

School of Mathematics and Statistics Newsletter

March 2023

Congratulations to ...

- Antonia Wilmot-Smith on her appointment as our new Head of School, for four years from 1st August. We wish her every success in the post and look forward to the School flourishing under her leadership.
- István Kolossváry, who was awarded a prestigious *Marie Curie Fellowship* from the European Commission. István will hold this Fellowship at the Alfréd Rényi Institute of Mathematics in Budapest after completing his post here in the Analysis Group.

Welcome to ...

- Shuqin Zhang, who will arrive in the UK on 19th March to work with Lars Olsen in the Analysis Group for a year on a CSC (China Scholarship Council) scholarship as part of her PhD.

Farewell to ...

- Rachel Sippy, who joined us in January 2022 and is returning to a research position in Cambridge, although she will retain some contact with us for a while.
- Saul Freedman, who is leaving St Andrews in March when his postdoc position in the Algebra group ends.
- Amlan Banaji, who has recently submitted his PhD thesis and has taken up a postdoc position at Loughborough University.
- Shahieda Erkamp, who joined our Teaching Support Team in April 2022 to cover maternity leave. Shahieda will not be far away as she is moving to the School of Biology as a Teaching Administrator

Visitors

- Dr Beth Gardner is a St Andrews Global Fellow from the University of Washington. She is visiting CREEM for two weeks at the start of March and another two weeks at the end of May. She will meet PhD students, give a guest lecture and a research seminar, and will discuss future collaborations with CREEM staff.
- Rogério Monteiro de Siqueira from Sao Paulo is with us for a month as a Visiting Fellow in History of Mathematics. During his visit he has given talks in Oxford, Edinburgh, and to the C19C Centre at St Andrews. He is researching a book on Positivism and working on a joint project with Deborah Kent on the Pernambuco branch of the Liverpool Astronomical Society.
- Nicolas Michel (Wuppertal) visited the History of Mathematics group for five days, in particular to work with David Waszeck and to give a talk.

Conferences, Talks and Visits

- Sophie Huczynska and Laura Johnson are enjoying a productive visit to the University of Richmond, Virginia, USA, working with Jim Davis and John Polhill. One highlight has been Laura's first-ever use of a blackboard and chalk to do mathematics! They are also working in a room which has the longest continuous stretch of whiteboard they have ever seen.



The Northern Lights from Svalbard

- Cosima Breu attended the *RoCS/MUSE/IRIS (Rosseland Centre for Solar Physics / Multi-Slit Solar Explorer / Interface Region Imaging Spectrograph) Workshop* from 27th February-2nd March, held in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway. She gave a talk with the title ‘Toward resolving nonthermal motions in the solar corona’. She had splendid views of the Northern Lights and managed to not be eaten by a polar bear. She also gave an outreach talk at *St Andrews Interdisciplinary Science Conference SISCO* on 19th February: ‘A hot mess: How is the solar corona heated?’.
- Peter Cameron spoke at an online *International Conference on Contemporary Research in Mathematics* in Coimbatore, India, on 27th February. His topic was ‘The ADE affair’.
- Mike Todd visited Loughborough, giving a talk on ‘Almost Anosov flows’ on 8th March in the *Dynamical Systems Seminar*, as well as acting as external examiner on a PhD thesis.
- On 13th March, Amlan Banaji gave a talk at the University of Edinburgh *Analysis Seminar* entitled ‘Dimensions of infinitely generated self-conformal sets’, and he also discussed maths with Jonathan Hickman, a former St Andrews postdoc.
- Collin Bleak, Tom Elsdon and Valentin Popov accompanied 28 undergraduates to the Burn from 8-10th March. The students gave some excellent talks, and more relaxing activities included hillwalking and the staff defeating the students at Trivial Pursuit.
- Collin Bleak travelled to Japan in February to attend the RIMS (Research Institute for Mathematical Sciences) *Symposium 2023* in Kyoto, where he gave a talk ‘Embeddings into Finitely Presented Simple Groups’. Whilst in Japan he also spoke at the University of Hyogo’s *Algebra Seminar* on ‘ $3/2$ -generation for Thompson-esque groups’. The trip was wonderful and he is very grateful to his host ‘Kazu’ Tsunekazu Nishinaka for the invitation. Members of the School may remember Kazu from his visit for the academic year 2017-2018.
- In mid-February, Ben Swallow spent three days at the University of Oxford *Mathematics Institute and Big Data Institute*, during which he gave a presentation ‘Data-driven methods for nowcasting and tracking of epidemics’.
- On 10th March, Alison Johnston gave a talk at the University of Oxford.
- Five members or former members of the School attended the British Society for the History of Mathematics *Research in Progress* meeting in Oxford on 25th February. Isobel Falconer gave the keynote address on ‘The development of curve plotting: The case of J.D. Forbes’. Emma Baxter (undergraduate) spoke on ‘Soviet mathematics textbooks as a reflection of Stalinist culture’, Megan Briers (now doing an MPhil at Cambridge) talked about ‘The value

of women as observers in the 1870 eclipse expedition', and Kate Hindle (PhD student) spoke on 'Ancient Greek impact on D'Arcy Thompson's mathematics'.

- Deborah Kent made a trip South and, as well as attending the *Research in Progress* meeting above, went to the *Oxford Forum for the History of Mathematics*, made research visits to the Bodleian and the Royal Society, met with collaborators at the Science Museum, and attended to some Librarian matters at the London Mathematical Society.
- Alex Stewart participated in an (online) meeting hosted by the *Institute for Humane Studies* on 'Polarization, trust and political violence'. Alex is also participating in the *Royal Society Westminster Placement Scheme* which involves, among other activities, spending a week in London at the Royal Society and at Westminster attending workshops on policymaking and shadowing the MP for North East Fife, Wendy Chamberlain.
- On 9th March, Kenneth Falconer went to Buckingham Palace with a delegation from the University to present a Loyal Address to His Majesty the King on the occasion of his Accession to the Throne. St Andrews was one of 27 'Privileged Bodies' presenting such addresses, along with the other ancient universities, the churches, and other organisations such as the Bank of England. (Historically it was worth a new monarch ensuring allegiance from such influential bodies!) The formal ceremony was followed by a reception in the Palace Picture Gallery where the King spoke with the St Andrews group. Afterwards, the delegation went for tea at the House of Lords, hosted by the Chancellor.

Other News

- Rosemary Bailey was featured in an article 'Celebrating women in statistics and data science' in AMSTATNEWS (the magazine of the American Statistical Association) to mark Women's History Month, see <https://magazine.amstat.org/blog/2023/03/01/whm2023/>

Next Issue

- The next edition of the School Newsletter will be circulated in April. Items 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.