

## EDITORIAL

It is with great sadness that I mark the very recent and untimely death of Richard Timoney, a dear friend and a mainstay of the Irish mathematical community; bitter news to hear, and bitter tears to shed. A meeting to mark his sixty-fifth birthday was already arranged, to take place at TCD in May, and there will be other tributes, but for now I must note his long and efficient service as curator of the Society's website, which carries the digital version of the Bulletin. With typical thoroughness, and despite his illness, Richard very recently completed an obituary of his colleague Tim Murphy, which appears in this Bulletin, and arranged the continued care of the website (— Michael Mackey is now looking after this).

I have previously reported on the difficulties and expense involved in printing the Bulletin. The paper edition of Bulletin 81 was printed at UCD, thanks to arrangements made by Thomas Unger. At the same time, the IMS Committee was working on a plan for the future. A survey of the membership was conducted, and the results informed the deliberations of the Committee, which decided in December to cease the publication of a paper edition, with immediate effect. Accordingly, this issue, Bulletin 82, is published only on the Society's website. I would like to pay tribute particularly to Gordon Lessells of UL, who for many years has looked after the dissemination of the printed Bulletin to members and copyright libraries, and to Tony Waldron of MU, who looks after the exchanges. At one stage we had about 45 incoming exchange journals, and these were a valuable national resource, particularly in pre-internet times. The present number has dropped to 32, as exchange partners "went digital". It remains to be seen how this will develop.

To facilitate members who might wish to print the whole issue, the website will carry a pdf file of the whole Bulletin 82, in addition to the usual pdf files of the individual articles. As a further convenience (which may suit some Departments and Libraries), a printed and bound copy of this Bulletin may be ordered online on a print-on-demand basis<sup>1</sup>. Beginning with Bulletin 83, it is intended that

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<sup>1</sup>Go to [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) and search for *Irish Mathematical Society Bulletin* or use <https://tinyurl.com/y8kgnqme>.

the page layout will be changed, reducing the page count without diminishing the content. It was not feasible to execute this change for Bulletin 82, since the content has been prepared for the current layout.

The November 2018 issue of the AMS Notices (volume 65, number 10) is largely devoted to the late Maryam Mirzakhani, and has accounts of her work by Ursula Hamenstädt, Scott Wolpert, Alex Wright and Anton Zorich. Given the lamentable state of university maths education in Ireland, it would not be unreasonable to advise a bright and ambitious undergraduate to master whatever mathematics is on offer in her school, and to think about open questions as they arise (especially the simple ones), but to concentrate her efforts on learning enough to understand what Hamenstädt has to say, and follow the path into Mathematics that Mirzakhani blazed. When asked how he knew so much, Abel is reported to have replied that he only read the masters. It remains true that the way to a commanding view of the frontiers of our ignorance is to follow the masters of our art. We live in a golden age of mathematics. More than half the research mathematicians who have ever practiced are alive today, and great progress is being made. However, viewed from the highest level, most of the workers are apprentices and journeymen. There are relatively few masters, and just a few dozen grand masters, none in Ireland. You have to find these people, understand their work, and take it from there.

Of course, members may disagree with this view, and sympathize more with that expressed by Beauzamy, in his article *Real Life Mathematics* in BIMS 48 (2002) 43-6: “Most current mathematical research, since the 60s, is devoted to fancy situations: it brings solutions which nobody understands to questions nobody asked.”

Speaking of questions people ask, it seems a little odd that the global warming debate is regarded as over, despite the fact that there appears to be much analysis to be done. The ranks of the climate change deniers may well include many fools, but Ray Bates is a sober and competent Irish meteorologist, and deserves to be heard when he voices criticism of the scientific methodology behind the recent IPCC report.

Ben McKay at UCC passed on a request from the the International Mathematical Union that we bring the Heidelberg Laureate Forums to the attention of members. “At HLF all winners of the

Fields Medal, the Abel Prize, the ACM A.M. Turing Award, the Nevanlinna Prize, and the ACM Prize in Computing are invited to attend. In addition, young and talented computer scientists and mathematicians are invited to apply for participation. The previous HLFs have been an exceptional success. The HLF serves as a great platform for interaction between the masters in the fields of mathematics and computer science and young talents.”

The next forum will take place in Heidelberg during September 22-27, 2019. See <http://www.heidelberg-laureate-forum.org>. Applications for participation at the 7th HLF are open in three categories: Undergraduates, PhD Candidates, and PostDocs. In Ireland the RIA and the IMS can nominate young researchers. The deadline for application is February 15, 2019.

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### Links for Postgraduate Study

The following are the links provided by Irish Schools for prospective research students in Mathematics:

DCU: <mailto://maths@dcu.ie>

DIT: <mailto://chris.hills@dit.ie>

NUIG: <mailto://james.cruickshank@nuigalway.ie>

MU: <mailto://mathsstatspg@mu.ie>

QUB: [http://www.qub.ac.uk/puremaths/Funded\\_PG\\_2016.html](http://www.qub.ac.uk/puremaths/Funded_PG_2016.html)

TCD: <http://www.maths.tcd.ie/postgraduate/>

UCC: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/matsci/postgraduate/>

UCD: <mailto://nuria.garcia@ucd.ie>

UL: <mailto://sarah.mitchell@ul.ie>

UU: <http://www.compeng.ulster.ac.uk/rgs/>

The remaining schools with Ph.D. programmes in Mathematics are invited to send their preferred link to the editor. All links are live, and hence may be accessed by a click, when read in a suitable pdf reader.

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