BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY FORTRAN MEETING

MINUTES of a MEETING to "Discuss the
formation of a Specialist Group for the
FORTRAN language: standards, restrictions
and recommended extensions", held in BCS
Headquarters, 29 Portland Place, London W.1.,
on Tuesday, 6th January 1970 at 10.45 a.m.

PRESENT: Mr J. Gatehouse   (Convenor)
         Mr B. H. Shearing
         Mr D. T. O'Leary
         Mr J. P. Holland
         Mr L. I. Brown
         Mr A. J. Payne
         Mr K. O. Hallinan
         Mr A. D. Johnson
         Mr R. Butchart
         Mr I. A. G. Snowball
         Dr A. Colin Day
         Mr P. Bradly
         Dr A. H. De Borde
         Mrs B. Swann
         Dr I. C. Pyle
         Mr K. Normington
         Mrs M. M. Barritt   (Secretary)

The meeting was arranged by Mr Gatehouse.

Mr Gatehouse explained how the impetus to convene the meeting had
arisen. His own company (G.E.C./English Electric) were considerably
expanding their use of FORTRAN and so had started to look at what
standards might be laid down, in doing so they became aware that
there was no forum for the exchange of information on standards news,
proposals and requirements in the United Kingdom.

It was suggested to Mr Gatehouse that it would be appropriate to
form a specialist group of the British Computer Society for the
FORTRAN language. The purpose of this meeting was to explore what
support might be expected for such a proposal.

It was agreed that a specialist group should be formed.

Mr Gatehouse was invited to be Chairman and Mrs Barritt to be
Secretary. Mr Gatehouse accepted the nomination for a year and
Mrs Barritt accepted, with the reservation that her location in
Scotland would support having a second secretary nominated with
residence in England. It was further suggested that the second
secretary, Mr Bradley, could always conveniently act as Vice-Chairman
for the first year. The main aim of these arrangements was to avoid
any meetings being held up due to difficulties experienced in
travelling in adverse weather conditions.

FORMALISING A discussion on formalising the objectives of the group took place.
  OF   One of the immediate background factors was stated to be the
OBJECTIVES imminence of the 1970 revision of the ASA standard. It was felt by
           some members present that the collation of information and views
           of relevance to the ASA revision should be given very early
           consideration by the group.

OBJECTIVES The objectives of the group were formally agreed to be:
            (a) to form a focus in the United Kingdom for work concerned
                with establishing and maintaining FORTRAN standards.
            (b) to work in association with national and international
                standardisation bodies.

PROGRAMME   The following programme of activities was then devised against
OF   these objectives.
ACTIVITIES (1) Analyse existing ASI standards for Basic FORTRAN and FORTRAN.
            (2) Review, implementation against (1) in regard to syntax and
                semantics.
            (3) Collating Users' requirements and proposed solutions.
            (4) Recommendations to standard Bodies as a result of (1), (2)
                and (3).
            (5) Dissemination of information on FORTRAN standards.

            It was agreed that Mr Gatehouse would write to ASI to advise them   ACTION
            that a BCS FORTRAN specialist group is being formed and to ask, in   Mr Gatehouse
            particular, for communication on documentation and information on
            standardisation practices.

            It was decided to start some immediate work against the programme.   ACTION
            of activities, in particular, Dr Ian Pyle would collate information   Dr Pyle
            against item 1 and present an Interim Report at the next meeting.   ACTION
            Mr Shearing (Alcock Shearing & Partners) and Mr D. T. Muxworthy   Mr Shearing
            (Edinburgh Regional Computing Centre) would similarly proceed with   Mr Muxworthy
            an Interim Report for presentation at the next meeting against
            item 2. Members would write to Mr Gatehouse regarding item 3 and
            again, dependent on the response, a preliminary statement on 3 would
            be available for the next meeting.

FUNDS FOR   In response to the Secretary's enquiries, Mr Gatehouse established
SPECIALIST the normal procedure for financial support, namely, that the
GROUP   British Computer Society makes available to a specialist group,
            funds of £50 per year to cover incidental expenses. It therefore
            became clear that members would need to be able to fund their own
            travelling expenses to the meetings and those present agreed that
            provided the meetings were not too frequent this would be feasible.
            However, the point was made that if the work subsequently entailed
            special travel against a formal specified project, then
            Mr Gatehouse would make representation to Mr John Nicholson, the
            Secretary to the Technical Committee, regarding the position of
            the British Computer Society funding, before any such project
            commenced.

DRAFT FOR   BCS The Secretary agreed to draft for comment at the next meeting a   ACTION
BULLETIN   contribution intended for the next British Computer Society   Mrs Barritt
            Bulletin.

DATE OF NEXT The date of the next meeting (to discuss the first documents)
MEETING   was fixed for Tuesday, 17th February, 1970 at 10.45 a.m. at
             29 Portland Place, London, W.1. A formal meeting will also be
             held on 7th April, to which interested parties will be invited
             through the Bulletin.

ADDENDUM TO The following is a list of headings under which Dr Pyle proposes
PROGRAMME OF to produce his Interim Report:
ACTIVITIES

             Data type and manipulation

Flow of control within routine

Connection between routines

Error detection and handling

Environment for compilers and object programs

Manner of defining Standard.