The end of an era

This is probably the hardest editorial for me to write since it is my valedictory editorial. As you will read elsewhere in this issue, Sunny Bains is taking over in 2003. A quick check reveals that I have been producing these editorials since January 1996. Whilst I have no doubt that it is time for someone else to bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the Society's publications, I shall be sad to quit. I have certainly enjoyed every part of the work.

I generally tried to produce controversial (if not downright opionated) editorials. Whether this remains an AISBQ tradition we wait to observe. I shall certainly be ready to post emails to the new editor. Yes, Sunny, it's a rewarding job and, for the benefit of all members, I can honestly say that the enjoyment of speculating about just who Father Hacker might actually be remains for me. I managed to occupy the post for all these years without anyone who knows his identity giving the slightest hint. I have hunches, then again, don't we all?

Also in the news recently has been the Edinburgh fire. In case any member has not heard, a serious fire destroyed many buildings in the Old Town area of Edinburgh on the 8th and 9th of December. While nobody was seriously hurt, damage to property was severe. Damage to AI-related property was also severe. The fire destroyed the 80 South Bridge building of the School of Informatics. Despite the loss of this building and about £1/2 million's worth of computing equipment, the School is confident that it can continue its work next term. What is undoubtedly much more serious for us all is the complete loss of the AI library.

Housed in 80 South Bridge was one of the finest collections of publications on AI anywhere in the world, never mind this country. There were about five thousand books, eight hundred journals, and about thirty-five thousand research papers. Not only is this a loss of twenty years work by the librarian, it is the loss of an irreplaceable resource for our subject. Many of the more recent publications will be available elsewhere, but much will be hard, if not impossible to replace. As a result some information may become irretrievable and future researchers face a much harder task.

Edinburgh University is to appeal by letter to past students, academics, and other institutions for personal copies as relacements for the many lost texts. It seems to me that AISB is an institution which could help and I would urge all members to contribute. Perhaps the society as a whole could make an offer to help.

Blay Whitby
Editor

An Appeal from the University of Edinburgh

Please let us know if you have any AI books or papers which you would be prepared to donate to the new Library by logging on to: http://www.informatics.ed.ac.uk/resources/library.

It is crucial that we contact all our former students, so please pass this message on to any Edinburgh graduates who may not be aware of the impact of the fire.

Thankfully, the building along with the contents of the library will be covered by insurance. However to prevent a loss like this in the future we intend to create a digital archive of the documents we receive. This would also ensure that the AI community worldwide could access much of this knowledge base online. Please send a donation today to help make this possible.

Please send cheques payable to The University of Edinburgh Development Trust to:
AI Library Appeal, The University of Edinburgh, Charles Stewart House, 9-16 Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1HT, UK.

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http://www.aisb.org.uk/

AISB News

Chair's Message

One of the major matters that the AISB committee has had to deal with this year has been the discovery of some inconsistencies in the Society's ancient constitution. Something had to be done.

Louise Dennis has been working hard to first rationalise and then update the constitution to something which is self-consistent and operationally feasible. Because this issue, though tedious and irritating, is fundamental to the Society's being, as a legally constituted organisation, we have decided to devote much of this issue of AISB to the newly adjusted and formatted document, to allow the membership to comment and upgrade it further if necessary. Please do read it, and let us know **before February 28th**, by email to me, geraint.wiggins@aisb.org.uk, if you have a problem with it or a query about it. To recapitulate, the reasons for making the changes are:

1. Because the existing constitution has consequences which are logically inconsistent;

2. In order to facilitate effective management by the committee, while still maintaining the power of the membership to control the direction of the Society.

Another innovation on the cards is a trial, for one year, of a new style of AISBQ. Sunny Bains, who, in real life, is a successful science journalist, has agreed to take on editorship of the Q, and to raise its status to a scientific newsletter. It will continue to run the old favourites like Fr Hacker (for as long as he continues to delight us with his correspondence, that is), conference reports, and other Society news. But it will also include short, pithy reports from members on their current research, so as to allow us all an up-to-date digest of the interesting work going on among the Society's members. However, this won't be a Journal publication: the reports will not be refereed, and will be informal and current, rather than archival. After a year, we will review the success of the new style, and decide whether to continue.

Meanwhile, approaching its 1st birthday,

AISBJ will continue unabated. I'm pleased to report that papers now arriving, but we still need our members to submit more of their work to this fledgling journal.

As I've already said, this issue of the Q sees a number of significant changes in the organisation of AISB.

This is the last issue to be edited by Blay Whitby, and assembled under the management of Medeni Fordham. Blay has been editing the Q for longer than I can remember, and has worked tirelessly to keep it going through times when material was hard to come by. In spite of a stated wish to retire from the editorial post some years ago, Blay soldiered on until we were able to find someone fit to replace him. Blay's contribution to the Society must surely be one of the largest in the Society's history, and we will miss it very much.

Medeni is not just leaving the Q, but also CASA, the organisation which does AISB's administration. She has decided to leave work to look after her little daughter, full time. Both CASA and AISB will miss her calm efficiency very much. Fortunately for AISB, Therie Hendrey-Seabrook, who is familiar to members already for her administration of the weekly bulletin, will be taking over AISB's business at CASA, and we are therefore reassured that the Society is still in very capable and safe administrative hands.

I'm sure I speak for all the members when I thank Blay and Medeni most sincerely for all their efforts over the past years, and wish them the very best for the future.

Geraint Wiggins
AISB Chair

> *If you want to write to the editor, or send an open letter for publication, please write to: The Editor, AISBQ, Dept. of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Imperial College, Exhibition Road, London SW7 2BT. Or email aisbq@aisb.org.uk*

AISB News

Proposal for amended constitution of SSAISB

SECTION 1: Name
The name of the society shall be the Society for the Study of Artificial Intelligence and Simulation of Behaviour.

SECTION 2: Objects of the Society
The objects of the Society shall be:

1. to promote the study of artificial intelligence, simulation of behaviour, and the design of intelligent systems.
2. to facilitate co-operation and communication among those interested in the study of artificial intelligence, simulation of behaviour, and the design of intelligent systems.
3. to hold, or to participate in the holding of, conferences and meetings for the communication of knowledge concerning, and to publicise and disseminate by other means knowledge and views concerning artificial intelligence, simulation of behaviour, and the design of intelligent systems.

SECTION 3: Amendments to the Constitution
1. **Conduct of the Ballot.** Voting on amendments to the Constitution shall be conducted at a General Meeting of the Society, but will include votes submitted by post.
2. **Votes.** Changes in the Constitution shall require the approval of two-thirds of those actually voting, provided that the number voting be not less than fifteen percent of the membership.
3. **Notification.** The Committee shall give one clear month's notice of the text of proposed amendments.
4. **Proposals.** Proposals to amend the Constitution may be put forward by the Committee. Additionally such proposals may be forwarded by an individual Member to the Committee provided that it bears the signature of at least twelve members of the Society.
5. **Timescale** In either case the proposal must be put to the Society for voting not later than at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) provided that time allows for due notice to be given, otherwise at a General Meeting and no later than the next AGM.

SECTION 4: Publications
The Society shall publish an organ from time to time as determined by the Committee, but at least once a year.

SECTION 5: Membership
1. **Individual Membership.** Membership of the Society shall be open to persons interested in the study of artificial intelligence, simulation of behaviour and the design of intelligent systems.
2. **Institutional and Corporate Membership.** Libraries, departments in educational establishments with kindred interests, and similar not-for-profit establishments may be admitted as Institutional Members. Corporate bodies such as companies may be admitted as Corporate members.
3. **Subscriptions.** From every Member there shall be due, on the anniversary of their joining, an annual subscription which shall be determined from time to time by the Committee.
4. **Entitlements of Individual Members.**
1. Individual Members are entitled to receive the Society's organ
2. Individual Members of the Society shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the Society. Members shall not be exempt, by virtue of membership alone, from any due fees for conferences or meetings other than General Meetings.
3. Individual members are entitled to vote at General Meetings of the Society and in any postal ballots which the Committee may from time to time conduct.
4. Every Member shall receive on admission a copy of the Constitution of the Society.
5. **Entitlements of Institutional and Corporate Members.**
1. Each Institutional Member is entitled to receive a number of copies of the organ free of charge, the number to be determined from time to time by the committee.
2. Institutional Members shall be non-voting members.
3. Every Member shall receive on admission a copy of the Constitution of the Society.
6. **Termination of Membership.** The Committee may, on the submission of the Hon. Treasurer, terminate the membership of any Member who remains in default with their subscription after at least one reminder

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and, in a subsequent communication, at least one month's notice of termination.

7. **Resignation.** Notice of resignation of membership must be given to the Secretary in writing. Such notice of resignation shall not exempt the resigning Member from payment of the current year's subscription.

SECTION 6: Officers and Committee of the Society

1. **Principal Officers of the Society.** The Principal Officers of the Society shall be drawn from the elected members of the committee and shall be an Hon. Chairman, an Hon. Vice-Chairman, an Hon. Secretary and an Hon. Treasurer.

2. **The Officers of the Society.** All officers of the society are drawn from the committee and shall include
i.   the Principal Officers of the Society,
ii. the principal Editor of the Society's organ,
iii. a membership officer.
Other officerial posts may be created at the committee's discretion.

3. **The Committee of the Society.** The business of the Society shall be conducted by a Committee consisting of no more than thirteen elected members. The Committee may, at its discretion, co-opt further members to the committee.

4. **Quorum.** A quorum shall consist of half of the current elected members of the committee, of whom at least two must be Principal Officers.

5. **Votes.** Voting at Committee Meetings shall be by a simple majority of the elected members present. In the event of a tie, the chairman of the meeting shall be entitled to a casting vote as well as a deliberate vote. Co-opted members shall not be entitled to vote.

6. **Committee Elections.** Vacancies on the Committee for each year shall be filled by election by postal ballot, at the earliest convenient time. The results must be declared at the Annual General Meeting and published in the Society's organ.

7. **Nominations.** Nominations must be signed by two members of the Society, carry a statement of the nominee's willingness to serve, and must be sent out to the members at least two clear months before the closing date of the ballot.

8. **Term of Office.** No elected member may serve for more than three years without re-election. No co-opted committee member may serve for more than three years without being elected.

9. **Votes of No Confidence.** An individual member of the society may instigate a vote of no confidence in a principal officer of the society by submitting a petition to that effect to the Hon. Secretary signed by no less than 10 per cent of the membership of the society. No more than one vote of no confidence may be called against an officer in one calendar year.

A ballot must be held within three months of receipt of such a petition. This may be conducted as a postal ballot or at a General Meeting and will be decided by a simple majority of those actually voting, provided that the number voting be not less than fifteen percent of the membership. A clear month's notice should be given for the ballot. This notice should include any text supplied with the petition outlining the reasons for the vote. The officer in question should be provided with an opportunity to defend their actions by similarly including a defense with the notice of the vote.

If the vote is carried the principal officer in question must resign immediately from his or her post and the committee and may not restand for election to the committee for a period of three years.

SECTION 7: General Meetings

1. **Annual General Meeting.** The Society shall hold at least one general meeting (the AGM) in each calendar year.

2. **Proposed Resolutions.** Any member may propose a resolution to be considered at a General Meeting. Such a proposal, if it is not a proposed amendment to the Constitution, must be given in writing to the Secretary no later than the beginning of that General Meeting.

3. **Votes.** Voting on proposals shall be by a simple majority of those present. In the event of a tie, the Chairman shall be entitled to a casting vote as well as a deliberate vote.

4. **Additional General Meetings.** Other General Meetings may be held at the discretion of the Committee, not less than one month's advance notice being given of the date of such a Meeting.

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Proposed Constitutional Amendments

SECTION 8: Branches

Regional branches of the Society may be set up from time to time at the direction of the Committee. All branches shall be strictly accountable in financial matters to the Hon. Treasurer.

SECTION 9: Society Finances and Assets

1. **Publication of Accounts.** The Balance Sheet and Income Expenditure Account of the Society, duly audited, shall be published annually in the Society's organ.

2. **Use of Income and Assets** The income and property of the Society shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Society, as set forth in this Constitution, and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise to Members of the Society except by way of re-imbursement of authorised expenses legitimately incurred in the Society's service or by way of paid employment deemed by the committee to be necessary for the furtherance of the objects of the Society. No elected committee member or officer shall be eligible to be paid solely for the fulfilling of any of the normal duties or responsibilities of their position.

3. **Liability.** In the execution of the objects of the Society, no committee member or paid employee of the Society shall be liable for any loss to the property of the Society arising by way of any improper investment made in good faith, providing that professional advice had been taken regarding that investment. In the execution of the objects of the Society, no committee member or paid employee of the Society shall be liable for any loss to the property of the Society arising by way of any other matter or thing other than willful and individual fraud on the part of that person.

4. **Winding up of the Society.** In the event of the winding up of the Society, any assets or funds remaining after the discharging of all debts and commitments shall be transferred to an educational charity, to be selected by a simple majority of those present at a general meeting of the Society.

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- **SECTION 5: Article 6. and SECTION 9: Article 2.** The word "his" changed to "their".

- **SECTION 5: Article 2 changed from**
  - **Institutional Membership.** Libraries, departments in educational establishments and corporate bodies with kindred interests may be admitted as Institutional Members.

  to

  - **Institutional and Corporate Membership.** Libraries, departments in educational establishments with kindred interests, and similar not-for-profit establishments may be admitted as Institutional Members. Corporate bodies such as companies may be admitted as Corporate members.

  Article 5. Also altered so it is titled **Entitlements of Institutional and Corporate Members.** but text is otherwise unchanged.

- **SECTION 7: General Meetings. New first clause -**
  - **Annual General Meeting.** The Society shall hold at least one general meeting (the AGM) in each calendar year.

  Remaining clauses in section renumbered accordingly.

- **SECTION 6: Clause 1. changed from**
  - **Elected Officers.** The Elected Officers of the Society shall be drawn from the membership and shall be an Hon. Chairman, an Hon. Vice-Chairman, an Hon. Secretary and an Hon. Treasurer.

  to

  - **Principal Officers of the Society.** The Principal Officers of the Society shall be drawn from the elected members of the committee and shall be an Hon. Chairman, an Hon. Vice-Chairman, an Hon. Secretary and an Hon. Treasurer.

  and then references to elected officers to be changed to principal officers throughout.

- **SECTION 6: Clause 2 split into two clauses from**
  - **The Committee of the Society.** The business of the Society shall be conducted by a Committee consisting of
  1. the Elected Officers of the Society,
  2. and ex officio the principal Editor of the Society's organ
  3. and ex officio a membership officer.

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Proposed Constitutional Amendments cont...

4. no more than eight other elected members,
5. The Committee may, at its discretion, co-opt further members to the committee.

to

- **2. The Officers of the Society.** All officers of the society are drawn from the committee and shall include

1. the Principal Officers of the Society,
2. the principal Editor of the Society's organ,
3. a membership officer.

Other official posts may be created at the committee's discretion.

3. The Committee of the Society. The business of the Society shall be conducted by a Committee consisting of no more than thirteen elected members. The Committee may, at its discretion, co-opt further members to the committee.

All further clauses in SECTION 6 renumbered accordingly.

NB. This change makes no sense if previous changes are not made

- **SECTION 6: Clause 6 (now Clause 7)** Nominations Clause - all the stuff about chairman and vice-chairman deleted (no longer relevant if above changed). So the clause is changed from
- **Nominations.** Nominations (with the one exception noted below) must be signed by two members of the Society, carry a statement of the nominee's willingness to serve and must be sent out to the members at least two clear months before the closing date of the ballot.

Upon the post of Hon. Chairman falling vacant, the Hon. Vice-Chairman shall be automatically eligible as a candidate for election to the post, without needing to be nominated by two members of the society. to
- **Nominations.** Nominations must be signed by two members of the Society, carry a statement of the nominee's willingness to serve and must be sent out to the members at least two clear months before the closing date of the ballot.

NB. This change makes no sense if previous changes are not made

- **SECTION 6: A new clause (clause 9) added with the following text**
- **Votes of No Confidence.** An individual member of the society may instigate a vote of no confidence in a principal officer of the society by submitting a petition to that effect to the Hon. Secretary signed by no less than 10 per cent of the membership of the society. No more than one vote of no confidence may be called against an officer in one calendar year.

A ballot must be held within 3 months of receipt of such a petition. This may be conducted as a postal ballot or at a General Meeting and will be decided by a simple majority of those actually voting, provided that the number voting be not less than fifteen percent of the membership. A clear month's notice should be given for the ballot. This notice should include any text supplied with the petition outlining the reasons for the vote. The officer in question should be provided with an opportunity to defend their actions by similarly including a defense with the notice of the vote.

If the vote is carried the principal officer in question must resign immediately from his or her post and the committee and may not restand for election to the committee for a period of three years.

A New Q!

From the next issue, there will be major changes in the AISBQ. Most noticeable will be more technical content, more figures, and more editorial input, which—we (in the AISB committee) hope—will lead to a more interesting and useful publication from your point of view. Full submissions guidelines are available on the web,[1] including lots of information about how to submit your ideas or to make sure your field is represented. However, I (the new Editor[2]) thought I'd give you a short rundown of the kind of articles we intend to run here, so that you know what we're looking for. Also, as this is a one-year trial run that may or may not continue, we are looking for feedback. If you would like to object to any of the changes in progress or make further suggestions, please get in touch as soon as possible.

First, the core of the newsletter (which will, we hope, be a constant 12 pages from the Spring issue onwards) will be six to eight pages of one-page technical articles. These are the equivalent of extended abstracts with a bit of extra context built in so that our general AISB audience can get the gist and purpose of a piece of work without being a specialist in the field. These articles will also include figures (for easier explanations), and both references and URLS (for follow up) where available. The hope is that these short pieces will spark cross-disciplinary interest, inform you of what your neighbours and colleagues are up to, and give you a perspective on the diversity of the field as a whole.

Who is asked to write these articles will be determined, in part, by our new Editorial Board,[1] whose sole purpose is to keep a collective eye open for new and interesting work in Britain and Europe and, where appropriate, the world. This board is open to anyone willing to participate and who has reasonable credentials (Ph.D. students on up). If you'd like to help in this way, perhaps because you feel the existing board does not reflect your interests, please get in touch.

Up to two pages per issue will be dedicated to conference and book reviews. Full guidelines are, again, available on the web,[3] but I thought it worth mentioning how the editorial perspective on these will change. As far as books are concerned, our main goal is to provide *useful* information. To me,

this means telling you about good books you may or may not have heard of, or helping you avoid bad books that are getting a lot of press. For this reason, over the next year we will only be running reviews of books that are either deemed worthwhile, or which are likely to receive so much attention that we cannot ignore them.

As far as conferences are concerned, very narrow reviews, intelligible only by the specialist, will not run either. We will hope, in future, to enlighten *all* of our readers on new topics, emerging trends, and interesting individual projects that are highlighted at meetings. To do this, we must give you enough context to understand the state of the art in that field before expecting you to understand the details of the new stuff. We will endeavor to do this.

Among the features in the remaining two to four pages, we hope to include profiles of recently-funded projects, major academic and industrial laboratories, the usual society reports and letters, Father Hacker (should he continue to make himself available!), and more. Again, all ideas and suggestions gratefully received.

Sunny Bains
Imperial College London
& The Open University
E-mail: aisbq@sunnybains.com

References
1. http://www.aisb.org.uk/qhome.html
2. http://www.sunnybains.com/
3. http://www.aisb.org.uk/qreview.html

Deadlines for next issues of AISBQ:

Spring 2003 *(Out in May)*
Copy deadline (articles, reviews, advertising etc.): *14 February 2003*
Summer 2003 *(Out in August)*
Editorial Board and new feature suggestions: *24 February 2003*
Author/project/review suggestions: *28 March 2003*
Copy deadline: *16 May 2003*

(But do not submit anything without reading the web guidelines!)

Father Hacker's Guide for the Young AI Researcher
Cognitive Divinity Programme
Institute of Applied Epistemology

In this issue, the Guide turns to that vital topic for the young AI researcher.

5. How to Get Research Funding

Success in obtaining research funding will enable you to increase the size of your research group and, hence, your authority, influence, reputation and power. It will also provide resources for those new high-tech toys and for trips to exotic foreign locations. No wonder then, that this topic excites huge interest and cut-throat competition in the research community.

A few high-flying research stars enjoy enviable and repeated success in harvesting research grants. How do they do it? Learn Hacker's top tips and you can follow in their footsteps.

1. Scour the funding agencies for under-subscribed funding programmes. Focussing on these will boost your success rate. Look for narrowly scoped but over-funded, unfashionable and poorly advertised programmes. Shmooze the funding agency bureaucrats to identify the programmes that are under-selling. Europe is a rich seam to mine: political machinations often crystallise the most unlikely programmes.

2. Be flexible. Follow the money. Don't be hide-bound by intellectual coherence.

3. Don't wait for promising programmes to be created by others. Make yourself such an invaluable asset to your funding agency cronies that they invite you onto the panels that devise new programmes. I have personally midwifed the birth of 13 low profile programmes in *Computational Theology*, from which I have subsequently extracted over 90% of the funding. *[Another word from our sponsor: The latest, deluxe edition of Hacker Enterprise's One2Many ™ research paper cloner (see Guide #3) includes the new feature of customising funding programme proposals to targeted at your funding agency of choice.]* To ensure acceptance of your programme suggestions, cultivate your fellow panellists and exchange support for each other's proposals.

4. Remember that the size of each funding pot is fixed: other's success will cause your failure. Ensure they are unsuccessful. Praise their work so that they nominate you as a referee, but pan their proposal when you are sent it. If they complain that their application failed, offer sympathy - and regret that you did not get asked to referee it yourself.

[A word from our sponsor: Too busy to search for obscure funding programmes? Let Hacker Enterprise's PoundFound ™† surf the web on your behalf.]

Email anything fun or interesting (AI jokes and cartoons, artistic impressions of Father Hacker, interesting news, letters to the editor, etc.) to:
aisbq@aisb.org.uk

Do you want to reach AISB members with information on your publications or events?

This is an ideal target market for AI related publications and events which are relevant to both industry and academia. If you would like us to organise a direct mailing to our members, or have an enclosure mailed out with our quarterly newsletter or journal, please contact:
admin@aisb.org.uk