

BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY FORTRAN SPECIALIST GROUP

MINUTES of a MEETING, on Tuesday,
7th April, 1970, at B.C.S.
Headquarters, 29 Portland Place,
London, W.1.

PRESENT: Mr J. S. Gatehouse (Chairman) General Electric Co. Ltd.
Mr R. E. Small CAP Ltd.
Mr J. P. Holland Tunnel Cement Ltd.
Dr A. C. Day U.C.L. Computer Centre
Mr I. A. G. Snowball A.E.R.E., Harwell
Mr B. H. Shearing Alcock Shearing & Partners
Mr D. T. Muxworthy Edinburgh Regional Computing Centre
Mr D. T. O'Leary Computer Systems & Programming
Mr K. E. Bicknell Rothamsted Experimental Station
Mr K. F. James International Computers Ltd.
Mr J. R. Keane " " "
Mr I. D. Hill Medical Research Council
Mr M. Garside University of Kent at Canterbury
Mrs B. Swann EE/AEI Turbine Generators
Mr R. H. Gooding R.A.E., Farnborough
Mr J. C. Cullen B.P., London
Mr C. K. Mackinnon U.K.A., E.A., Risley
Mr A. D. Johnson Ministry of Technology
Mr J. R. Main NCR, London
Mr D. K. White " "
Mr L. I. Brown Kienzle Data Systems
Mr K. Hallinan IRDC, Univac
Mr W. Hilder Radiacs Ltd.
Mr H. W. Bradly (Assistant Secretary) GEC Power Engineering Ltd.
Mrs M. M. Barritt (Secretary) Edinburgh Regional Computing Centre

APOLOGIES FOR

ABSENCE: Mrs Cairns University of Glasgow
Mr T. D. Palmer National Coal Board
Dr I. C. Pyle A.E.R.E., Harwell

1.

STATEMENT BY
THE CHAIRMAN

The purpose of the meeting is to proceed with the formal setting up of the British Computer Society FORTRAN Specialist Group. It is felt that publicity has now been wide enough to ensure that everyone who would wish to know about the proposal to set up the Group, does now do so. The membership seems to be encouraging. The position of the computer manufacturers is not clear, however. There were three members at the meeting, namely ICL, NCR and KDS. Marconi-Elliott have asked to be represented by the Chairman. Univac and STS had representatives at the Interim Meeting but did not appear to be present at this meeting, and similarly, this applies to the National Computing Centre.

The terms of reference suggested in the BCS Bulletin contribution were discussed and it was decided to add that performance of FORTRAN Compilers, where it naturally arises in the context of discussion to the topics specified in the Bulletin, would be discussed and would not be excluded from any prepared reports. However, at this stage, it would not be taken as a major objective in its own right.

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2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES Minutes of the meeting of 17th February 1970 were approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING
- (i) It was requested that a copy of the distribution list be attached to the Minutes of this meeting to ensure that the names and addresses of those involved are known to all members.
 - (ii) The Chairman advised that he would raise with the BCS Publications Department, the wider issue of holding copies of the USASCII American Standards document in this country, He would investigate immediate access for the FORTRAN Specialist Group.

It has been learned since the meeting that stocks of American Standards are held at the Sales Branch of the British Standards Institution, 101 Pentonville Road, London, N.1.

Mr James (ICL) noted that the intermediate level referred to in 2(b) of the Minutes of 17th February was in fact ECMA FORTRAN, a subset of ASI dated April, 1965.

4. COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE BCS STANDARDS COMMITTEES ETC. The Chairman advised that the BCS FORTRAN Specialist Group can only speak for itself and not the BCS. The route is that deliberations are directed by BCS Standards Committee to International organisations through the B.S.I.

The Standards Committee is expected to establish a Sub-Committee which may equate to the Specialist Group.

The letter from Mr Dennis E. Hamilton was read to the meeting. It was clear that funds for special visits to the States would not be available, but there may be sufficient financial support to cover an extension of an existing visit to attend a USASCII meeting on behalf of the Specialist Group.

In discussion on the trend of the ASI Committee, Mr James and the Secretary were in agreement that the objectives were seen to be practical steps to standardise and enhance facilities to the existing FORTRAN language structure and not to design a language as in the case of the Algol 60 and Algol 68 Committees.

5. WORKING PARTIES There was considerable discussion about the nature, objectives and remit which Working Parties might have.

It was agreed that members wished to work on specific objectives and that these could best be attempted by setting up the following Working Parties to which it would be possible for some members to contribute by post.

The Chairman of each Working Party would therefore like to hear from all members interested in his topic.

(i)/

- (i) Extensions to the ASI FORTRAN IV.
Chairman: Mr B. H. Shearing
- (ii) Adaptation to conversational use (all levels of FORTRAN). To characterise what has been done, e.g, GEIS and Hewlett-Packard systems,
Chairman: Mr H. W. Bradly
- (iii) FORTRAN on small machines
The upper limit would be an IBM 1150.
To identify the levels, nature and extent of FORTRAN facilities in use on small machines.
Chairman: Mr M. J. Garside

In response to Mr Shearing's comments, the Chairman invited the meeting to appoint a Steering Committee to ensure liaison between the Working Parties and to establish more detailed terms of reference

The Steering Committee membership would be the Chairman, Dr I. C. Pyle, the Secretaries, Mr B. H. Shearing and Mr M. J. Garside.

In regard to the original proposals on the Agenda, it was agreed that

- (a) Is being effectively tackled by the ASI Committee.
- (b) Has already been done by the Shearing and Muxworthy Report.
- (c) and (d) are being set up as above.

It was further recognised that there may be five de-facto levels of FORTRAN:

- (0) Level 0 - small machines - "primitive"
- (1) Basic
- (2) Intermediate
- (3) ASI FORTRAN
- (4) ASI + as on IBM 360, UNIVAC FORTRANV etc.

6.
NEXT
MEETING

The first meeting of the Steering Committee will be held on Tuesday, 30th June 1970, and the next meeting of the Specialist Group will be on Tuesday, 8th September, 1970.

MEMBERSHIP OF BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY FORTRAN SPECIALIST GROUP

The list of names and addresses of 54 'members' and 13 'postal members' is not reproduced.