THE COMPUTER CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting 2011

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This is my fourth and final report as Chairman of the CCS Committee and covers the period October 2010 to September 2011.

Absent Friends

Sir Maurice Wilkes died in November 2010 aged 97 after almost a century of pioneering in the field of computing. He was always a strong supporter of the CCS, and your Chairman gave a tribute lecture at the Computer History Museum in May. A major tribute was held in Cambridge in June, and a CCS tribute is scheduled in the 2011-12 CCS London programme.

It is especially sad to have to report the death of Tony Sale in September 2011. Many tributes have been paid to Tony, including BBC radio and television, and there will no doubt be more. In the context of CCS there are three things that stand out: his contribution to the founding of the Society, his fight to preserve Bletchley Park and the incredible achievement in rebuilding *Colossus*.

Projects

Technical progress in the various CCS projects is reported regularly in *Resurrection.* Here are some of the highlights of the year.

Once again the *Turing Bombe* and *Colossus* continue to be major attractions at the cryptography museum and the National Museum of Computing respectively at Bletchley Park. During the year a volunteer group at TNMoC completed the *Tunny* replica, which uses keys found by Colossus to decrypt messages from German Lorenz cipher machines. In July our projects figured prominently in a visit of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to Bletchley Park. The indomitable veteran Jean Valentine demonstrated the Bombe, and Colossus was demonstrated by the late Tony Sale.

Also at TNMoC, progress has been made with the *ICL 2966* and the *IRIS* air traffic control system, although work on the *Harwell Dekatron Computer* has been slow due to illness. Some important circuit diagrams have been acquired for the PDP 8, thanks to the assistance of the Computer History Museum in California.

The SSEM (the 'Baby') has been re-installed in the new gallery at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, and is again being regularly demonstrated by our volunteer team. Following a visit from members of ISACA (Information Systems Audit and Control Association) a donation to help support the team was received. Progress continues with the restoration of the *Hartree Differential Analyser*.

At the Science Museum in London, the re-restoration of the *Pegasus* has continued to be delayed, but the necessary work including the certification of the volunteer team and tests connected with electrical safety have started. The Elliott 401 project is being reviewed; more volunteers are needed and, in anticipation, work has been done to establish model roles for volunteers. The Museum has submitted a successful first stage bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a gallery entitled of *The Making of Modern Communications* and CCS members are active in the development of the new gallery.

Two substantial new projects were established during 2010-11. The EDSAC Replica project aims to rebuild in as authentic a manner as possible the original Cambridge computer that

ran its first program in May 1949. Work so far has involved discovery of necessary archive material and reconstructing the technical design details. The replica is scheduled to be built at TNMoC and construction work is planned to begin there in 2012. The project is being managed by a charitable trust and being funded funded by a consortium led by Cambridge computing entrepreneur, Hermann Hauser.

A project has been established to plan and build a replica of Charles Babbage's *Analytical Engine*, the first phase of which is to digitise and conduct a detailed examination of the technical drawings in the archive held by the Science Museum. Doron Swade is the CCS representative on the project's management board.

North West Group

Ben Gunn has retired after 17 years as secretary to the CCS North West Group. In May, Group Chairman Tom Hinchliffe led a small party to Ben's home in Penistone for the presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation from the BCS together with a whisky decanter from all his friends in the North West Group. Gordon Adshead has taken over the position of Group Secretary.

Publications and Web Sites

Thanks to the energies of editor Dik Leatherdale, *Resurrection* has continued to be circulated quarterly to all CCS members. *Resurrection* is not only a journal of record for the Society, but publishes much material of historical value.

Alan Thomson continues as web site editor ensuring that the site remains up to date. Further work has been done to integrate the web site with the main BCS site, and now includes information on historic computers initially provided for the BCS by Simon Lavington.

A new venture has been to add pages to the web site providing details of many of the computer museums in the UK. These pages will be updated as the CCS becomes aware of them.

Alan Turing Centenary

Last year the CCS instigated planning for a public exhibition at the Science Museum to mark the centenary of the birth of Alan Turing. The Museum has been successful in obtaining sponsorship, and we look forward to seeing the fruits of this in 2012.

At the same time, under the editorship of Simon Lavington, a book entitled *Turing and his contemporaries: building the world's first computers* has been written by various members of the CCS Committee and will be published by the BCS in 2012.

Events

Roger Johnson as Meetings Secretary continues to manage the the London events programme, while Gordon Adshead does this for the North West Group. Included at the two venues were *Research Machines*, by John Leighfield (Chairman of Research Machines and a Past BCS President), *Tales of the Unexpected: an alternative history of the computing industry* by journalists John Naughton and Bill Thompson, *Konrad Zuse and the origins of the computer* by his son Horst Zuse, the *Story of Elliott-Automation Computers, 1946-1986* by Simon Lavington to mark the publication of his book, and *the LEO Story* by Gordon Foulger.

David Hartley
CCS Chairman