

GROUP OF EUROPEAN PTERIDOLOGISTS (GEP) EXCURSION

Czech Republic – 15-19 July

Pat Acock

Nineteen pteridologists arrived from all over Europe during Sunday afternoon. We were staying in the hotel 'Vila Krenov' in the small hamlet of Krenov close to the Polish Border in the Krkonoše Mountains in the northern Czech Republic. The weather was very hot at 35°C but the vegetation was lush, hinting at regular rain. The family-run hotel was ideal for our needs and we were the only guests, which allowed us the freedom to make as much noise as we wanted in our discussions on matters ferny.

Monday saw us in Špindlerova, a ski resort above Špindleruv Mlýn. We only saw *Athyrium distentifolium*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *D. dilatata* and *Cystopteris fragilis* in the conifer forest at the top but were rewarded in addition with *Equisetum arvense*, *E. sylvaticum*, *Phegopteris connectilis*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Oreopteris limbosperma*, *Athyrium filix-femina* and *Gymnocarpium dryopteris* on the long walk back to the car park.

On Tuesday we went in a cable car up the highest mountain of Middle Europe outside the Alps, Sněžka. The party split in two. The hardy group went off to more distant places to look at *Isoetes* but were disappointed as a warden would not let them leave the trail and they only saw a few ferns. Unfortunately for the second group the first coffee stop was in Poland and the exchange rate was not in our favour with only kronas to spend! Early on, Andrew Leonard spotted a very large *Botrychium lunaria* and a little further along the trail the French party called us over to examine their *Diphasiastrum* find, which turned out to be *D. alpinum*. Another long walk, fortunately with many stopping places for tea, saw us back at the cars footsore but happy. In the evening after dinner, Wilfried Bennert treated us to a slide-show on his recent trips to the Philippines, which seemed magnificent for ferns but not for staying dry!

Serpentine rocks are often good sites for interesting aspleniums, so on our final day together it was decided to set off to explore 'on spec' the serpentine region of Poland, south of Sobótka, which proved elusive with roads cut off by barriers. When we did eventually all reach the woodland with the serpentine rocks, we found it very damp and shady and disappointingly we could not find a single *Asplenium*.



photo: A. Leonard

GEP 2007

Back: Ronnie Viane, Claude Jerome, Pascal Holveck,
Martin Rickard, Manfred Horn,
Christianne Baumann, Karsten Horn,
Franco Passarello, Sylvain Speissner

Front: Andrew Leonard, Arnaud Bizot, Pat Acock,
Wilfried & Carmen Bennert, Paul Ripley,
Lien Van den heede, Daniella Ivanova

Although the number of ferns was small, the breathtaking beauty of the area and the good company, which allowed us to discuss our varied interests, made this another memorable and enjoyable excursion.

Driving home after the excursion, the British contingent returned to the lower ski slopes of Špindlerova and was able to recognise four diphasiastrums, namely *Diphasiastrum alpinum*, *D. × issleri*, *D. tristachyum* and *D. complanatum*.

If you are interested in joining the GEP annual excursion please contact Prof. Ronnie Viane, Research Group: Pteridology, Dept of Biology, Ghent University, K.L. Ledeganckstraat 35, B-9000 Ghent, Belgium.

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HORTICULTURAL SHOWS

SOUTHPORT FLOWER SHOW – 16-19 August

M. Hayward

The theme set for the show this year was 'Music'. Our token response to this was the presence of fiddleheads in our display! Vases of cut fern fronds and a display of fern photographs formed the background to the stand, with a demonstration of propagation methods to the fore. This year we displayed an increased number of young ferns in pots, which attracted a steady stream of visitors to the stand.



photo: R. Ennos

Southport Flower Show 200

Yvonne Golding, Michael Hayward, Harvey Shepherd (with Happiland Trophy), Ann Gill

Visitors frequently enquired about selecting suitable varieties of ferns for the garden and for next year we plan to produce a range of pamphlets on this topic, as well as one giving details of local branches of the BPS. The FSC *Key to Common Ferns* was again the most popular item of merchandise on sale.

The number of exhibitors in the competitive classes is slowly increasing and although the standard of exhibits was a little patchy, there were many excellent specimens on show, particularly a large pot of the small *Blechnum microphyllum* from Harvey Shepherd, who this year won the Happiland Trophy. The BPS Cup for the Individual Championship was again won by Brian Russ. The fern judge was Richard Godard-Key.

The prize-winners are listed below.

Class 8 Individual Championship: Four Hardy British Ferns (dissimilar), two Greenhouse Ferns (dissimilar) and two Foreign Ferns Hardy in Great Britain: 1st B. Russ, 2nd M. Hayward, 3rd I. Rawson (3 entries)

- Class 9 Three Hardy British Ferns (distinct species, not varieties): 1st I. Rawson, 2nd H. Shepherd (2 entries)
- Class 10 One Foreign Fern Hardy in Great Britain: 1st H. Shepherd, 2nd B. Russ, 3rd I. Rawson (4 entries)
- Class 11 Three *Polypodium* (3 distinct varieties): (no entries)
- Class 12 Three *Polystichum* (3 distinct varieties): 1st H. Shepherd (1 entry)
- Class 13 Three *Athyrium* (3 distinct varieties): 1st M. Hayward (1 entry)
- Class 14 Three *Asplenium* excluding *A. scolopendrium* (3 distinct varieties or species): 1st H. Shepherd (1 entry)
- Class 15 One British Fern (any genus or variety): 1st H. Shepherd, 2nd O. Fairclough, 3rd I. Rawson (3 entries)
- Class 16 One Greenhouse Fern: 1st J. Abbott, 2nd D. Abbott, 3rd D. Need (4 entries)
- Class 17 Three *Asplenium scolopendrium* (3 distinct varieties): (no entries)

I would like to thank Ruth Berry, Roland Ennos, Ann Gill, Yvonne Golding, Rita Hardman, Trevor Pearce and Harvey Shepherd for manning the stand. All the helpers again enjoyed social evenings at my house in Blundellsands after the show.

The dates for next year's show are 21-24 August 2008. The theme for the show is 'Liverpool' and we are planning a new look for the BPS stand, complete with our own 'Liver Bird', so do try to come and see what surprises we will have on display. Or why not join us on the stand and get your entrance to the show free! I can arrange stop-overs for anyone travelling a distance. You also get a complimentary ticket to the show if you exhibit in the competitive classes. If you are interested in showing ferns at Southport either contact M. Hayward (6 Far Moss Road, Blundellsands, Liverpool L23 8TQ; mhaywardL23@blueyonder.co.uk) or obtain details of the schedule direct from the organisers at www.southportflowershow.co.uk

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.G. Taylor, Westlea, Kyleakin, Isle of Skye IV41 8PH (Membership@eBPS.org.uk).
