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EUROPEAN WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS

Newsletter 9

Edited by
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Contents

I. The 10th General Meeting of EWM	3
• Report by Tsou Sheung Tsun	4
• Report by Irene Sciriha	5
II. Other meetings	8
• International conference “Mathematics, education, economics, ecology” May 28 - June 2, 2001, Cheboksary, report by Nadeshda Merlina	8
• Seminar in the Department of Mathematics, November 1, 2001, Malta, report by Irene Sciriha	10
• Meeting of the British Women in Mathematics, January 9, 2002, London, report by Helen Robinson	10
• A creation of the French association “Femmes et Mathématiques”: An Exhibition: Women In Maths. Why Not You?, by Christine Charretton	10
• “Young Women in Computer Sciences and Maths Forum” March 8-9, 2002, Henri Poincaré Institute, Paris, report by Christine Charretton	12
III. Future activities of EWM	13
• International Workshop on Groups and Graphs	13
• The 11th General Meeting of EWM	14
IV. Useful e-mail addresses and links	15
• EWM addresses and links	15
• Other useful links	17

I

EUROPEAN WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS

The 10th General Meeting, Malta, 24-30 August 2001



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The Proceedings will be published by next summer (World Scientific Publishers).

List of Participants: <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/~ewm01/participlist.html>

REPORT

Tsou Sheung Tsun
Oxford

The 10th International Meeting of the EWM took place in Sliema, Malta, 24-30 August, 2001. There were 65 participants from outside of Malta, and 11 participants from Malta, giving a total of 76 participants coming from 21 countries and 4 continents.

The conference took place at the Plaza Hotel, where most of the participants were housed, except for two lectures which were given at the University of Malta in Msida. There were 5 main sessions: 3 EMS lectures given by Michele Vergne; the pure session on 'cohomology theories' with 2 main lectures (Chiara de Fabritiis and Yukari Ito) and one short contribution (Barbara Fantechi); the applied session on 'mathematics applied to finance' with 3 main lectures (Francine Diener, Monique Pontier and Nadine Bellamy); the inter-disciplinary session on 'the uses of geometry' with 3 main lectures (Asia Weiss, Xenia de la Ossa and Caroline Series) and one short contribution (Konstanze Rietsch); and the socio-political session on 'mathematics outside the classroom' with 2 main lectures (Mireille Chaleyat-Maurel and Claudine Hermann) and one short contribution (Rosa-Maria Spitaleri). There were in addition two short contributed talks (Sabine Schiller and Bettina Rehberg). There were 3 poster sessions, comprising some 35 posters. Also there was a report by Ina Kersten and Emilia Mezzetti on the EMS Questionnaire Project. Irene Sciriha gave us a lesson in Maltese, which generated a lot of interest in the local culture.

The EWM General Meeting took place in the afternoon of 26th August. The new Standing Committee was elected, with Ljudmila Bordag as Convenor. Some members of the Organizing Committee were also elected, the remaining vacancies to be filled later once the place for the next meeting in 2003 is decided. Topics for that meeting and also for workshops in the even years were discussed. Regional coordinators were elected. The usual business was successfully conducted.

A day trip to Gozo was organized for participants and accompanying persons on Tuesday 28th August.

We received financial support from the EU (reference HPAM-2000-00051) and the EMS. An application to UNESCO (UVO-ROSTE) is still pending. In addition we received material and personnel assistance from the University of Malta. Ms Annabelle Attard from their mathematics department supplied much needed secretarial help. Air Malta was the official carrier. World Scientific Publishing Company (Singapore) and Discovery Bookstore (Malta) donated material and offered discount on their books. The staff at the Plaza Hotel was very helpful to us throughout the meeting.

The meeting provided plenty of opportunity for participants to renew friendships and make new ones. There were a lot of small discussion groups, mathematical and otherwise. In particular, there was a spontaneously generated round-table on the ethics of using mathematics in finance, which was indeed very timely. A small group of mathematicians and physicists with common interest in the areas of geometry and topology applied to quantum field theory and string theory was formed to promote better networking.

Members of the Organizing Committee were: Christine Bessenrodt (Germany), Laura Fainsilber (Sweden), Tatiana Ivanova (Russia), Emilia Mezzetti (Italy), Marie-Francoise Roy (France), Irene Sciriha (Malta), and Tsou Sheung Tsun (United Kingdom). The editors for the proceedings are Emilia Mezzetti and Sylvie Paycha.

REPORT

Irene Sciriha
Malta

OH mathematics, so hard,
Yet sweeter than honey!
I do not forget your learned lessons
That penetrated my heart
Like a mighty fresh wave.

French Poem Les Chants de Maldoror by Lautreamont

The women and men ascending to the conference hall in the seventh floor at the Regency-Plaza Complex in Sliema during the last week of August, aroused the curiosity of the staff and tourists staying at the hotel. What can be so interesting as to absorb the attention of so many people on six consecutive days for over twelve hours a day?

The 10th European Women in Mathematics (EWM) conference held in Malta attracted over ninety participants from twenty one countries and four continents. The EWM Association was set up at the Berkley International Congress of Mathematics in 1986, by the few women delegates at that meeting who felt the need to unite and do their best to increase the number of women attending the following Congress. Since then EWM has set up its headquarters in Finland, has held biennial meetings and has given moral support to the many talented women who felt isolated in the mathematical circles in their country.

Many eminent mathematicians mostly from European universities, look forward to EWM meetings to share and promote their latest research results. At this year's meeting we were privileged to welcome the Mathematical Society (EMS) speaker of the year, Michele Vergne of Paris, who chose to give a course of lectures on Convex Polytopes, one of the branches of mathematics in which she is universally accepted as an expert. What struck us most during her lectures, apart from her sweet sounding French accent, was the way she thinks aloud and almost forgets all around her, as she juggles with her thoughts and settles a point that could lead to a new theory.

A group of French mathematicians delivered a co-ordinated system of talks on Financial Mathematics. These professors of mathematics, often commissioned by the government in their country, showed us the mathematical theory of optimization is utilized to see how hedging, derivatives and risks are applied to explain the ups and downs of the current stock and share market. Statistics of the performance of Dow Jones, Nasdaq and other investment schemes were compared and analysed.

A welcome occurrence at our meetings is the participation of members from the same family. Husband and wife who conduct research in the same field in the manner of Pierre and Marie Curie and sisters living in different cities, that use EWM as an opportunity to see each other, are not uncommon at our conferences. One couple treated us to a thorough explanation of the post-Einsteinian string theory. They are mathematical physicists from Oxford University in the UK and they showed us their ongoing research in this area. It was interesting to witness the manner in which such collaborative work can flourish.

A group of mathematicians from the UK, Italy and Germany described various cohomologies. In the field of Dynamical Systems, Professor Caroline Series of Warwick University in the UK who sits on the panel of judges of the EMS that awards coveted prizes for high mathematical achievement, gave an illuminating talk on the uses of geometry. Yukari Ito of Tokyo University applied the McKay Correspondence as a bridge from Algebra to Geometry. A group of participants who are interested in the configuration of old temples

availed themselves of the unique opportunity that our meeting offered to explore the wealth of such sites in Malta and Gozo.

The hubbub of activity that often went on even through the short siesta did not seem to tire the delegates and several spontaneous groups for the separate mathematical disciplines were formed. Perhaps the feature of our meetings that contributes to our enthusiasm is the informal manner in which the talks are conducted ensuring that every participant is actively involved. The speakers often welcome questions that enable them to clarify their theorems further even half way through their talk. Besides, with an introductory talk on Maltese grammar and idioms relating to numbers, followed by a very articulate brief account of the history of Malta and our university, given by the communications officer, Patricia Camilleri, the participants felt more at home.

Although invited speakers were bound to feel privileged, all participants were given the space and time to contribute to the discussions. Each delegate contributed through talks and posters to "sell" the area of mathematics dear to her. On three evenings, poster discussions were organised. The designer of a poster was often asked to take the floor to explain to all her new ideas.

There was also a series of talks on the methods of popularising the subject. There are conflicting views on this point. Some were of the idea that the mathematical public is not found in any country and that groups had to be specifically targeted so that they realise the substantial benefits they reap from our theories. The British mathematician Professor Gower, the 1998 winner of the distinguished Fields medal, wrote, "Non-scientists, not realizing that the Big Bang in physics actually means playing with equations and studying computer print outs from particle accelerators, have the illusion of understanding what is being studied. Most mathematicians, on the other hand work in areas that cannot be explained in a sentence or two, even in a loose way. Most non-scientists start to lose interest after more than this."

The Croatian delegates explained how they managed to break the record of the number of visitors to the mathematics stand in the annual science fair in their city. A group of German Ph.D. students shared an impressive software, Math-Kit, that they are developing to make mathematics as attractive as possible in schools. Even Maltese members of the local mathematical society shared their recent experience when setting up an exhibition.

Mireille Chaleyat-Maurel, the Parisian Professor and co-ordinator of the World Mathematical Year 2000, had the express mission of drawing mathematics out from the shadows and splashing it on Metro walls, buses and homes for a year. Even if there are mathematical works that do not lead to immediate applications, they still contribute to a body of interlinked knowledge that supports the whole of science. "How else can we produce secret codes in bank cards, explain the structure of DNA or design the best mobile phones and satellites?" she argued.

The two daily coffee sessions gave us the opportunity to enjoy the peaceful panoramic view of the Sliema rugged coast as we tried to clarify mathematical or organisational ideas among ourselves. The hotel staff assisting us were amused to read the posters that filled two giant billboards and spilled over to cover all the columns and walls of the conference hall. They witnessed mathematics emerging from its shadows through lively pictures, photos and explanations, often in awkward English. The dedication of the Maltese helpers both at the university and the conference hall ensured the smooth running of the conference. In spite of the hectic time and loss of sleep, we enjoyed every minute.

Great satisfaction was expressed by participants doing research work in groups who in a week managed to complete papers that had dragged on for long months over the internet. From e-mails prior to the conference asking whether Malta is just a port, it was evident that delegates were originally intent on using all their time here for the sole purpose of strengthening their mathematical contacts, but as the days went by they became more and more enthusiastic about their surroundings. The lovely scenes of the Maltese coast, the lively colours

of the Maltese way of life and the sterling service by all those with whom they came in contact, must all claim their fair share of merit. Besides, the bubbly Mediterranean character of the Maltese seemed to have affected most participants. There were some who formed groups and extended their holiday here. It was interesting to witness the initial austere shyness of the north Europeans give way to broader smiles, spontaneous applause and increasing participation to the satisfaction and enjoyment of all.

II OTHER MEETINGS

REPORT

**Nadeshda Merlina
Russia**

**International conference “Mathematics. Education. Economics. Ecology”
Cheboksary, Chuvash State University, May 28 – June 2 , 2001**

The annual 9th International conference “Mathematics. Education. Economics. Ecology” was held in Cheboksary at the base of the Chuvash State University, May 28 – June 2, 2001. The Chuvash State University was chosen as a place for holding the conference. The organizers of the conference were the Chuvash State University named after I.N.Ulyanov, the Ministry of Education, Science and Higher schools of the Chuvash Republic, the Interregional public organization “Women in science and education”, the Russian Association “Women-mathematicians”, the Chuvash State Pedagogical University named after I.Y.Yakovlev. The sponsors of the conference were the Russian Fund of fundamental researches, the Chuvash State University.

208 authors of 192 reports from 55 Russian cities, the republics of the former Soviet Union and foreign countries as well as 50 mathematicians from Cheboksary and Novocheboksarsk were supposed to take part in the conference. 85 people participated in the work of the conference including representatives from: Moscow – 18, Aprelevka (Moscow region) – 1, St.Petersburg – 1, Kazan – 11, Cheboksary – 35, N.Novgorod – 2, Lutsk (Ukraine) – 1, Rostov-on-Don – 3, Voronezh – 1, Yakutsk – 2, Ekaterinburg – 1, Tver – 1, Perm – 1, Elista (Republic Kalmikiya) – 1, Yaroslavl – 2, Syktyvkar – 1, Krasnodar – 1, Vladimir – 1, Stockholm (Sweden) – 1.

The following sections worked within the framework of the conference:

1. Differential equations and theory of functions.
2. Algebra, topology, geometry.
3. Theory of probabilities and discrete analysis.
4. Mathematical models in natural sciences and engineering.
5. Mathematics in secondary, special and higher education.
6. Mathematics and economics.
7. Mathematics and ecology.

The interdisciplinary seminar “Non-linear models in natural scientific and humanitarian knowledge” (Russian Fund of fundamental researches, grant No.01-01-10050). The chairman, corresponding member the Russian Academy of Sciences – S.P.Kurdyumov. Prof. D.S.Chernavsky from the Moscow State University delivered a lecture to the students of the Physics faculty on the theme “Economics of Russia. Models and forecasts”.

Round tables:

1. Women in science and education. International cooperation of women-mathematicians.
2. Publication projects of educational-methodical literature. Experience of work with gifted children.

Before the opening of the conference the submitted reports were published. “Mathematics. Education. Economics. Ecology” is the abstracts of the 9th International conference of women-mathematicians. Cheboksary. May 28 – June 2, 2001. – Cheboksary: Publishing office of the Chuvash Univ., 2001. - 208 p., ISBN 5-7677-0496-1. The sponsors’ aid in publication of the listed works of the conference was rendered by the Chuvash State

University, the Nizhny Novgorod State University, the Interregional public organization “Women in science and education”, the Association “Women-mathematicians” and by the members of the associations. The abstracts of the reports and the issues of the works have the same design prepared by RUSSIKA (Cheboksary) and “Radiophysics”, University News (N.Novgorod), and they meet the international requirements for publishing the corresponding literature.

DECISION

of the interdiscipline seminar
“Non-linear models in natural and humanitarian sciences”
Cheboksary, May 31, 2001

Non-linear approaches in mathematical modeling of processes of different nature find an increasing use. The development of analytical methods and computer science enabled to expand considerably the number of natural phenomena. In the study of these phenomena mathematical models become an efficient instrument of research. Non-linear models enable to describe such defining properties of complicated systems as multistationary, fluctuating character in the changes of the system’s characteristics, dynamic chaos and complicated space-time operating conditions.

In the last decades of the 20th century the non-linear synergetical approach won fundamental positions in physics, chemistry, biology and other natural sciences and there are also successful attempts in using this approach for describing cyclical processes of critical conditions and catastrophes in economics, psychology, sociology. Though the ideas and methods of non-linear science are not included extensively in the curriculum of higher educational establishments as well as both natural and humanitarian profiles.

The interdiscipline seminar “Non-linear models in natural and humanitarian sciences” was held on the base of the Chuvash State University. The aim of the seminar was to discuss the main directions and opportunities of the non-linear approach in modeling of natural and humanitarian sciences, as well as the ways how to include non-linear sciences into the educational courses of higher schools and senior forms of lyceums and gymnasiums.

We must give the future generation of young Russian scientists the opportunity to master the approaches and methods of this modern scientific methodology.

At the seminar the lectures were delivered and the plenary reports were made by corresponding member the Russian Academy of Sciences – S.P.Kurdyumov (Moscow), Prof. D.S.Chernavsky from the Moscow State University, Prof. S.I.Aksenov from the Moscow State University, Prof. G.Y.Risnichenko from the Moscow State University, Prof. I.S.Emelyanova (NSU, N. Novgorod), Prof. I.V.Melnikova (USU, Ekaterinburg).

The participants noted high opportunities of non-linear methods for solving tasks of mathematical modeling and important philosophical and world-outlook aspects of non-linear science.

For spreading the ideas and methods of non-linear approaches in modeling the participants of the seminar stated:

1. To publish an annual bulletin. It will inform men of science and education about publication in Russia textbooks, books and brochures on synergetics and non-linear dynamics. The publication is supposed to be carried out on the base of the Chuvash State University and the Interregional public organization “Women in science and education”.
2. To take attempts for making a textbook on synergetic and non-linear dynamics for senior forms of schools and gymnasiums.
3. To hold the next interdiscipline seminar “Non-linear models in natural and humanitarian sciences” in Novorossyisk, May 27 – June 2, 2002. The chairman, corresponding member the Russian Academy of Sciences – S.P.Kurdyumov.

The program committee, the heads of the sections and the participants of the conference noted a general high scientific and methodical level of the reports. The conference program envisaged thematic exhibitions and an extensive cultural programs.

On November 1st 2001, a seminar was held in the Department of Mathematics, University of Malta with the aim to arouse awareness of EWM activities. On the mathematical side, lecturers, students and others interested in mathematics discussed new proofs and posed new problems on Zorn's Lemma, Roots of polynomials over the quaternions, Petrinets, Divisors and Matrix equations. During the meeting book tokens were given as prizes for significant contributions to previous seminars.

*Irene Sciriha
University of Malta*

On Wednesday 9th of January 2002 the British women in Mathematics held a meeting at De Morgan House, London, the headquarters of The London Mathematical Society. This was specifically aimed at encouraging women into post-graduate mathematics. The morning programme had three short talks by women with careers in mathematics who had done Ph.Ds. These were Susanne Mischke, Reidun Twarok and Alice Miller. Alice had returned after a break for children via a Daphne Jackson Fellowship. These are two year part-time fellowships for people who wish to get back into research careers after a break for family responsibilities.

The afternoon programme consisted of four short talks by research students: Christine Currie, Anne Porter, Jennifer Siggers and Elisabeth Mann. They spoke about their respective work on Epidemiological Modelling of TB/HIV for the World Health Organisation, The Effects of Entrained Air on Violent Wave Impact, Pattern Formation in Rayleigh-Benard Convection and Configuration Spaces in Topology.

There were about 40 women including about 31 students (mainly research and MSc but some undergraduates). We are very grateful to The London Mathematical Society for its support and for the use of De Morgan House.

*Helen Robinson
Coventry University*

**A creation of the French association “Femmes et Mathématiques”:
AN EXHIBITION: WOMEN IN MATHS. WHY NOT YOU?**

This is a mobile exhibition intended for high schools and universities. It consists of sixteen portraits of women presented through photographs and interviews.

The women obtained degrees in maths, then turned to different occupations in various parts of France: cryptography, business, banking, epidemiology, several aspects of computer science, research in pure maths or applied maths to automation, computer sciences, molecular biology.....

The idea is to illustrate the numerous professional activities and variety of positions that degrees in maths can lead to – and so encourage young men and women to study maths.

The association devised the exhibition and collected the materials, and professional women took part in the design: a journalist, a photographer and a graphic artist.

For this purpose, we received financial support from the National Office for Equality (Secrétariat aux Droits des Femmes et à l'égalité), CNRS and the Ministry of Research.

We were granted the Irene Joliot-Curie Prize – attributed to associations managed by women and working to increase the number of women in science. Several copies of the exhibition were produced. Reims University is the head of a network of universities working to diffuse the exhibition (femmes.maths@univ-reims.fr) and it has been seen in a number of areas in France.

Christine Charretton
Présidente de l'association "femmes et mathématiques"

REPORT

Christine Charretton
Présidente de l'association "femmes et mathématiques"

YOUNG WOMEN IN COMPUTER SCIENCES AND MATHS FORUM **March 8-9, 2002 - Henri Poincaré Institute - Paris**

This is the 6th annual conference for young female researchers in mathematics, organized by the french association "femmes et mathématiques". The Forum had a different flavour to its predecessors since Computer Sciences and Maths were advertised together and the Programme Committee comprised mathematicians and computer scientists.

The event was organized in the French – and European context, where the numbers of women in computer sciences are decreasing in university studies and research. All but one of the speakers were women; but several men attended the conference. Three plenary lectures were given by senior mathematicians.

There were 19 twenty minute conferences from young women, mathematicians or computer scientists, just finished or in the process of finishing their PhD qualification and looking for a position. Due to the combination of the two themes, the mathematical subjects addressed were theoretical computer science or discrete maths as well as maths applied to partial differential equations. The audience comprised around 50 people.



A conference given by Frances Grundy of the British association "Women in Computer Science" started the audience reflecting about obstacles for women going into computer science; this was followed by three other debates where statistics were presented and discussed, and remedies sought to improve the situation.

Computer science is more and more attractive to students and their numbers are increasing dramatically in all kinds of academic training – practical and theoretical. But the numbers of women are decreasing. Are the reasons for the absence of women in the field related to the attractive economic factors and social prestige of the types of positions concerned? Are they linked to the way computer science is taught, with a strong relationship to mathematics? Is it the way young people – mostly boys – become familiar with computer science, mainly through groups of friends and playing games on the computer?

Not only mathematicians and computer scientists participated in the debates they were joined by sociologists studying computer scientists in general and women in computer sciences in particular. As a beginning for many people, the analysis consisted more of questions than of definite answers.

As everybody could note, the Forum took place on Women's Day. There were several events in Paris to celebrate this occasion. Not far from the Henri Poincaré Institute, the front of the Pantheon was decorated and illuminated by several portraits of women with the inscription "To great Women, The Nation's Gratitude" (The pantheon bears the inscription "Aux grands hommes, la patrie reconnaissante"). This was enjoyable, at least for this one day

III

FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF EWM

International Workshop on GROUPS AND GRAPHS

Varna, Bulgaria, August 31 - September 6, 2002

Web site: <http://www.moi.math.bas.bg/EWM02/>

EWM organizes general meetings each odd year and specialized workshops each even year. Their aim is to bring together young researchers and women-experts in some fields of mathematics, give them the opportunity to present their results, and the methods and techniques they use, and thus encourage young women to remain in Mathematics. All the invited speakers will be women, but otherwise the workshop is open to everybody who works, or has any interests in GROUPS AND GRAPHS.

The Workshop will be held in Bulgaria on the coast of the Black Sea from August 31 to September 6, 2002. Its duration will be 7 days, including the days of arrival and departure and an excursion day.

The scientific problems to be concerned are both theoretical problems from Graph or Group Theory, and problems from other sciences or other fields of mathematics, which can be attacked by means of graph or group methods. Thus the workshop is intended to be a meeting place for people using a similar mathematical apparatus in different research areas. The organizers believe that the new contacts will be very useful to those who attend the workshop.

The Programme Committee is responsible for the scientific programme and the Local Organizing Committee – for all the other details concerning the conference.

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The 11th International meeting of EWM, June, 2003 CIRM, Luminy, France

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CIRM (Luminy, France)

Web page: www.cirm.univ-mrs.fr

IV USEFUL E-MAIL ADDRESSES AND LINKS

EWM addresses and links

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Our web page was renewed. Any comments for further development are welcome.

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EWM Regional Coordinators: <http://math.helsinki.fi/EWM/coordinators.html>

Other useful links

Biographies of Women Mathematicians

<http://www.agnesscott.edu/lriddle/women/women.htm>

Women and Science

<http://www.cordis.lu/improving/>

Forum des jeunes mathématiciennes et des jeunes informaticiennes

<http://www.ens-lyon.fr/~nportier/forum2002>

Femmes et Mathématiques

<http://www.desargues.univ-lyon1.fr/home/fem/fem.html>

Mathematics Information Servers

<http://www.math.psu.edu/MathLists/Contents.html>

Mentoring Program for Women in Mathematics

<http://www.math.ias.edu/womensprogram/>

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

<http://www.aauw.org/>

Association for Women in Mathematics (AWM)

<http://www.awm-math.org/>

Russian Association of Women in Science and Education

<http://mars.biophys.msu.ru/awse/>

Topology Atlas

<http://at.yorku.ca/topology/>

The Math Forum

<http://mathforum.org/>

European Science Foundation

<http://www.esf.org/>

The Math Net

<http://www.math-net.de/>

Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

<http://www.humboldt-foundation.de/>