



Chairman's Report 2011-2012

It has been a tremendous privilege to be Chair of the Belfast Branch for the last year and this has been a very successful year for the Branch, with a full programme of events delivered across a wide range of topics. The attendance at the events has been encouraging and we hope to continue to expand the programme through the coming year. CPD certificates are now awarded to attendees of events to help support individuals with professional development. Reports coming back from HQ are very positive with HQ recognising the increased activity from the Belfast Branch.

Membership has risen back to levels of several years ago and it is great to see that younger member group make up nearly 1/3 of our membership which bodes well for the future of the branch. Interestingly a similar proportion is made up of Fellow and Chartered members, which means that we have a very even mix across our branch. We are challenged by not having any local assessors for CITP within our region and we are addressing this through HQ. This however should not hinder any member from seeking CITP status as interviews are currently carried out via Skype and can I encourage all members to consider upgrading to the next level. We will try and run an event in the coming year to explain the process and provide support for those looking to further their membership.

From a financial point we have targeted our annual allocation at events and have applied for exceptional funding for projects outside the norm. Such funding applications have in the past been received positively by HQ and the increasing activity within the Branch will provide an even stronger case.

The committee has met regularly and I would personally like to thank everyone for their support and efforts over the last year. Attendance at meetings has been good and everyone has made a contribution. We have embraced technology to enable remote attendance with mixed results. There are a number of nominations for new committee members which is very welcome and I look forward to their contribution to the branch.

I would like to congratulate Colm McGoldrick on becoming the IT Professional of the Year and Michael Martin being awarded BCS Student of the Year in Queens. The University of Ulster student is not announced by the university until later in the year. It is also a pleasure have Colm present the Chairman's invitation lecture and many thanks to him. Congratulations to Roger Martin on winning the Annual BCS Golf and Eircom NI for their success in the 7 a side football.

It is a personal crusade of mine to champion volunteering and giving back to our communities. To this effect we had a number of members volunteer for a day with Habitat for Humanity and those involved found it a rewarding activity. I have reached out to members to express an interest in further volunteering efforts but unfortunately the response has been disappointing. The intention was to have a cohort of BCS members as STEM ambassadors who could evangelise IT and Computing in schools, and to run a competition within our Universities where we would have BCS members interview students for a "virtual" job providing students with interview practice. We will revisit this later in year and welcome your support.

We have added Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to our Branch communications and would encourage everyone to join the groups and contribute to the conversations. The Branch is keen to engage with members and this provides a simple platform for members to express opinions and make requests. As a branch we have used it as a means of gathering feedback from members and can I encourage everyone to respond good and bad with your opinions. We are always looking for speakers and suggestions for event and would welcome volunteers and recommendations.

Paul Hanna
Branch Chairman
27 September 2012