

BCS Coventry Branch Chairman's Report October 2016

It is time for the AGM once again. I thank all the branch committee for putting together a rich and varied programme of monthly meetings and other events during the last 12 months, as detailed in the Secretary's report. We are very grateful to both universities for hosting our meetings and events.

We had another successful run of the Challenge IT youth competition, which is always very intensive towards the finals event, but very rewarding when we see the excitement and enthusiasm of the teams. It is good to report that many of the judges agreed that the standard of entries was considerably higher this year compared to previous years, which is a great tribute to the teachers. Perhaps we are already seeing the impact of the curriculum changes.

One of the great delights of running the competition is involving branch members who we would not normally meet very often in a very rewarding activity. Thanks to all the sub-committee members and to everyone who served as a judge or sponsor. We know from both formal and informal feedback that the event was a great success by all the measures we employed.



The left picture, taken on 16th March 2016 at the Challenge IT finals event, shows Andy Goulding from Free Radio, the excellent MC for the finals event, Branch Chairman, Coventry's Lord Mayor Cllr Michael Hammon and Prof John Latham FBCS, Coventry University's Vice Chancellor. The picture on the right shows the overall winners Ebony and Ivory from King Henry VIII, Coventry being presented with their prize by Dr Iain Philips, representing BCS Academy. It is well worth checking out the details of the winners and photographs and newsletter from the finals event available via the branch web site showing all the teams and their entries: http://coventry.bcs.org/education-activities/challengeit_2016/.

In the autumn of 2015 Coventry Vice Chancellor Prof John Latham was presented with an Honorary Fellowship by BCS for his services to IT, nominated and presented by long-standing branch member and former branch chairman Alan Chantler.

A new development for the Coventry area was the establishment of two BCS Student Chapters, at University of Warwick and at Coventry University. The branch supported a Hackathon organised by the Coventry Student Chapter at Coventry University on 18th-19th March 2016 by providing and

presenting the first prizes (parrot drones). We look forward to working with both Chapters in the future to organise joint events and to support events organised specifically for younger members.

The branch committee is very keen to encourage more members to take an active part in branch activities. We are particularly interested in hearing from anyone who would like to become a committee member or branch officer, now or in the future. New members who have joined the committee recently have brought fresh ideas and expertise, which has helped to steer our direction. We very much welcome input from any branch members about any aspect of the branch business.

I would like to pay a special tribute to our branch treasurer, Ursula Rutherford. Ursula has announced that she will be stepping down from her post at the AGM. She has served us very well in this role for many years, despite several periods of illness, and absorbed and coped with the many changes introduced in the course of her term of office. She has attended many of the specially designated Treasurers' Days to receive and contribute to updates in the BCS finance systems and processes. Most important of all, throughout her term of office she has ensured that the branch finances and budgets are accurate and returned the necessary information in a timely manner. We will greatly miss her in this role, but hope she will remain an active member of the branch committee for some time to come.

I give particular thanks to our long-serving secretary John Rendall and also to Margaret Low, who both do far more for the operation of the branch than they get credit for.

Ursula's announcement means that we will need to find a replacement treasurer. The post of branch chairman is also available! To add to what I said in my 2015 report, if anyone would like to nominate someone or offer your own services to take over as branch chairman, deputy chairman or treasurer, I would very much like to hear from you.

We have some interesting meetings coming up once again during 2016-17. If there is nothing that interests you then please let us know what we could organise that would encourage you to attend. I hope to see a good number of branch members attending at least one of the meetings in 2016-17.

Irene Glendinning

October 2016.