.
TULIP TOPICS

It has been found that by treating bulbs in a cold store before planting, cut flowers from glasshouses can be on the market by mid-December.

The first known cold store for bulbs in South Lincolnshire was used in 1926 by Mr. W. H. Waldoek, of Spalding. The idea was subsequently copied in Holland.

From the early part of the century the selling of bulbs for the dry bulb trade developed simultaneously with the cut flower industry. English grown bulbs are far more solid and weigh more than Dutch bulbs of the same size.

In 1830 a tulip bulb was worth £100—£170 in England. In 1636 one Viceroy tulip was considered to be worth any of the following: Two loads of wheat, four barrels of beer or butter, four loads of rice, one suit of clothing, or 1,000lb. of cheese.

The Tulip tree is a magnificent North American plant with a height up to 190 feet. Its greenish flowers are superficially like the tulip.

Tulip wood is yellowish, with red or purple stripes used for ornamentation work. It is produced from an undetermined Brazilian tree.

Rain and mist are always regarded as the chief enemies of the bulb growers during the flower season. There is a double effect — one on the flower itself, and the other on commerce. It may result in spots on the bloom, and keep townspeople indoors away from the florists.

South Lincolnshire is noted as much for daffodils as tulips and equally so for its bulbs. Famous parks throughout the country are planted with them.

Flower growers now hold two shows a year at Spalding. One is of forced (glasshouse-grown) bloom in early February. The other is outdoor daffodils and narcissi in April.

The industry did much in the "dollars for Britain" effort in the war by exporting to America.

Export trade is getting back into its stride with the increase in acreage. Many millions of bulbs are sent abroad. Britain, however, has to take second place to the Dutch.

Organised tulip routes began in 1934. The route now has the approval of the Ministry of Transport, who carefully check for its safety and ability to take thousands of cars and motor coaches.

More and more people are now visiting the tulip fields in mid-week instead of waiting until Sunday when the route is congested.
Previous picture page: Tulip fields near Spalding (top) and Holbeach. This page: Some typical scenes the visitor sees at Tulip-time. The girl is one of the employees in the bulb industry who was chosen as Tulip Queen.

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