Editorial

When Steve Abbott (following his appointment as an HMI), rang me up in 2001 to ask me if I was interested in taking over from him as the Editor of *The Mathematical Gazette,* I was extremely flattered to be considered for the post, although I did not realise that it would occupy such a significant portion of my life. My first *Gazette* was in July 2002, and this will be my final issue, making (if my arithmetic is correct) a total of 71.

I describe in my first editorial the process of being 'induced' by Steve in Felixstowe and then driving home with a car full of office equipment, including ledgers, marker pens and box files, and, most important of all, what seemed like a large number of mathematical papers in different stages of processing. Gradually I learnt what was required from the Editor of such a distinguished journal, and I must record my thanks to my Head of Department and my school in allowing me to carry out my duties as Editor as well as using my pigeonhole as a repository for new submissions. Everything, at that time, was done using the postal service. Nearly all of the material came from the UK, and the editorial work proceeded at a fairly leisurely pace.

This all changed with the coming of the Internet. Not only did this allow contributors to send material from all corners of the world, but the pace of operations – from submission, through peer review, revision and eventual acceptance (or rejection) – accelerated significantly. I retired from the classroom in 2013 and since then have worked from home. I am and remain very grateful to my school, and in particular my Heads of Department, for supporting me.

Editing a journal is a cooperative enterprise, and I must now record my thanks to many people who have contributed to its success. First of all, there are the authors, who have sent me so many stimulating articles, and have often been asked to revise their work to make it presentable. I should also acknowledge the grace shown by authors whose work was not deemed appropriate. Next in line for my gratitude is a wonderful team of referees whose advice on the appropriateness of submissions is invaluable. Often they have had to review several re-writes before something becomes publishable. With referees retiring, and the number of submissions increasing, their job is becoming more demanding than ever.

Next in line, I must record my gratitude to a variety of volunteers with specific roles. These include the Reviews Editors who have ensured that the journal carries insightful commentary on new books and the editors of the two Problem Corners who supply a stream of stimulating material for both young and old readers. Then there are the Assistant Editors whose role is to check that typeset material is accurate and appropriate in respect of house style. This is essential if the journal is going to present a consistent format across the entire range of published material. Seemingly trivial issues ranging from the numbering of equations to the formatting and order of references are important if the journal is to present a coherent house style. The names of all

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these individuals, who are too many to name individually, appear at the front of each issue of the *Gazette*. I am also very grateful to the staff at the MA Office for all their work in supporting the journal. Without this team, I would not have been able to do my work as Editor with any confidence.

Finally, very special thanks are due to Bill Richardson, without whose unflagging support and judgement my job would have been impossible. He has fastidiously typeset every detail of each individual issue of the journal. In particular, his excellent geometrical diagrams are an asset which require meticulous attention to detail and a willingness to improvise – for example, when a label in a figure requires moving in order to clarify a configuration. This is not something which you can rely on software to accomplish; it needs imagination and resourcefulness in equal measure. The same applies to tables, equations and in-text diagrams as well as the cover of each issue, which often requires a great deal of imagination if it is to look right. More that this, Bill and I regularly engage in lengthy phone calls in order to correct typeset material on the basis of comments from authors. This personal touch is essential, in my view, to the excellence of the journal which it was been my pleasure and my privilege to edit over the last twenty-three years.

The new Editor of the *Gazette* will be Peter Rowlett. He will introduce himself in the March 2026 issue, but we have already been working together and I hope he enjoys his editorial role as much as I have.

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