

IRISH MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY

ORDINARY MEETING

December 22, 1988

An Ordinary meeting of the Society was held at 12.15pm in the DIAS. The President S. Dineen took the chair. There were 20 members present.

1. The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of April 16th, 1987 were approved and signed.
2. The Treasurer presented his report, which was approved unanimously (proposed by R. Critchley and seconded by M. Brennan). It was reported that the committee wished to increase the reciprocity subscription for AMS members to \$6, and this was agreed. Also, through the efforts of F. Holland, the Society was now recognised by the Revenue as being established for charitable purposes only.
3. The Secretary presented his report.
4. It was agreed to consider holding a meeting of the Society in September. It was also agreed that the President would set up a discussion at the Easter DIAS Symposium on the degree programmes involving Mathematics currently on offer in Ireland and on the careers followed by graduates of these programmes. Written information which could be available by then would be very welcome.
5. It was announced that the Committee was seeking a member who could represent the Society at the American Mathematical Society Centennial Celebration in Providence, August 8-12, 1988. The Society would be sending greetings to the AMS on the occasion of their centennial year.
The committee decided to solicit tasteful advertisements for the Bulletin.
The committee had also decided to support three conferences in 1988, to be held in Dublin (Matrix Theory, March), Galway (Groups, May) and Limerick (Computers in Primary Education, February).

6. A.G. O'Farrell was elected Secretary, G.M. Enright was re-elected Treasurer and the following were elected committee members: R. Critchley, D. Hurley, T. Hurley and R. Timoney. All are elected for two-year terms. (S. Dineen (President), F. Gaines (Vice-president), M. Brennan, N. Buttimore, B. Goldsmith and R. Ryan were elected in December 1986 for two-year terms.)
7. T. Laffey reported that he and F. Holland were progressing with their preparations for sending a team to the Mathematical Olympiad in Australia in 1988. Introductory sessions for secondary school pupils had been successfully held in Dublin and Cork so far.
8. The committee nominated Professor J.L. Synge to honorary membership of the Society. (This nomination is to be voted on at the next Ordinary meeting of the Society.)

Richard M. Timoney,
Secretary

IRISH MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY

SECRETARY'S REPORT

It seems to me appropriate, as I come to the end of my term of office as Secretary, to reflect on my activities during my periods as Secretary. I would like however, first, to thank all those who responded to my various requests for help or information. Specifically I would like to thank the local representatives.

During the past year, the one succesful venture I can point to is the setting up of departmental electronic mailboxes for the Mathematics departments at all the HEANET sites in Ireland. The electronic addresses for these are MATHDEP@VAX1.MAY.IE, MATHDEP@VAX2.NIHED.IE, MATHDEP@VAX1.NIHEL.IE, MATHDEP@DEC20.TCD.IE, MATHDEP@IRUCCVAX.UCC.IE, MATHDEP@IRLEARN.UCD.IE and MATHDEP@VAX1.UCG.IE. (This and other HEANET addresses are now easily accessible to all BITNET users in the USA and elsewhere. The mail is routed to HEANET automatically through a gateway facility at UCD and, conversely, HEANET users can send messages to BITNET users through this same gateway.)¹

Although this facility has the potential to be very useful as a means of delivering messages to mathematicians at other departments whose electronic addresses are unknown, it has not yet been widely availed of, perhaps because its existence is not sufficiently widely known. Until there is a steady trickle of usage, its reliability may be in question, since the person checking for mail to MATHDEP may not do so regularly if there does not seem to be traffic.

The EUROMATH project is perhaps relevant in this context as it aims to facilitate electronic mail usage between mathematicians, among other objectives. A significant part of this project is being carried out at NIHE Dublin under John Carroll. Some years ago Irish mathematics departments showed their enthusiasm for the basic ideas of EUROMATH by contributing towards the costs of preparing a proposal for EEC funding. Members may recall that A.K. Seda of UCC represented the Society at some of the early meetings on the scheme and was largely responsible for bringing it to our attention.

Other positive notes in the recent past of the Society were the joint meeting with the London Mathematical Society on Operator algebras (which was organised by T.T. West) and the reciprocity agreement with the American

Mathematical Society. In my view the Bulletin has continued to improve steadily under the editorships of D. Hurley, P. Fitzpatrick and R. Ryan and I certainly hope that this trend will be maintained.

There are a few matters on which I feel that the Society needs to exert more effort, through the committee. I think it would help if the committee could arrange to meet more frequently. It is often hard to generate enthusiasm for committee meetings which involve special long journeys for at least some of the members. It might be reasonable to have a policy that committee meetings should be arranged to coincide with conferences which are partly sponsored by the Society (*e.g.* Groups in Galway). September is a time when a committee meeting would often be useful. This year there was a plan to hold a conference (or meeting of the Society) in UCD in September, which fell through. We should perhaps consider having a one-day meeting of the Society annually (say in September) much as the LMS and the AMS do on a more frequent schedule.

I think that it is important that the Society should make it a priority to cater equitably for all strands of mathematical interests in Ireland. A step in this direction would be to find out what the strands currently are. To some extent the Bulletin and the DIAS Symposia may serve this function, but I feel that a report on the needs of or for mathematics in Ireland could be a valuable focus for future planning on many levels.

Richard M. Timoney
December 22, 1987

¹Ed: Addresses amended 3/88