

BPS ACCOUNTS FOR 2020

2019

2020

ORDINARY ACCOUNT

INCOME

Subscriptions (<i>see note 1</i>)	£19,841.62	£20,361.12
Booksales (<i>see note 6</i>)	£618.00	£131.30
Merchandise (<i>see note 6</i>)	£1,159.32	£1,788.59
Publications (<i>see note 5</i>)	£8,523.24	£3,924.16
Inland Revenue Gift Aid	£1,358.81	£1,258.25
Donations	£336.01	£443.00
Plant Sales & Spore Exchange	£393.40	£210.00
Prize Money	£200.00	-
Miscellaneous	-	£68.06
TOTAL INCOME	£32,430.40	£28,184.48

EXPENDITURE

Pteridologist	£5,319.70	£5,467.54
Fern Gazette	£4,183.87	£4,277.97
Bulletin	£5,613.95	£6,469.59
Administration & Postage	£780.79	£1,058.05
Subscriptions to Societies	£95.00	£145.00
Plant & Spore Exchanges	£209.61	£172.52
Merchandise (<i>see note 6</i>)	£927.91	£1,598.66
Publications	£8,442.00	£5,245.14
Trustees' Expenses (<i>see note 7</i>)	£366.27	£140.00
Booksales (<i>see note 6</i>)	£330.00	£382.07
Special Awards	£200.84	-
Autumn Mailing	£453.06	-
Promotion & Advertising (<i>see note 4</i>)	£2,054.00	£180.00
Insurance	£357.20	£355.20
Donations/returned overpaid fees	£618.40	-
Bank Charges (<i>see notes 2 & 3</i>)	£344.16	£490.60
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£30,296.76	£25,982.34

Balance (income minus expenditure)	£2,133.64	£2,202.14
Brought Forward from previous year	£14,971.85	£33,806.52
Transfer from Publications Account	£16,701.03	-
Total in Ordinary Account	£33,806.52	£36,008.66

RESERVE FUND

Transfer from Ordinary Account	£20,133.32	-
Brought Forward from previous year	-	£20,265.20
Interest	£131.88	£61.87
Total in Reserve Fund	£20,265.20	£20,327.07

CENTENARY FUND (Restricted Account)

Interest	£40.18	£18.85
Interest brought forward from previous year	£550.63	£590.81
Total Interest	£590.81	£609.66
Capital brought forward from previous year	£5,583.73	£5,583.73
Total in Centenary Fund	£6,174.54	£6,193.39

GREENFIELD FUND (Restricted Account)

Interest	£19.18	£8.28
Interest brought forward from previous year	£2,141.55	£1,660.72
Travel Grant	-£500.00	-
Total Interest	£1,660.72	£1,669.00
Capital brought forward from previous year	£1,051.00	£1,051.00
Total in Greenfield Fund	£2,711.72	£2,720.00

GRAHAM ACKERS FUND

Brought forward from previous year	£14,742.05	£14,838.61
Interest	£96.57	£45.30
Total in Graham Ackers Fund	£14,838.61	£14,883.92

SUMMARY

Ordinary Account	£33,806.52	£36,008.66
Reserve Account	£20,265.20	£20,327.07
Centenary Fund	£6,174.54	£6,193.39
Greenfield Fund	£2,711.72	£2,720.00
Graham Ackers Fund	£14,838.61	£14,883.92
Total Funds	£77,796.60	£80,133.04

REPRESENTED BY

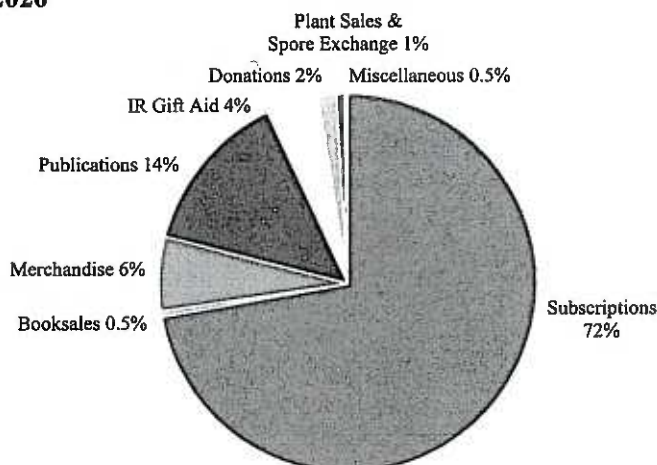
Charitable Organisations Investment Fund (COIF)	50,857.69	50,991.99
NatWest Bank & Others	26,938.91	£29,141.05
Total Funds	£77,796.60	£80,133.04

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

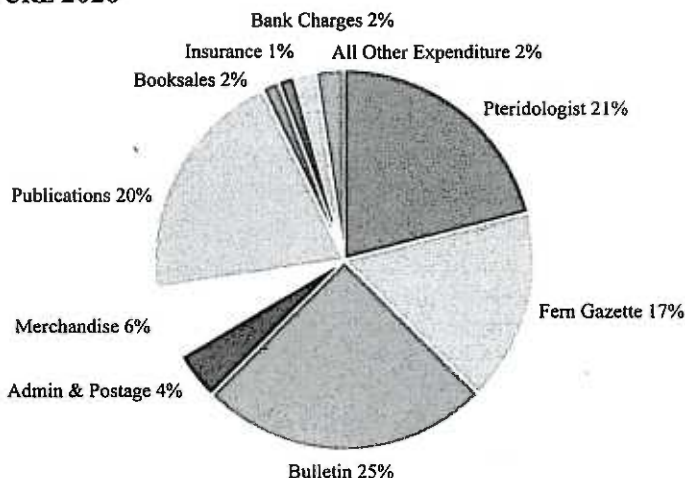
1. The accounts reflect the subscriptions received in the year.
2. Transaction charges are levied by NatWest and PayPal. All payments received via PayPal into the bank are net of the bank charges included here. Payments received via NatWest are received gross and the charges included here are levied separately.
3. The Society is now using internet banking as some service providers are no longer accepting cheques.
4. Promotion and advertising has been reduced in 2020 due to the Covid-19 restrictions. There were no shows or displays. However, close contact has been kept with the RHS with the intention of being involved in the 2021 Specialist Plant Society Show.
5. The income from Special Publications was particularly high in 2019 at £8,523, due to the publication of SP16 *Polypodium cultivars and species*. In 2020, total income was £3,924, with that from SP16 1st & 2nd editions being approximately £2,000, with plenty of stock remaining.
6. Merchandise stock is valued at £2,000 and Booksales at £5,500 with an additional £5,819 capital. These accounts are reviewed by the Treasurer.
7. The AGM and Committee meetings were held on Zoom, with consequent savings on travel expenses.

Peter Blake, Treasurer

INCOME 2020



EXPENDITURE 2020



BRITISH PTERIDOLOGICAL SOCIETY

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 December 2020.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and, in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent Examiner: Barrie Buels FCCA FCIE, 3 March 2021

Crestmere Limited, Chartered Certified Accountants

REPORTS OF OFFICERS & COMMITTEE APPOINTEES FOR 2020

OFFICERS' REPORTS

GENERAL SECRETARY – David Hill

From a BPS perspective, January and February is an odd time of year for me. I can't wait for spring, planning trips and aiming to get out from behind my computer screen. At the same time, I have to look back and wrap up the previous year, reminding myself of what has happened and reviewing my list of outstanding actions before the first committee meeting of the year.

I rounded up the last General Secretary's report by noting our step into a new decade and the many changes ahead. Little did I realise quite how prophetic my comments were, and how quickly things would change.

In April the Executive held an emergency meeting to discuss Covid implications for the year ahead. The first major casualty to the calendar was cancellation of the AGM, which had been due to take place at the Natural History Museum. Subsequently the rest of the committee deftly moved online, and I must admit I was pleasantly surprised at how quickly all involved adapted to the change. The May and October Committee meetings, which had been due in Norwich and Chester respectively, were replaced with living room backdrops and mugs of tea. All were pleased to see each other but are still looking forward to face-to-face meetings. That said, my 4 a.m. start to catch a train to London was certainly not missed, and the combined carbon saving of the committee was a positive side effect.

As the year progressed, different infection rates and varying national lockdown restrictions both accentuated how far apart a lot of us felt, but also strengthened a combined sense of business as normal.

Initially the AGM had been postponed in the hope that it could be run in the summer but as the year progressed more and more things were cancelled. Statutory reporting requirements meant we couldn't put off the AGM any longer, and our first electronic AGM happened on Saturday 3rd October (reported separately). Matt Busby and Adrian Dyer were re-elected as Vice-Presidents, Sue Dockerill was formally elected as Committee Secretary, and Franziska Wittenstein as Publicity and Communications Officer to work alongside Sophie Walwin.

One event that really does lose its shine in an online meeting is the awarding of Honorary Memberships. Normally a heartfelt celebration of thanks, the awards this year to Alison Paul and Martin Rickard were no less deserved, but will need a proper in situ celebration as soon as the situation permits.

Society meetings, training events and shows were all casualties of the ongoing pandemic, but other aspects have flourished. Sophie and Ziska's cyanotypes project got off the ground, fern courses moved online, we have a YouTube channel, merchandise sales are up and the progress in online working has led to increasing international outreach.

2020 was certainly a year to remember, or forget, and I know some aspects have been particularly difficult and isolating for far too many. As a 'Brexit-ed' nation stumbles towards a 'new normal' there is at least consolation in knowing that the ferns will still be waiting for us when we return, and I suspect a renewed interest in the natural world will lead to a flourish of full field trips, and horticultural interest in ferns will increase. I know as a Society that many are itching to get back out into the field, myself included. Please help by contacting your local group organiser and offering to show people your local patch when you feel safe to do so.

Yet despite all this change I can still report some consistency. I still have the intention of getting out from behind my computer screen (it certainly didn't happen last year), and I am still trying to wrap up the previous year!

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY – Ann Robbins

During 2020, 104 people joined or re-joined the Society. Of these, 87 live in the UK, 13 in Europe and four in the Rest of the World; 81 are full members, nine are students, 12 optional members and two are new subscribers. There were three new family members.

During 2020, 101 people left the Society: 80 lapsed, 19 resigned and two died, Mr Melville Thomson in May and Mrs Fay Mandt in August.

As of 31 December 2020 we had 752 'Active' members plus 57 family members. This was made up as follows:

Full members	538
Optional members	124
Honorary members	10
Complimentary members	7
Students	25
Subscribers	48

MEETINGS SECRETARY – Bryan Smith

We began 2020 looking forward to another busy year of meetings. These were to include outdoor meetings in Cumbria (July), Seattle, USA (August), Scotland (September), South-East Fern Cultivars (September) and South Devon (September). For indoor meetings, the AGM was to have been at the NHM, London (April) with several illustrated talks on tropical and sub-tropical ferns, and the Autumn Meeting should have been in Staffordshire (November) with talks about Victorian ferneries. There should also have been four shows – the BBC Gardeners' World at the NEC Birmingham (June), the Plant Societies weekend at Wisley (June), a BPS fern display weekend at Wisley (July) and the Southport Flower Show (August).

In the event, the coronavirus pandemic put paid to all of these, and none of the meetings were held. However, we did manage to hold the business part of the AGM virtually in October, and a small socially distanced party did some reconnoitring in Devon in September. Some of the Regional Groups also managed some fieldwork, and these excursions are reported elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

The Meetings subcommittee did not hold its usual annual get-together early in the year, but we did progress updating the BPS Safety Code and Code of Conduct, and the revised versions appeared in last year's *Bulletin*. Also, the revised Codes and the Generic Risk Assessment for Field Meetings were put on the website. The Meetings Declaration form was updated and copies of this, the two codes, the Generic Risk Assessment and a Risk Assessment form were circulated to Regional Group leaders for their meetings.

At the time of writing, there is still much uncertainty about when and if meetings will be held during 2021, but meetings planned for 2020 will be carried forward if possible, either to 2021 or to 2022. The Meetings Subcommittee will continue to hold its annual meeting and, as approved by the Committee, Regional Group leaders will be invited to attend. It is likely that these annual meetings will be held virtually.

PUBLICATIONS SECRETARY – Martin Rickard

Despite the difficult year making face-to-face meetings impossible most of the time, our publications have kept up the high standard of recent years with a flow of interesting features and general Society news, although the *Bulletin* is rather different from normal.

There were very few Society meetings for the *Bulletin* to report, but this shortfall has been largely filled by members reporting on their own ferny activities. We know that the membership will appreciate the effort of editor Alison Paul in encouraging contributions, and hopefully there will be more for the coming season if, as expected, the same problem

with face-to-face meetings continues. Short notes of a type not normally published in the *Pteridologist* could be considered, e.g. observations on unusual sites, newly noticed arrivals or losses on private walks, perhaps even for a particular road near your home, or fern interest in a local wood, mountain, bog or hedgerow. Please send potential items to Alison.

The *Pteridologist* still brings a huge number of items to members; please keep supplying copy to Chris Evans. We have already passed the deadline for this 2021 *Pteridologist*, but it is good for Chris and Alec Greening to have material in reserve, and depending on the situation at any given time late submissions might be squeezed in.

Our *Fern Gazette*, now 112 years old, continues to publish more scientific material allowing the Society to keep its relevance in worldwide pteridophyte research. Mary Gibby and her team are to be congratulated on a difficult job well done. As numbers of specialist pteridologists fall in Europe and North America, more and more research is being done in East Asia. Good quality papers become scarcer, especially in English, yet still they come, largely due to Mary's editorial team from across several continents.

Special Publications continue to be popular within, and beyond the Society – spreading the word! The monograph on *Polypodium* cultivars and species worldwide was launched in autumn 2019. Gratifyingly selling out by spring 2020, the opportunity was taken to reissue it as a slightly modified second edition, which appeared in autumn 2020. Unfortunately, it could not be launched at a Society meeting but sales have again been very good. For the future we hope that a monograph of *Athyrium* cultivars by Ian Unsworth will appear in the next few years, followed by an in-depth survey of variation in *Asplenium scolopendrium* by Tim Brock. That will give us modernish coverage of four of the main species groups of cultivars (with *Polystichum* and *Polypodium* done already). Just *Dryopteris* and 'odds and ends' left. By the time they appear it will be time to start again at the beginning!

Fred Rumsey's new British fern flora looks very exciting. Fred has prepared a few sample pages for the Committee to see. If the rest of book keeps to that high standard it will be a remarkable tome which could be a standard for many years. I cannot wait!

I hope that everyone is continuing to look at Mark Border's amazingly up-to-date Cultivar Group Newsletter on the BPS website. He frequently reports on cultivars new to me and to horticulture generally. He has developed a network of international fern enthusiasts who often make their new discoveries known to him. Don't miss it!

FERN GAZETTE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – Mary Gibby

Despite the lockdown in spring, we were lucky with the support from our printers and were still able to distribute Volume 21 Part 3 in May, followed by Part 4 in November. We had no review articles this year, but published research articles on a wide range of topics, including fern records and distributions in Iran, India and Mexico, a new hybrid cultivar, taxonomy of *Asplenium* in the Philippines and a new hybrid *Asplenium* from the Azores. I am very grateful to Andrew Leonard, the Production Editor, who continues to provide a key role; his introduction of colour images in the *Gazette* has greatly enhanced the presentation of the articles. Adrian Dyer, Bridget Laue, Klaus Mehlreter and many reviewers have helped maintain the quality of the *Gazette*, and I thank them all.

PTERIDOLOGIST EDITOR – Alec Greening

The 2020 *Pteridologist* was published on July 12th and ran to 84 pages plus covers. The pandemic limited travel to ferny places but there were plenty of interesting articles to keep members happy. The layout has changed slightly but the biggest change was that I decided not to print contact details or show images of the authors because of the data protection act. Members who want to contact authors were invited to do so through me. There were a few complaints about this decision, for various reasons, and some contact details will appear in the next issue. Jenny Hakney, a professional proofreader, was invaluable in spotting mistakes. She is an asset to the team along with my co-editor Chris Evans.

The 2021 issue already looks very promising. If you have an article that you would like published please contact Chris Evans as soon as possible at receiving@eBPS.org.uk and we will do our best to include it in this edition.

BULLETIN EDITOR – Alison Paul

Due to be printed just as the UK went into its first lockdown of the pandemic, the 2019 *Bulletin* was delayed for a few weeks while the Printers worked out their new Covid-safe modus operandi. Due to postponement of the AGM, however, this timing was not critical.

With almost all Society meetings being cancelled in 2020, this *Bulletin* is inevitably somewhat slimmer than in most recent years (80 pages). However, in spite of having virtually no official meetings to report, Regional Groups came up with many items of interest; many thanks to all contributors, and in particular to Pât Acock and Paul Ripley for their history of the South-East Group. Martin Rickard deserves special thanks for producing, at rather short notice, an overview of BPS meetings covering 150 years! I hope you find it as fascinating as I did. Our Archivist, Michael Hayward, also came up trumps with some great early photos to accompany it. A new feature is the Fern Monitoring Group report.

Huge thanks are due to Peter Elcock for again expertly compiling a really useful *Bulletin* Index, this time to Volume 8.

WEBSITE CO-ORDINATOR – Bridget Laue

In 2020 more than ever we found our website to be essential since everyone was using the internet for so many reasons. ‘Real’ meetings were, and still are, limited, but interesting virtual meetings, lectures and programmes relating to ferns can be found via our website, listed on the left-hand side of the home page. The BPS website saw significant increase in activity, with over 40,000 users – mostly from the UK and USA – of whom 10% were new users. There was also a healthy increase in sales of merchandise and Special Publications using PayPal on the website, as well as membership applications. As always, a huge thank you to Andrew Leonard for his valuable management of the website, both in his technical skills and also his content contribution.

The website is also linked to our Social Media groups. They can be accessed from the BPS website using the icons on the left-hand side of the home-page screen. All these accounts invite viewers back to the BPS website for more information.



photos: Chris Nicholson

Examples of Instagram posts

Fern World on Facebook, managed by Alison Evans, now has 2,174 'followers'. As far as possible, fern pictures are posted every Friday for 'Fern Friday', and interesting posts from other fern societies are shared. There are also some specialist fern groups on Facebook run by BPS members – the *Polypodium* cultivar group, the *Dryopteris* species, hybrids, and cultivars group, the *Polystichum* group, and the *Athyrium filix-femina* cultivars group. A good place to discover new things and keep up to date with what is happening in the cultivar world.

We also have a dedicated YouTube channel – search British Pteridological Society on YouTube for a range of informative videos.

Our Instagram account, managed by Chris Nicholson, has 2,197 followers.

As always, we welcome comments, participation and contributions. We would also welcome anyone who is interested in getting involved in the Webteam.

CONSERVATION OFFICER – Fred Rumsey

With little else to report in this strangest of years, I would draw members' attention to potential forthcoming changes in conservation legislation. Every five years, the country nature conservation bodies (Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and NatureScot), working jointly through the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), review Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981. The review will provide recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and to Ministers for the Environment in the Scottish Government and Welsh Government for changes to these schedules. This is known as the Quinquennial Review (QQR). A seventh QQR is now underway, giving us a chance to propose changes to the species accorded special legal protection. This time, however, clearer guidance has been given as to the qualifying eligibility criteria. These have been revised and have seen the integration of the IUCN Red-Listing categorisation into the process, such that only the species considered as at imminent threat of extinction, i.e. Critically Endangered or Endangered, can now be scheduled. Of the six fern species currently protected, only one, *Woodsia ilvensis*, would meet the new criteria. The guidance circulated suggests that Vulnerable species listed on the existing schedules will be evaluated by the QQR Inter-agency group to check their conservation dependence on the protection afforded by the schedules. This would account for a further two species: *Ophioglossum lusitanicum* and *Equisetum ramosissimum*, although it is still unclear whether if their survival were deemed conservation dependant they would still be accorded legal protection. *Vandenboschia speciosa*, which has since the discovery of its gametophyte been listed as Least Concern and has probably retained its protected status largely by virtue of European legislation, may come to rue Brexit!

It is important to emphasise that endangerment, on its own, is not seen as sufficient justification for recommending a species for scheduling. Many species will be endangered principally due to changes in land-use or land management leading to increased habitat fragmentation, deterioration or outright habitat loss. Such causes of endangerment do not, for the purposes of the QQR 7, constitute 'direct human ('reckless' in Scotland) pressures' as covered by Sections 9 and 13 of the WCA. To be recommended for scheduling, the endangerment of a species must, at least in part, be due to one or more of the direct human pressures listed in the Decision Criteria. For plants these very much focus on picking and trade.

Many had been dissatisfied by the past inconsistent approach to scheduling. The law was being employed to effectively protect sites, in lieu of any other meaningful legislation to accomplish this. This is clearly in the minds of those who have drafted the new guidance. Returning it to its original intention, protecting those threatened species particularly attractive

to collectors, I can accept, but only if we also have stronger legislation protecting habitats that is properly enforced! I will very much be fighting the corner of our plants during the consultation process, through my involvement in Red-List and agency Taxon Groups.

At a time of economic difficulty, possible post-Brexit de-regulation removing protective legislation and facing a global climate emergency, the future prospect for our countryside looks bleak indeed. I feel we must be vigilant and hold those to task who are responsible for our environmental health.

EDUCATION OFFICER – Gill Smith

We had our annual meeting in February 2020, never thinking that all the plans we were putting together would be 'scuppered' by Covid! Consequently, I do not have much to report for the last year. BBC Gardeners' World was cancelled, all the RHS events were cancelled, and even our face-to-face meetings were cancelled.

Just one small light in the darkness though – in September I was contacted by the Field Studies Council asking me to take part in a Zoom meeting about new online courses that they were hoping to set up in the immediate future. They wanted to discuss how the BPS might collaborate with the FSC in 2021 by advising on course content or recruiting members as tutors. The Education Subcommittee and also the main BPS Committee were in favour of helping with this, so we are slowly progressing this project.

Apart from that, I have had many contacts via the Website from the general public seeking information, which I have followed up and encouraged other members to help with. Some of these conversations have been prolonged and enthusiastic, so hopefully may have resulted in new members.

At the time of writing this report, we are still unsure whether or not we will be able to do any events in 2021.

PUBLICITY & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS – Sophie Walwin & Franziska Wittenstein

We produced three newsletters in 2020 (spring, summer and autumn) and we hope you enjoyed them and found them uplifting in these challenging times. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the content and to Membership Secretary Ann Robbins for sending it out to our members so professionally.

Our social media pages continue to successfully engage with members and the wider web community. Our Twitter feed steadily gains followers and we try to post a new fern-related story or plant feature each week, but the pace has been difficult to maintain without new material being shared with us. Retweets (and 'regrams' on Instagram) are essential to ensure fresh topics and images appear on our feeds.

Franziska and I launched a cyanotype artwork project, 'Ferns out of the blue', in the summer, which received a lukewarm response after an initial flurry of shared images. Franziska produced an amazing video to demonstrate the process, which features on our YouTube channel. This project could be re-launched in the future – and perhaps the process could feature at shows as the effects are quick to produce and could be a new way to engage with the public – especially children.

COMMITTEE APPOINTEES' REPORTS

RECORDER – Fred Rumsey

Unsurprisingly in a year of lockdowns and almost entirely curtailed group recording activities there is rather less for me to report. Many of us have made the most of our allowed recreation and as a consequence have become much more aware and appreciative of our local areas. For me this led to the discovery of *Dryopteris cycadina* established in

woodland close to habitation by Fleet Pond and new to Hants. Its discovery has recently been reported to me from a range of English vice-counties and it is probably our fastest increasing alien. The commonest alien is still, however, *Cyrtomium fortunei sensu lato*, now cropping up across the country but annoyingly variable and difficult to distinguish from related species when young, as many of the plants are. I hope to come up with better guidance on the genus shortly.

Work continues too on our lycopods. The Northumbrian plants that had been thought to be *Diphasiastrum xissleri* have now been re-assessed as atypical *D. alpinum* in a paper shortly to appear in *British and Irish Botany*. This effectively renders the taxon Regionally Extinct in England, the only definite finds being those from Gloucestershire in the 1880s. Its conservation status at the GB level remains unchanged as more Scottish populations have come to light. Also in Scotland, the careful researches of Roger Golding have, with the cytometric aid of Libor Ekr, shown that we have diploid examples of *Huperzia*, as well as the common hexaploid that we can equate to *H. selago*. There has long been confusion over the identity and appropriate nomenclature of the somewhat distinctive boreal form(s) found in the Highlands and Islands. While these plants have in recent years been treated as *H. selago* subsp. *arctica*, it seems likely that they may better be placed in *H. appressa*, although some small plants from serpentine debris on Unst may indeed be what we should call *H. arctica*. Much more work is needed. The possibility that some Scottish montane examples of *Lycopodium annotinum*, or *Spinulum annotinum* if you prefer (for me the jury is still out!), would better be placed under the boreal subsp. *alpestre* – treated by North American authors as *Spinulum canadense* – is also currently being investigated. As with *Lycopodium clavatum* and *L. lagopus* (which I am increasingly regretting not retaining as a subspecies of *L. clavatum*) the distinctions never seem as clear as the books would have you believe!

The value of digital devices as recording tools, and social media as identification forums has become increasingly obvious in these difficult times. I am grateful to those of you using the latter for alerting me to various interesting finds over recent months. I fear we must wait until 2021 to find out if we have another site for *Polystichum xlesliei*, as is suspected (possibly the only extant one?). One exciting *Asplenium* find (in 2021) must wait until



photo: Fred Rumsey

Asplenium billotii – Westminster, 16th December 2020

next year's report, but I can tell of the exciting discovery by Roy Vickery of a thriving population of *Asplenium billotii* (*A. obovatum* subsp. *billotii*), on granite blockwork a stone's throw from Parliament Square, Westminster. The only other London site has regrettably long since been destroyed by the development of the King's Cross area.

As always, my thanks to those of you who have sent me records and apologies to those of you whose exciting finds have not been reported here.

SPORE EXCHANGE ORGANISERS – Brian & Sue Dockerill

These statistics give an overview of the main Spore Exchange for 2020.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No. taxa in list	374	441	503	459	452	405	402	384
No. orders received	99	115	98	96	135	155	164	146
No. packets supplied	1,548	2,015	1,703	1,568	2,331	2,486	2,664	2,324
No. first choices supplied (%)	1,276 (82%)	1,795 (89%)	1,526 (90%)	1,400 (90%)	2,024 (86%)	2,077 (83%)	2,220 (85%)	1,927 (83%)
No. donors	35	31	32	32	39	36	40	35

We are pleased to say that the Spore Exchange remains well supported by members. The use of the web-based ordering system is also popular, with over 90% of orders coming by that route. Because of the speedier arrival of orders, from the 2021 Exchange we will start picking orders a week after the list opens, rather than two weeks, which was originally to allow time for postage from overseas. Almost half the orders have already been received by the earlier date and this also spreads out our workload.

Many of our taxa are in short supply and this can mean some people get a very small proportion of their order. From 2021 we will be noting those that are in short supply so people are aware that this may happen.

We again supplied spores to the Seed Exchange of The Hardy Plant Society.

We continued to supply short viability spores separately, and the statistics for this are shown below.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No. taxa donated	9	11	11	13	13
No. donors	4	6	7	7	6
No. packets supplied	40	30	39	63	67

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.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No. taxa available	32	22	62	44	48
No. donors	6	5	5	7	8
No. taxa wanted	19	25	41	49	67
No. requestors	5	8	13	15	18

The Plant Exchange continues to list a reasonable number of ferns, and many of these are requested – of the 48 available this year, 22 are not currently listed as they are used up. As last year, we feel this aspect of the system is working well, albeit on a moderate scale.

For plant wants, the number requested continues to rise, but with little evidence that plants are obtained this way. Overall, this aspect of the system is working less well, possibly because the plants requested do not seem to be available within the membership. We would encourage all members to look at this list and see whether they are able to meet the needs of their fellow members.

Both aspects of the Exchange are advertised in the Autumn Mailing and other communications, and with all spores sent out from the Spore Exchange.

We also offer to send out a paper list on request, and again one person took advantage of this.

There have been several recent changes to plant import and movement regulations and we will be considering how the Plant Exchange may be affected by these. We will ensure the website reflects the situation at the time.

BOOKSALES ORGANISER – Frank Katzer

The year 2020 was the quietest year for BPS Booksales since I took over in 2006. I acquired some copies of *Britain's ferns* by James Merryweather for Booksales, which are being sold for £15.00, but sales have been very slow because there have been no face-to-face meetings. Booksales had an income of £131.30 but made an overall loss of £250.77 due to the purchase of new books. As usual I will keep looking to acquire more books during the coming year and I would be grateful if you could let me know if you become aware of any new fern books before they are published so that I can contact the publishers in order to get a better deal for our members.

BPS Booksales will welcome 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 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 and SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS SALES – Pat Atcock

I understand that during lockdown year we recruited a large number of new members. When I joined (over fifty years ago), I started to buy back numbers of our journals. In fact, that is how I ended up running the back numbers and, later, selling our Special Publications.

I recently spent a day trawling through all eight volumes of the *Bulletin* to research a piece for this issue. Do not be caught out by not catching up on the reasonable price of our back numbers; it is so much harder to track them down as second-hand copies later from dealers. Despite my appeal last year, we sold only a few *Bulletin* parts, one *Fern Gazette* and, as far as I can tell, no copies of the *Pteridologist*.

In contrast, our Special Publications broke new records, selling 13 copies of *Fern albums and related materials*, ten copies of the second edition of *Polystichum cultivars* and a few copies of most of our other volumes. But by far the best seller was *Polypodium cultivars and species*, with the last 33 of the first edition selling out and after many problems with the printing of the second edition we have now sold 51 copies of that all over the world, including to the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, USA, Thailand and Australia.

MERCHANDISE ORGANISERS – Bryan & Gill Smith

The year 2020 started off pretty quietly as usual, then Covid hit and we all went into lockdown in March. After the novelty of staying at home all day began to wear off, it seems that people turned to their computers for some entertainment – that's when the sales of merchandise suddenly took off!

Thereafter we had a fairly steady stream of orders – in a normal year we usually have about 25 orders via the website, in 2020 we had clocked up 75 by the end of December! We had orders from the USA, Netherlands, Belgium, Channel Isles, Australia, Germany and Ireland, as well as from many UK members. Thank you everyone for your orders and for giving us something to keep us occupied in these strange times! So that we didn't have to go to the Post Office regularly, we set up a Royal Mail account so we could pay postage online and produce our own labels for parcels. At the time of writing this report we have already had nine merchandise orders for January 2021, so it looks as if we will be kept busy for a while!

Fortunately, a lot of our merchandise suppliers were still working throughout the year so we were able to replenish stock when needed. Plus we added several more items to the already long list. We know many people still use matches, so there are three different types of match holders/boxes with fern motifs. We obtained more sets of small cards from a previous supplier, and added some larger cards of our own design introducing images of ferns created by one of our talented members using the cyanotype method. Another of our inspired members has made sets of fern nightlights that display coloured acrylic laser-engraved images of ferns – he is also using his laser to personalise garden trowels for us, which have been very popular so far! We also changed the style of our fern calendar for 2021 but sales have been very poor; it takes a lot of time and effort to put it together, so something for consideration – do we need to produce a calendar?

As there were no meetings or shows in 2020, we missed out on face-to-face sales, but as the Covid vaccines are being rolled out quickly, we are hoping that we will be able to see other members 'in the flesh' again before the end of 2021. We have had some really nice positive feedback about our range of Merchandise, but if you have ideas for any other items that you think would enhance our list, please contact us on merchandise@eBPS.org.uk.

HORTICULTURAL INFORMATION ADVISER – Matt Busby

I received no enquiries during 2020. Most enquiries of this type are now received and dealt with via the Society's website. Sadly I feel I must step down from this role.

ARCHIVIST – Michael Hayward

The archive is still open for business, despite lockdown restrictions. The great majority of requests can now be answered from the digital collection of data and images, created over the last few years. Requests that need an article to be physically retrieved will unfortunately have to wait until the museum staff are able to be back in their offices.

Conservation work was carried out during the year on the eight volumes of press clippings put together by Charles Druery. This is one of the most important collections in the archive. Each page of each album was cleaned and then the pages interleaved to reduce further deterioration. A few of the articles clipped from newspapers are quite acidic and have browned significantly, but the gardening and horticultural press fortunately used a better quality of paper, so their ephemera have survived remarkably well.

I am looking forwards to working once again with the staff of the Botany Department at the World Museum Liverpool, as soon as the current situation allows.

CULTIVAR REGISTRATION WORKING GROUP – Roger Golding

I am hoping to provide a first rough draft of a Register of *Polypodium* cultivars by the autumn for discussion; progress has been delayed again, this time by the publication of Martin Rickard's *Polypodium* book, which has introduced a number of new cultivars and new names for old cultivars! Once again, if anyone is interesting in helping with this project, please get in touch.