

Bulletin Issue 8 May 2012

Editorial

As we near the end of another season a sincere vote of thanks is due to Joe Newbold who once again has arranged another of series of first class lectures. This year's public lecture was a great success and attracted a number of Rencombe College students shown here with our chairman and Johnathon Porritt.



Members

We welcome the following members who have joined the Society since the previous Bulletin: Kevin Carr Briggs, Chris Stevens, Michael Garratt, Poppy Turner, Penny Gear, Rosemary Bailey, Bob Merrill, Danny Mills, Clare Finnimore, Cas Boddam-Whetham, Richard Banks and Brian Horton.

Forthcoming Events

The eleventh Times Cheltenham Science Festival will take place on 12-17 June 2012. The programme opens with a discussion of research into the effects the sun has on earth's climate and once again includes an impressive range of topics: details can be found on cheltenhamfestivals.com. For those of you who also have an interest in music, the Music Festival, which runs from

the 4 -15 July, includes four events exploring what it takes for the human body to sing or play a musical instrument.

News/Comments

Work is now complete on building a new world-class facility in Bristol that will bring together leading industry experts and academics in the growing area of composites research and manufacture.

The National Composites Centre constructed at the Science Park, or S-Park, in Emerson's Green, between Bristol and Bath, is a collaboration between the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and the University of Bristol. So far Vestas, Rolls Royce, AgustaWestland, Airbus UK, and GKN have committed to participate in the centre. It will also forge links with other centres of advanced manufacturing expertise across the UK.

The new 6000m² Centre houses leading industry researchers and engineers and provide manufacturing facilities at an industrial scale, capable of building prototypes to validate design concepts and rapid manufacturing processes. The centre has a cross-sectoral focus providing workshop space, open plan offices, meeting rooms and teaching facilities.

Are scientists getting younger? A ten-year boy, Linus Hovmöller, is believed to be the youngest named author of a scientific paper published by the Royal Society. He helped his father crack the problem of identifying the structure of four types of "quasicrystal that until recently had not been thought to exist.

Suggested Reading

Members have identified two books which might be of interest. The first is "The Archimedes Codex" by Reviel Netz and William Noel. Part detective work and part adventure the authors tell the tale of the history and discovery of the oldest surviving manuscript of Archimedes of Syracuse which contains the world's greatest Palimpsest. The book is available from Cheltenham Lending Library or can be purchased from Amazon in both book and Kindle form. For those who want to delve further, look for Archimedes Stomachion Construction and possibly the Antikythera Mechanism on the internet. The second book is "The Hockey Stick and the Climate Wars" by Michael E Mann published this year. It is a blow by blow account of the long term and still on-going assault on climate science in the US. This started following the inclusion in the 2001 UN report on climate change of the Hockey Stick graph showing that global temperatures have risen in conjunction with the increase in industrialisation and the use of fossil fuels. It is a very disturbing story about what can happen to research scientists when their findings pose a threat to major corporate and political interests.

Visit Reports

In October last year nine members visited the National Coal Museum of Wales-The Big Pit. The journey through the Forest of Dean and over the Blorenge Mountain was an event in itself. After two days of torrential rain, the air was unusually clear, so we enjoyed spectacular views of the Severn Estuary across to the North Somerset coast. The brilliant sunlight was soon contrasted by the total darkness of the mine, when the lights were extinguished during the underground tour. Apart from the pit itself there was plenty to interest the engineers and scientists above ground. The Tour and exhibits are suitable for 8 to 80 year olds, so if you have children or Grandchildren, this would be a day of enjoyable education

Tailpiece

To date Mathematics has been conspicuous in its absence from Tailpiece so I hope the following will amuse.

After explaining to a student through various lessons and examples that:

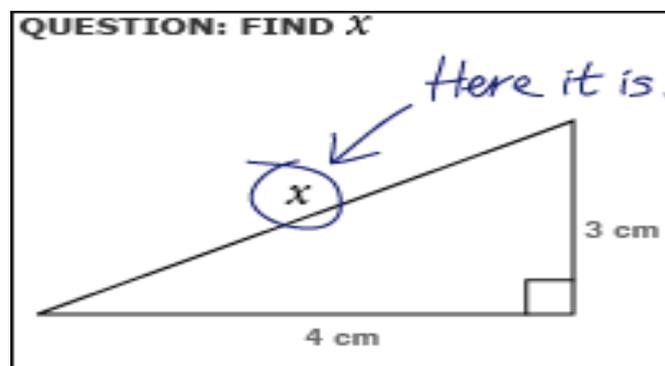
$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 8} \frac{1}{x-8} = \infty$$

I tried to check if she really understood that, so I gave her a different example.

This was the result:

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 5} \frac{1}{x-5} = \infty$$

Attributed to Rich Watts



As seen on fark.com