

School of Mathematics and Statistics

Newsletter

October 2020

Congratulations...

- Congratulations to Alan Hood on winning the Royal Society of Edinburgh Lord Kelvin Medal for his internationally commended work in theoretical and computational solar physics which has helped to enhance understanding of the solar atmosphere. Alan's award of what is the Senior RSE prize for Physical, Engineering and Informatics Sciences was officially announced today.
- to our undergraduate Molly Chung, who has just been announced as runner up in the British Society for the History of Mathematics (BSHM) Undergraduate Essay Prize for her essay 'The effects of rivalry on mathematical development in Europe'.

Farewell ...

- to Solar and Magnetospheric Theory Group postdoc Petros Syntelis. Petros came to the School in 2016 after completing his PhD at the University of Athens. He has now started a training programme in artificial intelligence in London.
- to long-time cleaner Pam Edie at the Observatory, who retired at the end of September – we were very sorry that we were unable to say goodbye in person. Pam was very much part of the CREEM team and we look forward to giving her a proper farewell when we are again able to meet in person for CREEM cake and coffee.

Welcome ...

- to Rod Stoddart who replaces Pam Edie as a cleaner at the Observatory. Rod is a member of the Trossachs Search and Rescue Team, and was awarded an MBE in 2009, see www.pressreader.com/uk/the-courier-advertiser-fife-edition/20200311/282849373044410
- to Theoni Photopoulou, who returns to CREEM having been appointed to a 3.75 year postdoctoral position working with Len Thomas as well as Catriona Harris and Peter Tyack in Biology, on a US Navy funded project looking at the population consequences of multiple human stressors on marine mammals.
- once again to Feyisayo 'Shayo' Olukoya who has been appointed an Associate Lecturer (Education Focussed) until June 2021. Shayo completed his PhD with us in May 2018 and then held an LMS Early Career Fellowship.

Virtual Activities

- Peter Cameron gave the inaugural lecture in the virtual version of the *Bristol Algebra Colloquium*. He spoke on 'The geometry of diagonal groups', and was introduced by former St Andrews undergraduate Scott Harper.
- Mike Todd chaired a talk by Tushar Das at the *Resistência Dinâmica Seminar* in Rio. Tushar was an undergraduate at St Andrews from 2002-05 (hence the chairing choice) before heading to the US where he's now at Wisconsin La Crosse. His talk 'Is your favorite dynamically defined measure strongly extremal?' was an interesting tour of recent results at the intersections of Diophantine approximation, geometric measure theory and dynamical systems.

- Kenneth Falconer gave an online Mathematics Colloquium at the Indian Institute of Technology, Tirupati, India on 6th October.
- Thomas Neukirch gave an invited talk entitled ‘Modelling magnetic fields in the solar corona using magnetohydrostatic equilibria’ in the splinter session on *Cosmic Magnetic Fields* of the 2020 *Annual Meeting of the German Astronomical Society* (Astronomische Gesellschaft or AG). Jack Reid contributed a talk entitled ‘MHD avalanches: coronal heating in braided fields’ in the splinter session *From bright points to coronal mass ejections: the Sun on its various scales*. The meeting was held completely online via Zoom (with the Stack app also being used for informal chats and discussions) and attendance was free.
- Peter Jupp had looked forward to attending the conference in memory of Zdzisław Denkowski in Krakow in mid-October, particularly as he had found a minor connection between theoretical statistics and his friend’s work on Wirtinger inequalities. The conference has been postponed *sine die* (which may give Peter time to obtain a new passport).

Other News

- David Borchers has been awarded an EPSRC IAA grant of £26,000 to develop and deliver online and in-person training for surveying vocalising terrestrial species like gibbons using acoustic spatial capture-recapture methods. Project collaborators include Dr Ben Stevenson, former PhD student at St Andrews and now a lecturer at the University of Auckland, four NGOs conducting gibbon surveys in SE Asia, and Dr Warren Brockleman at Mahidol University in Thailand.
- Having successfully defended their PhD theses over summer, Ashley Clayton and Craig Miller have been offered postdoc positions at the University of Lisbon. There they will join the research group led by Gracinda Gomes, whom some may remember as a PhD student of John Howie in the 1980s.

Forthcoming Events

- A reminder of the forthcoming *Black Heroes of Mathematics Conference*, 26-27th October for which Isobel Falconer is representing the British Society for the History of BSHM on the organising committee. For details and registration see www.kcl.ac.uk/events/black-heroes-of-mathematics-conference-2020-1

Nominees Sought

- The School would like to nominate at least one staff member to participate in the 2021-22 Aurora leadership development initiative for women www.advance-he.ac.uk/programmes-events/aurora Professional services and academic/research staff at Grade 6, 7 or 8 are eligible. This program includes six one-day workshops along with self-directed learning and a mentoring partnership. If you have any questions or would like to speak with previous participants, contact Karen McGregor kfm3@st-andrews.ac.uk To register interest in being nominated by the School, please discuss this with your line manager and contact Aidan Naughton an18@st-andrews.ac.uk Nominations will be made to the central Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team in Spring/Summer 2021. For further information see www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/sex_gender/aurora/

Next Issue

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