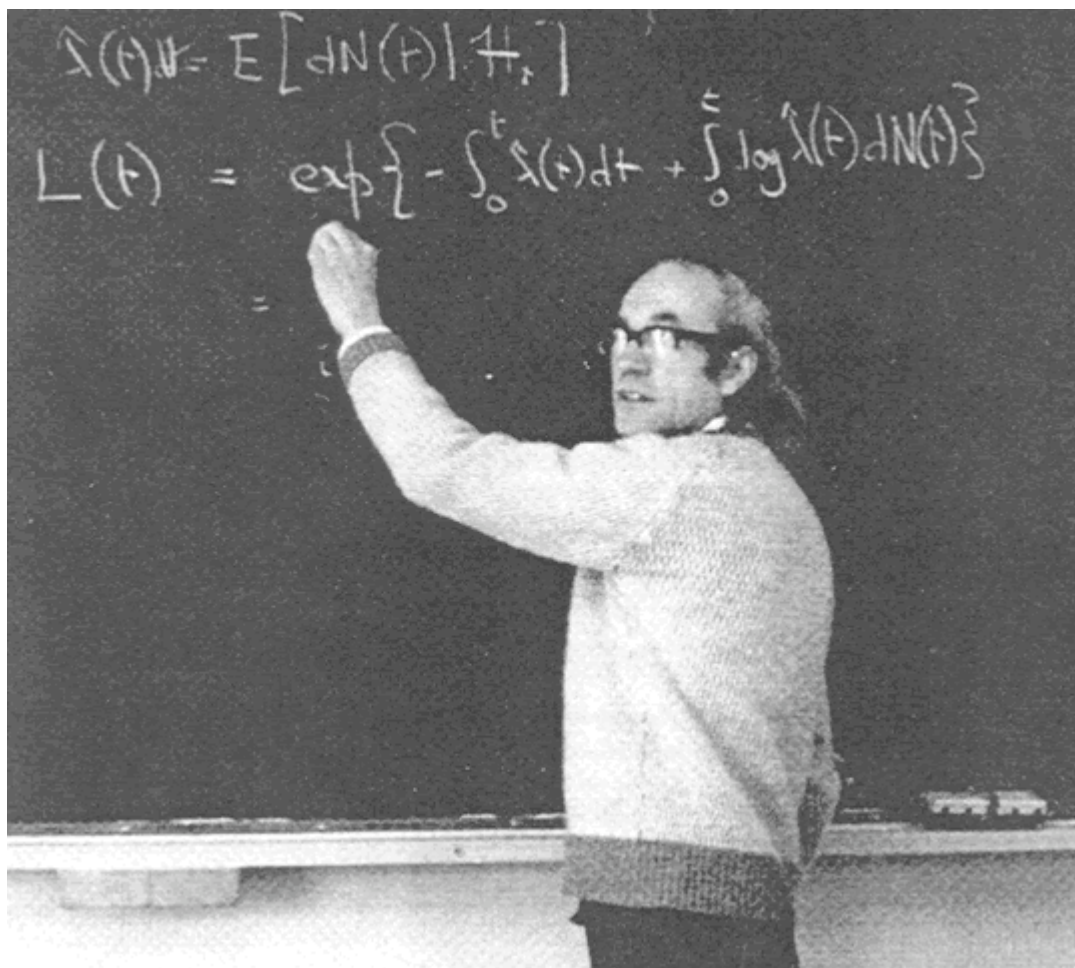


## ***CENTREFOLD***

# **New Zealand Mathematics Society Silver Jubilee Celebration A toast from the foundation Secretary 1974-5**



The icon for NZMS drawn by Mr Bill Armstrong (Victoria University of Wellington, now deceased) in 1974. It has been used for 25 years.



Professor David Vere-Jones, Victoria University of Wellington, was the first President of NZMS 1974-5.

Those of us who need to remember anniversaries (and also those who do not need to!) were pleased to note at the 1999 New Zealand Mathematics Colloquium, the 25th birthday of the

formation of the New Zealand Mathematical Society. As its first Secretary 1974-5, I am pleased to have been asked to propose this toast to NZMS. For a further historical view of the first 26 years, I must refer you to the talk (hopefully to be published) by Mr Garry Tee of the University of Auckland given at the 1999 NZMC held at the University of Canterbury, 6-9th July. The pre-formation period of discussion about the formation of the NZMS goes back in my memory at least to June 1967, when Professor Bernhard Neumann visited most of the New Zealand University centres to discuss the possible liaison of the New Zealand mathematical community, with the Australian Mathematical Society. All options were canvassed including divisional status, full status within an enlarged Australian Mathematical Society, etc. At this time contact between New Zealand mathematicians was largely confined to chance encounters at Oxbridge and very rarely in New Zealand, except that of course the holding of annual New Zealand Mathematics Colloquia from May 1966 onwards, provided a very good beginning in this regard. Debate ensued over the following 6-7 years at a leisurely pace. The then increasing emphasis on research by New Zealand based mathematicians gave rise to an increasing need to improve our activity and profile nationally (e.g. with Royal Society of New Zealand) and internationally. Though the Colloquium was (and largely so, still is) organised independently, the meetings of the NZMS developed in tandem with the Colloquium. The appointment of a number of highly regarded mathematicians to local positions provided a further element of strength towards the eventual outcome: the formation of NZMS in 1974. Those of us who were at that time based in Wellington were very conscious of the positive leadership of Professor David Vere-Jones (pictured) of Victoria University of Wellington (from 1970), but many others nationally were involved. There were those who were against its formation ("we're doing well as we are", was a commonly expressed view). After further discussion the decision to go ahead was eventually taken and the first meeting was held in May 1974 during the New Zealand Mathematics Colloquium. Inevitably the foundation President was Professor David Vere-Jones of Victoria University of Wellington. He was supported by 2 Wellington colleagues: Dr Jim Ansell and myself (Dr Graeme Wake), as foundation Newsletter Editor and Secretary respectively. Professors Bill Davidson (Otago) and John Butcher (Auckland) were the foundation Vice-Presidents. Dr Peter Lorimer (Auckland) was the first Treasurer/Membership Secretary. It was very well supported nationally though growth has been relatively modest with a "steady-state" of 200-300 members being achieved of late. The first annual report (1975) reports a membership of 94 members over all categories including 3 honorary members (Professors J.T. Campbell, Forder, and Neumann). Also in the first year considerable efforts were made to make good contact with the Mathematical Associations, later mostly became "federated" into the New Zealand Association of Mathematics Teachers. I remember these as exciting days. We felt we were breaking new ground and helping in a small but significant way to put New Zealand Mathematics on the world map.

Developments include:

- Making reciprocity agreements with other Societies, mostly overseas;
- affiliation with Royal Society of New Zealand as a member body;
- formation of a constitutional framework;
- publishing activities, initially just the Newsletter (but soon to include textbooks and much later joint publication of New Zealand Journal of Mathematics with the University of Auckland);

occupied our time in these early days. Certainly the collective effort of many colleagues over the 25 years just concluded, justify the start made one quarter of a century ago which helped place New Zealand mathematics on the world stage. We salute the contributions of all who have carried the vision forward from those stirring days. Happy anniversary NZMS!

*Graham Wake*

*NZMS Secretary 1974-5*  
*University of Canterbury*