Fortran Specialist Group Chairman's Report
2018/19

This is my second 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 less active than last year.

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 slides are visible on our website. There was an extended discussion of possible new features during the final session. Interest was expressed in holding a half-day meeting in the Spring to follow up on this discussion and provide input for the meeting of the Fortran committee in August when features for the next revision were to be chosen. Unfortunately, our Standards Officer had changed jobs and felt unable to lead the discussion and likely follow-up. No-one else was willing to play the role, so the idea was abandoned.

A joint meeting with the BCS Open Source Specialist Group was held on 15th November in Manchester, when Kiran Chandramohan spoke on "A Tour of the Flang Fortran Compiler" and Paul Thomas spoke on "gfortran – the gnu gcc Fortran compiler".

I attended the meeting of the International Fortran Committee WG5 in Tokyo in August, but was not supported for my expenses by BCS this year. I was supported by BSI for about a third of the cost and BCS offered to match this on condition that I be listed as representing "BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT and not JKR Associates UK". I found this unacceptable and refused. Besides me, the following UK people attended: Kiran Chandramohan (Arm), Malcolm Cohen (NAG), Nathan Sircombe (Arm). The UK's objectives were achieved. We requested that one small feature be included in the next Standard: to extend the procedure C_F_POINTER to allow a Fortran array pointer to have lower bounds other than 1. This was accepted. Beyond this, we requested that neither of the two larger features that have been proposed, exception handling and templates, be included. We wished all changes to be minor in order to give vendors time to produce processors that conform fully to the standard. This objective, too, was achieved.

Led by Anton Shterenlikht and with help from Wadud Miah, the Group has conducted a survey of the benefits of Fortran standardization and nearly 400 people have responded. The final report is available here

http://www.fortran.bcs.org/2019/FortranBenefitsSurvey_final.pdf

We will be holding another a half-day joint meeting with the Computational Physics Group on 24 September. This will focus on requirements for future Fortran Standards. It will essentially be the meeting that was originally planned for the Spring.

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, 18 September 2019.