The Mathematical Chronicle

The Mathematical Chronicle was founded in 1969 by some members of the University of Auckland Department of Mathematics. The following shows the inside back cover of Volume 1. Notice the subscription charge!

The first issue, which appeared in November 1969, included tributes to Emeritus Professor H. G. Forder in honour of his 80th birthday, which many of us celebrated with him in September, 1969.

As shown in the extract above the journal was published by the Mathematical Chronicle Committee. The first Editors were Professors John Butcher and John Kalman, with Roy Swenson as Managing Editor. By Volume 4, John Kalman was the sole Editor and he continued in this role until the publication of Volume 11. For Volumes 12–14 the Editor was Dr David Smith who was followed in this position by Dr Nicholas Wormald for Volumes 15–17 and finally Dr Simon Fitzpatrick for Volumes 18–20. Over the years a number of other staff of the Mathematics (and Statistics for a decade) Department helped in the production, including Drs David Gauld and Paul Hafner as Managing Editors and Drs Graham Baird, Bruce Calvert, Ganesh Dixit, Simon Fitzpatrick, David Gauld, Paul Hafner, David Ryan, Joel Schiff, David Smith, M. K. Vamanamurthy and Nicholas Wormald as Assistant Editors. Stan Roberts was the Editor of News and Personal items in the early years.

Production of the Mathematical Chronicle would have been impossible without the amazing work of a succession of very competent secretaries of the Mathematics Department. As will be seen from the sample above early issues were produced using a typewriter. In the early days the typewriter had a second bank of keys with special symbols such as Greek letters and the typist had to move from one bank of keys to the other as she (yes, inevitably she) produced the finished product from what often was a very scruffily handwritten manuscript. One can only admire the skill and marvel now at the painstaking effort required to jiggle the paper slightly so as to accommodate a superscript like $^{-1}$ then further jiggle so that the rest of the line matched properly with what preceded it. Misprints were handled by use of white paint to hide the miscreant then again careful insertion of the paper into the typewriter so that the eventual reader would not realise there had ever been a misprint. Later they moved to electric typewriters which housed the fonts on a ball about the size of a golf ball so changing fonts required a manual change of the golf ball. Of course as their competence increased they stopped referring to charts which would tell them which key to press to get the top half of a large integral sign or a φ! Then in the mid-80s desktop computers came along and the secretaries had to master yet another way to prepare the journal. The following made contributions to this aspect of the production: Jane Addington, Barbara Clements, Helen Cope, Betty Fong, Sandra Glanville, Peggy Haworth, Sharyn Hill, Gladys Hubbard, Joanne Hunter, Helen Jackson, Lois Kennedy, S. Lai, Penny McGrail, Eve Malbon, Olita Moala, Linda Moxon, Mary Quinlan, Hildegard Scheunert, Marilyn Talamaivao and Carole Worthington.

The last volume, Volume 20, was published in November 1991 by which time an agreement was reached between the New Zealand Mathematical Society and the University of Auckland Department of Mathematics and Statistics jointly to publish a Mathematics journal as a successor to the Mathematical Chronicle. The successor journal was given a different name, the New Zealand Journal of Mathematics, but the volume numbering was retained to show the link with the Mathematical Chronicle.

As stated on the inside back cover reproduced above, the aim of publishing the Mathematical Chronicle was "in the interests of mathematics in New Zealand." This interest was at least threefold:

- to provide another outlet for the publication of mathematical research undertaken by mathematicians based in New Zealand or for research of interest to such folk;

- to provide a permanent venue for news about mathematical activity in New Zealand;

- to provide a reasonably cheap means of bringing many other mathematical journals to New Zealand.

Inspection of the content of the 20 volumes of the Mathematical Chronicle will readily reveal how the first two were satisfied. Regarding the third, especially in the early days, a lot of effort went into organising exchanges between the Mathematical Chronicle and many other mathematical journals published elsewhere in the world: up to about 200 exchanges were achieved. These journals are housed in the Library of the University of Auckland but, especially before electronic transmission of such material, were of great use to mathematicians in other parts of New Zealand. They were particularly useful when funding for research journals was being cut and we could rightly argue that in a sense many of the mathematical journals coming to our Library were doing so thanks to the freely offered service of New Zealand mathematicians and at no cost to the Library except for storage.

In addition to copies being produced for exchange purposes a number of individuals or institutions took advantage of the low subscription rate to purchase their own subscriptions. While a lot of this income went straight into production costs, the Mathematical Chronicle Committee slowly accumulated some money to guard against a sudden increase in costs which might otherwise have made it difficult to honour commitments to authors and subscribers.

With the change from the Mathematical Chronicle to the New Zealand Journal of Mathematics (NZJM), the Mathematical Chronicle Committee continued, though with little activity. The NZJM now has its own overseeing committee consisting of two representatives of each of the two parties, viz the New Zealand Mathematical Society (NZMS) and the Department of Mathematics of the University of Auckland, together with the Editor. Recently the Mathematical Chronicle Committee resolved to disband, transferring its rights over the Mathematical Chronicle to the NZJM Committee and gifting its accumulated funds to the NZMS. The NZMS accepted the proposal from the Mathematical Chronicle Committee to set this money aside to cover the costs of an invited speaker at the annual NZMS Colloquium, to be known as the Butcher-Kalman Invited Speaker in honour of the founders and first two Editors of the Mathematical Chronicle. The Butcher-Kalman Invited Speaker will be a New Zealand resident mathematician within ten years of completion of her/his doctoral degree.

Another of the Mathematical Chronicle Committee's final acts was to agree that all issues of the Mathematical Chronicle should be scanned and made available online with the University of Auckland Library as well as

on the NZJM website within the Mathematics Department's website. At the same time the NZJM Committee agreed to the same being done for back issues of the NZJM not already online. At the time of writing all of these back issues are available through the Library's website and it is planned to make them available through the NZJM website as well.

David Gauld
July, 2014