

From the editor

Once again this journal is packed with articles to interest, inform, and often also to entertain us. Our President starts by reminding us that we're lucky to be gardeners. We then put our minds to climate change, arguably the biggest challenge facing our world, and see how we gardeners can contribute to the solution.

Plant conservation brings both challenges and successes. An example is the rescue of a once highly valued daffodil, long thought to have been lost. It's a pleasure to feature three articles – *The Beth Chatto Symposium*, *Herbaceous perennials*, and the *Wonders of New Zealand flora* – by four writers who have been on study trips part-funded by the HPS Kenneth Black Bursary Scheme.

We move to the edges of the UK, to the Isle of Lewis and the Suffolk coast, where making a garden demands vision, determination, knowledge and hard graft --which of course our Hardy Planters have in spades. Val Bourne gives the finale, and we congratulate her on yet another award, The Dr David Hessayon Columnist of the Year!

This is my last – my 30th – edition, and your new editor, Souren Ala, will doubtless bring new ideas and develop *The Hardy Plant*. He is a landscape gardener, he has written for this journal, and I'm sure he'll bring great energy and enthusiasm to the job.

As I'm stepping down, I hope you will allow me to take a short trip down memory lane. In the past 15 years this journal has become a full-colour publication, the page size has increased and there are more articles in each edition, all of which I hope mean even more value for members.

In 2004, as many of you will remember, we communicated mainly by phone and by post. A heavy thud on my door mat would announce the arrival of an article and the slides (remember them?) to illustrate it. Problems arose as contributors got to grips with their new digital cameras: naturally they wanted to send me their photographs electronically, but our tiny hamlet had only steam-age internet connections which couldn't cope with large files. A generous friend in a better-connected village had the answer: pictures would be emailed to him, he would

download them to a CD, then cycle 5 miles to hand-deliver it – a high-speed solution!

Technology has moved on, but the HPS remains a most friendly Society, a great way to learn, and to share knowledge and enthusiasm for all things plant-related.

I will close Oscar-style by thanking everyone who has helped me over the last 15 years: the Society's consistently supportive officers and postholders; my expert proofreader, Sandra Hartley; and all those wonderful people who have written inspiring articles. And thank you, dear readers, for your interest and attention.

My very best wishes to you all, and happy gardening!



I splurge on spring-flowering bulbs, because after the short, grey days of winter there can't be too much colour!