



Media release

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For immediate release

**Science fiction writer is first UK mathematician honoured for
promoting mathematics**

The London Mathematical Society and the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications are delighted to announce that Professor Ian Stewart, FRS, will receive the first ever Christopher Zeeman Medal for the Promotion of Mathematics to the Public.

Professor Stewart has been an outstanding communicator of mathematics for nearly 40 years, writing numerous books, newspaper and magazine articles, making television and radio appearances, writing for newspapers and magazines and giving public lectures. He is also an internationally recognised mathematician.

In a joint statement, IMA president Professor David Abrahams and LMS vice-president Professor Alice Rogers said, "Recognition of the importance of promoting mathematics to the public and communicating the scope, power and sheer joy of being a mathematician is long overdue. With his characteristic enthusiasm, Professor Stewart has shown that mathematics is an accessible and exciting subject. His work has set the standard for all mathematics communicators to follow."

The medal is named in honour of Professor Sir Christopher Zeeman, FRS, one of the UK's foremost mathematicians who spent much of his career at the University of Warwick sharing his love of mathematics with the public. In 1978, Sir Christopher was the first ever mathematician to be asked to deliver the Royal Institution's Christmas lectures in its 125 year history. In 1997, Professor Stewart became the second.

Professor Stewart said, "Receiving the Zeeman medal, especially the first one, is a great honour, and I am overwhelmed. Sir Christopher had a huge influence on my mathematical career, both in research and in popularisation. He set an example of public engagement at a time when such activities were often frowned upon. I would like to take the opportunity to thank him for all the help and encouragement that he has given me over the last 40 years."

The author of 19 popular mathematics books which have been translated into many languages, Professor Stewart's back catalogue includes notable works such as *Does God Play Dice?*, *How to Cut a Cake* and *Letters to a Young Mathematician*. He has also written several science-fiction books in collaboration with celebrated science-fiction writer Terry Pratchett and reproductive biologist Professor Jack Cohen.

Professor Stewart is based at the Mathematics Institute at the University of Warwick. His research interests include dynamical systems, bifurcation theory, pattern formation and biomathematics.

His most recent book, *Professor Stewart's Cabinet of Mathematical Curiosities*, published in 2008, is a collection of problems, conundrums, jokes, facts, tricks and interesting things that Professor Stewart collected in his notebooks over the years.

An electronic image of Professor Stewart is available on request.



Notes for Editors

1. The **Christopher Zeeman Medal** was launched this year as a triennial award of the IMA and LMS to recognise and reward the contributions of mathematicians involved in promoting mathematics to the public, and to encourage others to work in this area by demonstrating that such activities are valued and are a part of a mathematician's role and responsibilities. The medal will be presented to Professor Stewart by Sir Christopher at a joint meeting of the LMS and IMA at the Science Museum, London on 9 June 2009.

2. The **London Mathematical Society (LMS)** is the UK's learned society for mathematics. Founded in 1865 for the promotion and extension of mathematical knowledge, the Society is concerned with all branches of mathematics and its applications. It is an independent and self-financing charity, with a membership of over 2600 drawn from all parts of the UK and overseas. Its principal activities are the organisation of meetings and conferences, the publication of periodicals and books, the provision of financial support for mathematical activities, and the contribution to public debates on issues related to mathematics research and education. It works collaboratively with other mathematical bodies worldwide. It is the UK adhering body to the International Mathematical Union.

3. The **Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (IMA)** is the professional and learned society for qualified and practising mathematicians. It promotes mathematics research, education and careers, and the use of mathematics in business, industry and commerce. Amongst its activities the IMA produces academic journals, organises conferences, and engages with government. Founded in 1964, the Institute has 5,000 members. Forty percent of members are employed in education (schools through to universities), and the other 60% work in commercial, industrial and governmental organisations. In 1990 the Institute was incorporated by Royal Charter and was subsequently granted the right to award Chartered Mathematician designation.

4. The LMS and IMA are members of the Council for the Mathematical Sciences, which also comprises the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications, the Royal Statistical Society, the Edinburgh Mathematical Society and the Operational Research Society.

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