

CCS Chairman's Report 2025-2026

I am pleased to report another energetic and active year for the Society.

There have been eight hybrid meetings held at the BCS London headquarters and online as well as the traditional December film show organised by Dan Hayton. Topics included Sir Dermot Turing on “Misread Signals. How history overlooked women codebreakers”; Derek Jones on “Computer Performance, 1953-1993” and Gareth Edwards on “The Man who beat IBM: How Compaq saved the PC”.

We are most grateful to Roger Johnson for his continuing organisation of such an interesting series of talks, and for making the physical arrangements, which has not been straightforward.

North-West branch has not been able to hold meetings. Before the advent of Zoom, members and guests were happy to attend meetings in Manchester. However now that they can attend hybrid meetings held in London online, the demand has diminished. Nevertheless, the leaders of the North-West branch will continue to try to hold meetings and they attended and supported the IEEE Milestone award, described below.

This year there were two IEEE Milestone awards related to the work of the CCS. In April they honoured the Manchester Code at the University of Manchester. I represented the CCS at the ceremony, together with Bob Geatrell and Alan Pickwick and a number of other members. The Citation¹ states:

At this site in 1948–1949 Manchester code was invented for reliably encoding digital data stored on the Manchester Mark I computer's magnetic drum. It became a standard for computer magnetic tapes and floppy disks, and was used in digital communications including the *Voyager 1* and 2 spacecraft and early Ethernet networks. It found wide use in domestic remote controllers, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, and many control network standards.

In September (just after the end of the CCS year) the IEEE made an award at TNMoC at Bletchley Park for The Colossus Computers, before the Tony Sale Award. The Citation² reads:

Six Colossus codebreaking computers operated in this building in 1944-1945. Designed by Thomas H. Flowers of the British Post Office, they enabled deciphering of encrypted radio messages transmitted between German commands across occupied Europe, North Africa, and the Soviet Union. The resulting military intelligence saved countless lives and helped shorten World War II. As the first successful large-scale application of digital electronics to computing, Colossus anticipated subsequent computer developments.

There were many members of the CCS as well as TNMoC volunteers and guests and representatives of IEEE present. We were honoured that Sharron Gunn, Group CEO of the BCS, attended as our guest.

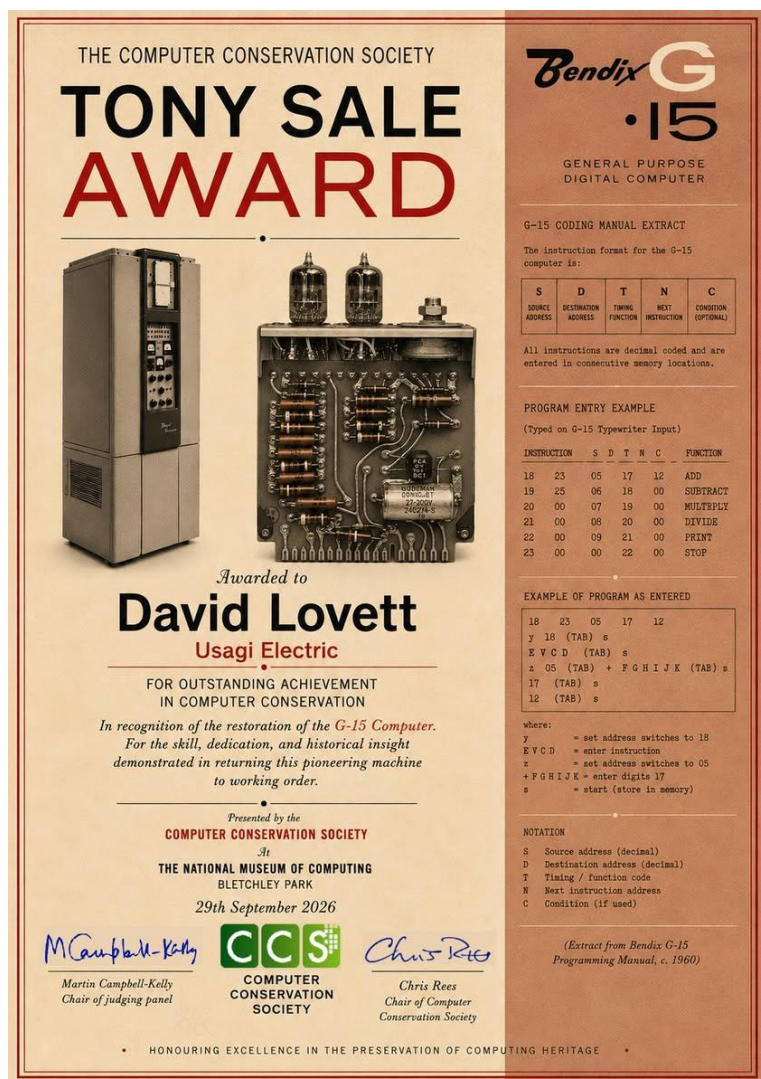
After the IEEE ceremony I presented flowers on behalf of the CCS Committee to Jacqui Garrad, former Director of the Museum, on her retirement from TNMoC in recognition of all her support to the Committee of the CCS over many years; and Andrew Herbert, Chair of Trustees of the Museum, presented her with Honorary Fellowship of the Museum.

¹ https://ethw.org/Milestones:Manchester_Code,_1948%E2%80%931949#Citation

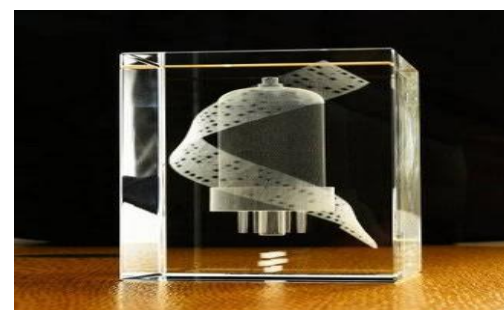
² https://ethw.org/Milestones:The_Colossus_Computers,_1944-1945#Citation

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Martin Campbell-Kelly, Convener of the judging panel, then introduced the Tony Sale Award and its history and announced the winner, David Lovett of Usagi Electric, who delighted the audience with an animated, entertaining presentation of his unique restoration project, the Bendix G-15 computer. Adrian Sale, Tony Sale's son, then presented the award to Dave Lovett.



The Tony Sale Award certificate, designed by Kevin Murrell



Dave Lovett presenting the Bendix G-15, receiving the award, and the Tony Sale award

Members continue to work on a substantial number of projects relating to historic computers, including the Manchester Baby, the Harwell Dekatron, known as The Witch, ICL 1900 and 2966, the EDSAC replica, the Elliott 903 and many more. Volunteers maintain and develop these machines and their software, often challenging tasks. There is also a software conservation project, and IBM Hursley Museum has a large collection of IBM artefacts.

I reported last year on our attempts to build a database which would record members' skills and interests and enable them to communicate with the committee and with each other on matters of mutual interest. This had met obstacles over many years because of the BCS's ultra-strict interpretation of GDPR. I am delighted to report that Bill Barksfield, our Membership Secretary has now succeeded in building and launching the new CCS Membership Database. It is being populated and numbers are increasing; so far about a quarter of CCS members, both BCS and

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non-BCS members have entered their information. This is a major development for the Society. I would encourage all members to enter their details on the database. Bill has designed the input process to be easy and straightforward. It takes little time. Huge thanks to Bill who has worked with BCS Management, educated them in Mailchimp, convinced them that it is safe and reliable and conforms to GDPR, and has set the system up.

There were three most interesting editions of *Resurrection*. Many thanks to Dik Leatherdale for encouraging, assembling and editing the articles for each edition. After 19 years Dik has now retired from the editorship of *Resurrection* and Kevin Murrell has taken over the role. In recognition of his service to the Committee and the Society in the role of editor, we awarded Dik the title of Editor Emeritus. The next edition will be Kevin's first. Dik continues to manage the Society's website.

After Simon Lavington's death last year, we had nobody to maintain the Our Computer Heritage (OCH) site. Ed Smith has now joined the Committee as Our Computer Heritage project manager.

Chris Burton stepped back from his role as leader of the SSEM working party but was co-opted onto the committee. Chris has previously been awarded the CCS Lifetime Achievement Award as well as a BCS Honorary Fellowship.

Dan Hayton, Dik Leatherdale and Martin Campbell-Kelly continued the collection and preservation of the Society's digital and video archives, including photographs, thus recording the Society's history.

We had hoped to visit the Madrid Computer Museum in April, but it proved impossible to agree dates that suited both them and us. We plan to set up a museum visit in 2027.

We noted with regret the deaths of Sir Tony Hoare and Frank Land.

I would like to record my gratitude to the members of the Committee, including the leaders of the various projects referred to above which report to the Committee, for all their support and hard work. I could not have led the Society without their generous support.

Chris Rees