

## EDINBURGH BRANCH



### Chairman's Report for 2007-2008

#### Branch meetings

The mainstay of the events organised by the BCS Edinburgh Branch is our Wednesday evening lecture series. This year we held 10 events (one less than last year) as follows.

16/05/07	Codemakers versus Codebreakers: Who Wins	Professor Fred Piper, Information Security Group, Royal Holloway (University of London)
10/10/07	Massively Parallel Architectures	Colin Egan and Jason McGuiness, Department of Computer Science, University of Hertfordshire
24/10/07	Games and learning – the state of play	Chris Brannigan, Caspian Learning
21/11/07	Virtual Worlds - Next Step for the Internet	Professor Austin Tate, AIAI, School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh
05/12/07	Discrete Element Modelling of Particulate Systems	John Favier, DEM Solutions
09/01/08	Building the World's Biggest Next Generation Network	Tim Hubbard, Head of 21CN Technology Futures, BT
30/01/08	Introduction to WiMAX, LTE and 4G Mobile Services	Colin Bendall, Motorola
20/02/08	Genetic databases: intellectual property and individual privacy	Professor Graeme Laurie, University of Edinburgh
12/03/08	Is Privacy dead? Do we care?	Professor Anne Anderson, University of Dundee
26/03/08	The Sidney Michaelson Memorial Lecture. Systems biology: what is the software of life?	Professor Muffy Calder, University of Glasgow
16/04/08	Visit to Edinburgh Airport Traffic Control Tower.	

The Sidney Michaelson lecture is our flagship public lecture of the year and, as in the past, is run as part of the Edinburgh International Science Festival programme. This year's attendance was just over 140 people.

Our visit to Edinburgh Airport Air Traffic Control Tower proved especially popular – with over 100 people expressing interest for the maximum 12 places we were allowed. The 're-run' in June is obviously also sold out. We will look at doing some other types of visit in the coming year.

Attendance at our other talks been mostly good – for example, with over 70 people at the Virtual Worlds talk.

As an experiment this year we have made audio "pod-casts" of some of our talks. These are available on our Branch web site, along with the speakers' presentation slides. We would welcome feedback on this. Is it useful? Is it usable?

Looking forward, we are going to try out some changes to our programme schedule for 2008/9. Traditionally (for the past 40 years) we have run 10 or 11 talks over the period from early October to our AGM in May. This programme was usually fixed over the preceding summer and we published a programme card in September. We are now going to switch to a regular rolling series of talks throughout the year. Starting with the June visit to Edinburgh Airport (ok, already fully subscribed) BCS Edinburgh Branch meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of every month; including the summer months. In order to provide up-to-date and topical subjects for our talks we will only plan about three to four months in advance.

As a result of this some changes are necessary to our traditional BCS Edinburgh Branch Programme Card that we used to publish in the autumn. We are still considering options here – e.g. whether to scrap it completely or

retain a basic info card with contact details, programme dates but no programme content. Comments from Members are always welcome on this. We will put out at least one paper Newsletter to Branch Members each year.

## **Branch Professional Awareness Courses**

We have run, or rather attempted to run, two Branch Courses this year: one on ITIL and one on Ruby-on-Rails development. The ITIL course ran successfully with XX people. The Ruby-on-Rails course had to be cancelled because of lack of interest.

We will continue to organise Branch Professional Awareness Courses in the coming year as we see a need. We are always eager to get suggestions for new courses.

## **BCS-in-Scotland**

At last year's AGM I reported on the setting up of the "BCS-in-Scotland" group consisting of the chairs of the four Scottish branches, together with BCS Specialist Group chairs resident in Scotland and other prominent BCS individuals in Scotland. The purpose of this group is to improve the BCS presence and visibility in Scotland. Our initial major project was to have the BCS fund a part time person in Scotland to provide a direct channel into the devolved institutions in Scotland, such as the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament, NHS Scotland, Education, etc... Unfortunately this proposal has not been approved by the BCS Board. We are currently working on how to proceed.

At a local level the BCS-in-Scotland group has ...

1. Sponsored the Young Software Engineer of the Year award at the Scotland IS Gala event in October 2007.
2. Sponsored Scottish Developers' Developer Day Scotland event at Glasgow Caledonian University on 10<sup>th</sup> May.

Both of these events provided good publicity for the BCS at a relatively modest cost.

In addition the regular meetings between the Scottish Branches has encouraged co-operation between us. For example, tonight's talk by Russell May here in Edinburgh has been arranged with the Tayside Branch. Russell will be speaking to Tayside Branch members in Dundee tomorrow.

## **And finally ...**

All the people on the BCS Edinburgh Branch Committee are volunteers and donate their time and energy free of charge. Without them we would not have a BCS Edinburgh Branch nor a programme of events and courses. At this AGM Dr. Alison Crerar is standing down after 12 years on the Committee, including 3 years as the Branch Chair. I would like to thank Alison for her significant contribution to the Branch over this time.

Mike Hurst  
14<sup>th</sup> May 2008