BCS Bedford Branch Chair report to AGM 17 September 2014

The last programme year has been a very busy and exciting year, with new initiatives connecting with the local schools, The National Museum of Computing, BioPark and other partners to further the interest of computing and IT in our area. Engaging members better is a recurring item in committee meetings and there are still a lot we are wanting to do.

1. Highlight of the year - Bedford BCS Challenge is our new venture to contribute to the school computing education in our area. The new Computing Curriculum that comes into force this month aims to teach children from the age of 5 to learn about programming and problem solving. BCS, through involvement in the Computing at School Working Group (CAS), has been a key force behind the movement. Bedford Branch set up a special project and worked with CAS and the Bedford Borough Council to set up an annual Bedford BCS Challenge for KS3 students. The results had been outstanding and the prize winners were presented with their awards in a special ceremony in Cranfield University. A half day meeting for computing/ICT teacher was held in The National Museum of Computing to foster network of teachers. We also supported a number of teachers to our July Family Fun Day.
2. Five new members joined the committee this year, including YPG representatives that we did not have for a long time. The new minds bought about new efforts in setting up meetings and social media. We were able to experiment with new meeting arrangements.
3. Successful series of joint meetings with Bedford College and other partners, sustaining high level of attendance.

Date	Meeting	Partner
18 Sep 2013	AGM Hays IT Market Overview Speaker: Lee Chant, Hays IT Recruitment	
2 Oct 2013	More Free Ways to Market Your Business Speaker: Stefan Drew	BSC, Bedford College, IET
22 Oct 2013	Instrumentation and computation to understand earth's atmosphere Speaker: Jamie Trembath, FAAM	BCS, RAeS and IET Cranfield University
19 Nov 2013	IT Recruitment Speaker: Ian Smith / Dale Smith, BizTek Recuitment	BCS, Bedford College
5 Dec 2013	Data security and resilience in the 21st Century and visit to Secured Data Centre Speaker: Mark Boost, ServerChoice	BCS, IET, BioPark
4 Feb 2014	Introduction to IT Service Management Speaker: Ian Connelly, BCS Service Management Specialist Group	BCS Bedford + SMSG, IET
26 Feb 2014	Designing for The Connected Consumer: Adapting to changes in customer behaviour - Responsive Web Design Speakers: Chris Smith and Alec East - THBOOM! Web Consultancy	BCS, Bedford College
14 Mar 2014	Career path in Computing/ICT and organising visit to TNMOC Meeting for school ICT leaders and teachers	BCS, CAS, TNMOC
13 May 2014	Hacking the Internet of Things Speaker Geraint Williams, IT Governance Ltd	BCS, IET

25 Jun 2014	Bedford BCS Challenge Prize Presentation Prize giving to winners of school computing challenge	BCS, CAS, Bedford Borough Council
20 July 2014	Family Day at Bletchley Park's The National Museum of Computing	BCS Bedford + Northants, TNMOC

While the meeting list grows longer, we are also noting weaknesses in the communication before meeting, recording of meetings, reporting after the meeting, and various opportunities of communication. We can do with additional skills and more hands. If you can help, please make contact anytime in the year.

4. University Student Prizes

We finally managed to have nominations from all four universities in our area. It was a delight to present prizes to the worthwhile recipients. With the prize recipients, we are likely to be able to develop BCS student chapters in the universities of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

Date		Institution
8 Jan 2014	Jason Jhuboo Best project for The Computing and IT Project	Open University
22 Mar 2013	Adam Floyd Best Performing Graduate in Applied Computing	University of Buckingham
5 Jun 2013	Juan Pablo Alberto Laporte Ribera Best Performing student in Management and Information Systems	Cranfield University
15 Jul 2014	Matthew James Kaye Best Performing Year 1 student in Computing	University of Bedfordshire

5. Social media – A Facebook page was created to supplement the Linkedin group for the branch. It is used erratically and not yet gained a self sustaining momentum. This is an area of further work.
6. Wider publicity engagement – championed by Saverio Bongo, connecting with local newspapers, business publications, business parks, schools and many more.
7. I would like to thank the committee, branch members and many other partners for their support throughout the year. Our committee members of the year are:
   - Ip-Shing Fan – Chairman
   - Saverio Bongo – Secretary
   - Richard Maddison – Treasurer
   - Christopher Knight – Membership Secretary
   - Ian Wilson – Webmaster
   - Sam Faulkner- YPG Representative
   - Nathan Lewis - YPG Representative
   - Bob Bethell - General Committee Member
   - Bill Kenway - General Committee Member
   - Sue Brandreth - General Committee Member
   - Chris Ireland - General Committee Member
   - Maurice Komolafe - General Committee Member

BCS Treasurer work report to August 2014

Richard Maddison

Each year the biggest activity for the treasurer is the development of the bid for the following year's budget submission. This has to be prepare on the BCS spreadsheet and submitted by the end of March. The problems are:

* one can only guess at the likely pattern of speakers, locations, dates and costs, yet the form is asking for the detailed expenditure under each of various headings and each in the column corresponding to the month.

* Special events, such as our schools competition have to be included appropriately.

* The whole has to include text justifying the various proposals.

* This needs input from other members of the Branch Committee, obviously, and circulation to them for comments on the drafts as it is developed.

The allocated budget is not decided till about July, and for all the years I have been involved we and other branches have been allocated less than was bid for. Many other branches have for years bid high, typically in the ration of 150 to 100, in the hope that their allocation will cover their expected expenditure.

We have to submit a supplementary bid on a different form to get further funding above the original allocation, with justification again. They will not accept a request that we be allocated the difference to make up our allocation to my original bid.

In most of the recent years we have had to cancel meetings or change them to cheaper locations that in many cases attracted fewer members to attend. In the meeting to allocate funding, they also compare the bid with the corresponding bid the previous year and what was finally actually spent. So if one reduces one's meetings and expenditure to fit the allocation, one is penalised the following year on the expectation that one will spend less than was allocated.

I do not agree with this behaviour, including that people who bid high etc and then spent their allocation were rewarded by the committee that allocates the available funds, eg getting enough in the following year. I feel that it would be far more realistic to bid for the best estimate that can be made in each March. Then any allocation short of the bid is a real signal from HQ that the funds are less than the bids and that we are being asked to reduce our planned meetings and events correspondingly. In some years we have been allocated a reduced sum that has to cover the first three months, Sept to Nov, say.

I have campaigned for many years to get the system changed, but for all these years except the last year my suggestions have been rejected. I wish that the system asked treasurers to submit their best estimate of everything and allowed the actual outturn to be slightly above or slightly below without penalty and without needing a supplementary bid if going over the allocation slightly.

Last year, the committee that allocates the money had a new chairman, and he has listened to what I have suggested and intends to gradually change things if he can. I had a long phone call with him last December.

Thus last December unexpectedly to us the committee allocated us more than my supplementary bid, so we have been able to run the schools completion and related event meetings with good meetings etc within that allocation. This was the first year that the outcome, eg of the subsequent supplementary bid and the allocated funding for the rest of the year, has not been a problem.

The rest of the role is:

* to attend the various committee meetings, submitting reports if necessary in advance, or reporting that everything is satisfactory;

* to keep records of what is committed, even though not spent yet;

* to watch emails and at committee meetings for indications of things that are going to cause some expenditure, and to keep a record. This is now done by having an extra column or the right of the table of the proposed programme giving the best estimate of the expenditure as it all gradually evolves;

* to get people who are planning meetings or events to find out the cost of hiring rooms and other likely costs, and to estimate the figures to be in that extra column;

* to authorise payments, liaising was necessary;

* generally to try to get the meetings and events to both not exceed the allocation, and also not be underspent against the allocation if possible;

* report to the Member Group Committee when required;

* prepare accounts for the Branch AGM.

In recent years we did not run anything that generated income for the BCS, so our bids did not have to include details that would be needed – eg if we were to run a conference say where the participants had to pay to attend. I have been involved in such things in the past but not recently.

The last few months, since 21st May 2014 have been exceptional as Pat was found to have cancer that could not be cured and I had to give up everything I was doing for the various organisations that I was involved in, so as to care for her full time. She continues to deteriorate, sadly. She is now in Airedale Nursing Home.

I am grateful to Fan particularly and other committee members for so excellently doing the job of treasurer during this difficult time.

BEDFORDSHIRE BCS BRANCH SECRETARY ROLE – SEPT2014

- Maintain up to date contact information of all Committee Members
- Provide support to the Branch Chairman for them to perform their duties
- Assist with scheduling and giving notice of all Branch Committee Meetings, General Meetings (AGMs and EGMs) to all Branch members & guests, where appropriate
- Arrange suitable venues for the Branch/AGM/EGM meetings
- Prepare, agree and circulate the Agenda for all Branch/AGM/EGM meetings
- Record and circulate the Minutes of all Branch/AGMs/EGMs meetings
- Assist with organising Branch Events
- Maintain the Master List of all Branch Talks/Events
- Provide assistance to Committee members as and where appropriate
- Assist with preparing the promotional material for all Branch Events
- Circulate Branch Events to Committee Members, to all BCS Branch Members and externally to all interested parties
- Attend Branch Events and assist with the co-ordination on the actual day
- Perform additional roles when required ie. Social Media, Marketing Officer, Education Liaison Officer etc.
- Approach individuals & SME's to identify opportunities to widen/enhance awareness of the BCS in particular the Bedfordshire branch
- Give due notice of committee vacancies to all Branch members
- Submit electronic copies of each set of approved minutes to the Branches Manager in HQ (branches@hq.bcs.org.uk)
- Handle all relevant correspondence / interactions with BCS HQ

Saverio Bongo
BCS BEDS Branch Secretary
10th Sept 2014

Sam Faulkner, YPG Representative

This past year was my first as a member of the Bedfordshire BCS Committee. Along with Nathan Lewis, I joined as a YPG member and set about learning how the committee planned to engage the public with a variety of IT related events and talks. My main responsibilities were to attend events on behalf of the committee to represent our branch and report back on everything I had been involved in. One such event was the apps demonstration at Buckinghamshire University, where we learned what a selection of the students had been doing for their final year projects. Most recently, I have been tasked with keeping the branches social media sites up to date with information of the latest events on offer, consisting of a Facebook, LinkedIn ad Twitter account. Next year I hope to engage more the public through this medium, as well as setup some of my own events on behalf of the Bedford branch.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ACTIVITIES 2013-2014 – Sue Brandreth

I have continued to facilitate further talks in the highly successful series of meetings at Bedford College aimed at local businesses, IT professionals, academics and students and held as a joint venture between the Bedfordshire branch of the BCS and Bedford College.

In October 2013 Stefan Drew, "The Marketing Magician", returned to talk on the topic "More Free Ways to Market Your Business"; in November 2013 the topic was "Lifting the Lid on IT Recruitment" by Dale and Ian Smith; and in February 2014 Chris Smith and Alec East of THBOOM! Web Consultancy talked about "Designing for The Connected Consumer".

In May 2014 we tried a change in venue and the talk "Hacking the Internet of Things" given by Geraint Williams was held at the University of Bedfordshire's Polhill Campus, Bedford. This proved that we now have an alternative suitable venue for future events of this nature within Bedford.

In July 2014, in conjunction with the Northampton branch of the BCS, a Family Day was arranged to The National Museum of Computing, Bletchley Park. As a part of the branch's Computing in Schools project, IT teachers from local schools were also invited. The day proved very successful with an attendance of over 50. The feedback from attendees was excellent.