

FROM THE EDITOR

Wow, what a summer! The last time we had a comparable heatwave was 1976. On our family holiday in Bournemouth that year, I set my own personal sand pie record on the beach - 112, no less - and instigated the design and build of umpteen moated and castellated sandcastles to boot. No stranger to a spade, even in those days. Our used bathwater was recycled during that drought, we three sisters ferrying buckets from the downstairs bathroom through the house to douse the parched vegetable patch and Mum's Iceberg roses surrounding the lawn.



There wasn't much bucket-ferrying this summer, as I recovered from my hip replacement operation. Hallelujah for hosepipes, and for the high reservoir levels here in Somerset after the spring rains. In our garden, compacted soil, cleared and ready for rotavating, developed great Death Valley-style cracks, the scorched earth deterring even the toughest weeds from venturing above ground. The heat seemed to suit insect life, how-ever; areas where the borders had been developed were inundated with many different species of bee, and remarkable numbers of butterflies.

This issue of *Cornucopia* is stuffed to the gills with interesting articles, from the traditional method of 'puddling in' when planting, to the ins and outs of Plant Breeders' Rights, and even advice on how to avoid poisoning yourself when preparing seeds. What a diverse bunch HPS members are. I'm fascinated by the broad spectrum of subject matter covered in the Local Group newsletters which are submitted for *Cornucopia*. If you haven't written an article for your Local Group newsletter yet, why not have a go - choose a subject that tickles your pickle and jot it all down. You never know, it might end up in *Cornucopia*.

I've found the garden a healing place to be since the operation. I still can't bend low enough to plant, but I can prune, and I weed with a long-handled mini-fork. As I potted round the garden with secateurs in hand this morning, an elderly neighbour spotted me over the front wall. 'Still at it?' she observed, cheerfully. 'That's it, you see - a garden is a joy forever...and a job for life!'

Marion Jay