

From the editor

Some time towards the end of January, as the light lifts ever so slightly, even the most hardened gardeners among us begin to dream of spring. Some will already have enjoyed the blooms of *Iris unguicularis* and the first glimpses of *I. reticulata* (fig. 1); and buds of *Clematis alpina* are swelling. Then, on the radio we hear mention of 'wintry showers on high ground', and slowly it dawns on us that we are only just entering the worst bit, and will be held for a while yet in winter's icy grip. So far this winter, not so much ice as an epic of wind and rain.

In this issue we are treated to some highlights of our president's gardening year; and he speaks for us all in expressing dismay at the pain and hardship brought by this winter's extreme weather to people all over the land, particularly in flood-prone regions. Conditions have not improved as we go to press (fig. 2).

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Fig. 1 *Iris* 'Spot On'

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Fig. 2

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Fig. 3 Dinosaur gramps garden

And from a gardening standpoint, many members will be worried about those among their plants which dislike winter wet.

I am so grateful to members from far and wide, who responded to my plea for more writing; this is a bumper edition – please keep it up! We also have three exciting new articles from recipients of support from the Kenneth Black Bursary Fund.

We cover a variety of genera including sun lovers (nerines, erodiums, chrysanthemums and prairie plants in general); shade lovers of all sorts (epimediums and ferns among others); and clematis, which like a bit of both – in gardens, city parks and further afield.

We look back over a gardening life, and are given views into a garden exemplifying British landscape design and plantsmanship. Many readers will also identify with the false starts we all experience in our journey towards knowledge. Elsewhere, two exciting books are recommended.

Last year's photographic competition yielded some gorgeous images, from children (fig. 3) as well as grown-ups. The HPS image library continues to make important contributions to the journal. Finally, thank you to Twink Addison for her superb drawings.