

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 2004 – The 101st AGM will take place on Saturday 20th March 2004 in the Mineralogy Seminar Room, The Natural History Museum, London at 2.00 p.m.

COMMITTEE VACANCIES – In accordance with paragraph 3, section 3 of the Society's Constitution, five vacancies will occur due to the retirement of three of the longest serving Committee members and two unfilled vacancies. Nominations are invited from Society members to fill these vacancies at the Annual General Meeting in 2004. The names of the nominees, proposers and seconders, together with a letter from the nominee indicating his/her willingness to serve, should reach the General Secretary before the AGM. **Members with a potential interest in serving as an elected Committee member** and who wish to know more of the duties and responsibilities are invited to contact the Secretary.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2004 – Members are reminded that subscriptions were due on 1st January 2004 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.

Persistent subscription defaulters – Each year the Membership Secretary spends twice as much time on the 200 members who pay late, or not at all, as on the 600 members who pay correctly within the first four months of the year! 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*"! Despite persistent requests from the Membership Secretary, there are also a small number who fail to update their Standing Orders when subscriptions increase. Such members have continued to receive full benefits of membership at the Society's cost. 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BACK NUMBERS OF JOURNALS – I have been impressed this year when out in the field by the number of times our journals have been seen, either while in use looking for an old site or just as general reading about a previous visit. In Madeira we were rueing the fact that we had not got a particular article with us to help us ‘unravel’ a couple of tricky ferns. All the journals have something worthwhile within and it is sad that I cannot provide all the back numbers but there are still a few tons stored away in my loft for those preparing to go on field trips, those needing extra help in cultivation and for those armchair pteridologists among us. A mixed pack of six of our journals is available for £6. The Back Numbers Organiser can provide a full list of other journals available. *Pat Acock*

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

E-MAIL ADDRESSES – Members who would like their e-mail addresses published in future membership address lists and who (1) have a stable e-mail address that is unlikely to change in the immediate future, and (2) keep up-to-date with their e-mail messages, are invited to send their address BY E-MAIL to the Membership Secretary at: Membership@eBPS.org.uk. *Please subsequently notify the Membership Secretary if your e-mail address changes.*

BPS WEBSITE – www.eBPS.org.uk (Hosted by The Natural History Museum.)

E-MAIL LIST & PRIVATE DOCUMENT STORE – 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 updated 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@yahoogroups.com to subscribe. There is also a document store on this site, which will be used for documents intended only for members and therefore not appropriate for posting on the BPS website, e.g. Booksales list and Merchandise details. So far, few members have subscribed to this service. Contact the BPS Webmaster for further information.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MERCHANDISE – Do you have a BPS sweatshirt and/or tee-shirt, or one of the polo shirts? These are all dark green with a small BPS logo in yellow. Other items, such as BPS ties and metal badges, ferny greetings cards and mugs, are also for sale. Can’t find your order form? Contact the Merchandise Organisers for details. They would also welcome suggestions for new stock.

ROYAL PATRONAGE – We are pleased to announce that HRH The Prince of Wales has agreed to be our patron for another five years.

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

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED ON BPS STANDS AT FLOWER SHOWS – The Society needs volunteers to assist at the BBC Gardeners' World Live! and Southport Flower Show. You do not need to be an expert on ferns or fern growing, just prepared to spend a few hours or a day on the stand. Expenses are available and should be negotiated with A.R. Busby in the first instance. Further information is available from the Horticultural Information Officer.

Do you have expertise in the design of display stands or similar skills and would like to help the Society? The Committee has agreed the purchase of display stands for use at Flower Shows and other events and is seeking help with their design. If you have that expertise and are willing to help, please contact A.R. Busby, the Horticultural Information Officer.

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

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

THE HARDY FERN FOUNDATION – The Hardy Fern Foundation was founded in 1989 to establish a comprehensive collection of the world's hardy ferns for display, testing, evaluation, public education and introduction to the gardening and horticultural community. Many rare and unusual species, hybrids and varieties are being propagated from spores and tested in selected environments for their different degrees of hardiness and ornamental garden value. Membership costs just \$20 for regular members or \$10 for students. Members receive a first-rate introductory pack, a quarterly journal and access to their spore exchange.

We are proposing a reciprocal arrangement to make payment easier. Those wishing to join or renew their subscription for 2004 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 the Membership Secretary. See AFS advert on p. 114.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003

MINUTES of the 100th Annual General Meeting of the British Pteridological Society held at The Natural History Museum, London, on Saturday 22nd March 2003 at 14.15 hours.

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

PRESENT: Mr R.G. Ackers, Mr P.J. Acock, Mr M.A. & Mrs L.C. Baggott, Mr A.R. Busby, Miss J.M. Camus, Mr S.E. Czeladzinski, Mr R. Dadd, Mr A.J. Dickman, Mr C.R. & Mrs N. Fraser-Jenkins, Dr Y.C. Golding, Dr N.J. Hards, Dr M. Hayward, Mrs R. Hibbs, Mr K. Hill, Mr G.K. Hoare, Miss J.M. Ide, Ms E. Knox-Thomas, Mr A. Leonard, Ms M.A. MacBeth, Mr A. Monaghan, Miss C.M. Mullins, Mr A.H. Ogden, Miss A.M. Paul, Mr A.C. Pigott, Prof. C.E. Polkey, Mr T. Pyner, Mr P.H. Ripley, Dr F.J. Rumsey, Mr B.D. Smith, Mr F.A. Strang, Mr A.D. & Mrs M. Urquhart, Dr T.G. Walker, Mr L.H. Winning, Mr B. Wright.

Item 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Mr J.H. Bouckley, Mr R.J. Cooke, Dr A.F. Dyer, Dr M. Gibby, Mr M.L. Grant, Mr L. Kirkham, Dr S.D. Martinelli, Dr J.W. Merryweather, Mr M.H. Rickard, Mrs G. Smith, Mr R.W. Sykes.

Item 2 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Minutes of the 99th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 15th March 2002, and published in the 2002 *Bulletin* (Vol. 6, no. 1) were approved (proposed by A.R. Busby, seconded by R.G. Ackers) and signed by the Chairman.

(Note: Owing to the late publication of the *Bulletin* the Minutes of the AGM 2002 had only been seen in advance by the Committee but copies were available on the day to members attending the AGM. The Minutes published in the *Bulletin* and approved at this meeting were a slightly shortened version of the Minutes as recorded in the Minute Book.)

Item 3 – MATTERS ARISING: None.

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

As the Society celebrates its one hundred and twelfth year this year you may be asking, “Where did the other 12 AGMs go?” In 1917 annual meetings were suspended after the death of C.T. Druery, who was Secretary at the time and because of the First World War, being resumed in 1920. Then, in 1940, the Society went into abeyance during the Second World War, with Annual General Meetings being resumed in 1947.

In the early years the Society’s annual meeting was the only meeting in the year when “*the business affairs of the Society were transacted, fern hunts were organised and talks given by the more gifted members*” (Dyce 1991). The form of the meeting has changed several times over the years, but as the activities and interests of the Society increased they became the more formal AGMs of today, usually sandwiched between more interesting indoor activities.

(Ref.: Dyce, J.W., 1991 ‘The British Pteridological Society – The First One Hundred Years’, in *The History of British Pteridology*, Ed. J.M. Camus, BPS Special Publication No.4.)

CHARITY STATUS: We made it! After six years and a great deal of hard work the Society officially became a registered charity on 11 June 2002!

A number of people contributed to the work that eventually resulted in our registration. In particular we should thank B.A. Thomas for providing the initial impetus to begin the pursuit of charity status, A.C. Wardlaw for his work in investigating the answers to a number of queries that arose in the initial stages of the Committee’s discussions, and R.W. Sykes for the preparation of the application form. After the application had been

submitted it fell to my lot to draft the changes to the Constitution that the Charity Commissioners required, and to organise the procedures to ratify them.

GIFT AID: One advantage of being a charity is that the Society can boost its income through claiming Gift Aid on members' subscriptions, and you should all have discovered a Gift Aid form in your mailing of documents at the beginning of the year. I can assure you that the Committee is not short of ideas on how to spend it!

GRANTS: A second advantage is that it should now be possible for the Society to tap into sources of grants and the Committee recently deputed R.W. Sykes to investigate possible sources and the application procedures for such as the Heritage and Lottery funds.

INSURANCE: The Committee continues to review the Society's organisation and activities. Insurance was already part of the on-going review, but once the Society became a charity it was imperative that investigations should be completed as soon as possible and decisions made.

On becoming a charity, every member of the Committee became a trustee with a number of responsibilities, not least of which is to see that the Society is neither negligent with its money nor careless of the safety of others or of property, both of members and third parties. In the event of accidents, damage to property, fraud or defamation, the Society must be able to show that it has taken all possible measures to avoid them. If the Society was sued and found to be negligent in the way it conducted any of its affairs, any damages against the Society could ruin it financially and the trustees could become liable, even to the forfeiture of their own property. Although the Society, since 2000, has had an insurance policy to cover third party liability, the Committee had a number of concerns, not least of which was trustee liability. The Committee, therefore, accepted R.G. Ackers' offer to investigate insurance and review the ways in which the Society tries to reduce the risk of accidents to members and their guests, and damage to property during meetings. As a result of a considerable amount of work, for which we must thank him warmly, the Committee is now satisfied that we have appropriate insurance cover, but will regularly review the position and constantly be open to situations that may give cause for change.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS: When the Special Interest Groups were first set up around 1992, it was expected that each group convenor would prepare and distribute an annual newsletter to members of the group. A.C. Wardlaw reviewed the Groups and found that the other convenors, like himself as convenor of the Tree-Fern SIG, were finding it difficult to elicit articles from members and were effectively writing the newsletters themselves. This was putting a considerable burden on them. A.C. Wardlaw suggested, therefore, that the activities of these groups might take alternative forms, and as a result the Meetings Subcommittee was asked to arrange, as part of the national programme, a meeting each November based on the area of interest of one Special Interest Group, running on a two to three year cycle; these would, of course, be open to other interested members of the Society. It was also suggested that convenors might solicit lists of ferns grown by members of their groups and these could be published in *Pteridologist*. With these alternative activities there would be no expectation of an annual newsletter, but the idea of Special Interest Groups would be preserved. The meetings would also serve to extend the Society's contribution to its educational aims. Already we see these alternative activities manifested in this year's meetings programme with a Tree-Fern Mini-Symposium to be held at Kew, and in the publication of the Tree-Fern Newsletter in the latest issue of *Pteridologist*.

ARCHIVES: After one hundred and twelve years the Society's archive material is now considerable. With no record of exactly how much material there is or where it is stored, the Committee has been anxious about the inaccessibility and vulnerability of this very valuable

asset. At last I am able to report that some positive movement is taking place, but, not wanting to steel his thunder, I will leave any further word to the Archivist, A.R. Busby.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP: In celebration of his 70th birthday and for his contributions to the Society and to fern taxonomy, the Society conferred Honorary Membership on A.C. Jermy at last year's AGM at Ness Botanic Garden, South Wirral. In the evening celebrations continued with a dinner in his honour after which diners enjoyed the skills of James Merryweather on several instruments from his collection of bagpipes.

AFFILIATE SOCIETIES: The Society does not act in isolation. It has been a member of the *Royal Horticultural Society* for very many years now, and we have had a representative, since its inception a number of years ago, on *PlantLife Link*, the organisation that liaises on behalf of the individual botanical societies of the British Isles with the plant conservation charity, *PlantLife*. In 2002 we were invited to have a representative on *PlantLife Link Scotland*, a new similar group with a particular concern for Scotland's flora.

Towards the end of 2001 but reported for the first time in the Society's minutes in 2002, the Society had a representative at the first *Annual Conference for Society Recorders* held by the Biological Records Centre, and this will be an ongoing commitment.

In October the Committee took the decision to join the *National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens* (the NCCPG) (though we actually joined in 2003), as it was felt that the Society should seek to improve its relationship with the NCCPG and be proactive in encouraging members to create National Collections of ferns.

Finally, we have registered our interest in the proposed educational activities of the *National Biodiversity Network* (NBN) by completing an extensive questionnaire sent to the Society. (The National Biodiversity Network aims to provide a central Internet access point for all biological records from all sources, which can be accessed by anyone.)

Our affiliation to these different organisations is one means by which the Society fulfils its stated aim of promoting the cultivation, study and conservation of ferns and fern allies.

(For completeness, perhaps it should be noted here that the Society is also a member of the *National Federation of Plant Societies*, which was set up a few years ago to provide constructive support to the various plant societies in the United Kingdom, be they botanical societies with an interest primarily in wild plants, or groups with an interest in particular cultivated species.)

DEATH OF MEMBERS: It is always with deep sadness that we report the death of members, but 2002 saw the loss of five members of long-standing, who, in very diverse ways, had made valuable contributions to pteridology in the cultivation of ferns or the study of their biology. They were John Bond and John Mashiter, both expert fern growers, Hugh Corley and Betty Molesworth-Allen, fern taxonomists, and Peter Corbin, whose claim to fame was his discovery of a true wild *Asplenium scolopendrium* 'Crispum'. (See Obituaries, *Bulletin* 2002, Vol.6, Number 1, pages 78-85.)

THANKS: I would like to finish my report by saying thank you to several people.

If it had not been for his considerable personal determination to ensure the publication of the *Fern Gazette* and *Pteridologist*, these journals would not have been published in 2002. Alastair Wardlaw devoted a great deal of his time in searching for an editor for *Pteridologist* and in personally preparing Part 5 of Volume 16 of the *Fern Gazette* for publication. (He is also responsible for the bumper three-part issue of the *Gazette*, which will contain the papers presented at the Symposium in 2001, to be published very shortly, which will bring the due issues of the *Gazette* up-to-date.) The difficulty continues of finding editors for our journals and members willing to help, even in small ways, with the

publication process of both the journals and Special Publications. A very pro-active President, Alastair deserves our admiration for taking on a second time-consuming position, that of Acting Chairman of the Publications Subcommittee. The Society owes him a great debt of gratitude, and on behalf of the Committee and the membership of the Society I would like to record our thanks to him for all his hard work.

My own special thanks go to Alastair for being so supportive and gentle with me in my present circumstances, which do not always enable me to be as efficient or as supportive of him as I would like, and to Alison Paul for keeping me on the straight and narrow by reminding me of things I have forgotten, not taken into account, or just plain got wrong! Finally, I should like to thank the Committee for being very forbearing with me when I am unable to get documents out for meetings as early as I would like and they would wish. To you all, thank you very much indeed.

R.G. Ackers commented that the Meetings Subcommittee was already reaping an advantage of being a charity. The normal charge for a room at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, where next year's AGM is to be held, is £360, but the Society will be charged £60 because of its charity status. T.G. Walker noted that another Society of a similar size to the BPS and of which he is a member, has 75% of its membership Gift Aiding their subscriptions. This resulted in a considerable boost to that Society's annual income.

The Secretary's report was approved, proposed by A.M. Paul, seconded by N.J. Hards.

Item 5 – REPORT OF THE HONORARY TREASURER (A. Leonard): The Treasurer presented the unaudited accounts for the year ending 31st December 2002. He explained that the accounts had yet to be finalised. Traditionally, the cost of the *Bulletin* was charged to the year on which it was reporting although the invoice was usually received and paid in the following year. The figure in the unaudited accounts will, therefore, probably be changed. Income exceeded expenditure by approximately £3,000, which was about average over recent years. He was pleased to report that the accounts were healthy.

In response to a question, the Treasurer stated that the value of the two computers noted in item 3 of the notes accompanying the accounts were the actual prices paid for each of them.

The accounts were approved, subject to auditing, proposed by S.E. Czeladzinski, seconded by F.J. Rumsey. (For accounts see page 169.)

Item 6 – REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (M.S. Porter): Despite a rise in subscription rates and unavoidable delays in the publication of the Society's journals, membership numbers held up well, although there was a small decline. Some members resigned, feeling that twenty pounds was too much to pay, others became 'Optional' members, thus reducing their payments to sixteen pounds, but forgoing the *Fern Gazette*, and some said they would resign at the end of the year – although not all have carried out this threat! Thus, at the end of 2002 the membership total stood at 778, 23 down on 2001. A breakdown of this total shows that there were 33 Complimentary and Honorary Members, 52 Family Members, 19 Student Members, 86 Subscribers and 588 'Ordinary' Members. Interestingly we have practically doubled our number of Student Members; 19 young people with a keen eye for good value.

During 2002, 76 new members joined the Society, the same number as in 2001 and very much in line with most previous years. Against these have to be set the losses: the death of five valued members of the Society, the resignation of 37 members, a figure that is substantially higher than normal and, as mentioned before, is largely accounted for by the rise in subscription rates, and finally, 57 members were deemed to have lapsed, since they failed to pay their subscription for the year despite one general and two personal reminders.

Although membership has dropped below 800, the reason for the fall is obvious and we can be confident that within a year or two numbers will be made up. Following a rise in subscription rates most societies experience a fall in numbers but they are quickly made good in the ensuing years. The number of new members has not declined, and this should perhaps be seen as the key factor in that process.

Item 7 – REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION OFFICER AND RECORDER (R.J. Cooke): The most noteworthy event this year in botanical circles was the long awaited publication of *The New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora*. This monumental tome (nearly 1,000 pages plus a CD, and very heavy), published by the Botanical Society of the British Isles, is the culmination of a vast amount of recording, including that of BPS members. It reflects well on the BPS that members were able to contribute both records and species accounts. The Atlas contains distribution maps and brief species accounts, and also includes for the first time a separate distribution map for the gametophyte of Killarney fern and many non-native species. Flicking through the fern maps reveals a number of trends, including the contraction of the range of clubmosses to the north-west, the general decline in distribution of marsh fern and other species susceptible to intensive agriculture, and the widespread distribution of the non-native *Azolla*. If you have not yet seen the Atlas I would recommend it, although perhaps to consult rather than to purchase.

Inevitably, the first thing that one does with an atlas is to check that dots exist where you know the species to occur. Usually it becomes quickly obvious that there are some unexplained gaps. Therefore the BPS is likely to instigate some targeted recording of specific species over the next couple of years to try and plug these gaps. We will then be able to publish updated maps, in much the same way as we did in 1978 with the (old) fern atlas. More on this to follow once the Committee has endorsed the proposal.

The Atlas, of course, will stimulate much recording and discussion and one of our greatest challenges is keeping data freely and readily available. The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) aims to help this process, by linking datasets and information through a ‘gateway’ on the Internet. It is early days yet but in due course I hope that the BPS will be able to play its full role in this initiative. More information can be found on the NBN website (nbn.org.uk); its stated objectives are to:

- Bring together information about biodiversity from a range of different sources.
- Check that this information is reliable, properly documented and safely stored.
- Create links between organisations and their different sets of information.
- Prepare dictionaries of names to help people cope with regional differences in species names.
- Enable anyone to find out about the UK’s wildlife, locally and nationally.
- Develop projects to make the wealth of information available for educational purposes.
- Encourage people to participate in the network, so that knowledge and understanding of our natural heritage continues to grow in the future.

In reply to a question from T.G. Walker, N.J. Hards commented that localities of endangered species were safeguarded to the extent that only the general area in which an endangered species was present was given and not the details of the precise locality. Some people still had qualms about even this level of information being available.

R.G. Ackers asked if a pteridophyte subset of the new Atlas was likely to be published, as suggested in the Minutes of last year’s AGM? A.C. Pigott replied that there was a verbal agreement with the Botanical Society of the British Isles that the BPS could have access to the data. However, the BSBI might be uncomfortable with a straight lift from the Atlas. He felt that the BPS should aim to do something extra, something better, with the data.

Item 8 – SUBCOMMITTEE (Permanent) REPORTS:

8.1 – MEETINGS SUBCOMMITTEE (P.J. Acock): I suppose it is because we live in such prosperous times that we are able to have such a rich and challenging meetings programme. Who among our forbears would have guessed that the Fern Society would have been exploring for ferns in Chile in February, eating ice-cream and celebrating Clive Jermy's 70th Birthday in the Wirral on the occasion of our AGM, putting on an excellent mini-symposium in Edinburgh during the World Cup or clambering around Tenerife during December. As well as this we fitted in a day trip to Scotney Castle and Sissinghurst; were able to fit in our postponed field meeting to the Lakes in July; and ran an *Equisetum* Workshop at Bangor and a field meeting to Teesdale. It takes your breath away just thinking about it.

We have seen a wealth of new attendees and fellowship has grown among a number of members. We have had members joining us from across 'The Pond' and from the BSBI. We had 28 attending for one of the days at Bangor!

To put on all these meetings takes a great deal of effort and it is my privilege and pleasure to give a vote of thanks to all those involved in any way in the planning, preparation and execution of this great year. We must especially thank those who front the meetings, who come up with the ideas and plan them, but we must also thank those who offer their homes for hospitality, those who prepare rooms, sit on doors, make the tea and help in any number of little ways that make the meetings pass by seamlessly.

The regional groups continue to flourish and are an excellent way of recruiting and retaining the membership's interest at the local level. They are as diverse as they are in number. To start one is not difficult because they can be what anyone wants them to be. In East Anglia and the South East we had our second joint meeting and this has proved to be an excellent way of sharing ideas, interest and friendship.

The Meetings Subcommittee would also like to thank all those who attended and helped to make this year's meetings a real joy.

8.2 – PUBLICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE (Prof. A.C. Wardlaw): Because of the dispersed nature of its membership, the Publications Subcommittee did not meet during the past year. However, the members were in communal communication by e-mail, and an e-Publications Subcommittee had numerous exchanges of correspondence. The President served as Acting Chairman pending other arrangements.

Meanwhile the Society overcame the difficulties encountered 18 months ago when both *Pteridologist* and *The Fern Gazette* were without Editors and had none in prospect. The future of publication activities by the Society potentially looks bright, with all the new electronic possibilities for storing and disseminating information. Thus we have the printed journals and leaflets, the special publications, the capability of copying large archival texts onto CD, and our website. However, to exploit these opportunities will require more volunteers with the necessary skills and availability. It would therefore be good if all computer-literate or artistically-inclined members, or writers and proof-readers etc. within the Society were to help from time to time with a tour of duty on these activities.

8.2.1 – BULLETIN: At the time of writing, the 2002 issue of the *Bulletin* is in the final stages of preparation, the delay being caused by the large size of this Part combined with the introduction of new technology. It contains the usual range of Society News. Miss A.M. Paul continues the expert and dedicated service that she has delivered to the Society in this role for many years now.

8.2.2 – THE FERN GAZETTE: The 2002 issue will be of exceptional size – 230 pages and comprise Parts 6, 7 & 8 of Volume 16. It contains the Proceedings of the 2001 Guildford Symposium on *Fern Flora Worldwide: Threats and Responses*. It should be published in March 2003. This special volume has been edited by Dr A.F. Dyer, Dr E. Sheffield and Prof. A.C. Wardlaw and is dedicated to Clive Jermy on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Meanwhile, Dr M. Gibby became Chief Editor of the journal in November 2002 and has mainstream papers being processed for Volume 17, Part 1 to be issued in 2003.

8.2.3 – PTERIDOLOGIST: A new-look *Pteridologist* journal was produced at A4 size and full colour. The new Editor, Dr J.W. Merryweather, is to be congratulated for his initiative and designer talents in this very attractive product. By previous arrangement, the Tree-Fern Newsletter (No. 8) was included as a feature of the magazine. As always, the Editor is keen to receive articles and illustrations on any aspect of ferns and their allies.

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

8.2.5 – OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS:

8.2.5.1 – Symposium Proceedings: See above at 8.2.2.

8.2.5.2 – BPS Minute Book CD: (BPS Special Publication No. 6). As previously reported, the Society's most valuable archive, the 630-page Minute Book, was scanned in colour and copied onto CD in Adobe PDF format by Mr B. Wright (case design by Mrs R. Hibbs). This unique product is now on offer through BPS Booksales. Further particulars may be found on the Society's website and in *Pteridologist* 4(1): 28.

8.2.5.3 – Index for the Bulletin: Mr J. Crowe completed a draft Index to volumes 1-4 of the *Bulletin* (1973-1995). It is hoped that an index to volumes 1-5 will be published during the next year.

8.2.5.4 – Index for Pteridologist: Mr M. Searle is completing the compilation of an Index for the last volume (Vol. 3) of *Pteridologist*, and will soon start indexing Volumes 1 and 2. It is planned to issue the Indexes for the three volumes simultaneously but under separate covers. They will provide invaluable access to information on the wide range of pteridological subjects published in this magazine between 1984 and 2001.

Discussion: At the end of the report, A.C. Pigott commented that the website had few of the restrictions that paper journals had, and articles with a minority interest or that were too large for a journal could easily be published on the website. C.R. Fraser-Jenkins asked if hard copies would be available for articles submitted to the website? A.C. Pigott replied that there was no automatic production of hard copy for items published on the web, but if the nature of the material was such that the author required the formality of publication then the necessary procedures would have to be gone through, such as the lodging of copies with the appropriate organisations. This could be done. A.C. Wardlaw commented further that it would be possible to make CD copies available on request. The BPS needs to be as imaginative as possible in the ways in which it disseminates material.

8.3 – FERN VARIETIES NOMENCLATURE SUBCOMMITTEE: No report.

Item 9 – SUBCOMMITTEE (ad hoc) REPORTS:

9.1 – FERN ATLAS SUBCOMMITTEE: No report.

Item 10 – COMMITTEE APPOINTED OFFICERS AND MANAGERS:

10.1 – ARCHIVIST (A.R. Busby): This is probably the first time the Society Archivist has been able to report any real progress on the development of the Society's archives to an

Annual General Meeting. Since the formation of the Society in 1891, it has accumulated a large quantity of pictures, letters, articles, books and items of memorabilia. Since then most of it has been stored in very poor conditions, usually in the attics or box-rooms of members. For some time the Committee had discussed how it might all be brought together under one roof, so that the appointed archivist might be given the chance to assess and catalogue the contents. During 2002 the Committee agreed to rent commercial storage space and last October I managed to obtain premises near to my home in Coventry.

Having now had the opportunity to begin collating and assessing the contents of the Society's archive, I am beginning to appreciate its contents and estimate the work ahead. The task is huge and at this stage I have no clear idea of how much other material is in the hands of other members. If any members feel that they have items that they would like to donate to the Society's archive such as photographs, letters, press items or any fern memorabilia, would they kindly contact me with the details first so that I am not overwhelmed by members' generosity. I look forward to reporting further on this matter at the next Annual General Meeting.

10.2 – BOOKSALES (S.J. Munyard): Booksales continued to be used regularly by members at meetings and frequently by postal requests. It continues to be difficult to obtain good second-hand material but in the last four months a number of titles were purchased on the Isle of Wight and in Suffolk. I will continue to search for these items along with any good new material that becomes available.

10.3 – MERCHANDISE (B.D. & G. Smith): Last year was our first full year running the BPS Merchandising having taken over from Mick and Linda Craddock's capable hands in June 2001.

For merchandise sales things were slow during 2002, with very few orders coming in. There were two main reasons for this. One, the merchandise list did not go out with the members' mailing at the beginning of 2002. The second was that we did not have a large gathering like the Symposium, which had given sales a big boost in 2001. The turnover for 2002 (about £200) reflects this, being much less than in 2001 (about £700).

However, we have been trying to improve matters for the future. The merchandise list *did* go out with the early 2003 members' mailing, and there has been a good in-flow of orders since then. More importantly, we have been investigating new items which we and the Committee feel would interest members and are able to launch at this meeting a new BPS bone china mug, which features a lovely *Blechnum penna-marina* designed by Anne Wright and available at £4.50 each. We also have some attractive greetings cards again featuring more of Anne's delightful ferns, and we are grateful to her for producing them for the BPS to sell.

Existing stocks of a number of items have been dwindling and these will gradually be replaced. As an example, there are now polo and sweatshirts bearing an attractive *embroidered* BPS logo. The screen print ones are still for sale but in a limited number of sizes, and are a little cheaper than the embroidered ones. Similarly, there are new car stickers which the manufacturer assures us are a lot more durable than the old (now exhausted) stock. Still in stock in abundance are boxes and boxes of BPS postcards and notelets. However, a lesson can be learnt here about over-purchasing as many are now in a poor state and will have to be written off.

As for the future, we are looking into BPS pens, serviettes and tea towels, and we may even be producing a BPS calendar, but, more of that next year.

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

A.C. Wardlaw asked how remainder stock was valued? Although no direct reply was forthcoming, A.C. Pigott responded that the postcards and notelets, purchased by him, had already paid for themselves when management of Merchandising was handed over to the previous managers, M. and L. Craddock, over six years ago. It was suggested that advertisements for merchandise could be placed on the website and in *Pteridologist*. The latter could be a permanent feature.

10.4 – PLANT EXCHANGE (R.G. Ackers): Following responses from the Plant Exchange insert in last November's *Pteridologist* mailing, a new List was prepared and distributed mid-January 2003 to 14 postal requesters and 20 e-mail requesters. An updated version of the List was e-mailed at the end of January. This version contained 61 'offered' and 56 'wanted' taxa from a total of 22 scheme participants.

Four new ideas were introduced:

- The addition, where known, of the USDA Hardiness Zone for the plants offered.
- The option of having plants collected and/or posted.
- The introduction of plant 'wants' (up to a maximum of six plants per participant).
- The supply of List updates to e-mail participants.

10.5 – SPORE EXCHANGE (B. & A. Wright): The exchange continued to be a popular service offered to members, with 149 requests being received and processed, resulting in the sending out of 2,473 packets of spores. Of these, 110 requests were from UK members (England 89, Scotland 11, Wales 10) and 39 from overseas. This reaffirms the international nature of our exchange. The overseas requests were from Austria (1), Belgium (1), Czech Republic (1), Denmark (2), Eire (3), Estonia (2), France (2), Germany (8), Japan (1), Luxembourg (1), Mauritius (1), Netherlands (4), Norway (1), Poland (1), Sri Lanka (2), Switzerland (1), USA (7). Three requests for spores were processed by A.R. Busby.

Out of the 614 taxa on the 2002 list we had requests for 561 of them. Because we are no longer discarding spores after three years, we expect a steady increase in the number of species on the list. There is obviously a balance between taxa that 'run out' and 'new taxa' donated each year, but we still seem to be adding steadily to the list.

During 2002 we received donations from 29 donors sending in 274 different taxa to top up the spore bank. Without donations there would not be an exchange. We are grateful for all the spores we receive and would like to thank those requesting them for their patience in the early weeks of the distribution.

In 2002 we suffered one of the aftershocks of the September 11th terrorist attack in America. The United States government imposed strict import regulations requiring that we produce a phytosanitary certificate for every consignment of spores going into the US. This added to our workload. We tried to group together these requests as we have to call out an inspector from DEFRA each time we send out a consignment. So far DEFRA have not charged for this service, however, we have been advised that if a charge is to be made it would be in the order of £40 per consignment. (DEFRA – Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

The only other problem we had during the year was when we tried to cash in some of the International Reply Coupons sent in by overseas members. Apparently, these are not valid for redemption if they have not been stamped by the issuing post office. This meant that we had to throw out more than 25 coupons because they had not been stamped. In this country they are worth 44p for the return postage. This is a significant loss and we hope that overseas members will, in future, ensure that their coupons are correctly stamped by their issuing post office.

So far we have had no adverse comments about our use of small foil packets to contain the spores. We hope this means that it is an acceptable method of packaging and not that people are too apathetic to complain. It may seem a fiddly way of packaging, but we find it advantageous in the long run as we can economise on glassine envelopes. It also enables us to make some of our smaller donations of spores stretch further by putting in smaller quantities than we would have normally put into a glassine envelope alone. We did get a number of adverse comments about spores getting trapped in the folds of the glassine envelopes that we used to use.

One of the perennial problems we face is how to provide a 'level playing field' for our overseas members. Clearly they do not receive their spore lists at the same time as UK members and also there is a delay in their replies. This is why we do not start the exchange immediately we receive our first requests from UK members. We try to anticipate the turnaround period for various overseas members and advance their requests forwards by three or four days to give them a fair chance of obtaining the spores they want. We also continue to favour donors by advancing them to the front of the box regardless of when their request arrives. A good incentive for being a donor!

With the increase in the use of the Internet and e-mail, we are coming under increasing pressure to accept requests via this method. This poses the problem of how we get the money back for the expenditure of stamps and envelopes, etc. This problem will need to be addressed during this coming season. Unfortunately, although we can receive requests via e-mail we have yet to find a way to send out the spores as an attachment!

10.6 – HORTICULTURAL INFORMATION OFFICER (A.R. Busby): Four enquiries had been received during the year, three of which were from non-members. One enquiry concerned glazed cases and A.R. Busby was able to direct the enquirer to a supplier; the other enquiries concerned the cultivation of ferns.

The above reports, items 6 to 10.6, were accepted *en bloc*, proposed by P.H. Ripley and seconded by C.R. Fraser-Jenkins.

Item 11 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS: The present officers of the Society were all eligible to stand for re-election and had indicated their willingness to stand. Of the present elected members of the Committee, R.G. Ackers was retiring, being the longest serving member of the Committee (elected 2000), and F.J. Rumsey had agreed to retire, there being four members elected in 2001. It was proposed by N.J. Hards and seconded by Miss J.M. Camus that the officers and those elected members eligible for re-election be elected *en bloc*. The vote was unanimously in favour.

ELECTION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS: There was one nomination for Committee membership: Dr Yvonne Golding, proposed A.C. Wardlaw, seconded R.G. Ackers. Dr Golding was elected unanimously.

ELECTION OF AUDITORS: The auditors, P.H. Ripley and Mrs K. Munyard, are disqualified as auditors now that the Society is a charity as they are either on the committee or married to a committee member. G.K. Hoare and Dr N.J. Hards, proposed by the Committee, were elected unanimously.

Item 12 – HONORARY MEMBERSHIP: A proposal to award Honorary Membership to C.R. Fraser-Jenkins, supported by a detailed statement setting out his contribution to pteridology, had been made by J.M. Camus and seconded by A.M. Paul. The Committee was delighted to support the proposal and in making the award, the President congratulated him. In reply, C.R. Fraser-Jenkins, now resident in Nepal but currently visiting the UK, said

that he was very happy to receive the award; it meant a great deal to him. He issued an invitation to the Society and its members to visit Nepal, a homely fern garden!

Item 13 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS: The President reported that Miss Rose S. Murphy had been elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society and the Royal Horticultural Society had awarded the Gold Veitch Memorial Medal to Martin H. Rickard. The congratulations of the meeting would be sent to them both.

There being no further formal matters for consideration the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 15.45 hours.

Jennifer M. Ide
Hon. Gen. Secretary

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. The accounts reflect the subscriptions actually received in the year.
2. BPS Booksales had assets of £5,712.60 (£5,361.24) at 31.12.2002.
3. The Society also possesses the following assets:
 - Back issues of the *Bulletin*, *Fern Gazette* and *Pteridologist* valued at approximately £3,000.
 - Merchandise valued at approximately £1,200.
 - Booksales has a computer valued at £600 in 2000.
 - The Editor of *Pteridologist* has a computer valued at £1,133.99 in 2001.
4. The Society made no grants in 2002.
5. The numbers of copies of publications are shown on either side of the title.

REPORT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS

(Since the Society is a registered charity with an annual turnover of less than £100,000 no audit is required but a formal examination is carried out in accordance with Charity Commission rules.)

We report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ending 31st December 2002.

Our Examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the Committee as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently we do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

In connection with our examination, no matter has come to our attention:-

1. which gives us reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Acthave not been met; or
2. to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Dr N.J. Hards & G.K. Hoare
19th September 2003

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2002

ORDINARY ACCOUNT

(2001)	INCOME	2002
£12,973.77	Subscriptions	£14,791.26
637.48	Interest	498.10
749.71	Booksales	15.66
0.00	Spore Exchange	0.00
704.60	Merchandise	102.25
55.00	Plant Sale	0.00
21,303.72	Symposium 2001	0.00
<u>£36,424.28</u>	TOTAL INCOME	<u>£15,407.27</u>
EXPENSES		
3,241.45	Pteridologist	3,519.73
4,762.08	Fern Gazette	2,308.16
3,990.10	Bulletin	3,497.20
585.25	Printing & Stationery	128.00
1,061.37	Administration & Postage	875.57
47.50	Subscriptions to Societies	55.00
51.37	Plant & Spore Exchanges	50.00
529.62	Meetings	1,147.12
0.00	Merchandise	0.00
18,407.14	Symposium 2001	0.00
749.71	Booksales	0.00
57.84	Special Interest Groups	0.00
0.00	Archive Storage	203.28
<u>£33,483.43</u>	TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>£11,784.06</u>
2,940.85	Balance (income minus expenses)	3,623.21
10,118.28	Brought forward from previous year	13,059.13
<u>£13,059.13</u>	Total in Ordinary Account	<u>£16,682.34</u>

CENTENARY FUND

383.44	Interest	247.38
0.00	Grant	0.00
16.00	<i>172</i> World of Ferns <i>171</i>	8.00
6,086.15	Brought forward from previous year	6,485.59
<u>£6,485.59</u>	Total in Centenary Fund	<u>£6,740.97</u>

GREENFIELD FUND

121.41	Interest	78.25
0.00	Grant	0.00
3.00	Donations	0.00
1,927.01	Brought forward from previous year	2,051.42
<u>£2,051.42</u>	Total in Greenfield Fund	<u>£2,129.67</u>

PUBLICATIONS ACCOUNT

321.90	Interest	227.11
255.67	Offprints	203.57
39.75	<i>155</i> Fern Names & Their Meanings <i>146</i>	35.10
128.30	<i>339</i> Cultivation & Propagation <i>310</i>	112.00
60.00	<i>819</i> History of British Pteridology <i>813</i>	30.60
39.30	<i>430</i> BPS Abstracts & Papers <i>427</i>	18.00
5,109.38	Brought forward from previous year	5,954.30
<u>£5,954.30</u>	Total in Publications Account	<u>£6,580.68</u>

AWARDS

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP – C.R. FRASER-JENKINS

At the AGM on 22nd March 2003 Honorary Membership was conferred on Chris Fraser-Jenkins for his services to pteridology.

In the UK, the name Fraser-Jenkins is associated with the *Dryopteris affinis* complex, but Christopher's work with ferns is much wider than this.

At the tender age of nine, Chris started to identify ferns using *The Observer's Book of Ferns* as his botanical bible. When at school at Radley College he met the late Hugh Corley who was already involved in researching the male fern group. It was Hugh who really introduced Chris to the detailed observations needed for fern research – frond shape will only get you so far. Spore-size measurement, pinnule-toothing, details of indusia and scales, and frond texture all became standard tools. Chris continued his pursuit of ferns at the University of Leicester.

Chris started his collecting trips abroad shortly before he left school, going first to Arctic Sweden, then with Martyn Rix to Turkey and Iran, and joined the BPS in 1966. Through the BPS meetings he met Clive Jermy at The Natural History Museum, and hence was fortunate to be awarded a Student Vacationship to study the *Dryopteris villarii* group. Shortly afterwards he was able to join a cytology course run by Prof. I. Manton and John Lovis at Leeds where he met more important British pteridologists – Anne Sleep and Mary Gibby, and got confirmation that he had indeed found the missing diploid ancestor of *D. filix-mas* in the Caucasus.



photo: F.J. Rumsey

Alastair Wardlaw (right) presents Christopher Fraser-Jenkins with his Honorary Membership certificate

His long, free-lance career started through contact with Prof. T. Reichstein, a retired Swiss chemist who had won the Nobel prize for his work on vitamin C. Reichstein took up pteridology at the age of 75 and studied the chemistry of *Dryopteris* and *Asplenium* complexes. Reichstein financed many of Chris' collecting trips to obtain *Asplenium* for his work, allowing him to travel round the world looking at *Dryopteris*, *Polystichum* and *Athyrium*.

His work really expanded beyond European ferns when he first visited the Himalayas in 1977 and encountered so many species and species-complexes that he realised he would have to get to grips with all their relatives in China and Japan as well. Mary Gibby was now in post at The Natural History Museum and could help with cytological problems, and Prof. C.-J. Widén at Helsinki, Finland, provided phytochemical analyses. The three worked in a complementary way as a very successful team. Clive Jermy again assisted Chris' career by helping him to get a major fellowship from the Nuffield Foundation in 1979 and two Royal Society exchange visits in 1980 and 1982 with Academia Sinica in China.

Since then he has continued his research with work on floristic projects such as *Flora Iranica* as well as monographic studies on *Dryopteris*, *Polystichum*, *Athyrium* and other genera, collaborating especially with Nepalese and Indian botanists. His publications now number well over seventy and he is the author of over 100 new names or new combinations. Chris has received two honours from the Indian Fern Society: the Prof. S.S. Bir Gold Medal in Pteridology in 1989 and Fellow of the Indian Fern Society in 1999.

Chris has been an assiduous and gifted collector with a remarkable eye for new and critical material, which has forwarded the insight into many ferns, especially in the *Dryopteris* complexes. He is widely acknowledged as a world expert in *Dryopteris*, in fact he is THE world expert in this genus. His publication "*A monograph of Dryopteris (Pteridophyta: Dryopteridaceae) in the Indian subcontinent*" may be taken as a good example of his work. This paper is a model for fern taxonomy: it has keys to species, detailed descriptions, cytology, ecology, range, good black and white photographs, lists of material examined and very useful notes for each species. Very few fern botanists have achieved this high standard of presentation beyond the publication of their degree research, but this fine attention to important detail is typical of his work.

His collections now number over 30,000. These specimens are distributed among major herbaria in Europe and Asia but especially at The Natural History Museum and the National Museum of Wales (he first became associated with the latter in his childhood). His field experience of Asian pteridophytes is second to none. During the course of his fieldwork, especially in India, he has helped numerous Indian fern botanists with identifications, contacts and literature. He now has informal fern students in Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. Gardens of many fern-lovers in the UK have been enriched with plants as a result of Chris' work. Major collections were held in, for example, Chelsea Physic Garden, Oxford Botanic Garden and in private gardens such as that of his late father, Derek, at Bridgend where he held the National Collection of *Dryopteris* – now in Martin Rickard's garden.

For the last ten years he has been resident in Nepal. In 2002 Alison Paul enabled Chris to receive a curation bursary from The Natural History Museum that allowed him to return there to identify and study Himalayan ferns. He was able to extend his stay in the UK to attend the 2003 AGM with his wife, Nirmala, and receive his Honorary Membership in person.

Josephine M. Camus

OBITUARIES

RICHARD HENRY ROBERTS

1910 – 2003

Richard Henry (Dick) Roberts, who has died aged 92, was one of the country's leading amateur botanists and a nature conservationist of the highest integrity. His recognition of the botanical interest of the Anglesey fens during the 1950s led directly to their designation as nature reserves and to the establishment of the North Wales Naturalists' Trust (now the North Wales Wildlife Trust) of which he was a proud co-founder and its first General Secretary. In addition he had an international reputation for his taxonomic expertise in *Polypodium*, *Dactylorhiza* (marsh orchids) and *Mimulus* (monkey flower).

Born at Llanllechid, near Bangor, North Wales, in a strongly Welsh speaking community, Dick took an early interest in botany, encouraged no doubt by his mother's knowledge of herbal plants and his upbringing on the family hill farm. However, he received no formal instruction in botany at school or university and after graduation from University College of North Wales, Bangor, he began a lifetime's career as a primary school teacher. His first teaching post was in Sussex, followed by a spell in Evesham where he met and married Bet, who was his loving and supportive wife for 58 years. In 1947 he was appointed to teach in Penmachno, which allowed him to study the mountain flora of Snowdonia, especially the area's ferns. Here he relished the opportunities to study the fine grained distribution patterns of plant species against the wide range of rock types. Finally, in 1955 and now with family, he moved to Bangor where he was a much respected head teacher until his retirement in 1974.

Despite a heavy workload Dick was an active member of both the British Pteridological Society and the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) for almost 50 years. He was appointed BSBI Vice-County Recorder for Anglesey in 1955, a position he carried forward with undiminished enthusiasm and expertise until 1995. During his stewardship he made a number of significant additions to the island's flora, including *Ophioglossum azoricum*, *Polypodium cambricum* and all the polypody hybrids, *Equisetum* *x font-queri* and *E. x litorale*, *Pyrola maritima* subsp. *rotundifolia*, and the marsh orchids *Dactylorhiza traunsteineri* and *D. majalis* subsp. *cambrensis*. As his interest in marsh orchids grew he undertook detailed morphometric studies which together with his keen appreciation of ecological factors gave him a unique field-based insight into this complex. And it was the same with the polypody ferns that he came to understand with great authority, ably distinguishing the cytotypes both in the field and after careful examination at home, regularly preparing sporangia or root tips to view under a microscope on the family's lounge table and thereby make accurate chromosome counts and cell measurements. He wrote a series of papers for *The Fern Gazette* and *Watsonia* clearly describing his findings in these fields and frequently accompanied by his own skilled botanical drawings.

After extensive fieldwork Dick published *The Flowering Plants and Ferns of Anglesey* in 1982, an invaluable guide to the island's plant life. An *Atlas of Flowering Plants and Ferns of Anglesey*, which he published privately in 2002, reveals the detailed extent of his knowledge of the distribution of species, both native and alien.

Despite his commitments to Anglesey, Dick retained a keen and discerning interest in mainland botany, partly as a result of his long friendship with a fellow Caernarfonshire botanist, Evan Roberts of Capel Curig, and made notable contributions to our understanding of *Dryopteris* in Snowdonia. Additionally he contributed in a wider field by collaborating with specialists in plant genera such as *Mimulus*, *Equisetum* and *Asplenium*. As well as

publishing almost 50 scientific articles and papers of his own, Dick has been formerly acknowledged in 20 more. He has been given due recognition in the naming of two taxa – *Mimulus x robertsii* and *Equisetum x robertsii*, the latter a hybrid horsetail discovered on Anglesey in 2002, a fitting tribute to a botanist with a keen eye for hybrids and a deep attachment to the flora of his natal area.

Dick was always happy to share his knowledge and experience, regularly advising university staff and students, professional conservationists and taxonomists, as well as fellow amateur botanists. He acted as a referee for the BSBI for *Polypodium*, *Dactylorhiza* and *Mimulus*, with a worthy reputation for his prompt, informative and courteous responses.

During the 1950s and 1960s Dick became increasingly involved with conservation as he witnessed first hand the changes to the landscape and wildlife of North Wales wrought by farming, forestry and tourism. He teamed up with Bill Lacey, a Senior Lecturer in the Botany Department in the University at Bangor to save a fine wetland in the east of Anglesey known as Cors Goch from becoming a rubbish dump and this action led the two botanists to form the North Wales Naturalists' Trust and a long friendship that was to serve nature conservation well.

Indeed Dick Roberts' association with the University at Bangor developed strongly and in recognition of his botanical scholarship and services to plant conservation he was awarded an Honorary MSc by the University of Wales in 1979. He became an Honorary Member of the BSBI and was awarded the Linnean Society's prestigious HH Bloomer Medal for services to botany and conservation in 1999.

Despite such accolades R.H. Roberts was an intensely modest man who was content to work quietly without acknowledgement. He had wide interests, which included archaeology, Welsh history and poetry, and even Welsh Mountain sheep breeding. Above all he loved his family and to his wife, Bet and their two daughters Pat and Anne and the wider family we extend our condolences.

There is no doubt that in his combined knowledge of the flora, history and environment of North Wales R.H. Roberts was unsurpassed in his lifetime and has continued the fine tradition of Welsh natural historians.

Nigel Brown

(with grateful thanks to Bet Roberts and Ian Bonner for information and comment)

GRAHAM STUART THOMAS OBE VMH

1909 – 2003

Graham Thomas was born on the 3rd of April 1909 and died on the 16th of April 2003. Over this long life he made a very significant contribution to gardening in general, with some valuable input into the world of ferns. I well remember being recommended his book *The Modern Florilegium*, published in 1976. In it he gives a very full list of garden ferns together with some useful notes about each. According to *The Modern Florilegium* his favourite fern was *Dryopteris wallichiana*, in fact he considered it one of the most magnificent of all garden plants. Many years later I had the pleasure of meeting Graham several times at the Chelsea Flower Show when he confirmed that he still rated *D. wallichiana* one of the best.

During my stint as Editor of the *BPS Bulletin* I had the good fortune to be able to publish one article by Graham on some evergreen ferns hardy in Britain (1981). Sadly, I believe this was his only contribution to the Society's journals. He joined our Society in 1964 and resigned in 1987, partly due to reducing his society commitments but due partly also to his

dislike of some of the fancy cultivars so much enjoyed by many of us – me included! We laughed about this in later years!

Graham wrote many books and achieved much in the world of horticulture, notably being Gardens Advisor to the National Trust for 19 years. For more details and a fuller obituary please see *The Garden*, Vol. 128, Part 6, page 149.

Martin Rickard

IN MEMORIAM

We were also sorry to learn of the death of the following members:

Mr Brian P. Haskins of Cheshire, who joined the Society in 1982.

Mr William H. Keatley of Devon, who joined the Society in 1993.

Mr Barry Ollerenshaw of Cheshire, who joined the Society in 1999.

Mr R. Martin Riemer of Dusseldorf, Germany, who joined the Society in 1972.

Mrs Antonia Surman-Wells of East Sussex, who joined the Society in 1999.

MEMBERSHIP LIST: ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS

NEW MEMBERS

* *new members 2003*, ** *new members 2004*, # *members rejoined 2002*, ## *members rejoined 2003*

- * Addington, Mrs M., 69 Clarendon Gardens, Ilford, Essex IG1 3JW
- * Adesoji, Mr O., Botany Department, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State 00234, Nigeria
- ** Aranz Ayuso, Mr S., Paseo del Prado no.1, Talavera De La Reina, Toledo 45600, Spain
- * Arnold, Mr J., 59 Seabrook, Luton, Beds. LU4 0EJ
- # Baxter, Mr W.D., 307 Riverdale Cir., Stephenson, Virginia, 22656-2120, USA
- * Berry, Mrs R., 44 Green Lane, Lancaster, Lancs. LA1 2EZ
- * Burton, Mr R., 29 Whitehouse Avenue, Loughborough, Leics. LE11 2PN
- ** Chen, Mr C.C., No. 12, Lane 20, Goushi, Lungtan Shiang, Taoyuan, Taiwan 325, RoC
- * Christie, Mr C.A.J. & Mrs J., 25 Main Road, Middleton Cheney, Banbury, Oxon OX17 2ND
- **Cook, Mr T.S., Stallis Cottage, 4 Royal Oak Lane, Middleton Cheney, Banbury, Oxon OX17 2LX
- * Diggens, Mr R., 3 Roedeer Copse, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 1RF
- * Dyke, Mr K. & Mrs M., 49 Woodside Way, Whitley Wood, Shinfield, Reading, Berks. RG92 8SY
- * Eddie, Dr W.M.M., 20 Gosford Place, Edinburgh EH6 4BH, Scotland
- * Edwards, Mr G.G., 14 North Feus, Upper Largo, Leven, Fife KY8 6ER, Scotland
- * Etherington, Miss J., 32 Keswick Avenue, Fulwell, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR6 8NL
- * Eyre, Mr S.S., Venn Bridge Lodge, Venn Bridge Hill, Cheriton Bishop, Devon EX6 6HD
- * Filet, Mr G., de chez Bardin, Saint-Sulpice-Les-Feuilles, 87160, France
- * Franks, Mr P.D. & Mrs C.A., 17 Russell Street, Eccles, Manchester M30 0NU
- **George, Dr J.D. & Prof. J.J., Sabella, Gays Lane, Holyport, Maidenhead, Berks. SL6 2HL
- * Gerrard, Ms S.P. & Dr R.P. Ball, 81 Barley Lane, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 5NT
- **Godfrey, Mr C.L., 14 Torridon Close, Sinfen Moor, Derby, Derbys. DE24 9LJ
- * Golding, Mr R., 50A Bullingdon Road, Oxford, Oxon OX4 1QJ
- * Golding, Mr R.L. & Mrs G., 30 Millbrook Road, Dinas Powys, Vale of Glamorgan CF64 4DA, Wales
- * Hamilton-Scott, Mr P.J., 42 Ridgeside, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 1PB
- * Harding, Mr D.A., Cedar House, 22 Plymouth Road, Barnt Green, Birmingham B45 8JA
- * Harris, Mr R.J. & Mrs B.V., Ash Beacon, Churchill, Axminster, Devon EX13 7LZ
- * Hawkes, Mr M.J., Preston Grange, Preston Candover, Hants. RG25 2EP
- * Higham, Mr P.A., 17 Alexandra Drive, Bootle, Merseyside L20 0EE
- * Hughes, Miss A., 88b Winchester Road, Southampton, Hants. SO16 6US
- * Hyvärinen, Mr A., Toivoniementie 11 AS 20, Oulu, 90500, Finland
- * Jamieson, Mr A., 4 West Grove, Sale, Cheshire M33 3EX
- * Jeffery, Mr I.C., 5 Sandmartin Lane, Norton, Stockton-On-Tees, TS20 1LR
- * Kaye, Dr M.G., 5 Oxford Road, Farnborough, Hants. GU14 6QT
- * Lamont, Mr S., 1/2 Harbourne Road, Kingsford, New South Wales 2032, Australia
- ** Laney, Mr B.J., 5 South Close, Long Buckby, Northants. NN6 7PX
- * Law, Mr I., 43 Shanklin Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 3LP
- ## Lawson, Mr R., 42 Marine Road, Port Bannatyne, Isle of Bute, PA20 0LW, Scotland
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- * Macer, Mr N.J., Kenton, Cowle Road, Stroud, Glos. GL5 2JR
- * MacGregor, Mr A.S., 58 Hawthorn Avenue, Bearsden, Glasgow, G61 3NQ, Scotland
- **Martz, Mr J., Burgschmietstr. 7, Nuernberg, D 90419, Germany
- * May, Miss T.L., 144 Roseholme, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8DT
- * Moon, Mr K.G., Applewood House, The Hill, Charing, Kent TN27 0LU
- ** National Taiwan University Library, No.1, Sec. 4, Roosevelt Rd, Taipei 106, Taiwan, RoC
- * Newman, Mrs C.H. & Mr G.D., Warrens Cottage, Pound Lane, Upottery, Honiton, Devon EX14 9QB
- * Norman, Mrs S.M., Ivy Croft, Ivington Green, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0JN
- * Ococks, Mr S.R. & Mrs R.M., 49 Parr Lane, Eccleston, Chorley, Lancs. PR7 5SL
- * Outcalt, Dr M.C., 1105 Westfield Court, West, Indianapolis, Indiana 46220-7101, USA
- ** Reid, Mr A., Windyhaugh, Crarae, Furnace, Inverary, Argyll PA32 8YA, Scotland
- * Rose, Mr M.H.W. & Mrs E.M., Kilravock Gardens, Durrus, Co.Cork, Ireland
- # Rowland, Mr N.A., Long Acre Cottage, South Marsh, Charlton Musgrove, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 8EX
- * Salmon, Mr D.P., Parkview House, 49 Baronsmead Road, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP12 3PG
- * Sekerka, Dr P., Prague Botanical Garden, Nadvorni 134, Praha 7, 171 00, Czech Republic
- * Shaw, Mr A.J., 20 Meadow Drive, Darfield, Barnsley, South Yorks. S73 9HL
- * Skelton, Ms E.A.I., 8 Parkway, Raynes Park, London SW20 9HF
- * Smart, Mr D., 3 Silver Terrace, Exeter, Devon EX4 4JE
- * Smith, Dr A.J.E., 5 Queens Gardens, Llandudno, Conwy LL30 1RW, Wales
- * Squire, Dr G.R. & Mrs K.M., 1 Millhill Cottages, Inchtute, Perthshire PH14 9SN, Scotland
- * Stasiak, Mr F., 12 Rue Gustave Scrive, La Madeleine, 59110, France
- * Stringer, Dr R.N., Vendreth, 53 Priory Street, Kidwelly, Dyfed SA17 4TY, Wales
- ## Struck, Prof. Dr P., Bornstrasse 25, Hamburg 13, D-20146, Germany
- * Taylor, Mrs C.E., 8 Esperanza Court, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 2TS
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- * Tregudda, Ms M.M., 124 Tottenham Road, London N13 6DG
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- ** Veismanis, Mr A., Apes 6-6, Aluksne, LV-4301, Latvia
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- * Wilkins, Mrs C., Little Treliever, Mabe, Penryn, Cornwall TR10 9ET
- * Worth, Mr S.R., Rouebrique, Uxbridge Road, Hillingdon, Middx. UB10 0PL
- * Youngs, Mr R.G., 34 Raedwald Drive, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 7DD
- * Zänglein, Miss F., Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Jermyn's Lane, Ampfield, Hants. SO51 0QA

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- Berrie, Mrs A., 7 Bench Tor Close, Torquay, Devon TQ2 7SH
- Border, Mr M.G., 118 Westfield Lane, St-Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7NQ
- CSIC, Madrid = Real Jardin Botanico, Biblioteca, Plaza de Murillo, 2, Madrid, 28014, Spain
- Hopkinson, Mrs H.M., Friesian Farm, Barrow Road, Barton Upon Humber, East Yorks. DN18 6DA
- Laws, Dr H., PO Box 352, Lenah Valley, Tasmania 7008, Australia
- Lovis, Prof. J.D., School of Biological Sciences, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8020, New Zealand
- McCarthy, Mrs C.S., 60 Rosaline Road, Fulham, London SW6 7QT
- Melbourne University Library, 780 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3010, Australia
- Nakamura, Dr T., 1-2-1-803 Ohkura, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo, 157-0074, Japan
- Needham, Mr R.A., Pike House, George Lane, Cinderford, Glos. GL14 3LL
- Nelson, Mr M.A., Malling Cottage, 84 High Street, Lindfield, West Sussex RH16 2HP
- Nielsen, Mr J.H., Eernbanegade 39 2TH, Nykobing, 4800, Denmark
- Palacios Rios, Ms M., Depto. Sistemática Vegetal, Instituto de Ecología, A.C., Apartado Postal 63, Xalapa, Veracruz 91500, Mexico
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- Schippers, Mr R.R., De Boeier 7, 3742 Gd Baarn, The Netherlands
- Stringer, Mr G., 179 Red Lane, Brightmet, Bolton, Lancs. BL2 5HP
- Universiteit Gent - Biologie, Lab Plantkunde, Ledeganckstraat 35, Gent, B-9000, Belgium
- Vulcz, Mr L., Mr Fern Pty Ltd, 260 Amiets Road, Wyelangta, Victoria 3237, Australia
- Weedon, Mr G., 8 Cathay Gardens, Dibden, Southampton, Hants. SO45 5TY

MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2004

- Meetings Secretary:** P.J. Acock
Meetings Subcommittee: R.G. Ackers, N.J. Hards, J.M. Ide, A. Leonard, P.H. Ripley
- Thurs. 8 - Mon. 19 Jan. **Overseas Field Meeting – Trinidad, West Indies**
Leaders: Yasmin Baksh-Comeau & Graham Ackers
- Sat. 20 March **Spring Meeting & AGM – Natural History Museum, London**
Leader: Graham Ackers
- Sat. 12 - Sun. 13 June **Weekend Field Meeting – New Forest, Hampshire**
Leader: Andrew Leonard
- Fri. 25 - Mon. 28 June **Long Weekend Field Meeting – Isles of Scilly**
Leader: Ian Bennallick
- Mon. 12 - Fri. 16 July ***International Pteridophyte Symposium, Edinburgh**
Organiser: Mary Gibby *et al.*
See www.rbge.org.uk/rbge/web/science/news.jsp
- Sat. 17 - Mon. 19 July **Long Weekend Field Meeting – Glasgow & SW Scotland**
Leader: Frank McGavigan
- Sat. 31 July - Sun. 1 Aug. **Weekend Field Meeting – South Shropshire**
Leaders: Clive Jermy & Martin Rickard
- Thurs. 19 - Sun. 22 Aug. ***Southport Flower Show: BPS Stand**
Further Info.: Matt Busby
- Sat. 20 Nov. **Autumn Meeting on Fern Reproduction – Reading University**
Leader: Jennifer Ide
- 28 June - 8 July 2005 **Overseas Field Meeting with Hardy Fern Foundation – Philadelphia, USA**
Organiser: John Scott
See www.hometown.aol.com/bps2005/myhomepage/index.htm

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

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

REGIONAL MEETINGS

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

- Leeds & District** B. Wright, 130 Prince Rupert Drive, Tockwith, York YO26 7PU
e-mail: Leeds@eBPS.org.uk
- South-East England** P.H. Ripley, North Lodge, Dene Park Gardens, Shipbourne Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9NS; e-mail: SouthEast@eBPS.org.uk
- East Anglia** B.R. Stevenson, Willow Cottage, Cowlinge, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 9QB
e-mail: EastAnglia@eBPS.org.uk
- North-West England** Mrs F. Haigh, 56 Church Street, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7DZ
e-mail: NorthWest@eBPS.org.uk
- Cornwall** I.J. Bennallick, Lower Polmorla St, Wenn, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 5PE
e-mail: Cornwall@eBPS.org.uk
- Scotland** F. McGavigan, 12 Glenbank Avenue, Lenzie, Glasgow G66 5AA
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