

WELCOME to a celebration of 50 years of our journal *Mathematics Teaching*

As well as *MT*'s 50th anniversary giving us cause to reflect on the journal's contribution to mathematics education, this issue marks a watershed in *MT*'s history. *MT193* is the last *MT* in its current form. From January 2006, *Micromath* and *Mathematics Teaching* combine to become one inclusive journal for our association.

When we planned this issue we didn't know that this would be the case. It does now seem to be an auspicious occasion. It is also Barbara Ball's last issue as Professional Officer [read her on p22]. So perhaps this merger was 'meant to be'? It does have an air of serendipity in its timing. In putting together this issue, we have tried to look both forwards and backwards. This has been interesting, as we have also been planning what the new journal might contain.

ATM – which to begin with was called the Association for Teaching Aids in Mathematics (ATAM) – was founded in 1952 by a group of enthusiasts led by Caleb Gattegno and Roland Collins. The twelve founding members responded to a notice in the *Mathematical Gazette*, journal of the Mathematical Association, inviting the formation of a teachers' cooperative to produce teaching aids. In the following year ATAM had 150 members, one of whom was Trevor Fletcher who at the time was a lecturer at St John Cass College. Trevor was a pioneer maker of mathematical films and the instigator of the first book by members of the Association. He later became senior HMI for mathematics and *MT*'s first editor. It is Trevor we have to thank for reminding us of the 50th anniversary of *MT*. He writes on page 8 [1].

A *Bulletin* produced by Roland Collins preceded *MT*. In the first *Bulletin* dated January 1953 there is a plea for scripts for filmstrips and details of mechanical models to be prepared for sale to members. [2] The roots of 'teaching aids' are still strong in our Association, through the pages of our journal, our publications and within the Workshop at our annual conference. Read Phil Boorman, the main mover and shaker of the Workshop, on his desire to expand this further – Phil's bus! (p42).

Caleb Gattegno's influence on many ATM members has been profound. He urged ATM members to transform the teaching of mathematics from 1952 to his farewell address to our conference

in 1988. Alf Coles' powerful piece (p4) discusses the significance of Gattegno's writings today. Keep checking the website for more of Gattegno's words.

We have invited previous editors to consider the role *MT* has played in developing the quality of what happens in mathematics classrooms over the past 50 years. Several of the authors in this issue refer to previously published *MT* articles and we have made many of these available as downloadable pdf files on our website. Which was your most influential *MT* article? Please contact us if you have any additional *MT* material that you would like to see made available on the website.

What has changed since 1955? Where to start? The publication of materials for teachers – apparatus, equipment, lesson plans, software, schemes of work ... , has exploded out of all proportion to what we are able – or may even wish – to use. What of materials by teachers? This is *MT*'s role. Teaching can be a solitary occupation. The journal provides a forum for exchanging stories by teachers in order for us all to better understand the craft of teaching. Keep your stories coming in. What might a mathematics classroom look like in 50 years time? What do I want my maths classroom to be like?

In 1972 Dick Tahta wrote: '*After a decade of drastic changes in mathematics teaching, the very generation of teachers that sustained those changes seems to have lost its inquiring voice. And in tired reaction seems to be demanding framework, structure, constraint, criterion for judgement, assessment and so on.*' [4]

We certainly have all these 30 years later. But does ATM – and by definition *MT* – have an inquiring voice? And what boundaries are both ATM and *MT* pushing today towards humanising mathematics education for *learners* in schools?

'Let us begin with the learner, not with the teacher and the teachers' courses, or the regulations and the curriculum. Let's begin with the learners.'

Caleb Gattegno [3, p14]

On the penultimate page of this final issue we look forward to the new combined journal. It is interesting that ATM is now producing one inclusive journal when everything around us in education seems to be increasingly fragmented. Happy 50th birthday *MT*.

Helen Williams, editor of MT.

Notes

- 1 With thanks to Dick Tahta for this information.
- 2 *ATAM Bulletin No 1*, January 1953.
- 3 C. Gattegno: *A Gattegno anthology*; (eds L Brown, D. Hewitt, D. Tahta) ATM, 1988
- 4 D. Tahta writing on C. Gattegno; *A prelude to the science of education*; *MT59*, summer 1972, p.37

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Membership of the ATM will help you through

*Now, this bit is
important - you
must read this*

- Six issues per year of a professional journal, which focus on the learning and teaching of maths. Ideas for the classroom, personal experiences and shared thoughts about developing learners' understanding.
- Professional development courses tailored to your needs. Agree the content with us and we do the rest.
- Easter conference, which brings together teachers interested in learning and teaching mathematics, with excellent speakers and workshops and seminars led by experienced facilitators.
- Regular e-newsletters keeping you up to date with developments in the learning and teaching of mathematics.
- Generous discounts on a wide range of publications and software.
- A network of mathematics educators around the United Kingdom to share good practice or ask advice.
- Active campaigning. The ATM campaigns at all levels towards: encouraging increased understanding and enjoyment of mathematics; encouraging increased understanding of how people learn mathematics; encouraging the sharing and evaluation of teaching and learning strategies and practices; promoting the exploration of new ideas and possibilities and initiating and contributing to discussion of and developments in mathematics education at all levels.
- Representation on national bodies helping to formulate policy in mathematics education.
- Software demonstrations by arrangement.

Personal members get the following additional benefits:

- Access to a members only part of the popular ATM website giving you access to sample materials and up to date information.
- Advice on resources, curriculum development and current research relating to mathematics education.
- Optional membership of a working group being inspired by working with other colleagues on a specific project.
- Special rates at the annual conference
- Information about current legislation relating to your job.
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Additional benefits

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