

# MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS

# NEWSLETTER

June 2002

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## CONGRATULATIONS

- to Eric Priest who has been made a Fellow of the Royal Society. The Royal Society says, “Professor Priest is distinguished for his contributions to basic magnetohydrodynamics and its applications to solar physics. Together with colleagues, he has unified and generalised existing two-dimensional models of magnetic reconnection, and is now a leader in the development of more realistic three-dimensional models. He is responsible for major advances in our understanding of the Solar Corona, whose structure is dominated by magnetic fields.”
- to Zaharenia Romeou on the successful defence of her Ph.D. thesis “On the Application of Numerical Continuation Methods to Two- and Three-dimensional Solar and Astrophysical Problems”. Zaharenia has now moved to Preston where she has a post-doc position with Barbara Bromage at the Centre for Astrophysics of the University of Central Lancashire.
- to Paolo Giuliani (at the moment at the Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel) for being awarded a Marie-Curie-Fellowship for 2 years. Paolo will be working in the Solar Theory Group with Thomas Neukirch on “Theory of Particle Acceleration in Solar Flares”.

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## FAREWELL

- to Thomas Wiegelmann who has left to take up his new position with the STEREO team in Katlenburg-Lindau, Germany. Thomas was a member of the Solar Group for 2 years on an EU Marie-Curie-Fellowship.

## NEWS

- Between 24 April-9 May, Louise Burt and Sharon Hedley attended the 54th meeting of the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission, in the traditional whaling city of Shimonoseki, Japan. Louise presented three papers to the In-Depth Assessment subcommittee; two on abundance estimates of Southern Hemisphere minke whales, and one (with David Borchers) on improved methodology for estimating school size. Minke whales are a hot topic at the moment, with the most recent circumpolar Antarctic estimate being less than half of that from about 11 years ago. This, together with other issues, and the fact that the meeting was being held in Japan, meant that there was a great deal of media interest in the meeting, and Louise and Sharon found themselves photographed on the front page of the Yamaguchi Times (although what the caption said is anyone's guess!) Sharon was also invited out by a local TV company to dine at a whale-meat restaurant with two Norwegians and a Canadian scientist. Delights included minke tongue, minke testicles, minke bowels and minke heart - Sharon has never been so thankful to be vegetarian...
- Peter Jupp attended the *Journées de Statistique* of the *Société Française de Statistique* held in Brussels and Louvain-la-Neuve during 13-17 May. He spoke on *Statistiques directionnelles des orbites des comètes et des axes de rotation des étoiles binaires* and *Tests scores modifiés en statistiques directionnelles*. Other participants with a St Andrews connection were Gentiane Haesbroeck (Liège) and Philippe Lambert (Louvain-la-Neuve), who were exchange students here in the early 1990's.
- The 'History of Mathematics Afternoon' on Friday 31 May 2002 was a great success. The meeting was held in association with the British Society for the History of Mathematics and included talks from Alex Craik (Mathematics & Statistics, St Andrews) on "The logarithmic tables of Edward Sang and his daughters", George Molland (History, Aberdeen) on "Greek mathematics; medieval mathematics; early modern mathematics. Hiatus?", Ian Tweddle (Mathematics, Strathclyde) on "James Stirling on the Stirling Numbers" and Peter Clark (Logic & Metaphysics, St Andrews), "What happened and why did it happen to the 'Higher Functional Calculus' ? ".

The meeting was attended (all or part) by 38 participants. The majority were St Andrews University staff and postgrads from a variety of depart-

ments; plus 2 from Abertay, 2 (in addition to Ian Tweddle) from Strathclyde and 1 from Dundee universities; 1 St Andrews schoolteacher, and a BSHM member and husband who had driven from distant Peebles. Several participants commented on the success of the meeting – the talks, diverse in nature, were each of interest to at least some of the audience, and the discussions were lively. Abstracts of each talk will be available later. The total cost of the meeting to the School is expected to be around 120 pounds, including travel expenses for two speakers and dinner for all four. Alex Craik thanked the School for its support, and encouraged those present to consider joining BSHM: he still has some membership leaflets if anyone else wants one.

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## **NEXT ISSUE**

- Please send any material for the next newsletter to [mcsnews@mcs](mailto:mcsnews@mcs) by 12pm Thursday 4th July.