

To All Members of the Hertfordshire Branch,

Welcome to the new 2003/2004 season

Accompanying this letter is our new Programme Card, where you will find that the Committee has been busy over the summer recess and has organised what we hope you will consider a varied, interesting and topical programme. This ranges from problems with helicopter computer control, through root cause analysis following system failures, to e-commerce and the management of content. This last subject was postponed from January of this year when snow prevented the speaker and all but four Branch members from reaching the Thistle Hotel.

You may have noticed that we are now called the Hertfordshire Branch. The former name of "West Herts" reflected the origins of the Branch in the Hemel Hempstead area. We felt we should drop the "West" part of our name to reflect better where our current members live, and BCS Headquarters agreed, so we changed our name.

Having completed my first year as Branch Chairman I should like to thank former Treasurer, Keith Armstrong-Bridges for his stint in that rôle, and for organising our successful AGM at Mill Green Mill, a working flour water mill. Following that AGM, our new Treasurer is Mike Culverhouse, our former Secretary, and our new Secretary is Mike Barwise. New to the Committee is Stuart Goldberg, who brings a detailed knowledge of the BCS to us, as some years ago he served as Branch Chairman and then Treasurer. I'm sure you will want to join me in thanking the whole Committee for working so hard on your behalf throughout the last year.

Following the request in my last Chairman's letter, we have had some Branch members volunteer to be speakers at some time in the future. We are attempting to build up a bank of possible speakers, and to enable members to share their expert knowledge for the benefit of the Branch as a whole. If you would like to do this, please let me have a brief synopsis of your proposed talk and we'll take it from there.

Remember that the BCS is the UK's only Chartered Engineering Institution and representative body for the IT profession. We hope that in a small but significant way our Branch meetings help to advance our profession by disseminating state-of-the-art knowledge from speakers who are experts in their fields. Our meetings are also an opportunity to exchange ideas by meeting other professionals, either following the speaker's talk or over refreshments, which are always served half an hour before meetings begin. Any friend or colleague you bring to a meeting will also receive a warm welcome.

Having emphasised Branch meetings and their benefits to you, the Committee and I look forward to seeing you at the events described in our new

Programme Card.

Yours sincerely,

David Smith
Branch Chairman