Preface

After retiring I made a web page to help me decide what to do. A year has
passed, so I’ve made another web page – this one – that reviews my first year of
retirement as an aid to thinking about what to do next.

Actually, I’m not yet fully retired – I’m no longer on the faculty of the Computer
Laboratory, but I continue to be employed for 20% of my time “in an unestablished
capacity”. This continues until 30 September, 2017, when I become fully retired.
I keep my office for another year and then the official plan is that I can use SC32,
the office for retired members of the department.

What I did in my first year of retirement

It takes a while to drop off various admin databases, so after I stopped being a
University Teaching Officer (UTO) I still got assigned the occasional academic
task, e.g. reviewing PhD student progress reports and Researchfish grants re-
porting. I also spent some time on activities that will probably never go away,
like reviewing papers and writing reference letters. I continued to participate
in a few other academic activities, such as meetings related to projects that I
take an interest in (e.g. REMS) and helping to plan and attending external
scientific events (e.g. this). My residual academic work only adds up to a
few hours a week, at most. The remaining time, when I’m not in full-blown retirement mode – e.g. reading novels or snoozing on the sofa at home – has been spent somewhat randomly surfing the Internet, reading tutorial papers, auditing MOOCs, listening to podcasts and writing lightweight articles (see below), some with the goal of learning about stuff – computer science and beyond – that over the years I haven’t had time to keep up with.

**Articles written**

The articles I wrote in the last year fell into three categories.

- Tutorials on technical areas I wanted to learn about – the writing of the article being a way to make me think about and understand the material.

- Autobiographical notes, partly written for fun, but also because I’m supposed to write such notes for the records of the Royal Society.

- Miscellaneous reports on non-academic activities that I’ve participated in during the last year – I view this as an experiment in journalistic style writing.

Links to these articles are at: [http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~mjcg/plans/Articles.html](http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~mjcg/plans/Articles.html).

**Thoughts on what to do next**

I’ve enjoyed writing articles and have ideas for more. Reading the background material needed to write expositions of technical stuff seems like a good way to keep my ageing brain healthy . . . and it reminds me of halcyon days as a PhD student in Edinburgh, when I’d sometimes retire to the George Square Library for days on end trying to understand just one paper.

I had thought I’d attend more scientific meetings as I’m fortunate in still having access to grant money to pay the expenses. However, conferences seem less alluring than I expected, perhaps because I no longer need to network for research collaborations and funding. I still hope to go to the occasional one to keep in touch and learn about new things.

I’d like to find some ongoing thread of intellectual activity for the next few years. Writing articles is rewarding, but is a sequence of transient goals. I’ve chatted tentatively with another retired colleague about a possible writing project and maybe something will come of this.

I feel pretty happy at the moment and I want to remain so as I age. To this end I’ve been reflecting on how to transition psychologically from work to retirement.
My article on failing to learn mindfulness is a first step. I haven’t chosen a second step, though possibilities I’m thinking about include: another attempt to get mindfulness training, taking classes in tai chi, reading about existentialism and attending the next Stoicon conference.

I wrote in my retirement-planning web page that retirement feels like being on sabbatical without any worries that time is running out and academic chores will soon be back. It still does! Retirement is wonderful and I recommend it.