

National conference & 3MT (2020/2021)

Oxford University SIAM-IMA Student Chapter

This academic year, 2020-2021, the Oxford University SIAM-IMA Student Chapter hosted three events: a biweekly seminar series (JAMS), a three-minute thesis competition, and the UK National SIAM Student Chapter conference.

The national conference was a highlight of the year. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions at the time, the conference was hosted virtually on June 14-15th. In total we had 94 registrations and the conference was held over two days. The first day started with a keynote talk from Prof. Nick Trefethen, from Oxford University, on quadrature formulas. The talk gave a wonderful overview of the development of quadrature over the decades. Our second keynote talk was delivered by Prof. Apala Majumdar from the University of Strathclyde. Her research is focused on the mathematics of liquid crystals which is a beautifully rich applied area requiring complex mathematics to adequately understand the behaviours. We also heard from 23 student speakers from Oxford, Imperial College, Reading, Strathclyde, Warwick, and Cardiff. The topics ranged from deep learning to cancer modelling to numerical methods for chaotic systems, with everything in-between. The standard of the talks was outstanding, and the speakers did well to present their complicated research in just 15 minutes. We would like to commend Cathie Wells from Reading and Michael Negus from Oxford for winning the best student presentation awards. To promote discussion, we hosted a GatherTown space that was always open. Speakers and attendees would join GatherTown after each session to ask questions. In that same space, we hosted a poster session on the Monday evening featuring 7 posters from Warwick, Cardiff, Dublin, and Strathclyde. Again, the posters were extremely high quality, and we commend Tatjana Kokina and Sajal Minhas (both from University College Dublin) for winning the best poster awards. We would like to thank SIAM, G-Research, and GatherTown for sponsoring the conference and allowing us to host this event.

On the 19th February, we hosted a virtual three-minute thesis competition. Eleven PhD students from Oxford stepped up to the challenge and condensed their research into a 3-minute talk accessible to a general audience. COVID-19 had made it very difficult to discuss research with other students over the past year and this event was a breath of fresh air. This was reflected in the very high attendance rate; over 80 people joined the call. The talks ranged from discussing the Langlands programme to stem cell therapy. These talks were judged by the audience and our esteemed panel: Prof. Marcus du Sautoy, Prof. Helen Byrne, Prof. Samuel Cohen, and Dr Vicky Neale. The competition was highly contested, and the panel ultimately decided to award two joint first-places prizes to Maria Violaris and James Timmins, with the audience vote giving awards to James Kohout and Carla Groenland.

This academic year, JAMS was also held virtually. JAMS provided a platform for any applied PhD student to present their work in a relaxed environment. The talks would range from 15 minutes to 45 minutes and were a great way to hear from students that one would not hear from otherwise. We look forward to starting up again in October.

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<https://people.maths.ox.ac.uk/siamsc/>

August 18, 2021