

The Southampton Study Centre members are already operating a Mathematics Telephone Self-Help Scheme, both for M202 and also for M201 and M100, should they feel in need of student help. So far no M201 or M100 student has contacted us, but we are standing by with any support they want - probably more likely when M100 hits differentiation and integration, kernels and Unit 24, and who knows what in M201.

This project has received a blessing from Bletchley staff. John Mason, who is in charge of M202 Maintenance, has written several letters to me since the beginning of the course, after I sent the first misprint, and is requesting our opinions on the plans for M202 Summer Schools. So far I have fed back the opinions of six members of the Telephone Scheme, and extracts from his replies are included in this Newsletter.

Please help to make this Telephone Scheme a huge success, because with such a rapid means of contact we have something really new in OU study methods. Let me have your views on M202 Summer Schools with all possible speed, for inclusion in the next report to John Mason - or write to him yourself. I am supposed to be the official Convener of M202 Study Groups, at least for the Southampton Study Centre. This means that George Watts has my address to give to any student who contacts him for information on M202 Study Groups in Southampton. Let me know if you want Study Groups, and if so, what times are convenient or inconvenient. So far no-one particularly wants them, but they do want telephone contact, and things may change as the course pace increases.

So do let me have your address and telephone number (unless they are to be kept secret) - and if you have any items for a second Newsletter, let me have them before the next Tutorial.

EXTRACTS FROM JOHN MASON'S LETTERS

“I would appreciate any detailed suggestions that you have for the content at Summer School. At the moment we are working on the basis of a series of workshops which will deal with the principal areas of the course. Students will be given a choice, rather in the form of choice review sessions in M100, to select whichever workshop they should wish to attend. The workshop will then consist of a very short formal presentation of some basic ideas, followed by the opportunity for students to work by themselves on a couple of problems. This could then be followed by a meeting with a tutor to discuss those and further problems on that topic. There will also be some formal lectures and other miscellany.” 26 January 1973

“We were all very pleased to see that Self-Help groups are beginning to spring up. We feel that this is an essential development in every course, but it does not always seem possible to get people going. It seems to depend on people like yourself or on very effective counsellors.

Concerning Summer School: initially your letter greatly depressed me, but on the second, third or possibly fourth thought I am beginning to appreciate the difficulties. I suspect that I was not completely clear on our ideas for Summer Schools, because in fact they are highly compatible with what you are suggesting. What we want to do is to offer all students the opportunity to get the kind of help they most need, but with 100 students floating around it is very easy to lose some in the sense that they never find out what is available or where. Therefore we wish to provide a number of distinct activities which will satisfy the bulk of needs.” 8 February 1973

“The views that you have collected on Summer Schools are indeed useful. I may easily take you up on being a member of the telephone service, although I never seem to be able to predict when I myself will be at home to answer telephones and that is why I have not offered my telephone number. The problem of Summer Schools for half courses has strained several of our members of Faculty. ... Many people at the OU are against any activity being optional which costs money, on the grounds that the student who can pay for it can get better tuition. ... I personally would like to see us not offer Summer School at third level unless it can be made optional, because the Faculty would be at full stretch.” 14 February 1973

I hope that these extracts will be helpful to fellow students and will indicate to everyone the interest which Bletchley is taking in our opinions, and the enormous power of rapid and effective means of inter-student communications.

It seems that Summer Schools for third level are in some danger - note that they have already disappeared for anyone taking one half-credit mathematics course at 2nd level. If you have views on this, let someone know - rapidly.

Apologies for the poor quality of carbon copies. Will try to stencil any further Newsletters.

Marion Stubbs

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TEL. NO. (business) (Home)

COURSE 1973:

DO YOU WISH TO ATTEND SELF-HELP GROUPS?

IF SO, STATE TIMES YOU ARE FREE TO ATTEND:

DO YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDENT SELF-HELP TELEPHONE SCHEME?

COURSES PREVIOUSLY SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED:

ARE YOU WILLING (TO ATTEMPT) TO HELP WITH TELEPHONED PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE DOING COURSE(S) YOU HAVE ALREADY PASSED? (Recall that no-one expects miracles, but what is near incomprehensible at one stage may now be old hat to you!)

Note: These schemes are not restricted to members of SOUSU.

[The six original names: Marion Stubbs, Jill McKean, Alan Nicol, Dave Turner, Joy Dickens, John Bennett]

[There was a note added to this explaining why Marion Stubbs gave her work phone number: she had no home telephone. Also, the MOUTHS scheme was invented by a person with no domestic telephone (Tempora mutantur).]