Fortran Specialist Group Chairman's Report

2015 - 16

All the Member Group Conventions for the Institute's 2015 – 16 session have fallen in the spring of this year. I attended both the January and March Conventions, which introduced the new BCS strategy with its pillars and challenges as Group Chair.

In February I attended the Treasurer's Day on behalf of our Treasurer, John Reid, and the Birmingham Branch as well as in my own right as Treasurer of the Wolverhampton Branch! There have been no major changes to the financial procedures of the Institute. I am pleased to say that BCS has continued to provide funding for the Group to enable good representation of the UK at the annual ISO WG5 meeting. David Muxworthy and John Reid will give us information on what has been achieved later today.

For the 2016-17 session the first Convention will be held on 15th November. This event is for Chairs, Secretaries, Treasurers, Equality and Inclusion Officers but deputies are welcome if the office holder cannot make the date. John Reid and I have booked to attend on the assumption that we will be reelected to our current offices. I hope no one feels that is presumptuous. This Convention will incorporate the Treasurer's Day so I may find myself trying to be in two different places at the same time!

This year I have had the opportunity to give talks on Fortran to two BCS Branches, in Coventry in March and in Bedford last week. Both talks were entitled 'Fortran, alive and well at 59!'. At both meetings I had a mature audience of around a dozen, though there was one young person at the Bedford meeting who was attending with his grandfather! The presentation materials can be downloaded as http://coventry.bcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/FortranAliveAndWellAt59.pdf and from the bottom of the page at http://beds.bcs.org/event.php?event=124.

I am in discussions with the Henley on Thames branch of Cafe Scientifique to speak to them about Fortran in the spring of 2017.

In the last couple of months I have been contacted by three people requesting assistance with Fortran-related matters. The first was from Codethink Labs in Manchester who were seeking private sector organisations using legacy Fortran who might be interested in using their Open Fortran Compiler to convert F77 code to the F90 standard. He had attended part of the WG5 meeting in Boulder as an observer and met a number of the UK delegation. Neither I nor other members of the committee were able to offer him any suggestions but I did invite them to send a representative to our meeting today but no one from Manchester has booked so far.

The other two contacts were ladies from Francophone countries requesting help with Fortran coding problems. One was fairly easy to answer, the other is proving more difficult and I am still working on it.

As I have said each year for the last few years, I have been Chairman of the Group for many years, longer than FDR was president of the USA! I was not yet 60 when I was first elected as Chairman and now I am a grandfather with a one year old granddaughter! While I am willing to stand for re-election under item (viii) of today's agenda I will continue to say that I think the Committee and the Group as a whole should try to get fresh blood onto the Committee and at the head of the Group, in business I believe it is called Succession Planning.

Sometimes I feel that I am not doing enough for the Group and that someone younger and more energetic should take over. We will be discussing the future direction for the Group under item (ix) of the agenda.

I want to take this annual opportunity to thank all the members of the Committee for their assistance in the smooth running of the Group during the past year. especially John Reid, our Treasurer and John Pelan as Vice-Chairman, who through his contacts enables us to organise joint activities with the Institute of Physics Computational Physics Group, such as this afternoon's presentations, and for his thoughts on options to broaden the remit and appeal of the Group, which is also down for discussion under item (ix).

I would also like to mention the willing support which I, wearing numerous hats, have received from the staff at BCS HQ and the London Office, from Judith Taylor and her Member Groups team, especially Mandy Bauer, and the BCS staff here in London.

To finish on a traditional note, if anyone reading this report has any comments or suggestions relating to the Group, its activities or Fortran in general please contact myself or any other member of the Committee. Don't let the fact that we may invite you to help us put your suggestions into practice put you off!

Peter Crouch
Chairman Fortran SG
28th September 2016