

IRISH MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY

President's Report 2010

In Society news, Richard Timoney will leave the committee at the end of 2010 and I would like to express my gratitude to him for his outstanding service on the committee. Martin Mathieu leaves his post as editor of the Bulletin at the end of 2010—he leaves with the gratitude of the Society for a job well done. From January 2011 Tony O'Farrell will take up the reins at the Bulletin and the Society is fortunate to have such able and committed editors to call on. Our September meeting was held this year in DIT and was a great success. As well as our September meeting, we have continued our programme of conference support and I encourage any prospective organisers of conferences in 2011 to submit applications for funding to our treasurer as soon as possible.

The economic downturn has affected our members in many ways, with hiring freezes and pay cuts being some of the more obvious. In February 2010 we saw another proposed cutback with the announcement by IreL of wide ranging cuts to electronic journal access in seven of our universities—mathematics was particularly affected by the proposed cuts. The IMS, along with the RIA and representatives from the universities was involved in discussions with IreL which will hopefully ensure that we have continued access to these valuable resources. Incidents such as this serve to highlight the fact that the IMS has an important role to play in representing the interests of mathematicians in Ireland.

More recently, mathematics has been in the public spotlight again with the announcement of the so called “bonus points scheme” for higher level leaving certificate mathematics. A lively discussion on this issue took place at our AGM in September. While the IMS has subsequently publicly supported the introduction of a bonus points scheme, many of our members have reservations, especially concerning the details of the proposed scheme. It is clear that there is a crisis in second level mathematical education in Ireland and it is to be hoped that our politicians will provide the resources to back up the introduction of bonus points with a corresponding improvement in the level of second level mathematics teaching.

As I come to the end of my term as president, I would like to thank all the members and especially the committee members for

their support and I look forward to meeting everyone in late August in Limerick.

James Cruickshank
Galway, January 19, 2011.