

Malcolm J Collins MBCS CITP **Chairman, BCS Northamptonshire Branch**

I have been a member of the Northamptonshire branch of the BCS since it's inauguration as a sub branch of Bedford in September 2004. I was the branch's 1st Secretary. In 2005, due to the sub branch's growth, we obtained full Branch status and I volunteered to change to the roles of Membership and Email Coordination Secretary. When our founding branch Chairman (Brendan D'Cruz) left in 2007 I was appointed as Chairman of the branch.



Experience

Having left school at 16, I went straight into work. My first role involved designing Systems to put hair on Action Man! That was it, a career in systems and process control was to be my career, even though in 1968 no one even thought of it as a proper job. Unfortunately poor financial management caused the downfall of what should have been a thriving business. I reluctantly found work with GEC, first in Inventory control, and very shortly afterwards in systems & procedures.

In 1970 I was given my first computer to play with and it was about the size of a large shed. "Punched cards & tape", "TSO", "JCL" & later MVS Systems were the order of the day. Over the next 12 years I designed and oversaw the development of 2million lines of IMS Cobol code in 150+ programs running a multi site, multi £million company. After that I progressed to developing one of the UK's first Novell LAN based software development systems using VS COBOL Workbench from Microfocus. This "development" LAN in the mid 80's went on to replace virtually all the mainframe systems.

By this time GEC had become GEC ALSTHOM which later became ALSTOM, a multi-national company in 80 odd countries around the world with France and the UK being the two largest parts. Through 1995/6 the IT team replaced 14 differing email systems with 68,000 Lotus Notes users in 22 countries in 14 months. I was in charge of the UK IT with 47 unit IT managers and left ALSTOM in May 2000 having had some 18 roles in 14 countries.

I have always been a very "hands on" person. In 1997 I featured in Computing as having the 5th largest IT budget in the UK, but at the time I was always being told to put down my screwdriver and stick to being "Management". My skills with a PC even in the late 80's were in constant demand and I formed CeT Services in 1987, with it ticking over quietly until I took redundancy from ALSTOM in 2000. Two to three years contracting as Program / Project Management for Alcatel & Marconi followed until 2003 when I was able to work full time for my own company.

CeT Services became a Ltd company in 2005 with my wife joining the company as a full time qualified Prince 2 practitioner. So whilst she contracts, I supply PC's Broadband, wired/wireless networks to homes & small businesses throughout the UK. We do not advertise but go purely by personal recommendation. I try to devote time & energy to giving customers the best systems and equipment at the best prices, all fully setup so you just turn the machine on. My oldest customer is 97 and I have many others in their 70's and 80's, as well as numerous despairing parents of teenagers who need all the help and guidance I can give them ("Mum, I downloaded some stuff and now the computer won't work and all the files have gone!").

In 2009 I became the Digital Unite Tutor for the Northamptonshire area providing training to novice and elderly computer users and surfers. This is enhanced by CeT Services use of Remote Support and Training software that permit remote control of any PC anywhere in the world. This enables me to help customers either in a support function or in being able to provide training in small manageable chunks of a few minutes at a time.

I am a house husband, looking after the needs of my 2 children who are presently at schools in Rugby & Northampton. I enjoy DIY, technology, holidays, quantum theory & teaching my children all the things they don't get taught at school anymore. I fit work around my family; this gives me a great quality of life, & time to spend on BCS activities. I hope to bring my down to earth realistic approach to our branch of the BCS.