The 1989 Leslie Fox Prize Meeting

THE Fourth Leslie Fox Prize Meeting was held at the University of Cambridge on Monday, September 4th, 1989, immediately preceding the Silver Jubilee meeting of the IMA. We are grateful to Mike Powell for hosting the meeting and to ICI for sponsorship.

I think that I speak for all the 39 attendees at the Meeting when I say that the standard of presentation by all candidates was truly exceptional. The quality both of content and presentation was extremely high and the talks covered many different areas of numerical analysis, some emphasising the theoretical and others the practical aspects of the subject.

There were more finalists than in any previous year and the adjudicating committee of Bill Morton, FIMA (Chairman), John Mason, FIMA and Nancy Nichols, AFIMA had apparently had great difficulty in selecting this short list from an entry of 17 papers from six countries, such was the over-all standard of this year's entry.

The quality was such that they almost overshadowed the numerical analysis minisymposia at the IMA Silver Jubilee Meeting the following day. Nearly all the more "senior" speakers at that meeting used vital minutes from their precious 30 to pay tribute to the speakers at the Fox Meeting whom they regarded with some awe and a great deal of respect.

The cast of this outstanding performance was (in order of appearance): A. Edelman (MIT) "Eigenvalues and Condition Numbers of Random Matrices"; M. Buhmann (Cambridge) "Multivariable Cardinal Interpolation with Radial Basis Functions"; B. L. R. DeMoor (Stanford) "The Restricted Singular Value Decomposition: Properties and Applications"; D. J. Higham (Toronto) "Highly-Continuous Runge-Kutta Interpolants"; R. H. Chan (Hong Kong) "Circulant Preconditioners for Hermitian Toeplitz Systems"; A. M. Stuart (Bath) "Linear Instability Implies Spurious Periodic Solutions"; M. Ainsworth (Durham) "An Asymptotically Exact *a-posteriori* Error Estimator for the Finite Element Approximation of Problems with Singular Solutions."

If encores at mathematics meetings were in order, we might still have been sitting there until this day. After the final curtain we retired to tea with the usual side stakes on the outcome, although the only unanimity from the audience was that with talent such as was displayed at the meeting the future of numerical analysis was secure.

Unfortunately, because of a family bereavement, Nancy Nichols had been unable to come to the meeting. The remaining adjudicators, after one is sure much agonising, awarded 3 first prizes to Martin Buhmann, Bart DeMoor and Andrew Stuart and second prizes to Mark Ainsworth, Ray Chan, Alan Edelman, and Des Higham. Leslie Fox presented the prizes.

It may seem that I eulogise too much but let me say personally that it was a great privilege to be present at such a fitting tribute to Leslie Fox on the eve of his presentation of a justly deserved Honorary Fellowship of the IMA.

At the *IMA Journal of Numerical Analysis* Editorial Board Meeting, which followed the Prize Meeting, it was agreed that Charlie Elliott, FIMA would replace Bill Morton, who was retiring after 3 hardworking years on the committee. It is planned to hold the Fifth Leslie Fox Prize Meeting in Dundee on June 24th, 1991, the Monday immediately before the Biennial Conference in Dundee. Further details will be given in due course.

Alas, the quality of the field has severely deplenished the Prize Fund to which further contributions would be more than gratefully received. The Fund is quite independent of any organisation but Catherine Richards of the IMA has graciously agreed to accept contributions on behalf of the Fund. Contributions great and small can be sent to her at The Institute of Mathematics and its Applications, 16 Nelson Street, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 1EF or to Nancy Nichols at the University of Reading, Department of Mathematics, Box 220, Reading RG6 2AX.

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(*l. to r.*). D. J. Higham, John Mason, FIMA, Leslie Fox, FIMA, A. Edelman, A. M. Stuart, M. Ainsworth, M. Buhmann, B. L. R. DeMoor, Bill Morton, FIMA and R. H. Chan