

Minutes of the 1st Meeting - Northampton Sub-Branch BCS Committee, 12th October 2004,
6.30pm at University College Northampton

Present:

Chair: Brendan D'Cruz BSc, PhD, MBCS, CEng, CITP
Secretary: Malcolm Collins MBCS, CITP
Press Officer: Dave Johnson BSc, MBCS
Webmaster: Brian Allen AMBCS
Education Liaison Officer: Alan P Broadaway BSc, MA, MSc, CEng, FBCS, CITP, MIEE, CM

Apologies:

YPG Representative: Chris Neale BA, MBCS

Committee Makeup:

The minutes of the inaugural meeting of September 14th were approved by the committee.

A discussion took place with regard to the point that there were only 5 members of the committee in attendance and that by right there should be at least 6. This highlighted the need for at least two additional members to be appointed to allow for absence at committee meetings.

It was suggested that additional committee members handling the roles of Membership Secretary and Email Coordinator would be the most useful appointments. The role of Treasurer was presently subsumed by the Bedford Branch.

However as yet the committee did not have a full overview of the branches potential membership as the compressed file containing this information had not yet been successfully sent from BCS HQ. This was expected to happen in the next few days.

Branches Congress:

Dave Johnson provided an overview of his visit to the Branch Congress. This was attended by some 80-100 branch members, and from several different countries. Full documents of the events and discussions that took place are available from the BCS Members Area.

Dave highlighted 4 key points:

- 1) A new BCS Building in Southampton St, London was now open and provided Hot Desking and conference rooms for members whilst in the city.
- 2) The chair of the YPG gave a talk on the direction to be taken by the BCS as regards competitions and monies for prizes and bursaries.
- 3) The increase in membership since the reorganisation at the beginning of the year was recorded as being 5000 in the first 6 months, slightly ahead of targets.
- 4) Details were also provided as regards Student Membership pricing (£30 for duration of course, £20 in the final year) and access to additional member benefits such as Career Builder and details of the University BCS promotion programme.

Young Professionals Group:

Although Chris Neale was absent from the meeting, he had forwarded a document to the Chair which covered a number of salient points:

- 1) We should actively promote the benefits of BCS accreditation.
- 2) We should recognise the importance of networking in terms of social events.
- 3) Stress the incentives for Students and young professionals;
 - a. Career Builder
 - b. Skills Developer
- 4) Close liaison between the YPG and the ELO should take place, and our social events programme should reflect upon the membership's age profile and interests.

Alan Broadway agreed to investigate the situation with respect to prizes and bursaries.

Membership Questionnaire:

Since the meeting of 14th September Brendan had forwarded a proposed questionnaire to all the committee members with a view to reviewing the content of the previously used questionnaire, and forming a new document that could be used by the new sub branch to obtain information with regards to the needs of our potential membership.

- 1) It was agreed that the content of the questionnaire should be more targeted to attract a response from as many potential members as possible.
- 2) The content should be active and very simple for the recipient to respond to.
- 3) The questionnaire should provide details of the committee members and what their daily activities are, as this is likely to be the first time many of the potential members of the sub-branch would have received any correspondence.
- 4) One of the questions that should be asked is what the perceived benefits of membership of the BCS were locally and nationally.

After further rewriting and suggestions for content, it was agreed that *Brendan would produce an outline questionnaire and pass it back to the committee via email* to aggregate all suggestions. This would then be enabled on the web site by Brian, and *an email sent with a hotlink to all potential branch members.*

Programme of Events 2004/05:

2 specific events were known at the time of the meeting which it was felt should be promoted:

- 1) *Latest Developments in Data Management Technology*, organised by the BCS Data Management Specialist Group, to be held at the Sunley Management Centre (UCN), 22nd November 2004 from 10.30am to 4.30pm, <http://www.bcs.org.uk/datamgt/news/news.htm>
- 2) *Methods, Tools, Architecture – Are they Still Relevant*, organised by the International Business Systems Development Forum (IBSDF), to be held at Browns, 82-84, St. Martins Lane, Covent Garden, WC2N 4AA, 10th November 2004 from 9.45am to 4.45pm, email sue.mcgowan@ibsdf.net

It was agreed that Dave would pursue the current proposal to have a branch event and tour at the Carlsberg Brewery (Northampton) at the end of November/early December. A reference to the event to be provided in the questionnaire discussed earlier. A social event pre-Christmas would best be held in conjunction with the Bedford Branch.

Other suggestions for possible events:

- 1) Something organised in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce.
- 2) *Security and Cybercrime* presentation in early March 2005 (Dr. Steven Furnell).
- 3) A talk by local political parties on the subject of *Government and IT* in early April to coincide with any possible General Election timing.

- 4) A *Women and IT* event in February 2005 highlighting the disproportionate numbers of male vs. female members in the IT profession generally, and how to tackle this locally. Possible support and involvement would be sought from e-skills UK (the sector skills council). It was noted that the County Council's Head of IT is female, and she may wish to contribute to this event.
- 5) An event with Barclaycard regarding *Chip & Pin Implementation* timed to coincide with the compliance deadline in January 2005.
- 6) Site visit to Weatherby's of Wellingborough.
- 7) *Corporate IT Governance*.
- 8) *IT Services Management Forum* – Guest Speaker and discussion.
- 9) Site visit to Satellite Earth Station at Lawford Heath, nr Rugby.
- 10) *Logistics Technology* (e.g. Traffic Master and GPS) event perhaps with Eddie Stobart, NYK Logistics, Christian Salvesen.
- 11) *Motorsport and Technology* – numerous interested companies are located in this area.
- 12) Northampton Saints Rugby Club – perhaps a technology-focused event/site visit.
- 13) *IT Suppliers Showcase* e.g. with Phoenix IT, Belkin, etc.
- 14) A local *Student Showcase* and career networking event to be held in June 2005.

Various committee members were identified to investigate these proposals further.

Finance:

The budget for all possible events stands at £300 in total for the year. So wherever possible the committee stressed the need to promote a cautious financial approach to the possible programme of events e.g. should the budget be used to provide refreshments and drinks at each meeting? *Dave agreed to check with Bedford on the expectations of their branch members.*

Charging for events should be avoided, but where appropriate some charges for events would have to be made. Alternative forms of finance (such as event sponsorship) would be considered where possible.

Publicity:

Dave Johnson mentioned a number of publications that had carried information as regards the formation of the Northampton Sub Branch of the BCS. He intended to provide information to the Northampton Chronicle and Echo for their Saturday "Clubs and Societies" section specifically.

Dave was also attempting to produce a paper guide in addition to any electronic version, covering any programme of events that is drawn up. He was also intending to produce a monthly newsletter.

Brian would list the events on the web page (<http://www.northampton.bcs.org>) as and when these were finalised, details of the location of the web site would be sent out as part of the questionnaire.

Any Other Business:

Action points arising during the meeting would be worked on directly by committee members with a view to having issues resolved and firm proposals ready to be reported back at the next meeting of the committee, to be held at *7pm on Thursday 11th November @ the same room of UCN.*