From the Editor

It is amazing how time flies! It is nearly 7 months since I sent out the last UK Peatland News in June and much has happened since then. The meetings I mentioned in the last issue have all taken place and some will be reported on later in this one.

The most important event was the IPS 50th Anniversary that was marked by a ‘Peat Summit’ for our industry members followed by a Symposium and Gala Dinner. These were held in the former liner and cruise ship SS Rotterdam that is moored in Rotterdam harbour. It was an exciting venue.

Now we are looking to the future to ensure that the IPS will still be going strong in another 50 years! For this to be possible we need to build up the membership in all countries and encourage greater participation not only in events but also the organisation and running of the Society.

To do this IPS needs to have a strong and forward-looking Secretariat including staff and Executive Board members, assisted by the Scientific Advisory Board and its Expert Groups. All National Committees must be active and inclusive. We have been without a Secretary General for almost two years and this has meant a reduction in the servicing of National Committees and members, and much additional work has been put onto Susann Warnecke the Communications Manager. Now, thanks to the endeavours of Vice President Guus van Berckel and colleagues on the Executive Board funding has been obtained from industry companies for the salary of a full-time Secretary General for the next three years commencing 1st January 2019. This should breath new life into the IPS, reinvigorating it to deal with the challenges ahead and expand the important work that IPS does to promote responsible peatland management globally. It also means the Society must find funding to pay the SG salary indefinitely. If you have suggestions for this, please let me know.

The IPS continues to gain members and influence in Asia with National Committees in China, Indonesia, Japan and China, mainly as a result of the very successful Congress that was held in Kuching, Sarawak in 2016. Following that meeting the IPS Executive Board established the ‘Tropical Peatland Round Table’ (TPRT) at which to discuss important current and emerging issues affecting peatland in the tropical zone. The first TPRT was held in Jakarta in November 2017 and the second has been held recently on Batam Island, Sumatra in November 2018. Future meetings are being planned.

Finally, I am making a plea for the new peatland year 2019 that you all remain in membership of the IPS and persuade colleagues and students to join. The IPS is the only international NGO that embraces every aspect of peatlands and peat from conservation, culture and science to responsible management through its three Commissions – Peatlands and Environment, Peatlands and Society and Peatlands and economy. Why not join one of their 13 Expert Groups? http://peatlands.org/about-us/commissions-expert-groups-and-sab
IPS UK Annual Subscriptions

This is to remind you that the annual subscriptions were increased in 2017 to the following:

Individual members: £45
Corporate and institutional members: £150
Student members: £25

A few members have not renewed their subscriptions for 2018 and I hope that they will still do so. Every subscription unpaid means less can be done to support peatlands and peat and continued payment ensures that the IPS continues its important work.

Most of the money raised from subscriptions is transferred to IPS in Finland to help maintain the Secretariat that now has two full-time members of staff – Gilbert Ludwig, Secretary General from 1st January 2019 and Susann Warnecke, Communications Manager. A small amount from UK subscriptions is retained and put to good use for peatland projects in the UK. For the last four years we have contributed generously towards the Allan Robertson Grants for early career peatland scientists and managers and this year we also part-funded the first meeting of the Editors of the Scientific Journal Mires and Peat.

I must report, however, that already we are suffering from consequences of Brexit, especially devaluation of the pound sterling by around 25% compared to its value against the Euro several years ago. This is having a major effect on the finances of the UK Peatland Society because we pay our annual subscription contribution to the IPS Secretariat in Finland in Euros. UK member subscriptions will be maintained at their current level for 2019 but if the exchange rate remains as it is or deteriorates further, they will need to be increased in 2020.

New IPS Secretary General takes up his position on January 1st

As announced earlier, our full-time Secretary General Dr Gilbert Ludwig started his work for the IPS on 1 January. Do not hesitate to contact him at gilbert.ludwig@peatlands.org. His IPS mobile number is +358 40 145 2267. More information can be obtained at www.peatsociety.org/about-us/secretariat.

Dr Gilbert will spend his first year mostly travelling and getting to know our members, but also playing a major role in implementing the IPS Strategy 2016-2020, including cooperation with international conventions, bridging science and industry, improving communication and enhancing IPS' project management.
Allan Robertson Grants 2019 – Application is now open

Thanks to generous funding provided by the National Committees of Estonia and UK, IPS and Professor Robertson’s family, 10 grants of €500 can be awarded to students and young professionals this year. Visit www.peatlands.org/about-us/allan-robertson-grants and apply, if you are 30 or under and eager to reveal your plans to us. Application will be open from 15th December until 31st January.

Extraordinary IPS Assembly

An Extraordinary Assembly of National Representatives will be held by email during 28 - 31 January. This is necessary as the current Auditor of the IPS is now working for the same group of companies as our accountants and this is not permitted under Finnish law. National Representatives will elect a new Auditor for 2019. National Committees were notified in December 2018.

New Executive Board elected

The Annual Assembly of the IPS elected a new Executive Board in Rotterdam on 13 September 2018. Six ordinary members were elected by secret ballot out of nine candidates, among which are, for the first time in IPS history, three women. The IPS Executive Board consists now of (term in brackets):

**Presidents (2016-2020)**
- Gerald Schmikelewski, Germany (President)
- Guus van Berckel, Netherlands (1st Vice)
- Samu Valpola, Finland (2nd Vice)

**Ordinary members (2018-2020)**
- Erki Niitlaan, Estonia
- Zhengping Wang, China

**Ordinary members (2018-2022)**
- Sabine Jordan, Sweden
- Lulie Melling, Malaysia
- Jack Rieley, United Kingdom
- Frank Tamminga, Germany

Their detailed contact information can be found at www.peatlands.org/about-us/executive-board.

THE FLOW COUNTRY IN THE NORTH OF SCOTLAND IS A CANDIDATE WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The Flow Country of Caithness and Sutherland in the north of Scotland occupies 4000 km². This landscape is the best blanket bog habitat of its type anywhere in the world and has been on the UK’s list of potential World Heritage Sites since 2012. The background to this and the reasons why it should be designated are explained in a recent article by Joe Perry and Roxane Andersen in Peatlands International. Two technical evaluations were submitted to UNESCO in 2013 and 2015 and a third will be finished by the end of 2019. This will be sent to the UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and if accepted will be forwarded to UNESCO for decision.

Members of the IPS, its Executive Board and National Committees can support this proposal for World Heritage status by sending letters to Joe Perry, Project Coordinator, Flow Country World Heritage Site Working Group, Highland Council Offices, Drummuie, Golspie, Scotland, KW10 6TA, United Kingdom. DON’T DELAY!
Executive Board meets in Tallinn

The new Executive Board of the IPS held its first meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on 2 - 5 December 2018. This was a special meeting at which the new full-time Secretary General Gilbert Ludwig was introduced!

In addition, the plan of activities and budget 2019 were discussed, as well as the Peat Dialogue, the 2019 IPS Annual Meeting in Bremen, future global convention meetings and symposia, the Mires and Peat Journal and the 2nd Tropical Peatland Round Table.

On 4 December, the Executive Board met the organisers of the 2020 International Peatland Congress, which will be held in Tallinn just 18 months from now. I shall keep you updated.

IPS Executive Board in Session in Tallinn

Five newly elected EB members "in front" of the Rotterdam Market Hall, Tamminga, Rieley, Jordan, Melling, Niitlaan, left to right. (Photos: SW)

2nd Tropical Peatland Round Table in Bantam & Meranti Island

The 2nd Tropical Peatland Round Table was held in Batam, Sumatra, Indonesia on 12 - 13 November 2018, followed by a field excursion to Meranti Island to view tropical peatland restoration projects. Around 100 participants attended from peatland science and technology, restoration, industry, government, NGO and international Agencies. Gerald Schmilewski, Jack Rieley and Sue Page attended, on behalf of IPS, giving opening speeches and other presentations.

Gerald Schmilewski, Haris Gunawan, Bambang Setiadi and Mitsuru Osaki at the TPRT in Batam
Best wishes for New Year 2019

The meeting was sponsored by Indonesian Peatland Restoration Agency (BRG), Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF), International Peatland Society (IPS), Japan Peatland Society (JPS), Indonesian Peatland Society (HGI), and Research Institute for Humanity and Nature.

Following up the 1st Tropical Peatland Roundtable that was held in Jakarta in November 2017, the 2nd Tropical Peatland Roundtable aimed to implement the ‘Jakarta Declaration’ on Responsible Tropical Peatland Management.

IPS President Gerald Schmilewski, and Professors Jack Rieley and Susan Page and Lahiru Wijedasa from the National University of Singapore attended the Round Table on behalf of the IPS, in addition to several Indonesian and Japanese IPS members.

After two full days of presentations and round table discussion the 2nd Round Table participants:

- WELCOMED the establishment of the International Tropical Peatland Centre (ITPC) by the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry
- PROPOSED setting up a “Tropical Peatland Network” (TPN) to share information and activities
- RECOMMENDED, once the TPN has been established, appropriate persons are identified to populate an “International Committee for Technical Consultation” (ICTC) to advise, as appropriate, the TPN, ITPC, research projects and other activities on tropical peatland
- NOTED the status of and recent developments in monitoring technologies for detecting fire and land use change and assisting restoration of tropical peatland
- PROPOSED a “Model Project” for responsible management of tropical peatland globally using a multi-partner approach
- AGREED that “Capacity Building” is a priority action necessary to raise scientific, public and institutional awareness of the importance of tropical peatland and to train future practitioners and managers of this important resource
- PROPOSED to publish a multi-authored book on “Responsible Management of Tropical Peatland”

TROPICAL PEATLAND ECOSYSTEM AND RESTORATION CONFERENCE

This important conference was organised by the University of Palangka Raya in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia on 21-22 November 2018. The focus was on:

- Characteristics of natural and degraded tropical peatland
- Prospects of tropical peatland restoration and the challenges presented
- Development and livelihood issues in current management of tropical peatland
- Government policy for peatland management
Participants included National and International speakers, employees of Indonesian Government and Provincial agencies, policy makers, NGOs, university and college lecturers and students. Plantation owners and employees.

The activity of this International Conference was part of a series of events marking the 55th anniversary of the University of Palangka Raya.

Keynote speakers included Professors Jack Rieley and Susan Page of the UK Peatland Society/IPS, Professor Mitsuru Osaki Chair of the Japan Peatland Society/IPS and Dr Alue Dohong of the Indonesia Peatland Restoration Agency.

During the meeting Jack rieley was presented with a medal of honour in recognition of his long association with the University of Palangka Raya for research and staff training.

Thanks to all attendees of the IPS 50th Anniversary events in Rotterdam!

We warmly thank all attendees of the IPS Jubilee Symposium and the Global Peatland and Peat Industry Summit in Rotterdam.

Presentations and abstracts are currently being uploaded to the IPS Intranet (as authors’ permission are received). Visit https://bit.ly/2xN5Hs2 to read and download (available to members). If you have lost your password, insert your email address at www.peatlands.org/user/password. User names for the Intranet (Document bank) are, in most cases, firstname.lastname or your email address.
Irish Peatland Society Annual Meeting, Study Tour and Seminar

The Irish Peatland Society (IPS) aims to bring together organisations (including Government bodies, academic institutions, NGOs and forest, peat and energy companies) and individuals with an interest in peatlands and peat. In 2018 the Irish Peatland Society hosted a Study Tour and Seminar in County Fermanagh centred on the Cuilcagh Geopark and Marble Arch Caves.

The meeting commenced with a study visit to the Cuilcagh Legnabrocky Trail, Slieve Rushden peatland, followed by a tour of Marble Arch caves system.

The Seminar covered the following topics: Marble Arch Geopark, Revision of the IPS Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management, Conservation Status of Peatlands in Northern Ireland, CANN and QUBBES, Peatlands and Climate Change.

The invited speakers included:

- Martina O’Neil (Marble Arches Geopark)
- Jack rieley (UK Peatland Society)
- Richard Wyle (Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs)
- Francis Mackin (QUBBES Project)
- Trish Fox (CANN Project)

These presentations were followed by a question and discussion session.

It is hoped to organise a joint meeting of the Irish and UK Peatland Societies again in the future. Suggestions are welcome.

England Peat Strategy Moves Forward

The following information was received from Judith Stuart, DEFRA Soils and Peatlands Policy Specialist.

“Things have continued to move at a fast pace in Defra since I last updated you in August. Our plans have changed a bit, with publication of the Strategy now planned for 2019, but we are making some very good progress.

The proposed aim of the Strategy is that in 25 years we want all of England’s peatlands to be functioning healthily for the needs of wildlife and people. We recognise that peatland serves multiple objectives and this can create tensions (e.g. with forestry), therefore the Strategy aims to surface and resolve these tensions through applying a systematic approach, to ensure that no area of peatland is overlooked. We do not want the national strategy to function as a top-down strategy – rather we will rely on locally based partnerships reporting into local governance and national governance aligned with biodiversity and forestry strategies to ensure trade-offs are evaluated and managed. We will be testing this approach in five pilot areas across England. We are working with Natural England and other stakeholders to get these pilots in place and will update you about these early next year.

The Strategy will focus on lowland peat used for agriculture given that it is responsible for the majority our greenhouse gas emissions from peatland. This is a new focus for many of us and we will need your help to identify real solutions. We are setting up a Lowland Agricultural Peat Taskforce (as announced by the Secretary of State -
https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/michael-gove-speech-on-uk-climate-change-projections) which will deliver recommendations for a new more sustainable future for agriculture on lowland peatlands in England. We held a successful stakeholder workshop earlier this month to help shape the terms of reference and work programme for the Taskforce. We will be circulating the revised terms of reference for comment early in 2019. The Taskforce will commence in Spring/Summer 2019. We have a separate circulation list for updates on the Taskforce, if you want to receive more specific updates on that strand of work and have not received a separate Taskforce update email today please let me know.”

My email is changing – from 31 March 2019 GSI will be removed from my email address. My new email address will be Judith.stuart@defra.gov.uk. My new email address is already working so please start using my new email address now.

MIRES AND PEAT EDITORS’ MEETING

*Mires and Peat* is a peer-reviewed free-access internet journal focusing specifically on mires, peatlands, and peat. It is published jointly by the International Peatland Society (IPS) and the International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG).

The first meeting of the Editors of Mires and Peat was held at the University of Leeds, UK in October 2018. Ten of the 12 editors attended including Olivia Bragg, Editor-in-Chief and Jack Rieley, Deputy EiC. Richard Payne, an Associate Editor also attended.

Present: Andy Baird, University of Leeds; Olivia Bragg, University of Dundee; Frank Chambers, University of Gloucestershire; Dicky Clymo, Queen Mary University of London; Stephan Glatzel, University of Vienna; Bartek Glina, University of Poznan; Ab Grootjans, University of Groningen; Richard Payne, University of York; Jack Rieley, IPS and University of Nottingham; Katy Roucoux, University of St Andrews, David Wilson, Earthy Matters Consultants

Apologies: Jonathan Price, University of Waterloo. Skype from Canada did not work.

Aims of Meeting

- To discuss the current situation of the journal with respect to use of the Online Journal System facility (OJS) provided by the University of St Andrews
- Improvements to instructions for authors to include: example papers that have been done well, be more specific about what’s required, refer to the book by Dickie Clymo on how to write a scientific paper; importance of authors formatting own references; editing guide
- Number of editors:
  - If we identify new potential editors, send names to Olivia for approval
- Consider M&P policy for
  - Reviewers
  - Editing skills (subject expertise)
  - Reject rate
  - Responsibility of editors
  - Copy editing
  - Impact factor
  - Citations and references
  - Special issues
- Future direction
- Development of the journal; work towards improving quality; get informal help (e.g. proof-reading?)
- Olivia Bragg’s role / succession / sustainability
  - Suggestions about how to ease the work load of Olivia: recruit more editors; editors be more willing to reject papers; be more self-reliant – editorial responsibilities now clearer.
- Future editorial meetings

**OTHER EVENTS AND INFORMATION**

**IPS Convention 2019 in Bremen, Germany**

The **2019 Annual Meetings of the IPS will be held in Bremen, Germany during 14 - 17 May 2019**, hosted by IPS together with the German Peat Society (DGMT, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Moor- und Torfkunde).

This will be a major meeting for all who are interested especially in **economy & business, peat harvesting, and the importance of growing media** for the production of edible and ornamental plants.

Besides lectures in English and German, and an interesting evening networking programme, the participants will also be able to join interesting excursions to the surroundings of the city.

**2019**

- 25th PERG’s Symposium
  - 18 - 19 February 2019
  - Québec City, Canada
  - [www.gret-perg.ulaval.ca](http://www.gret-perg.ulaval.ca)

- IPS Symposium and Annual Assembly
  - Bremen, Germany
  - 14 - 17 May 2019

- 27th European Biomass Conference EUBCE 2019
  - 27 - 30 May 2019
  - Lisbon, Portugal
  - [www.eubce.com](http://www.eubce.com)

- ISHS-IPS III International Symposium on Growing Media, Composting and Substrate Analysis
  - Milan, Italy
  - 24 - 28 June 2019
  - [www.susgro2019.com](http://www.susgro2019.com)

- 8th World Conference on Ecological Restoration
  - Cape Town, South Africa
  - 24 - 28 September 2019

**2020**

- 16th International Peatland Congress
  - Tallinn, Estonia
  - 14-20 June 2020

Society of Wetland Scientists

- 2019 Annual Meeting
  - The Role of Wetlands in Meeting Global Environmental Challenges: Linking Wetland Science, Policy, and Society
  - Baltimore, Maryland
  - 28 - 31 May 2019
  - [www.swsannualmeeting.org](http://www.swsannualmeeting.org)

IPS Symposium

- 16 - 18 October 2019
  - Liaocheng, China

Southern Hemisphere Regional Conference on Permafrost of the International Permafrost Association (IPA)

- Queenstown, New Zealand
  - 4-14 December 2019
  - [https://southcop19.com](https://southcop19.com)
Best wishes for New Year 2019

16th International Peatland Congress

This major event will be held in Nordea Concert hall and Artis cinema, Tallinn, Estonia on 14 – 20 June 2020

Note the date – Registration will open in June 2019 – make sure of a place

What is new?
Present a paper either on your own or with colleagues. Suggest a topic because the scientific programme is not yet finalised.

The programme will include:

• Technological innovation
• Special events to the public (photo contest, movie programme, public lectures)
• Special programme for the industry
• Special events for students
• Tropical peatlands

See it on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/events/1162609177193984/

International Peatland Congress 2024 goes to China!

The Annual Assembly decided in Rotterdam that the 17th International Peatland Congress will be held in Beijing, China on 22 - 25 July 2024. The event will be hosted by the Chinese National Committee of the IPS, China Peat Industry Association, Northeast Normal University; and supported by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, People’s Republic of China.
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

IPS and Ramsar scientific and technical Review Panel (STRP)

The IPS has applied to continue its observer organisation status in the Ramsar Convention via its Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP). At the COP13 held in Dubai in October 2018 future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention were agreed for the next triennium 2019-2021. Many of these will be dealt with by STRP and draft resolutions for their implementation prepared for COP14. The IPS will play an important role in processing these priorities and it is essential that EB, SAB, EGs NCs and other experts provide support as necessary. The focus is on:

- Conserving and managing the Ramsar site network
- Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation, including peatlands
- Wisely using all wetlands, and
- Enhancing implementation

BOOKS

New Book on Growing Media

Earlier this year, the German association Industrieverband Garten (IVG) e.V. has published a new book on growing media (in German). “It gives at a glance the most important information on growing media and potting soil and supports interested parties when doing mostly tedious research on the subject”, Dr. Arne B. Hückstädt, desk officer horticulture and environment at IVG, states. Written by Gerald Schmilewski, the 250-page book introduces individual constituents and gives an explanation on chemical, physical and biological properties. Furthermore, it illustrates which legal requirements shall be fulfilled and how internal and external quality assurance should be conducted. This publication is intended for users working in commercial horticulture, hobby gardeners, students and tutors at universities or colleges. The book can be flipped through at www.ivg.org/static/flipbook/flipbook.html#p=1. Thanks to the digital publication the contents can continuously be brought up to date. (IVG).
New Sphagnum Guide - The Stars of European Mires

Some of you have already seen the brand-new printed 326-page European Sphagnum guide in Rotterdam. To order a copy, visit https://holvi.com/shop/Sphagna.

We proudly present the 60 Stars of European Sphagnum mosses for both identification in field conditions and for microscopic work in the laboratory. The main emphasis is on the illustrations, mainly photographs, showing both macroscopic and microscopic characteristics of the species. Distribution of each species in Europe is given as well as the latest changes in taxonomy.

This book is a collaboration among museum-based botanists, field ecologists and peatland scientists and teachers. This new magnificent book will help both field ecologists and paleo-ecologists/geologists in their demanding work of Sphagnum identification, and — also hopefully — reveal the beauty of the peatlands even in the smaller forms. The book includes 326 pages and approximately 1000 high quality photos, black and white line drawings, tables, etc. Authors are Jukka Laine, Kjell Ivar Flatberg, Pirkko Harju, Tuuli Timonen, Kari Minkkinen, Anna Laine, Eeva-Stiina Tuittila and Harri Vasander. Order your personal copy now

Write for Peatlands International 4.2018!

If you are interested in writing for Peatlands International 4.2018, please send your article and photos (jpg + captions) by 20 November (strict deadline!) to susann.warnecke@peatlands.org.

The Editors reserve the right to edit, shorten and choose articles for publication, native speaker proofreading will be carried out on behalf of IPS.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

• Please send me information to include in UK Peatland News 22

• Peatlands are now in the mainstream of Government policies across the world as their importance for biodiversity and in climate change processes is realised and accepted.

• Peatlands are now considered in an increasing number of international conventions, agencies, programmes and actions making the role of the IPS even more important.

• However, more informed experts need to take part in research on peatlands and peat, promoting their responsible management and contributing to policies based upon sound, verifiable science using modern technology.

• Volunteer to help through the United Kingdom Peatland Society of the IPS

• It is time to find a replacement for me as Secretary of the UK Peatland Society. In addition to my other responsibilities in the IPS I took up this position in 2008 when the UK National Committee was moribund and inactive. However, 10 years is probably long enough, and it is time for the post to be filled by someone much younger than me. I hope to hand over no later than 2020.