

An Evening with the ECMs – Celebrating 20 Years

This year we mark 20 years since the first IMA Early Career Mathematicians (ECM) conference. Since then, the ECM Committee has become an integral part of the IMA, providing a network for early career mathematicians in industry, academia and teaching through activities to attract, retain and grow the future talent pool of mathematicians who will serve the IMA and wider community.

ECMs offer a variety of events, workshops and networking sessions to help new mathematicians feel welcome and have a professional home; such IMA involvement also helps develop knowledge, skills and professional competencies which can benefit their career development. Many have gone on to senior roles within the IMA committees and/or their organisations.

Therefore, it was a pleasure to welcome current and former ECM members to a special evening event, after the March Council meeting, to share future plans, stories and encourage new interest.



IMA Chair Robyn introduces the ECM Committee

The evening was hosted by the IMA's VP for Communications and former ECM member, Nathan Turner CMath MIMA. We were joined by Robyn Goldsmith, ECM Chair, and co-opted committee members Thomas Hobson CMath MIMA and James Van Yperen AMIMA, for an overview of the committee's current activities and plans. The evening ended with an engaging talk from former ECM Chair Karrie Liu CMath FIMA.

Robyn began by providing an overview of the ECM Committee, highlighting the representation from academia, teaching and industry and wider diversity of members. Robyn then provided some fun insights into ECM Committee members past and present with a little quiz, asking:

- Which previous ECM Committee member became President?
- Which committee member did Peter Andre once buy a doughnut for?
- Which ECM Committee member has had a rugby stadium named after them?
- Which committee member met HRH Queen Elizabeth II?
- And which has met the King of Spain?

We won't give away any answers here, you can view the video online to find out!

Then Tom highlighted ECM activities for the academic and teaching community, now focused on shorter, snappier events. A great success has been the 'Ideas Exchange' aimed at those new to teaching maths and stats in higher education, introducing the different bodies who provide support, such as TALMO, Sigma and the IMA. The BAMC Icebreaker event has also helped early career attendees make connections before the conference (see next page). New plans include a competition for undergraduates; encouraging involvement in the IMA Exponential Mentoring Scheme, and further teaching maths advice.

Next, James gave an update on industry liaison on behalf of Paige Pearson MIMA who was unable to attend. He noted the success of the IMA Virtual Maths Teas as the timings seem to work well for those working in industry. Upcoming events will focus on career development themes. A new podcast is also planned, led by Nathan, discussing the skills that employers are seeking, along with mini 'sandpits' to bring together undergraduates and IMA Corporate Affiliates to hear about working in industry.

'What is ...?' sessions, such as 'What is a Maths Consultant?', are also being introduced so that IMA members can share their expertise. A careers and employability fair with a difference is also in the pipeline. The committee would also love to hear from recent graduates embarking on their career in industry and support the transition from studying to employment.

James also highlighted the committee's commitment to EDI, working closely with the EDI Champion Howard Haughton CMath FIMA, and developing a special outreach project to create a Maths Scout/Guiding badge for children.

Robyn introduced new ECM 'Subgroups' (see next page) to encourage input from those who can't commit to a full committee role and capture new ideas for ECM events and activities.

Karrie then gave an inspiring account of her career. She highlighted the changing perceptions of mathematics since her graduation, gaining acceptance as data science becomes more widely understood. As a mathematics graduate who became inspired to work in healthcare after the death of a loved one, she joined the NHS as a data analyst, excelling in the role (and Excel spreadsheets). She eventually took an MSc, returning to the NHS before starting her own consultancy. The IMA became very important to Karrie, offering a place where she could continue learning about mathematics through the magazine, conferences and meeting like-minded people. She also gained CMath and was interviewed for *Mathematics Today* (see ima.org.uk/15137/interview-with-karrie-liu-cmath-fima), the latter leading to a request to join the University of York's Industry Liaison Board. As ECM Chair, Karrie developed many skills and made fantastic contacts.

Karrie continues to support the next generation through her charity work, and invited a Year 13 student to present her NHS analytics work at the 2023 IMA Employers' Forum. She is passionate about the ECM Committee and the opportunities getting involved can bring. See the talks in full on our IMAmaths YouTube Channel – scan the QR code.



Rosalind Azouzi
Executive Director