

MEI has moved!!

During the holidays the Office of MEI has moved into larger accommodation to accommodate the increased office staff.

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From the Chief Executive**Thanks to OCR**

Dealing with this summer's results must rank among the most complicated tasks undertaken by an examination board. They had to grade parallel legacy and new modules to a uniform standard when they were being taken by quite different populations of candidates, and then they had to deal with all the complications that arose when candidates took a mixture of legacy and new modules. That things have gone smoothly is a great tribute to the professionalism of all involved and I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of MEI, to say thank you to OCR. A large team of people were involved and thanks are due to all of them, but I would particularly like to mention Sandie Fernand our Subject Officer and Ken Barley our Chair of Examiners.

New office

During August we moved into our new office just outside Westbury. This is the fourth office we have had during my time with MEI, each one much grander and more spacious than its predecessor. Not only does this new office provide much better working conditions for those permanently based there, Jo and Lynn, and Janice and Dave (who have a "Further Mathematics Network" banner in front of their desks), but it also provides us with space to hold meetings and seminars with 12 or more people. So it will be a real home base for MEI where we can host events with pride.

Roger Porkess

MEI websites update

The MEI website www.mei.org.uk has undergone a facelift. The site contains the latest news from MEI (including recent newsletters), details about MEI's projects and syllabuses (including competence statements), position papers, information about CPD, resources to support teaching, past-papers and contact details for MEI staff.

We hope that the new site allows teachers to access the information they want quickly and easily. Please visit the site regularly for up-to-date information.

The information site about the online resources (previously www.mei-distance.com) has moved to resources.mei.org.uk. This site allows access to the online resources and student record system. It also contains an explanation of how to use the resources.

Please send any comments about either site to tom.button@mei.org.uk

Tom Button
Online Learning & IT Coordinator

New post at Cadbury College

Cadbury Sixth Form College, Birmingham, are advertising for a Mathematics Outreach Worker for Birmingham. The post involves taking responsibility for the organisation and delivery of a comprehensive outreach programme. The person appointed will be an experienced classroom teacher, possessing a degree in Mathematics or an equivalent subject and a post graduate teaching qualification.

Applications, and further information may be obtained from the Vice Principal, Mrs Sheila Tallon, or from the Head of Mathematics, Mark Kent 0121 458 3898, or enquiry@cadcol.ac.uk

Applications should be received by the College no later than September 20th.

MEI Conference, 7—9 July, 2005—A delegate's experience.

I have been involved with the MEI modular scheme since Roger Porkess, my then Departmental Head, first discussed the system in the late 80's. However, this is only my third (consecutive) conference, preferring to go to the Munros of Scotland instead. I have missed a lot!

I have found what an invaluable inset course this is, as my choice of lectures indicate.

On the Thursday, Roger Porkess's introduction filled in all the gaps in the shifts and changes within the MEI secondary mathematics system (and GCSE) since last year. A taster, with plenty of ideas, for the next 48 hours. After coffee I marched off to Douglas Butler's ICT session, targeted because I have three brand new Interactive white boards coming during the summer holidays. I was bombarded with ideas. My Autograph horizons leapt into 3D. This alone will give me departmental feedback sessions until Christmas!! What a nice lunch.

Having taught Numerical Methods for the first time this year I sloped off to Michael Ling's NM coursework session hoping to pick up more ideas. I think it worked and now look forward to my second attempt.

The first guest speaker, Jennifer Piggott NRICH, gave a very good talk about enrichment within mathematics. I do find these talks inspire me with very good intentions of being more innovative: I will try... honest. Certainly it will fit in with the new ICT facilities – with the contrasting challenges she gave, I now see that I am a very visual mathematician. Dinner then the quiz in the bar hooray.

On Friday, I attended a Hodder presentation to view a cd of Core Mathematics Presentations. Good, but you can get lots on the internet like this, for free. During the next session I was able to quiz Bernard Murphy about the Teaching Advanced Mathematics Project targeted because our Head of PE wants to move across to mathematics teaching. Buzzing from this I went on to the next lecture to brush up on my Decision Mathematics. I come to the conference to learn as well as find information and the Decision Mathematics is a focus area... as is the Numerical Methods theme. So I also went to the NM Examiners Advice meeting. This proved useful for my own professional development and will affect my teaching strategies. The Guest Lecture, by Alan Slomson, rounded off my day with a talk on computer machine code linked to proof by contradiction.... Heavy stuff for an "applied" mathematician!!

Unfortunately the guest speaker did not arrive for the Dinner, but the food and social contact was good. I sat by some very entertaining, youthful (compared with me), maths staff from Skegness.

The Saturday morning tends to be a quiet affair – I don't know why because it is always good value. I first listened to Roger Porkess on the new pathways for mathematics which consolidated all the future ideas up to (my retirement?) 2009. Important stuff to know when talking to senior management. Finally the last speaker, Doug French from the MA, really rounded off the conference with an excellent talk on geometry. The use of ICT was stunning. I really must go in this direction in my teaching!

The beauty about the conference and the reason why I will continue to come is it ticks all the boxes:

- It is relatively cheap inset.
- There is a wide variety of session choices.
- The Guest lectures make me think outside my preferred mathematical world.
- I can input, as a user, into the MEI system.

And most important of all I can talk to teachers just like myself, administrators of the MEI scheme, and all those friendly faces all the way to the top of this excellent assessment scheme.... and feel listened to.

Derek Barker, Head of Mathematics, Denstone College

Examination Question Analyses

This is a revision resource for students. Each page contains the question, a model solution, notes and the comments of the Principal Examiner.

It is expected that the examinations for January 2005 will be available soon for Centres to use with their students. They will be offered as photocopyable masters for multiple production within the purchasing centre only, and also available on CD.

I regret to say that there have been problems with the production of these resources. Please consult the web-site for news of their availability. *Please* do not make an order until they are ready!!

The Further Mathematics Network

The setting up of the national Further Mathematics Network is now well underway. You can access up-to-date information via the MEI website. This will allow you to find out about developments in each Further Mathematics Centre across the country.

If you are from a school or college that teaches AS/A level Mathematics and/or Further Mathematics, use the web site to contact your local Further Mathematics Centre and register your institution with them. Please do get involved with your local Further Mathematics Centre. If you are not currently offering Further Mathematics, your local Further Mathematics Centre can help you to do so; if you are, you may be able to contribute by supporting students from other local schools and colleges.

Schools and colleges who have registered with their local Further Mathematics Centre qualify for free access to the on-line resources for all of the AS/A2 applied modules and the Further Pure modules (note that the AS/A2 Pure Core modules are only accessible by subscription). Students and teachers will also have access to study days and other events organised through their local Further Mathematics Centre.

Fantastic news from the Learning and Skills Council is that AS Further Mathematics entries were up by 27% this summer. I believe that the Mathematical Community, in particular MEI and the Mathematical Association, can claim a lot of credit for this through our tireless promotion of Further Mathematics and the development of the new AS Further Mathematics.

The new AS Further Mathematics opens up Further Mathematics to far more students because it is not dependent on any of the A2 Mathematics Core, so it can be taught alongside AS Mathematics in year 12, or taken up in year 13. ALL students intending to do a maths-related degree (engineering, sciences or mathematics itself) would benefit from it, not just the very high-fliers.

I believe that ALL schools and colleges with students studying AS/A level Mathematics should also have students studying for Further Mathematics qualifications. The Further Mathematics Network will help ensure this happens. Our aim is for 25 – 30% of Mathematics A level students to also complete a Further Mathematics qualification. This will more than double the current numbers.

Results from the pilot Further Mathematics Centres: Results in so far are just as good as last year, with many students achieving excellent grades and a high proportion going on to study strongly maths-related degrees. Once we know all of the results they will be published on the web site.

Online Resources

Resources to support all of the AS modules are complete and most of the standard A2 modules are now complete or virtually complete. Decision 2 resources are available and will be completed by the end of October half-term. Some Statistics 2 resources are available and these will be completed as soon as possible. FP2 resources are complete and FP3 resources will be ready for the New Year. More of the higher applied modules will become available over this academic year. Check the resources log-in page for up-to-date news.

The resources are continually updated and improved, with a particular emphasis on developing more interactive resources and more ideas for 'active learning'.

Subscription is £200 per institution per year, plus £3 for each individual student password, as last year. Please download an order form from the MEI website.

Charlie Stripp

Resource Material

Module Summaries

These summaries are intended as revision sheets for students. Each page contains topic points, references to the textbook, exercises to try from the book and further worked examples.

They are currently offered in two versions; Version A gives references to the old (2nd Edition) books and Version B to the new books.

They are offered as photocopyable masters for £30 a set—permission is given for multiple copies to be produced within the purchasing centre only.

For a supplement of £6 they are also offered on CD. They are written in Publisher2003 and so this version is useful only if you are able to read this software.

They have already proved immensely popular this session. Further modules will be prepared in time for the new Academic Year. Order forms are available from the Office.

The Teaching Advanced Mathematics Project

The Teaching Advanced Mathematics (TAM) programme continues to grow. This 17 month course, with five years funding from The Gatsby Charitable Foundation, is designed to support mathematics teachers who wish to teach A level mathematics for the first time.

The first group of teachers at Warwick University have just completed the course and are now submitting their portfolios. They will receive their postgraduate awards this term. A second cohort of 24 teachers enrolled in April. During the summer term and over the holidays they have been working through the content of AS Core from a teaching and learning perspective with website and email support. The first study day at Warwick took place last term with another coming up as this newsletter goes to print. The remaining study days take place on a Friday and Saturday towards the end of each term; with teachers coming from as far away as Penzance and Anglesey priority has been to minimise the travelling.

In response to the demand for places the course is now being offered at two additional universities both of which support teachers in the local area thereby allowing more face-to-face support.

22 teachers from the Greater Manchester area have enrolled at Manchester Metropolitan University. There is an expectation that, whilst on the course, participants are teaching some post-GCSE mathematics every week. As there are many 11-16 schools in Greater Manchester those in schools without sixth forms are teaching Additional Mathematics to year 11 groups rather than A level mathematics. In addition to the university sessions focusing on A level pedagogy, we are also offering extra sessions to support teachers learning the material whilst giving them an overview of how each topic fits into the bigger picture. Whilst on line learning has many advantages it also has limitations and the regular extra sessions go some way to overcoming these.

Towards the end of this term we shall be inviting applications for the course starting in January at London South Bank University. It is anticipated that this will be for those teaching in inner London only and will follow the MMU model using a mixture of whole day and twilight sessions.

When Gatsby funding comes to an end in 2008 it is expected that the course will become part of the national provision of CPD available to mathematics teachers. It may be the case that LEAs take a leading role in this provision and, with this in mind, we are now working with West Sussex LEA who, being aware of the need for this kind of professional development in their area, approached us with a view to offering a TAM style course to their teachers.

Further information about the course can be found on the MEI website, www.mei.org.uk If you or a colleague would be interested in applying for a place on the course please email me with a postal address and I shall ensure that you receive application forms as soon as they become available.

Bernard Murphy

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