

# **FUTURE OF THE BMC**

## **Report to the Annual General Meeting of the BMC, Warwick, April 2002**

### **1. Introduction**

After the BMC meeting in Glasgow, Council of the London Mathematical Society agreed to consult Professor J.P.C. Greenlees, one of its nominees on the BMC Scientific Committee, and if appropriate to arrange a meeting to pursue the matter.

Professor Greenlees carried out consultations and prepared a report in July 2001. In the light of this, it was agreed to convene a meeting to prepare proposals for consideration at the Annual General Meeting in Warwick in April 2002, and by the London Mathematical Society and the Edinburgh Mathematical Society.

### **2. Participants**

This meeting took place in London on Monday, 7 January. Present were: Professor J.P.C. Greenlees (Sheffield), Professor D.A. Armitage (Belfast), Professor R.T. Curtis (Birmingham), Dr M. Mathieu (Belfast), Dr H.D. Robinson (Coventry), Professor C.P. Rourke (Warwick), Professor A.J. Scholl (Cambridge), Dr M. Weiss (Aberdeen), Professor R.A. Wilson (Birmingham) and Dr D.J.H. Garling (London Mathematical Society).

### **3. Discussion**

The meeting began by thanking Professor Greenlees for his excellent report. This provides a clear account of the issues to be addressed, and a basis for the proposals to be made.

It was agreed that although the BMC welcomed support from LMS and EMS, it was important that it maintains its independence. Dr Garling remarked that the LMS welcomed this. It wished to continue to support the BMC. It was willing to provide financial support, and to underwrite BMCs, but preferred to do this on a year by year basis.

The fundamental problem, given that each BMC is arranged separately, is to provide continuity. It is for example important to maintain a good balance, over time, for the subjects treated at the BMC. It is important to keep good records (at present these are passed from Chair to Chair), and to keep in mind policy decisions made in the past. All this should be the role of the Scientific Committee, which needs to monitor the health of BMCs, and to be firmly pro-active, encouraging and developing new ideas: the introduction of special sessions and satellite meetings, for example, had been very worthwhile, but there are other initiatives that are needed.

The meeting was reminded that this year's meeting in Warwick was a joint meeting with BAMC, and that there may be another joint meeting in Liverpool in 2005: this depends on the views of BAMC. There were lessons to be learnt from BAMC – for example, it attracted a large number of research students. Similarly, statistics students organise an annual meeting, attended by most students in the area. A satellite meeting for research students might make this BMC more attractive to research students.

It was agreed that the running of BMC required both a Scientific Committee and Organising Committees: they should work together but that their roles should be separate, and clearly understood.

The meeting then agreed to make the following proposals to the Annual General Meeting of the BMC at Warwick in April 2002.

#### **4. Proposals**

- (i) There shall be a standing committee of the BMC called the Scientific Committee, responsible for the medium and long-term development of the BMC and for strategic issues.
- (ii) Each meeting of BMC shall have an Organising Committee, comprising members of the Department hosting the meeting of the BMC. The Organising Committee shall be responsible for running its BMC. Its responsibilities shall include:
  - (a) the financial management of its BMC including application for financial support and underwriting of costs;
  - (b) invitation of plenary speakers and morning speakers;
  - (c) the arrangement of special sessions;
  - (d) development of and co-ordination with satellite meetings.

It shall carry out these responsibilities in full consultation with the Scientific Committee.
- (iii) The Chair of the Organising Committee shall be Chair of its BMC, and shall Chair the Annual General Meeting.
- (iv) The Scientific Committee shall have twelve members:
  - (a) two members (usually the Chair and Treasurer) of each of three Organising Committees, to serve from 1 June, 34 months before their BMC until 31 May following their BMC.
  - (b) three members nominated by LMS, to serve (usually) for three years;
  - (c) two members nominated by EMS, to serve (usually) for three years;
  - (d) one member, elected from the floor at the BMC, to serve for one year.
- (v) The Scientific Committee shall have a Chair, not a member of the current Organising Committee, who shall serve for three years. The Chair shall be

elected at an Annual General Meeting of a BMC, on the nomination of the Scientific Committee, after due consultation.

- (vi) The Scientific Committee shall meet twice a year, once after the Annual General Meeting of the BMC, and once in September/October.
- (vii) At its BMC meeting, the Scientific Committee's business should include:
  - (a) consideration of plenary speakers for two years hence;
  - (b) a review of plans for the BMC in the following year.

It should advise Organising Committees on matters such as special sessions, morning lectures and other new developments.

- (viii) At its September/October meeting, the Scientific Committee should review strategy in a pro-active way, encouraging and developing new ideas and initiatives, and should advise Organising Committees accordingly.
- (ix) The London Mathematical Society shall be asked to provide support for the Chair of the Scientific Committee, to keep copies of the minutes and other records and to help with the transition of papers from one Chair to the next.
- (x) The London Mathematical Society shall be asked to meet the costs of the September/October meeting. This will usually but not always be held in De Morgan House.