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Dear Members,

I write this newsletter as a storm builds outside and there are lots of worrying things going on in the outside world. In the world of academia we seem to have settled slightly as we have come through covid, although there are still challenges, not least of which seems to be a universal increase in workload and the ongoing backdrop of industrial action as we fight for the future of the sector. We are also back on the REF cycle (if we ever got off!). This time I am really excited about the opportunities that REF offers to ensure we have a healthy research culture and recognize a wider range of activities and achievements. That all seems really positive and on that front one of the most positive things I have done as president this year is to get more involved with the Heads of Departments of Mathematical Sciences (HoDoMs). I have been hugely impressed with the collegiality and support between institutions, and that has really reinforced for me what a great community we have within the mathematical sciences. I am not sure all other subjects are so lucky and the ability to think of us as a whole community and ignore the competition between institutions that academia has traditionally encouraged is really refreshing.

Speaking of which, the National Academy for Mathematical Sciences (AcadMathSci) continues to develop and the team that have come together to do that, including colleagues who represent Scotland, have put huge amounts of work into developing the academy including consulting widely with the community. More information can be found at https://www.acadmathsci.org.uk/.

In terms of specific EMS activity, we have continued to hold our meetings in hybrid format. That presents benefits and issues. Obviously, it is more accessible and so we are delighted to be able to offer online access to people. However, it can sometimes mean the number of people in the room is small and we have some concerns about how that seems to the speaker. So, we will continue to monitor the situation. In the meantime we want to remind PhD students that EMS will pay your travel expenses if you are attending a talk so we would encourage you to take advantage of that. We are also encouraging the host institution to run talks at a time which is most likely to attract a good audience locally- given that 430 is not convenient for many people. So, look out for the times of talks over the next year and we will see if that helps attendance. As ever, organizing, advertising and running these talks is a huge amount of work and I therefore need to thank Oana Pocovnicu as Meetings and

Membership Secretary, the staff at ICMS and our local reps for working together to make that work.

We have run the Whitaker and PhD prizes this year but have hit a really positive snag, which is that the quality of nominees has been so good that we have not been able to decide on a winner in the time frame we would have liked to. So, I would usually announce them in this newsletter but the prize committee are still in discussions. This is partly due to the fact we are all extremely busy, but mostly due to the fact that every nominee was in someone's top four and no one was in more than two people's!

We are still developing the Reaching Higher, widening participation project which is being administered by Glasgow, which aims to support people from underrepresented backgrounds to successfully study maths at University, providing both mathematical and pastoral support.

A reminder of our other activities are that the Research Support Fund and Schools enrichment fund are open for applications throughout the year and we also have a "pathways to teaching" bursary and the student research bursaries available- all of the information about these is on our website https://www.ems.ac.uk/. We also publish the Proceedings of the Edinburgh Mathematical Society which contains research papers on topics in a broad range of pure and applied mathematics and book reviews.

The EMS has worked with the other learned societies this year through the Council for Mathematical Sciences and the Protect Pure maths (https://www.protectpuremaths.uk/). This group is organising a Maths Summit next year on 12th March at the Science Centre in London- look out for more information as it becomes available.

Other things to look out for in the next year include the fact that we are restarting the Burn event for PhD students. For those of you who don't know this is a residential for PhD students where you can present your work and network with other mathematical sciences PhD students from across Scotland. It was very popular pre-covid but has been on hold for a few years. So, it will run from 28th -30th May 2024 and we will open applications in January so watch this space.

I should like to express my gratitude to the people who contribute so much of their time to the society and without whom we could not function as a society - the General Committee, the Policy Advisory Group (PAG), the Research Support Fund Committee, the Education Committee, the Investment Committee and the PEMS Editorial Board. A special thanks to the people stepping down from their roles and a warm welcome to all the new incumbents of these various roles. I am delighted that Tara Brendle will take over as President at the AGM and look forward to supporting her in the role of Vice President for the next year.

Best wishes,



Rachel Norman,
President, Edinburgh Mathematical Society