

## Editorial

**A**s you may have seen in the February issue of *Mathematics Today* our President, Dr Nira Chamberlain, wants to encourage mathematicians to embrace a stronger mathematical identity and to maintain this throughout their career (see [tinyurl.com/Interview-NC](http://tinyurl.com/Interview-NC)). As he pointed out ‘one of the challenges after a mathematics degree is that you get called all these different titles’ and not often mathematician. As a member of the IMA you not only gain recognition of your qualifications and professional experience, but also assert your identity as a mathematician. We want to encourage young mathematicians to establish their mathematical identities early on through engagement with IMA, and to help established professionals increase recognition in their field while remaining true to their roots. Your membership enables us to provide this support and to make a difference for current and future mathematicians.

We understand the importance of supporting and engaging students and demonstrating the different and exciting mathematics and its applications. We do this at events such as the Big Bang Science Fair, the Festival of Mathematics and its Applications and New Scientist Live; and we also offer an e16plus newsletter – subscribe for free at [tinyurl.com/e16plus](http://tinyurl.com/e16plus). The newsletter is designed for aspiring mathematicians aged 16–19 and features a variety of information and news about mathematics such as updates on mathematical activities, information on the use of mathematics in the real world, and competitions. We also run the MathsCareers.org website which is aimed at anyone who has an interest in mathematics. It includes examples of mathematical applications, profiles of working mathematicians in various fascinating careers, ideas for mathematical themed days out and much more. The site also includes areas where teachers and careers advisors can gain access to quizzes, downloadable materials, mathematical activities and links to many other great resources.

We established the Academic Representatives scheme over three years ago, which plays an active role in promoting the IMA and membership to students and colleagues within UK universities. We now have 55 representatives at 53 universities with whom we work closely to help support their mathematics students and graduates. We provide the representatives with additional copies of *Mathematics Today* to make available to their students, a bi-monthly newsletter and a dedicated communication network to share information and ideas. It is at this time that students start to forge their identity as mathematicians; to support this we offer a free eStudent newsletter, which contains a mix of mathematics news and events, careers advice and helpful links – subscribe for free at [tinyurl.com/eStudentNews](http://tinyurl.com/eStudentNews). We also maintain a Student Blog ([ima.org.uk/ima-student-blog](http://ima.org.uk/ima-student-blog)) on our website which contains advice and support for students throughout their time at university covering all aspects of career planning. We provide materials for university freshers’ fairs and run an annual programme of visits to deliver mathematics careers talks, and support Mathematics Societies by offering grants of £400 to help build their membership and activities programmes.



Caroline Irwin Promoting the IMA

Our work with our academic members includes hosting an annual Academic Representatives Forum which features a number of presentations, and provides our members with the opportunity to come together to share ideas and network. We also support the universities via our programme accreditation scheme: through this, universities can make their mathematics undergraduates aware that such professional recognition is available to them and assist them in their first steps to gaining this. We recognise achievement and further promote mathematical identity by offering UK universities the opportunity to annually nominate their two best graduates to be awarded a year’s free Associate Membership of the

IMA. This has proved very popular with our academic colleagues and in 2019 we awarded 51 such memberships.

Along with growing your professional recognition as you progress through the membership grades, you can strengthen your mathematical identity by declaring your professional status through Chartership. As you may know, we offer a route to three different chartered designations: Chartered Mathematician, Chartered Mathematics Teacher and Chartered Scientist. Our engagement with the professional community involves us working closely with industry via our Corporate Affiliates Scheme, which we offer to organisations that wish to demonstrate their commitment to mathematics, value their mathematically trained staff, and are committed to their continuing professional development. We offer approval for training programmes to help their mathematicians work towards gaining the skills and competences for Chartership. Our Professional Affairs Committee gives our Corporate Affiliates’ members a platform to inform and shape best practices and standards. We also promote and



Dr Nira Chamberlain speaking at the 2017 Academic Reps Forum

share best practice through our annual Employers' Forums ([ima.org.uk/events/employers-forum](http://ima.org.uk/events/employers-forum)). These are hosted jointly by IMA and our Corporate Affiliates and have included a range of topics such as: Employability of Graduates; Motivating and Rewarding Chartership; Diversity, Inclusivity and Employability and most recently Knowledge Exchange. Over the years our members have commented that it can be difficult to find opportunities to communicate across disciplines and employment sectors. The forums give Industry, Academia and individuals in general the opportunity to network and share ideas and expertise.

Regional Branches continue to be important in providing support to our members, promoting mathematics, and giving mathematicians the opportunity to come together with like-minded people. They are run by committees of local members, and host a varied programme of events through the year, as well as providing regional networking opportunities. We currently support six local UK IMA branches: East Midlands, London, North West, Scottish, West Midlands and West of England. We also run an annual conferences programme on various mathematical subjects. Included in this programme are the Early Careers Conferences which are aimed at students and recent graduates but are open to anyone. The programmes for these events generally include talks and career profiles, but they all have a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and offer the opportunity for mathematicians from all walks of life to come together to network and participate in discussions and workshops. Don't forget, as a member you get a discounted fee for all our conferences.

Maintaining your mathematical identity can be difficult if you are working in multi-disciplinary teams where you may be the only mathematician on a project or even in the organisation. Our membership portal myIMA (<https://my.ima.org.uk>) contains a platform in which our members can find other mathematicians to

consult and collaborate with. As members update their profiles we are hoping this Membership Directory will become a useful tool to connect our members with each other. The directory can include your interests and expertise, contacts, work details and links to your individual web and LinkedIn pages. It is up to you how much you want to include, the default is simply your name and membership grade. You can log on to myIMA now to complete and share your profile.<sup>1</sup>

These are just some of the ways that your membership is working for mathematics. We are pleased that our numbers have been increasing over the past few years: in the last year alone we recruited 916 new members and assisted 96 existing members in transferring their membership to a higher grade. This gives us a stronger voice and enables us to continue to support mathematicians and mathematical identity. At the end of 2019 we had 5525 members, which is the highest we have achieved in recent history. This is great news as none of this is possible without you, our members. We thank you for your support for mathematics and the mathematical community.

**Caroline Irwin and Alan Peacock**  
IMA Membership Manager and Assistant Director

## Notes

- 1 Visit [ima.org.uk](http://ima.org.uk) to log into myIMA. You will then see a link to your profile where you can update your details. The Membership Directory can be found under the membership tab at top of the page. When you choose your Directoty Options, the choices will include **Limited Profile**: LinkedIn Profile and Webpage, and **Full Profile**: LinkedIn Profile, Webpage, Interests and Expertise, Job Title and Place of Work. Please note as a member you already have an account on myIMA and your contact email is your username.

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