

## BCS Belfast Membership Secretary Report 2007-08

As outgoing Membership Secretary I can report that our Branch membership is a healthy 1027, with about 800 MBCS, 43 FBCS, and 355 CITP. This represents an increase of roughly 10% in overall membership over the year. However there are some challenges.

By a very rough calculation, only 300 or fewer of our members are living or working in Belfast. The number rises a little if we include neighbouring towns and cities. This makes it difficult for us as a Branch to provide direct events and services to the broader branch. The special interest groups tend to be remote – hard to access in Belfast, let alone in the rest of Northern Ireland or in the Republic. Efforts have been made to organise events in the North West – we hope that this can continue and expand in the coming year.

Our links with the universities have been weak for some time, but the enthusiastic work of Karen and others on the committee is expected to bear fruit in the coming year.

Only a very small proportion of our members – even of those in the Belfast area – attend Branch events. This may be because they are not relevant, not of interest, or because the members are too busy. We need to look hard at the events we organise, and the needs of our members.

It is interesting that a non-technical event – on stress and wellbeing – attracted the largest proportion of female visitors of any of our evening seminars. That, and the comment that we should organise more events that were “not about computers” is food for thought.

In conclusion, membership levels are healthy, with a good proportion of chartered members – but there is room for improvement. The services we provide to our members can also be improved.

We are very interested to hear views from the branch membership or the wider IT community on how we can improve.

Finally, I'd like to thank our active members, and especially the committee, for their support. We could not have a functioning branch without you.

Paul Dundas