

EMS Minutes: Volume 1: pages 1 to 14
1883: First session

The Edinburgh Mathematical Society was begun at the suggestion of Messrs. A. Y. Fraser and C. J. G. Barclay, Mathematical Masters in George Watson's College, who, in conjunction with Dr. C. G. Knott, Assistant to the Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University, issued the following circular to gentlemen in Edinburgh and Cambridge and throughout Scotland generally, whom they deemed likely to take an interest in such a Society:—

(Over)

Edinburgh University,
January 23, 1883.

DEAR SIR,

WE, the undersigned, beg to call your attention to the following proposal, in the hope that you will find it in your power to give it your support :—

It is proposed to establish, primarily in connection with the University, a Society for the mutual improvement of its members in the Mathematical Sciences, pure and applied.

Amongst the methods by which this object might be attained may be mentioned :— Reviews of works both British and Foreign, historical notes, discussion of new problems or new solutions, and comparison of the various systems of teaching in different countries, or any other means tending to the promotion of Mathematical Education.

It is suggested that the Society be formed, in the first instance, of all those who shall give in their names on or before February 2, 1883, and who are (1) present or former students in either of the Advanced Mathematical Classes of Edinburgh University, (2) Honours Graduates in any of the British Universities, or (3) recognised Teachers of Mathematics ; and that, after the above mentioned date, members be nominated and elected by ballot in the usual manner.

It may be added that Professors Tait and Chrystal have expressed themselves as highly favourable to the project, as one that may lead to important results.

If there are any of your friends who might take an interest in the Society, kindly inform them of its objects, and invite them to attend the Preliminary Meeting, to be held in the MATHEMATICAL CLASS ROOM here, on Friday, February 2, 1883, at Eight P.M., at which meeting your presence is respectfully requested.

We are,

Yours faithfully,

CARGILL G. KNOTT, D.Sc.(Edin.), F.R.S.E.

A. J. G. BARCLAY, M.A.(Edin.).

A. Y. FRASER, M.A.(Aberdeen).

1883

Feb. 2

The Preliminary Meeting was held in the Mathematical Class Room, Edinburgh University, on Friday February 2, 1883, at 8 p.m. — Dr Knott in the chair

The Chairman, in his introductory remarks, mentioned that Professor Tait had suggested that the Society regard itself as the resuscitation of the Physico-Mathematical Society, which had led a vigorous existence during the years 1836-39, had revived at subsequent intervals, but finally collapsed in 1850, leaving behind it however, a library, some fragmentary apparatus, and a ballot-box

It was proposed by Mr T. Muir M.A. Glasgow High School, and seconded by Mr Allardie, M.A., Mathematical Tutor in the University

Motion I

"That a Society be instituted called the Edinburgh Mathematical Society; and that its aim shall be the Mutual Improvement of its Members in the Mathematical Sciences, pure and applied."

This was carried unanimously

It was proposed by Dr Magarlane F.R.S.E.
Examiner in Mathematics to the University, and
seconded by Mr W. J. Macdonald M.A.
of Daniell Stewarts

Motion II

"That the Society shall consist of Hon-
orary and of Ordinary Members, the
latter to be meanwhile specified as in
the Circular of January 23 (See above)"
This was carried unanimously.

It was proposed by Mr George Thom M.A.
of Dollar Institution, and seconded by
Mr Barclay M.A. of George Watsons College

Motion III.

"That the Office-bearers of the Society
shall consist of President, Vice-President,
Secretary and Treasurer, and Four Addi-
tional Members of Committee, to be
elected annually."

This was agreed to.

It was proposed by Mr Mackay M.A.
of Edinburgh Academy and seconded
by Mr W. J. Macdonald

Motion IV.

"That Professor Fair and Professor

Crystal be elected Honorary Members."
This was carried unanimously

It was proposed by Mr. Thom
and seconded by Mr. J. Macdonald M.A.

Motion V.

"That the Professors of Pure and
Applied Mathematics in the other Scottish
Universities be invited to become Honor-
ary Members."

This was agreed to.

Motion VI.

It was proposed by Mr. Robt. Robert-
son, M.A., Queen Street Educational Institu-
tion, and seconded by Mr. W.
Thomson M.A.

Motion VII.

"That the Society now elect as Office-
bearers for the present year:

President - J. S. Mackay, M.A., F.R.S.E.

Vice-President - A. Macfarlane M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.E.

Secretary & } - C. G. Knott D.Sc. F.R.S.E.
Treasurer }

This was carried unanimously

It was proposed by Mr. Peter Camp-

bell, George Watson's College, and seconded
by Mr. J. Vernon

Motion VII.

"That the Society elect as Members
of Committee for the present year

Messrs A. J. G. Barclay M.A. (Edin)

A. Y. Fraser M.A. (Aberdeen)

R. E. Allardice M.A. (Edin)

W. J. Macdonald M.A. (St. Andrews)"

This was agreed to.

It was proposed by Mr. J. McKean,
Watt's School of Arts, and seconded by
the Rev. Robert Miller, George Square,

Motion VIII.

"That the Committee be instructed
to draw up the Constitution of the Society,
and submit it to the Society at the First
Ordinary Meeting to be held on Friday,
March 9, 1883, at 8 p.m.

This was agreed to.

J. S. Mackay.

1883

March 12

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Minutes of the First Ordinary Meeting held in the Mathematical Class Room, Edinburgh University, on March 12 at 7.30 p.m.,—W. Mackay President in the Chair.

Professor Chrystal gave an Address on Present Fields of Mathematical Research.

~~Sixty were present.~~

On the motion of Professor Blyth seconded by Mr. Muir a hearty vote of thanks was given to Professor Chrystal for his interesting and suggestive address.

Sixty were present.

The Members present then proceeded to consider the draught of Rules submitted by the Committee.

The Rules finally agreed to were as follows:—

(Over)

March 12

1. The Edinburgh Mathematical Society shall consist of Ordinary and Honorary Members.
2. Every Ordinary Member shall pay on election, and at the commencement of each succeeding session, a contribution of Five Shillings to the Funds of the Society.
3. Candidates for admission as Ordinary Members shall be proposed and seconded at one ordinary meeting of the Society, and balloted for at the next, a majority of at least two thirds of the members present being necessary for election.
4. Honorary Members shall consist of persons eminently distinguished in the Mathematical Sciences.
5. Honorary Members shall be nominated by the Committee, on a proposal subscribed by three members; and in case the Committee decline to bring this proposal before the Society, it shall be competent for the proposers to bring the same before an ordinary meeting. In other respects the mode of election shall be the same as in the case of ordinary members.

March 12

6.

The Ordinary Meetings shall be held on the Second Friday of each month from November to July inclusively. Special Meetings may be called by the Secretary, by direction of the Committee or on a requisition signed by twelve members.

7.

The Office-bearers of the Society shall consist of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, and four additional Members of Committee, to be elected from the ordinary membership at the first ^{ordinary} meeting of each session.

8.

The Secretary shall keep minutes of the meetings of the Society, issue notices of the meetings to the members, and conduct all other necessary Correspondence.

9.

The Treasurer shall submit to the first ordinary meeting of each session a Financial Statement for the previous session, duly audited by two other Members of Committee.

10.

The Committee shall meet at least

March 12

once a month during the session to arrange the business of the Society, the Secretary to be Convener. Four shall form a quorum.

11. Abstracts of all papers read before the Society shall be left for preservation in the hands of the Secretary.

12. No motion to repeal or alter an existing rule, or to enact a new one, shall be made with notice at the preceding ordinary meeting, or carried without the consent of two-thirds of the members present.

13. A simple majority shall decide all questions not otherwise provided for in the Rules, the Chairman having in all cases both a deliberative and a casting vote.

These rules were formally adopted on the motion of the Rev. Mr. Kirk, seconded by Mr. Allardice.

It was proposed by Mr. Macdonald and seconded by Mr. Allardie that in view of Rule V, the ~~Left~~ carrying out of Motion V of the Previous Meeting be transferred from the Secretary to private members.

Johns. Mackay.

April 13

Minutes of Meeting held April 13, at 8 p.m. — Mr. Barclay in the Chair. Mr. Mackay read a descriptive and historical paper on The Triangle and its Six Scribed Circles. A vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Mackay on the motion of Mr. Macdonald, seconded by Dr. Knott.

Minutes of last meeting were read and approved.

The following gentlemen were proposed as Ordinary Members:

Mr. Charles Prentice C.A. — proposed by Mr. Mackay, seconded by Dr. Knott
Mr. Laurence Wight M.A. — proposed by Dr. Knott, seconded by Mr. Barclay.

Sir William Thomson was nominated for election as an Honorary Member, being proposed by Dr Knott, Mr Ormond, and Mr Mackay. Sixteen Members and Five Strangers were present.

John S. Mackay.

May 11.

Minutes of Meeting held May 11, at 8 p.m. — Mr Mackay, President, in the Chair. Mr Munro read a paper on the Nine-Point Circle, in connection with which Mr Mackay drew attention to a theorem — the square of the distance between the orthocentre and the inscribed centre of a triangle is less than twice the square on the inscribed radius by the rectangle under the segments into which the orthocentre divides any of the perpendiculars — for which an easy elementary demonstration was wanted by the Association for the Improvement of Geometrical Teaching. Dr Knott read a paper on Newton's "Opticks," with extracts from the original English Edition. The Minutes of last meeting were read and approved.

Sir William Thomson was duly elected
an Honorary Member
Messrs Prentice and Weight were
duly elected ordinary members.

Professor C. Kivan was nominated
for election as an Honorary member, being
proposed by Messrs Fraser Knott
& Thomson

Mr. J. F. Rankin was proposed
as an Ordinary member by Mr. Mackay
seconded by Mr. Fraser.

Twenty nine were present.

John S. Mackay.

June 8

Minutes of Meeting held June 8, at 8 p.m.
Mr. Mackay President in the Chair. Mr.
Muir communicated a new proof of Professor
Jair's Problem of Arrangement, and added
some short notes of interest to teachers. Mr.
Fraser read a paper on the Fundamental
Notions of the Differential Calculus. Dr.
Knott discussed Plücker's first Equation con-
necting the singularities of Curves.
The Minutes of last meeting were read

June 8)

and approved.

Professor Nixon of Aberdeen was duly elected an Honorary Member.

Mr. J. F. Rankine was duly elected an Ordinary Member.

Thirty-one were present.

John S. Mackay.

July 13

Minutes of Meeting held July 13 at 8 p.m. — Mr Mackay President in the Chair. Dr. Knott gave some notes on Quaternions. Mr Meun discussed some theorems relating to the radical axes of systems of circles.

The minutes of last meeting were read and approved.

~~Minutes were read.~~

On the motion of Mr Barclay a special vote of thanks was given to Dr. Knott on his leaving for Japan.

Mr. Andrew King was proposed as an Ordinary Member by Mr. Mackay and seconded by Mr. W. J. Macdonald.

Nineteen were present.

John S. Mackay.