

School of Mathematics and Statistics

Newsletter

January 2021

Congratulations...

- to Ineke De Moortel on being awarded the Royal Astronomical Society 2021 Chapman medal for ‘her seminal work on the nature of waves in the solar atmosphere. Her unique contributions to the topic of coronal waves stand out from the field, resting on her combination of both theoretical and observational expertise.’ For the full citation see https://ras.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-01/De_Moortel_Ineke_Chapman_Medal.pdf
- to Chris Russell who successfully defended his PhD thesis entitled ‘Enumerating 0-simple semigroups’ on 15th January.
- to Haipeng ‘Clarence’ Chen, who after passing his PhD in December was appointed a tenure-track assistant professor at the Shenzhen Technology University. (Shenzhen is the Chinese city immediately adjacent to Hong Kong.) Clarence spent last academic year with our Analysis Group under the China Scholarship Council scheme.
- to Paolo and his wife Yuliya on the birth of their daughter Mara in Dundee on 7th January. Mara’s sisters Masha and Maya and brother Matteo (a lot of Ms here!) were thrilled to meet her and are spending lot of time her with in lockdown. Also, she sleeps a lot at night.



New arrival Mara

Welcome ...

- to Alex Stewart who joined us in early January as Senior Lecturer in Mathematical Biology. Alex took his PhD at University College London, before postdocs at the University of Pennsylvania and UCL, and then an Assistant Professorship at the University of Houston, Texas. Alex uses mathematical models, computation and experiments to study game theory, evolutionary dynamics and social behaviour.
- to Anastasia Frantsuzova who returned to St Andrews this month as Associate Lecturer (Education Focussed) in Statistics. Anastasia took an MSc in Statistics at St Andrews in 2017 before going to Leeds for her PhD on ‘Prior distributions for stochastic matrices’.
- to Murray Bennett and Hazel Wallace who joined our Professional Services staff on 11th January as part of the School’s Teaching Team (which also includes Niki and Lauren). Murray is our new Undergraduate Administrator and Hazel is our new Postgraduate and Undergraduate Administrator.

Farewell ...

- to Paolo Pagano who came to St Andrews in 2011 to work with Duncan Mackay on the numerical modelling of coronal mass ejection and eventually joined Ineke’s group on coronal heating. Paolo has been appointed to a permanent position at the University of Palermo, Italy, which will formally start on 1st February though he will stay in St Andrews and work remotely for the time being.

- to Alexia Yavicoli who has been a postdoc with the Analysis Group for the past 18 months. We wish her all the best as she leaves us at the end of January to work at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

Grants

- Nik Ruskuc has been awarded an EPSRC grant for a project entitled ‘Right Noetherian and coherent monoids’. It will be a joint project between St Andrews and York, and will ensure the continuation of a long-standing fruitful collaboration between Nik and Victoria Gould. Nik’s former PhD student Craig Miller is the named RA in York, and there will be another RA in St Andrews. The total worth of the grant is £750k.
- Jon Fraser has been awarded a Royal Society of Edinburgh Early Career (!) Sabbatical Grant for £63k for a project ‘Fractal dimension in nonlinear nonconformal settings’.

Virtual Activities

- On 22nd December, Rosemary Bailey spoke online at the *Ural Seminar on Group Theory and Combinatorics* at the Ural Federal University in Yekaterinburg on ‘Some applications of finite group theory in the design of experiments’.
- Laura Johnson participated in the *Postgraduate Group Theory Conference 2020*, hosted online by the University of Southampton, from 10-15th January 2021(!). She gave a talk on the first day on ‘Principal, secondary and trivial theta-orbits in Latin squares’.
- Jon Fraser gave a talk ‘A new perspective on the Sullivan dictionary via the Assouad dimension and spectrum’ on 17th December, at the online *Séminaire Cristolien d’Analyse Multifractale* of the Laboratoire d’Analyse et de Mathématiques Appliquées, CNRS, Paris.
- Deborah Kent was one of the organisers of the AMS Special Session on History of Mathematics at the *Joint Mathematical Meeting* of the American Mathematical Society and the Mathematical Association of America from 6-9th January.

Other News

- Eric Lander, who was one of Peter Cameron’s earliest research students, has been appointed to Joe Biden’s Cabinet as Science Adviser and head of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Eric completed his PhD on ‘Topics in algebraic coding theory’ under Peter’s supervision in Oxford in 1981 before taking up positions at Harvard and then MIT. His interests moved from mathematics to molecular biology and genomics for which he won many prestigious awards including a MacArthur Fellowship and Breakthrough Prize. See <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2021/01/biden-appoints-geneticist-eric-lander-science-advisor>
- Work by Paolo Pagano, Duncan Mackay and Stephanie Yardley on ‘Predicting space weather and eruptions from the sun’ is a featured impact case study in a booklet *From Knowledge to Impact: STFC Impact Acceleration Account*.

Next Issue

- The next edition of the School Newsletter will be circulated in February. Items for inclusion may be sent to maths-news@st-andrews.ac.uk at any time but a reminder will be sent out a week before the deadline.