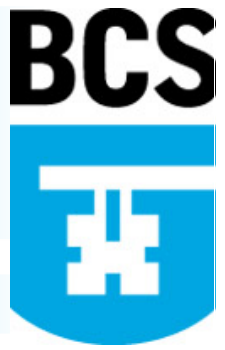
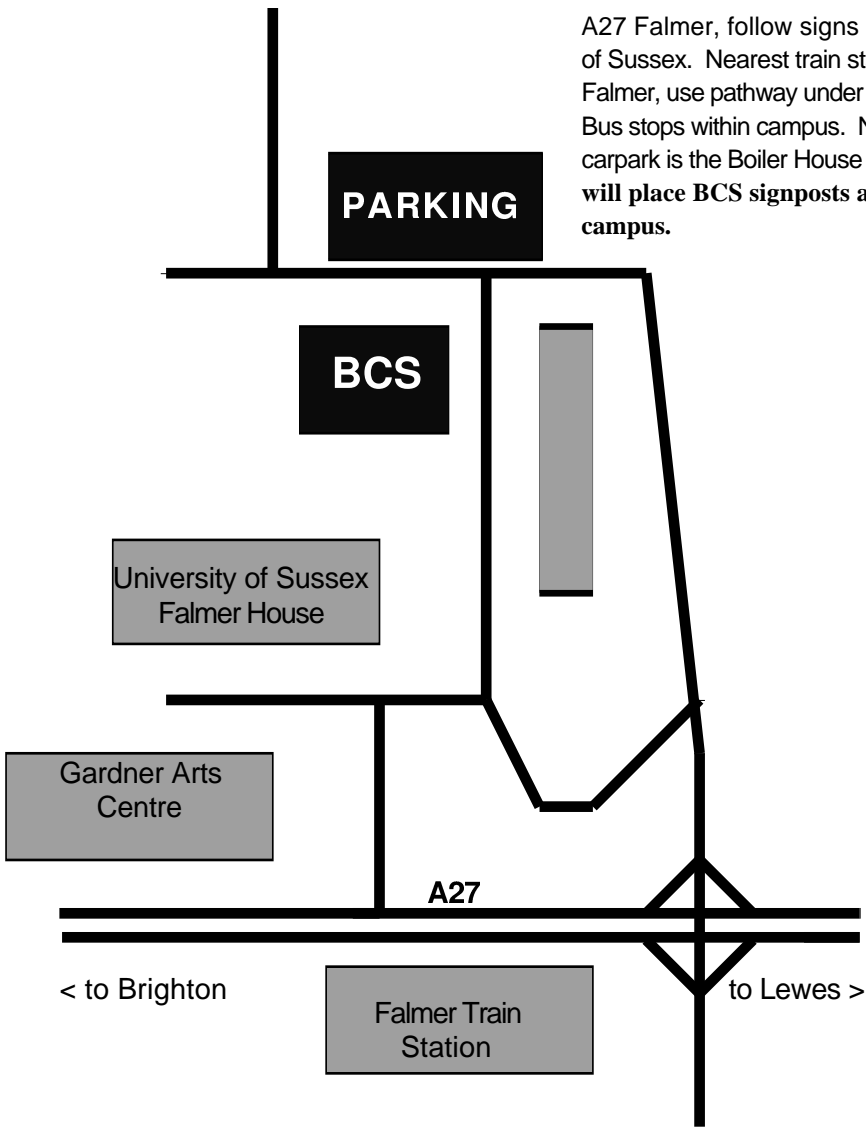


University of Sussex Engineering  
Lecture Theatre One.

A27 Falmer, follow signs to University of Sussex. Nearest train station is Falmer, use pathway under main road. Bus stops within campus. Nearest carpark is the Boiler House carpark. We will place BCS signposts around the campus.



### *A Message from the Chairman*

It seems as though the recession that we are in is proving a little hard to shake off. Contractors such as myself tend to notice economic shifts rather more acutely than most. Right now contractors seem to be reeling from a triple whammy. The first blow was IR35 (don't worry, like Michelle from "Allo Allo" I shall say it only once!), the second is the economic slowdown and the third is the fast track visa scheme.

**It seems as though the recession that we are in is proving a little hard to shake off.**

This scheme was devised to bring in much needed skilled labour from abroad at the time of the dot com boom. However, it has been doubly abused. Employers used it to displace expensive staff and workers from abroad have used it to gain valuable, on the job, training. Once again the government has failed to appreciate the nature of the information economy. When a nurse comes to the UK they bring skill with them. When an IT

professional comes to the UK they take skill home with them. A Spanish nurse provides valuable help to the NHS. An Indian programmer takes valuable skills back to India from where, thanks to the internet, they can compete directly with us in a country with a very much lower cost of living. And many of them are returning home.

In a world of fierce competitiveness we cannot be complacent. Our friends from the Indian sub-continent are not a bunch of cheap, third world, hacks as some may feel. They are every bit as bright and as sharp as the best of us and capable of being every bit as professional. I believe that a significant amount of the code that I am using whilst writing this was written in Bangalore.

If we are to survive and thrive in the world market place we must stay one step ahead and we do not achieve that by handing our formulas for success on a plate to our competitors. It would be like Michael Schumacher lending his Ferrari to David Coulthard. I am not sure that the skill shortage was

as ever as a acute as some pundits claimed. I seem to know a lot of older IT professionals who cannot find any work at all.

I have had a little bit of feed back about whether or not to upgrade my C: drive to NTFS or leave it as FAT. The consensus is that FAT is simpler and works better with dual boot systems and the like but that NTFS is potentially more secure and harder to attack over the internet or on a laptop. Peter Wright wrote "FAT is often makes it simpler to access your HDD after a mishap. You can boot from floppy or install it as 2nd drive in any modern PC running FAT when things go wrong."

I have a problem for which the solution seems particularly elusive. My PC, which I use for work, has an ISDN port and an Ethernet connection to my daughters PC elsewhere in the house. I would like my daughter to be able to fire up an ISDN connection and surf the net from her PC without her either having to go into my office or being able to compromise the security on my PC. We run NT4 all round. E-mail your suggestions to me and we will publish them in aBaCuS.

Last time I mentioned our plan augment our usual formal program with informal meetings. The Extreme Programming group has taken off; we have had our first two meetings. It is proving an excellent format for learning in a relaxed evening atmosphere. We will be meeting in the Prince Albert in

Trafalgar Street in Brighton on the last Wednesday of each month at about 8 p.m. Everyone is welcome and it is free, apart from the beer! My thanks to Dr. Peter Lappo for organising this. He has done an excellent job.

On Wednesday the 22nd May 2002 we will have our AGM and Presidential Visit and there is a formal notice elsewhere in this aBaCuS. Geoff McMullen, current President of the British Computer Society, will be giving a presentation on "The Janet Network". The Janet Network is one of the worlds most advanced Internet networks. Its backbone runs at 2.5Gbits/s and it connects five million users to the Internet. He will tell us how it got there and where it is going. We will be offering a buffet before hand and I hope that as many of you will come as possible. Once again I would much appreciate it if you could spread the word amongst your colleagues. We will try and have suitable posters put up on the web site ( <http://www.bcssussex.org.uk> ). Please download these, print them and put them up on your notice boards at work.

Do not forget, if any of you would like to speak at one of the branch meetings you are most welcome. This years program is complete but we are making plans for next year.

**Rupert Harper**

## Your Committee

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## Sussex XP Group - April Meeting Report

April's meeting in the Prince Albert was attended by 12 people, 5 of which were new to the XP. We played the extreme hour game which produced a lot of lively discussion and amusement.

The whole idea behind the extreme hour is to go through two iterations of an extreme project but of course you cannot write software in such as short time so the deliverables are drawings. In our case a coffee machine.

After splitting the group into 2 teams consisting of customer and developers the game proceeded. Some interesting issues emerged:

1. One team did not draw a coffee machine as such. Rather it drew some of pieces of the machine. This was not really what the customers expected but nevertheless some of the elements were accepted. Better communication between customers and developers would have prevented this, but unfortunately the customers were busy writing acceptance tests and drinking their beer.
2. Some stories were not easy to estimate, such as one that limited the machine to four buttons. Was this a constraint? But surely it would have an affect on the drawing?
3. Both teams severely underestimated the time required to produce the drawing in a 100 second iteration. The resulting velocity was 2. (Velocity is the estimated time for all the stories in the iteration divided by sum of the estimates of the completed stories.) The velocity is useful in determining a completion date.

The Sussex Extreme Programming (XP) group is run in association with the BCS Sussex Branch. XP was invented by Kent Beck and is a set of good practices in software development which when used together and to extreme:

- delivers valuable software incrementally throughout the project.
- results in high quality software that is easier to maintain.
- creates a stimulating productive environment for the people involved.

Informal meetings are held from 8.00pm on the last Wednesday of each month at the Prince Albert Pub, Trafalgar Street, Brighton. All are informal and without agenda.

The group does not constrain itself to XP but encourages discussion about agile software development in general in particular the use of agile processes in large projects.

This text has been taken from the Sussex Extreme Programming Group website @ <http://www.smr.co.uk/cgi-bin/sussex-xp>.

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## BCS Sussex Events Reports

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### Student Evening

On 20th February 2002 Vicki Brown, Student & Graduate Development Manager of BCS HQ gave a presentation to University of Sussex students about the Society, and student membership. Vicki's presentation covered the growing need for professionalism within the IS industry, as well as highlighting and giving examples of how students can best take advantage of the many benefits of student membership - their first step towards a career as an IT professional. The event was well attended and each student was given a student information pack. The BCS Sussex Branch also provided free beer and sandwiches, and a forum for the students to network with committee members

### eXtreme Programming Group Mentioned in BCS E-Bulletin

#### SUSSEX BRANCH GOES TO EXTREMES IN BRIGHTON PUB

A group focusing on extreme programming has been formed by The BCS' Sussex Branch for people interested in this system development method which is fast gaining attention. 'There are no silver bullets in software development - however, extreme programming is a simple set of commonsense practices that, used together, really can help projects hit targets,' says group chairman Peter Lappo.

'How much would users pay for a software development team that would do what they want and say how much it would cost? With extreme programming you get quality software, a robust array of tests that support the project through its entire life cycle, and an up-to-date view of project status. And best of all you get the chance to change your mind about what you want, at any time.'

The group will meet on the last Wednesday of each month, typically in a Brighton pub.

*(taken from <http://www.bcs.org.uk/ebulletin/020417/xp> - more details in this issue)*

# BCS, Sussex Winter/Spring Programme 2002

7.15pm for 7.30pm @ Engineering 1 Lecture Theatre  
University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton

Free to members and non-members. Further details from the Meetings  
Co-ordinator. Updates available from [www.bcssussex.org.uk](http://www.bcssussex.org.uk)

22nd May, 2002

## THE JANET NETWORK AGM inc. PRESIDENTIAL VISIT & PRESENTATION

The Janet Network is one of the worlds most advanced Internet networks. Its backbone runs at 2.5Gbits/s and it connects five million users to the Internet. How did it get here? Where is it going?

In the late 1970s, the networking activities were fragmented with universities developing several regional networks, national computer centres developing separate star networks, and other bodies developing a national X.25 network. April 1984 saw the first Joint Academic NETwork (JANET), an enhancement of the existing X.25 networks serving 50 sites at a speed of 64Kbit/sec. By the late 1980s there were around 200 sites. Further upgrades in the early 1990s provided 2Mbit/sec on an 8Mbit/s backbone which made JANET the fastest X.25 network in the world. An IP service over X.25 was started in 1991 and within ten months the IP traffic had overtaken the X.25 traffic, aided by the connectivity to the Internet.

SuperJANET was proposed in 1989 and was an initiative to develop a high performance wide-area network based on optical fibres. Two pilot networks were setup in 1993, a 34Mbit/s data network and a 34Mbit/s video network. The introduction of SuperJANET saw the move over from X.25 to IP. Since then we have had SuperJANET II and SuperJANET III, each time getting faster and bigger.

*talk to be presented by  
Geoff McMullen, President, British Computer Society*

# Notice is Hereby Given BCS Sussex AGM

"Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the British Computer Society Sussex Branch will be held at **7.30pm on Wednesday 22nd May 2002** in the Engineering 1, Lecture Theatre 2, University of Sussex".

### Agenda

- Apologies
- Minutes of previous AGM
- Chairman's report
- Treasurer's report
- Election of Branch Officers

There is no provision for Any Other Business in the Rules, but any further items of business for the agenda should be notified to the Hon. Secretary. Nominations for Chairman, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer and Committee Members should be sent, in writing, signed by a Proposer and Seconder who are members of the Society and the Branch, to the Hon Secretary. The nominee should agree to his/her nomination. A suitable form on which to nominate Officers/Committee Members is provided here.

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British Computer Sussex Branch Election of Officers and Committee Members

We hereby nominate (print name) \_\_\_\_\_ as  
Sussex Branch: [Chairman/Hon] [Secretary/Hon] [Treasurer/Committee Member]\* at the election to take place at: The Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 22nd May 2002.

Proposer (print name) \_\_\_\_\_ Mem number \_\_\_\_\_  
Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Seconder (print name) \_\_\_\_\_ Mem number \_\_\_\_\_  
Signed \_\_\_\_\_

## Meeting Reports

### 20th February 2002

#### Linux 10 Years On - Entering the Mainstream

Presented by Roger Whittiker, SuSe Linux

A popular topic by a major company in the Linux world, a certainly well attended evening held by an enthusiastic talker. A system that is multi-user, multi-tasking, 32 and 64bit, able to run on a server and a desktop platform, network centric, running on most hardware from mainframe to PC to PDA. It was said that what made Linux unique to its competition is that it is stable, secure, supported, and free. The Internet demonstrated its capability back in 1991 when the creator of Linux wanted UNIX for his 386 PC, after posting the suggestion in a UseNet group there became a world wide group of hobbyist developers collaborating over the Internet to create Linux.

Stability and uptime is a big thing with Linux, you should only have to reboot when you change some hardware, not because you change network settings. The website <http://www.netcraft.com> surveys servers on the Internet and keeps statistics on uptime, Linux comes up high.

Security through understanding, a quick introduction to open source computing. The benefits of open source and knowledge. A picture was drawn of a storage company that keeps your belongings safe was given. One company used their own locks, would not allow the customer to inspect the locks, would not allow the customer to add their own locks, but expected the customer to trust their own technology. Another company used their own locks but encouraged the customer to inspect the locks and would allow the customer to add their own. The second company demonstrated open source and Linux, the first company did not. Linux uses security through understanding and not security through obscurity. Do you know if/how/why your data is safe, do you know all the back doors? Open source allows you to find out and if you do not like what you see, do something about it.

The Linux Kernel is now up to 2.4 which includes large amounts of memory and disks, logical volume managers/journaling file systems. All the things that large servers require. Linux is competing with all Windows and UNIX platforms. IBM, Intel, AMD and Compaq are all involved with Linux. Cluster computing is easy to configure and used in genetics, special effects, and most noticeable Google search engine ([www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)).

A number of uses for Linux servers were put forward. These included apache being the most widely used web server. Mail servers, proxies, firewalls, DNS. Fileservers using

Microsoft's SMB protocol are able to show themselves as true NT servers on a network, the only way of telling being that fact that they run faster than the real thing!

An interesting talk which concluded with an interesting questions and answers session. The idea of Linux on the desktop was put forward and indeed agreed that although the software was there, Microsoft is still the choice. When challenged what operating system the talker was using on his laptop to run the presentation it was good to see it was Suse Linux. Further support on the desktop and for home users will grow as more hardware companies support the system. Today we have at least two Linux glossy magazines on the shelf which demonstrate that something is changing.

### 13th March 2002

#### Revolution with a Small 'r'

Presented by Colin Crookes & Merv Wyeth, Sussex Police

There is more to being a police officer than catching bad people, we had a technical talk about the call centre used by Sussex Police for all non-emergency calls.

From studying the type of calls that this number received, further services were added for the call centre staff to use. A multimedia reference, a FAQ list, legal database. An Intranet approach was used allowing the operator to have easy access and able to go from the internet system to external agencies over the Internet. Areas were opened up to the public Internet, passing of some of the call traffic to Internet web browsing instead. The recent floods in Lewes was a major incident for Sussex police and calls to the centre were once again surveyed. From this they were able to see what people wanted to know in times of trouble when normal living is not possible. Questions like roads closed, help centres, can all now be collected on a FAQ available to both the operator and the public over the Internet.

A task of "call optimisation" was used where each type of call is given a score. A 999 call scores 100 points, the central Sussex number given 10 points, web hits given 1 point. The long term aim is for all inquires to the police by the public should have the lowest score possible.

At present, the operator in the call centre has access to police services and web portals to third party bodies such as the council and the AA. Many using VPNs through multiple firewalls, others available to the public. Everything is browser based and the future holds further ideas for WAP, G3, digital TV, and handheld. The more information easily available to the public means most calls to the call centre are not required, scoring a perfect 1 point only.