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Editorial

The current themed issue of EJAM is dedicated to Professor Sam Howison of the University of Oxford in recognition of his deep and wide-ranging contributions to applied mathematics and of his indispensable service to the journal over many years, from its inception in 1990 and including as co-editor-in-chief from 1995 to 2015. The first three papers in this issue arose from a workshop in his honour in Oxford in June 2018 and are indicative of the breadth of his influence. We are grateful to Sam for providing the following reflections on the journal and on the field more generally.

The Editors
Martin Burger, John King & Michael J. Ward

I am greatly honoured - and flattered - to be the dedicatee of this issue of EJAM. Both the issue itself, and the 60th birthday conference from which it stems, remind me how privileged I have been to work with such a range of hugely talented collaborators. They range in seniority from those who were my own mentors in many ways to very recent graduate students. I admire them all and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have worked with them. My birthday conference was a simply delightful mathematical and social occasion and I would like to record here my thanks to Àlvaro Cartea, Michael Coulon and Daniel Schwarz for organising it.

One nice thing about being an applied mathematician is the licence to poke your nose into almost any other area of study. The world around us is just full of mathematical problems awaiting our attention, whether making models or analysing them analytically or numerically. One thing that came across very clearly from the conference was the way in which our subject has become broader. Let alone continuum models and differential equations in all their multifarious glory, so many problems one sees demand some probability, or some stochastic analysis, or optimisation, or some graph theory, or ideas from combinatorics, or . . .. The flood of data has opened up whole new vistas. There has been a similar explosion in areas of application. How is a young mathematician to navigate this luxuriant jungle and learn what they need? There is the internet, of course, and the young can do astonishing things with computers. Nevertheless, it is a challenge to us (relative) oldsters to provide the right training and guidance, not only in mathematics but also in thinking critically about what one is doing and why, and in communicating with complete clarity. The old adage ‘solve the simplest problem first’ still has legs.

It is rather sobering to note that EJAM has been in existence for about half my entire life. That is no mean feat for a generalist applied mathematical journal, given that new areas will inevitably spawn specialist journals which, if successful, can become the *de facto* place to publish in that field. EJAM has had to keep ahead of the game, and it has thrived publishing an eclectic mix of wide-interest papers in established areas, pioneer papers in emerging ones, and papers which are hard to classify but simply interesting (some of my favourites come into this class). I think that the papers in this issue illustrate the point rather well and I am grateful to the Editors for curating

this festschrift, and to the contributors for submitting their papers. EJAM is now a fixture in the applied mathematical landscape and I wish it every success in the new era of open-access publishing: its stamp of quality will be more important than ever.

I think that is enough from me; I urge the reader to dip into the following pages (insofar as that makes sense in an online journal!); by sampling the variety therein you will see exactly what makes me and so many other mathematicians tick: the opportunity and challenge of gaining even a little more quantitative understanding of our world, and to do some nice mathematics along the way.

Sam Howison
University of Oxford, September 2021

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