

Fortran Specialist Group Chairman's Report

2016 - 17

This is my fifteenth and final report as Chair of the Fortran SG. Over recent years I have said in my annual reports that I was willing to step down but at this year's AGM I am definitely not standing for re-election. I feel very honoured to have been able to act as a figurehead for the Group for so long.

In November 2016 I attended a Role Based Member Groups Convention where I had a conflict of interests as I was attending as both Chair of the Fortran SG and Treasurer of the Wolverhampton Branch. I took part in the Chair's stream and hoped that no surprises would be sprung in the Treasurers stream! I was not able to attend the Spring Convention in March as I was out of the country; David Muxworthy and Sam Ellis attended on behalf of the Group.

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 2017-18 session the first Member Groups Convention will be held on 2nd November at the BCS London offices. So far there is no further information on the event.

This year I have not had the opportunity to speak at any BCS group meetings and the discussions with the Henley on Thames branch of Cafe Scientifique that I mentioned in my report last year did not come to anything.

I was invited to a luncheon to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the formation of the British Computer Society as Chair of the Group. It was held at the Stoke Place Hotel near Slough on 9th September. I met a member of the Open Source SG committee there and we discussed the possibility of setting up a joint meeting on open source Fortran compilers. Though not at the same event I have had discussions with members of the Advanced Programming SG about holding a joint meeting with them. We can discuss these ideas further under item (ix) of the agenda.

In addition to 2017 marking the 60th anniversary of the formation of the BCS it also marks the 60th anniversary of the launch of the first Fortran compiler by IBM. I was reminded of this earlier this year when I had a telephone call from Mr J. W. Bruce, the former BCS Regional Officer for Scotland. Although I had not been able to generate any enthusiasm for a meeting in the UK, as I told Mr Bruce, I did bring the matter up again with the FSG committee and Harvey Richardson contacted his colleagues in the USA and I am pleased to say that there will be a Birds of a Feather session at Supercomputing 17 in Denver, Colorado on Tuesday 14 November at 12:15 organised by John Levesque of Cray Inc and entitled "Fortran Is 60 Years Old - Has It Changed for the Better?". The speakers will be John Levesque, Bill Long also of Cray, Paul Selwood from the UK Met Office and Salvatore Filippone from Cranfield University, who is also one of our speakers this afternoon.

I want to take this final opportunity to thank all the members of the Committee for their assistance in the smooth running of the Group during the past 15 years, especially John Reid, our current 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 still down for discussion under item (ix) of the agenda.

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. My thanks to you all.

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 any 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
25th September 2017