

The INSTITUTION of ANALYSTS & PROGRAMMERS

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INSTITUTION NEWSLETTER

December 1990

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Christmas is approaching and Santa has already called at the Institution, his sleigh piled high with diaries for all our members.

The diaries are now a seasonal tradition at the IAP. Mr. Charles did try to emulate Scrooge one year, but it was out of character and members soon told him so. He never risked it again. In some ways it might be nice if we could send out something different as a surprise. What about a nice Amstrad Box of Delights, almost possible the way prices are going. Some of those can be very surprising from what I hear.

This year the diaries are bigger than before (or fatter, so I am told), as the result of representations from certain Council members whose writing tends to be large and straggly, especially in the Festive Season. Seriously, it was felt that members would be more likely to use the diaries if they were a more practical size, and it would also present a better image of the Institution. I hope all your diaries will quickly fill with interesting and rewarding assignments for 1991.

Work on the Institution's filing system is progressing faster than expected, due mainly to the strong motivation of our Secretary, who suffers most when things are in a muddle. Hopefully we are nearing the point when members will no longer receive letters from the Institution with totally spurious qualifications attached to their names. Members of the IAP are highly skilled in a wide range of disciplines, so we do see a lot of unusual qualifications. But I have yet to meet anyone who thinks he is a CADD, DOS, or VTOL (there are others!). This problem seems to have crept into our database during the "interregnum" period, when unsupervised junior staff got applicants' qualifications and working experience mixed up together.

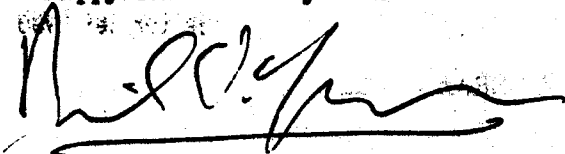
Looking forward to the New Year a priority will be the completion of the new Directory. We are coming round to the view that it may be necessary to conduct an updated survey of members' skills and interests. Although we already have a lot of data relating to the more long standing members, much of which will not have changed, it does not seem to be organised quite as we would wish. The hope was to get everything coded so that we can trace members with particular skills.

Recently a member wrote asking if we could put her in touch with anyone else who was interested in the use of computers in music. I am sure we have several such people, but of course we have no way of locating them, and this made us think that perhaps we should aim to know about members' interests outside the most obvious aspects of computing as well. If anyone is interested in this particular field, let me know and I will put you in touch.

Through the year we receive a lot of requests for help from our members, and often there are things we can do. That is what the Institution is for. But spare a thought, this Christmas, for the member whose cry for help has been smuggled out of Kuwait. Even the Institution cannot send a gunboat, much as we might like to.

Struggling with these problems and the dark mysteries of the IAP filing system I feel not unlike the page boy in the carol, battling against the night wind on the Feast of Stephen many years ago. I could do with a bit of cheerful encouragement from my predecessor and mentor Good King Charles. "Tread my footsteps good my page" he would have said. He gave me a lot of sensible advice over the years, most of which I foolishly ignored. Now, just when I need him most, the Good King has gone on ahead, and his footsteps are beginning to fill with snow..... But perhaps the wind is easing off a bit at last.

A Happy Christmas to you all.



MICHAEL C. RYAN Director General

IAP CONFERENCE 1992

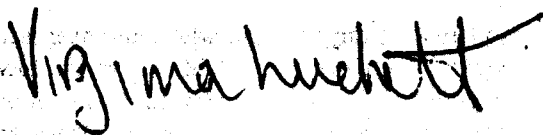
It has been suggested that the Institution might sponsor a 2-day conference, the earliest probable date being the spring of 1992.

The key to a successful event would be to make it so interesting that we could sell places to the business community at large thereby covering most of the cost, so that IAP members could attend at preferential rates.

Above all we would need an interesting theme - we think it would have to be based on our mainstream specialization in programming. We would need at least a dozen good papers to be presented, preferably by people with recognised authority in the world of computer programming.

We are asking whether any of you feel you would have something sufficiently interesting to put across, and whether you would be able to present the material as a conference item. If you have any ideas about conferences in general or think you might be able to help in any way, please write. We are just testing the water at this stage so there would be no commitment.

May I take this personal opportunity to wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas, and a rewarding and prosperous New Year.



VIRGINIA L. LUCKETT Secretary