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IN CONFIDENCE

SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH COUNCIL
RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY

INFORMATICS DIVISION

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING GROUP NOTE 14

ACARD WG on SE

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R W Witty
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R W Witty
EL/ACARD

(see next page)

1. INTRODUCTION

RWW has been invited to sit on a new ACARD Working Group concerned with Software Engineering. Formally RWW is an assessor representing Alvey.

The Working Group is chaired by John Copling, the Design Director of Rolls Royce who has served on a previous ACARD WG concerned with an advanced manufacturing study.

2. MEETING 7/1/85

Those attending:

John Copling (Chairman) from Rolls Royce

John Walley from BAe

Colin Whitby-Strevens from INMOS (who now seems to be on their marketing side!)

Peter Ost from MoD, either PE or REME (he was representing some Brigadier and was a pain in the !)

Mrs Jo Connell from F International who said almost nothing all morning

Sir Robin Nicholson, the Cabinet Office Chief Scientist

Geoff Holmes of SDL

Alan Tolan (ex Chemist))
Mike Kelly (seconded from STC)) ACARD Secretariat
Monica Darnbrough)

3. ACARD

Nicholson gave a brief introduction.

ACARD is currently chaired by Sir Henry Chilver, the VC of Cranfield. It reports directly to the PM. ACARD consists of captains of industry, academics, and "one economist". Its reports are often confidential as they go direct to the PM and cabinet briefings.

Working Groups produce reports which also go direct to the PM, but these are normally published. ACARD WGs have been on

IT and Microelectronics
Biotechnology
Control Systems
Higher Education and Industry
Advanced Manufacturing Technology

Working Groups make recommendations aimed primarily at the Government but can also be aimed more broadly eg industry, UGC, SERC, CBI etc.

The ACARD WG on SE arose out of the Advanced Manufacturing Technology study because these people saw software becoming an increasing fraction of a total system and software development becoming a problem for an increasing range of manufacturing industry both as product component and, via CAD, as a process aid.

The ACARD WG on SE will meet monthly for the next six months.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chairman opened with the remark that he knew nothing about computers (!) and proceeded to lead a discussion on the terms of reference which demonstrated this. He only seemed to recognise the existence of large systems companies such as Aerospace. Given the bias of the WG towards MoD/bespoke systems the discussion was very lopsided.

As the Chairman and the Secretariat had no idea of what the WG was supposed to be doing there was a long shambles of a discussion which occupied the entire meeting and failed to reach a useful conclusion.

The Chairman seemed to think the WG was going to produce detailed technical recommendations as to the exact tools and techniques UK industry (ie his company!) should employ. Geoff Holmes and I managed to head him off but as he did not understand the technical points being made he did not really understand what Geoff and I were saying.

Subjects to be considered at the next meeting will be

- Education and Training
- Quality Assurance and Certification
- Corporate Integration of SE Techniques
- Impact of SE on Managers and Applications Engineers
- Public Purchasing/Procurement Policy
- 'Post Alvey'.

The Chairman wanted the WG to visit BAe and RR 'so we would understand the problem'(!)

Nicholson asked us to consider what work we would like to commission.

Members were asked to do some homework on the above set of subjects and send in some written material before the February meeting.

5. CONCLUSION

A fairly chaotic shambles because the Chairman did not know what problem the WG is supposed to address.

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR APPLIED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

WORKING GROUP ON SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

MEMBERS' S ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

(DECEMBER 1984)

(The Secretariat would be pleased to receive any corrections which may be necessary).

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