

SECRETARIAL NOTES

Please note: names and contact details of all officers can be found on the inside of the front cover of this Bulletin.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2005 – The 102nd AGM will take place on Saturday 19th March 2005 at the University of Manchester’s School of Biological Sciences Botanical Experimental Grounds, Whitworth Lane, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 2HB at 14.00 hrs.

COMMITTEE VACANCIES – In accordance with paragraph 3, section 3 of the Society’s Constitution, three vacancies will occur due to the retirement of two of the longest serving Committee members and one unfilled vacancy. Nominations are invited from Society members to fill these vacancies at the Annual General Meeting in 2005. The names of the nominees, proposers and seconders, together with a letter from the nominee indicating his/her willingness to serve, should reach the General Secretary before the AGM. **Members with a potential interest in serving as an elected Committee member** and who wish to know more of the duties and responsibilities are invited to contact the Secretary.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2005 – Members are reminded that subscriptions were due on 1st January 2005 and should be paid to the Membership Secretary. Cheques should be made payable to ‘The British Pteridological Society’. Current rates are given inside the front cover of this issue. Payment can be made by **Credit Card** – see renewal form. **Standing Order** forms are printed on the reverse of renewal forms and are also available from the Membership Secretary and the BPS website (www.eBPS.org.uk). Standing Orders may be paid on 1st January or 1st February. In either case, membership is deemed to be from 1st January to 31st December.

Members are reminded that according to Clause 11 of the Constitution “*Any member failing to pay his subscription within six calendar months of its becoming due shall be liable to have his name removed from the List of Members of this Society*”! Defaulting members who do not amend their Standing Orders with their bank and are still paying at the old rate shall be notified that they will not receive the *Fern Gazette* until such time as their Standing Orders are updated. Members still paying even earlier rates shall be notified that their name will be removed from the Membership List until such times as Standing Orders are updated or cancelled. Any monies received from old Standing Orders will be treated as a donation.

GIFT AID – Since 2003 the BPS has been a registered charity. This enables us to claim back from the Inland Revenue 28p for every pound paid in the annual subscription for each member who authorises us to do so. By August 2004 164 members had returned a Gift Aid form and thus the Society benefited by just over £900. (In 2003 the sum was just over £670 based on authorisation by 122 members.) While this is obviously an extremely valuable addition to the Society’s annual income, it could be a considerably more. There are probably a further 300-350 members on whose subscriptions the Society could claim Gift Aid if these members authorised it. This could lead to perhaps another £1,500 per annum. All that is required is a minimal amount of form filling (about one minute) and a second class stamp. **Even better, the form has only to be filled in once.** The forms are retained by the Gift Aid Secretary and the same ones used year after year to make the claim.

The small number of provisos are set out below:

1. Gift Aid is available only to members who reside in the UK.
2. Members on whose subscription Gift Aid is claimed must be paying income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount claimed.
3. Members whose subscriptions are allowed as an expense in connection with their employment may not claim Gift Aid. (We have learned of this only very recently. Members in this position who have already sent in their authorisation should let the Gift Aid Secretary know so that no further claims are made on their behalf.)

If the Inland Revenue allows us to claim relief on your membership subscription please authorise us to do so. It's the equivalent of a yearly £5 donation to the Society.

PUBLICATIONS BY AIRMAIL – Our journals can be sent by airmail to overseas members, provided that they advise the Membership Secretary and pay an additional subscription to cover airmail postage. See inside front cover for rates.

CODES OF SAFETY, CONDUCT AND DECLARATION FORM – All members attending Society field meetings should be aware of the Society's *Safety Code* (see 2000 *Bulletin* 5(5): 275), as well as the *Code of Conduct for the Conservation and Enjoyment of Wild Plants* (see 1999 *Bulletin* 5(4): 199), and are required to sign a Declaration form. Copies of these documents can be obtained from the Meetings Secretary or BPS website.

GREENFIELD FUND – This fund, set up as a memorial to one of our Society's great fern growers, Percy Greenfield, is used to finance approved projects, helping with the cost of necessary equipment, books and travel expenses. Percy Greenfield's interest leaned very much towards the non-scientific side of our activities and it is felt that he would have wanted this taken into consideration when decisions are made. Workers eligible for university or college grants and similar support are not therefore eligible for help from the fund. Applications will normally be dealt with once a year and should be submitted by 1st November. Anyone wishing to avail themselves of this fund should contact the Hon. General Secretary for further information.

CENTENARY FUND – This fund is used to promote the study of all aspects of pteridophytes – horticultural, scientific and educational, whether by amateurs, students or professional pteridologists. As such its scope is much broader and more flexible than the Greenfield Fund. Applications will normally be dealt with once a year and should be submitted by 1st November. Anyone wishing to avail themselves of this fund should contact the Hon. General Secretary for further information.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS – There are three Special Interest Groups. For further information please send a stamped addressed envelope to the organisers:

Tree-ferns: Prof. A.C. Wardlaw, 92 Drymen Road, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 2SY.

Foreign Hardy Ferns: A.R. (Matt) Busby, 16 Kirby Corner Road, Canley, Coventry CV4 8GD.

Filmy Ferns: S.J. Munyard, 234 Harold Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 5NG.

Alternatively the organisers may be contacted by e-mail: Tree-Ferns@eBPS.org.uk, ForeignHardyFerns@eBPS.org.uk, FilmyFerns@eBPS.org.uk.

MEMBERS INFORMATION SERVICE – Members often require information and advice on many aspects of pteridophytes but are reluctant to ask or simply do not know where to obtain help. Queries from members on any aspects of the biology, identification or cultivation of ferns or fern allies should be sent, with three first class stamps, to the Horticultural Information Officer.

READING CIRCLE – The Society operates a reading circle for the *American Fern Journal*, a quarterly publication containing much information for those seriously interested in ferns. The *Fiddlehead Forum*, which publishes many 'ferny' items of interest to the amateur grower, accompanies it. To receive these journals contact the Horticultural Information Officer.

FOREIGN FERN SOCIETY JOURNALS HELD BY THE SOCIETY – The Society exchanges journals with many other fern societies in the world. We have a collection of journals/newsletters from societies in the United States (2), Australia (3), New Zealand, India and the Netherlands. If members would like to browse these, they are welcome to get in touch with the Back Numbers Organiser for a list of our holdings. The journals can then be borrowed for just the cost of postage both ways.

BACK NUMBERS OF JOURNALS – Our Back Numbers are always a good source of Pteridological information. They contain articles written by an array of authors on interesting fern subjects. You can have a sample pack of six journals for £6. A full list of journal parts stocked is available from Pat Acock.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES – These have been published for the first time, as agreed, for members who (1) have a stable e-mail address that is unlikely to change in the immediate future, and (2) keep up-to-date with their e-mail messages. Supplementary lists will be published in the *Bulletin*. Members who wish to have their e-mail address added, changed or removed are requested to inform the Membership Secretary BY E-MAIL at: Membership@eBPS.org.uk.

BPS WEBSITE – www.eBPS.org.uk (Hosted by The Natural History Museum.) In today's internet-oriented world, it is increasingly important for the Society to see the website as a major means of communication. The website provides information for the membership, but it is also, and perhaps more importantly, a 'shop-window' to present the Society and pteridology to the wider world. Our aim is to make our website the premier source on the internet of information about pteridophytes and pteridology. We have recently formed an Advisory Group to support the Website Editor. This group will help to clarify the objectives for our website and to support the work necessary to achieve those objectives. Members with views on what the website should provide and with offers to help with content should contact the Web Site Editor, Anthony Pigott.

BPS E-MAIL LIST – Members are reminded that there is an e-mail group or 'list' for BPS members only. Its purpose is for discussion of Society matters of common interest and for communication of information; it is not intended as a list to discuss the botany or growing of ferns, for which another list such as FERNS would be more appropriate. See the BPS Website under 'Links'. Send a blank e-mail to: BPS-subscribe@yahoo.com to subscribe. Unless your real name is obvious from your e-mail address, please send an e-mail at the same time to Webmaster@eBPS.org.uk in order to identify yourself as a BPS member. Members are encouraged to join as the potential benefits are greater with a fuller participation. Contact the BPS Webmaster for further information.

BPS VIDEO 'BRITISH FERNS' – This twenty-five minute video shows most of the native British ferns growing in their natural habitats. It demonstrates the wide variety of size and form to be found in British ferns and the broad range of habitats they colonise. Attention is drawn to key identification characters for each species.

Schering Agriculture and the National Museum of Wales funded the video. It is available for loan to members and interested organisations for £3, to cover handling costs (UK only). For further details write to the General Secretary enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

BPS FIRST MINUTE BOOK – This historical document containing the Committee Minutes from the inception of the Society in 1891 to 1983 is available in full colour on a CD ROM at £10 per copy, including postage. Place your order through Booksales.

BRITISH WILDLIFE – Concessionary individual subscriptions to *British Wildlife* magazine are available to BPS members.

ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY – Our Society is affiliated to the RHS, enabling a limited number of members to enjoy certain privileges in connection with RHS Shows, competitions and services.

PAYMENT OF EXPENSES – Documents setting out the *Rules of Conduct for the Treasurer* (BPS/T/1), the *Rules for Seeking Re-imbursment of Personal Travelling and Administrative Expenses* by officers and members acting on behalf of the Society (BPS/T/2), and the *Authorities for Payment* (BPS/T/3) can be obtained from the Honorary Treasurer on request.

COPYRIGHT – All contributors to the BPS journals and webpage are required to sign an agreement assigning ownership of copyright of the article, photograph etc. to the BPS. This has the aim of safeguarding the contributors' work from unlawful copying and use. It does not stop contributors from using their own work elsewhere provided that they acknowledge the original source of publication.

MERCHANDISE – Do you have a BPS sweatshirt, tee-shirt or polo shirt? These are all dark green with a small embroidered BPS logo in yellow. Other items, such as BPS ties, metal badges, ferny greetings cards, bookmarks, pens and mugs, are also for sale. Can't find your order form? Contact the Merchandise Organisers or look on the website for details. The Organisers also welcome suggestions for new stock.

THE FUTURE OF BOOKSALES – Steve Munyard regretfully needs to relinquish his role as Booksales Organiser, so we are looking for volunteers to take over for 2005. Would you be interested? There is the possibility of splitting management of BPS Special Publications from the sale of other new/second-hand books. Contact Steve to find out what is involved.

SOUTHPORT FLOWER SHOW – Why not spend a few hours or a day helping man the Society's stand? You do not need to be an expert on ferns or fern growing, just prepared to spend a few hours or a day with us. Expenses are available, as well as free entry to the Show. Details are available from Michael Hayward, 6 Far Moss Road, Blundellsands, Liverpool, Merseyside L23 8TQ. mhaywardL23@blueyonder.co.uk.

DESTINATION OF PTERIDOPHYTE RECORDS – Members are reminded that records of ferns and fern allies in the wild should be sent to the appropriate Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) Vice-county recorders, whose addresses are available from the BSBI website or BSBI yearbook, which is available to BSBI members. For those without access to the Internet or yearbook, records may be sent to the Conservation Officer who will forward them to the BSBI. These records are stored centrally at the Biological Records Centre, and can be accessed by the BPS.

NURSERY ADVERTISEMENTS – Members with nurseries that offer ferns are reminded that they may place an advertisement in the *Bulletin*, *Pteridologist* and on the website, free of charge, in return for the inclusion of a note about the Society in their catalogues. A suitable form of words is available from the Secretary. The Website Editor can add a suitable image of a plant or the nursery against the nursery's details, if it is wanted. The leaflet *Where to see ferns* is soon to be revised. If members wish their nursery to be included, please contact the Hon. Gen. Secretary.

THE HARDY FERN FOUNDATION – The Hardy Fern Foundation was founded in 1989 to establish a comprehensive collection of the world's hardy ferns for display, testing, evaluation, public education and introduction to the gardening and horticultural community. Many rare and unusual species, hybrids and varieties are being propagated from spores and tested in selected environments for their different degrees of hardiness and ornamental garden value. Membership costs just \$25 for regular members or \$30 for family membership. Members receive a first-rate introductory pack, a quarterly journal and access to their spore exchange.

A reciprocal arrangement has been set up to make payment easier. Those wishing to join or renew their subscription for 2005 should contact Pat Acock, 13 Star Lane, St Mary Cray, Kent BR5 3LJ as soon as possible after reading this notice and will be informed of the current membership rate in pounds. The contact in the USA is Michelle Bundy, 16038 46th Ave, South, Tukwila, WA 98188 USA.

AMERICAN FERN SOCIETY – The AFS has had a reciprocal payment arrangement with the BPS for many years through their respective Membership Secretaries. See AFS advert on p. 237.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2004

MINUTES of the 101st Annual General Meeting of the British Pteridological Society held at the Natural History Museum, London, on Saturday 20th March 2004 at 14.00 hours.

IN THE CHAIR: The President, Prof. A.C. Wardlaw.

PRESENT: Mr R.G. Ackers, Mr P.J. Acock, Mr C. Brotherton, Mr A.R. Busby, Miss J.M. Camus, Dr A.F. Dyer, Prof. J.A. Edgington, Mr R.L. Golding, Dr Y.C. Golding, Dr M. Hayward, Mrs R. Hibbs, Miss J.M. Ide, Ms E. Knox-Thomas, Mr A. Leonard, Mr H.W. Matthews, Mr F. McGavigan, Dr J.W. Merryweather, Mr S.J. & Mrs K. Munyard, Mr A.H. Ogden, Mr C.E. Polkey, Mr M.S. Porter, Miss A.M. Paul, Mr M.H. Rickard, Mr P.H. Ripley, Mr B.D. & Mrs G. Smith, Mr B.R. Stevenson, Mr R.W. Sykes, Mrs J. Wardlaw, Miss L.A.M. Williams, Mr L.H. Winning.

Item 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Mr R.J. Cooke, Dr M. Gibby, Dr N.J. Hards, Mr A.C. Jermy, Dr S.D. Martinelli, Mrs R. Stevenson, Dr T.G. Walker.

Item 2 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Minutes of the 100th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 22nd March 2003, and published in the 2003 *Bulletin* (Vol. 6, No. 2) were approved (proposed by Dr A.F. Dyer, seconded by Miss A.M. Paul) and signed by the Chairman.

Item 3 – MATTERS ARISING: None.

Item 4 – REPORT OF THE HONORARY GENERAL SECRETARY (J.M. Ide):

I had hoped that this report would be shorter than in previous years, but on going through the Minutes of your Committee's meetings in 2003, I found that this would not be so.

ARCHIVES: The setting up of a formal archive for the Society is now well under way thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of A.R. (Matt) Busby our Archivist. (See his report for more details.) A mission statement on the purpose of the archives has been prepared, which will provide the Archivist with a focus on the material to be kept.

PUBLICATIONS: Our President has done more than his fair share of work during his presidency, taking on the unforgiving task of keeping the publications afloat as well as his presidential duties. It is perhaps, therefore, not unexpected that he feels he rightly deserves a rest and has offered his resignation as Acting Chairman of the Publications Subcommittee with effect from this AGM. With reluctance and regret the Committee must respect his wishes.

EXPENSES INCURRED BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDING MEETINGS: It was considered invidious that anyone who had accepted the responsibility of becoming a Committee member, and ex-officio a Trustee of the Society, should have to go to the Treasurer for permission to claim expenses for attending Committee meetings. It was also unacceptable that some Committee members should be discriminated against financially because of the distance of their home from London, where most Committee meetings are held, and that a member should feel unable to accept nomination as a Committee member for financial reasons. However, if every Committee member claimed their expenses for attending meetings it could lead to an unsustainable depletion of the Society's finances.

A small Working Party, consisting of A.C. Wardlaw (President), A. Leonard (Treasurer) and B.A. Thomas (Vice-President) has been set up to explore the implications of financing members to attend Committee meetings, and to make recommendations for changes to the *Rules for Seeking Reimbursement of Personal Travelling and Administrative Expenses*. The terms of reference include considering the number of Committee meetings per year, the venue of meetings, the size of the Committee and the most efficient ways of having meetings, including the possibility of setting up conference telephone links to enable distant members to participate.

SOCIETY'S INSURANCE POLICY: R.G. Ackers finished his review on the insurance implications of the Society being a charity. The Committee agreed his proposal to continue the policy held with the Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance Co. as part of a group policy arranged by the North West Naturalists' Union for voluntary natural history societies. The policy is for Public Liability only, to a sum of five million pounds, at an annual premium of £40 plus annual membership fee to the NWNLU of £10.

The Committee agreed R.G. Ackers' recommendation not to take out a much more expensive policy that would give protection against libel and accepted the proposal that articles for journals should be checked for possible libellous content by other persons in addition to the editor. However, the original policy not to take out protection against libel is now being reviewed as part of a 'doomsday scenario', i.e. someone taking action over an event that was not covered by insurance and which, if successful, would drain the Society of its financial resources and might also render the Trustees liable.

ATTENDANCE OF MINORS AT FIELD MEETINGS: A young teenage member has been attending meetings during the past year and concern was expressed about the insurance implications of the attendance of minors at meetings. Our current insurance policy contains no exclusion clause regarding minors and it has been ascertained that there is no public liability problem. However, it was agreed, again as part of our 'best practice' policy, that when a minor attends a meeting unaccompanied by his/her legal guardian, the legal guardian must sign a form stating that he/she agrees to the minor attending the meeting and also that he/she agrees that one named person acts *in loco parentis*. The 'responsible adult' must also sign the form.

FERN ATLAS SUBCOMMITTEE: Following publication of the BSBI's *New Atlas of the British & Irish Flora* (2002), the Fern Atlas Subcommittee, which has lain dormant for a number of years, is preparing to resume activity. The subcommittee (Chairman, A.C. Pigott) is currently reviewing its objectives and formulating the best way forward; we hope to have news of significant progress next year.

NCCPG FERN COLLECTIONS: Last year I reported that the Society had become a member of the NCCPG as part of an initiative to encourage members to create National Collections of ferns.

S.E. Czeladzinski presented a paper to the Committee setting out the current position on national collections of ferns recognised by the NCCPG, suggesting collections that the Society should aim to see added, and the advantages to the Society of having collections held by its members. It was felt that cultivar collections would be particularly valuable. S.E. Czeladzinski is currently seeking and negotiating sites where collections might be held.

MAILING OF NOTICES: As the *Bulletin* was unlikely to be published before March, it was agreed that a separate mailing of the usual inserts would be made well before Christmas and the meetings programme would be put on the website. This would give members much longer than usual notice of the meetings for the coming year and should enable them to avoid conflicting commitments more easily. The value of this early posting would be seen in the numbers attending meetings.

SALE OF MEMBERSHIP LIST: A request to rent the Society's Membership list for the purpose of promoting pteridophyte publications was received from The New York Botanical Garden Press. It was agreed that as a matter of principle the Society would not sell details of its membership to another organisation or individual. In this particular instance, it was agreed to distribute fliers with one of our publications for a cost negotiated with the Press.

FIRST AID COURSES: As part of the Society's policy to implement best practice wherever possible as a "hallmark of a well run Charity", suitable First Aid courses were investigated. Unfortunately, the BPS could not afford to pay for training for interested leaders of field meetings. However, the Committee decided it wished to encourage leaders

to gain First Aid skills and details of where information could be obtained for local courses have been added to the *Guidelines for Leaders*. I am happy to report that an oft-times leader has since completed a course!

DESTINATION OF PTERIDOPHYTE RECORDS: We received a query about the destination for field records of pteridophytes made by members. The Committee reviewed and confirmed the present arrangements and these are reiterated in the *Secretary's Notes* in the recent issue of the *Bulletin* (Vol. 6, Part 2, 2003), where more details can be found.

EDINBURGH SYMPOSIUM 2004: The Committee made a grant of £500 to the Committee organising the Edinburgh Symposium to be held in July this year (2004), with the proviso that it be used to enable one or more BPS members to attend the meeting. The possibility of the Proceedings forming a future issue of the *Gazette* is under discussion.

Before I end on some good news, I would urge members to read the *Secretarial Notes* in the *Bulletin*, particularly if you haven't done so for a number of years. There are various significant new items.

EXPIRY OF PATRONAGE: The good news! The five-year period of the patronage by HRH The Prince of Wales has come to an end, and we are pleased to report that the Prince has agreed to continue as Patron of the Society for a further period. We hear that he really does read the journals that we send to him!

SECRETARY'S CONCLUDING COMMENT: One day your Committee will find time to talk about ferns!

The Secretary's report was approved, proposed by M.H. Rickard, seconded by M.S. Porter.

Item 5 – REPORT OF THE HONORARY TREASURER (A. Leonard): The Treasurer presented the provisional accounts for the year ending 31st December 2003. He explained that the accounts had yet to be finalised and contained projected values.

In answer to a suggestion from the floor, the Treasurer agreed that the Merchandise and Booksales Accounts could also be published in full. He would resolve the matter with the respective Managers in time for next year's statement.

The Finance report was accepted unanimously; proposed by R.W. Sykes, seconded by P.H. Ripley. (For the final accounts see page 255.)

Item 6 – REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (M.S. Porter): The consistency of BPS membership never fails to amaze me! Practically every year the Society gains about 75 new members (76 in 2001, 76 in 2002 and 77 in 2003) while between 20 and 30 members resign and about 50 lapse. In these circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that our numbers remain fairly constant; in outstanding years we top 800 but in most years our membership is in the high 700s, usually between 770 and 790. It takes something startling to change the pattern – in 2000 Martin Rickard published the *Plantfinder's Guide to Garden Ferns* and we had over 100 new members, while in 2002 when membership subscription rates went up, nearly 40 members resigned and membership numbers fell by about 35. Nevertheless, these variations are over a very small range and we are maintaining our numbers well, probably better than many specialist societies of comparable size.

For 2003 the details were: 34 Complimentary or Honorary members, 15 Student members, 63 Family members, 85 Subscribers and 593 'Ordinary' members, giving 790 members in all, our third highest membership total. As noted above, 77 new members joined the Society. Against this had to be set the 25 resignations, the 43 lapsed members and the death of 8 valued members of the Society.

Last year, while entering membership renewals on the database, I decided to do a comparison of the different amounts of time taken for this task. When things are straightforward – an up-to-date Standing Order or a correctly made-out cheque – it takes one minute to find the name on the database and enter details. Credit card payments take longer to deal with, as special forms have to be filled in, so this may be three minutes per member. However, when a Standing Order has not been brought up-to-date or personal reminders have to be sent out, the amount of time to be spent soars to at least ten minutes per member and this is doubled if there is no response to the first reminder. I reckon, therefore, that it takes me half as long to process the details for the 600 plus members who pay correctly as it does for the 150 plus members who don't. My grateful thanks to the 600 members who pay correctly!

STATEMENT CONCERNING GIFT AID: When the BPS was registered as a charity it became possible for us to claim Gift Aid on each member's subscriptions – so long as that member is paying some income tax. The Inland Revenue repays us 28 pence for every pound paid in as membership subscription. Thus for each Full Member paying £20 we receive £5.60, for each Optional Member paying £16 we receive £4.48, for each Student Member paying £10 we receive £2.80, for each Subscriber paying £33 we receive £9.24 and for each Family Member making an additional payment of £2 we receive £0.56.

Gift Aid is, of course, not open to overseas members so we have up to about 550 eligible members. Last year 122 members sent in their forms authorising us to claim Gift Aid with the result that the Society was £673.68 better off. However, 122 is roughly a quarter of all eligible members. I suspect we could benefit by about £2,500 per year if all members filled in the form. So please, if you didn't fill in your form last year can you do so this year? It will cost you nothing (apart, perhaps, from a 2nd class stamp) and there is a minimal amount of form filling to do: viz. First Name, Surname, Address and Postcode. Finally, once it is done it doesn't have to be done again. I can use the form year after year to make the claims.

After a brief exchange of information about Gift Aid it was agreed that efforts should be made to encourage the three-quarters of the membership who could be entitled to Gift Aid their subscriptions but had not done so, to do so, possibly via an article in the *Pteridologist* and/or by a statement in the *Secretarial Notes* in the *Bulletin*.

Approval of the report was proposed by J.W. Merryweather, seconded by A.M. Paul and accepted unanimously.

Item 7 – REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION OFFICER AND RECORDER

(R.J. Cooke): I have very little to report this year in terms of my activities on behalf of the BPS, so I thought I would update members on progress of one of the issues I have previously discussed, the re-introduction of *Woodsia ilvensis* to several sites in the uplands of Britain, and I am grateful to Heather McHaffie for providing me with this summary. All of the introduced and re-introduced populations at four sites continue to be monitored. Populations are stable, and they appear to have survived last summer's dry conditions. The plants are producing spores but as yet no sporelings have been found. This, of course, remains a key aspect to their long term survival. This research is producing many interesting results, but as with all research it raises as many questions as it answers and I am looking forward to reading the full results, which I understand will appear in the *Pteridologist*.

Some of you may know that I am also the BSBI referee for *Polypodium*, and I know other members also act as BSBI referees. My reason for mentioning this is that over the last few months I have identified polypodiums and their hybrids from several sites not recorded in the new *Plant Atlas*. I am sure this is the case with other ferns, and I think we now have to begin to plan an updated fern atlas. The last one was published in 1978, 14 years after the BSBI atlas. I hope that we will be able to produce a second edition rather sooner than 2015! In doing so, however, we should make use of technology and in particular our web site. We have a Fern Atlas

subcommittee in the BPS and we now need to consider how best to stimulate additional recording and make the results widely accessible. Members of the BPS have a key role here and I hope we in the subcommittee will be able to provide further guidance in the not-too-distant future.

Item 8 – SUBCOMMITTEE (Permanent) REPORTS:

8.1 – MEETINGS SUBCOMMITTEE (P.J. Acock): Personally, I cannot remember a year when we have had such a diverse and interesting collection of meetings. Thanks to the hard work put in by the leaders of each meeting, those attending found it difficult to find superlatives to describe them. We started with a well-attended AGM with a fine and informative collection of talks on fern classification, which prompted lively discussion.

Steve and Karen Munyard's excursion to SW Ireland was like the best family holiday – with ferns. In the evening we shared the day's experiences around a meal table in the lounge of a large house, the base for the meeting. It was a truly magnificent excursion with great company and superb organisation.

Barry Thomas led another large meeting around his part of mid-Wales, when over 30 people were treated to more ferns, interesting talks and cream teas than one could imagine could be packed into a weekend! Joy Neal regally entertained the whole group to the delights of her garden and home cooking when the group visited on the Saturday afternoon.

After more than two years of planning, Sue Olsen and the Hardy Fern Foundation led us on one of our most ambitious tours yet. From registration at the University of Seattle to the farewell dinner, we were whisked from one delight to another in the most carefully organised tour of a most beautiful part of the USA.

We tried a new venture last year to actively encourage people to support Matt Busby at the Southport Flower Show. Although the number of attendees was disappointing, the weekend was enjoyable and a trip to the Show definitely can be recommended. The Show celebrates its 75th year this year (2004).

Paul Ripley organised a magical trip to the Somerset and Devon borders. The base for the excursion was a lovely inn at Lynton, from where we were taken to see the ferny delights of the area and enjoyed another cream tea at Joan Lorraine's well-known, wonderful garden at Porlock.

To round off the year, Graham Ackers, Alastair Wardlaw and Bob Johns arranged a tree-fern workshop at Kew that attracted members from all corners of the kingdom. They came in droves and were not disappointed. Sixty members and friends delighted in getting their heads around the subject from all sorts of angles and over 20 gathered at a Thai restaurant in the evening to continue the discussions!

Superb weather, good company, but above all the very generous giving of many hours of time by the leaders and, in some cases sizeable teams of co-organisers, resulted in a year of meetings that will go down in the memories of all those who were fortunate enough to have taken part.

8.2 – PUBLICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE (Prof. A.C. Wardlaw): As in previous years, the President served as Acting Chairman of this Committee pending other arrangements. No meetings took place but members of the Committee exchanged information electronically as all have e-mail.

BPS journals and other publications are progressively being supplied to printing firms as finished files on CD. This procedure reduces the costs of production, as compared with former times when the printer would make printing plates for the illustrations, do the page make-up and send the Editor the page-proofs for correction. The new procedures allow greater editorial control, but are more demanding of time, skills and computer equipment than in the past. The Society is therefore much indebted to those individuals who serve as today's Editors, and who give freely of their time and expertise to produce the publications, which are so widely appreciated.

8.2.1 – BULLETIN: The 2003 *Bulletin*, only recently printed, again has 88 pages. The exceptionally large size reflects the steadily increasing activities of the Regional Groups, and four National Field meetings, two of which were overseas, and the inclusion of more photographs. This size may be compared with the 1997 *Bulletin* when only 56 pages were needed, and 1993, when 44 pages sufficed. Contributors are requested to send their reports and photographs as early as possible to facilitate earlier publication. Miss A.M. Paul continues the expert and dedicated service she has delivered to the Society for many years as Editor of the *Bulletin*.

8.2.2 – THE FERN GAZETTE: In April 2003, Parts 6, 7 and 8 of Volume 16 were issued as a single 230-page volume containing the Proceedings of the 2001 Guildford Symposium on *Fern Flora Worldwide: Threats and Responses*. This especially large volume was edited by Dr A.F. Dyer, Dr E. Sheffield and Prof. A.C. Wardlaw and was dedicated to Mr A.C. Jermy on the occasion of his 70th birthday. It contained a preface by HRH The Prince of Wales. In December 2003 the first Part of Volume 17 was issued by the new joint Editors, Dr M. Gibby and Mr A. Leonard. It is expected that future issues will contain the Proceedings of the forthcoming Symposium *Ferns for the 21st Century*, to be held at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in July 2004. Under active discussion is a proposal to encourage submission of review articles, in addition to the original papers that the Journal currently attracts.

8.2.3 – PTERIDOLOGIST: Volume 4, Part 2 of the new A4-size *Pteridologist* was produced as a 35-page issue in 2003. The Editor, Dr J.W. Merryweather, is to be congratulated for his initiative and designer talents in this very attractive product. As in the previous issue, the *Tree Fern Newsletter* (No. 9) was included as a feature of the magazine. The editor still requests plenty of short articles, brief notes, news and letters as well as a constant supply of major articles. New authors are encouraged to contribute.

8.2.4 – WORLDWIDE WEB SITE: Mr A.C. Pigott continues to manage the Society's site on the Worldwide Web and is always on the lookout for new material. Members are referred to his article published in a previous *Bulletin* (Vol. 5(5): 276. 2000).

8.2.5 – OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS:

8.2.5.1 – Index for *Pteridologist*: Mr M. Searle finished compiling the indexes for the first three volumes of *Pteridologist*, i.e. from 1984 until 2001 inclusive. The text is now being edited and will be issued as a booklet of approximately 43 pages of double-column format. These indexes will provide searchable access to the wide range of pteridological subjects, persons and places in this journal during the first 18 years of its existence. Publication and distribution of the combined indexes is expected during 2004 and the Committee approved that all current members should be sent a free copy.

8.2.5.2 – Index for *Bulletin*: Mr J. Crowe completed a draft index to volumes 1-5 of the *BPS Bulletin*. This now needs to be edited and formatted for publication as a booklet of approximately 28 pages. We hope to be able to print and distribute copies of this very useful publication to members before the next AGM.

8.2.5.3 – *Polystichum: Variation in the British Shield Ferns*, by J.W. Dyce, expanded and updated by Robert Sykes, Martin Rickard & Peter Barnes: This BPS Special Publication (No. 7) has been many years in preparation from the incomplete manuscript left by Jimmy Dyce at the time of his death in 1996. The three Editors have had the major task of collecting illustrations of all the cultivars of the British polystichums, and revising the text left by the author. The work is in the final stages of preparation and will run to about 90 A4-size pages. The exact form of publication, particularly the number of colour pictures, is still under discussion. Hopefully this very attractive and authoritative volume will be published during 2004.

8.2.5.4 – *BPS Leaflets*: The BPS Membership leaflet is being revised and two new A5 leaflets, *Getting Help from Your Society* and *An Introductory Selection of Books on Ferns*

and *Fern Allies* are being prepared for publication. We also plan to revise *Where to See Ferns*. Mrs R. Hibbs has produced draft designs for consideration by the Publications Subcommittee. We expect that these will all be made available both as hard copy and on the BPS Website.

Discussion: There were queries and discussion from the floor. R.W. Sykes commented that the recent issue of the *Bulletin* was 'a jolly good one'. Regarding *Pteridologist*, J.W. Merryweather said that he would find it helpful to receive comments. The copy date for *Pteridologist* is 30th November of the preceding year. Two particular issues dominated discussion about the website. Some members experienced difficulty in getting onto the website; when this occurred the member should inform the Website Editor. Concern was also expressed at the lack of updating of the website; the 2004 meetings programme was not yet available. It was suggested that even when no amendments were made to a long-standing page, the update date should be changed regularly to indicate that the page had been reviewed.

Concern was also expressed at the cost commitment over the next two years for the several publications already in preparation. There was some division of opinion on the necessity of sending the index for the *Pteridologist* free to all members. The following proposal was put to the meeting and accepted 31:2 against: "In principle, the meeting agrees that the index to the *Pteridologist* should be free to current members of the Society unless the cost was unreasonable, and that the matter should be referred to the Committee" M.S. Porter proposed, and R. Hibbs seconded a similar proposal for the index to the *Bulletin*, which was accepted unanimously. The Treasurer requested that cost estimates should be available when the Committee discussed the matter. R.W. Sykes further suggested that if the cost for either of the indexes was not over £1,000, then they should be distributed free to all current members receiving the respective journals. This latter suggestion was not put to the meeting.

8.3 – FERN VARIETIES NOMENCLATURE SUBCOMMITTEE: No report.

Item 9 – SUBCOMMITTEE (ad hoc) REPORTS:

9.1 – FERN ATLAS SUBCOMMITTEE: No report. See Secretary's Report, Item 4.

Item 10 – COMMITTEE APPOINTED OFFICERS AND MANAGERS:

10.1 – ARCHIVIST (A.R. Busby): The archive consists of mainly three types of material: 1. Correspondence and photographs, 2. A colour-slide collection and 3. Pressed fronds.

During this last year I have been able to list most of the correspondence and photographs. They are now kept in numbered file boxes. At some future date this material will be sorted into chronological order. I hope to list the colour-slide collection some time this year. The major task will be the sorting and examining of several hundred pressed fronds so that those considered worth keeping can be mounted.

A.R. Busby was asked if he had the material held by the previous Archivist, Nigel Hall. He replied that he had contacted Nigel Hall, requesting that the material be passed to him so that it could be integrated with the material already in the new archive. He was still waiting for it.

10.2 – BOOKSALES (S.J. Munyard): Sales of books were steady for 2003, with more second-hand titles available than in 2002. BPS publications still sell steadily but sales of the Centenary titles remain very slow. A number of new titles are now in stock. As I will be giving up Booksales by the end of 2004 I am preparing a sale catalogue to reduce the number of non-fern titles for the person taking over this task.

10.3 – MERCHANDISE (B.D. & G. Smith): We have now been running merchandise for several years and 2003 was our best year yet. Overall, sales income amounted to nearly

£1,000. Unlike 2001, we didn't have a symposium to give a big input. So what has been so much better this year than last year, when income was only about £200?

Over the year we made an effort to improve the range of BPS items. We produced a new improved merchandise list and we attended some venues where we were able to show people what they can buy. The new items introduced in 2003 – BPS mugs, embroidered sweatshirts, embroidered polo shirts and the ever-expanding range of Anne Wright's lovely greetings cards – all proved popular, and sales are going well.

We updated the merchandise list in April and it now occupies a full two pages (at least, one page of items and one page of order form). As new advertising ventures, a copy of the list was placed on the BPS Web page, and we also put a small article in *Pteridologist* about merchandising. Copies of the new list were also mailed to members towards the end of the summer. All of these have helped with sales.

As for face-to-face selling, we made use of two national meetings (Ireland and Wales), and the very successful tree-fern meeting last autumn. We also managed to sell several non-clothing items to the general public while manning the BPS stand at the NEC Gardeners' World Live! show last June.

So what of the future? Following the tradition established last year of launching new items at the AGM, we have yet more new goodies to tempt you this year. These include new bookmarks with a 'guess the fern' frond, BPS pens, the BPS fern video, and more new designs of Anne's greetings cards. We've also updated the Merchandise List and hopefully everyone received a copy with their *Bulletin*; you can also find it on the Web page.

Finally, if anyone has any ideas for items of a 'ferny' nature that they would like to see, please do let us know.

A.R. Busby raised the possibility of a calendar, which the managers had previously suggested at a Committee meeting. They replied that calendars were still a possibility but it was necessary to start their production in time to commence sales in June or July of the previous year.

10.4 – PLANT EXCHANGE (R.G. Ackers): The present Plant Exchange List has remained current for the whole of 2003. The last version was number 5, and was sent to e-mail participants in May 2003.

To determine whether the 'wants list' addition to the scheme should be continued, a questionnaire was distributed in December 2003 asking participants if they had received their 'wants', and requesting feedback on the scheme as a whole. The results of the survey were as follows:–

Total number of wants in list	67
Total fulfilled	11
Total unfulfilled	33
No response received	23

Thus a success rate of 25% occurred, probably a reasonable result considering that some of the wants were pretty obscure, some participants understandably trying to obtain rarities. The present system allows the 'wants' to be viewed by scheme participants only, but a wider audience could be achieved by publishing a 'wants list' in the *Bulletin*, and this is being considered. From the questionnaire, *ad hoc* comments on the scheme in general were favourable, with few suggestions for changes.

The intention is to produce a new list in the spring, and a request for new offers and wants was distributed with the *Bulletin* last week. This set a 'deadline' of 31st March for potential participants to respond but in view of the *Bulletin* being distributed later than I had anticipated, I intend to extend this deadline to the end of April, after which the new list will be produced.

10.5 – SPORE EXCHANGE (B. & A. Wright): The exchange continued to be a popular service offered to members with 148 requests being received and processed, resulting in the sending out of 2,548 packets of spores. Of these, 114 requests were from UK members (England 95, Scotland 13, Wales 6) and 53 from overseas. This reaffirms the international nature of our exchange. The overseas requests were from Australia (1), Austria (1), Belgium (1) Czech Republic (1), Denmark (2), Eire (2), Estonia (1), France (3), Germany (5), Luxembourg (1), Mauritius (1), Netherlands (1), Norway (1), Poland (2), Spain (1), Sri Lanka (1), Sweden (1), USA (9).

Of the 649 taxa on the 2003 list we had requests for 575 them. Because we are no longer discarding spores after three years, we expect a steady increase in the number of species on the list. There is obviously a balance between taxa that ‘run out’ and ‘new taxa’ donated each year, but we still seem to be adding steadily to the list.

During 2003, 37 donors made 491 donations to top up the spore bank (some taxa were duplicated). Without donations there would not be an exchange. We are grateful for all the spores we receive. To plagiarise a famous author, “all spores are equal, but some are more equal than others”. We are occasionally saddened by the efforts of some of our donors. They obviously go to great lengths to collect spores for the exchange only for us to find that there are few, if any, spores present in the sample they sent in. On other occasions, the donor has used sticky tape to seal round the edges of the packet, only to result in the vast majority of spores sticking to the tape and leaving so few spores free inside the packet that it is not worth our while including them in the list. It is not fair to criticise these donors and we do not wish to offend or discourage them in any way, but we do feel we should let them know that they have not provided something we can use. We make the best of what we receive and are happy to get spores in almost any condition, but we do hope that the donor has enough skill and has taken care to ensure that we can actually use their donation.

We still have to contend with the phytosanitary certificates of our US requesters, but this does not seem to be posing any great problem to date. One minor problem we noticed during the year was that there were occasions when fresh spores were in relatively short supply and the next freshest spores were more than four years old. We did not know what to do in this situation as we did not know what the requester would have preferred. We could either have given them the old spores of the taxon they were requesting, or we could have moved on to the next taxon on their list. The plan for the 2004 list is to give requesters the option to receive old spores of their preferred taxon or fresher spores of an alternative. Hopefully we can find a way of phrasing this that is unambiguous to foreign requesters.

A. Leonard and P.H. Ripley suggested that a spore-collecting workshop, possibly as part of the national programme of meetings, might be appropriate.

10.6 – HORTICULTURAL INFORMATION OFFICER (A.R. Busby): I received four requests for information in 2003. Three were requests from students of botany (one NDH student and two from Degree students) asking for information on various aspects of pteridology. The fourth was a question on germinating spores of *Ophioglossum*. All requests were dealt with to the satisfaction of the enquirers.

Item 11 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS: ELECTION OF PRESIDENT: Prof. Alastair C. Wardlaw, having served his three-year term of office, retired at this meeting. The Committee had nominated Dr Adrian F. Dyer to be President for the next three years and he was elected unanimously. Dr Dyer, on accepting the Presidency, thanked Prof. Wardlaw for his effective leadership and unstinting hard work on behalf of the Society. During his presidency, and in many cases due to his personal involvement, the Society had made significant advances in several areas of its activity.

VICE-PRESIDENT: Dr Trevor Walker had completed his term as Vice-President and was thanked for his contributions to the work of the Committee during his period of office.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS: The present officers of the Society were all eligible to stand for re-election and had indicated their willingness to stand. Of the present elected members of the Committee, Dr A.F. Dyer, Ms E. Knox-Thomas and Mr R.W. Sykes retired, being the longest serving members of the Committee (elected 2001). The Chairman thanked them for their service to the Society. It was proposed by A.F. Dyer and seconded by Miss A.M. Paul that the officers and those elected Committee members eligible for re-election be elected *en bloc*. The vote was unanimously in favour.

ELECTION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS: The following members were nominated for election to the Committee: Mr Graham Ackers, Mr Frank MacGavigan, Dr Fred Rumsey, and Mr Bryan Smith. There were five vacancies. No further nominations were received from the floor. It was proposed by M.S. Porter and seconded by Mrs R. Hibbs that the nominees be elected *en bloc*. This was accepted unanimously.

ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS: Mr G.K. Hoare indicated that he did not wish to stand for election again as an Independent Examiner and was thanked for his services in 2003. Dr N.J. Hards, proposed by the Committee, was re-elected unanimously.

Dr Y.C. Golding proposed from the floor that the biographical details of the President-elect be given on the election notice. This was seconded by M.H. Rickard and accepted unanimously by the meeting.

Item 12 – STANSFIELD MEDAL: Prof. A.C. Wardlaw said that the Stansfield Medal, the highest award the Society could give, was rarely awarded. It gave him immense pleasure to award the medal, at this meeting, to Mr Martin H. Rickard. He had probably done more to popularise the cultivation of ferns than anyone in the recent history of the Society and the culmination of his work has been the runaway success of his recent book, *The Plantfinder's Guide to Garden Ferns*.

In accepting the medal, Martin said that it was a great thrill to receive the medal and he was sure that Jimmy Dyce would have been pleased. (See citation for Martin on page 257.)

Item 13 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS: There being no further formal matters for consideration the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 15.45 hours.

Jennifer M. Ide
Hon. Gen. Secretary

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. The accounts reflect the subscriptions actually received in the year.
2. BPS Booksales had assets of £5,712.00 (£5,712.60) at 31.12.2003.
3. The Society made no grants in 2003.
4. The Society received £673.68 from the Inland Revenue in the form of Gift Aid.
5. The numbers of copies of publications are shown on either side of the title.
6. The Society made a loss in 2003. This was because we produced four volumes of the Fern Gazette (instead of the usual two volumes). We also set up a separate account for merchandising with an initial grant of £2,000.00. The situation will need to be monitored for 2004.

Andrew Leonard, Honorary Treasurer

I have examined the books and records of the British Pteridological Society for the year ending 31 December 2003, and can certify that this statement of accounts is in accordance with the records maintained by the Honorary Treasurer.

Dr Nick Hards, Examiner, 19th June 2004

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2003

ORDINARY ACCOUNT

2002	INCOME	2003
£14,791.26	Subscriptions	£15,674.54
498.10	Interest	504.10
15.66	Booksales	0.00
0.00	Spore Exchange	0.00
102.25	Merchandise	147.80
0.00	Plant Sale	0.00
0.00	Inland Revenue Gift Aid	673.68
<u>£15,407.27</u>	TOTAL INCOME	<u>£17,000.12</u>
EXPENSES		
3,519.73	Pteridologist	3,532.25
2,308.16	Fern Gazette	7,474.27
3,497.20	Bulletin	3,819.60
128.00	Printing & Stationery	405.59
875.57	Administration & Postage	419.76
55.00	Subscriptions to Societies	97.25
50.00	Plant & Spore Exchanges	0.00
1,147.12	Meetings	318.21
0.00	Merchandise	2,000.00
0.00	Booksales	0.00
0.00	Trustees Expenses	463.69
203.28	Archive Storage	725.08
<u>£11,784.06</u>	TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>£19,255.70</u>
3,623.21	Balance (income minus expenses)	-2,255.58
13,059.13	Brought forward from previous year	16,682.34
<u>£16,682.34</u>	Total in Ordinary Account	<u>£14,426.76</u>

CENTENARY FUND

247.38	Interest	203.70
0.00	Grant	0.00
0.00	Donation to Fund	43.00
8.00	<i>171</i> World of Ferns <i>171</i>	0.00
6,485.59	Brought forward from previous year	6,740.97
<u>£6,740.97</u>	Total in Centenary Fund	<u>£6,987.67</u>

GREENFIELD FUND

78.25	Interest	64.35
0.00	Grant	0.00
2,051.42	Brought forward from previous year	2,129.67
<u>£2,129.67</u>	Total in Greenfield Fund	<u>£2,194.02</u>

PUBLICATIONS ACCOUNT

227.11	Interest	198.85
203.57	Offprints	306.81
35.10	<i>146</i> Fern Names & Their Meanings <i>137</i>	33.75
112.00	<i>310</i> Cultivation & Propagation <i>296</i>	61.00
30.60	<i>813</i> History of British Pteridology <i>809</i>	22.20
18.00	<i>427</i> BPS Abstracts & Papers <i>426</i>	7.50
	CD Rom – BPS Minute Book <i>15</i>	54.96
5,954.30	Brought forward from previous year	6580.68
<u>£6,580.68</u>	Total in Publications Account	<u>£7265.75</u>

'FERNS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY' – A RETROSPECT

(A GRANT FROM THE CENTENARY FUND)

I have just come back from a five-day symposium on 'Ferns for the 21st Century', held at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Scotland on 12-16 July 2004. Although still having my dose of jetlag, it feels good to reminisce on the fact that I actually was with people around the world who spoke the same language as I do (I mean ferns), even for such a short time. My grateful thanks go to the Organising Committee, in particular Dr Mary Gibby, Director of Science at RBGE, who built a bridge between me and my sponsor, the British Pteridological Society, of which I am a member. Through a grant from the Centenary Fund to the conference, the BPS was mainly responsible financially for my presence at the symposium.

During the symposium, I presented a paper on 'Noteworthy pteridophyte discoveries, collections, and observations from the lowland karst forest of Bohol I. to the montane forests of Luzon, Philippines'. This was only one of a wide range of subjects covered in the symposium, catering for different interests and aspects of pteridology including ecology, fossils, molecular systematics and whole genomics, floristics and conservation. Listening to different papers made me realise how much I had to catch up in terms of using molecular tools to understand the evolutionary history or phylogeny of pteridophytes. It introduced me to some avenues that I, as a pteridologist from a tropical archipelago where 10% or more of the earth's 'ferns' are actually present, can explore and study, either in my capacity as the fern curator of the Philippine National Herbarium (PNH) or with students and other future pteridologists as an adviser or committee member. I learned first hand from the experts how *Pleuromanes* is actually not a *Trichomanes s.l.* but rather a *Hymenophyllum s.l.* based on molecular evidence, what kind of insects prey on ferns in the forests of Mexico, and how our colleagues from Canada are trying to piece together the 'footprints' that the fern ancestors left behind in Apple Bay. On the other hand, the herbarium workshop convened by Alison Paul of the Natural History Museum (BM) was an opportunity for us fern curators to exchange experiences and knowledge of how to maximise use of specimens but with minimum damage to them, given different environmental conditions, pest problems, resources and user attitudes.

Although I had to miss the fern excursion to Holyrood Park and Roslin Glen to have more time to actually examine Philippine fern collections in the herbarium of the RBGE (E), I have to admit that it was worth it because there are many unique collections of Philippine ferns there, especially those collected in the mid 1800s. Given another week or two, I could have annotated and updated some names – perhaps a good excuse for another visit to Edinburgh in the future!

My trip to Edinburgh not only successfully accomplished the scientific aspect of it but also was a get together of like minds, some of them old friends, many new acquaintances, and yet a few prospective collaborators. Additionally, my personal experience of Scotland and Edinburgh the weekend after the symposium enriched my understanding of the unique culture that the Scottish nation has and put into perspective my understanding of my own people and country. This trip surely crossed the racial, financial, cultural, geographical and, perhaps, age boundaries in the exchange of scientific knowledge among biologists around the world!

I am back in my office with an invigorated attitude towards work and towards life. Thanks Mary, and thanks BPS for such a wonderful experience.

**Julie Barcelona
Manila, Philippines**

AWARDS

STANSFIELD MEDAL – MARTIN H. RICKARD

At the AGM on 20th March 2004 Martin Rickard was awarded the Stansfield Medal for his services to pteridology.

It was resolved by the committee of the British Pteridological Society in 1937 that a medal would be awarded in memory of F.W. Stansfield “*to persons contributing to the advancement of the fern cult*”. It is rarely given and is the Society’s highest award. A Stansfield Medal was awarded to Martin Rickard last year, and this is an attempt to summarise his contribution to ‘the fern cult’ and to the Society.

His major contributions to spreading the good news about ferns have been his fern nursery and his books. He started the nursery, Rickard’s Hardy Ferns, with his wife Hazel in 1988, and he ran it initially with her and latterly on his own until he sold it to Dick Hayward in 2003. He assembled a substantial catalogue and many of us walked round his tunnels with astonishment and delight and some envy. He hit a moment when ferns suddenly became fashionable – or did he create that moment? He certainly fuelled it, and was responsible in particular for a surge in the popularity of tree-ferns in cultivation in this country.

His displays at the major shows introduced ferns to a wider public, and were very successful in their own right: among other triumphs, he won 36 Gold Medals of the Royal Horticultural Society, and the Tudor Rose at Hampton Court (the largest annual flower show in the world) for the best display in the show (1996). In 2003 he was deservedly awarded the RHS Gold Veitch Memorial Medal for advancement of science and horticulture.



photo: A.R. Busby

Martin Rickard (right) receives Stansfield Medal from Alastair Wardlaw, March 2004

His book, *The Plantfinder's Guide to Garden Ferns* (2000), is a magisterial review of ferns hardy in this country, covering both the many cultivars so avidly sought out and bred in the nineteenth century, and numerous exotics from the temperate regions of the world, many of them introduced by him. It is a remarkable book, which can stand unashamed beside the works of some of his great predecessors in the field, Lowe, Druery and Kaye. Indeed his treatment of cultivars (particularly the polypodiums) is arguably better: his text is both informative and readable, he does not permit himself useless descriptions like Druery's 'very fine form', and his illustrations, with the advantage of modern photography, are more generous. Would that his publishers had allowed him to have more still. He also wrote the Wisley guide, *Ferns*, for the RHS in 2003, and numerous articles in magazines such as *The Garden* and *Country Life* and of course in our own journals.

It started in the 1960s. Tony Worland and Martin were fellow students on day release on the Special Botany degree course at the Cambridge Tech. They used to go off botanising together. In 1965 Martin bought the *Observer's Book of Ferns* on holiday in Grasmere, and in 1968 Tony Worland persuaded him to join the BPS. In 1969 he went on his first meet to Arran and met among others Jimmy Dyce, Henry Schollick and Fred Jackson, and discovered to his surprise and pleasure that wide age gaps are irrelevant when there is a common enthusiasm.

He soon made his mark: in 1970 he was elected onto the committee. In 1972 he wrote his first article for the *British Fern Gazette* on woodsias. This was a wide-ranging review of the history of woodsias in Britain, and was founded on a study of the 19th-century literature and herbarium records around the country. Perhaps that was the stimulus for the fine library he has built up over the years. He has a deep sense of the history – and continuity – of ferning; typical that on his recent meet in Herefordshire, he had us all searching (successfully) for beech fern, because his hero Edward Newman had “*found it abundantly near Amestrey quarry*” in about 1850.

There was a period in the 1970s, when he went out each year to France for the summer in connection with his professional work on plant diseases, and hosted a succession of fellow members, exploring the local fern flora and enjoying the good French wines.

He edited the *Bulletin* from 1979 to 1983 and was the founder editor of the *Pteridologist* from 1984 to 1993. That is 15 years editing a major Society journal, and he did it extremely well. The *Pteridologist* was a new idea (largely his idea I suspect) “*aimed at improving our service to growers and other enthusiasts*”. It is hard now for this grower and enthusiast to imagine pteridological life without it. He has been a Vice-President from 1991 to the present day, broken only by his presidency, 1997-2000.

He is a good man to be with in the field, or looking round a garden – he will say modestly what he knows, which is a lot, and admit freely what he does not know; he always finds something to admire and enjoy and query. He has a very sharp eye; just a bit maddening the way he drifts off and finds something you would have dearly loved to find yourself. He has found numerous cultivars wild over the years, among them *Polypodium australe* ‘Hornet’ and ‘Grandiceps’, a *Polystichum setiferum*, parent of the handsome ‘Leinthall Starkes’, and *Blechnum spicant* ‘Rickard’s Serrate’. He has also raised new cultivars, such as *P. australe* ‘Diadem’ and *Athyrium filix-femina* ‘Kalothrix’.

Finally I must add this: Martin is congenial company; sadly one does not get medals for being congenial, but, as it did for his old friend and mentor Jimmy Dyce, it enhances his skill in encouraging the rest of us – members of the Society, customers, friends – and sharing his experience and understanding. No-one in his generation has contributed more to the fern cult.

Robert Sykes

OBITUARIES

AUDREY G. PIGGOTT

Audrey Piggott had been very interested in ferns since early childhood. She took a degree in Botany, and went on to do a postgraduate degree in Bacteriology. She later lectured in bacteriology and household science. With her husband Charles (John), an agronomist with the British Colonial Service, she travelled over much of the world, including Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Australia, Zimbabwe and Malaysia, making pteridophyte collections in all of them, but more especially in West Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia) and Singapore. For nearly 20 years (until 1983, when they set up home in Devon) she spent many weekends there with her husband (and sometimes with their children) collecting pteridophytes. These she meticulously numbered, prepared and labelled, her husband taking many transparencies of the specimens before they were pressed. She sent most of her collections (c. 3,000) to the herbarium at Kew, where Professor Eric Holttum happily confirmed or renamed them. A large and mutually helpful correspondence about ferns took place between them. These letters are preserved in the RBG Kew Archives.

Thereby Audrey built up a considerable body of expertise about the pteridophytes of the area. This knowledge culminated in her 458 page book *Ferns of Malaysia in Colour* (1984). This book, well known to many members, has proved (as intended) a fine companion to Holttum's *Ferns of Malaya* (1954 and 1968). It is copiously illustrated by Charles's colour transparencies of living plants at several magnifications per species. Anyone who has tried to photograph ferns in rainforest will know what an achievement it is to get a few good shots; to achieve thousands, and of critically named material too, is very rare.

Audrey and Charles were members of the BPS from 1976 to 1992.

Peter Edwards

JEFF WHYSALL

1946 – 2004

Midland members will be saddened to learn of the death of Jeff Whysall, who joined the BPS in 1984. In spite of a serious illness that kept him away from meetings during 2003, apparent successful treatment meant that he was able to help us on the Society stand at the BBC Gardeners' World Live! Show at the NEC this year.

Jeff was a keen and knowledgeable plantsman whose passion was propagation. Always taking keen advantage of our Society's spore exchange, he was constantly sowing spores in his greenhouse. His garden housed a goodly selection of British and foreign hardy ferns and he had several genera of exotic ferns in his greenhouse. Ferns were not his only passion. He had a large selection of 'air plants' (tillandsias) and orchids. He was an active member of several garden and specialist societies. Midland members will recall Jeff and Judith's hospitality when they invited the local fern group to their garden in July 1989.

Our sincere condolences to Judith and son Peter and daughter Jennie on their sad loss.

Matt Busby

IN MEMORIAM

We were also sorry to learn of the death of the following members (date joined BPS in brackets):

Mr John Arnold of Bedfordshire (2003)

Mr Cliff A.J. Christie of Oxfordshire (2003)

Mrs Joan Crichton of Sligo, Eire (1985)

Mrs Barbara V. Harris of Devon (2003)

Dr Martin G. Kaye of Hampshire (2003)

Mr Thomas A. McLellan of Oxfordshire (1990)

Mr Ken H. Pfeiffer of Hampshire (1997)

Mr Allan McG. Stirling of Glasgow (1971); obituary will be published in the 2005 *Bulletin*.

MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2005

- Meetings Secretary:** P.J. Acock
Meetings Subcommittee: R.G. Ackers, N.J. Hards, J.M. Ide, A. Leonard, P.H. Ripley
- Sat. 5 February ***Polypodium* Identification Day – New Forest, Hampshire**
Leader: Andy Byfield
- Fri. 11 - Mon. 14 March **Overseas Field Meeting – Cataluña, Spain**
Leader: Andrew Leonard
- Sat. 19 March **AGM & Spring Indoor Meeting – Manchester**
Leader: Graham Ackers (NB: Contact Graham for more info.)
- Sat. 4 - Sun. 5 June **Weekend Field Meeting – Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire**
Leader: Barry Thomas
- Tues. 28 June - Fri. 8 July **Overseas Field Meeting with Hardy Fern Foundation – Philadelphia, USA**
Leader: John D. Scott
- Sat. 16 - Sun. 17 July **Weekend Field Meeting – Oxfordshire**
Leader: Nick Hards
- Thurs. 18 - Sun. 21 Aug. ***Southport Flower Show: BPS Stand**
Further Info.: Michael Hayward
- Sat. 10 - Sun. 11 Sept. **Weekend Field Meeting – Norfolk**
Leader: Bryan Smith
- Sat. 19 Nov. **Autumn Meeting – *Polystichum* Seminar & Workshop – The Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Surrey**
Leader: Graham Ackers
- End June - July 2006 **Ten-day Overseas Garden & Field Meeting – Germany**
Leader: Berndt Peters

* *Event supported by, but not organised by, the BPS.*

For further details of these and other meetings of interest to members, including information on accommodation, please see the separate Meetings Programme sheet. This can be sent to overseas members on request.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

For details of additional meetings in the following areas, please contact the regional organisers, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

- Leeds & District** B. Wright, 130 Prince Rupert Drive, Tockwith, York YO26 7PU
e-mail: Leeds@eBPS.org.uk
- South-East England** P.H. Ripley, North Lodge, Dene Park Gardens, Shipbourne Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9NS; e-mail: SouthEast@eBPS.org.uk
- East Anglia** B.R. Stevenson, Willow Cottage, Cowlinge, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 9QB
e-mail: EastAnglia@eBPS.org.uk
- North-West England** R.W. Sykes, Ormandy House, Crosthwaite, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 8BP
e-mail: NorthWest@eBPS.org.uk
- Cornwall** I.J. Bennallick, Lower Polmorla St, Wenn, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 5PE
e-mail: Cornwall@eBPS.org.uk
- Scotland** F. McGavigan, 12 Glenbank Avenue, Lenzie, Glasgow G66 5AA
e-mail: Scotland@eBPS.org.uk

DISCLAIMER: Views expressed by contributors to *The British Pteridological Society Bulletin* are not necessarily those of the British Pteridological Society.