



INI-ICMS Correspondents Day 2018 Report

This first Correspondents Day following the revamping of the Network and the extension of its scope to incorporate ICMS was a great success. Turnout was high (50 attendees) and particular thanks must go to the four Correspondents from Scotland and two from Wales who attended for travelling from further afield.

It was a pleasure to welcome back to the Isaac Newton Institute a number of Correspondents who have been regular attendees of past Correspondents Days including Tomasz Brzeziński (Swansea), Andrew Burbanks (Portsmouth), Paul Hammond (Schlumberger), Antal Jarai (Bath), Shahn Majid (QMUL), Ben Mestel (Open University) and Frank Neumann (Leicester), as well as a healthy influx of new Correspondents who joined us for the first time.

Following opening remarks from Directors David Abrahams (INI) and Paul Glendinning (ICMS), Andrew Bourne, Associate Director of EPSRC, gave a most engaging talk on the Mathematical Landscape in the UK in the light of Brexit, the 2015 Mathematical Infrastructure Review and of course the transition to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). He talked about the funding opportunities available with e.g. Global Challenges Research Fund and the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. Correspondents reported that they found this and the update on the Review of Knowledge Exchange for Mathematical Sciences very helpful and informative.

The topic of discussion for the breakout groups was strategies for promoting diversity, and in particular gender balance, across the mathematical sciences in the UK. The session was introduced by INI Deputy Director Christie Marr who presented for discussion a draft of the 2018 INI Gender Balance Action Plan, and by Liz Mansfield (Kent), Vice President of the IMA, who gave an inspiring and thought-provoking talk finishing with a slide on how to avoid the “female participant/speaker bingo” game, a copy of which is appended at the end of this document. Liz gave some examples of how “money talks” including in particular the impact of the threat to withhold government research funds from departments not having an Athena Swan award. In her concluding remarks, Liz proposed that the application process for INI/ICMS events include a statement, from the proposers, about their active practice concerning inclusivity and that that inclusivity should include not just invitations to participate, speak and collaborate, but also inclusive citation practices.

The views expressed by Correspondents were very varied and we are most grateful to the Breakout Group Chairs, Peter Challenor (Exeter), Sophie Huczynska (St Andrews), Sofia Olhede (UCL, Royal Statistical Society) and Emily Walsh (UWE) for the summaries that they provided during the feedback session

and also to Chair of Correspondents, Ulrike Tilmann (Oxford) for her expert Chairing of that session.

The following points were raised during the discussion session:

Participation Rates

There was an extended discussion and diverse opinions on the merits or otherwise of imposing targets (hard or soft) for female participation rates.

- Some Correspondents felt that non-diverse programmes should automatically be rejected but others felt that this would skew the science. Some suggested that financial incentives and/or penalties be introduced to encourage organisers to increase female participation rates.
- The group converged upon the following, but without uniform agreement:
 - Each programme should have at least one female organizer.
 - There should be a soft target of a 25% participation rate for programme participants but a hard target of 10% ie any proposal that comes in with fewer than 10% female potential participants should be sent back for revision.
 - There should be at least one female referee per proposal.
 - It was felt that it was important to collect data as to why people are not participating in INI and ICMS programmes.

Governance

- It was noted that the gender balance for both INI's Scientific Steering Committee and its Management Committee exceed 25%.
- It was suggested that some members of INI's committees are selected following an advertising and appointments procedure. ICMS already adopts this process.
- Another suggestion was that when organisations are approached and asked for nominations they should be asked to nominate for consideration both a male candidate and a female candidate.

Environment

- It was commented that not everyone knows that INI can provide family friendly accommodation and financial support. This should be stated more clearly on the website and should be championed by the organisers.
- It was remarked that it would be helpful were there a family friendly space near the Institute.
- One Correspondent observed that although INI can help find schools near the Institute sometimes that doesn't always solve the problem because the child would lose their place at the home school.

Unconscious Bias Training and Diversity

- The majority opinion was that the Unconscious Bias Modules produced by Harvard are the best and that these should be adopted by INI and ICMS. There was not uniform acceptance of the benefits of unconscious bias training.

- It was felt that INI should require (some or all?) programme organisers to complete an unconscious bias training module.
- Some Correspondents thought that all participants should be expected to complete some unconscious bias training prior to their arrival at the Institute but others felt this to be impracticable.
- It was suggested that INI and ICMS introduce a mechanism (via their websites) whereby those from minority groups who wish to participate in a programme or workshop can apply via the institute rather than approaching the organisers.
- There was a brief discussion about how GCRF money might be used to bring mathematicians from Africa to INI.

There now follows:

- A timetable for the day;
- A list of attendees; and
- A copy of the female participant/speaker “bingo” game.

Table 1: The Timetable for Correspondents Day

12:00 - 12.45	<i>Lunch</i>
12:45 - 13:00	Welcome - Prof David Abrahams, Director, Isaac Newton Institute - Prof Paul Glendinning, Scientific Director, ICMS
13:00 - 14:00	Keynote Talk: The Mathematical Landscape in the UK - Dr Andrew Bourne, Associate Director, EPSRC
14:00 - 14:20	Introduction to break out discussions: Diversity in the Mathematical Sciences - Dr Christie Marr, Deputy Director, Isaac Newton Institute - Prof Liz Mansfield, University of Kent, Vice President IMA
14:20 - 14:45	<i>Coffee Break</i>
14:45 - 15:45	Break out discussions
15:45 - 16:30	Reporting and Feedback Session
16:30 - 17:30	<i>Wine Reception</i>

Table 2: Correspondents Day Attendees and their Institutions

Attendee	Institution
Professor David Abrahams	Isaac Newton Institute
Dan Aspel	Isaac Newton Institute
Dr Alex Bartel	University of Glasgow
Dr Wolfram Bentz	University of Hull
Dr Katie Blaney	EPSRC
Dr Horatio Boedihardjo	University of Reading
Dr Andrew Bourne	EPSRC
Professor Tomasz Brzeziński	Swansea University
Dr Andrew Burbanks	Portsmouth University
Dr Edmund Chadwick	University of Salford
Profesor Peter Challenor	University of Exeter
Dr Colin Christopher	Plymouth University
Professor Peter Clarkson	University of Kent
Dr Chris Dent	University of Edinburgh
Dr Robert Douglas	Aberystwyth University
Professor Paul Glendinning	ICMS
Professor Victor Goryunov	University of Liverpool
Dr Georgi Grahovski	University of Essex
Dr Paul Hammond	Schlumberger Limited
Richard Hibbs	OR Society
Professor CJ Howls	University of Southampton
Dr Ostap Hryniv	University of Durham
Dr Sophie Huczynska	University of St Andrews
Dr Antal Jarai	University of Bath
Professor Edward Kissin	London Metropolitan University
Dr Gandalf Lechner	Institute of Physics
Professor Niall MacKay	University of York
Dr Kirill MacKenzie	University of Sheffield
Professor Shahn Majid	QMUL
Professor Elizabeth Mansfield	University of Kent
Dr Stan Marée	John Innes Centre
Dr Christie Marr	Isaac Newton Institute
Dr Alexandre Martin	Heriot-Watt University
Dr Jock McOrist	University of Surrey
Dr Ben Mestel	The Open University
Professor Anatoly Neishtadt	Loughborough University
Professor Frank Neumann	University of Leicester
Professor Sofia Olhede	Royal Statistical Society
Professor Nigel Peake	IMA
Mr Peter Ransom	Mathematical Association

Professor Alastair Rucklidge	University of Leeds
Samantha Skehel	Isaac Newton Institute
Professor Enrico Scalas	University of Sussex
Dr Alexey Sevastyanov	University of Aberdeen
Professor Victor Shrira	Keele University
Dr Igor Smolyarenko	Brunel University
Dr Hendrik Suess	University of Manchester
Professor Ulrike Tilmann	Chair of Correspondents
Dr Amanda Turner	University of Lancaster
Jane Walker	ICMS

Table 3: Liz Mansfield's Female Participant/Speaker "BINGO" Game

Women just aren't interested in this field	There were not enough qualified female speakers	We need big name speakers and few of those are women	It's a male dominated field	There aren't a lot of women in C-level positions
Both women we called were booked that weekend	Both women we booked bailed out at the last minute	All the women were probably busy	Female speakers are always burnt out from speaking too much	Trying to get more female speakers is sexist
The organisers just wanted to get the best speakers they could find	You can't kick out a male speaker just to fit a woman in there	BINGO	You can't shoehorn in a woman where she doesn't fit	Women never volunteer to present
You have to be bold; people are not just going to invite you to present	Women are shy	Women only ever want to talk about women-stuff	Women need to act more like men	No one has complained about this before
Attendees want to hear from people like themselves	Well, there are not that many female attendees, either	We are only responding to demand	Fine, YOU tell me who they should have invited	Who? I've never heard of her.