

THE COMPUTER CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting - 14th May 2009

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Constitution

The BCS is in the process of a substantial re-organisation and the full implications for the CCS are as yet unknown. The BCS is adopting a new financial year and Specialist Groups are being asked to change the dates of their AGMs to some time in September or October. The CCS Constitution was last amended in 1999 and it would be appropriate to conduct another review to bring it into line with current practices.

The Committee has agreed two actions. Firstly, to set up a small working group to review the Constitution and to make proposals, and then to put a revised Constitution before an Extraordinary General Meeting on 15 October 2009.

Officers and Committee

Both Peter Barnes and George Davis have indicated their wish to retire from the CCS Committee. Peter has served from 2003, whereas George has been on the Committee since the CCS was founded in 1989. We thank them both for their support, but most especially George who for 8 of his 20 years on the Committee was also Meetings Secretary.

We are saddened to record the death in April of Peter Hall, the first chairman of the North West Branch. Having been a key player in the early development of the British computer industry, Peter was an avid supporter of the CCS. An obituary will appear shortly in *Resurrection*.

In view of the need for a constitutional review, the Committee are recommending that, as a temporary measure, all other current officers and committee members are re-elected *en bloc*.

Resurrection

At last year's AGM, I announced that Nicholas Enticknap who had edited *Resurrection* from its first issue in 1990 had decided to step down after 42 issues. As I wrote in his last issue, the CCS Committee owes him a great debt for so much skilled, professional, and selfless support given for so long. 42 issues all to the same standard is no mean achievement.

I also announced that Dik Leatherdale, a member of the Society, had come forward and has been editing *Resurrection* for the past year. Dik has proved to be both enthusiastic and conscientious, and *Resurrection* has continued to appear with the same quality as before, already with some innovations.

Web site

Similarly, Alan Thomson has continued for a second year as web site editor, providing quality and timely information on CCS news and events.

Events

Our Meetings Secretary, Roger Johnson, produced another interesting and varied programme. At the start of the 2008-09 season we were able to host a seminar on LEO as a tribute to the late David Caminer while at the end of the season there was a meeting covering the BBC Domesday project. In between, lectures ranged from love letters generated on the Manchester Mark 1 to the JANET network now 25 years old, and reviews of early EMI computers and the ICL-Fujitsu technology collaboration. We took advantage of a visit to the UK of Charles Bachman, the database pioneer, when he spoke about his life with databases.

The North West branch also held a varied series of events, including repeats of the successful BBC Micro seminar and one on the applications of CAFS, both held in London the year before. An unusual departure was a visit to Jodrell Bank.

We continue to be grateful to our two associated museums in London and Manchester for acting as hosts to CCS meeting programmes.

Projects

Technical progress in the various CCS projects is reported regularly in the news sections of *Resurrection*.

Since its official switch-on in 2007, the Turing Bombe project continues to be hailed as a remarkable achievement, and is attracting many visitors to the cryptography museum at Bletchley Park. A highlight of the year was the receipt of a Heritage Award from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. The Bombe now proudly wears a large metal plaque designed more for the front of old railway engines than a complex calculating machine.

Alongside the Bombe at Bletchley Park, the re-built Colossus continues to be a star attraction in the National Museum of Computing, where many other old systems have been installed and brought to working order.

Following environmental and power supply problems in 2007-08, the Pegasus at the Science Museum is now back in full service as the oldest working computer in the world, while the "Baby" attracts visitors to the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry. The CCS North West branch joined with Manchester University in celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the "Baby", and we awarded BCS anniversary medals to four of the pioneers that built the original machine.

The Committee has recently conducted a review of the Elliott 401 project, and is hopeful that this very important machine can be brought to working order in the not too distant future.

Finally, the Committee extended an invitation to the ICT 1301 project located at Pluckley in Kent to join the CCS as one of our projects. This possibility had been mooted some time previously, and we are delighted that they have agreed to join us. The 1301, affectionately known as *Flossie*, is housed in a barn on a farm and is in partial working order. We hope that our involvement will help speed the machine to full operational status.

David Hartley, Chairman