

Report

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 4 MAY 1991

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool, at the invitation of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, at 11.15. 95 members were present and Mr J. Ounsted, Vice-President, took the Chair.

Apologies for absence were read and Minutes of the 1990 Annual General Meeting, as published in *Watsonia* 18: 331-332 (1991), were approved and signed by the Chairman.

REPORT OF COUNCIL

The adoption of this report, which had been circulated to members, was proposed from the Chair, seconded by Dr E. C. Nelson and accepted nem con.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

The Hon. Treasurer, proposing the adoption of his Report and Accounts, offered to explain any points. Dr T. C. G. Rich asked for clarification of the terms of covenant of subscriptions. Mr Walpole replied that the covenants must be for a minimum of four years. The adoption of the Report was seconded by Mr R. G. Ellis and Dr P. Macpherson, who coupled this with a vote of thanks to the Treasurer. This was carried unanimously with applause.

SUBSCRIPTION INCREASES FROM JANUARY 1992

Following the general rise in costs, particularly of postage, Council had proposed the following rates from 1992:

Ordinary	£12.50 to £15.00
Family	£1.00 to £2.00
Junior	£5.00 to £6.00
Senior	£7.50 to £9.00
Institutional	£12.50 to £15.00

The Hon. General Secretary noted that there had been no increase in subscriptions since 1986. Mrs M. Lindop, relaying a query from a member unable to be present, asked for clarification of the Senior rate. The Hon. General Secretary read the definition as in B.S.B.I. Rule 24: "Persons over 60 who have been members of the Society for at least 10 years and who are no longer in full time employment may elect to pay an annual reduced subscription at such rate as from time to time shall be decided by Council". It was agreed to republish this rule in *B.S.B.I. News* for the information of members. The adoption of the new rates was proposed by the Hon. Treasurer, seconded by Mrs A. Lee, and carried with none against.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

The election of Dr P. Macpherson F.R.C.P., F.R.C.R., F.L.S., as nominated by Council, was proposed from the Chair and carried unanimously with acclamation. Dr Macpherson was then welcomed and took the Chair. Thanking Mr Ounsted, he also thanked members for his election, saying that this leap to President had in no way been anticipated, but that he was humbly and deeply

appreciative. The President then called on Dr J. R. Akeroyd to thank the retiring President, Professor D. A. Webb Sc.D., F.M.L.S., who was unfortunately unable to be present at the meeting.

Dr Akeroyd, recalling that he and Professor Webb had shared the same biology teacher at Charterhouse, the late Percy 'Cheese' Chapman, reminded us that Professor Webb was first a marine biologist, whose research over the years had ranged from the blood pigments of sea-squirts to *Saxifraga*. Professor Webb, who had been one of the driving forces of *Flora Europaea* and had dominated Irish botany since the death of Praeger, had been an active President of this Society, frequently making the long journey to attend meetings and supporting all the B.S.B.I. activities during his term of office. He thanked Professor Webb on behalf of the Society and this was acclaimed with applause.

ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTS

The election of Mr P. S. Green, Dr G. Halliday and Mr A. C. Jermy, as nominated by Council, was proposed by Dr R. J. Pankhurst, seconded by Mr R. M. Burton and carried unanimously.

RE-ELECTION OF HON. GENERAL SECRETARY AND HON. TREASURER

Proposing the re-election of Mrs M. Briggs, the President recalled that, when invited to accept nomination for President, he had asked if a medical certificate ensuring the good health of the Hon. Secretary was available. He particularly thanked the Hon. Secretary for the Annual Report of Council and this year for the first of a new series of the *Year Book* which had been widely acclaimed by members. Proposing the re-election of Mr Walpole, the President adding to his earlier vote of thanks, referred to the considerable workload of the Treasurer for the Society. The elections were formally seconded by Mrs A. Lee and Mr R. G. Ellis and carried unanimously with applause.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

In accordance with Rule 10, nominations had been received for Dr J. R. Akeroyd, Mr J. M. Montgomery and Dr T. C. G. Rich. Their election was proposed by Mr R. G. Ellis, seconded by Dr R. J. Pankhurst and passed unanimously.

MINOR AMENDMENTS OF THE RULES OF THE SOCIETY

Some changes in the wording of eight of the Society's Rules, to incorporate changes of Rules approved by Annual General Meetings since 1968, and to consolidate the wording, had been discussed and approved by Council. Copies of the amended Rules were available at the meeting, and had been offered to members by post beforehand on request. The amendments were accepted without comment.

ELECTION OF HONORARY MEMBERS

Mr R. G. Ellis, proposing Mr M. Walpole F.C.A., F.L.S., spoke of him as a keen supporter of conservation and active member of his local Wildlife Trust, and as a botanical book collector with the finest private collection in this country. For the Society Mr Walpole was a decisive Chairman of the Publications Committee, and, most significantly, as Hon. Treasurer he has efficiently handled B.S.B.I. finances for 20 years.

Proposing Mr A. O. Chater, Mr Walpole noted that some societies awarded medals to individual members as a token of appreciation of distinction in service to the society. Mr Chater, a competent Secretary of the Publications Committee for nine years, was co-author of *Sedges of the British Isles* and had also been very involved in the publication of five other titles in this series of B.S.B.I.

Handbooks. His general botanical advice has been valued by the officers and members alike, and as a *Carex* Referee and the Specialist on Nomenclature his adjudications are generously offered and highly respected.

Before the meeting neither recipient knew that they had been nominated by Council; both were unanimously elected with warm applause.

RE-ELECTION OF HONORARY AUDITORS

The Hon. Treasurer, in proposing the re-election of Grant Thornton, West Walk, Leicester, referred to the honour for the Society to present their Accounts over the name of these distinguished Auditors. Their re-election was passed unanimously, and the President agreed to write expressing thanks from the Society.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr M. Walpole, as Chairman of the Publications Committee, reported that the Committee had appointed two new *Watsonia* Editors: Dr R. R. Mill and Dr E. C. Nelson. Both were present and were welcomed. Dr R. J. Gornall had retired and Dr B. S. Rushton would now be Receiving Editor. Thanking Dr Gornall on behalf of the Society he observed that the high standards of *Watsonia* had increased during the ten years of Dr Gornall's editorship. He was thanked for competently coping with the very heavy workload, and for his skill at conforming to prescribed budgets. Thanks were extended also to all the Society's Editors, not least to Mr R. G. Ellis (*B.S.B.I. News*) and Mr D. H. Kent (*B.S.B.I. Abstracts*).

The *Report of the B.S.B.I. Monitoring Scheme* by Dr T. C. G. Rich was complete in two large format volumes, of which copies of Vol. II (the maps), sufficient for distribution to v.c. Recorders, were now available, and a matching number of copies of Vol. I were in production. Because of their large size, publication of further copies would be costly and, at the request of Council, the Hon. Secretary asked how many of the members present (who were not v.c. Recorders) would be interested in purchasing copies if these were to be published at approximately £20. Almost all those members signalled by a show of hands as wanting to purchase a copy if published. Possible ways to reduce the cost, e.g. smaller paper size for Vol. I, or a shortened text as an Introduction to the maps, were discussed. Dr Rich noted that he had submitted three papers to *Watsonia* on the results of the Scheme. Dr Rushton pointed out that if these papers were accepted by and published in *Watsonia*, they could not be published elsewhere. A lengthy and lively discussion followed and the matter was referred to Council with some urgency, in view of the time that had elapsed since the end of the field work and the completion of the *Report*.

Following some general announcements, the President then thanked Dr J. R. Edmondson and his assistants for the excellent local arrangements and the meeting closed at 12.23.

MARY BRIGGS

PAPERS READ AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Four papers were presented on the theme of "Botanists and Books". Michael Walpole first spoke on *British Floras and the book collector*, explaining his personal reasons for collecting local Floras and sharing some anecdotes on the sometimes difficult relationships with antiquarian booksellers. He found it particularly difficult to confine his collecting to a severely restricted field, given the large number of publications which have botanical data in their contents.

Charles Nelson then gave a talk entitled "*Out of olde bokes . . . cometh al this newe science*": *musings on bibliography and botanists*. Aptly complementing the previous speaker, he chose a series of examples to illustrate his theme that it was not only the printed contents of the books which were of significance to posterity, but also the jottings, scribbings and more deliberate mutilations of

books (such as bookplates – several exuberant examples were shown) which provide rich pickings for botanical historians.

After the tea break, Tim Rich presented a paper *Towards an Atlas of the British Flora 2000*, the date being millennial rather than a firm prediction. Based on his experience during the recently completed Monitoring Scheme project, he outlined various methods for the efficient capture of distributional data and made a strong plea for the continuation of involvement in field recording which would lead to the publication of a new *Atlas*.

The final speaker, Bob Barnard of H.M.S.O. Publications, gave a professional publisher's account of *The new technology of publishing botany books*, showing examples from various recent H.M.S.O. publications to demonstrate new methods of typesetting, illustrating and distributing books. Reference was made to CD-ROM technology as well as to more conventional printed products, with helpful guidance on the various ways in which publishers price their products.

THE NATURAL HISTORY BOOK FAIR

This was the first occasion on which a Book Fair had been arranged as a commercial venture at the Maritime Museum. It was organized by the Botany Department of Liverpool Museum to take place in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting. The following booksellers participated:

B.S.B.I. Publications (Oundle)
 Broadleaf Books (Cardiff)
 Chantrey Books (Sheffield)
 John Price (Marlborough)
 Parry Books (Liverpool)
 Subbuteo Natural History Books (Treuddyn)
 Summerfield Books (Brough)
 Tim Oldham, of Wyseby House Books, had to withdraw at a late stage because of illness.

It was generally agreed that this event enhanced the value of a conference on "Botanists and Books" as well as providing tempting purchasing opportunities for bibliophiles. The agreeable atmosphere of the Maritime Museum's historic warehouse galleries was also appreciated.

EXHIBITION: SOME NORTH-WEST BOTANISTS AND THEIR BOOKS

A small display was mounted by the Botany Department of Liverpool Museum containing short biographical sketches of some of the principal authors of botanical books in N. W. England together with examples of the books themselves as well as items from the archives. One of the highlights of the exhibition was a copy of Thomas Johnson's 1633 edition of Gerard's *Herball*.

The following botanists with North-west connections were featured: William Bean (1817–1864); Joseph Dickinson (1805–1865); John Gerard (1545–1612); Conrad Theodore Green (1863–1940); Leopold Hartley Grindon (1818–1904); Thomas Batt Hall (1814–1886); William Roscoe (1753–1831); William Gladstone Travis (1877–1958); John Warren, Baron de Tabley (1835–1895); James Alfred Wheldon (1862–1924) and Albert Wilson (1862–1949).

Also on show were samples of the manuscript of de Tabley's *Flora of Cheshire*, together with examples of specimens from his herbarium, on loan from the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin. The organizers are indebted to the authorities at Glasnevin, as well as to Mr Neville Carrick, the City of Liverpool's Librarian and Mr Eric Greenwood, Keeper of the Liverpool Museum, for the loan of items for this exhibition.

A leaflet entitled *Some North-west Botanists and their Books* was prepared by Lorna Cunliffe-Lister, a student from the Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, to accompany the exhibition.

FIELD EXCURSION HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE A.G.M.

BODNANT GARDEN AND THE GREAT ORME, NORTH WALES. 5 MAY 1991

A coach party of 42 people together with about 20 travelling by car made the journey to Bodnant Garden, near Conwy, on a day which started cloudy but developed into a gloriously sunny afternoon. The garden at Bodnant, which was given to the National Trust by the late Lord Aberconway, is set in a precipitous valley close to the estuary of the River Conwy. It is managed partly as a formal garden and partly as a 'wilderness' garden with steeply sloping rocky banks and a network of crazily angled paths. The facilities have been enhanced by a garden centre (under refurbishment) and a new restaurant and coffee shop which, despite the Bank Holiday crush, was able to offer an efficient luncheon service.

After lunch the coach departed for Llandudno, hoping to take its passengers to a rendezvous with the car-borne botanists at the foot of the Great Orme. Alas, Bank Holiday crowds attending a "Victorian Extravaganza" in Llandudno, coupled with the closure (due to a landslide) of the coastal road which encircles the peninsula, conspired to delay the coach to the point where the two parties set off separately for the limestone massif of the Great Orme. Led by three local botanists, Wendy McCarthy, Ted Phenna and Geoff Battershall, 17 members set off on an 'alternative A.G.M. excursion'. Numerous specialities were seen including *Aster linosyris*, *Hypochoeris maculata*, *Helianthemum canum*, *Hornungia petraea*, *Orchis morio* and *Cotoneaster integerrimus*. The coach party, having finally reached the ungrazed area below the cablecar station, were able to scramble up the slopes above the foot of the Happy Valley gardens in order to see some of the characteristic early-flowering limestone plants, including *Scilla verna*, and *Brassica oleracea* at its northern limit of distribution in Wales.

Thanks are due to Tim Rich for contributing to this report, to all the speakers and exhibitors at the Book Fair, to the staff of the Conference Office at the Merseyside Maritime Museum for their efficient handling of the front-of-house arrangements, and to the Trustees of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside for their hospitality.

J. R. EDMONDSON