

PEN PICTURE:

DR GEOFF BUSBY MBE

I was born with cerebral palsy in 1943. To enlarge upon this the effect of cerebral palsy means that I cannot walk or use my hands, I also have speech impairments. My intellectual ability however is unaffected and in 1972 I gained an MA and Doctorate in Computer Science and Psychology from the University of Essex.

As well as taking my qualifications I started working as a freelance programmer during 1967 undertaking projects from companies such as Fords, Courtaulds and Scicon. In 1975, having proven my abilities I was able to gain a position in mainstream industry with GEC Computer Services.

During my years at University I developed an interest in the way technology can enhance and empower people with disabilities. In 1975 this interest led me to create a special interest group on this topic within the British Computer Society. I have been Chairman of this group, apart from two years, ever since. In turn this has led me to become involved in the Council of European Professional Informatic Societies (CEPIS) and the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP). The above has seen me make presentations at National and International conferences. When giving such presentations I utilise technology in the shape of a Voice synthesiser. Countries that I have lectured in, and learnt from, include most of Europe, Japan, America, Australia, Iraq, Dubai, Syria and South Africa. The latter was achieved via satellite. I have also had my work published in many scientific journals.

For the past thirteen years my company has seconded me to undertake the above projects as well as the Chairmanship of the North London Committee for the Employment of People with disabilities and to assist in the creation of The Computability Centre now AbilityNet. I believe that the IT Industry has to learn to design for all, thereby creating better products thus producing increased market areas.

Over the past three years I have become interested and active in the Essex Independent Living movement plus other areas of disability issues.

In 1991 I was awarded the MBE and in 1992 received an Honorary Degree from the University of Middlesex. In January 1996 I also became one of the founder members of their Court. In September of 1997 Oxford Brookes University presented me an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws. May 2000 I was presented with an Honorary Doctorate from the Open University.

Since April 2003 I have been a consultant on disability issues working mainly for the BCS.