

# BCS South West Branch Annual General Meeting

16<sup>th</sup> October 2017  
University of Plymouth, Plymouth

## Chairman's Report

The primary activity of the South West Branch over the last year has continued to be our event series, with the following having taken place in this period:

- Retro Gaming 2016 (South West Retro Computing Archive, 7 November 2016)
- BCS President Talk (Ray Long, 16 February 2017)
- Smart Cities: Small but smart - An English city's journey to digital innovation, or the Bristol approach to a smart and secure city? (Dr Theo Tryfonas, University of Bristol, 7 March 2017)
- BCS Voices (Victoria Tan, 16th April 2017)
- 2017 Karen Spärck Jones Lecture: Creating Robots That Care (Dr. Maja Matarić, 25 May 2017)

In addition, the Branch has continued to run joint activity with the South West Branch of the Institute of Information Security Professionals (IISP), with the *Secure South West 7, 8 and 9* events all having taken place since the last AGM, organised by Plymouth University and Plymouth City Council.

We have also continued to sponsor prizes for the best performing degree students on computing-related programmes at Exeter and Plymouth universities. The awards in the last year went to Thomas Brady, who graduated from *BSc Computer Science* at the University of Exeter, and Brian Viviers from *BSc (Hons) Computer Science* at the University of Plymouth.

Once again, I would like to thank the members of our Branch Committee for the work they have put in on an entirely voluntary basis. This is an aspect that I feel the BCS itself does not fully recognise to anywhere near the degree that it should. This was brought home to me when we were unable to get Certificates of Appreciation issued to past committee members that had given 10+ years of service to the Branch. We were told that this Certificate is “for significant achievements and benefits to BCS as a direct result of the volunteer’s personal contribution in a single voluntary role”. My personal view was that 10+ years of active branch support (including organising and attending events, and representing BCS in wider contexts) was a significant benefit for BCS, but clearly our views diverge on this issue. The fact that the Branch Committee wished to see the individuals recognised was also of secondary importance, and I find that to be a sad reflection of how BCS views things.

This situation actually helped towards (but did not motivate) my decision that, after 15 years as Branch Chair and around 20 years on the Branch Committee, I should now stand down and allow someone else to have the opportunity to take things forward. I have very much enjoyed being involved in the Branch activities throughout this time, and working with the various colleagues that have been part of the committee with me. Broadband Internet access,

smartphones, and the IoT are just some of the innovations that we have seen arrive over these years, and I hope that whoever takes over as Chair has similarly exciting things to use as the basis for Branch activities and events.

We also have some other committee colleagues standing down at this time, Dr Shirley Atkinson (who has previously served as Branch Secretary) and Prof. Nathan Clarke, who has been Membership Secretary for several years (and actually began his service as a Young Professionals Group representative around 15 years ago). I would like to thank both of them for their support and involvement.

I would like to offer my best wishes to the members of the Committee who are continuing, and to thank the Branch members for their continued support of the Branch and BCS in general.

I will now look forward to seeing people at future events as a participant rather than as an organiser!

Prof. Steven Furnell CEng FBCS CITP F.Inst.ISP SMIEEE PFHEA  
October 2017