

Greetings

DEAR EDITOR,

I am very honoured to be asked to contribute to the centenary edition of the *Gazette*. I hope you will accept this letter as all I have to offer are congratulations and best wishes for the next hundred years. If I have a claim to fame, it is that I have been a subscriber for almost half of the *Gazette's* existence, but I don't suppose even that is a record. I have enjoyed the articles, the notes, the pillory and most of the book reviews.

My first contact on the other side of the fence was in 1964. I had delivered a rather frivolous lecture called 'Matrices for the million'. As I left the platform, my manuscript was confiscated by Martyn Cundy who did a first-class job, as assistant editor, in preparing it for publication in the *Gazette*. I have since had a very happy dialogue with a succession of editors. I was particularly pleased when, as Chairman of the Teaching Committee, I had an arrangement for short articles from the Modern Trends Subcommittee to be published in the *Gazette* (the first of these was 'Stage A Topology', by Alan Tammadge). In swiftly moving times, this was far more effective than waiting for a ponderous Report.

I hope it will be helpful to make three suggestions for the future.

1. *More contributions from the pupils*

It is not impossible to garner these (the interested reader is referred to 'Mathematica Prima', by H. V. Lowry, *Math. Gaz.* **44** (February 1960) pp. 9-12). The Hungarian sister journal of the *Gazette* publishes pictures of budding mathematicians, and these have motivated good work.

2. *More mathematical news*

It is a pity to have to go to *Scientific American* for the latest on Fermat's Last Theorem or the Four-colour Map Problem. Even a note on the lines of 'the proof takes up 30 pages and is quite unintelligible' would be far better than nothing.

3. *More mathematical reviews*

A small example is 'Quanta for the quick' by R. Lewis and G. Matthews, *Math. Gaz.* **58** (March 1974) pp. 8-14. There were a few computers in schools at that time and we showed how one could be programmed to give graphical solutions to Schrödinger's equation. I don't think Schrödinger will reach the National Curriculum next year, but I am sure it will do so in the course of the next 100 years. An obvious subject for treatment is Chaos Theory. I'm sure one of our members could give a simple exposition.

Renewed congratulations and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

GEOFFREY MATTHEWS, President 1977-78
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Geoffrey Matthews earned his first degree from Cambridge in 1938 and his PhD from the University of London in 1959. He was Head of

Mathematics at St Dunstan's College 1950–1964, Organiser of the Nuffield Mathematics Teaching Project 1964–1972 and Shell Professor of Mathematics Education 1968–1977. His books include *Calculus* and *Matrices 1, 2*. He joined the Association in 1957 serving as Chair of Teaching Committee and then as President 1977–78. His interests include Mathematics education, psychology of learning, art and travel. His first *Gazette* contribution was in 1962.

DEAR EDITOR,

I add my congratulations to the many you will receive on the centenary of the *Mathematical Gazette*. Although I have not been active in the Association for some time, I had the honour to be President of the Mathematical Association in the first year of its second century – at the time of the successful Appeal which funded the move of our Headquarters to Leicester.

I should like to use this occasion to record our debt to an earlier President, Theodore Combridge, who (particularly during his retirement) devoted a tremendous amount of time and energy to the Association. His enthusiasm for the Appeal to buy our own Headquarters led him to describe Leicester as ‘more or less the centre of England’ – though I am not sure he was taking proper account of road and rail communications. He was usually a very precise man! I am well aware of the great work which has been done since then in coping with financial problems and in developing the activities of the Association to this present high level. Even so, we ought to recognise the contributions of Combridge (and many others) in the sixties and seventies.

I think he must have been President of the Association when, in the early sixties, he chaired the first of the conferences which were sponsored by BP on ‘Mathematics and Industry’. He and Stephen Mullaly (of BP) encouraged me to follow this up during my term at Balliol, out of which was born the ‘Mathematics in Education and Industry Schools Project’ – and later MEI syllabuses. Although it was BP which was particularly generous financially, many others firms and individuals gave their support and encouragement: my particular thanks go to those who continued with MEI when I moved from London to Edinburgh, where the MA Annual Conference was held when I was the President. I am full of admiration for those who have worked with MEI so successfully over the years – and, more generally, to those in the Association who have coped so well (both educationally and financially) in times of such fast moving changes. I include those responsible for the administration of the MA and Headquarters, publications, and especially of course the *Gazette*.

Congratulations and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

BERTIE BELLIS, President 1971-72

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Bertie Bellis took the Mathematical Tripos at St John's College, Cambridge in 1951. In 1955 he became Head of Mathematics at Highgate School, London. From 1965 to his retirement in 1986 he was Headmaster, first at Daniel Stewart's College, Edinburgh then at The Leys School, Cambridge. In 1962 he was founding Director of the MEI Schools Project. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and of the IMA. He joined the Mathematical Association in 1952 and was President for 1971-72.

DEAR EDITOR,

I wish to congratulate the *Gazette* on reaching its centenary. Whilst it has provided a medium for learned articles and most useful reviews of new mathematical books, I consider its major role has been in giving a platform for discussions about the teaching of mathematics. In this way, the Association has been, and hopefully will continue to be, a leading light in the development of the subject.

Since the first conference for teachers about the use of Mathematics in Industry, which was run jointly by BP and the Association in 1961, I became increasingly involved in education. Due to my involvement in recruiting science graduates for a number of departments and employing them in my own branch, I developed strong personal views about industry's needs from such employees. These I expressed at the Annual Conferences that I then began to attend and useful discussions ensued. This led to involvement with the Schools Council and its successors, the CBI Education section, and culminated in the work that BP was doing with teacher fellowships. As a result, my company career changed significantly, allowing me to concentrate upon education. Since the Association was the 'root cause' of these changes, it was a great honour to be invited to be its President in 1984-85.

My only contribution to the *Gazette* has been my Presidential Address. Although my title was 'Why teach Mathematics?', I consider that the subject is the core for the study of all sciences and that it provides the logic necessary for all living. Therefore, I trust that the *Gazette* will continue to develop the subject for another century and beyond, so that it is taught well to the benefit of all.

Yours sincerely,

PETER B. COAKER, President 1984-85
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Peter Coaker studied Mathematics and Meteorology at Imperial College, graduating in 1949. His professional interests are in computing and operational research and until he retired he was Manager of Educational Affairs for British Petroleum. He has been Chairman of the CBI Schools Panel and a member of various committees of the Schools Council, SEC and SEAC. He joined the Association in 1967 and served as Chair of the Schools and Industry Committee 1980-1990 and as President for 1984-85.

DEAR EDITOR,

I am writing to congratulate the *Mathematical Gazette* on reaching its Centenary year. Much has changed in those hundred years, of course. The original readers of the *Gazette* were almost certainly all from universities, public and grammar schools – maybe they still are! – but the broadening of the membership of The Mathematical Association, and the extended range of its publications, now involves a much wider group of those who work in mathematics education.

I was certainly proud when I was asked to become the President in 1986. There were two reasons for this. The first was that not very many women had held this post before me and I was pleased that the balance would be redressed a little. However, the main reason was that I was the first teacher from a primary school to be so honoured – and a reception class teacher at that!

Yours sincerely,

ANITA STRAKER, President 1986-87

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Anita Straker OBE earned her BSc in 1959, PGCE in 1960 and MSc (in number theory) in 1961. Since then she has taught in primary and secondary schools and has been a Mathematics Inspector in Surrey, Wiltshire and ILEA. She enjoys ‘helping teachers to do their best for the children they teach and fighting their cause with politicians’. She also collects jellymoulds! She has been Deputy Director of Education in Camden since 1993 and was MA President 1986–87.

DEAR EDITOR,

I was very pleased indeed to hear that *The Mathematical Gazette* has reached its centenary edition. Its continuing success owes much to those among the loyal readership willing to share their significant insights (both mathematical and educational), good problems and mathematical delicacies. However a major debt of the mathematical community is to a series of first class editors who have displayed a fine degree of judgement in their selection and have been willing to let the format evolve in order to adapt to changing needs, while maintaining those traditions which continue to be valued. Some recent vigorous editions certainly augur well for its next century. Many congratulations to everyone involved!

Yours sincerely,

MARGARET BROWN, President 1990-91

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