

COMPUTER CONSERVATION SOCIETY (CCS)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Thursday 17 October 2013 Chair's report for the year from October 2012

Events

We have enjoyed a programme of presentations in London and Manchester organised by Roger Johnson and Gordon Adshead respectively, given by authoritative speakers, with informed questions, observations and discussion to follow. These are always well attended. The varied topics have included:

- Computers: Babbage's Analytical Engine, Atlas, Bracknell Ferranti, CAP;
- Manchester's Telecoms Firsts;
- Computing before computers, machine translation, computer memory, information retrieval, conservation of data, websites and software, the development of IT law;
- Barclays Bank and Technological Change;
- Andrew Booth - Britain's Other Fourth Man.

At our Christmas meeting we watched some historic computer films, which we have had digitised.

A day's visit to IBM's Hursley Park in Hampshire was kindly hosted by the volunteer curators of their museum.

There were two two-day events, and attendees at both came from home and abroad, far and wide.

- The *Atlas 50th Anniversary* event, organised by Simon Lavington, was held at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester. It combined exchange of information on Atlas, opportunities to meet up with colleagues after many years, and nostalgia, and was greatly appreciated by the attendees, over 150.
- The conference *Making the History of Computing Relevant*, in collaboration with IFIP, the Science Museum and Google, was held at the Science Museum. The aim was to discuss what needs to be done to make the history of computing relevant and interesting to the general public today. There were over 100 delegates, maximum capacity, and a number of the speakers were members of the CCS.

Apart from the conferences and other individual events, our London meetings are held in the afternoon, and Manchester meetings are normally held in the evenings. We are very willing to arrange presentations to groups about the Computer Conservation Society and its work and projects, or about a specific project, if asked. We have joined the list for collaboration in this way with other Member Groups of BCS. We are also pursuing whether we can reach a wider audience online.

Museums

The Science Museum, The National Museum of Computing, Bletchley Park Trust and the Museum of Science and Industry's current activities are reported to each Committee meeting.

The Science Museum is progressing a new gallery to open in September 2014, *Information Age*, for information and communication technologies over the last 200 years.

The former CEO of Bletchley Park Trust from April 2006 until January 2012, Simon Greenish, was awarded an MBE for services to English heritage.

The National Museum of Computing has extended its opening hours. Its Learning Programme for educational institutions is into its second year. Professor Brian Randell gave a talk earlier in the year on uncovering the secret of Bletchley Park and Colossus in the early 1970s. The CCS made a donation towards scanning copies of *Computer Weekly* for the museum.

Projects

Resurrection reports regularly on the continuing work on the various CCS projects.

Just a couple of points to note:

- The Harwell Dekatron (aka WITCH) computer was switched on and has become a popular attraction at The National Museum of Computing.
- The ICT 1301 has been dismantled and shipped to storage, for future assembly at The National Museum of Computing.

Publications, publicity and website

We now have a CCS logo.

Resurrection, edited by Dik Leatherdale, is issued four times a year. It publishes articles and reports on CCS activities, projects, events and other news. It has been transformed into HTML for the website.

Our CCS website gives information about the Society and its programme of events. The *Computer Heritage* website provides technical information on the majority of British-designed computers 1950 – 1970, with data compiled by the CCS.

Our projects get good press, radio and TV coverage, from time to time.

Members and Networking

Computer history and conservation continues to get increasing media coverage.

Our membership has increased.

Dan Hayton represented the CCS at a Paris conference on computer and digital society museums and collections in France, about a possible French museum of the Information Age, and made a presentation to them about the CCS.

We are pleased to be working more closely with the IBM Hursley Museum.

Over the year we have been in touch with a number of associations in similar areas, and with other organisations who are interested in what we do. We provide information in response to enquiries where we are able to do so.

In conclusion, my thanks to all Committee Officers, Committee Members, Project Managers and other volunteer workers, and to all who attend our meetings in London and in Manchester and support the CCS.

Rachel Burnett
Chair, Computer Conservation Society
16 October 2013