

Prof. Ian Strachan
President
Edinburgh Mathematical Society

School of Mathematics and Statistics
University of Glasgow
Glasgow G12 8SQ Scotland
Tel.: +44 (0) 141 330 2479
E-mail: ian.strachan@glasgow.ac.uk
Web: www.ems.ac.uk

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Dear Members,

I recall, when I first talked to Tony Carbery about becoming the next EMS President, him mentioning the Presidential Address, but that this was something not to worry about. I now find myself with a week to go until my address with a set of blank beamer slides in front of me and the weight of precedence on my shoulders. The Society's first address was given by Prof Chrystal and was on the "Present Fields of Mathematical Research". I am finding it hard even to describe my own research, let alone all the fields that constitute our subject. The two years one spends as President go by extremely quickly and it is all too easy to forget what has happened and how it has all happened.

Central to our society are the regular meetings - I really would like to encourage more people to attend these. The meeting where Prof. Vaughan Jones (Fields Medal, 1990) talked was particularly well attended, in part due to the number of final year undergraduate students who attended. Many of these had just learnt about the Jones polynomial, and it is rare for undergraduate students to see the person responsible for the mathematics that appears in their courses.

Until I become President I did not realize quite how fundamental our Proceedings, PEMS, is to the Society. The profits we make from this, basically, fund the majority of our activities: all of the research grants, all of the grants to Schools and much of everything else we do. I would like to thank, as he steps down, Sandy Davie for all the work he has done as Deputy Convener of the PEMS Editorial Board, and I would like to welcome his successor, Martyn Quick, into his new role. A large "thank you" also goes to Stephen Theriault, as Convener, and all of the Subject Editors for the work they do for PEMS: without this the Society would be much diminished.

Societies do not run themselves – behind the scenes are many individuals who give up their time to serve the Society and its aims. Jozsef Farkas is stepping down as General Secretary, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all the work he has done over the last four years. And also to welcome Jess Enright who will be taking up the reins – welcome to your new role!

The Society also continues to evolve. We have, for many years, held meetings at ICMS and this link has further developed over the last few years. As well as providing secretarial support, they have recently taken on the role in processing grants and expenses, and other activities will be transferred to them over the course of the next year. This means we will be saying a fond farewell to Frances Reid (from the School of Mathematics, Edinburgh University) and we thank her for all the tireless work she has done for the Society over many years – this has been much

appreciated by all. I should point out that ICMS do not offer their services for free, but the GC felt that it was appropriate to use such an organization given its larger aims of supporting the mathematical sciences – aims very much in tune with our own.

Lobbying activities continue - the difference in funding rates (1.2 in Scotland and 1.6 in rUK) continues to be a source of considerable irritation. As I wrote in various e-mails over the summer, the Scottish Funding Council are looking again at these figures and as well as my letter, Prof. Sir Adrian Smith, the chair of the UK's Council for the Mathematical Sciences has written, lending the support of all of the UK's mathematical sciences learned societies. A meeting with the SFC has been floated though I have not yet heard anything concrete. But we can all do more. I was very much taken by a remark made by Carol Monaghan MP whom I met (together with my colleague Tara Brendle) earlier in the year. At the end of a very interesting hour long conversation which covered many topics, she asked why it had taken us two years to make an appointment to see her! In Scotland we have MPs, MSPs, MEPs: why not contact your own directly with your concerns over the funding of the mathematical sciences in Scotland?

We attended, for the first time, the annual "Science and the Parliament" event last year – its theme being Education. This year the event (on Nov. 15th) will have the theme "Science, Innovation and the Economy". Do come alone – the event will be held at Dynamic Earth just next door to the Holyrood Parliament.

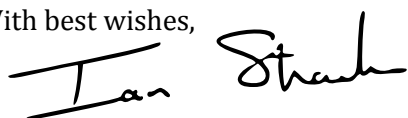
Maintaining our place, post Brexit, within the European mathematical scene should be of importance to us all. I gave a presentation at the annual Meeting of Presidents of European Mathematical Societies which held in Lisbon this year. I tried to convey the pressures on a small society within the dual Scottish/UK funding systems. There was much talk about the repercussions of Brexit! But our links can, and must, continue to be developed whatever the political landscape. Last week we held a joint meeting with the Societat Catalana de Matematiques, reciprocating the event which was held in Barcelona two years ago. Over one hundred people attended the conference, held over three days at the ICMS, and my congratulations and thanks go to the organisers for all their hard work that made the meeting such a success. There was much talk over dinner about what was then their forthcoming referendum, and we wish them well as they face new challenges.

We celebrated the first "Maths Week Scotland" last month, and seeing the breadth of events across Scotland and the enthusiasm with which they were given and received was very gratifying. The EMS sponsored the lecture, held at the ICMS, of Elisabetta Strickland (University of Rome "Tor Vergata") on "Mary Somerville and the Secrets of the Universe" as part of this week. Mary Somerville has appeared, today, on the Royal Bank of Scotland's new £10 note. Maths Week Scotland will be a regular event, so one to look out for and support in future years.

As I look forward, in addition to our series of regular meetings, we will be supporting both the BAMC and BMC meetings that will be taking place in St Andrews in, respectively, March and June 2018.

In ending, I can only offer Ineke the best of luck and my personal support as she becomes our 123rd President. It is a unique job and one I have most thoroughly enjoyed doing - I hope you enjoy it as much as I have done!

With best wishes,



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