



John Blair-Fish

PhD Rainfall Variations in Time and Space, 1997

Who is your current employer and what do they do?

University of Edinburgh (retired December 2011)

What is your job title and what does the job entail?

Senior Computing Officer

I provided support to the Edinburgh Compute and Data Facility which was set up in 2006 to provide a large compute cluster and data facility for researchers. I did outreach work and requirements analysis to make sure user's needs were met especially with software. As the service was run on Full Economic Costing I helped develop and implement a charging policy. There was also a lot of day to day work in answering queries and installing software.

How did you achieve your current position?

I have worked continuously for the University of Edinburgh providing IT support since 1976.

This has included porting and installing software. Some work has led to close involvement with researchers to the extent of becoming co-authors of their papers. I have helped look at how to use new novel architectures such as the ICL DAP (1981), the transputer (1986), and the GPU (2009). I have been members of national committees and user groups such as secretary of the BCS Parallel Computing SIG, and chairman of the AVS/UK User group.

I have also looked at the use of computers in teaching doing a project in 1985 in teaching the Tephigram in Meteorology and the above certificate.

Jobs as a scientific assistant at the Central Electricity Research Laboratories between school and university and at the Royal Aircraft Establishment during a summer vacation while at Oxford taught me about applied science research.

How do you feel you have used the skills and/or knowledge developed during your research degree in your career to date?

It was extremely useful to know how students study for a PhD in a Scientific Discipline, know how they use computers, and to know how the University and its staff work.

Knowledge of Meteorology was useful in the computers in teaching project and in helping meteorologists make best use of computers in their research.

Other qualifications

BA (then MA) Physics, 1972, University of Oxford

Certificate in Online Education, 2003, University of London