



South Yorkshire Branch

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Chair's Annual Report 2019

Overview

A warm welcome to all BCS South Yorkshire Branch members from myself, Andrew Shaw, as part of the Branch AGM Chair's Report. 2018 – 2019 has been my first year as Chair and I would like to thank the committee, members, speakers, attendees and Sheffield Hallam University for another successful year for the branch.

Programme

What We Did Last Year

During the past year we have successfully held seven monthly events with an average attendance of 28 people, which has been better than the previous year's average of 15 people. Events are typically held on the third Thursday of the month between September and May, with the last year seeing events including:

- Entrepreneurship and Innovation for Economic Diversification and Local Deployment
- Cyber and small/ medium business: What you need to know
- Windows past, present and future
- Rediscovering Agile
- Diversity in IT
- Raspberry Pi Jam 2019
- Designing engaging open-domain conversation AI for the Alexa Amazon prize

Many thanks to the speakers for presenting and who attended ensuring lively debate as always. We also organised a joint trip to Bletchley Park, with lecturers and students from Sheffield Hallam University in February 2019 which went well.

Making IT Good for Society

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

This year again saw the BCS South Yorkshire branch sponsor both Kids Tracks (ages 4-9 and 10+) at Steelconⁱ, Sheffield's Security Conference, for the sixth time. The Kids Track provided the equipment and workshops for the attendees to be introduced to the world of IT and supporting BCS's Computing at School programmeⁱⁱ. Steelcon continue to gain in popularity, selling out all tickets in advance and attracting many speakers and attendees from around the UK's cyber security field.

The BCS South Yorkshire branch sponsored the Sheffield Startup weekend. This event was encouraging the creation of digital startup applications and ideas that could be developed as prototypes programme^v.

The BCS South Yorkshire branch sponsored an Ada Lovelace Fringe event in Sheffield, organised by Sheffield Women in Tech (ShfWiT), which encouraged and inspired girls of school age to explore careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and IT by engaging in problem solving exercises and raising the profile of women in the IT Industry^{vi}.

Community

Who We Serve and How We Engage with Our Community

We continue to award the annual "Elliot Chait" student prize, named after our long serving branch Secretary who died in January 2003. The prize will be awarded at the AGM of the 2019 – 2020 Events Programme.

Leadership

How we provide Leadership to Our Community

The Branch Websiteⁱⁱⁱ continues to be the main source of information for upcoming events, event registration and contacting the Branch. The website is supported by the Branch's LinkedIn and Twitter groups, mailing list and main BCS site.

We continue to work successfully with Sheffield Hallam University, and thank them for their support through venues, collaborative events and colleagues who are an active part of the committee.

Excellence

How We Excel

This year, in collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University, we held our second Raspberry Pi jam. This event brought together technologists, students and hobbyists to showcase projects and share stories. The event included prizes for the best project, best talk and a "hackspace" with all the equipment provided to tackle a project there and then. Feedback for the event was very positive and we look forward to supporting the event again next year.

Objectives for Next Year

Our Plan

As we start the 2019 – 2020 year we hope the events will provide networking, learning and discussion opportunities across IT topics for all members, with a number of events already lined up ⁱⁱⁱ ^{iv}. We welcome suggestions from the Branch for topics and anyone who would be interested in speaking.

Achievements

Our Successes

This last year the Branch has been pleased to deliver a number of events across the IT field, and sponsoring the Steelcon Information Security conference which continues to go from strength to strength, as well as the Sheffield Startup Weekend, which the branch will sponsor again in the new academic year.

Challenges

The Barriers We Face

The branch committee is vital to planning and organising our events, and for the continuing operation of the branch. We are always looking out for new members with new ideas for how to improve the branch and organise events to represent the IT community.

We are looking at the possibility of making some of our future events online so members or the general public who cannot attend in person, have the possibility of attending the events online. This is so we can reach out to more members and the general public, who may not otherwise be able to attend.

Anyone interested in joining the committee, or helping out in any other capacity, are welcome to speak with us at any event.

Inclusion and Diversity

How We Are Working for Everyone

We are always looking for volunteers to help run the branch and speakers for events, and invite any members interested in reach out to us ^{iv}. Without volunteers on the committee we would be unable to operate the Branch for the members and the wider community, or ensure a good variety of topics events.

Committee

About the Committee

As always thanks goes out to all the committee for helping to run the branch and organise the Events Programme. In particular, thanks go to Martin Beer who has continued his role as treasurer and Eva Barabas who has become the vice-chair and

secretary. These are key officer roles required for the South Yorkshire branch to operate.

Gavin Whitelaw, Chris Gray, Lucian Tipi, Colin Smythe, Colin Brooks, Mike Hall, Malihe Shahidan, Gavin Callaghan and Neil Bizzel form the rest of the active committee providing the support necessary, including YPG, Email Communications and Website Administration, to keep the Branch running.

Andrew Shaw
BCS South Yorkshire Branch Chair

ⁱ <https://www.steelcon.info/>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.computingschool.org.uk>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.bcs.org/membership/member-communities/south-yorkshire-branch/>

^{iv} <https://www.bcs.org/membership/member-communities/south-yorkshire-branch/committee/>

^v <http://communities.techstars.com/uk/sheffield>

^{vi} <https://shfwit.org/eventbrite-event/ada-lovelace-fringe-event-escape-the-box-with-shfwit/>