Making IT
good for society

Hertfordshire

Overview

BCS Hertfordshire has enjoyed another successful year. Our programme was extended to eleven events. For the first time, we introduced a pre-Christmas social event in the form of a quiz evening. We also developed a relationship with the British Standards Institute (BSI). They provided the speaker, venue and hospitality for our March event. Other events were held at the University of Hertfordshire (UH) and Sopra Steria (SS) and we would like to thank them for their generosity and support. Our thanks also go to Advanced Collection Systems Ltd who provided accommodation for our committee meetings. Our link with our local University remains strong and we continue to sponsor student prizes.

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.

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
11 Oct 2018	Ada Lovelace Commemorative Lecture: Forensic IT	Siobhan Forster, Senior Commercial Dispute Consultant, IT Group	UH	26	21	47
8 Nov 2018	Developing, Integrating and Deploying Software in Primary Care	Ben Osborne (VP Engineering) and Laurence Bargery (CTO), accuRx	UH	22	10	32

Date	Event	Speaker	Venue			
14 Dec 2018	Quiz Evening		UH	9	6	15
15 Jan 2019	The Internet of Things – Everything you've ever wanted to know and a few things you didn't	Andrew Yeoman, CEO, Concirrus	SS	31	2	33
7 Feb 2019	GDPR: 9 Months On	Ian Fish, Chair, BCS Information Security Specialist Group	UH	20	16	36
9 March 2019	.helloworld Hertfordshire Hackathon		UH	16	27	43
13 March 2019	An Introduction to the role of BSI and Standards in IT	Thomas Harrison (Engagement Manager), BSI	BSI	14	1	15
9 April 2019	Improving Strategic Management with Dynamic Business Models	Kim Warren, Strategy Dynamics	UH	17	0	17
15 May 2019	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle: Drones for civilian and humanitarian needs	Stephan Barnard, Product Developer and UAV entrepreneur	SS	16	2	18
12 June 2019	Visit to Mad Squirrel Brewery		Boxted Farm, Potton End	12	7	19
20 Sept 2019	AGM followed by: Visit to Verulamium Museum		Verulamium Museum			
			Total Attendance	183	92	275
			Last year	198	109	307
			Average Attendance	18.3	9.2	27.5

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. A large proportion of attendees are non- members. For the second time, we ran a Hackathon as an all-day event on a Saturday and it attracted young people from local schools and colleges. It also consolidated our relationship with officers from Cyber Prevent, the regional Cyber Crime Unit of Hertfordshire Police, who were in attendance.

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 approximately 1460 members at all grades, and we meet approximately once per month from September to June.

This year has seen the consolidation of our relationship with Cyber Protect, through our Hackathon attended by students from local schools and colleges. Our March event was the culmination of our reaching out to a local organisation, the British Standards Institution. We continue to 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 continues to be 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. Mike Pickup, our link with the University of Hertfordshire has stood down from the committee. A key objective is therefore to maintain our relationship with the University

2. Produce a high quality programme of around ten meetings

3. Encourage wider committee membership

4. 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

- The development of new relationships e.g. Cyber Protect.

Challenges

The Barriers We Face

Recognition – the public profile of BCS remains weak and we often need to explain what BCS stands for

Reaching the core of our membership – of our 1460 members, only a small fraction attend our events.

Policy changes within BCS – these continue to impact 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. There is still some work to be done in ensuring diversity at our meetings although this remains a problem for the wider BCS as well. We have had some success at attracting younger people.

Committee

About the Committee

The committee met seven times during the year at Advanced Collection Systems Ltd and we would like to thank them for their continuing support. Each meeting lasted for approximately two hours and our committee included two new members. We are pleased to report that as a consequence we have improved not only the average age of the committee but also the gender imbalance!

This was the third year in the role for the chair and secretary and first year in the role for the treasurer.

We reported last year on two factors that had 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. We are disappointed to report that the branch has continued to suffer because of errors in the accuracy of information fed into the system by BCS HQ. We have been in contact with other branches and have confirmed that we are not alone in experiencing annoying issues with the setting up of our events on Eventbrite. By definition, members of BCS are computer literate and understand why computer systems produce the results they do. We therefore are well placed to know when we are provided with explanations by HQ staff which are inconsistent with reality. This is very frustrating.

The second factor was the stance that BCS took with respect to GDPR. Branches are not allowed direct access to any data. Indirect access is allowed through HQ, but the quality is variable. The situation has worsened as there are now two membership databases which are mutually inconsistent. Even the relatively simple task of producing a membership report has been compromised.

Notwithstanding these frustrations, the committee of BCS Hertfordshire remains passionate and hardworking.

Three longstanding members of the committee, Bob Thurlby, Malcolm Appleford and Mike Pickup, have announced their intention to step down from the committee. We would like to thank them for their numerous contributions over the years and wish them well as they focus on other things.