

From the editor



Bents Road, Sheffield – gardeners Viv and Hilary Hutson

Celebrating our 60th Anniversary this year, our front cover photograph shows one of the 60 wonderful gardens which were opened to mark the occasion. There's another here, and more in several articles later.

Reflecting on how the Society reached this milestone, we publish formal 'Appreciations' of three people who have served the Society prominently at national level, the first of many such tributes. Just remember that they were once new volunteers, maybe apprehensive about the role and/or the task they were taking on, as there may well be a position just waiting for you to offer your talents...

I can't have been the only one to have been gently watching BBC's *Gardeners World* when I heard Monty Don refer to the Hardy Plant Society stand at Chelsea and, suddenly alert, I watched, spellbound, the 7 prime-time minutes devoted to the Worcestershire Group's medal-winning exhibit. Didn't they – the Worcestershire team – truly do us proud! (And well done the Beeb too.)

Looking forwards, we meet our new HPS Ambassadors. Many may feel that they "know" Matt Biggs, Matthew Wilson and Carol Klein through their appearances on TV and radio. Val Bourne, a stalwart contributor to this journal for many years, of course hardly needs an introduction. All four express great loyalty to the Society and its goals, an enormous vote of confidence in the future.

On a personal level, in 2013 I found a house that could become a home, its plot crying out for TLC. Two years on, happily I can report that the plot has become a garden. The back, planted 18 months ago, looks remarkably mature. Not the result of my skill, rather thanks to the rich clay loam (albeit over an almost impenetrable layer of stones – glacial fluvial moraine – not a trifling obstacle to spade work), and to the slug-hunting proclivities of a colony of frogs, a hedgehog and at least one toad.

The front garden has been 'greened': gone is the 'easy maintenance' desert of grey clippings, grey boulders, grey concrete (and just one plant, a mangled ornamental cherry) and now there are borders to tend, a lawn to mow, plants to nurture. Yes, it is more work, but it's also a lot more pleasant to look at and to come home to. The neighbours are rather pleased too. What's more, having a proper garden of my own again is rooting me in my home and in the local community.

On the High Street, this year every business is sporting window boxes, colour scheme of their own choosing. Residents and visitors alike comment on how, come rain or shine, the flowers lift their spirits.

What better testimony to the power of plants! 🌱