

DUODECIMAL - NEWSCAST

Duodecimal Society of Great Britain  
106, Leigham Court Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

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Until we can start a regular magazine I shall keep members informed of activities in the world of duodecimals by means of such circular letters as this. I should also like members to use it to air their views.

In fact I have delayed answering the prompt and encouraging support which came from the invitations to form a duodecimal society in this country until now so that I could report on progress so far and send the enclosed leaflet which has just become available. I am sorry that this has been so long.

We now number seven pioneers. This is a small number but encouraging in view of the fewness of the people I knew of to invite. It is hoped that publicity will reveal more to whom I can write. Bertrand Russel declined to accept presidency.

Our membership is somewhat dispersed up and down the British Isles. This prevents the formation of a Working Committee as yet. Nevertheless the formation of a Committee must be our first aim even if discussion is only by correspondence; for our detailed policy should be discussed beforehand. I am limiting my activities for the moment to recruitment and reconnaissance. But in that I should like to have in mind members' opinions. If any member is coming to London we may be able to arrange to meet.

We need all the members and advertisement we can. There are surprisingly many in all walks of life who share our views; but we still have to discover them. I therefore ask members to help as much as they can in recruitment and publicity. The former can be done through connections by family, work or other interests. May I suggest the latter can be done by seizing every opportunity of putting our case to a newspaper or periodical, preferably in allusion to some article which can be shewn to have an answer in duodecimals. For the Society's records do let me know, or send me a cutting or make a carbon copy of what was submitted shewing subsequent selections. As soon as editors see how many people are interested in duodecimals, they will be more inclined to publish letters and articles. I have already tried "The Times" without success. If you are also a regular reader we might make that a special target among the daily newspapers. Also perhaps someone may receive a mathematical journal which can be watched.

The Duodecimal Society of America have most generously sent some copies of their latest Bulletin, their leaflet, "An Excursion in Numbers", "Antipatio al Aritmetiko" and lessons with tests. The parcel came as a very pleasing Twelfth Night present. I have these available for advertising and recruiting. The American Society have evinced great interest in our society and have expressed their best wishes for its success. They (the Chairman, President and Secretary) also extend entire co-operation.

Mr. Beard has told me of the death of Mr. Lewis Carl Seelbach on 30th September last. He has bequeathed most of his property to the American Society, and his extensive library to Mr. Beard. This will ease the financial situation of the American Society and help them reprint their books. All who knew or know of Mr. Seelbach will realise what a loss his death means to duodecimal and phonetic research. Seeing what was best for the world in its system of numbering, he did not merely admit it, but had the courage to persuade the others that the ideal is not too high a mortal aim.

You will be pleased to hear that I have been given access to the library of Isaac J. Pitman. The material there should be most helpful and I propose to take advantage of the offer when I have time at my disposal.

With regard to the leaflets enclosed, it will be seen that they express in very broad terms what the aims of our Society must be. I have formulated these points from letters I have received. I think points (i) and (ii) are most effectively done as a group to achieve weight. Individual activities, however, will

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achieve number. The third aim will also be the work of a Committee; but this Committee, about which mention has already been made, will require a few ideas to go on. You may care, therefore, to get your thinking cap on, even at this early stage. Research into applications of duodecimals in all fields from calculating machines to football pools is necessary. Also we need some gimmick.

Besides new symbols, either for all the digits or just for the two new ones, there will be new units of weights and measures. These especially will require careful deliberation; so we must not develop hastily any proposals until they have been diligently assessed.

Finally, here are a few points from correspondence:

Mr. T. I do quite a lot of talking on the subject ..... and am sometimes called Mr. Duodecimal.

Mr. R. it would have been a good thing if the Almighty had given us twelve fingers instead of ten.

Mr. J. There must be mathematical functions for which no tables at present exist; we want pioneers in research who will agree to publish their results in the reformed notation.

It is hoped that this will give an idea of some of the ideas that are buzzing about in the Secretary's and other peoples' minds.

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Unavoidable delays have rather disturbed my plan of activity. I regret that, owing to personal circumstances, I am now unable myself to undertake much on behalf of the Society for a couple of months. After then I hope to be able to get something moving towards the convening of a meeting. If however members will meanwhile help in recruitment as I have already suggested, increased membership should make that time about ripe for a committee to be elected. We may also be able to start one of those circulating packages to which each one adds a contribution of research or interest, and, when it comes back after going full circle, the contribution is replaced by another - like the party game except you add as well as extract and the prize is the profit we all will reap.

If the printer finds this leaves a white space on the sheet, do not worry: members will need it immediately to jot down ideas.