

## BPS ACCOUNTS FOR 2017

	2016	2017
<b>ORDINARY ACCOUNT</b>		
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions ( <i>see note 1</i> )	£19,521.85	20,327.24
Interest	£60.00	-
Booksales ( <i>see notes 3 &amp; 4</i> )	£2,770.71	£2,690.21
Merchandise ( <i>see note 4</i> )	£3,508.86	£1,875.65
Inland Revenue Gift Aid	£1,428.82	£1,372.95
Publishers Licensing Society	£196.09	£40.82
Donations	£452.79	£1,704.97
Plant Sales & Spore Exchange	£341.50	£783.50
Prize Money ( <i>see note 9</i> )	£150.00	£200.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£28,430.62</b>	<b>£28,995.34</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Pteridologist	£4,972.99	£5,385.00
Fern Gazette	£2,367.23	£4,167.92
Bulletin	£5,337.36	£5,908.59
Printing & Stationery	-	£104.53
Administration & Postage	£712.54	£615.10
Subscriptions to Societies	£85.00	£85.00
Plant & Spore Exchanges	£246.39	£153.81
Meetings	£1,120.25	£174.50
Merchandise ( <i>see note 4</i> )	£3,589.28	£1,123.77
Trustees' Expenses	£352.15	£470.86
Booksales ( <i>see note 4</i> )	£1,525.48	£1,385.06
Special Awards	£230.50	£190.00
Website	£310.95	£35.77
Autumn Mailing ( <i>see note 6</i> )	£672.91	£296.20
Promotion & Advertising ( <i>see note 2</i> )	£907.53	-
Insurance	£61.65	£62.20
Donations/returned overpaid fees	£15.00	£698.76
Chelsea Flower Show	£1,250.00	-
Bank Charges ( <i>see note 7</i> )	£220.00	£393.95
Solicitor's Fees	£522.00	-
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£24,499.21</b>	<b>£21,251.02</b>
<b>Balance (income minus expenditure)</b>	<b>£3,931.41</b>	<b>£7,744.32</b>
Brought Forward from previous year	£35,256.31	£24,587.72
Transfer to Graham Ackers Fund	-£14,600.00	-
Transfer to Greenfield Fund	-	-£430.00
Transfer to Reserve Fund ( <i>see note 8</i> )	-	-£20,000.00
<b>Total in Ordinary Account</b>	<b>£24,587.72</b>	<b>£11,902.04</b>
<b>RESERVE FUND</b>		
Transfer from Ordinary Account ( <i>see note 8</i> )	-	£20,000.00
Interest	-	£44.15
<b>Total in Reserve Fund</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£20,044.15</b>

<b>CENTENARY FUND</b> (Restricted Account)		
Interest	£16.84	£12.59
Interest brought forward from previous year	£102.57	£119.41
<b>Total Interest</b> (see note 5)	<b>£119.41</b>	<b>£132.00</b>
Capital brought forward from previous year	£5,583.73	£5,583.73
<b>Total in Centenary Fund</b>	<b>£5,703.14</b>	<b>£5,715.73</b>

<b>GREENFIELD FUND</b> (Restricted Account)		
Interest	£6.21	£4.86
Interest brought forward from previous year	£1,045.06	£1,051.27
Donation	-	£430.00
<b>Total Interest</b> (see note 5)	<b>£1,051.27</b>	<b>£1,486.13</b>
Capital brought forward from previous year	£1,051.00	£1,051.00
<b>Total in Greenfield Fund</b>	<b>£2,102.27</b>	<b>£2,537.13</b>

<b>GRAHAM ACKERS FUND</b> (Restricted Account)		
Transferred from Ordinary Account	£14,600.00	-
Brought forward from previous year	-	£14,644.43
Interest	£44.43	£32.33
<b>Total in Graham Ackers Fund</b>	<b>£14,644.43</b>	<b>£14,676.76</b>

<b>PUBLICATIONS ACCOUNT</b>		
Brought forward from previous year	£14,609.74	£15,304.02
Income	£1,272.00	£1,576.36
Interest	£43.28	-
Expenditure	£621.00	£1,890.00
<b>Total in Publications Account</b>	<b>£15,304.02</b>	<b>£14,990.38</b>

<b>SUMMARY</b>		
Ordinary Account	£24,587.72	£11,902.04
Reserve Account	-	£20,044.15
Centenary Fund	£5,703.14	£5,715.73
Greenfield Fund	£2,102.27	£2,537.13
Graham Ackers Fund	£14,644.43	£14,676.76
Publications Account	£15,304.02	£14,990.38
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>£62,341.58</b>	<b>£69,866.19</b>

<b>REPRESENTED BY</b>		
Charitable Organisations Investment Fund (COIF)	£40,280.95	£40,374.88
NatWest Bank & Others	£22,060.63	£29,491.31
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>£62,341.58</b>	<b>£69,866.19</b>

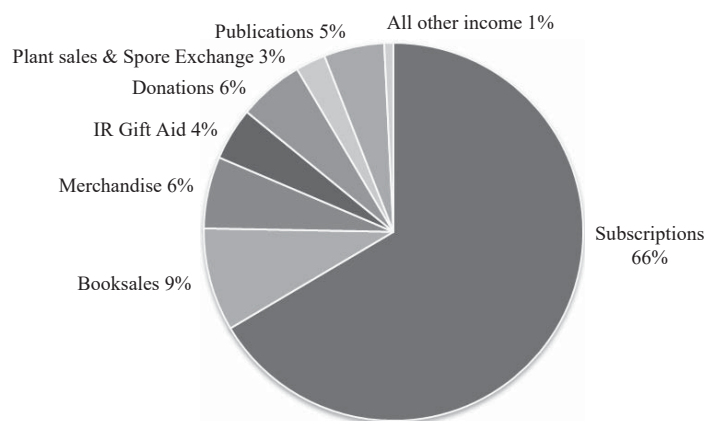
## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. The accounts reflect the subscriptions actually received in the year.
2. 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*.
3. The Society has stock: FSC Key to common ferns – 40 valued at £100.  
What's that Fern? booklet – 800 valued at £1600.  
Back issues of the *Bulletin*, *Fern Gazette* and *Pteridologist* valued at approximately £2,000.  
Merchandising valued at approximately £3,000 & capital of £1,116.39.  
Booksales – new and second-hand books valued at approximately £6,000 & capital of £4,469.06.  
BPS Special Publications valued at £12,500.

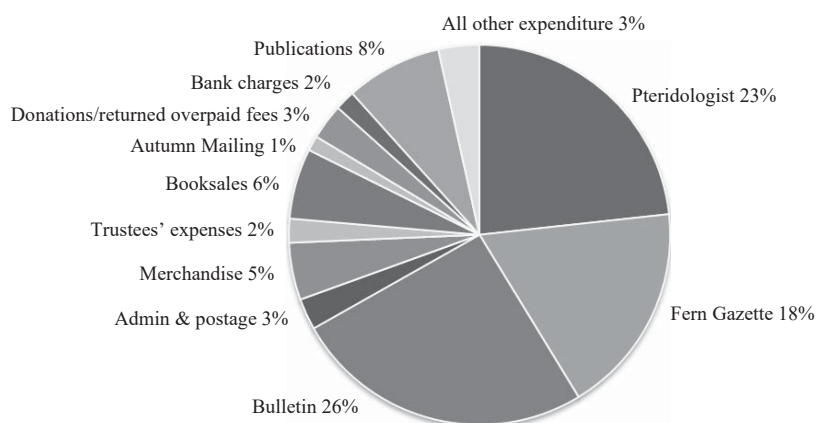
4. Full details of Merchandise and Booksales Accounts can be obtained from the Managers. These accounts are checked annually.
5. The Greenfield and Centenary Funds are split into 'Capital' and 'Interest'. The 'Interest' section of the Funds is available for payment as grants; this interest will be 'topped up' with money from donations, plant sales, etc. from time to time.
6. A large proportion of the Autumn Mailing was sent out to members via e-mail. This saved the Society valuable funds on postage.
7. All payments received via PayPal into the bank are net of charges.
8. £20,000 has been transferred out of the Ordinary Account to create a Reserve Account. Interest will be credited to this account and the three restricted funds.
9. The Society was successful at Southport Flower Show. £200 was awarded in prize money.

**Peter Blake, Treasurer**

## INCOME 2017



## EXPENDITURE 2017



## ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2017

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.

**Barrie Buels, Independent Examiner, 13 March 2018**

## REPORTS OF OFFICERS & COMMITTEE APPOINTEES FOR 2017

### OFFICERS' REPORTS

#### GENERAL SECRETARY – David Hill

The 114th Annual General Meeting on Saturday 22nd April at the University of Hull was part of a packed weekend (reported separately) and was, rightly, one of the highlights of a very busy 2017 calendar. At the AGM we welcomed Elise Knox-Thomas, Barry Wright and Mike Canaway to the committee, and this was the point at which I took over from the inimitable Yvonne Golding as General Secretary. The AGM saw an impressive array of photographs, posters, speakers, ferns and merchandise, as well as a chance to catch up with old friends and new. The tenth J.W. Dyce award went to John Edgington for his Special Publication *Fern names and their meanings*. The award in this case went to an impressive publication, but it is open to anyone who writes an interesting and informative article for any of our publications; there is also a cash prize for our photographic competition, so it is well worth submitting material for both.

The stunning cover of the *Pteridologist* featuring an *Asplenium scolopendrium* gametophyte by Jennifer Deegan continues to take my breath away, and illustrates the power of new images in showing the world of pteridophytes to others.

All of the publications, leaflets, posters, exhibition stands and website posts produced throughout the year by the Society continued to be of an amazing quality. This is in no small part due to the work of the editors, committee and subcommittee members, authors, contributors and volunteers in all of their variety, and one of the joys of this post is exposure to the range of roles, time and commitment delivered by this diverse group. If you have any skills or energy that you feel could be of benefit to the Society please don't hide your light under a fern, I'm sure you will find working with this group of professionals as rewarding as I do.

2017 saw membership continue to grow, primarily due to Alison Evans' efficiency; keeping pace with this were all of the other services provided, and their organisers are to be congratulated. The free Plant and Spore Exchanges are now on-line and have handled an impressive number of packets (and spores). Our current subscription is still extremely good value despite high printing and postage costs, and low interest rates. Booksales and Merchandise take time and energy, but bring in much-needed revenue, and we benefit tremendously 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.

An enquiry from a BBC researcher in June saw Andrew Leonard's incredible garden and allotment being featured on BBC Gardeners' World in September. If you missed the episode I can highly recommend it [available on YouTube via a link on our News webpage]. This coincided with the Gardeners' Question Time 70th Anniversary Party at Ness Botanic Gardens, and both high profile events gave us good exposure to a wider public.

In terms of our 'virtual Society', Andrew Leonard's mastery of the world of WordPress continued to help the site to flourish. When I get the chance, tweets and Facebook posts on #FernFriday now have a rapid and wide impact. Although difficult to measure such things, their international reach at the touch of a button is impressive. Twitter also helped with finding out about a new Killarney fern site in Ireland, and revealed a new and impressive 22-foot-girth *Osmunda regalis* specimen on a private property in South Wales. Facebook brought an enquiry about the greatest number of fern species in a genus, and in August headline news about the mystery die-off of sword ferns in the USA.

As this *Bulletin* is testament to, the Society held an impressive range of meetings, events, talks, excursions and fern recording. On a purely personal level, the highlight of the year

was the July visit to Kindrogan, ticking *Spinulum (Lycopodium) annotinum* off my life list, and a very long trek was rewarded with *Athyrium distentifolium*, *Woodsia alpina*, and my new favourite fern *Cystopteris montana*.

Publication of the IUCN *European Red List of Lycopods and Ferns* makes sobering reading, and highlights how much more we need to do to continue to raise the profile of this important and often overlooked group of plants. Along with this report the Society helped support, advise and fund the new BSBI Code of Conduct, and the *Threatened Plants of Britain and Ireland* publication, and funded the re-planting of ferns at Jodrell Arboretum. We are also starting projects to monitor *Polystichum lonchitis* sites in England and Wales and continuing to re-visit historic pillwort sites.

The January and May committee meetings were held at the Natural History Museum in London, and in October we met at the 15th-century flint watergate of Pulls Ferry on the River Yare in Norwich. As always, thank you to all those involved in arranging and hosting these productive and enjoyable days. We were pleased that Brian and Sue Dockerill agreed to be co-opted to the committee. However, during the year we lost Ann Robbins and Lizzie Evans, and I would like to thank them for all of their work and wish them well with their new ventures.

There have been several changes of Regional Group Organisers for 2018. After over thirty years at the helm of the South-East Group Paul Ripley and Pat Acock handed over to Julian Reed and Peter Clare. Barry Wright took back leadership of the Yorkshire Fern Group from Bruce Brown, and Peter Blake is currently looking after the East Anglia Group. Many thanks to all of them.

So far, one of the few jobs I do not relish is reporting on deaths within the Society, and this year, as the obituaries testify, we have lost many great characters. Very recently Tim Pyner passed away; a lovely personal recollection was written by Andrew Leonard for the website, and by Yvonne for the *Bulletin*. His knowledge will be missed both on the committee and in field meetings, and our thoughts are with Beverley at this difficult time. Sadly, others have also passed, including Ray Smith, Jack Schieber and his wife, Peter Campion, David Walkinshaw, past President Gwladys Tonge and John Lovis.

Looking forward, 2018 sees the introduction of the new General Data Protection Regulations, which impacts charities just as much as businesses; the key difference is our limited resources to address the issues that arise. As you will have found in this issue, there is a slip that we need you to complete, either on-line or by post, in order for us to comply with the new regulations. If you have any problems, questions or issues please contact me directly and I will endeavour to help.

I am extremely grateful to Yvonne for having the faith in me to take over a role she excelled at, and a big thank you to Alison Paul and Ann Haskins for prods and reminders at the appropriate times; however, any errors or omissions are definitely mine. As I start to try to find the reins, hopefully I can try and emulate some of Yvonne's efficiency and enthusiasm for this wonderful role, and look forward to reporting on some exciting developments and events that are already in the pipeline for 2018.

#### **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY – Alison Evans**

We had 109 new members joining in 2017, 80 of them for the 2017 subscription year, and 29 who joined late in the year to start their membership in 2018. Sixty-eight of the new members joined via the website, using PayPal, and 262 people in total used this method of payment. Fifteen people who had previously been members re-joined the Society in 2017. Sadly, four members died. We had 20 resignations during the year, and 17 members lapsed as they did not pay their subscriptions after two reminders. These figures represent an improved retention rate of members compared with the previous year, when we had 23 resignations, and 61 members lapsed.

As of 6th January 2018, we had 753 active members plus 66 family members. This was made up as follows:

Full members	539
Optional members	116
Complimentary members	12
Honorary members	7
Students	26
Subscribers	53

There were some problems with the American Fern Society (AFS) website at the start of the year, leading to some payments not being recorded initially, but finally it seems that 65 members chose to pay through the AFS, and seven members of the BPS paid their AFS fees via the BPS.

In the past year we sent out quarterly news e-mails to those members who choose to have e-mail communication, to remind them of BPS events and services that are detailed on our website. If you have acquired an e-mail address that you use regularly, and you would like to sign up for this service, please let me know on [membership@ebps.org.uk](mailto:membership@ebps.org.uk)

In May 2018, new General Data Protection Regulations will come into force. We will need to have your explicit consent to contact you by telephone or by e-mail. This requirement is reflected in our new 'Renew your subscription' form on our website. Please see the form enclosed with this *Bulletin* that explains the new regulations and how the Society is going to comply with them. Please let us know your preferences for how we contact you – if we don't have your permission, we will not be able to contact you!

#### **MEETINGS SECRETARY – Bryan Smith**

The Meetings Subcommittee met in March to review progress on the 2017 programme and to plan for 2018. Thereafter, as in previous years, most of our communication was conducted by e-mail. We were pleased to recruit Bruce Brown to the subcommittee.

During the year we considered several new issues. (1) The effects of the Nagoya Protocol on field meetings: a form of words, similar to that used for the Spore Exchange, is being drafted for inclusion in several of our documents. (2) Risk assessments: our insurers felt that we should have these for field meetings, and something similar to that used by the British Mycological Society for fungus forays is being adapted for our use. (3) Expenses for organising meetings: we felt that these needed to be agreed with the Treasurer beforehand.

Once again, we planned a busy and exciting programme for 2017. The first of our field meetings was to the Azores in early May (organised by Tim Pyner and Andrew Leonard). Next we visited Northern Ireland (organised by Hazel and Chris Metherell) in July. Also in July, there was a cultivar weekend at Sizergh and South Cumbria (organised by Julian Reed) and a Scottish trip based at Kindrogan (organised by Heather McHaffie). We finished off with a weekend in September near Tavistock in Devon (organised by Andy Byfield and Ian Bennallick).

We began our indoor programme with the AGM at Hull University in April (organised by Yvonne Golding and Roland Ennos) with talks themed around ferns and fossil ferns in Yorkshire, followed by a Sunday exploration of Hull's wall ferns. In June, we again had a stand at the Plant Society weekend at RHS Wisley (organised by Peter Blake) and in July we took over part of the Wisley glasshouse for a repeat of last year's weekend BPS 125th Anniversary fern display (organised by Julian Reed). In August, we had our annual stand at Southport Flower Show (organised by Michael Hayward) where we won a Gold Medal. The finale to our year was the Autumn Indoor Meeting at Cambridge University Botanic Garden in November (organised by Tim Pyner and Peter Blake) with talks by BPS members on the theme 'Ferns on islands'. Reports on all of these meetings can be found elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

Details of meetings planned for 2018 were circulated with the Autumn Mailing and are available on the website. It includes trips to Holland and Belgium (July), Leicestershire (July) and Wensleydale (September). Indoor meetings include the AGM and Spring Meeting at the NHM, London (April) with several talks on 'Garden design with ferns' and the Autumn Meeting at World Museum Liverpool (November) with talks about '*Dryopteris* – UK and foreign'. There will also be three shows – the Plant Society Show weekend at Wisley (June), a

BPS fern display weekend at Wisley (August) and Southport Flower Show (August), and we will have a BPS display at Fibrex Nurseries' 60th Anniversary Weekend (June).

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. Please also let us know if there are any places 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 you can join.

#### **CONSERVATION OFFICER – Fred Rumsey**

The IUCN *European Red List of Lycopods and Ferns* mentioned in my report last year was duly published (García Criado *et al.*, 2017). Quibbles about the taxonomy used and the scope thus achieved aside, this important document can be seen as an excellent starting point for European fern conservation and has done much to raise the profile of pteridophytes more generally. It is interesting that when considered at this broader geographic level all of our British & Irish ferns are considered LC – Least Concern, with the exception of *Lycopodium issleri* (*Diphasiastrum* × *issleri*) which is NT – Near Threatened. The greatest concentration of threatened species is in Macaronesia, and through its excursions to this region the Society has played a useful role in raising our understanding of the distribution and abundance of these species.

In the light of the status of *Diphasiastrum* × *issleri* and long term concerns over the identity of some British populations, not least the only extant English examples in Northumberland, I put forward a proposal to Natural England for some re-survey work on this species. Word is that budgets are particularly tight this year and so I have little expectation of receiving funding. It is, however, hoped that support will be ongoing for the work being carried out on *Dryopteris cristata*. Due to the kindness of Angela Tandy at Fibrex Nurseries we are currently in the process of raising plants to use for *ex situ* conservation, experimentation and possible translocation.

#### **RECORDING OFFICER – Fred Rumsey**

My thanks once again to all who have alerted me to finds, or have sent me and their local BSBI recorders their records. I know that these are particularly welcome as we approach the final push towards Atlas 2020. With just two field seasons to go there still remains a lot to do!

My list of species, native and naturalised, continues to evolve, reflecting the taxonomic changes suggested by such important works as the Pteridophyte Phylogeny Group publication (see my comments in *Pteridologist* 6:322) but also through additions with novel escapes from cultivation. It is my intention to publish this list, annotated as a census catalogue giving distributions at the vice-county level, which hopefully will stimulate recording. With the appearance of novel species in our flora there tends to be a distinct time lag between taxa entering cultivation (or indeed entering the country through other means) and them taking off into the wider countryside. The latest garden subject to make an appearance, although transient, on a London wall was *Athyrium otophorum*, found by Stephen Lemmon. It is interesting that away from urban walls there are so few naturalised alien ferns.

Fieldwork continued on the *Pilularia* survey, working with the Freshwater Habitats Trust, and in some areas we have now re-visited all known and likely habitats. I hope that by 2020 we can say this country-wide. The Society's recording project on moonwort and adder's-tongue on the North York Moors, conceived and led by Barry Wright, is approaching its twentieth birthday and with each passing year becomes an even more valuable record of these enigmatic plants' performance and behaviour. The North-West group, with Mike Canaway leading, are also now intending to do a detailed survey of the English populations of *Polystichum lonchitis*. While considered Vulnerable at the GB level, this attractive species is regarded as Endangered at the English level, and in the England Red List (Stroh *et al.*, 2014) it was suggested that the total English population may only be c. 250 plants in 14 sites but that re-survey was needed.



Work has continued on producing better guidance on the scaly male ferns (*Dryopteris affinis* agg.) so that we can make more, and more detailed, records. The second edition of the late Ken Trewren's illustrated guide is in production; we are currently waiting in the hope of receiving molecular data from a parallel study that will inform this. Workshops have been run in conjunction with the BSBI, and if there is demand within the Society further themed field meetings and workshops can be delivered.

#### **PUBLICATIONS SECRETARY – Martin Rickard**

The situation with our three excellent journals has changed little since last year. All the principal staff are the same and the same praise applies. One change with the *Pteridologist* is that editorial help is being given to Alec Greening by Chris Evans. Don't forget to keep sending copy to Alec.

Special Publications keep coming. The second edition of *Polystichum cultivars* appeared in the autumn. It seems to have been received well. It is exactly the same as the first edition, which sold out, apart from the addition of 50 high quality colour photographs of some of the more interesting cultivars. It sells at £15, the same price as the first edition. Work is also well underway on a revised edition of *Some taxa within the Dryopteris affinis complex*. Possibly more exciting, because it is completely new, is the book on *Ferns albums* that Michael Hayward is putting together. This will be the first serious attempt to describe a very full range of the fern albums that have been produced around the world – mainly in the UK and former British colonies. We are expecting it to run to about 200 pages with well over 100 albums described and illustrated.

Further down the line is a monograph of the genus *Polypodium* with the provisional title of *Variation in Polypodium and a brief review of all species worldwide*. It is potentially nearly complete but it will take some time to get it fit for publication and I doubt it will appear in 2018. Probably even further off, the Society is also looking at a new British fern flora. This is currently being steered by Fred Rumsey.

Last autumn a new Society publication appeared, a free on-line Newsletter for the Cultivar Group put together by Mark Border. So far we have had two issues, October 2017 and January 2018. To have your name added to the circulation list e-mail Mark on [markgborder@btinternet.com](mailto:markgborder@btinternet.com).

#### **FERN GAZETTE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – Mary Gibby**

Two parts of the *Fern Gazette* were published during the year, in May and November. Both parts included a review article, in June an article on rheophytic ferns by Professor Kato from the University of Tokyo, Japan, and the second in November by Professor Gensel from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA on fossil ferns. The *Fern Gazette* team is already benefiting from the addition of Klaus Mehlreter, who joined Adrian Dyer and Bridget Laue as a commissioning editor for review articles. Klaus is at the Institute of Ecology, INECOL, in Veracruz, Mexico, and brings his extensive expertise in fern ecology to the team, and commissioned Professor Kato's article. The subjects covered in research articles this year included hybrids of *Equisetum* in Norway, a new record of *Serpocaulon obscurinervium* from Colombia, monitoring *Polystichum lonchitis* in the Netherlands, brown rot disease on *Azolla microphylla* and new discoveries in *Cystopteris fragilis sensu lato* in the UK.

I am very grateful for the support of the review commissioners and the other members of the editorial board for support with the *Fern Gazette*, and for all who have given their time to review articles. Enormous thanks go to Andrew Leonard for his excellent work in preparing the *Gazette* for publication, and ensuring that this is publicised (and made available) through the BPS website.

#### **PTERIDOLOGIST EDITOR – Alec Greening**

The 2017 *Pteridologist* was published by the end of June, slightly bigger than last year at 88 pages plus cover. Chris Evans joined me as co-editor, which made my work load a lot



easier. Many thanks Chris. This issue contained a reprint of the *Azolla* article with all the co-authors correctly placed in the header. Yet again there was a good mixture of articles ranging from hybrids, cultivars and natives to foreign ferns in exotic locations such as Taiwan, Tasmania and Malaysia. The *Tree fern newsletter* was missing because Mark Longley had work commitments but he promises that it will be in the next issue. Many thanks to my proof readers: Roger Amos, Brian Ottway and Adrian Dyer.

The 2018 issue already looks very promising. If you have an article that you would like published please contact me as soon as possible and I will do my best to include it.

#### **BULLETIN EDITOR – Alison Paul**

The 2017 *Bulletin* is again 100 pages. I was expecting it to be shorter, as the Cornwall and Wessex Regional Groups held no meetings, and a few other Groups had a reduced programme. Sadly, however, there were eight obituaries to accommodate.

Huge thanks are due to Peter Elcock who beavered away compiling the index to volumes 6 and 7 of the *Bulletin*. He has done an excellent job, and prepared it well in time for distribution with this issue.

#### **WEBSITE CO-ORDINATOR – Bridget Laue**

In 2017 the BPS website went from strength to strength, largely due to the ingenuity and hard work of Andrew Leonard. As before we were hosted by TSO, which provides us with a platform free of charge. The design and the management of the site were provided by a volunteer webteam, including Liz Evans, Roger Golding and David Hill in addition to Andrew. Thus, the Society continued to benefit from this service at no financial cost. Sadly, the website is constantly under threat from hackers but, ever vigilant, Andrew has so far been able to block these attacks quickly and add appropriate security measures.

The website ([www.ebps.org.uk](http://www.ebps.org.uk)) continued to provide a vital service to members of the Society as well as being our window to the general public. In 2017 there were nearly 24,000 visits to the website, from more than 15,000 different people; a little over a third of these were new visitors to the site. The most often viewed pages were: Ferns, Growing ferns, Fern nurseries, Spore exchange, News, Archive, BPS publications, the *Fern Gazette*, Merchandise, Cultivation of ferns, the Forum, and Membership. There was more interest during the summer months and, not surprisingly, there was a burst of visits in late September following the special item on *Gardeners' World* about ferns, featuring Andrew and his garden. We also had 48 website enquiries, with people asking for information about membership or merchandise, or seeking general advice. When an enquiry is posted the webteam are immediately alerted and we try to refer it to someone who can best answer the question.

The PayPal system has been working well: a total of £6,505 was paid through the website, including £5,680 for subscriptions, £330 for 36 orders of merchandise and £390 for Special Publications. About 80% of the orders for the Spore Exchange came via the on-line web ordering system. We explored the possibility of posting advertising from fern-related businesses, but at this time there does not seem to be enough demand to make it worthwhile.

We would like to thank the following people for maintaining particular pages on the website: Brian and Sue Dockerill – Spore Exchange and Plant Exchange; Bryan Smith – Merchandise; Bridget Laue – New Research; Tim Pyner and Andrew Leonard – What's that Fern?; Alison Evans – Membership and Where to see Ferns; Roger Golding – Ferns.

As well as the website, we had additional exposure on social media provided by Ashley Basil (Flickr) and Alison and Liz Evans (Facebook and Twitter).

We are very keen that the website should be up-to-date with BPS news and events, and we want to keep it full of attractive items that will be of interest both to members and to casual visitors. As always, we encourage all of you to contribute to the content – this is your website! We look forward to hearing your suggestions and would welcome any feedback.

### EDUCATION OFFICER – Gill Smith

In 2017, members of the Education Subcommittee were involved in RHS Wisley plant shows, Southport Flower Show, Plant Heritage shows and National Trust guided walks.

The RHS Wisley Plant Society Show in June was very successful. New members were signed up and plants and Merchandise were sold. The display set up by reasonably local members was superb and attracted a lot of public interest.

At the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show in July, Julian Reed and Peter Clare won a Silver-Gilt Medal for their display of cultivars of *Aplenium scolopendrium* and *Athyrium filix-femina* as part of the Plant Heritage Exhibition of National Collections. Other members provided plants for show and for sale at local level Plant Heritage shows, e.g. three East Anglia Group members had a stand at the Plant Heritage Hethersett show near Norwich, selling a lot of plants and also recruiting two new members.

RHS Wisley had offered us another ‘fern specific’ weekend in August, and a great display of ferns by members of the South-East and East Anglia Groups was accommodated in the Glasshouse. We were amazed to discover that people were queueing up to get to the fern plant sales first thing on the Saturday morning – we were very grateful that plants were provided for us at cost price by Angela Tandy of Fibrex Nurseries. New members were signed up, money was raised for the BPS from the plant sales and a good selection of Merchandise was sold.

At Southport Flower Show Michael Hayward and Society members won a Gold Medal for an excellent display of ferns. They also raised money through sales of Merchandise and Special Publications, and more new members were recruited.

Scottish members again had a stand at the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland and Botanical Society of Scotland joint AGM in November at RBGE. There were 38 exhibits so a lot of competition but the BPS stand seemed to get plenty of attention. The day included Mini ID sessions including two on ferns given by Heather McHaffie that were attended by no fewer than 42 people. Meanwhile Mary Gibby conducted a session in the herbarium on the subtle differences between *Dryopteris expansa* and *D. dilatata*, again with around 40 attendees.

Other fern workshops were run by Alison Evans at World Museum Liverpool, David Hill in Bangor and by Mark Duffell. These types of events often pass unrecorded, so if you are involved in any similar events or talks that promote ferns and the Society, please let me know so that they can be recorded against our Educational charitable aims.

‘Gardens to Visit’ was revised by Alison Evans and is on the BPS website under ‘Where to see Ferns’. ‘Research Alert’ on the website continued to be managed by Bridget Laue, providing easy and free access for members to many fern-oriented research papers.

The Victorian Fernery at Southport is in need of some replanting to improve its fern collection, and also of interpretation materials. Volunteers from the Southport Botanic Gardens Community Association are preparing to take over responsibility for the maintenance of the fernery. Training days for the volunteers are planned, which will include hands-on gardening. Members of the Education Subcommittee have been to investigate ways in which the Society can assist in this project; this help will be progressed through the main Committee.

Ascog Fernery on the Isle of Bute has been giving out our promotional leaflets and have suggested that we run some courses there in the future. As the glossy leaflets proved very popular at the various venues, it was decided to produce an extra one on ‘Growing ferns indoors’ as well as updating and printing the rest in the same style. We are also hoping to revamp all the posters so that new sets will be available for members to use in 2018.

Finally, three of our members resigned last year, leaving the team rather short-handed. David Hill and Chris Nicholson have kindly stepped up to help us. If any other BPS members would like to join our friendly group, please contact me via e-mail; we only meet up once a year. I would like to thank wholeheartedly the Education Team for their wonderful support throughout the year.

## COMMITTEE APPOINTEES' REPORTS

### SPORE EXCHANGE ORGANISERS – Brian & Sue Dockerill

These statistics give an overview of the main Spore Exchange for 2017.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>No. taxa in list</b>	374	441	503	459	452
<b>No. orders received</b>	99	115	98	96	135
<b>No. packets supplied</b>	1,548	2,015	1,703	1,568	2,331
<b>No. first choices supplied (%)</b>	1,276 (82%)	1,795 (89%)	1,526 (90%)	1,400 (90%)	2,024 (86%)
<b>No. donors</b>	35	31	32	32	39

They show that overall the Exchange is healthy, with most statistics fairly stable or improving. Both the number of donors and number of orders was high in 2017. We again supplied spores to the Seed Exchange of The Hardy Plant Society.

We included wording on the website, spore list and insert sheet sent out with orders to cover the implications of the Nagoya Protocol on the usage of any spores. We also contacted all active donors to draw their attention to the need to ensure that all spores were collected legally and included this in the donor notes and general information about spores on the website and in the spore list.

We continued to supply short viability spores separately, and the statistics for this are shown below. These include packets of *Leptopteris* spores kindly supplied directly to recipients by Michael Hayward.

	2016	2017
<b>No. taxa donated</b>	9	11
<b>No. donors</b>	4	6
<b>No. packets supplied</b>	40	30

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 ORGANISERS – Brian & Sue Dockerill

The following gives some statistics for the current web-based scheme, with the related figures for the previous paper system in 2015.

	2015	2016	2017
<b>No. taxa available</b>	77	32	22
<b>No. donors</b>	8	6	5
<b>No. taxa wanted</b>	n/a	19	25
<b>No. requestors</b>	9	5	8

From this it can be seen that, although members used the web system fairly well for posting wants, there was less usage of it for offering ferns. Both were advertised in the autumn and spring mailings and also with all spores sent out from the Exchange. We also offered to send out a paper list on request, and one person took advantage of this.

### **BOOKSALES ORGANISER – Frank Katzer**

2017 was a successful year for BPS Booksales, and stock levels increased significantly despite good sales throughout the year. I would like to thank Alan Ogden for donating his fern book collection to the BPS, Ted Munyard for donating some fern books and also David Bannister and Robert Sykes for selling some fern books to the BPS. Vivien and Angela Green bequeathed their fern book collection to the Society. Booksales also purchased some new books, including the *Ferns and fern allies of Taiwan* series by Ralf Knapp. Booksales made a surplus of £1,305 for 2017 and I was able to transfer £2,000 from the Booksales account to the main BPS bank account.

I would like to thank Yvonne Golding for her help during the year. Yvonne took fern books for me to several meetings in England, making them available to many more BPS 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 alternatively 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**

Sales of back numbers of our journals were still very slack despite all their wonderful articles packed with fern interest. After 2016's report and appeal sales were not notably up. If you would like any back numbers, there is a price list on the website, but do get in touch as I can always do a deal for members, and I am still offering a bargain pack for £7 including postage. It grieves me to take our journals for recycling after all the hard work that has gone into producing them as well as the tender loving care given during their storage.

It was good to have a new Special Publication to sell in 2017 – the second edition of *Polystichum cultivars*, enlivened by colour plates. I wonder how many people saw the flyer in the last Autumn Mailing; sales never picked up with only about eight being sold in the ensuing couple of months. However, by word of mouth and at meetings we managed to sell a further 35 to 40. Overall, sales-wise it was a good year with revenue of around £1,300, though probably a quarter of this was postage.

It is good news that there are a few more Special Publications in preparation. However, this will require me to cull a few more journals to make space for them since we are at the limit of storage capacity at my home unless we build another extension. Please try to buy a few; we cannot afford to cull the Special Publications as we only turn a small profit on publication costs once they are all sold, which may require storage for 30 years. Our top client is a botanical bookshop that sells them for about £10 more than we do. They do make excellent gifts, so I hope to hear from you soon.

### **MERCHANDISE ORGANISERS – Bryan & Gill Smith**

We had another successful year in 2017, and though not as good as in the 125th Anniversary year, there was good interest in items. Overall, sales were less in 2017 (nearly £1,800) compared with 2016 (nearly £2,500). There were a similar number of mail orders – nearly forty, and the trend continued that most of the mail orders came through the BPS website. There were overseas orders from Australia, Switzerland and Germany, and six orders from the USA.

We produced the 2018 BPS calendar early in the year to try and 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 2016 AGM and proved popular. Fortunately, following the closure of our local calendar manufacturer in 2016, we managed to find another local supplier who maintained the standard of the previous calendars. Hopefully, the 2019 calendar should be available in time for the 2018 AGM and contain more stunning images, this time from the Photographic Competition at the 2017 AGM.

The lovely fern scarf designed by Susan Brooke continued to be popular, and when Susan introduced a ferny apron that we added to our range, it also proved popular. We had to restock on BPS sweatshirts and we sold the last of the Great Yarmouth Pottery mugs featuring a *Blechnum penna-marina* by Anne Wright. This was one of the first new items we introduced when we took over merchandising in 2001. These limited edition mugs are bound to become very collectable, so if you have one, hang on to it!

As in previous years, the Spring AGM 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. 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, including Wisley, Southport, Ness Gardens (see North Wales Group report) and Hethersett (see Education Officer report). 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 November to take account of changes in stock. We also took the decision, as part of the drive to save printing and postage costs for the Autumn Mailing, not to include a printed list. The current list, available on the BPS website, 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**

I had another quiet year with no queries by post or the internet but as I prepare this report, I realise that a great deal of information is given during face-to-face contact with members. This is the most satisfying way to provide help because it gives me the chance to meet members old and new, and it is also a two-way exchange, enabling me to learn by listening to members' problems. Unfortunately, however, I am not able to get to many meetings these days.

I look forward to the coming year, hoping that members will contact me by whatever means about their problems or queries concerning their ferns and fern growing.

#### **ARCHIVIST – Michael Hayward**

All of the printed photographic material in the archive, over 1,000 items, has now been scanned and images can be readily retrieved on demand. If you are looking for an image of a particular fern variety or of a particular individual then do contact me by e-mail. A number of requests for images of old fern varieties were received in 2017. There is a wealth of correspondence in the archive and most of the early material has now been scanned, at the same time taking the opportunity to add more details of the subject matter to the index.

Material added to the archive during the year included a number of photographs. Good photographs of members, old and new, are always of interest, provided that they are annotated with the names of the subjects. A copy of Linton's *Ferns of the English Lake Country*, signed by the founder member of the Society, Robert Whiteside, was donated by Alan Ogden.

I am, as always, very grateful to the staff of the World Museum Liverpool for hosting us and to Alison Evans for continued assistance in sorting the material in the Society archive.

#### **CULTIVAR REGISTRATION SUBCOMMITTEE – Martin Rickard**

The job of producing cultivar registers is proving to be extremely time consuming and complicated. In the past year some progress was made on both the *Polypodium* and *Osmunda* registers but both are probably still some years from completion.

I have been asked: What is a cultivar register? Put simply, it is an alphabetical list of cultivars of a given species or genus. To create this list it is necessary to establish the correct name for every cultivar, involving finding the first given 'legal' name applied within the rules of the *International code of nomenclature for cultivated plants* (ICNCP) – first published in 1953, the ninth edition came out in 2016. This is not straightforward, requiring a good understanding of the ICNCP and other codes, all substantial volumes, and opinions will quite possibly differ. Once legal names are agreed, synonymy has to be sorted out. Unhappily, once finished, mistakes will surely be recognised, or opinion will change, or the rules will be modified, necessitating periodic revisions. The eventual register should be a useful guide to the true name for each cultivar but it will not be a descriptive monograph.

## **Independent examiners report to the trustees of the British Pteridological Society**

I report on the accounts of the British Pteridological Society for the year ended 31 December 2017.

### *Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner*

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### *Basis of independent examiner's report*

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of 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 the seeking of explanations from you as the committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts and my report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### *Independent examiner's statement*

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (i) the accounting records were not kept in accordance with Section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- (ii) the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- (iii) the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view, which is not a matter considered as part of an Independent Examination.

Barrie Buels FCCA FCIE  
March 2018

Crestmere Limited  
Chartered Certified Accountants  
Bangor, Gwynedd.