Jayne Stansfield brings news of flourishing branches, and sends an invitation to set up a branch.

Two years ago I joined GC and was given the job of ‘Branch Champion’ as George Knights, the then General Secretary, called it. George felt that branches are an important way of ensuring that members can take an active part in ATM by meeting up with new and old friends, sharing ideas; working on interesting mathematics and being challenged to think in new ways. My role was to re-invigorate branches by finding out what was happening around the country.

Since then I have visited several branches within reach of Bristol. This has been fascinating. Branches don’t need re-invigorating! All the branches I have visited have been organised differently, but there are strong common themes. Branch co-ordinators and their teams are full of enthusiasm and really believe their branches are worthwhile.

Across the country the range of sessions is phenomenal. For example, Charlie Gilderdale’s session on NRICH at Birmingham was packed to the rafters with teachers and students from Birmingham and beyond. Charlie presented some number patterns and very quickly got us making conjectures and investigating our own questions, until we discovered we were working on a well known mathematical concept from a completely different perspective to usual. It was an extremely thought provoking evening, as was Stephanie Prestage and Pat Perks’ Saturday morning workshop on Isosceles Triangles at Meridian branch (Reading) and a Saturday morning at The Marches which had a choice of sessions to attend. Some members of my local branch, Avon, wrote about a recent meeting in MT222. There is so much happening perhaps what was needed was more about re-invigorating GC’s interest in branches!

Last year I set up a new branch in Bath, initially as a means of enabling my ex-students to meet up having finished their PGCEs, although it is open to everyone. We have had five meetings on topics ranging from ‘Origami’ to ‘Engaging learners in mathematics’. Teachers from local schools are attending, as are MaST trainees, students from various education courses and LA advisers, proving the demand is there for what ATM can offer. Local branches are also an ideal way for ATM and MA to work together. Many are already joint ATM/MA branches.

It has been great to meet so many people who want to start branches in their area and being able to offer support. Andrew Davies’s East Manchester branch is planning to launch properly in the new Academic year. Heather Prendergast is working on getting a branch up and running in Hertfordshire, whilst Carol Knights and Alison Clark-Wilson are working towards getting a Solent branch off the ground, and Chris Messenger is on the case in West London. Meeting details will appear on the website when they area available, contact details are already there so get in touch if you can offer any help. www.atm.org.uk/branches/

Conference is a great time to get together, whilst branches enable you to stay in touch between conferences and if you can’t get to conference.

At conference this Easter, Cambridgeshire people wanted a branch and started to talk to each other about how they could do it. If you are one of these budding organisers I would love an update. Also Abha Chaudhary made her first ever visit, not only to conference, but also to England. She has gone back to India absolutely determined that there will shortly be an Indian chapter of ATM.

Take a look at the map to find your nearest branch. www.aardvarkmap.net/mapc/Z98TALMJ Meeting details will be on the website.

Not one near enough for you? Then contact me and I can put you in contact with other members in your locality.

All established, and some anticipated branches, are contactable via the website. You can contact me on branchesofficer@atm.org.uk and the office on branches@atm.org.uk for any branch-related issue.

Meeting up with so many people at branch events has been fantastic and I hope to visit several more branches very soon. Hopefully I’ll see you at one of them.

Jayne Stansfield is Branches Coordinator for General Council ATM.
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.
• Tax deductible personal subscription, making it even better value

Additional benefits

The ATM is constantly looking to improve the benefits for members. Please visit www.atm.org.uk regularly for new details.

LINK: www.atm.org.uk/join/index.html