

A Message from Andrew & Kathleen Booth

Kathleen and I send our greetings and best wishes to the students and Faculty of the Department of Computer Science at Birkbeck on the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the department in 1957. We wish that we could be with you but constraints of age and health make this impossible.

You may like to know that the original department was responsible for building one of the first operational computers in the World, the APEXC and its successors, the M series and the commercial version the HEC machines sold by the then ICT of which over 120 were produced.

Having produced the machines we needed teaching material and so produced the first systematic books on modern numerical analysis, programming and computer design.

On the research side we started research on Machine Translation, on thin film storage technology for digital storage, and magnetic drum and disc storage. Braille transcription, now touted as a recent IBM invention was actually the work of one of our Ph.D. students. And genetic, self modifying programs were also invented here.

These are only a few of our original activities and you are the carriers of a distinguished origin.

Kathleen and I (and the late Dr. J.C. Jennings the other member of the original faculty) send you our best wishes for the future. I do not expect to be with you in body in 2058 but I shall be with you in spirit.

Andrew & Kathleen Booth

Vancouver Island, BC, Canada

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