THE SMS DISTINGUISHED VISITOR PROGRAMME

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January 9 — 18, 1998

The Singapore Mathematical Society launched its Distinguished Visitor Programme in January 1998. Through the visit of a distinguished mathematician, who will interact with both research mathematicians at the universities here as well as teachers and pupils at the schools, the aim of the programme is to expose as large and diverse an audience as possible to the excitement and relevance of mathematics, thereby enhancing the awareness of mathematics in our society.

The inaugural Distinguished Visitor was Professor John Hubbard from Cornell University, USA. Professor Hubbard is not only a world-renowned researcher and author, but also an experienced expositor of mathematics to high school students and an IT enthusiast. The programme included the following:

1. Inauguration Ceremony cum Panel Discussion on "IT and Mathematics"

About 100 invited guests turned up for this event held at NUS in the morning of Saturday, 10 January. The Guest-of-Honour was NUS Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Chong Chi Tat Joining Professor Hubbard at the hour-long Panel Discussion were Assoc Professor Chen Chuan Chong from NUS, Dr Rosalind Phang from NIE, and Mr Hang Kim Hoo representing SMS. The moderator was our Honorary Secretary Dr Ling San.

2. The SMS Distinguished Visitor Programme Public Lecture.

Following the Panel Discussion that Saturday morning, Professor Hubbard delivered a public lecture to a packed lecture theatre. In this lecture, entitled "The Forced Damped Pendulum: Chaos and Control", Professor Hubbard dazzled the audience with colourful computer demonstrations as well as a number of quotable quips including the thought-provoking assertion that instability and controllability are synonymous, which he illustrated vividly using skiing as an example.

3. The SMS Lectures at the Department of Mathematics, NUS.

Professor Hubbard also delivered 6 hours of lectures at NUS on current research in complex dynamical systems. The titles of his lectures were: (i) Introduction to Julia and Mendelbrot Sets and Applications of Quasi-Conformal Mappings, (ii) Quasi-Conformal Mappings and Dynamics in One Complex Variable, (iii) Teichmuller Theory and Dynamics in One Complex Variable.

4. Workshop for Teachers.

On Saturday, January 17, Professor Hubbard conducted a 3-hour workshop at NUS for some 40 teachers. The theme of the workshop was "Modelling Ecology" and it included a lecture as well as a computer simulation session.