

BPS ACCOUNTS FOR 2016

	2015	2016
ORDINARY ACCOUNT		
INCOME		
Subscriptions (<i>see note 1</i>)	£19,126.40	£19,521.85
Interest (<i>see notes 7 & 10</i>)	£104.39	£60.00
Booksales (<i>see note 4</i>)	£1,613.50	£2,770.71
Merchandise (<i>see note 4</i>)	£553.52	£3,508.86
Inland Revenue Gift Aid	£1,201.67	£1,428.82
Publishers Licensing Society	£111.60	£196.09
Donations (<i>see note 5</i>)	£109.80	£452.79
Plant Sales & Spore Exchange	£127.50	£341.50
Prize Money (<i>see note 11</i>)	£100.00	£150.00
TOTAL INCOME	£23,048.38	£28,430.62
EXPENDITURE		
Pteridologist	£5,251.50	£4,972.99
Fern Gazette	£3,635.15	£2,367.23
Bulletin	£4,959.13	£5,337.36
Printing & Stationery	£473.00	£0.00
Administration & Postage	£667.86	£712.54
Subscriptions to Societies	£80.00	£85.00
Plant & Spore Exchanges	£122.40	£246.39
Meetings	£100.00	£1,120.25
Merchandise (<i>see note 4</i>)	£406.31	£3,589.28
Trustees' Expenses	£705.42	£352.15
Booksales (<i>see note 4</i>)	£1,584.63	£1,525.48
Special Awards	£190.00	£230.50
Website	£180.00	£310.95
Autumn Mailing	£446.60	£672.91
Computer Leasing	£126.00	£0.00
Promotion & Advertising (<i>see note 2</i>)	£234.00	£907.53
Insurance	£62.20	£61.65
Donations/returned overpaid fees (<i>see note 5</i>)	£209.95	£15.00
Chelsea Flower Show	n/a	£1,250.00
Bank Charges (<i>see note 9</i>)	£60.00	£220.00
Solicitor's Fees	£0.00	£522.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£19,894.15	£24,499.21
Balance (income minus expenditure)	£3,154.23	£3,931.41
Brought Forward from previous year	£32,102.08	£35,256.31
Moved to Graham Ackers Fund	n/a	-£14,600.00
Total in Ordinary Account	£35,256.31	£24,587.72
CENTENARY FUND (Restricted Account)		
Interest (<i>see notes 7 & 10</i>)	£19.40	£16.84
Interest brought forward from previous year	£383.17	£102.57
Donation (<i>see note 5</i>)	£200.00	£0.00
Grant	£500.00	£0.00
Total Interest	£102.57	£119.41
Capital brought forward from previous year	£5,583.73	£5,583.73
Total in Centenary Fund	£5,686.30	£5,703.14

GREENFIELD FUND (Restricted Account)

Interest (<i>see notes 7 & 10</i>)	£6.79	£6.21
Interest brought forward from previous year	£1,038.27	£1,045.06
Donation (<i>see note 5</i>)	£0.00	£0.00
Grant (<i>see note 6</i>)	£0.00	£0.00
Total Interest	£1,045.06	£1,051.27
Capital brought forward from previous year	£1,051.00	£1,051.00
Total in Greenfield Fund	£2,096.06	£2,102.27

GRAHAM ACKERS FUND (*see note 7*)

Brought forward from previous year	£15,000.00	£14,600.00
Interest (<i>see note 10</i>)	£0.00	£44.43
Expenditure	£400.00	£0.00
Total in Graham Ackers Fund	£14,600.00	£14,644.43

PUBLICATIONS ACCOUNT

Brought forward from previous year	£15,196.29	£14,609.74
Income	£2,126.04	£1,272.00
Interest (<i>see notes 7 & 10</i>)	£49.41	£43.28
Expenditure	£2,762.00	£621.00
Total in Publications Account	£14,609.74	£15,304.02

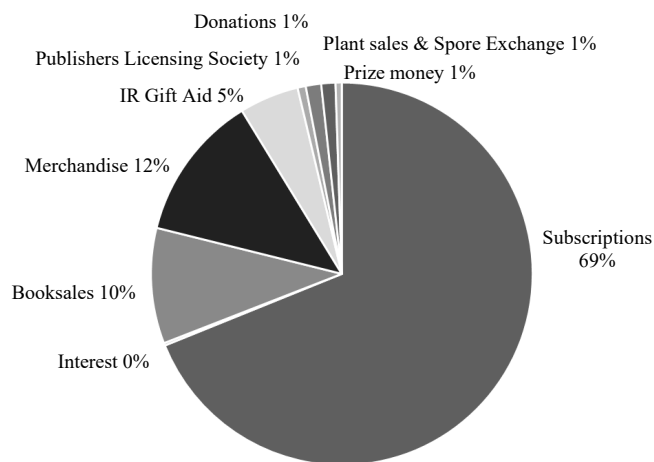
TOTAL FUNDS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2015

Ordinary Account	£35,256.31	£24,587.72
Centenary Fund	£5,686.30	£5,703.14
Greenfield Fund	£2,096.06	£2,102.27
Graham Ackers Fund	n/a	£14,644.43
Publications Account	£14,609.74	£15,304.02
Total Funds	£57,648.41	£62,341.58

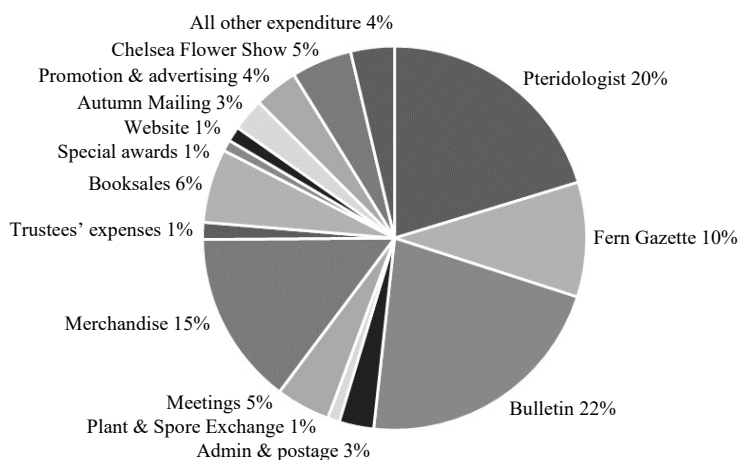
REPRESENTED BY

Charitable Organisations Investment Fund (COIF)	£40,110.19	£40,280.95
NatWest Bank & Others	£17,538.22	£22,060.63
Total Funds	£57,648.41	£62,341.58

INCOME 2016



EXPENDITURE 2016



NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

- The accounts reflect the subscriptions actually received in the year.
- The Society has been promoting and advertising the Society where possible via the RHS, BBC, county and national shows and public display days. Details of these appear in the *Bulletin*.
- The Society has stock: FSC Key to common ferns – 100 valued at £200.
What's that Fern? booklet – 300 valued at £600.
Back issues of the *Bulletin*, *Fern Gazette* and *Pteridologist* valued at approximately £2,500.
Merchandising valued at approximately £4,000 & capital of £1,766.52.
Booksales – new and second-hand books valued at approximately £5,800 & capital of £5,734.29.
BPS Special Publications (no. copies): no.2. Fern names and their meanings (214) £1,070
no.3. Cultivation and propagation (177) £885; no.4. History of British pteridology (212) £848;
no.5. BPS abstracts & papers (305) £1,220; no.6. CD Rom – BPS minute book (6) £60;
no.8. New atlas of ferns (2) £20; no.9. Fern books before 1900 (204) £3,060;
no.10. Occasional paper of the BPS (13) £32.50. no.11. CD of Fern Gazette vols 1-9 (12) £180;
no.12. Who found our ferns? (197) £2,955; no.13. Dryopteris affinis complex (4) £32;
no.14. Jones nature prints +DVD (30) £600.
- Full details of Merchandise and Booksales Accounts can be obtained from the Managers.
These accounts are checked annually.
- The Society's two Restricted Funds are split into 'Capital' and 'Interest'. The 'Interest' section of the Funds is available for payment as grants; these funds will be 'topped up' with money from donations from time to time.
- No Grants were paid out in 2016.
- Money raised from sale of books from the Graham Ackers bequest has been separated out into a Special Fund. This will accrue interest every year in the same way as the Publications Account.
- All payments received via PayPal into the bank are net of charges.
- An internet account with NatWest was opened but it proved too difficult to manage and was costing the Society £20 per month so the Committee decided that the Account should be closed.
- Interest rates have still been very low. Only £170.76 interest was added to our COIF account.
- The Society was successful at Southport Flower Show. £150 was awarded in prize money.

Peter Blake, Treasurer

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2016

I have examined the accounting records maintained by the Treasurer of the British Pteridological Society. I certify that the Accounts are a true and fair view of the financial position of the Society.

Nick Hards, Independent Examiner, 16 March 2017

REPORTS OF OFFICERS & COMMITTEE APPOINTEES FOR 2016

OFFICERS' REPORTS

GENERAL SECRETARY – Yvonne Golding

In 2016 the first committee meeting of the year was held in January at the Natural History Museum in London. The 113th Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 16th April, also at the NHM, when Fred Rumsey took over from John Edgington as our new President. We also welcomed Ann Robbins and David Hill onto the committee. There are still vacancies to fill on our committee so please get in touch if you are interested in helping to take our Society forward. The committee met again at the Natural History Museum in May, and in October we ventured north and met at the Botanic Cottage at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, which was lovely. We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to meet at NHM and RBGE, so many thanks to Alison Paul and Mary Gibby for organising this for us.



photo: M. Gibby

BPS Committee at RBGE

Clockwise from front: Adrian Dyer, Yvonne Golding, Rob Cooke, Ann Haskins, David Hill, Bridget Laue, Alison Evans, Peter Blake, Alison Paul, Robert Sykes

At our AGM in London, Honorary Membership was awarded to Matt Busby for his long service to the BPS in many different roles. We also gave an Outstanding Contribution Award to our retiring Treasurer Gill Smith for ten years of service in that role. The Publications Subcommittee awarded the ninth J.W. Dyce prize to Mark Longley for his *Tree Fern Newsletter* in the *Pteridologist*. This award (of £100) is open to anyone who writes an interesting and informative article for any of our publications. There is also some financial reward in our annual Photographic Competition. Please send in your best fern photographs, which may then appear in a future BPS calendar. In 2016 the overall winner was Paul Sharp.

It is always a sad duty to report on the deaths of people who have been associated with our Society. In the last year these were Dirk Ambachtsheer, Margaret Collins, Mick Craddock, Michael Forsgate, Jack Garstang, Vivien Green and Joan Loraine. The BPS sends its condolences to all their families. You can read obituaries of some of them in the *Bulletin*. Vivien bequeathed to the BPS her book collection, which will eventually be sold to bring in some extra funds, and her fern collection, which will be distributed and planted in a range of gardens. Please give a thought to bequeathing your fern books and your fern collection to the BPS and in so doing help to preserve our fern heritage.

You could not fail to have noticed that in 2016 the BPS was 125 years old and we had much to celebrate. Our Spring Meeting at the NHM in London considered the role the BPS had played in pteridology in the past and our Autumn Meeting at Harlow Carr in Yorkshire looked to the future. The BPS exhibited at Chelsea, the most prestigious flower show in the

world, winning a Silver Medal! We had several appearances at RHS Wisley in Surrey and again at Southport Flower Show, winning a Silver-gilt Medal. And this year for the first time our Ferns and Fossils show went to World Museum Liverpool, which houses the BPS archive. Members went fern hunting in Somerset and North Wales as well as in their local areas via their regional groups. Then we went to Cumbria for a full week, meeting BPS friends from all over Britain and welcoming many overseas members. What a year! Congratulations to all who organised these events and thanks to those that took part in them to make it a memorable anniversary celebration.

Our three journals continue to be popular, providing plenty of fern interest for everyone. 2016 saw the issue of a revised version of the popular BPS Special Publication *Fern names and their meanings* and there are more Special Publications in the pipeline. Thanks to all the Editors and contributors.

The meticulously run BPS website keeps us up to date with fern issues and advertises our Society to folk with whom we otherwise wouldn't engage: 13,000 visitors in 2016! Most new members are now signing up to the BPS via the website, and merchandise sales are up via the website. Once again congratulations to the team.

Our services to members continue to be first class and their organisers are to be congratulated. The free Plant and Spore Exchanges are now online with more choice. Fundraising is more important than ever, due to low interest rates, and high postage and printing costs. Our current BPS membership subscription is still extremely good value. Booksales and Merchandise bring in much-needed extra funds. Booksales benefit when members donate books or sell their collections to the BPS. Purchasing our merchandise keeps us looking the part at shows and events and on Society excursions, which further helps to raise our profile. Another way that members can help is by encouraging friends and family to join the Society or maybe gifting a subscription to someone who has not yet discovered the joy of ferns. Gardening clubs and societies are always looking for new and interesting talks, so why not enthuse about some of your favourite plants to an appreciative audience? You will be raising the profile of the BPS and maybe earning some much-needed extra funds. For example in 2016 a couple of talks to local societies brought in extra funds enabling us to contribute to the publication of the BSBI Threatened Plants Project, which will display our logo. Thanks also go to Fibrex Nursery who donated some ferns to be sold at Wisley, bringing in extra cash to help cover expenses.

Some of you may have noticed that the BPS got another mention on BBC Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time; it is on our website! If they come to your area make sure you get in there and keep raising the profile of ferns by asking a question even if you know the answer! Looking back over the year I never fail to be amazed by what the Society manages to achieve with volunteers who give their time for nothing other than the love of ferns. Please keep it up and continue to help fulfil our charitable status.

I look forward to welcoming many of you (for the first time no doubt) to Hull, City of Culture 2017, for our AGM, when I am retiring and passing on my job, with many thanks, to David Hill who I know will bring some new skills to the role. At the meeting there will be many interesting talks about ferns in Yorkshire both in the garden and in the wild.

I have had a wonderful time being Secretary of the BPS, meeting enthusiastic people, learning new skills, attending meetings, chatting with fellow fern book lovers, doing stands at shows (steep learning curve!), doing education events at museums (similar), visiting gardens, making fern gardens, and pottering around Derbyshire and Cheshire with the newly formed Manchester and North Midlands Regional Group. I have visited exotic places such as Trinidad, La Réunion and China, which I would never have got to otherwise, and have discovered more amazing ferny places a little closer to home such as Bavaria, Madeira and the Canary Isles (especially La Palma), not forgetting Ireland and the spectacular Outer Hebrides – all very memorable. Thank you BPS!

Happy Ferning in 2017.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY – Alison Evans

We had 119 new members joining in 2016, 97 of them for the 2016 subscription year, and 22 who joined late in the year to start their membership in 2017. Seventy-eight of the new members joined via the website, using PayPal. Sadly, four members died in 2016. We introduced a website facility for people to resign if they did not wish to renew their membership, to try to reduce the number of reminders we send out. Only two or three people used this, out of 23 resignations during the year. Sixty-one members lapsed as they did not pay their subscriptions after two reminders.

As of 11th January 2017, we had 694 active members plus 62 family members. This was made up as follows:

Full members	490
Optional members	117
Complimentary members	11
Honorary members	7
Students	19
Subscribers	50

Fifty-six members chose to pay through the American Fern Society (AFS), and six members of the BPS paid their AFS fees via the BPS. In December, a reminder e-mail was sent to people who usually pay via cheque or PayPal, and this had a good response.

We are planning to send quarterly news e-mails to members who choose to have e-mail communication, to remind them of BPS events and services. The information will be included in our paper mailings to those who do not use e-mail. If you have acquired an e-mail address that you use regularly, you would like to have this service, and you did not receive our January e-mail, please let me know on membership@ebps.org.uk.

MEETINGS SECRETARY – Bryan Smith

The Meetings Subcommittee held a meeting in February to review progress on the 2016 programme and plan for 2017. Thereafter, as in previous years, most of our communication was conducted by e-mail.

During the year, we modified the procedure for members to sign the Meeting Attendee's Declaration form. Previously, this was done annually, though very few members actually signed it. Now, at the start of each National and Regional meeting, all attendees sign a single form. We also modified our procedure in the Autumn Mailing whereby members used to use an annual form to express interest in attending meetings (again with very limited success), which the Meetings Secretary then passed on to organisers. Now, members are asked to get in touch directly with organisers. These changes were notified in the 2016 Autumn Mailing.

As 2016 was our 125th Anniversary year, we had planned a very busy and exciting programme, and this proved to be the case. The first of our field meetings was to North Somerset for a weekend in June (organised by Paul Ripley and Helena Crouch), then to Cumbria in July for a week-long meeting of visits and talks (organised by Alec Greening), and finishing in North Wales for four days in September (organised by David Hill). We began our indoor programme with the AGM at the Natural History Museum in April (organised by Peter Blake and Alison Paul) with talks themed around the role of the BPS in pteridology. In May, we had a stand at the Chelsea Flower Show (organised by Ann Robbins), which won a Silver Medal, and in June we again had a stand at the Plant Society weekend at Wisley (organised by Peter Blake). We had a one-day Chromosome Workshop at RBG Edinburgh in July (organised by Mary Gibby) and later in the month we took over part of the Wisley glasshouse for a weekend 125th Anniversary fern display (organised by Julian Reed). In August, the Cultivar Group's annual day was also held at Wisley (organised by Julian Reed) to view ferns and herbarium specimens, and we had our annual

stand at Southport Flower Show (organised by Michael Hayward) where we won a Silver-gilt Medal for our display of desert ferns. In September, we held another of our Ferns and Fossils weekends, this time at World Museum Liverpool (organised by Alison Evans). The grand finale to our year was the Autumn Indoor Meeting at Harlow Carr in November (organised by Bridget Laue) on the theme of the future of pteridology, and included guest speaker Dr Eric Schuettpelz of the Smithsonian Institution talking about current trends in fern research. Phew – what a year!

Details of meetings planned for 2017 were circulated with the Autumn Mailing and are available in the *Bulletin* and on the website. It won't be quite as busy as in 2016 (leaving more time for Regional Meetings!), but includes trips to the Azores (May), Northern Ireland (July), Scotland (July) and West Devon (September), and a fern cultivar day at Sizergh (July). Indoor meetings include the AGM in Hull (April) with several talks and visits about ferny Yorkshire and our annual photographic competition, and the Autumn Meeting in Cambridge (November) with talks about ferns on islands. There will also be three shows – the Plant Society weekend at Wisley (June), a BPS fern display weekend at Wisley (August) and Southport Flower Show (August).

As always, the success of meetings is dependent on the leaders who voluntarily give up their time and effort. This is no mean feat, but the rewards are well worth it! If you fancy organising a meeting, please do let one of us know. You won't be going it alone, as we always allocate a Subcommittee member as a liaison point for each meeting. Even if you don't fancy leading, please do let us know if there are any places that you would like to visit and study ferns.

Finally, I would endorse the fine work that Regional Meetings Organisers do in arranging trips 'on your doorstep'. Even if you are visiting an area on holiday, it is worth checking the BPS website or contacting the Regional Organiser to see if there is a meeting that you can join.

CONSERVATION OFFICER – Fred Rumsey

Following on from my work on national Red-Listing of the entire British and English floras, this summer I was involved in a workshop hosted at the IUCN in Brussels to produce a European Pteridophyte Red-List, to be published in 2017. Sadly we were constrained to using the most recently published Europe-wide taxonomic listing, that of the Euro+Med database, which has some rather anachronistic views! One consequence of the frustrations caused has been the development of a project to produce an updated list working with Harald Schneider and Alison Paul, alongside various other European colleagues. This is timely as Harald and Alison have also been part of the Pteridophyte Phylogeny Group, collaborating on the production of a world-wide consensus view on familial and generic taxonomy. This was recently published online (Schuettpelz *et al.*, 2016), and has implications for several familiar fern names (as will be explained in a forthcoming note in the *Pteridologist*).

More than a century after it was eradicated through collection and habitat degradation, the trial re-introduction of *Dryopteris cristata* to Wybunbury Bog, Cheshire, mentioned in last year's report, has proceeded. Initial results are positive, with the small plants from the Catfield Estate donor site establishing well, the majority producing fertile fronds and hopefully giving rise to the spores that we hope will lead to natural recruitment on site.

It would seem to have been an excellent year for arguably our rarest and most threatened fern species: *Woodsia ilvensis*. John Hooson's survey of the Cumbrian population, first discovered by Derek Ratcliffe in the 1950s, gave a count of between 142 and 149 plants, well up on the previous (2012) count of about 69 plants. What was particularly encouragingly was the 400% increase in small plants, strongly suggesting that recruitment is occurring. The still unexplained reasons for its general failure to do so are amongst the questions being explored by on-going molecular studies at RBG Edinburgh. It is speculated that the increase on the Wasdale Screes may be down to a reduction in grazing. Elsewhere a

new plant was discovered at the Moffat site (although thought to have been overlooked in 2013 following review of photos) and on Moel yr Ogof at least one previously overlooked plant was located by Helena Crouch and me.

Another of our great rarities, the Killarney fern (*Vandenboschia speciosa*), would also seem to be doing well. A BSBI team led by Rory Hodd discovered a new sporophyte site in West Cork in September, while I located two new small sporophytes at the well-known Cornish locality in October. I am currently involved in reviewing the status and abundance of the species in Wales and on Arran under contract to NRW and SNH.

RECORDING OFFICER – Fred Rumsey

As reported elsewhere in this issue (under Regional Field Meetings) our *Pilularia* survey work has gathered pace and I'm gratified to see many of our members chasing up old records and hunting past sites. Particularly to be mentioned in despatches are Brian and Sue Dockerill who have taken to it like ducks to a pillwort pond. We have been working more closely with the Freshwater Habitats Trust on the species and I hope that later this year under the aegis of the Aquatic Plant Taxon Group we will jointly host a workshop on what, and how, to meaningfully survey for this species. While on this habitat it is of interest to note that the related, introduced *Marsilea quadrifolia* found in 2015 in a Warwickshire pond overwintered successfully. This is unlikely ever to become an invasive threat under current climatic scenarios and as it is still declining in its native European range its presence here is, I think, on balance a positive one.

The year has seen exciting finds of other alien taxa, many in remote and natural habitats. On the North Wales national Snowdonian visit the remarkable find of *Adiantum pedatum*, in a cavern on the rugged cliffs of the Glyders, was particularly unexpected. The few past records of this species as an escape are in most cases uncertain due to confusion with the closely related *A. aleuticum*. Likewise the single record for that on the BSBI database from Wester Ross was more recently recorded by James Merryweather *et al.* as *A. pedatum*! It was therefore nice to get a record of definite *A. aleuticum*, of the cultivar 'Imbricatum' sent to me from a flint wall in Epsom by George Hounsom.

This year also brought the first records as an escape (in Surrey and Warwickshire) of the very widely cultivated *Equisetum hyemale* subsp. *affine*. Some of these plants have been known for some years but were previously just recorded as the species. I'm surprised that it hasn't hopped the fence more given its availability and people's regular inclination to 'improve' the flora of ponds on roadsides, commons and amenity areas.

However, perhaps the most exciting alien find was that made by Angus Hannah on the Isle of Bute. He discovered a sprawling colony of a large unfamiliar fern in Black Dubs plantation, two kilometres south of Mount Stuart. This was subsequently identified by Tim Pyner as *Hypolepis ambigua*. Soon, a second, very much larger colony was found six kilometres distant from the original find. This one extends over at least 300 by 200 metres across an area of recently felled and replanted Sitka spruce on a rough hillside two kilometres from Rothesay. There are no very large fronds, as in the nucleus of the first site, but the hillside was covered with tufts of an average dryopteroid size, and it was the striking greenness that drew attention from a distance. The fern has apparently occupied the whole area shaded by the spruce trees, but has not colonised the open hill to any extent, where bracken seems able to hold its own. This find increased his conviction that there must be other sites and search of similar habitats has now revealed the plant to be present in six sites and three hectads on Bute. A decidedly weedy species in its native Australia, with the potential to be invasive in milder areas, it will be interesting to chart its progress and see if this turns up elsewhere.

Finally, I would like to flag the progress being made with our recording of the critical *Dryopteris affinis* group. Work continues on the second edition of the illustrated guide to

the complex, which it is hoped to publish this year. Workshops on the group have been held in conjunction with the BSBI and as a consequence more accurate records of particular previously under-recorded taxa such as *D. affinis* subsp. *paleaceolobata*, newly identified for v.c. 6 on the BPS meeting to Ebbor Gorge, are being made.

Thanks to all who have alerted me to finds, or have sent me and their local BSBI recorders their records.

PUBLICATIONS SECRETARY – Martin Rickard

Yet again our journals continue to give outstanding value. Amazing what we all receive for our £25 membership! The *Fern Gazette* operates in the rarefied atmosphere of pure research, so often it can seem irrelevant to the amateur botanist or fern grower. Then the penny drops, the value of the *Fern Gazette* as background suddenly becomes relevant. We are so lucky to have Mary Gibby, a highly qualified Editor, and hardworking review editors Bridget and Adrian, let alone our indispensable international back-up team. If given a chance I feel that at least some members who opt out of receiving the *Fern Gazette* would find it well worth reading. The *Pteridologist* continues to amaze us all. Just how does Alec manage to get so much interesting copy? It is a bit of a struggle though, so please keep in mind the possibility of writing about your fern experiences. Our last journal is the *Bulletin*, another cornerstone of the Society. Alison has to chase up contributors (like me!) and then all the various reports of meetings and business have to be edited and put together, always in a very interesting and easy reading style.

The other side of our publications is the Special Publication series. This year we have not published any new titles, but one, *Fern names and their meanings*, went out of print and in double quick time a heavily revised version was produced. John Edgington did a wonderful job of expanding Jimmy Dyce's original. I'm sure Jimmy would have been delighted. Other projects in the pipeline have not fared so well. All are still in preparation but publication dates are difficult to predict. I really hope to get the updated *Polystichum* book out before too long, but after the unexpected delays of previous years I am not giving a date now!

FERN GAZETTE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – Mary Gibby

For 2016 the publication dates of the two parts were about six months apart, with Volume 20 Part 3 appearing in June, and Part 4 in December, although Part 4 was slimmer than usual. However, as we often overrun the normal allocation of 40 pages per part, this did not present a problem, and already we have several papers in review for 2017. The subject of papers published in 2016 are fairly diverse, and again we were able to publish a review article, this time by Lehnert and Kessler, commissioned as usual by Adrian Dyer and Bridget Laue. It was good to catch up with two of our overseas members of the editorial board, first Dr Klaus Mehltreter at the South Lakes meeting in July, and second Dr Barbara Parris who attended a Flora Malesiana conference in Edinburgh the following week. The editorial board members give valuable support in reviewing papers for the *Fern Gazette*, and I extend my thanks to them and to the other reviewers. I am pleased to report that Klaus has agreed to join Adrian and Bridget as a review article commissioner, to help ensure a diversity of good articles. As ever we are all enormously grateful to Andrew Leonard for his work in preparing the *Gazette* for publication.

The challenge ahead for the *Fern Gazette* editorial team is to seek ISI indexing for the journal, which would encourage the submission of more high quality papers.

PTERIDOLOGIST EDITOR – Alec Greening

The 2016 *Pteridologist* was produced by the end of June, just in time for the National Meeting in the Lake District, and all those who attended got their copy in the welcome packs to avoid the uncertainty of the postal system. The printer, M.T.P., is to be congratulated for the hard work needed to meet this deadline.

At 84 pages, including the covers, this edition was back to a more normal size. The content was as varied as ever with articles about ferns from all round the world, including the West Indies, United States and Australia. There was certainly enough to satisfy most members' interests. A glaring printing error meant that the co-authors of the article about *Azolla* were omitted from the header and this article will be reprinted in the 2017 edition in order to correct this omission. There is no truth in the rumour that a certain cultivar expert is taking over this magazine! He just has plenty to write about!

The deadline is supposed to be the end of January, but many authors submit articles long after that. I even had an article arrive two days before I went to the printer this year. That was cutting it a bit fine. After appeals for help with this magazine, one member has volunteered to assist with the layout and I look forward to working with him for the 2017 edition. I still need assistance with non-technical aspects such as soliciting articles, copyright signing and general organisation. If anyone would like to help please get in touch. The 2017 *Pteridologist* still has plenty of room for more articles; if you are quick I will make sure you are published.

BULLETIN EDITOR – Alison Paul

The 2016 *Bulletin* is another substantial issue (100 pages), covering the extended range of activities for the Society's 125th Anniversary. Every three years we publish a complete Membership List; this year it is again a separate booklet due to the overall number of pages exceeding the limit for stitching.

I should like to thank Peter Elcock for volunteering to prepare an Index to volumes 6 and 7 of the *Bulletin*. He is making good progress with this work and it is planned to distribute the Index in the next year.

WEBSITE CO-ORDINATOR – Liz Evans

In 2016, we welcomed David Hill to the Web Team, and continued to monitor and develop the website. The new Forum flourished, and remains spam free, which, considering the constant stream of spoof account requests (averaging at least one per day), is testament to Andrew Leonard's robust management of the system. We realise that this may sometimes cause frustration on behalf of users, but hopefully the overall experience is positive.

As with other editorial teams, a lot of the website content is generated by members or in response to member requests. Both the main site and the forum require content, so articles, comments, news snippets and suggestions are always welcome. With over 13,000 individual visitors to the site in 2016 making over 21,000 visits (we definitely have return visitors!), your article is guaranteed an audience. There are already many interesting articles and news updates to be found on the site, so if you haven't been for a while it may well be worth a revisit.

One thing that may have been missed by infrequent users is the availability of the *Fern Gazette* online. Volumes 1 to 10 are available from the Biodiversity Heritage Library (accessible via our website), and now Volumes 11 to 19 are available on our site as free downloadable PDFs; Volume 20 (2015 to 2016) can also be downloaded but for £10 per article (<http://ebps.org.uk/publications/the-fern-gazette>). Special thanks are due to Roger Golding for his work on this large and incredibly useful resource.

Other updates to the site include a revised *Where to see ferns* page, organised by county (<http://ebps.org.uk/ferns/growing/where-to-see-ferns/>). This list needs your input, so if your favourite ferning venue is not on the list, please let us know.

Behind the scenes the committee has been looking at the issue of advertising on the website, and as always members' views are important, so if you feel strongly one way or the other please get in touch.

Perhaps the most important thing to note is that a significant number of members, both new and old, chose to pay their subscription fees for this year through the PayPal function on the website, not to mention a large revenue generated through the sale of merchandise. Andrew

has written a detailed report on the website statistics and figures for presentation at the AGM, so I shall say no more here.

Finally, I should like to say that I have greatly enjoyed my time as Website Co-ordinator, and am very proud of what we have achieved in the last couple of years. Whilst I will continue to help with our Social Media channels, I am standing down from the post of Co-ordinator to let someone else have a turn. We hope that over the years to come, this role will continue to be passed forward to the next generation of pteridologists, and the website will continue to evolve. I would like to thank everyone who has helped, supported, and encouraged the team and myself, and remember – it is YOUR website!

EDUCATION OFFICER – Gill Smith

I took over this post at the 2016 AGM, by which time Peter Blake was well into producing some revised leaflets. They were colour, glossy leaflets containing some excellent photographs, providing advice about ferns for different garden conditions and for indoors. They were used on the exhibit for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and to give to members of the public at each of the events we attended in 2016. They have been very popular. Three sets of display boards were purchased, which are being held at different locations around the country and can be used at any event organised to promote the Society – please contact me and I will arrange for the nearest set to you to be made available.

The Chelsea Flower Show exhibit at the end of May, which won a Silver Medal, was co-ordinated by Ann Robbins. We congratulate her on this achievement! Some colourful art banners were also produced for Chelsea, which have been reused at later events.

In the middle of June, we attended ‘The Plant Society Show’ at Wisley. This was the second year that the RHS had organised this. It was a very successful event, providing us with ample opportunity to talk to the public about all aspects of ferns. Several members based in the South-East had provided a good selection of plants for the display and the footfall to the show was good as the weather was kind! There will be another of these events in 2017, which we will attend.

The RHS had also offered the Society our own special display day in the glasshouse as it was our 125th anniversary. This took place over the weekend of 30th to 31st July. Julian Reed co-ordinated the event, again with a display of ferns from SE members but our good friends at Fibrex provided us with several trays of young ferns for free, to sell at Wisley. This provided an excellent draw to the public – we sold all the ferns, a lot of Merchandise and managed to enrol two new members too! As it was so successful, we have been invited by RHS to repeat this in 2017 on 5th to 6th August. Once again, we will have a fine display of ferns, fern cultivation, fern merchandise and fern sales to promote the BPS and pteridology.

In September, Alison Evans co-ordinated an excellent Ferns and Fossils event at World Museum Liverpool. As with previous displays on this topic, fossils, live ferns, explanatory posters, fern artefacts, low-power microscopes and spore sowing were all demonstrated. In addition, the Museum provided an area for children to draw and paste pictures of ferns and dinosaurs, producing some interesting artwork! Footfall was perhaps less than hoped for on the Saturday but was much more satisfactory on the Sunday when a more adult and interested audience attended. Many members of the Society attended to help, and the Museum staff were very helpful and enjoyed our presence.

We will not be exhibiting at any Shows other than Wisley and Southport in 2017. We will take our time to create some new posters and work out a strategy for the next few years.

PUBLICITY & MARKETING OFFICER – post vacant; report by Liz Evans

The post of Publicity and Marketing Officer remains open. However, as I am still looking after the Society’s Social Media channels, I can report that at the time of writing the ‘Fern World’ Facebook page has received over 800 likes, and we currently have well over 1,600 followers on Twitter.

COMMITTEE APPOINTEES' REPORTS

SPORE EXCHANGE ORGANISERS – Brian & Sue Dockerill

These statistics give an overview of the main Spore Exchange for 2016.

	2013	2014	2015	2016
No. taxa in list	374	441	503	459
No. orders received	99	115	98	96
No. packets supplied	1,548	2,015	1,703	1,568
No. first choices supplied (%)	1,276 (82%)	1,795 (89%)	1,526 (90%)	1,400 (90%)
No. donors	35	31	32	32

These show that overall the Exchange is healthy, with most statistics being fairly stable. We have moved to reducing the shelf life of *Blechnum* and *Cyathea* spores to one year as these may not be viable for longer times and this explains the slightly reduced list size. Again we supplied spores to the Seed Exchange of The Hardy Plant Society.

For the first time, we set up a formal notification system for short viability spores, and the statistics for this are shown below. These include 13 packets of *Leptopteris* spores kindly supplied directly to recipients by Michael Hayward.

No. taxa donated	9
No. donors	4
No. packets supplied	40

As always, we are very grateful to the spore donors, without whom there would be no Exchange. If anyone is interested in becoming a donor, we are very happy to offer advice or they can look on the website for help.

PLANT EXCHANGE ORGANISER – Brian & Sue Dockerill

This was our first year of organising the Plant Exchange and we introduced a new, web-based system set up by Andrew Leonard. Rather than being a once-a-year paper list, this is a year round availability-and-wants list, updated by participants as required. The scheme was advertised in both the Autumn and Spring mailings and via a flier in the spore distribution.

The following gives some statistics for the scheme, with the related figures for 2015.

	2015	2016
No. taxa available	77	32
No. of donors	8	6
No. taxa wanted	n/a	19
No. requestors	9	5

It can be seen that the take-up of the electronic system was less than that of the paper one. This is not necessarily surprising for the first year of use. We will continue to monitor the uptake, to advertise and promote it where we can and consider improvements where necessary. We offered to send out a paper list on request, but no requests were received.

BOOKSALES ORGANISER – Frank Katzer

The last year was a relatively busy one for BPS Booksales. I would like to thank John Edgington and Liz Sheffield for donating some of their fern books and also Jennifer Ide for selling some of her books to the BPS. Booksales also purchased some new fern books, including: *Tüpfelfarne: Arten, Sorten, Kultur – Polypodium* by B. Peters (these have all sold

but I will try to get some more during 2017); *The Nature Printer* by S. Prett and P. Östlund; and *The lycopods and ferns of the Drakensberg and Lesotho* by J.P. Roux with G. Cooper-Driver. This helped to increase stock levels during 2016. Despite the purchase of these books, Booksales made a surplus of £1,245, which will allow me to increase stock levels during 2017.

I would like to thank Yvonne Golding for her help during the year. Yvonne took books for me to the AGM in London and several meetings in England, making BPS fern books available to many more members than I have contact with.

As always, BPS Booksales welcomes donations and bequests of books or offers to purchase either individual books or whole book collections. Please keep in mind that the prices offered cannot be internet prices but if you sell books to dealers, they will not offer you sales prices either. To contact me please use my work e-mail: Frank.Katzer@moredun.ac.uk or the Booksales e-mail: Booksales@eBPS.org.uk. I can also be contacted by post: Frank Katzer, Highfield House, Muirburn, Skirling ML12 6HL, Scotland or by phone: 0044 (0)1899 860 307.

BACK NUMBERS OF JOURNALS ORGANISER & SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS SALES – Pat Acock

John Edgington has revised and expanded Special Publication 2 – *Fern Names and their Meanings*, and what a delight it is! It is good to have new Special Publications to sell. They make ideal presents, especially for non-member leaders of overseas meetings, as it is unlikely they will have the book.

With the larger stock of Special Publications, room in the loft for journals is once again becoming a problem and so once more I appeal to members to send for some soon. I am still offering a bargain pack for £7 including postage. There is a price list on the website but do ask me as I can always do a deal for members. It grieves me to take our journals for recycling after all the hard work that goes into producing them. They are a treasure that we should be handing down to future generations so be sure to buy some while they are still available.

Some people know that I am an avid collector of fern journals and I know that it is very difficult to make up sets by buying odd parts. Usually you must wait for a bound set to become available, often at an exorbitant price, and these only turn up every decade or so. However, I have been given a few older volumes of the *Fern Gazette*, including some facsimiles, by a local institution and can let these go to an interested member for little more than the postage.

MERCHANDISE ORGANISERS – Bryan & Gill Smith

We had a very successful year in 2016, mainly due to it being the BPS's 125th Anniversary. Overall, sales were considerably more in 2016 (over £2,500) compared with 2015 (around £500). There were a lot more mail orders – nearly forty compared with only twelve in 2015. As is now the trend, many of the mail orders came through the BPS website. There were overseas orders from Denmark, Germany, USA and Taiwan in 2016 – none in 2015!

We produced the 2017 BPS calendar early in the year to try to improve on sales, and it was ready for the AGM. This paid off and there were even more selling opportunities throughout the year. The calendar contained some stunning images from the Photographic Competition held at the 2015 AGM, and proved popular, selling out before the end of the year. Unfortunately, our local calendar manufacturer has closed due to retirements, so we are now seeking an alternative. Hopefully, the 2018 calendar should be available in time for the 2017 AGM and contain more stunning images, this time from the Photographic Competition at the 2016 AGM.

As planned, we added several 125th Anniversary lines – commemorative mugs, tea towels and black polo shirts sported by members at the various shows during the year. However, we were disappointed that the mugs and tea towels did not prove as popular as we had hoped. During the year we also added four new items bearing the BPS logo – trolley coin key rings, lanyards, baseball caps and new design pens. We also started selling a lovely fern scarf designed by Susan Brooke. As the stock of BPS lapel badges (obtained long before we took over Merchandising) had run very low, we found a new supplier who maintained the original design. We also had to restock on the FSC/BPS *Key to common ferns*, the Chelsea Physic Garden fern cards, hand lenses and several items in the clothing range.

As in previous years, the Spring and Autumn Indoor Meetings were good for face-to-face sales. These opportunities saved members postage and packing costs, as did the local regional meetings and national meetings that we attended. Members from overseas who attended the Cumbria meeting particularly benefited. Colleagues in the north sold merchandise at the AGM of the North-West Regional Group, and where possible merchandise was sold to the public at the various shows the BPS attended. Further details of the accounts can be found in the Merchandise section of the Treasurer's report.

As well as trying to keep the website merchandise details up-to-date, we updated the printed list in April, October and November to take account of changes in stock. The latest list was distributed with the Autumn Mailing, and can also be found on the BPS website. It currently boasts a range of nearly 30 items and a total of over 50 individual products, but we always welcome ideas for new items.

HORTICULTURAL INFORMATION ADVISER – Matt Busby

Enquiries I received in 2016 included my opinion on an *Osmunda* variety, advice on planting ferns in a sink, examination of the reasons for damage to varieties of hart's-tongue, sterilisation of soil-based composts and the propagation of soft-shield fern varieties from bulbils.

I am always pleased to receive queries from members on any aspect of the cultivation of ferns. If I do not know the answer, I am sure that I will know someone who can assist.

ARCHIVIST – Michael Hayward

The Society Archive is now well established in the Herbarium of the Botany Department of World Museum Liverpool. Access to the archive proved to be excellent. During the past year the contents of all the storage boxes were checked against the new digital index, with accession numbers being assigned to each item. 1,700 accession numbers were created, but the number of items in the archive is considerably larger as, for example, a packet of photographs of a single occasion will have only one accession number, each photograph being individually listed in a separate table accessed through that number. About 25% of the photographic material in the archive is now digitised. I estimate that, at the present rate, it will probably take two years to complete the digitisation of all of the archival material, photographic and documentary.

The most frequent requests this anniversary year were to provide photographs of old members and also addresses of a few members. The digital index has already proved its worth in enabling very rapid responses to these requests.

It has become apparent that there are considerable gaps in the archive, with no photographic images of some prominent old members. There are also very many images, particularly of groups, where the names of the individuals are not recorded. Perhaps the Society should be more pro-active in sourcing images, particularly of our officers and committee members.

Additions to the archive over the past year include detailed records of the Yorkshire Regional Group from its creation in 1984 to 2013, meticulously assembled by Barry Wright for their thirtieth anniversary, and early records of the North-West Group put together by the late Marjorie Garstang.

Alison Evans has given me a considerable amount of help with the sorting and cross-checking of material, for which I am most grateful. My particular thanks are also due to the staff of the Herbarium at the World Museum Liverpool for making us so welcome over the last year.

CULTIVAR REGISTRATION SUBCOMMITTEE – Martin Rickard

Roger Golding is still progressing through the first draft of the *Polypodium* register. Going alphabetically I know he has got through 'S' so there cannot be too much more to do, but this is only the first phase, editing will be another very time consuming operation. Matt Busby is similarly involved with a register of *Osmunda* cultivars. This will be much smaller but still not straightforward. Matt needs to visit several herbaria to double check details.

Somewhat in parallel with register preparation, I have put a note in this year's *Pteridologist* on very welcome minor change in the rules governing cultivar naming. Hopefully this will help the registrars.