

## What is a key?

This voluminous correspondence records the long saga of Professor Jean Bacon's battle with the Member Services department of the IEEE Computer Society (you would expect them to know about such things as keys!).

At one stage things were almost sorted out, but a staff change at the IEEE-CS scuppered things. I find the whole correspondence compelling, because the IEEE implausibly and despite mounting evidence to the contrary continue to believe that the name is a key, and all of the problems come about because of that. At various points I've used *italics* to emphasise that aspect of the story.

If you can't take the suspense, you may like to scroll forward from the first message to the one dated 15<sup>th</sup> January 2001. But probably it's worth looking at December 2000, in which the second Jean Bacon comes onto the stage as a real protagonist for the first time.

The local Jean's brief notes set the context - she had for a while been a member of the IEEE-CS, renewing with the calendar year.

*Calendar 1999 - I renewed as usual #00751826*

*I received messages about meetings in February, May and August, but didn't get any messages about a meeting in November.*

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Date: Thu, 4 Nov 1999 09:34:19 -0500

Subject: Re: messages on Portland meeting

Lynne/Jean,

I checked Jean's official IEEE record. There is no problem with the membership status (active for 1999). However, IEEE is listing a Connecticut address for *her*, no UK. Our internal records (in Sisyphus) contain the CT address (received as part of our usual IEEE information) and also the UK information (through our volunteer directory information). If the CT address should not be the official address of record, we need to update the IEEE information.

E-mail changes can be sent to [address.change@ieee.org](mailto:address.change@ieee.org) .

Regards,  
Georgann

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To: web-renewal@ieee.org  
Cc: Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk  
Subject: 00751826  
Date: Tue, 25 Jan 2000 09:59:29 +0000  
From: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

My membership expired Dec 31st.  
I haven't been sent a renewal form.  
Please arrange for me to be able to renew my membership.

Many thanks  
Jean Bacon

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Subject: Re: 00751826  
To: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>  
From: p.desvignes@staff.ieee.org  
Date: Thu, 3 Feb 2000 16:20:33 -0500

Jean Bacon  
# 00751826

Dear Jean Bacon,

Thank you for your e-mail. Please be advised that our records show that we have mailed two renewal invoices to **you** and a postcard reminder.

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IEEE Member Services  
445 Hoes Lane, P.O. Box 1331, Piscataway, NJ 08855-1331

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To: member-services@staff.ieee.org  
Cc: Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk  
Subject: Re: 00751826  
Date: Fri, 04 Feb 2000 09:19:33 +0000  
From: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

Thank you for your message.  
I'd really like to have this sorted out.  
I'm EIC of Concurrency magazine and don't want my subscription lapsing.

I've received IEEE-CS membership packages but they are all about promoting the CS for new members - not about renewing.

My contact info is:

Dr Jean Bacon  
University of Cambridge Computer Laboratory  
Pembroke Street  
Cambridge CB2 3QG  
England  
tel +44 1223 334604  
fax +44 1223 334678  
email [jmb@cl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:jmb@cl.cam.ac.uk) <http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/users/jmb/>

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Subject: Re: 00751826  
To: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>  
From: p.desvignes@staff.ieee.org  
Date: Tue, 22 Feb 2000 18:48:43 -0500

Dear Jean Bacon,

Thank you for your e-mail. Please be advised that our records show that **your** membership was changed to Affiliate membership in the IEEE through the Computer Society and a subscription to the IT Professional Magazine. **Your** address was not changed from Connecticut to England on your renewal. Please advise.

If we can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Patricia DesVignes  
Member Services Associate  
*IEEE: Networking the World*

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Subject: Re: Re: 00751826  
To: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>  
From: e.seay@staff.ieee.org  
Date: Fri, 25 Feb 2000 11:41:24 -0500

Dear Jean Bacon,

Thank you for your email. Please be advised that ***your*** membership is paid in full. However, your subscription does not include Concurrency Magazine. If you would like to have this added to your membership the cost would be \$31.00US Print, \$30.00US Elect, or \$40.00US combo you can inform us by email or fax your credit card information to (732)562-6380.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Ella Seay

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To: p.desvignes@staff.ieee.org, e.seay@staff.ieee.org  
Subject: Re: Jean Bacon 00751826  
Date: Mon, 28 Feb 2000 19:09:53 +0000  
From: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

Thank you for your two messages (above).  
There is some confusion.  
You may have allocated my number to another Jean Bacon in Connecticut.

I have never had a Connecticut address.  
I have never subscribed to ITPro.  
I'm editor-in-chief of Concurrency and get all the magazines without subscribing.  
I have probably been getting Computer magazine because I am an EIC.  
I assumed it was because I'm an IEEE-CS member.  
I don't believe you have been sending me Computer.

I believe that my membership # 00751826 expired on 31st Dec 1999.  
My card says so.

I have been trying to renew it but no paperwork has reached my address which is and has been since 1985:

Dr Jean Bacon  
University of Cambridge Computer Laboratory  
Pembroke Street  
Cambridge CB2 3QG  
England

tel +44 1223 334604

fax +44 1223 334678

email [jmb@cl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:jmb@cl.cam.ac.uk)

<http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/users/jmb/>

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Subject: Re: 00751826

To: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

From: e.seay@staff.ieee.org

Date: Tue, 29 Feb 2000 14:09:02 -0500

Jean Bacon  
Member # 00751826

Dear Jean Bacon,

Thank you for your email. We apologize for any inconvenience we may have caused you. Please be advised that the member number 00751826 is the number we have in our database for you, ***I have changed the address to reflect the correct mailing address.***

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ella Seay  
Member Services Associate  
***IEEE: Networking the World***

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Subject: Re: Re: 00751826  
To: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>  
From: d.gould@staff.ieee.org  
Date: Tue, 29 Feb 2000 18:21:59 -0500

Jean Bacon  
Member #00751826 Region 8

Dear Ms. Bacon,

Thank you for your recent e-mail in reference to your mailing address. Our records indicate this was updated today. Please note our mailing labels are preprinted two months in advance. Therefore, it takes 4-6 weeks for this change to take effect.

If you can please inform us as to which issues you are missing, we will be happy to replace the available issues for you.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Debra Gould  
Member Services Associate

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To: e.seay@staff.ieee.org  
Cc: Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk  
Subject: Re: 00751826  
Date: Mon, 10 Apr 2000 18:13:56 +0100  
From: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

Jean Bacon  
Member # 00751826

Dear Ella,

My March issue of Computer has a sleeve which says my membership is ending. I have been trying to renew since Dec 31st but have received no renewal form. Please see all my previous emails for details.

I believe you have given two different Jean Bacon's the same number. My guess is that the other Jean Bacon is from Connecticut and subscribes to ITPro.

My contact address is, and always has been,

Dr Jean Bacon

University of Cambridge Computer Laboratory

Pembroke Street

Cambridge CB2 3QG

England

tel +44 1223 334604

fax +44 1223 334678

email [jmb@cl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:jmb@cl.cam.ac.uk)

<http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/users/jmb/>

Please send me a renewal form.

Thank you

Jean Bacon

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Subject: Re: 00751826

To: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

From: e.seay@staff.ieee.org

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 2000 10:21:55 -0400

Jean Bacon

Member # 00751826

Dear Jean Bacon,

Thank you for your email. Please be advised that I have researched our database and have found that a payment was received from **you** on 15-Feb-00. Also be advised that on 16-Feb-00 an acknowledgement package was sent which contains **your** receipt and membership card. Please disregard any further notices.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ella Seay

Member Services Associate

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**The local Jean Bacon writes:** at this stage in April I gave up for calendar 2000  
- I don't need the membership and get all the magazines anyway as an EIC.

**Now - renewing for calendar 2001:**

This time I received the renewal form instead of the Jean Bacon in Connecticut !

For the first time I saw her details which were clearly there in the record  
- business address, technical profile, subscriptions.

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To: gcarter@computer.org  
Cc: Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk  
Subject: **2 Jean Bacon's, one IEEE-CS number 00751826**  
Date: Mon, 27 Nov 2000 14:26:44 +0000  
From: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

Hello Georgann,

I had a protracted interaction with online membership from Jan through April last year. It's clear to me that membership have allocated the same number 00751826 to me and to another Jean Bacon in Connecticut but they don't accept this.

I told them that I have never even been to Connecticut and have been at my Cambridge address since 1985. They now have my Cambridge address as the mailing address but the other person's as secondary address. I didn't receive renewal paperwork for 2000 but have now received it for 2001.

On that I now see for the first time that the other Jean Bacon has a work address:

Bristol Technology  
39 Old Didbury Road  
Danbury CT 08810-5103

email [jean.bacon@mindspring.com](mailto:jean.bacon@mindspring.com)

This person will not have received a renewal request as IEEE-CS membership have changed the mailing address to mine in Cambridge.

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Subject: Jean Bacon, Member # 00751826  
To: Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk  
From: m.schmidt@ieee.org  
Date: Tue, 5 Dec 2000 14:36:17 -0500

Jean;

I have been copied on your e-mail to Georgann Carter regarding the problems you have experienced with your IEEE membership.

I have researched the IEEE database and we have *only one* "Jean Bacon" on record, member number 00751826. I show this record to have a *primary address in England* and a *work address in the US*. If this is not correct, I can only assume that a processing error may have taken place when an address was being updated for a member number similar to yours and mistakenly your address and e-mail were changed in the process.

To correct this situation I will be happy to update *your* account with the correct information or, if you wish, you can go to the IEEE web site, [www.ieee.org](http://www.ieee.org), and change your contact information on line.

Marianne Schmidt, Director  
IEEE Member Services Contact Center

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**(all that remains of the second Jean Bacon is the secondary contact address!)**

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To: jean.bacon@mindspring.com  
Subject: 2 Jean Bacon's, one IEEE-CS number 00751826?  
Date: Thu, 07 Dec 2000 09:39:25 +0000  
From: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

Hello,

I suspect that we have the same name and that the IEEE-CS have allocated the same number to us.

My IEEE email didn't reach me for a while in 1999 and they said it had gone to Connecticut by mistake. Then I didn't get renewal paperwork for 2000 and sent membership my address.

I've told them repeatedly that I've never worked in or even been to Connecticut but they don't believe there are two of us and said they have updated my address.

This year I have renewal paperwork sent to me in Cambridge but your contact information is still there as secondary contact. I've just seen this for the first time.

They now tell me I can login and change the secondary information - thus removing you from the record.

Do you exist? :-)

Jean Bacon

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**The secondary contact address is the only relic of the second Jean Bacon, so the only chance of a happy outcome is to find her and present the evidence.**

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To: info@bristol.com  
Subject: contacting Jean Bacon - IEEE-CS #00751826 ?  
Date: Mon, 18 Dec 2000 17:37:38 +0000  
From: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

Hello,  
I suspect that the IEEE Computer Society have given me (Jean Bacon) and a Jean Bacon that works or worked for you the same number.

My renewal papers have her work address as Bristol Technology  
.. CT 08810-5103  
and her phone as extension 182 .....  
with home phone .....  
Job: manager of information systems.

They tell me I can login and change this secondary information.  
That would remove her from the record.

Please could you forward this message to make the contact.

Many thanks  
Jean Bacon

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From: "MikeR" <miker@kenosia.com>  
To: Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk  
Date: Mon, 18 Dec 2000 13:33:26 -0500  
Subject: Re: contacting Jean Bacon - IEEE-CS #00751826 ?

Dr Bacon,

Yes, it appears as if, somehow, they confused you with my old boss, Jean Bacon. She no longer works here at Bristol Technology.

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Best regards,  
Mike Roberge

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**The second Jean Bacon comes to life . . .**

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Subject: contacting Jean Bacon - IEEE-CS #00751826 ?  
To: Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk  
From: Jean.Bacon@avon.com  
Date: Tue, 19 Dec 2000 13:33:55 -0500

Hello Jean Bacon,

We share the same name and now, unfortunately, the same IEEE Computer Society membership number! Please don't delete my records until we get this straightened out at IEEE. I tried to reply to the message you sent to my other account but your return address bounced ([Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk)).

Here are the best addresses for getting hold of me.

Jean.Bacon@avon.com  
Jean.Bacon@snet.net

-- Jean Bacon

3 Hollyberry Lane

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**So everything is now clear . . .**

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To: m.schmidt@ieee.org  
Cc: Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk, gcarter@computer.org  
Subject: Re: 2 Jean Bacon's, one IEEE-CS number 00751826  
Date: Thu, 21 Dec 2000 15:42:37 +0000  
From: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

Dear Marianne,

I sent you a message on Tues 19th, about 6.45 here.  
I hope you received it.  
Some of my email has been bouncing - I may have missed a reply.

Now Jean Bacon of CT has been found I think we can reconstruct what happened.

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**A naive observer might imagine that the problems are over . . .**

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Subject: Re: 2 Jean Bacon's, one IEEE-CS number 00751826  
To: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>  
From: gcarter@computer.org  
Date: Wed, 10 Jan 2001 08:23:24 -0500

Jean,

Sorry, no I haven't heard, and Marianne is now on leave for surgery. I will call and see who can fix this in her absence. Once I find out, I'll forward this correspondence to them, with a cc to you.

Georgann

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Subject: ***Re: Re: 2 Jean Bacon's, one IEEE-CS number 00751826***

To: Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk

From: b.mergner@ieee.org

Date: Mon, 15 Jan 2001 14:47:03 -0500

To: Dr. Jean Bacon

Member # 00751826 Region 8

Dear Dr. Jean Bacon,

I am responding to your recent e-mail inquiry on two Jean Bacon's. I apologize for the delay.

Our records indicate only one membership #00751826 for Jean Bacon. The membership lists the address in the UK. There is no second address on your record.

I have forwarded a renewal invoice to you today. If you have any other questions or if I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Mergner

Member Services Associate

IEEE Member Services

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***At this point one doesn't know whether to laugh or to cry . . .***

Notice that the local Jean has essentially collared the identity of the Jean in CT, and has even been offered the chance to expunge the secondary address data from the membership record. All this despite the ***Subject*** line on the e-mail, which is now being used by Member Services as well as by the local Jean.

The natural outcome of such a history is for one of the two memberships to lapse after a long period of irritation and frustration.

***But the local Jean Bacon is the Editor-in-Chief of Concurrency, and has friends with a lot of influence.***

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Subject: Re: 2 Jean Bacon's, one IEEE-CS number 00751826  
To: *senior-figure* <*senior-figure*@computer.org>  
cc: gcarter@ieee.org, member-services@computer.org,  
    *paramount-chief* <*paramount-chief*@attglobal.net>  
Date: Tue, 16 Jan 2001 09:06:38 +0000  
From: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>

Dear *senior-figure*,

Georgann Carter has been trying to help me with this problem but it seems we're back to square 1 - see first message below. (*dated Mon, 15 Jan 2001, above*)

I established with Marianne Schmidt, [m.schmidt@ieee.org](mailto:m.schmidt@ieee.org), head of member services, that there are two Jean Bacons with the same IEEE-CS number, back in December, by myself contacting the other Jean Bacon after they took no action for a year.

I was finally able to do this when I received my membership renewal for 2001 which had her address in Connecticut in the second part of the form - see messages 2 and 3 below about and from her.

Marrianne apparently went on sick leave without taking any action on this.

I gave up after an interaction like this with membership services a year ago.

I don't know whether to laugh, cry or be angry. It's very boring and is wasting too much time. I've also been trying to upgrade to full IEEE membership but can't do this until the two Jean Bacons get two separate membership IDs.

They filled in her details over mine sometime during 1999.

The renewal for 2000 went to her not me.

They changed the mailing address back to mine in 2000 when I queried renewal.

What should I do to get this sorted out?

Many thanks

Jean

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*It's who you know that counts . . .*

Note the extraordinary speed with which all of the problems get sorted out, with less than three days between the cry for help and a complete resolution.

Subject: Re: 2 Jean Bacon's, one IEEE-CS number 00751826  
To: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>  
Cc: gcarter@computer.org, member-services@ieee.org,  
    *paramount-chief@attglobal.net*  
Date: Thu, 18 Jan 2001 18:38:27 -0800  
From: *senior-figure@computer.org*

Jean,

A quick update. Georgann and I talked and decided that she was the best person to pursue this up one more level on the chain of command. Georgann is now dealing with William Cook, Staff Director, Member Services. Georgann is keeping me informed, and we should have a resolution very shortly.

Thank you for your patience.  
*senior-figure*

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Subject: Re: 2 Jean Bacon's, one IEEE-CS number 00751826  
To: Jean Bacon <Jean.Bacon@cl.cam.ac.uk>  
Cc: *senior-figure@computer.org*  
Date: Fri, 19 Jan 2001 13:43:34 -0500  
From: gcarter@computer.org

Jean, we now have 2 Jean Bacon records with 2 member numbers!

The CT Jean Bacon has been a member for many years. She has been contacted directly by IEEE member services. They updated her record, purging out your information, and paid for her 2001 membership. She keeps her original member #.

Your new ID number is #41352743. The staff in member services set you up as a full member of the IEEE with society membership in the CS effective member year 2000 forward . . .

Jean, I'm so sorry it's taken so long to get this squared away. Thank you for your patience. I will get in touch with our IT&S staff here to take care of your e-mail aliases and any e-account information.

Kind regards,  
Georgann

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