

My tuppence worth on Alan Bundy

Bill J. Ellis

I don't have a great memory for details. So I try to write stuff down. But the squiggles sometimes get misplaced. And not everything gets recorded. The point, and there is one, is that a detailed portrait of Alan's influence on my research is beyond my capacity. So, instead, I shall reflect on a single, particularly unforgettable, sentence.

CAIO-2003. Dagstuhl. Thursday. A projector is beaming a chapter in Alan's presentation onto a large screen. Alan is standing to the right of this screen. Wearing a Hawaiian shirt. Holding white chalk. Examining a blackboard, containing fresh depictions of rewrite rules. And proclaiming: "Oh, shit, that's wrong!"

As it transpired, he was correct. Or, rather, he was wrong to say he was wrong. This is incidental. The picture is one of a clever guy, continually questioning, and having a great time of it. This spirit is echoed in Alan's Army of students ; a great group with a fantastic conductor. Certainly, Alan has progressed my studies with nuggets of technical insights. However, it is this infectious enthusiasm for research that has helped keep the task entertaining.