Making IT
good for society

BCS Birmingham Branch

Chair's Annual Report 2019

An Overview

The Chair's Annual Report is intended to convey how the branch has satisfied the Institute's Strategic Mission of 'Making IT good for Society' under the strategic pillars of Community, Leadership and Excellence over the last year. As a committee, we have done our best to match the activities of the branch to these requirements but, as you will observe, there still a significant shortfall in what we have been able to achieve.

This report will however highlight what we have been able to achieve and set out our stall and our requirements for the coming year.

Our most significant events in the last year have been the continued sponsorship of the HacktheMidlands two day event in November of last year and our joint meetings with the Wesleyan Assurance also in November and the Requirements Engineering Special Interest Group (RESG) in June 2019

We continue to make our annual awards to the top performing student at the University of Birmingham and Aston University in memory of the late former secretary of this branch, Tazmmal Husein but have still to make contact with the Birmingham City University.

We continue to be represented on the PINWM Committee and to load details of Birmingham Branch meetings on to the PINWM website however PINWM is in limbo at the moment so continued membership of this group is under review by your committee.

I conclude, as I personally do each year, by once more thanking all those branch members who have attended meetings during the last year and particularly those here tonight who have had to put up with my 16th Chair's report! I hope we can count on your continued support during the 2019/2020 season.

Programme

What We Did Last Year

The meetings programme has run better this year with five of the planned eight events taking place but we did have two additional joint meetings with the Wesleyan and the RESG, highlighted above, which brought our meetings tally for the year to seven. Finding topics and/or

speakers is still an issue. Of the events that did take place, actual attendances varied between 19 and 40 with an average attendance of 28 but with the usual drop out rates of around 30% in most cases.

We managed two meetings in last four months of 2018, the October AGM, followed by a presentation by Paul Sherwood of Codethink on 'Toward Trustable Software' and, in November, a presentation on 'Bots, Burnout and Blame: Using Technology to Build Better Organisations' by Matthew Bellringer of MeaningBit Ltd, this one being held at the University of Birmingham's (UoB) Sloman Lounge. Our next meeting was not until 5 March, entitled 'Wominspiration' facilitated by Dalim Basu with David Hazelwood, a committee member, putting in a prodigious 50 hours of effort in co-ordinating this well received event.

On April 30, we had a presentation on Cybersecurity again at the UoB Sloman Lounge followed by our last meeting of the 2018/2019 session when Herman Fung another of your committee members gave a double presentation on his experience of IT in Malawi and on the topic of 'Developer to Manager Career Change', also at the Sloman Lounge.

In addition, our two joint meetings were a networking meeting on 13 November 2018 sponsored by Wesleyan Assurance at their offices on 'The Human Element in Technology and with the RESG on 'The Drone Identity: Requirements for Systems of Systems' by Dr. Yijun Yu, a Senior Lecturer in Computing and Communications at The Open University, UK and Chair of RESG, at Conference Aston.

Making IT Good for Society

How We are Making IT Good for Society as a Member Group

Here is where the going gets tough, if you don't know or can't remember what the mission is all about then for more information on Making IT Good for Society see http://www.bcs.org/category/18771.

It is the first thing you see when you log on to the BCS website and appears to revolve around Health and Care, Personal Data, Education and Capability and, it has been a pity that we have only been able to address such focus as that surrounding our need to protect our uses of Personal Data.

Community

Who We Serve and How We Engage with Our Community

The Branch's geographical area is largely Greater Birmingham including Sutton Coldfield and

Solihull, that is, most postal addresses starting Bxx, the tables below show membership by grades as at the start of this meeting:
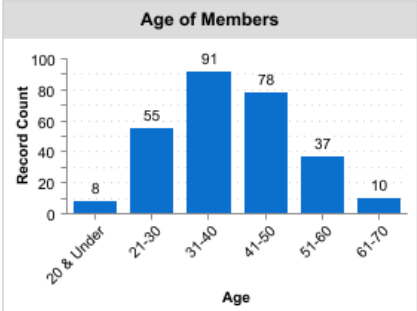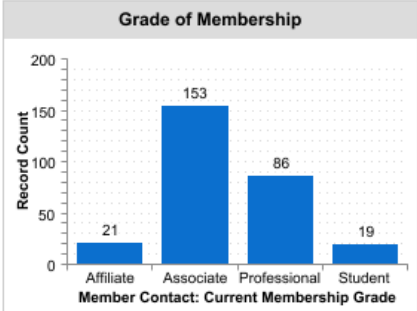
| Filter By: | Collaboration Group Details contains Birmingham | ⌄ |

Member Group Dashboard

Member Count

Number of Active Members	
Collaboration Group Details	Record Count
Birmingham Branch	279

Age of Members

Grade of Membership

New Members Last 30 Days	
Collaboration Group Details	Record Count
Birmingham Branch	14

New Members in last 12 months	
Collaboration Group Details	Record Count
Birmingham Branch	147

Leavers in Last 30 Days	
Collaboration Group Details	Record Count

Leavers in Last 12 Months	
Collaboration Group Details	Record Count
Birmingham Branch	8

Members not auto joined

Collaboration Group Details	Record Count
Birmingham Branch	152

We appear to have suffered a net loss of 68 members over all grades in the last 12 months, a drop of about 4.5%.

As to looking beyond our borders, our membership of the PINWM (Professional Institutes Networking West Midlands) group should give us an opportunity to showcase our wares to other professional bodies in the West Midlands but, sadly, this organisation appears to be almost moribund at present. Beyond that we currently have links to the Wesleyan Assurance, the IET and RESG which we plan to develop further in the near future.

Leadership

Who We Serve and How We Engage Our Community

Here we aspire to demonstrate how we provide technical leadership or local leadership in IT to the community at large but this is something we need greater engagement from the branch membership to enable us to achieve.

Excellence

How We Excel

Under this heading, we can report on our continued sponsorship of the HacktheMidlands event in November of last year which was the most successful so far in terms of attendance. This was organised through the good offices of one of our committee members, Tom Goodman who heads the group responsible for organising this event.

Objectives for Next Year

Our Plan

We still need more volunteers from the membership to help plan, organise and deliver events on our reduced meetings schedule of 8 so as to give time to and opportunity to assemble this support but will still try to cover as wide as spectrum as we can, dependent as ever on the availability of speakers and our ability to organise same. All meetings will be put on the PINWM website for the time being as well as the branch website in the hope of attracting as wide an audience as possible together with increasing use of Twitter and Linkedin as additional backup. We have applied for funding for the 2019 HacktheMidlands event to take place on 26/27 October this year.

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Achievements

Our Successes

This is where repetition starts to rear its head, our major achievement, as mentioned earlier, was the sponsorship of the HacktheMidlands event and the joint events with Wesleyan Assurance and RESG on which enough has already been disseminated.

Challenges

The Barriers We Face

The principal challenges this branch faces at this time are:

- general apathy of the membership to branch activities (although, to be fair, this is a problem with all branches and other professional bodies, for that matter.) The BCS is attempting to reverse this scenario through its New Beginnings initiative starting from June of this year.

- the continued inability, at present, to attract and/or maintain sufficient committee members to enable any chance of meeting the requirements of the Mission Statement.

Inclusion and Diversity

How We Are Working for Everyone

As far as we are aware, this branch still does not present any obstacles to the involvement of anybody in the work of committee members, attendees at events or contributors to our activities. If we are mistaken in this assumption then please advise us as a matter of urgency so that we can understand and address any issues.

We have appointed Tom Goodman as Inclusion Officer (a mandatory but not elected position) on the Branch Committee and a summary of his activity follows:

- Continuing work with HackTheMidlands - now in its 4th iteration - which provides a diverse and inclusive environment to learn, build, and share. HackTheMidlands also engages with a wide range of sponsors:
  ARM; Twilio; Bentley: BJSS; BBM; Webroot; Kainos; CSS; Fusion; DiscordMajestic; Capgemini; BCS; MLH; UoB; Stickermule; Balsamiq; Levitation; Arkwright; Jetbrains; HS2; Social Mobility Foundation; CapitalOne
- Meeting with the president of the Future Faces Chapter of the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce to work on collaborations with the BCS Birmingham Branch.
- Working on a number of initiatives to help make our events more inclusive

- Running every other talk in the Sloman lounge at the University of Birmingham to engage the student community
- Looking into using a hearing-loop compatible microphone for all talks
- Assessing the practicality of streaming and recording talks for those who couldn't otherwise make it to events (due to other commitments etc.)
- Potential involvement with #DIDFEST 2020 (the Diversity in Digital Festival)
- Working towards normalising the addition of pronouns to all name badges for all of our events.

Committee

About the Committee

Your committee have met on five occasions to transact the business of the branch. During the year, in addition to email, we have initiated the use of both WhatsApp and BaseCamp as additional avenues of communication between committee members. We have had better luck in maintaining an adequately sized committee co-opting seven new members during the year. However three of that number have decided not to continue after tonight for personal reasons; two more are uncertain of the commitment and have asked to be re-co-opted for a further year leaving just two to elected later this evening.

In addition as of tonight, we lose the services of Ravinder Jamgotre as he steps down from his roles of committee member and Treasurer but, on behalf of the branch, I thank him for the service he has given us over the last three years and the others for their contribution this year.

To add to the above activity, we were represented at both the February 2019 Treasurers' Convention and the June 2019 BCS New Beginnings Convention both held at the Southampton Street offices in London.