School of Mathematics and Statistics Newsletter

May 2021

Congratulations …

• to Helen Burgess and her partner Stephen who welcomed a daughter Miriam, born on 6th May weighing 8lb7oz. Mum and baby are well and happy to be home.

• to Louis Theran who, along with Zvi Rosen and Jessica Sidman, won the *2021 Merten Hasse Award* for expository writing with their paper 'Algebraic matroids in action', American Mathematical Monthly, **127**(3) (2020), 199-216. The award is made by the Mathematical Association of America for an expository article published in one of their publications. The citation states 'This compelling and engaging work allows any interested reader to get a taste of matroids, an important topic which deserves to be better understood by the general mathematical public'.

• to Tom Coleman for winning the *University Teaching Excellence Award*.

• to the Pure Mathematics Division team of Louis Theran, Kenneth Falconer and (mainly) Tom Coleman on once again winning the coveted Alpha Trophy in the Annual Staff-Student Quiz held on 15th April. Many thanks to the students who organised this, raising £260 for FRASAC (Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre).

Miriam

The Alpha Trophy

Farewell …

• to Tricia Heggie and Phil LeFeuvre, both of whom have been Computer Officers in the School for many years and who have done a great deal for the School. Tricia obtained her PhD in St Andrews in computational group theory in 1990 and has been with us virtually ever since. Phil has been a key member of CREEM, supporting and helping with many and various computing issues for two decades. We wish them both the very best with their future endeavours.

Virtual Activities

• Alex Stewart gave the *Political Economy Seminar* at the Hertie School in Berlin on 29th April via Zoom. The talk was entitled: 'Inequality, identity and partisanship: How redistribution can stem the tide of mass polarization'.

• Richard Glennie organised a one-day online *Careers Conference* for MSc and PhD students in statistics: the idea was to give students a taste of different statistical careers. The speakers gave really informative and down-to-earth talks, making the organiser's job laughably easy. All the talks are uploaded online for anyone to watch: https://t.co/3fg4h3NRQ5?amp=1.

- On 12th May, Peter Cameron gave the opening talk on the first day of the *London Combinatorics Colloquia* at Queen Mary University of London and the London School of Economics. He spoke on 'Graphs defined on groups'.

- Saul Freedman gave a talk on 'Non-commuting, non-generating graphs and intersection graphs of groups' on 28th April, as part of the online *Research Discussion on Graphs and Groups* seminar series hosted by Cochin University of Science and Technology, India.

- On 28th April, Colva Roney-Dougal gave the *Winsten Lecture* at the University of Essex. This is part of the *Winsten Day*, an annual event organised by the University of Essex for local sixth form mathematics students. The day is named in honour of Professor Christopher Winsten, an internationally respected probability theorist and former lecturer at Essex.

- Natalia Jurga gave a talk on 'Random matrix products and self-projective sets' at the *Webiner on Diophantine Approximation and Homogeneous Dynamics* on 21st April.

- Yoav Len organized a virtual workshop *Algebraic Geometry and Polyhedra* at ICERM (Institute for Computational and Experimental Research in Mathematics) at Brown University from 12-16th April. The workshop featured talks on tropical geometry, matroids, Schubert calculus, and mirror symmetry, as well as a virtual poster session.

- On 30th April, Isobel Falconer gave a talk at the *Marriage, Couples, and the Making of Mathematical Careers* online conference organised by the British Society for the History of Maths. Her talk 'Astronomy as a family enterprise in early modern Europe' investigated the possibilities that marriage to a male astronomer provided for women seeking mathematical careers between 1600 and 1800. She also gave a seminar 'in' Aberdeen on 12th May on 'Colin Maclaurin and the *Good-Seeking Forces of Minds*', based on work that she and David Horowitz, whom some will have met as a research visitor, have been pursuing. The seminar drew a wide external audience and a lively post-talk discussion.

- Mike Todd was supposed to have spent two weeks at the Bernoulli Centre at EPFL in Lausanne as part of the programme *Dynamics, Transfer Operators, and Spectra* which would have provided some good opportunities for collaboration and/or looking at a big lake, unfortunately most of this programme had to be cancelled.

Other News

- A reminder to members of the School of the new professional service arrangements and email addresses.

Mathematics & Statistics Professional Services Support			
Postgraduate Student Support	maths-pg-admin@st-andrews.ac.uk	-	*Niki Stalker* *Hazel Wallace*
Research Support	maths-research-admin@st-andrews.ac.uk	-	*Fiona MacFarlane* *Rhona Rodger*
School Support	maths-school-support@st-andrews.ac.uk	-	*Rachel Smith* *Valerie Sturrock*
Technical Support	maths-tech-support@st-andrews.ac.uk	-	*Steve Brooks* *Rachel Smith* *Valerie Sturrock*
Undergraduate Teaching Support	maths-teaching-admin@st-andrews.ac.uk	-	*Murray Bennett* *Lauren Gatherum* *Niki Stalker* *Hazel Wallace*

- Carl Donovan, Andy Lynch, Giorgos Minos, Michail Papathomas, Valentin Popov and Hannah Worthington are part of a team that recently obtained a £20,000 grant, between the Schools of Medicine, Computer Science, Mathematics and Statistics and the University of Bonn, on new computational methods to dissect complex disorders.

Next Issue

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