

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 2006 – The 103rd AGM will take place on Saturday 25th March 2006 at Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 47 Bateman Street, at 14.00 hrs.

COMMITTEE VACANCIES – In accordance with paragraph 3, section 3 of the Society's Constitution, five vacancies will occur on the Committee. Nominations are invited from Society members to fill these vacancies at the Annual General Meeting in 2006. The names of the nominees, proposers and seconders, together with a letter from the nominee indicating his or 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 2006 – Members are reminded that subscriptions were due on 1st January 2006 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.



photo: M. Hayward

Southport Flower Show 2005

Ann Gill, Trevor Pearce, Joan Hindle, Rita Hardman

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. Since 2003, increasing numbers of members have authorised us to claim Gift Aid on their behalf, and last year (2005) we were able to claim for 207 members, which brought in £1,129. While this is obviously an extremely valuable addition to the Society's annual income, it could be considerably more. There are probably a further 200 members on whose subscriptions the Society could claim Gift Aid if these members authorised it and this could lead to perhaps another £1,000 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.

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.

DIRECT DEBIT – The Society does not offer a Direct Debit facility for subscriptions. The reasons are two-fold. Expensive software is required to create a direct debit tape to send to the bank and is too expensive for a small Society like the BPS. With Standing Orders the bank does all the administration, whereas with Direct Debits a considerable additional workload would fall on the Society, in particular the Treasurer, and it is necessary to bear in mind that all officers offer their time and services on a voluntary basis.

NOTIFYING CHANGES OF ADDRESS – Please inform the Membership Secretary of changes of address and telephone number. He will be responsible for notifying any other officers and appointees who need to know.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES – These were published last year, as agreed, “for members who have a relatively stable e-mail address and who keep up-to-date with their messages”. A supplementary list and amendments are published in this *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.

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.

TREE-FERN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP – For further information, please either send a stamped addressed envelope to the organiser, Prof. A.C. Wardlaw, 92 Drymen Road, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 2SY, or contact him by e-mail: Tree-Ferns@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 a number of 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.

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 Website 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 Website Editor 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.

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-imburement 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 website 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, polo shirt or fleece? 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 – Last year, Steve Munyard regretfully advised the Committee of his need to relinquish his role as Booksales Organiser, and so far we have been unable to find a replacement. Would you be interested? There is the possibility of splitting management of BPS Special Publications from the sale of other new or second-hand books. Now that new and second-hand books on ferns are so readily available on the Internet, anyone interested in taking over this aspect of Booksales would not be expected to actively seek out books for sale, unless of course they had a burning desire to do so, but to be ready to accept or purchase suitable books offered to them for sale to members. Contact Steve to find out what is involved.

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 BPS Recorder, Fred Rumsey, who will forward them to the BSBI. These records are stored centrally at the Biological Records Centre, and can be accessed by the BPS.

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 L23 8TQ. mhaywardL23@blueyonder.co.uk.

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 with Pat Acock.

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 being 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 2006 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. 338.

QUALIFIED ARCHIVIST WANTED – During the past three years, the Society's considerable archive items have been gathered together and carefully sorted and catalogued by A.R. (Matt) Busby. It now remains for the individual items to be catalogued and any necessary preservation measures carried out before a depositary can accept them. The Committee is in the process of preparing an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to carry out this final stage. The application needs details to be given of the work to be carried out and the Committee is seeking a qualified archivist to advise on the preservation and cataloguing required. If you are such an archivist or know of one who might be willing to give this service, then please contact Matt Busby or Jennifer Ide.

BPS ARCHIVIST WANTED – Matt Busby is retiring as the Society's Archivist at the AGM in 2007, and the Committee is seeking a replacement. If you are interested in the history of your Society and are fascinated by the people who founded it and those who have been responsible through the years for developing its activities and building the Society into one with an envied reputation worldwide, then please consider becoming the Society's Archivist, if possible working alongside Matt for the coming year before taking over responsibility. (Perhaps two people would like to work as joint archivists?) The depositary will care for the archive, but as Archivist, you will be responsible for receiving documentary items, making decisions about what should be retained and cataloguing them preparatory to their being deposited in the archive. As well as documents that will come your way from officers and others, or personal items left to the Society by members, you will be encouraged to be alert to other items for inclusion in the archive, such as photographs and articles significant to the history of the Society and the history of pteridology in the British Isles, and to encourage others members to contribute. If you would like to know more, then please contact Matt Busby, Adrian Dyer (President) or Jennifer Ide (via the General Secretary).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2005

MINUTES of the 102nd Annual General Meeting of the British Pteridological Society held on Saturday, 19th March 2005 at the University of Manchester's School of Biological Sciences Botanical Experimental Grounds, at 14.00 hrs.

IN THE CHAIR: The President, Dr A.F. Dyer.

PRESENT: Mr R.G. Ackers, Mr P.J. Acock, Mr G. Baldwin, Mr C. & Mrs D. Brotherton, Mr B.K. Byrne, Mr J.P. Crowe, Mrs P.M.A. Francis, Mr C.L. Godfrey, Dr Y.C. Golding, Mr C. Goodman, Mr J.D. Grue, Mrs F. Haigh, Dr M. Hayward, Prof. R.J. Hayward, Mrs J. Hindle, Mr R. Hood, Miss J.M. Ide, Ms E. Knox-Thomas, Mr M.P. Lamb, Mr B.J. Laney, Mr F. McGavigan, Mrs S.H. Medd, Mr M.L. Merritt, Dr J.W. Merryweather, Mr M. Morgan, Mrs J. Neal, Dr T.G. Pearce, Mr M.S. Porter, Miss A.M. Paul, Mr M.H. Rickard, Mr H.C. Shepherd, Mr B.D. Smith, Mrs G.J. Smith, Mr F.A. Strang, Mr R.W. Sykes, Prof. B.A. Thomas, Mr K. Trewren, Prof. A.C. Wardlaw, Miss L.A.M. Williams, Mrs A. & Mr B. Wright.

Item 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Mr A.R. Busby, Mr R.J. Cooke, Mr C.P. Ellis, Mr C.R. Fraser-Jenkins, Mr P.B. Freshwater, Dr M. Gibby, Mr N.A. Hall, Mr A. Leonard, Dr H.S. McHaffie, Mr S.J. & Mrs K. Munyard, Miss R.J. Murphy, Mr P.H. Ripley.

Item 2 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of the 101st Annual General Meeting of the British Pteridological Society held on Saturday 20th March 2004, and published in the 2004 *Bulletin* (Vol. 6, No. 3) were approved (proposed by Prof. A.C. Wardlaw, 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):

The Committee only met twice in 2004, the summer meeting being cancelled owing to the personal circumstances of the Secretary. This resulted in a mammoth meeting in October, when it was found necessary to prioritise items on the agenda, with a few items having to be postponed for more detailed discussion until the meeting in January 2005.

EXPENSES, COMMITTEE SIZE AND MEETINGS: An item that engaged the Committee for several hours of discussion during the year was the matter of travelling expenses for Committee members. It is usual for members to pay their own expenses, with provision being available for anyone needing financial help. (This is usual in societies such as the BPS that are run by volunteers. It enables subscriptions to be kept low, thus encouraging interested people to join.) Until now, the Society has been fortunate, with the majority of the Committee not requesting reimbursement and consequently no undue stress has been put on the Society's finances. However, the cost of attending London meetings is significant for some Committee members and without some financial assistance they would be unable to accept the invitation to join the Committee and make their time and skills available to the Society.

A small working party, under Prof. A.C. Wardlaw, was asked to review the 'if, what and how' members of the Committee could claim expenses for attending meetings, and the two other inextricably entwined issues: Committee size and the number of meetings a year. The working party was asked to make proposals to reduce the overall expenditure on Committee travel and accommodation.

The large size of the Committee (26 if everybody attended) had evolved over the years. However, there was now a general consensus in support of a smaller Committee, as long as it were large enough to maintain some continuity and experience within the Committee whilst at the same time providing the opportunity to introduce new members. The role of Vice-Presidents was queried and is to be reviewed this year, but it was agreed that they

provided an element of continuity and, because of their experience of the Society, a valuable contribution to the Committee's deliberations.

Several ideas were put forward about the number and type of Committee meetings, including various e-communication methods, but after much discussion it was decided to retain three meetings per year.

After a long discussion, the Committee voted unanimously for the following:

Regarding the size and number of Committee meetings:

- There was no substitute for face-to-face meetings and therefore the number of meetings per year would remain at three, with the possibility, if required, of an additional meeting confined to one or two notified items, on the day of and prior to the AGM.
- Notionally, the number of Elected Members and Vice-Presidents would be reduced by not electing members to the maximum number of positions allowed by the Constitution. (The aim would be six Elected Members (ten allowed) and three Vice-Presidents (six allowed).)
- The following officers would attend meetings by invitation or when they wished to contribute: Meetings Secretary, Conservation Officer(s), Membership Secretary and the four Editors. Such persons would retain their voting rights when they attended.

These practices would take effect from the first meeting after the AGM 2005 and would be reviewed within two years. None of these practices offend against the constitution.

Regarding Committee expenses:

- Any Committee member wishing to claim expenses for attending a Committee meeting may submit a formal application.
- Claims should include the cheapest reasonable travel expenses, whether car, rail or air, and the cost of bed and breakfast where this is unavoidable up to a maximum of £40 per night. Other meals would not be paid for.
- The Treasurer would honour claims that conform to the guidelines up to a maximum total of £100 per meeting. Any Committee member wishing to claim above £100, or any other reasonable departure from the guidelines for special reasons, must discuss their proposed claim in advance with the three Executive Officers.

GREENFIELD FUND: At last the Greenfield Fund has a formal constitution. Although set up in 1975, the Fund had been run entirely on the basis of the letter from the Fund's founder, Mrs Elizabeth Greenfield, which accompanied her generous donation in memory of her father-in-law. Although the present Secretary started the work some years ago, we have to thank Prof. A.C. Wardlaw for finalising the work and presenting a draft Constitution to the Committee, together with a joint application form for both the Greenfield and Centenary funds. The Committee accepted both of his documents with some amendments. The President expressed the appreciation and thanks of the Committee to him for his work, and this long-running subject is now concluded.

ORGANISATION OF FIELD MEETINGS: The agreement form for the supervision of minors attending meetings in the absence of a legal guardian was finalised and procedures for its implementation were agreed. It is now in use. The document giving guidelines to leaders for the organisation of meetings was revised to take into account the implementation of the 'Minors' form.

FERN IDENTIFICATION CARD FOR BEGINNERS: A foldout, laminated card with images and text for the identification of ferns was in production by the Field Studies Council (FSC). Written by one of our members, Dr J.W. Merryweather, it is aimed at those with little or no knowledge of ferns. The card will carry the BPS logo and information about the Society, and we will be able to make an initial bulk discounted purchase of the cards with the option to buy more. These will be offered to the membership through Merchandise when they are available.

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT: The concern about the website expressed at the 2004 AGM was taken very seriously by the Committee. At the January 2005 meeting, Mr A.C. Pigott gave a presentation on the present contents of the website and on possible future developments. A small Website Advisory Group, Mr A.C. Pigott, Mr F. McGavigan, and one other non-Committee member at their invitation, has been set up. Mr M.G. Taylor will be Assistant Editor of the website. Objectives for the group were agreed, and A.C. Pigott, on their behalf, will submit a report on the group's progress to the Committee at its meeting in June 2005.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONNAIRE AND A PROPOSAL FOR A PLANNING MEETING: As the result of a discussion on the possible reasons for the drop in membership numbers in 2004 (a fall from 790 to 750 at the time of discussion), it was suggested that the Society should be pro-active and seek information about members' expectations from the Society, their comments on present activities, and at the same time welcome their suggestions for additional ones. Mr R.G. Ackers prepared a questionnaire together with a paper proposing a Committee meeting to plan future developments of the Society. The Committee welcomed his initiative. Members received the questionnaire with the *Bulletin* (2004, Vol. 6, No.3). The planning meeting will be held when the results of the questionnaire are known.

RETIREMENTS: Notices of retirements were received from Mr R.J. Cooke, as Conservation Officer and Recorder for the Society, and from Mr S.J. Munyard, as Booksales Manager, both with effect from this AGM. Whilst we have been successful in finding replacements for R.J. Cooke, in the persons of Dr F.J. Rumsey and Dr H.S. McHaffie, who are to share the responsibilities of Conservation Officer, with F.J. Rumsey also being the new Recorder, we have not been so fortunate in finding a replacement for S.J. Munyard. The Committee felt strongly that it would be a shame if Booksales should founder, and although Mr Munyard was unable to give the time required to run Booksales as he had done in the past, he has said he was prepared to carry on with second-hand books sales on a 'what-comes-his-way' basis for the time being. His offer has been accepted with gratitude, but the search must go on for an eventual replacement. (Members are referred to the note under 'Booksales' in the Secretarial Notes in *Bulletin* 2004, Vol.6, No. 3.)

Mr A.R. Busby had also given notice that after 31 years of representing the Society at the Southport Flower Show, the 2004 Show would be his last. However, he did save the Committee one job, that of finding a successor. Dr Michael Hayward has kindly agreed to take over. Dr Hayward is arranging the purchase and design of new display boards for use at the Show.

I am sure that this meeting, on behalf of the rest of the Society, would want to thank R.J. Cooke, S.J. Munyard and A.R. Busby for the magnificent work they have done for the Society during their periods in office.

OBITUARIES: Finally, it is with sadness that we announce the death in 2004 of Mrs Audrey Piggott, author of the very beautiful book, *Ferns of Malaysia in colour*. Her husband, John Piggott, who took the photographs for Audrey's book, kindly offered her fern library to Booksales, and her fern herbarium has gone to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

The Committee were also saddened to hear of the death of Mr Jeff Whysall. He had been an active member since 1984 and was in frequent attendance at Midland Region meetings. In spite of a long running illness and recent surgery, he was able to assist with manning the Society stand at the NEC Show in 2004.

Just a few days into 2005, Alison Rutherford reported the death of Allan McG. Stirling, a Scottish member who laid claim to fame in the Society by discovering *Polypodium australe* in Scotland for the first time.

In answer to a question on the future of Booksales, whilst no-one had yet been found to take on new books, Mr B.D. Smith noted that the sale of Special Publications and the coming FSC Fern Card was being transferred to Merchandise, and would be included in the next listing of items.

F. McGavigan reported that the third person to join the Website Advisory team was still being sought, emphasising that technical expertise was not necessarily a pre-requisite, but rather someone with ideas as to what should be on the website and how it might be acquired. A volunteer would be welcome. Communication within the group would be by e-mail. The Chairman said that the website was important, not only as a service to the membership but also to the wider world.

The Secretary's report was approved, proposed by A.C. Wardlaw, seconded by R.W. Sykes.

Item 5 – REPORT OF THE HONORARY TREASURER (A. Leonard): The Treasurer had submitted the draft summary accounts for the year ending 31st December 2004, and these were circulated. The following points were made in the explanatory notes he had provided, in addition to the regular notes that accompany the published accounts (see p. 338):

- The unaudited accounts do not show figures for either *The BPS Bulletin* or *The Fern Gazette*, as these figures are not yet available. Assuming that their costs are approximately the same as last year's, then instead of producing a profit of £11,634.69 in the Ordinary Account, we are likely to produce a reduced profit of approximately £5,500.
- The next *Gazette* was due in late 2003. This means that we still need to produce the equivalent of four issues in 2005. We are also planning to produce indexes for the *Bulletin* and *Pteridologist*. For these reasons we are likely to make a trading loss in 2005. Because of this we must keep a careful eye on our accounts. However, I do not feel it is necessary to increase subscriptions this year.

After a lengthy discussion, during which further detail than was available in the tabled accounts was requested, it was agreed that the accounts could be accepted as an interim statement subject to their completion and the inclusion of a Balance Sheet and a more detailed report on the accounts, together with the Merchandise and Booksales accounts.

The accounts were accepted subject to resolution of the above points and the completed and examined accounts were to be presented to the Committee for acceptance at its meeting in June. Proposed by A.C. Wardlaw, seconded by P.J. Acock. (For the final accounts see p. 337.)

Item 6 – REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (M.S. Porter): Last year I confidently spoke of the consistency of BPS membership, especially of the fact that we always have about 75 new members each year. Something should have warned me that this was tempting fate but I continued blithely on calmly stating that our numbers were going to remain practically the same, or even rise, in 2004. Of course what happened was that this year we had barely 50 new members and our membership total has fallen away to 758, 36 fewer than last year and, though by no means a disaster, still rather less than had been hoped and lower than for some years. It is obviously impossible to account for why fewer people than normal joined the Society but it is interesting to note that already more new members have joined the Society in 2005 than did in the whole of 2004. Perhaps the answer is not to look at individual years but to calculate membership trends over more prolonged periods – five years at the least or perhaps decades.

Precise details for 2004 were: 34 Complimentary or Honorary members (no change), 11 Student members (4 down on 2003), 58 Family members (5 down on 2003), 88 Subscribers (3 up on 2003) and 567 Ordinary members (26 down on 2003), giving a total of 758 members. There were 53 new members. Losses resulted from the death of 6 valued members of the Society, 30 resignations, and the lapsing of 53 members. Reasons given for resignations nearly all fell into the same category aptly summed up by one ex member as “*old age and inflation*”. However, one person resigned stating he could not belong to a society with a royal as patron. Lapsed members obviously do not give reasons but, as

lapsing almost always occurs after a very short membership, I assume such people find that the Society is not quite as they expected, or that their enthusiasm for ferns is short-lived.

In the light of experience I am not planning to make any forecasts about projected membership numbers for 2005.

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 subscription. Thus the Inland Revenue repays us 28 pence for every pound paid in as membership subscription. The rates are as follows: 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, and for each Family Member making an additional payment of £2 we receive £0.56.

The few provisos are:

- Gift Aid is available only to members who reside in the UK.
- Members on whose subscription Gift Aid is claimed must be paying income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount claimed.
- Members whose subscriptions are allowed as an expense in connection with their employment may not claim Gift Aid. (We have learned of this only 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.)

In 2003, 132 members authorised us to claim Gift Aid on their behalf allowing us to reclaim £673.68. In 2004, 164 members were involved and, as a result, the Society was £904.96 better off. We were also able to claim on two donations to the Society, giving us a grand total of £1,022.76. However, we have nearly 300 members who have not yet given us authorisation to claim on their subscriptions; in other words it is possible that we could benefit from a further £2,000 per year. Thus, I would ask all members who have not yet given the Society authorisation to claim on their behalf to do so this year.

B. Wright asked if Gift Aid could be claimed on Regional group subscriptions. In reply M.S. Porter confirmed that Gift Aid could be claimed, also donations made to the Society, including those made through Wills. J.W. Merryweather offered to put a note in the Pteridologist about Gift Aid.

The Membership Secretary's report was approved, proposed by A.M. Paul, seconded by F. McGavigan.

Item 7 – REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION OFFICER & RECORDER (R.J. Cooke):

No matters to report for 2004. As R.J. Cooke was retiring at this AGM, the Chairman took this opportunity to thank him for his work as Conservation Officer and welcomed F.J. Rumsey and H.S. McHaffie as his replacement.

In answer to F. McGavigan, A.M. Paul reported that she holds a stock of BPS record cards. A.F. Dyer said that the Society needed to do more recording and the Committee should consider this. There were areas, such as Northamptonshire, that were under-recorded. Mrs B. Porter reported that she had records going back ten years for southern Manchester.

Item 8 – SUBCOMMITTEE (Permanent) REPORTS:

8.1 – MEETINGS SUBCOMMITTEE (P.J. Acock): 2004 can only be described as another triumph in the Society's history. Those that took part in the meetings experienced a programme as diverse and exciting as could be offered by a botanical society anywhere in the world, in my opinion.

The overseas field excursion to Trinidad took pride of place. What a magnificent place and we met such extraordinarily kind and generous people who gave so freely of their time. A special word of thanks must go to Dr Yasmin Baksh-Comeau and Graham Ackers, who put it all together.

The AGM meeting, hosted by Alison Paul, saw faces old and new. The programme, as ever, was well put together by Graham Ackers. A splendid meeting in the New Forest led by Andrew Leonard was followed by a great meeting in the Isles of Scilly, led jointly by Ian Bennallick and the Islands' recorder, Rosemary Parslow.

Those that attended the International Symposium at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh were able to meet friends old and new and to discover and discuss what is happening across all areas of pteridophyte research. The meeting was followed by an excellent tour visiting the garden of our retiring President, Alastair Wardlaw, and then moving on to south-west Scotland, all superbly choreographed by our triumvirate of Adrian Dyer, Alastair Wardlaw and Frank McGavigan. We were joined by members from the USA and Mexico.

The Herefordshire/Shropshire meeting drew large numbers of attendees all capably fielded by our hosts Clive Jermy and Martin Rickard.

The Southport Flower Show once again had a Society stand, manned for the last time by A.R. Busby and his team. We really must say an enormous thank you to Matt, who has manfully done this duty for 31 years! Due to Matt's unstinting efforts, this used to be the principle source of new members to the Society. We welcome Dr Michael Hayward, who is replacing Matt, and who has said, from the outset, that he will not be doing it for as long!

A Fern Reproduction Day at Reading University rounded off the year. We must pay tribute to Jennifer Ide for the exciting programme, and to our host, Dr Stephen Jury. A number of Stephen's students joined us for the day and it is to be hoped that some will have been motivated to grow to appreciate ferns or at least bear them in mind in their future research.

Once again special thanks are due to those who organised and led each of our meetings. It crossed my mind that the Society's officers played an enormous role this year and we must be mindful that we need to encourage our younger and newer members to attend and also to offer to take a lead. I can remember many of those people who were leading meetings this year attending meetings many years ago when they were not so knowledgeable. If you would like to lead a meeting, or have an idea you would like your committee to help you with, we would be only too pleased to hear from you.

It was agreed that a letter should go from the meeting to A.R. Busby to thank him for his work at the Southport Flower Show.

8.2 – PUBLICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE (Dr A.F. Dyer): In June 2004, the subcommittee met in Edinburgh to review the present state of Society publications, including the website, and to identify the priorities for future developments. A report of the meeting was presented to the Committee for discussion. Membership of the subcommittee comprises the editors of the three journals, of Special Publications and of the website, together with the Treasurer, the Honorary General Secretary and the President, who is serving as Acting Chairman. The role of the Subcommittee is to monitor publication policy and promote a sustainable co-ordinated publication programme that makes efficient use of the Society's financial and editorial resources and reflects the needs of the Society and its members. The objectives of the BPS publications and website collectively are to promote pteridology and the Society, to record BPS activities, to inform and interest members, to provide a source of pteridological information for the wider public, to publish original research in an internationally recognised journal, and to provide an outlet for members' own creativity.

Because of past difficulties in getting volunteers to take on editorial duties, the possibility of amalgamating journals was discussed but there was strong support for continuing with three journals under their present names.

BULLETIN: A.M. Paul produced the 2003 Issue (No.2 of Volume 6) early in 2004, and the 2004 Issue (No. 3) has just been published. Issue No. 2 was 88 pages long, and Issue No. 3

is 84 pages, once more reflecting the increased level of activity within the Society. Even with over 80 pages, it is now difficult to fit in all the items and once again Alison has had to combine her editorial skills with the diplomacy necessary to reduce the length of many contributions. An Index to Volumes 1-5 prepared by Jonathan Crowe is now being edited. Preparation of the *Bulletin* is now a considerable and time-consuming task and we are fortunate that Alison is still willing to do this for the Society.

THE FERN GAZETTE: Although Volume 17 Part 2 had recently appeared, dated 2004, no issues of *The Fern Gazette* were published during 2004. This was mainly due to a shortage of submitted papers. This lack of material is largely due to factors beyond our control, including the declining numbers of professional pteridologists in Britain and elsewhere, and the need for the remaining researchers to publish in major journals that are frequently cited in other papers. Our failure over the last two years to maintain the normal schedule of two issues per year is a matter of considerable concern, not least because of the danger that a number of members and subscribers might resign if the situation were to continue. Fortunately, this will not happen. We have at an advanced stage of editing more than 20 papers based on talks given at the 2004 BPS Symposium '*Ferns for the 21st Century*'. In the meantime, other papers are being processed as they come in and an issue of non-Symposium papers will be produced as soon as it is complete. We expect all these papers to be published in 2005 or early 2006, by which time we will have made up the deficit of *The Fern Gazette* issues. In order to stimulate more contributions for future issues, we have begun a process of inviting authors to write mini-reviews on recent advances in specialised pteridological topics. We hope in this way to broaden the scope of the journal and increase the number of times it is referred to in other publications. Professor Mary Gibby and Andrew Leonard will continue to share the editorial responsibilities, with the assistance of peer reviewers, some BPS members acting as proof-readers, and, in the case of Symposium issues, session organisers.

PTERIDOLOGIST: Volume 4, Part 3 appeared during 2004 with 32 attractive pages of interesting and entertaining information interspersed with more than 60 colour illustrations. The Editor, Dr James Merryweather, is the creative force behind the publication but he is supported as needed by a group including Dr Yvonne Golding and Adrian Dyer as sub-editors and other BPS members who assist with proof-correction. An Index to Volumes 1-3 has been prepared by Michael Searle and Alastair Wardlaw and will soon be published and issued free to all members. Volume 4, Part 4, is being prepared for publication in July. *Pteridologist* provides an opportunity for members to share their knowledge and experiences and the Editor would welcome contributions, short or long, on any aspect of pteridology, especially from first-time contributors.

SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS: Work continues on the final stages of preparation of the account of *Polystichum* cultivars: *Polystichum cultivars: Variation in the British Shield Ferns*. Begun by Jimmy Dyce, this has been expanded and updated by Robert Sykes, Martin Rickard and Peter Barnes, in conjunction with Barry Thomas as Editor of Special Publications. Publication is scheduled for later in 2005. We would like to publish other titles and several suggestions have been made including themes ranging from *Polypodium* varieties to Ferny artefacts and Ferns for the home. A new Fern Atlas, currently under consideration by the appropriate Subcommittee, would be another publication under this heading. However, nothing can be achieved without members who are willing to take on the task of preparing the publications, whether as author or as a collator of others' articles. Anyone who has an idea for a Special Publication and who would be prepared to see the project through, should contact Prof. Barry Thomas to discuss its suitability.

WEBSITE: We recognise that the creation of a first-class website is of critical importance to the Society at a time when the web is the first source of information for an increasing proportion of the population. The website must provide communication and information for the membership, but it is also a 'shop-window' to present the Society to the outside world,

and, increasingly as pteridology in universities declines, it must also provide an easily accessible source of information for anyone seeking information about pteridophytes. Discussions through the year have led recently to the formation of an Advisory Group to support the Website Editor, Anthony Pigott, in his work to maintain and develop the website. This group will be responsible for agreeing the objectives of our website, prioritising requirements and helping to take the steps necessary to achieve those objectives. This may include commissioning specific items. In order to be able to take account of the requirements of the membership, it would be helpful if any member with views on what the website should provide would make those views known in their replies to the BPS Questionnaire or directly to Anthony Pigott.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS: Book Reviews. Book reviews are now organised by Prof. Mary Gibby, Editor of *The Fern Gazette*. Members who are aware of a new book that they think should be reviewed should contact Mary, who will write to the publishers requesting a review copy. A decision will then be taken as to whether the review should appear in *The Fern Gazette*, *Pteridologist* or both. Mary Gibby or James Merryweather, as appropriate, will then be responsible for obtaining and editing a review. Members who wish to submit a review of a new book should contact Mary Gibby first so as to avoid possible duplication.

Leaflets. We recognise that several leaflets need revising or replacing and there are ideas for new ones, but there have been other matters concerned with publications, as described above, that were considered to be more urgent. A start has been made on revising two leaflets and more progress will be made when someone can be found, not necessarily within the present Publications Subcommittee, who has the interest and time to take on this responsibility.

DISTRIBUTION: A vital aspect of our publication output, but one that is often taken for granted, is distribution to members. Distribution of some of our major publications, together with the many notices that keep members informed about the Society's other activities, has once again been carried out by Patrick Acock, to whom we are very grateful.

CONCLUSION: Finally, I would like to point out two things. First, our publications list is an ambitious one for a Society of considerably fewer than 1,000 members and a modest subscription rate. Secondly, it depends entirely on the editorial resources and other assistance available within the membership. Without the dedication and hard work of the editors and their assistants it would not be possible to produce these publications and our grateful thanks are due to them. However, more volunteers are always welcome and we would be pleased to hear from any other members who would like to become involved in the publication side of the Society's activities.

B.A. Thomas announced from the floor that publication was due in 2005 of N.A. Hall and M.H. Rickard's bibliographical compilation of Pre-1900 fern books. Based on a proposal by A.C. Wardlaw, the Society may also soon be in a position quickly to prepare and present in an inexpensive format a provisional pteridophyte atlas based on information in the BSBI's New Atlas of the British & Irish Flora (2002).

J.W. Merryweather made a plea for no more articles to be submitted on bracken to the Pteridologist! He would like to see more articles expressing opinions, possibly even controversial ones!

R.G. Ackers requested that editors should acknowledge the receipt of articles and, later if necessary, confirm or otherwise the inclusion of the articles in their journal.

B.A. Thomas said that he was against the publication of complete journals on the website. This could eventually be disastrous, especially in terms of losing Subscribers. F. McGavigan replied that the recently formed Website Advisory Group would be considering this matter. It was not policy at the moment.

8.3 – FERN VARIETIES NOMENCLATURE SUBCOMMITTEE (A.R. Busby): Apart from brief telephone conversations, there have been no meetings of this subcommittee during 2004. Unless some matters that require discussion present themselves during 2005, it is unlikely that this sub-committee will meet.

The Meetings, Publications and Fern Varieties Nomenclature Subcommittee reports were approved, proposed by M.S. Porter and seconded by Mrs J. Neal.

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): I am pleased to report that excellent progress has been made during the last year. With the assistance of Martin Rickard, a quantity of material that we considered to be unimportant was discarded. This resulted in a reduction of the volume of material stored and, consequently, we have been able to reduce the costs of storage by nearly one half. Work is now taking place to catalogue the pressed fronds so that they can be placed in a suitable permanent storage facility. The Committee is pursuing various channels in order to find suitable storage for the remainder of the Archive at little or no cost to the Society.

R.G. Ackers reported from the floor that the Royal Horticultural Society had agreed to take the approximately 800 pressed cultivar fronds into their herbarium, where they would be safe and secure. He had agreed with the Keeper of the herbarium to work one day a week to curate the collection and would like a helper. There was no pay, but there would be some perks!

M.H. Rickard said that the Society's donation had triggered a reaction at the RHS Wisley. A frond collection was being made from all the ferns in the gardens to be added to the herbarium.

10.2 – BOOKSALES (S.J. Munyard): No report received.

10.3 – MERCHANDISE (B.D. & G. Smith): Through 2004 we continued to provide a service for BPS members much as we had done during 2003. We introduced four new ranges – BPS pens, a new style bookmark, the BPS fern video and new fern notelet paper designed by Anne Wright. Also, thanks to Anne, we continued to add new varieties of her lovely fern greetings cards. The merchandise list now boasts some 14 ranges and a total of over 50 individual products. We had to re-issue the merchandise list twice during the year, and members will have received these either through routine mailings, or when we fulfil orders. There is an up-to-date copy on the BPS website for those with Internet access.

Mail order continues to be our main outlet for sales, and, as well as UK members, we have had orders from Canada, USA, Latvia and Eire. However, we did sell items face-to-face to members by making use of the national meetings at Hereford and Reading as well as our local East Anglian and South-East regional meetings. Also, as usual, we sold several items (not clothing) to the general public while manning the BPS stand at the NEC Gardeners' World Live! in June. As a new initiative, colleagues in the north sold a number of items at the Southport show and at their Leeds and North-West Regional Group AGMs. Overall during 2004, sales income amounted to nearly £800, slightly less than the £1,000 for 2003.

So, what's new for 2005? Well, following the tradition of launching new items at our AGM, we have followed up members' requests by introducing a fleece with embroidered BPS logo and, in a small effort to help the environment, we have produced BPS labels for re-addressing envelopes. As a new venture, we will be selling the BPS Special Publications, both the existing stocks and new titles. We are also holding a sale of old stock, with 50% or more off a number of BPS products including small tee shirts, small sweatshirts and several BPS Centenary items – real bargains!

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

M.S. Porter asked whether members knew that Special Publications were now available from Merchandising. B.D. Smith replied that a new Merchandise list including Special Publications had recently been prepared. This would be on the website shortly and copies sent with the next general mailing. Also, members ordering items were sent an up-to-date copy of the list. The possibility of a separate mailing was discussed, but it was noted that this would cost well over £100.

10.4 – PLANT EXCHANGE (R.G. Ackers): The Plant Exchange List was compiled and distributed in October 2004. This followed two mailings requesting plants for offer. The first, included with the *Bulletin* mailing in March 2004 excluded from the reverse the form required for completion. This unfortunate omission caused considerable confusion. Despite this, some potential participants responded without the form using e-mail. However, a second problem occurred at the end of March 2004, when as a result of a computer failure, the organiser lost all of these e-mails. These problems necessitated a second circular, which was distributed with the *Pteridologist* at the end of August 2004.

Once again, a Wants List was included in the Plant Exchange List. The number of wanted taxa reduced from 56 in 2003 to 40 in 2004. From 2005 onwards, the intention is to publish the Wants List in the *Bulletin* to increase exposure and hopefully thus increase the chances of fulfilment.

Statistics for taxa offered are shown below.

Status Code	Plant Status Description	No. in 2003	No. in 2004
Sp0	Sporeling less than 1 year old	3	10
Sp1	Sporeling 1-2 years old	8	13
Sp2	Sporeling 2-3 years old	10	13
Esp	Established plant	3	11
Bul	Bulbil	7	0
Rhs	Rhizomes	9	11
	Plant status not stated by donor	21	0
	Totals	61	58

The statistics for participants are shown below. The participant categories are mutually exclusive. All categories receive a copy of the Plant Exchange List.

Category of Participant	2003	2004
Donors only (thus only offering plants)	8	6
Donors also having Wants	7	5
‘Wanters’ only (thus not offering plants)	9	3
List requesters only (neither offering plants nor having ‘wants’)	10	16
Total Number of Participants	34	30

Based on the size of the BPS membership, participation numbers seem low, particularly considering the opportunity to acquire plants at no cost other than postage. Furthermore, numbers dropped slightly in 2004 over 2003, but this may have been due in part to the problems referred to above.

The intention for 2005 is to include the form for the next list with the *Pteridologist* mailing in the summer, and to produce the Plant Exchange List 2005 a couple of months later. A form to solicit Wants will be included with the BPS October/November mailing, for potential inclusion of a Wants List in the *Bulletin* for 2005, distributed in the early part of 2006.

10.5 – SPORE EXCHANGE (B. & A. Wright): The exchange continues to be a popular service offered to members. The breakdown of the data from 2004 is as follows, with the figures for 2003 in square brackets. There were 133 [148] requests received and processed, resulting in the sending out of 2,247 [2,548] packets of spores. Of these, 99 [114] requests were from UK members (England 78 [95], Scotland 8 [13], Wales 13 [6]) and 34 [53] from overseas. This reaffirms the international nature of our exchange. The overseas requests were from Australia 1 [1], Austria 3 [1], Belgium 1 [1] Czech Republic 1 [1], Denmark 1 [2], Eire 2 [2], Estonia 1 [1], Finland 1 [0], France 4 [3], Germany 3 [5], Japan 1 [0], Latvia 1 [0], Luxemburg 1 [1], Netherlands 2 [1], Poland 1 [2], Spain 1 [1], Switzerland 1 [0], USA 6 [9]. Out of the 679 [649] taxa on the 2004 list we had requests for 571 [575] them.

Unfortunately, the spore list was sent out relatively late in the season owing to a delay in the publication of the *Bulletin*. We hope this did not inconvenience growers by delaying the time at which they could sow their spores.

For the future we are considering adopting the approach of many of the seed exchanges that we are aware of. With these exchanges the list is available only on request and is sent out as a separate mailing by the seed distribution organisers. Our intention would be to send out a spore list request form with the *Pteridologist* in the summer and would then send out lists before Christmas to all those wishing to receive one. We would then be able to guarantee a distribution start date of the 1st February. This would enable us to complete the spore distribution by the end of April when we are becoming busy with other things ourselves. It would mean that we are busiest during February dealing with the initial rush and that we would slowly wind down during March and April. There are a number of advantages to this system. One is that we do not produce and print more than 700 lists to satisfy 130-150 requests. This is a waste of paper, ink and postage. Also, we would be in control over the whole process and would not be reliant on the publication date of the *Bulletin*. We would also plan to allow e-mail requests for the lists and to send the lists out as attachments. We would still need to have paper copies of requests along with the two 1st class stamps to cover the cost of return postage and the envelope we use to return spores. But, at a cost of two stamps, that is a lot cheaper than the £5.00 or £2.50 charged by the Alpine Garden Society and Scottish Rock Garden Club respectively.

Grateful thanks to all our loyal band of donors and thanks to all of the patient requesters, particularly those early birds that get caught up in the initial rush period immediately following the publication of the list.

The general feeling of the meeting was that the proposal set out in the above report, despite the possible small cost implication, was eminently sensible and its implementation would be welcomed.

10.6 – HORTICULTURAL INFORMATION OFFICER (A.R. Busby): I was pleased to be able to assist the Curator of the Museum in Chepstow with information on that great fern grower, E.J. Lowe. It was part of an exhibition of local history in Monmouthshire.

Other requests for help were mainly for advice on the cultivation of hardy ferns. Recently I had a query from a researcher asking for information on the distribution of *Dryopteris* in the Northern Hemisphere. This has been passed on to a number of academics in the Society, but if any members feel that they are in a position to help, kindly let A.R. Busby know.

All the reports in this item were approved, proposed by B.A. Thomas and seconded by A.M. Paul.

Item 11 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS & INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS: With the exception of Mr R.J. Cooke, Conservation Officer and Recorder, who had

tendered his resignation, all the present officers of the Society were eligible to stand for re-election and had indicated their willingness to stand. The Chairman thanked R.J. Cooke for his work for the Society. Dr Fred Rumsey and Dr Heather McHaffie were nominated by the Committee to share jointly the position of Conservation Officer and F.J. Rumsey would also serve as Recorder. Proposed by R.W. Sykes, seconded by Mr H.C. Shepherd, all were elected unanimously.

Mr A.R. Busby had completed his term as Vice-President and was thanked for his contributions to the work of the Committee during his period of office.

Of the present elected members of the Committee, Mr S.E. Czeladzinski, Mr M.L. Grant, Mr S.J. Munyard and Mr P.H. Ripley retired, being the longest serving members of the Committee (elected 2002). The Chairman thanked them for their service to the Society. Mr A.R. Busby (Proposed Miss J.M. Ide, seconded Mr P.H. Ripley) and Dr Michael Hayward (proposed Mr A.R. Busby, seconded Mr R. Smith) were nominated to be Elected Members of the Committee. There being no further nominations from the floor, they and the Elected Members eligible for re-election (R.G. Ackers, Dr Y.C. Golding, F. McGavigan and B.D. Smith) were elected unanimously en-bloc, proposed by Mr M.S. Porter, seconded by Mr B. Wright.

Dr N.J. Hards was re-elected unanimously as Independent Examiner. Proposed by B.A. Thomas and seconded by Mrs J. Neal.

Item 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

12.1 – RESIGNATION OF SECRETARY: The Chairman announced that the Secretary, Miss J.M. Ide, had tendered her resignation with effect from the Annual General Meeting in 2006. It was her wish to contribute in other areas of BPS activities, which she was unable to do at present owing to the Secretarial workload. The work of the Secretary had grown greatly in the past seven years, and it was felt that this was an opportune moment to divide the work into two parts, one having responsibility for organising Committee meetings, the AGM, and writing the Minutes, the other having responsibility for the administrative work of the Committee. It was agreed that the Secretary should write a note, for insertion with the next mailing to the membership, outlining the two positions and seeking volunteers.

Before closing the meeting the President addressed the membership:

“I do not apologise for this long meeting. It is a reflection of the impressive level of activity in our Society. In closing the meeting it would be wrong if I did not, on behalf of all the members thank all those whose effort, time and skill made all these activities possible. Without them there would not be a Society worth belonging to. The regional programmes, the national programme, the publications, the sales and exchanges, and the vital but less obvious activities like membership administration, managing the funds, observing the requirements of our Charitable status, interacting with other societies and organisations and others, all require a great deal of hard work. The amount of work is probably not fully appreciated by those who have never been directly involved. Since being on the Committee I have been repeatedly impressed by the level of commitment that some members have towards not only ferns but the BPS as well. I am not going to single out names because I would inevitably leave out several others deserving mention. Just look at our publications, programmes and other activities and use your imagination. However, none of these people will go on giving their services indefinitely. Our activities are quite ambitious for a relatively small society and if we are going to maintain them, we need new people coming forward from the membership to take over these tasks, starting with the post of Secretary. Meanwhile, many thanks to all those who make membership of the BPS so enjoyable for the rest of us.”

There being no further formal matters for consideration the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 16.10 hours.

Jennifer M. Ide
Hon. Gen. Secretary

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2004

ORDINARY ACCOUNT

2003	INCOME	2004
£15,674.54	Subscriptions	£15,699.54
504.10	Interest	602.40
0.00	Booksales	1,000.00
0.00	Spore Exchange	0.00
147.80	Merchandise	121.20
0.00	Plant Sale	0.00
673.68	Inland Revenue Gift Aid	1,022.76
0.00	Donations	417.76
<u>£17,000.12</u>	TOTAL INCOME	<u>£18,863.66</u>
	EXPENSES	
3,532.25	Pteridologist	3,413.32
7,474.27	Fern Gazette	1,418.18
3,819.60	Bulletin	4,497.05
405.59	Printing & Stationery	620.26
419.76	Administration & Postage	1,125.26
97.25	Subscriptions to Societies	107.00
0.00	Plant & Spore Exchanges	0.00
318.21	Meetings	317.90
2,000.00	Merchandise	4.60
0.00	Booksales	0.00
463.69	Trustees' Expenses	911.19
725.08	Archive Storage	705.00
<u>£19,255.70</u>	TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>£13,119.76</u>
-2,255.58	Balance (income minus expenses)	5,743.90
16,682.34	Brought forward from previous year	14,426.76
<u>£14,426.76</u>	Total in Ordinary Account	<u>£20,170.66</u>

CENTENARY FUND

203.70	Interest	291.78
0.00	Grant	-500.00
43.00	Donation to Fund	0.00
0.00	171 World of Ferns 171	0.00
6,740.97	Brought forward from previous year	6,987.67
<u>£6,987.67</u>	Total in Centenary Fund	<u>£6,779.45</u>

GREENFIELD FUND

64.35	Interest	91.61
0.00	Grant	0.00
2,129.67	Brought forward from previous year	2,194.02
<u>2,194.02</u>	Total in Greenfield Fund	<u>£2,285.63</u>

PUBLICATIONS ACCOUNT

198.85	Interest	303.39
306.81	Offprints	365.41
33.75	137 Fern Names & Their Meanings 124	45.00
61.00	296 Cultivation & Propagation 288	34.00
22.20	809 History of British Pteridology 804	26.40
7.50	426 BPS Abstracts & Papers 425	7.50
54.96	15 CD Rom – BPS Minute Book 12	30.00
6,580.68	Brought forward from previous year	7,265.75
<u>£7,265.75</u>	Total in Publications Account	<u>£8,077.45</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. The accounts reflect the subscriptions actually received in the year.
2. BPS Booksales had assets of £4,153.00 (£5,361.24) at 31.12.2004.
BPS Booksales repaid an advance of £1,000 (made in 1998) into the Ordinary Account.
3. The Society also possesses the following assets:
Back issues of the *Bulletin*, *Fern Gazette* and *Pteridologist* valued at approximately £2,000.
The editor of *Pteridologist* has a computer valued at £1,133.99 in 2001.
4. The Society made a grant to Julie Barcelona from the Centenary Fund of £500.
For further details see *BPS Bulletin* 2004 volume 6 number 3 page 256.
5. The numbers of copies of publications are shown on either side of the title.

Andrew Leonard, Honorary Treasurer

I have examined the accounting records maintained by the Treasurer of the British Pteridological Society for the year ending 31 December 2004, and can certify that the accounts presented to me are in accordance with the books and records.

Dr Nick Hards, Examiner, 19th September 2005

MERCHANDISE ACCOUNTS

The following Merchandise accounts for 2004 are presented separately, as the Merchandise organisers have a separate bank account and do their own accounting.

MERCHANDISE ACCOUNT

Income	848.13
Expenditure	-705.08
Surplus for year	143.05
Transfer to General Fund	-121.20
Brought forward from previous year	3,211.34
Balance carried forward	<u>£3,233.19</u>
Represented by cash	943.19
Represented by stock	2,290.00

BOOKSALES ACCOUNTS

The Booksales accounts are not shown separately. Not all the appropriate figures are available due to the traditional method of record-keeping by Booksales Organisers. In future, records will be kept in a different way so that annual accounts can be presented.

THE AMERICAN FERN SOCIETY

The AFS invites all readers of this *Bulletin* to join the American Fern Society. You are welcome to visit the AFS website: amerfernsoc.org. Regular members receive *Fiddlehead Forum* five times a year, a newsletter published for those who are interested in growing ferns, hunting for them and expanding their knowledge of ferns. Journal members also receive the scientific quarterly *American Fern Journal*. Membership costs \$19 and \$32 per annum respectively for members residing outside USA, Canada or Mexico, including postage for airmail-assisted delivery. For particulars please write to Dr George Yatskievych, Missouri Botanical Garden, P.O. Box 299, St Louis, Missouri 63166-0299, USA (george.yatskievych@mobot.org). Online credit card payment is now available for the AFS via the AFS website.

AFS SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENTS: Our societies have an exchange arrangement whereby members of the BPS can pay their AFS subscription through the BPS Membership Secretary and *vice versa*. To take advantage of this, prospective members residing in Great Britain should contact Mr M.S. Porter, 5 West Avenue, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 9LG (Membership@eBPS.org.uk).

BPS PLANNING MEETING

Organisations of any size routinely perform planning exercises in order to take stock of their performance and to formulate their future direction. These planning processes can be anything from guesswork (inspired or not!) to a meticulous analysis and interpretation of market environmental factors. To my knowledge the Society has never recognised nor performed a separate exercise called ‘planning’. Although we do discuss future plans at committee meetings, these discussions are often subsumed within the more urgent nature of current business. It was in this climate that the committee agreed that a meeting focused solely on planning could be worthwhile. The meeting was held in Edinburgh on the 3 December 2005.

Our starting point was the responses we received to the Members’ Questionnaire distributed with the previous Bulletin. Adrian Dyer gave a summary of these responses in his ‘President’s Letter 2005’ included with the autumn mailing. I produced a ‘Report on Members’ Questionnaire Responses’ for discussion at our Committee Meeting on 18 June 2005. Some of the Officers also produced separate analysis notes on their areas – Meetings, Publications, Website, and Merchandise. The members’ views summarised therein will be considered by these Officers in the course of their activities. All of these documents are available to members, so please let me know if you would like copies (my contact details are on the inside front cover).

One of the ironies of planning meetings is that they require planning (!), and therefore we prepared an agenda. However, it is an unwritten rule of planning meetings that they will not go according to plan! This one was no exception, for reasons I will explain shortly. However, most of the morning did go according to plan, resulting in two very useful sessions conducted in an informal ‘brainstorming’ way.

For the first session, we performed a SWOT analysis to take stock of our current situation. This technique requires us to focus on our Strengths and Weaknesses (these are both internal to the Society), and the Opportunities and Threats presented to us from the outside world. The results (in no particular order) are shown in the following chart.

<p><u>Strengths</u> Regional groups Good meetings Field botany Horticultural experience Journals People (some!) Amateur/professional relationships BPS is the only British fern society Good value for money Membership size stable Charitable status Our heritage</p>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u> Lack of succession planning Shortage of volunteers Lack of task ownership Size of membership (lack of critical mass) Tendency to ‘box above our weight’ Behind with <i>Gazette</i> production Website Lack of BPS publicity/promotion Lack of external sales (of journals) We are too exclusive and inward looking We get too bogged down in admin detail</p>
<p><u>Opportunities</u> Wide geographical spread in UK and abroad Possible increase in interest in ferns Promote BPS as a gardening society Promote at garden centres & fern gardens Increased public interest in (plant) conservation More recording Aid in identifying ferns of unknown provenance Funding opportunities (because of charitable status)</p>	<p><u>Threats</u> Decreasing number of professional pteridologists Aging membership Professionalism of BSBI and Plantlife Changing fashions result in possible reduction in interest in ferns</p>

During the second session we focused on our Critical Success Factors (CSFs). These are the activities that an organisation must absolutely 'get right' in order to survive; typically there are seven or eight. Again, in no particular order, these are shown below.

- Effective administration by the recruitment of volunteers and good succession planning.
- Effective financial management.
- A strategic planning function.
- The timely production of attractive and stimulating journals.
- An informative website that is kept up to date.
- Running successful meetings enjoyed by attendees.
- Maintaining membership levels.

Although our third session was planned, it was not intended to dominate the rest of the day as it did. The agenda item was rather pompously called 'Officer succession planning and the shortfall dilemma'. Ideally, there should be a 'blue sky' aspect to planning meetings, but at this one we were faced with a more urgent problem. Several of our Officers are either resigning, or have indicated their intention to do so. Replacements were proving difficult to come by, and so we decided to focus on how to fill these gaps. Some of the points emerging from our discussion were:–

- All Officer posts are unpaid and thus voluntary, therefore we depend on the goodwill of talented members to fill these posts.
- We do have several individuals who over the years have provided an outstanding service to the Society.
- Some of the jobs can be very onerous, and it was with this in mind that a decision was taken to split the job of Secretary (there was a circular about this with the *Pteridologist* mailing).
- Although Officers can of course resign at any time, some of the jobs seem to be open-ended, with postholders continuing for many years.
- It was highly desirable that potential Officers serve as elected committee members first, and so more 'new faces' should be encouraged to join the committee.
- People recently retired from their main employment may welcome the new set of challenges provided by serving on our committee.
- The President should approach certain people in an attempt to fill some of the gaps occurring both now and in the future.

Whether or not this last activity will have been successful should become apparent at our AGM on 25 March 2006. The results of the planning meeting will be discussed at our committee meeting on 28 January 2006. As this article needs to go to press before that date, please contact our Secretary if you would like any feedback on that committee meeting.

Notwithstanding those committee discussions, it is hoped that the SWOT analysis and CSFs will act as guidelines for the actions of future committees. It is all too easy for Officers to become engrossed in short-term needs, thereby potentially losing focus on other matters of equal importance.

In conclusion I would like to thank all those who responded to our questionnaire, and urge more members to put their names forward as elected committee member candidates.

Graham Ackers

BPS PLANT EXCHANGE SCHEME FERN 'WANTS' LIST

The Plant Exchange Scheme provides an opportunity for members to exchange surplus plants by offering plants and requesting 'wants'. The plants on offer were listed in the recently circulated 'Plant Exchange List – November 2005'. Members may still request this list by contacting me by e-mail to receive an electronic version, or by post enclosing an SAE to receive a paper version (contact details on the inside front cover). However, to be realistic, by the time of publication of this *Bulletin* some of the plants on offer will have run out.

In order to give requesters a greater chance of success, for the first time the 'wants' list is being published in the *Bulletin* to provide a greater exposure. Please would readers scan this list to see if they have (and can spare) any of the plants requested and then get in touch with the requester directly to arrange delivery.

Recipients should reimburse postage, so please count the stamps and assess the packaging costs before discarding. Round up for good measure and send the money (stamps or cheque) by return. Also, please inform me of any successful receipts. To some extent the publishing of this list in the *Bulletin* is experimental, and we need to ascertain the level of success before deciding whether to continue in future years.

FERN WANTS

The names of plants requested have not been validated.

Name	Requester
<i>Adiantum aleuticum</i> 'Laciniatum'	SP
<i>Adiantum edgeworthii</i>	JB
<i>Adiantum formosanum</i>	MC
<i>Asplenium ceterach</i> 'Cristatum'	TB
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> 'Cornutum Abruptum'	TB
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> 'Crispum Moly'	JF
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> 'Crispum Robinson'	JF
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> 'Crispum Variegatum Bolton'	JF
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> cultivars	TB
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> 'Glomerata'	JF
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> 'Golden Queen'	JF
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i> 'Incisum Moule'	SP
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> 'Fieldiae'	JF
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> 'Frizelliae'	JN
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> (rare varieties, good price paid)	SW
<i>Blechnum spicant</i> 'Congestum'	TB
<i>Blechnum spicant</i> 'Cristatum'	TB
<i>Blechnum spicant</i> 'Rickard's Serrate'	TB
<i>Botrychium lunaria</i>	MC
<i>Camptosorus rhizophyllus</i>	PK
<i>Cheilanthes albomarginata</i>	RJ
<i>Cheilanthes bonariensis</i>	RJ
<i>Cheilanthes distans</i>	JB
<i>Cnemidaria horrida</i>	SJ
<i>Cryptogramma crispa</i>	JN, MC
<i>Cyathea</i> (any)	EG
<i>Davallia fejeensis</i>	JB

Dicksonia (any except <i>D. antarctica</i>)	EG
<i>Doodia media</i>	JN
<i>Dryopteris cristata</i>	JB
<i>Dryopteris submontana</i>	JR
<i>Elaphoglossum crinitum</i>	SJ
<i>Gleichenia</i> sp.	SJ
<i>Goniophlebium</i> (<i>Polypodium</i>) <i>subauriculatum</i>	PK
<i>Matteuccia</i> (any)	EG
<i>Onychium japonicum</i>	JB, JN
<i>Oreopteris limbosperma</i>	EG
<i>Pentagramma pallida</i>	RJ
<i>Platycerium</i> (any)	EG
<i>Platyzoma microphylla</i>	SJ
<i>Polypodium</i> sp. (rare varieties, good price paid)	SW
<i>Polypodium lachnopus</i>	SJ
<i>Polypodium lycopodioides</i>	PK
<i>Polystichum lonchitis</i>	MC
<i>Polystichum prescottianum</i>	MC
<i>Polystichum rigens</i>	JN
<i>Polystichum setiferum</i> (rare varieties, good price paid)	SW
<i>Pyrrosia</i> (any)	EG
<i>Pyrrosia polydactyla</i>	SJ
<i>Woodsia polystichoides</i>	MC
<i>Woodwardia unigemmata</i>	JN

REQUESTER'S CONTACT DETAILS

Where full contact details have not been given, please refer to the Membership List published in the 2004 *Bulletin*.

- EG Miss Eleanor Glover, 31 Redannick Lane, Truro, Cornwall TR1 2JR.
- JB Mrs J. Basil, 14 Royden Lane, Boldre, Lymington SO41 8PE. Tel. 01590 676538.
- JF John Finch, 22 Victoria Street, Gillingham, Kent ME7 1EW.
E-mail: JOHNFINCH@BLUEYONDER.CO.UK.
- JN Joy Neal, Llwynceilyn, Glandyfi, Machynlleth, SY20 8SS. Tel/fax. 01654 781203.
E-mail: joy@glandyfi.fsnet.co.uk.
- JR Jeremy Roberts, Eden Croft, 2 Wetheral Pasture, Carlisle, CA4 8HU.
Tel. 01228 560164. E-mail: fjr@edencroft2.demon.co.uk.
- MC Michael Collins, Long Leys Farm, Leys Road, Cumnor, Oxford OX2 9QG.
Tel. 01865 865809.
- PK Pieter Kastelein, 'Cruach', Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8QZ.
Tel. 01546 602388. E-mail: kastelein@btinternet.com.
- RJ Rodney Johnson, 9 Barnfield Road, Bollington, Nr. Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 5DZ.
Tel. 01625 574467. E-mail: r.johnson77@ntlworld.com.
- SJ Stephen Jakusz, 14 Kaimes Gdns., Livingston Village, West Lothian, EH54 7D4.
Tel. 01506416508.
- SP Mr S. Plant.
- SW Stuart Worth, 17 Willow Tree Lane, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 9BD.
Tel. 078 341 54648. E-mail: STUART@EUROREP.CO.UK.
- TB Tim Brock, 108 Rushes Road, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 3AS.
Tel. 01730 301153. E-mail: TIM-BROCK@WSHSC.NHS.UK.

Graham Ackers

OBITUARIES

PROF. RODOLFO PICHI SERMOLLI

1912 – 2005

Rodolfo Emilio Giuseppe Pichi Sermolli died at the grand age of 93 on 25th April 2005, having just finished (with his wife Paola Bizzarri and Riccardo Baldini) a painstaking study of over 390 pages on the pteridophyta collected by Raddi in Brazil between 1817 and 1818. He unfortunately passed away just before it was published. He joined the BPS in 1954.

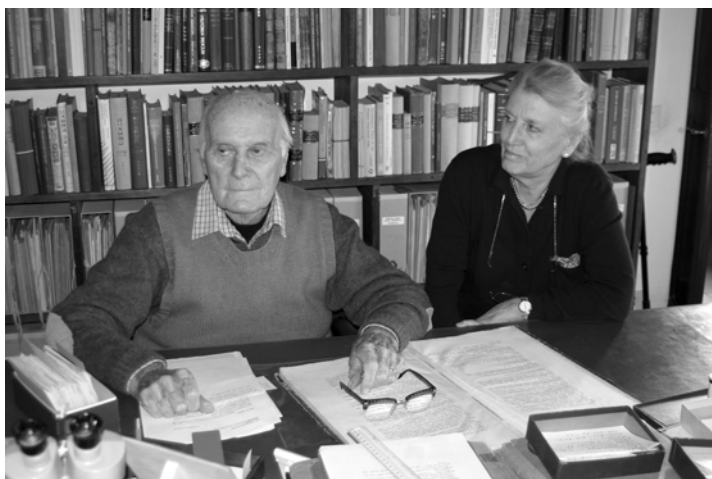


photo: R. Viane

**Prof. Rodolfo Pichi Sermolli and his wife, Prof. Paola Bizzarri,
working on the Raddi manuscript at their home in 2003**

Rodolfo (affectionately ‘Pichi’ to the international fern fraternity) began studying Natural History at the Botanical Institute University of Florence in 1931. He had a wide interest in ecology, and the study of the flora and vegetation of the serpentines of the Alta Valle del Tevere became the subject of his thesis, completed in 1935. The previous year he assisted in an Italian mission for the agricultural study of Cyrenaica, and thus came into contact with the flora and vegetation of an arid zone. In 1937 he joined, as a plant collector, a four-month expedition to Lake Tana and the Semien Mountains in Ethiopia, where he also made observations on the ecology of the area. This, his first journey to Ethiopia, gave him both a basis and an interest in ferns of drier areas and the tropical African flora on which he worked so much later in his career.

During World War II, he saw active service but also lost all his possessions, including his library and manuscripts, when his apartment in Florence was destroyed. In 1947 he got a grant from the British Council to study in the libraries and herbaria of Kew and the British Museum. Most of his time was devoted to the study of his Ethiopian collections but he became a close friend of the then Deputy Keeper of Botany, Arthur Exell, whose speciality was also the Central Africa flora. He was also much involved in the activities of AETFAT (Association pour l’Étude Taxonomique de la Flore d’Afrique Tropicale) and was a secretary of this organisation from 1960 to 1963.

Around this time he became interested in nomenclatural questions, which led to his nomination as Secretary of the *Special Committee for Pteridophyta and Spermatophyta* set up by the 7th Botanical Congress in Stockholm (1950), and later of the *Special Committee for Pteridophyta* (1954–1987) of which he became the Chairman in 1987. Throughout his life, his opinions on these matters were always considered seriously. These investigations led to him becoming involved, as editor, with the fourth supplement of *Index Filicum* (1965).

He was an avid collector and built up an important herbarium; a plant press was always part of his baggage, even if there was no scheduled field trip on his itinerary! Besides his trips to Central and Southern Africa, he travelled also to the Himalaya, Central and South America, Malesia, New Zealand, Fiji and Hawaii, and throughout Mediterranean Europe. Pichi Sermolli contributed regularly to a small group organised by Walter Callé that exchanged herbarium material of pteridophytes, and published notes under the heading '*Pteridophyta Exsiccata – Étude critique des Fougères d'Europe*'. In the early sixties when a British and Irish group launched the *Flora Europaea* project, he was involved as regional advisor for Italy and not only attended all the annual symposia, but also organised the second *Flora Europaea* symposium in Genoa (1961), where he was then Professor.

When Pichi moved to the University of Perugia in the early 1970s he was able to devote more of his time to the classification of fern genera, resulting in his well known 1977 publication *Tentamen pteridophytorum genera in taxonomicum ordinem redigendi*, in which he presented his classification of all living pteridophyte families, a catalogue of all genera he recognised, and comments on phylogenetic affinities of families and genera and their taxonomic position. He kept abreast of other useful disciplines that might increase our understanding of fern relationships, publishing, in 1977 with A. & D. Löve, the *Cytotaxonomical Atlas of the Pteridophyta*. In 1986, when spore studies were beginning, Pichi Sermolli, together with Ferrarini, Ciampolini and Marchetti, published the *Iconographia Palynologica Pteridophytorum Italiae*, which not only contains 550 SEM photographs of spores of Italian pteridophytes, but also nomenclatural, cytological, distributional and ecological notes.

In 1993 he became the third President of the International Association of Pteridologists, following Herb Wagner. He also played an active role in the establishment of the Group of European Pteridologists (GEP) and in 1994 he co-organised the GEP European fern conference in Aulla (Italy) and field trip into the Apuan Alps.

Pichi was a prodigious worker. In about 75 years, he published over 160 scientific papers (listed by M.P. Bizzarri in *Webbia* 48. 1993) comprising a total of almost 7,000 pages. He was an avid correspondent, often explaining in detail his point of view, and he set an example to many botanists by his enthusiasm, tenacity and very well documented opinion. His presentations to international conferences were equally detailed, to the point of sometimes needing the chairman to remind him of the time! Best were those lectures given in his native tongue, one of which I enjoyed in Menorca in the late 1980s, when he discussed generic limits in Aspleniaceae. I did not have to understand Italian for his enthusiasm and sincerity to burst through; nobody was left unaware of his views!

I am grateful to Ronnie Viane, whose excellent obituary in *GEP News* 13 (2005), based on a review (in Italian) by Paola Bizzarri in honour of Pichi Sermolli's 80th birthday in 1993 (*Webbia* 48: 701-733), was the source of much of this information.

Clive Jermy

DR CHARLES DENNIS ADAMS

1920 – 2005

The field of Tropical Biology, and in particular Caribbean Ecology and Plant Systematics, lost one of its most erudite scholars with the passing of Dr Charles Dennis Adams on the 25th March 2005. Dennis was born on the 23rd March 1920 in Shinfield, Berkshire, England. He attended King's College, University of London from 1937 to 1939. In 1940 he aborted his studies and volunteered for Military Service in the British Army. Moving up the ranks to Commanding Officer in the Weapon Training School in the Royal Artillery Depot, Woolwich, he ended his military career as a Major in the Royal Artillery in 1946. This was a significant period in his life for self discovery and his marriage in 1942 to Elsie, who died in 1986 ending 44 years of a fulfilling and loyal partnership.

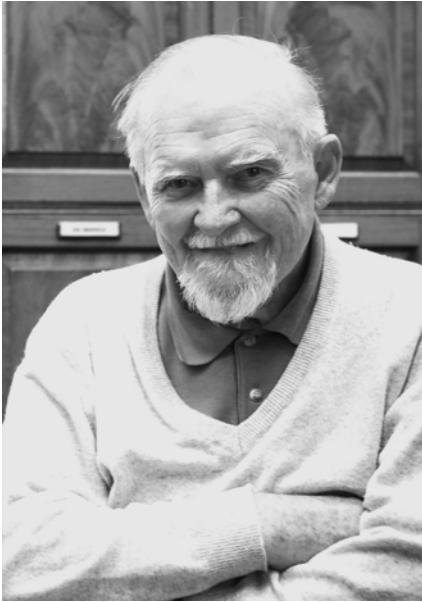


photo: Derek Adams (NHM Photo Studio)

Dennis Adams, April 2000

Immediately after the war he returned to King's College to resume his university education, graduating with 2nd Class Honours in his BSc General (Botany, Chemistry, Zoology) in 1948 and obtaining 1st Class Honours in a BSc Special (Botany) for which he was awarded the Carter Prize in Botany in 1949. A brilliant scholar, he was now poised to make his contribution to botany.

Post-war Britain was grim and depressing, and the opportunity to start a new life and career in one of the Crown Colonies, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), beckoned. A lectureship at the newly established University College of Gold Coast (University of Ghana) marked the beginning of a long and distinguished academic career in tropical plant ecology and taxonomy. His sojourn in Ghana from 1949 to 1959 led to numerous publications on West African vegetation and flora, focusing on pteridophytes and Compositae, establishing many new taxa, combinations and records.

The lure of writing and publishing Caribbean Floras took him to Jamaica to join the University College of the West Indies, Mona Campus (now the University of the West Indies) as a lecturer. The Jamaican era (1959-1976) would establish Dennis' reputation as the esteemed author of the *Flowering Plants of Jamaica* (1972) and other popular books such as *The Blue Mahoe & Other Bush* and *Caribbean Flora*. His formal academic career ended as a Senior Lecturer and Reader in Botany at the St Augustine Campus of the U.W.I. from 1976 to 1980.

C.D. Adams the scholar was equally matched by Dr Adams the lecturer. To many of his students he was a conscientious and gifted teacher who imparted his knowledge with humility, simplicity and clarity. A stickler for organisation and details, nothing escaped his sharp eyes and quick wit. Spelling errors or inaccurate use of terminology were the ultimate travesty in scientific writing! These were perfect attributes for a reviewer, and his expertise was always in demand. While he applauded modern technology, computer jargon made him cringe.

On retirement, he came full circle to his homeland and became an Honorary Associate at The Natural History Museum in London, where flora research continued uninterrupted. He soon became involved with *Flora Mesoamericana*, contributing the accounts of *Asplenium* and *Diplazium* as well as many genera of flowering plants, and several other Caribbean studies involving phytogeography, ethnobotany and conservation. One of the high points of his retirement was a UN/FAO (United Nations/Food and Agriculture Organization) assignment in 1983 to the Maldives where he "made an extensive survey of the flora and is probably the only authority on the subject" (Webb, P.A. 1988. *Maldives People and Environment*. Media Transasia Lt. Thailand).

At the personal level he was a very modest and private individual who shunned the limelight. In his spare time he 'taxonomised' his precious stamp collection. Close friends enjoyed his delightful company, with his quick repartee and double entendre. A number of tributes to Dennis were published in 2000 in *The Fern Gazette* (Vol. 16, pts 1-2: 1-10) to mark his 80th birthday.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Dennis' two surviving younger brothers, Michael and John Adams.

Yasmin S. Baksh-Comeau

RICHARD F. CARTWRIGHT

1910 – 2005

Dick Cartwright joined the Society in 1959 and quickly became involved with the Society's activities. In 1963 he volunteered to become the Society's Colour-slide Librarian and encouraged members to donate slides of ferns and fern allies to build up a comprehensive collection for the Society. In 1966 he was instrumental in providing a table demonstration of ferns for the BPS at the Royal Horticultural Society's June Show in London.

In addition to his interest in growing ferns, he was a keen member of the Alpine Garden Society.

In 1975, due to the illness of David Russell, Dick agreed to take over the Society's Spore Exchange Scheme and in the fourteen years he was responsible for it, the list of spores available to members topped over 500 species and forms. He was a frequent attendee at the Society's field meetings and always attended the West Midland Regional meetings. We also enjoyed his company at the Southport Flower Show during the 1970s, where many enquirers benefited from his wide experience of growing ferns and alpinines.

In recognition of his services to the Society he was elected an Honorary Member in 1989.

Matt Busby

Although I only met Dick for the first time around 1970, I know he had a tough time serving in North Africa during World War II. While on duty delivering a despatch on a motorcycle he was blown up driving over a land mine. He was of course seriously injured, having part of one leg amputated and the other never fully recovered. He said to me many years later that he sometimes wished they had removed the other leg as well as it caused him so much discomfort.

Despite this dreadful legacy from the war, Dick was a very cheerful character who lived life to the full. In 1973 he drove Jimmy Dyce to visit me in Savoie in the French Alps, a long drive for anyone but all the more remarkable considering his handicap. We managed to get into the Alps a little, where Dick was very much at home in grassland liberally sprinkled with gentians, reflecting his love of alpinines as well as ferns. On one sortie we were looking for *Woodsia ilvensis* near Mont Blanc. Typically, I had gone on ahead while Dick followed at his own pace – and he found the best fern of the day – *Asplenium septentrionale* growing by the side of the path!

During the late 1950s and 1960s he was in many ways Jimmy Dyce's right hand man. Living in Harlow in Essex, not far from Jimmy in Loughton, he was ideally placed to help Jimmy with organising meetings and other more routine Society business. I think Jimmy knew Dick before he joined the Society, I cannot remember how they met but it may have been through the local wine society.

During the 1970s he moved to Peopleton in Worcestershire. Not much later I moved over to live in Herefordshire. Occasionally my work took me to his area and if I had time I would call in out of the blue. Dick and his wife Audrey always made me feel most welcome, often giving me lunch. He still had some good ferns in his small garden, notably *Polystichum setiferum* 'Moly's Green', while his third bedroom was a BPS office for the spore exchange!

The Society has every reason to be grateful to Dick for helping guide the Society through the difficult times of the 1960s and '70s; without him stepping in to take over the spore exchange our membership number would have declined.

Martin Rickard

It was due to the southern polypody that I met someone soon to be called one of the best field botanists in Scotland. Reading of discoveries south of the Border, and of Dick Roberts' and Donal Synnott's work with pressed fronds, which showed that its range extended into Scotland and NE Ireland, I felt that this fern might grow in our mild west. A mutual friend suggested I get in touch with Allan Stirling to get his opinion. Allan hid his astonishment well at the thought of *Polypodium australe* (*P. cambricum*) occurring in SW Scotland. This was in 1971 when, despite the Gulf-stream and palm trees in the Highlands, the general perception was that 'southern' species would not occur in Scotland. He joined the BPS that same year.

Allan had long been a member of the Glasgow Natural History Society, going on many of their European trips as well as joining some of the Carr Botanical Expeditions to Spain, so he already had a wide knowledge of plant communities. As a keen bryologist, his discerning eye for mosses told him where the more basic rocks were. Armed with *The Limestones of Scotland* (Robertson *et al.* 1949) and a good microscope to look for branched paraphyses, he was ready for what we called 'the great polypody hunt'. We discovered southern polypody in eleven sites, the rare hybrid *P. x font-queri* (*P. vulgare* x *P. cambricum*) on Maidenbower Craigs near Dumfries and a colony of *P. x rothmaleri* (*P. cambricum* x *P. interjectum*), now called *P. x shivasiae*, on the Solway coast. Correspondence with Dick Roberts helped considerably. The findings were published in 1972 (*British Fern Gazette*) and 1973 (*Watsonia*).

With the assistance of Anne Sleep, Allan next tackled what was then regarded as *Asplenium cuneifolium*, but is now generally considered just a serpentine form of *A. adiantum-nigrum*. Following old records for curious forms of black spleenwort and clues in Jimmy Dyce's 1957 *Gazette* paper, and armed with Anne's tiny glass tubes, Allan went all over Scotland to serpentine outcrops collecting tiny bits of living fronds. About 16 sites were found in Scotland. He and Dick Roberts reported their findings in the *Gazette* in 1974, and four years later, with three others, including Anne Sleep, Allan wrote on this fern's chromosome counts.

Allan felt that the limestones of Inchnadamph in Sutherland might yield the rare *Polystichum x illyricum* (*P. aculeatum* x *P. lonchitis*), first found in Ireland in 1932. He went north in 1973, and with Nature Conservancy permission took three fronds; Anne Sleep confirmed them. Later that year they visited Inchnadamph and found almost 40 crowns; this was published in *Watsonia* the next year.

It is believed that he wrote or assisted with between 40 and 50 papers and articles. He was BSBI recorder for VC 99 (Dunbartonshire) from 1961 till 1987 when Ayrshire became vacant – he'd always wanted VC 75. I took over his old VC on the proviso that he named 'criticals' – roses, sedges, hawkweeds, dandelions, willows and brambles, all of which he mastered, working with experts in the field until he was able to name other people's difficult plants. In the 1970s the BPS visited Colvend by the Solway; some members were startled when two people arrived with a big polystyrene fish box in the boot filled with fresh fronds of puzzling *Dryopteris* and putative *Polystichum x bicknellii* for Clive Jermy!

Allan was generous not only with his time, but was also my 'wheels'. He was game for many things, happily diverting to an antique shop or plant nursery where he would examine what he called 'weedy things'. We worked well as a team; my vertigo kept me at the base of cliffs and steep places while he explored above. He was a true companion. Though sometimes quiet, with little small talk, he could be the life and soul of the party. He will be greatly missed, but remembered by his truly vast herbarium, which has been donated to the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, and the duplicates will eventually find their way to the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow.

Alison Rutherford

David Given was a plant systematist who specialised in the predominantly New Zealand genus *Celmisia*. He took a particular interest in the Chatham Islands and their fern flora, and was actively engaged in a programme to determine the age, origin and evolution of that flora. But it was his pioneering work in New Zealand plant conservation where he excelled, working for the NZ DSIR (Dept of Scientific and Industrial Research) until 1991. During that time he was involved with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and became a member of their Species Survival Commission's Steering Committee. In 1997 he was asked to chair their Plant Conservation Committee and he continued to inspire and steer this group until 2004.

He and I met in the UK in 1974 when he visited the Natural History Museum and Kew. In 1983, at the International Botanical Congress in Sydney, David joined me and other pteridologists in forming the International Association of Pteridologists. We set up a number of committees and David became chair of the IAP Conservation Committee. Two years later the IUCN/SSC invited members of that group to become the SSC Specialist Group for Pteridophyta, with David as its first chair. He had begun preparing a Pteridophyte Action Plan and prepared a draft list of the *Top 50* most endangered ferns. He gave the keynote address at the international symposium the BPS organised with the SGP in the UK in 2001.

David died on 27th November 2005, in Christchurch, New Zealand, after a brave battle with cancer. His loss is felt most deeply by the many he mentored throughout the conservation fraternity. He was always positive in his advice, which was usually given with a witty sense of humour.

Clive Jermy

IN MEMORIAM

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

M. Yves Bernard of Hauts-de-Seine, France (1980)

Mrs Elaine Borwick of Perthshire (1982)

Mr Gerald G. Edwards of Fife (2003)

Dr Gerhard Schulze of Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany (1965). In 1981 Gerhard attended a BPS meeting in Wales, when his "fern knowledge was a great asset to the party". He will be missed on GEP meetings, where he always enjoyed interesting discussions on ferns. He recorded several new fern species for Corsica and Germany.

Dr Trevor G. Walker of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1960); obituary to be published in the 2006 *Bulletin*.

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** new members 2005, ** new members 2006, # members rejoined 2005, ## members rejoined 2006*

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MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2006

Meetings Secretary: P.J. Acock
Meetings Subcommittee: M.H. Rickard, N.J. Hards, J.M. Ide, A. Leonard, P.H. Ripley

- Sat. 25 March **AGM & Spring Indoor Meeting – Cambridge**
Leader: Barrie Stevenson
- Sat. 10 - Sun. 11 June **Weekend Field Meeting – Isle of Wight**
Leader: Graham Ackers
- Fri. 30 June - Sun. 9 July **Overseas Field Meeting with Hardy Fern Foundation – Germany**
Leader: Berndt Peters
- Sat. 22 - Sun. 23 July **Weekend Field Meeting – Yorkshire Dales**
Leader: Barry Wright
- Thurs. 17 - Sun. 20 Aug. ***Southport Flower Show: BPS Stand**
Further Info.: Michael Hayward
- Sat. 16 - Sun. 17 Sept. **Weekend Field Meeting – Tamar Valley, Devon & Cornwall**
Leader: Matt Stribley
- Thurs. 19 - Sun. 29 Oct. **Overseas Field Meeting – Réunion Island, Indian Ocean**
Leader: Paul Ripley & Pat Acock
- Sat. 18 Nov. **Autumn Meeting – A BPS Miscellany – The Natural History Museum, London**
Leader: Graham Ackers

** 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.

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- South-East England** P.H. Ripley, North Lodge, Dene Park Gardens, Shipbourne Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9NS; e-mail: SouthEast@eBPS.org.uk
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