

Fortran / Scientific & Engineering Computing - Specialist Group Chair's Report 2022/23

It is probably fair to say that people do not join clubs and societies in the numbers that they used to. For example, trade union membership in the UK is at an all-time low since records began in 1995. There are many reasons for this, not least the failure to appear to deliver tangible benefits compared to the joining fees, and the accessibility of less-formal, ad hoc communities online which one can join and leave at a click of a mouse button at no cost at all. There is also the lack of available time and “headspace” that seems to be a common complaint in the current, time-poor milieu. This is the reality in which the BCS and its entirely voluntary Special Interest Groups, like us, operate.

The relatively new **Fortran Lang** community has injected life into the Fortran developer world, and they’ve shown what can be done with little formality and no membership fees. On the other hand, with much determination and just a little formality the **Society of Research Software Engineering** is now a formidable professional society with a regular annual conference all established in less than a decade. Their fees are a fraction of the BCS’s too. We, as a group and the BCS, need to learn from and respond to these developments. Most importantly, the current and prospective membership needs to engage with the group to keep it relevant, beneficial, and alive otherwise we are likely to fade away in the face of the range of choices available today.

Speaking of **Fortran Lang**, we did offer the group some prospective support in the form of the BCS providing a legal entity through which they could obtain grants and other funds, but this was not explored any further.

This year started off as usual with the AGM followed by an afternoon of talks. We continue to be grateful to those that give up their time to give interesting and engaging presentations. On the Fortran standards front, a WG5 meeting was held in June which was hosted by ARM in Manchester, UK. Three of our committee members attended.

One of our long-standing committee members, **Dr. Peter Crouch**, has decided to retire from committee activities. It is no exaggeration to say that this SG would likely not exist today had he not steered it as a chair for 15 years and organized a successful series of events including the “Fifty Years of Fortran” jubilee meeting. On behalf of the membership and the committee I would like to express our gratitude to him for all the outstanding voluntary work that he has done on behalf of the Fortran SG.

I would like to thank the **IOP Computational Physics Group** for their ongoing financial support of joint events and for the committee in placing their trust in me for the year just gone, even though I have not been able to contribute as much as I had hoped.

John Pelan – London, 21st September 2023