

The Mathematical Gazette

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Editorial

During the last eight years I have handled over 2000 different articles and notes (about five a week). Readers may be interested to know how each one triggers a chain of events, involving a whole team of people. First each article has to be recorded, along with the author's details, and acknowledged. In this secretarial aspect I have been ably supported, first by my wife Barbara and later by my daughter, Katherine. Next, I rapidly read the article and assign it to one of the hundred or so referees. Later, I read the referee's report and make a decision to accept or reject the article, or to ask for a revision. Some revised articles go round this cycle three or four times. Next, Bill Richardson typesets the accepted articles along with reviews (co-ordinated at various times by Nick Lord, Alun Green, Anne Baker, Tony Crilly, Bud Winteridge, Rosalie McCrossan and myself) and problems (edited by Graham Hoare and Tim Cross). Bill then sends them to Keith Barnett, Colin Davies or Michael Fox for proof reading. They send their suggestions to Gerry Leversha or Tom Roper (the Assistant Editors) who decide what changes are appropriate and pass the information to Bill and me. Bill sends the amended articles and reviews to the authors for checking and they return their corrections to me. Bill and I then spent many hours on the telephone making final alterations, putting the material in order, checking that we have the right number of pages, inserting the gleanings, creating the cover and generally finishing off. Bill e-mails the complete issue as a postscript file to Ernie Perry, at J. W. Arrowsmith, who returns the unbound pages to me for a final check. The journal is then bound and distributed to readers. Typically, the time between receipt of an article and its appearance in the *Gazette* is about 18 months.

It is now time for me to hand over the editorship of *The Mathematical Gazette*. This is the last issue that I will see to a conclusion. The next three issues of the *Gazette* will carry articles that I have already accepted, but Gerry Leversha, the new Editor will be responsible for bringing them to publication. He will also take over all articles currently under consideration. My family's involvement continues a little longer, through my daughter Helen, who is converting the *Gazette* card index into an electronic database.

It has been a privilege to edit the *Gazette*. I have enjoyed corresponding with mathematicians from around the world and reading their articles and

reviews. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the authors and reviewers, the many referees who have supported me over the years and all my editorial assistants, without whom the *Gazette* would not exist. Special thanks are due to Bill Richardson. We knew each other only slightly when we began working on the *Gazette*, but our professional partnership soon developed into an enduring friendship. Most of all, I want to thank my family. The *Gazette* has eaten deeply into their time as well as mine. Not only have they provided practical support with secretarial work, they have absorbed my stress in difficult times, endured my monopolisation of the telephone in the final stages of *Gazette* production and put up with my obsessive interest in all things mathematical.

When I took over in 1994, my predecessor, Nick Mackinnon, gave me some advice. He told me that editing would keep me very busy and that it would help advance my career. He was certainly right on the first point. As to career advancement, the *Gazette* allowed me to move into school management without sacrificing my interest in mathematics. From January 2002, I will be one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools. I will miss the editing work and all my *Gazette* colleagues tremendously, but I imagine that will be kept just as busy as an HMI.

STEVE ABBOTT

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It's voting time again!

The time has come to vote for the *Seventh Annual Mathematical Gazette Writing Awards*. Please use the address carrier from this issue of the *Gazette* to identify the articles and notes of 2001 that impressed you most. The *Index* for 2001 will remind you of the many good submissions.

There will again be a prize draw among those who respond. The prize, worth about £28, will be a copy of *Mathematics Unlimited – 2001 and Beyond*, edited by Björn Engquist and Wilfried Schmid.

As a reminder, the Article of the Year for 2000 was *Chains, froths and a 10-bead necklace*, by Michael Fox. The joint Notes of the Year for 2000 were *Never say never: some mistaken identities*, by Mark J. Cooker, and *Royal Mail 4-state barcodes*, by E. Keith Lloyd.

Please indicate, in the spaces provided on the voting form, the titles of your 3 favourite *Articles* and your 3 favourite *Notes*. Note that *Matters for Debate* count as *Articles*. Alternatively, you can just write your choices in a letter or on a postcard. Each vote will be given equal weighting. The results will be announced in the July 2002 issue.

Return the form as soon as you can, and definitely by 31st May 2002 to:

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