

Fortran Specialist Group Chairman's Report 2017 – 18

This is my first report as chair. When I took on the job, it was with the understanding that it would be “business as usual”, but no year is quite like another and this has been an active one.

We began with a half-day joint meeting with the Computational Physics Group of the Institute of Physics, which was well attended (28 people) with lively discussions. The program and copies of the slide shows are visible on our website.

A joint meeting with the BCS Advanced Programming Specialist Group was held on 9th Nov., when Anton Shterenlikht spoke on “Writing parallel programs with Fortran 2008 and 2015 coarrays”.

Both I and the Treasurer, Peter Crouch, attended the Member Groups meeting on 15 March. We heard from Paul Fletcher, Group CEO that BCS membership was slightly up on 2016 (it has been around 70,000 since 2009). We heard from Martyn Cox about GDPR and I was reassured that we have no problems in the Fortran Group. There was a fascinating talk by Alistair Goodall on both the engineering aspects of Crossrail and the associated IT support, in particular on the retention with accessibility of a huge amount of data when the active players have gone. Finally, I attended an informal session on unconscious bias led by Naseer Ahmed – we are all “programmed” to make instant assessments of those we met and need to be aware that these may be wrong.

Both I and David Muxworthy attended the meeting of the International Fortran Committee WG5 in Berkeley, Ca, USA in June. I was fully supported for my expenses by BCS and David was partially supported. We would both like to express our thanks to BCS for this support. It was an important meeting spent almost entirely with making final changes to the new standard which is expected to be published at the end of this year. We played an active role in this, particularly with regard to the most difficult outstanding problem which related to the behaviour of the random-number generator on multiple processes. I was also asked to provide a summary of modern Fortran to a wide audience from Berkeley Lab. and University.

Led by Anton Shterenlikht and with help from Wadud Miah, the Group has conducted a survey

<https://goo.gl/forms/JUFUReOoVUin2m8D2>

of the benefits of Fortran standardization and nearly 400 people have responded. Anton has prepared a preliminary report, which is visible from our web page and a short summary, see

<http://www.fortran.bcs.org/2018/survey1.pdf>

The survey will be open for the rest of 2018. I would like to express my thanks to Anton for all his work on the survey.

We will be holding another a half-day joint meeting with the Computational Physics Group on 27 September. This is in the next BCS year, but of course the preparation had to be done in this year. It promises to be another interesting meeting, with more speakers than usual (everyone we invited has accepted) so we have increased its length by an hour.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for all their work during the year and to thank the BCS staff, specially Mandy Bauer for their support.

John Reid, 14 September 2018.