

MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS

NEWSLETTER

July/August 2000

CONGRATULATIONS

- to Duncan Mackay and Gordon Petrie who have both gained positions on the Solar Rolling Grant and will start in October.
 - to Keith Bennett on his appointment as Cluster Administrator and on his new hair cut!
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WELCOME

- to Jack Ireland who has come back from Goddard Space Flight Centre to pester various members of the Solar Group for a week.
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NEWS

- Allan Gordon organised a session and presented a talk at the 7th Conference of the International Federation of Classification Societies, held in Namur from 11 - 14 July. He was also a co-organiser of, and lecturer at, a satellite meeting on Consensus Methods held on Monday 10th. It rained almost all the time in Namur, and his appreciation of foreigners' sense of humour was severely tested when he was the recipient of numerous inquiries about how he was enjoying the Scottish weather.
- Peter Jupp attended the conference on Statistics of Directions, Shapes and Images, which was held in Leeds from the 3rd to the 5th of July. He gave an invited talk on *Modified score tests in directional statistics*.
- From 16-22 July, Daniel Brown attended the COSPAR meeting in Warsaw, Poland. He gave a talk entitled "Magnetic structure and reconnection of

X-ray bright points in the solar corona”, on which Clare Parnell and Eric Priest were co-authors. He also attended the opening ceremony where the planets in the solar system were represented through the medium of dance (and has the video if anyone is interested in seeing it) !!!

- Zaharenia Romeou attended the NATO Advanced Study on Space Storms and Space Weather Hazards held on Crete, Greece, on 19-29 June. There she presented a poster, by herself and Thomas Neukirch, entitled “On the application of numerical continuation methods to the calculation of magnetostatic equilibria”.
- George Phillips attended the Ninth International Conference on Fibonacci Numbers and their Applications, held in Luxembourg 17 -22 July 2000. Members of the Conference still talk kindly about the Fifth Conference, which we hosted in St Andrews in 1992. Sadly, this year the Conference took place for the first time without the lively presence of the wonderful Herta Freitag (1908-2000). George gave an address in honour of Herta, who had attended and presented at least one paper at every one of the previous eight conferences. It is amazing to realise that Herta was already 75 at the time of the first Fibonacci Conference in 1984. (See the History of Mathematics web-site for a biography of Herta Freitag.) George also gave a paper on joint work with our former student Halil Oru. To George and Rona’s great delight, in the week before the Conference, Halil and our former student Cleonice Bracciali met up with them in Strasbourg - a most happy reunion.
- Alex Craik attended a IUTAM Symposium on Free-surface Flows held at the University of Birmingham during 10-14 July. There, he gave a paper entitled “Instability of two-dimensional standing Faraday waves” and chaired a session.

COMPETITION

- From Lars Olsen:

Following up on A. Craik’s problem in the last issue of the Newsletter, here is another fun maths problem that might interest the readers (I’m willing to give a small prize for the best solution (provided the best solution has a reasonable high standard)).

Show that the following limit exists and find it,

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{\tan(\sin x) - \sin(\tan x)}{\arctan(\arcsin x) - \arcsin(\arctan x)}$$

The problem comes from a maths competition for high-school students in Texas.

NEXT ISSUE

- Please send any material for the next newsletter to mcsnews@mcs by 12pm Thursday 31st August.