Hertfordshire

Overview

This has been another successful year for the Hertfordshire Branch. We ran a programme of ten events and this included for the first time, a Hackathon. In December, we made a second visit to Fujitsu and they provided our speaker and hospitality. We would like to thank the University of Hertfordshire (UH) and Sopra Steria (SS) for providing us with venues and hospitality for our events as well as Fujitsu. Our thanks also go to Advanced Collection Systems Ltd who provided accommodation for our committee meetings. Our link with our local University has been consolidated through our sponsorship of student prizes and a member of staff who is on our committee.

And it is to the members of our committee that final thanks should go as our achievements would not have been possible without their hard work and enthusiasm

Programme

What We Did Last Year

Details of our programme of events are shown in the table below. The programme was varied and attendance included many non-members.

Date	Title	Speaker	Venue	Attendance		
				Members	Non-Members	Total
12 Oct 2017	Ada Lovelace Commemorative Lecture: Cloud Computing - Demonstration and Directions	Paul Moggridge, University of Hertfordshire	UH	29	29	58
9 Nov 2017	Quantum Communication and Networks	Dr. Joseph Spring, Senior Lecturer, University of Hertfordshire	UH	26	19	45

7 Dec 2017	Infrastructure as code – "we are all coders now"	Nick Parlow, Fujitsu Distinguished Engineer,	Fujitsu, Stevenage	17	1	18
16 Jan 2018	Running a free and open source business for fun and profit	Dr. Jeremy Bennett, CEO, Embecosm	SS	20	4	24
8 Feb 2018	Using Analytics to Extract Value from Big Data	James Dales, Altius UK	UH	34	26	60
10 March 2018	Hertfordshire Hackathon		UH	14	19	33
19 April 2018	How the UK Video Games Industry Can Advance Beyond Brexit	Dr. Richard Wilson, Chief Executive Officer, TIGA	SS	16	6	22
15 May 2018	Visit to St Albans South Signal Box		St. Albans	16	1	17
12 June 2018	Visit to Waterways Experiences		Grand Union Canal	14	2	16
20 Sept 2018	AGM + Cyber-Bullying and online safety for children	Dr Xiaohua (Anna) Feng, University of Bedfordshire	The Hemel Hempstead School	12	2	14
			Total Attendance	198	109	307
			Last year	202	141	343
			Average Attendance	20	11	31

Making IT Good for Society

How We are Making IT Good for Society as a Member Group

Our programme of events demonstrates that the branch promotes IT beyond its immediate membership and we had in excess of 100 non-members at our meetings. In March, we ran a Hackathon which was an all-day event on a Saturday and it attracted young people from local schools and colleges. The event was also attended by officers from Cyber Prevent, the regional Cyber Crime Unit of Hertfordshire Police.

Community

Who We Serve and How We Engage with Our Community

The branch serves an area of the country which includes parts of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, as well as the eponymous county. We have over 1700 members at all grades, and we meet approximately once per month from September to June.

Our March event was a Hackathon held on a Saturday and attended by students from local schools and colleges. Our September event was held at The Hemel Hempstead School and featured a presentation on cyber bullying and online safety for children. We support computing students at the University of Hertfordshire through student prizes and membership of BCS.

Leadership

How we provide leadership

Leadership is about direction, and we demonstrate this through our engaging programme and by providing speakers who are leaders and expert in their fields.

Excellence

How We Excel

Our programme of events is innovative and has received excellent feedback. We plan a year in advance which is quite a challenge for a branch and relatively rare. We attract high numbers of non-members which reflects excellence in outreach.

Objectives for Next Year

Our Plan

1. Maintain our relationship with UH
2. Identifying new partners and opportunities
3. Produce a high quality programme of around ten meetings
4. Encourage wider committee membership
5. Plan for succession in key roles such as Secretary and Chair

Achievements

Our Successes

- Outstanding programme of events
- Strong attendance by non-members
- Supporting local students including student prizes

Challenges

The Barriers We Face

Recognition – the public profile of BCS is not strong and we often need to explain what BCS stands for

Reaching the core of our membership – of our 1700 members, only a small fraction attend our events.

Policy changes within BCS – these have impacted on the booking of our events and our communications with members.

Inclusion and Diversity

How We Are Working for Everyone

Our committee officers have all attended Unconscious Bias Training and are aware of the implications. We have a committee member with a focus on inclusion.

Committee

About the Committee

The committee met seven times for approximately two hours on each occasion. Two new members joined the committee but unfortunately they did not help to address the lack of female members. We approached Women in IT but they were unable to help.

This was the second year in the role for the chair, secretary and treasurer, all of whom attended conventions alongside other members of the committee.

Previously, the committee had met at Sopra Steria but this was not possible as Siva Niranjan, a long standing member of the committee and our contact with Sopra Steria has stepped down. Fortunately, Paul Moggridge who joined the committee last year facilitated the use of his employer's committee room. We would therefore like to thank Advanced Collection Systems Ltd for their support.

Two factors this year had a serious detrimental impact on the work and workload of the committee. The first was the introduction of a new event booking system, Eventbrite. Although this is a well tried and comprehensive system, the branch suffered because of errors in the accuracy of information fed into the system by BCS HQ. The second factor was policy changes within BCS. The BCS took a decision to prevent branches and member groups having any responsibility for data. Although the rationale for these changes was the introduction of GDPR in May 2018, the BCS has taken a far more extreme approach than many comparable organisations and charities. The impact of these factors was that our working methods are far more convoluted as simple operations such as setting up new event on the booking system or seeking information about our membership including contact details has to be conducted through BCS HQ. This had led to errors particularly in the closing time of our events and even to what should be a simple activity of printing name badges for our events. We even have members who refuse to use the new booking system because they view it as not GDPR compliant!

Despite some issues, the committee of BCS Hertfordshire continues to be comprised of passionate and hardworking volunteers from our local community. The committee represents the diverse views and interests of academia and industry within Hertfordshire and has used this diversity to continue to build upon the excellent and highly regarded reputation that the wider society and our numerous partners have come to expect from BCS Hertfordshire.