

Kathryn (Kit) Brownlee

Kathryn (Kit) Brownlee was the Quekett Honorary Treasurer for ten years, after which I took over the role.

I understood from Kit that when she initially became treasurer, the Quekett accounts were kept using the old-fashioned "Ledger and Pen" method that had been used since the Quekett was founded in 1865. I believe, therefore, that it was Kit who brought the Quekett accounts into the 21st Century by introducing the use of the Excel spreadsheet software that I used and continues to be used by my successor.

During my first visit to Kit's home, to learn something of the task that I was about to undertake, I recall saying to Kit that I had not even considered the possibility of the "Ledger and Pen" method of recording the accounts being an option. I assured Kit that had she not introduced the use of the Excel spreadsheet software, I would not have even considered taking over as Quekett Treasurer. Doubtless my successor would say the same.

Kit not only introduced the use of the Excel spreadsheet software, but she set the essentials of the format for the layout of the spreadsheets. During my time as Treasurer, I changed many items of the Quekett accounts in order to accommodate the changes in the Quekett's sources of income and items of expenditure, but the main essentials of Kit's format remained unchanged and continue to be used by the current Quekett Treasurer.

Throughout my initial years as Quekett Treasurer, Kit very willingly replied to my requests for advice and she was always available to answer the many questions that arose.

Each of the nine years that I was Quekett Treasurer, Kit visited my home in Chelmsford to carry out the required annual audit of the Quekett accounts on behalf of the Club members. For Kit this involved a train journey from Reading to Paddington, followed by a journey across London by Underground to Liverpool Street Station, where she boarded a train to Chelmsford. A journey, which in total, I estimate took around two hours.

I recall with great pleasure, during the audit, the way in which we worked together, examining the accounts, and I recall the very thorough and exacting manner in which Kit checked each and every entry. I also recall the welcome constructive criticisms that Kit offered, so that I could "fine-tune" the way in which I presented parts of the accounts.

After Kit had spent an exhausting day completing her audit of the Quekett accounts, she would return home to Reading, which, of course, necessitated another tiring two-hour journey.

During Kit's auditing of the Quekett accounts, we would take a break and I would walk with Kit to a local hostelry for lunch. This was always an education; our walk took us past a number of open spaces, trees and bushes, and as we passed the pleasurable sound of birdsong could be heard. I had heard these sounds many

times before, but I had no idea of the names of the birds from which they originated. However, with Kit on-hand, I was soon suitably enlightened, as Kit would provide a running commentary in which she expertly identified the source of each birdsong.

It is my privilege and pleasure to have known Kit, both as a fellow guardian of the finances of the Quekett Microscopical Club and as a friend.

I hope that wherever Kit is now, the birds are singing her song.

James Rider

Past Treasurer of the Quekett Microscopical Club