

## Obituary

### Francis William Kellaway (1913–2003)

Francis Kellaway was Honorary Secretary of the Mathematical Association from 1949 to 1969 and President for the year 1966–67. He died on 8 September 2003 at the age of 90.

Born and schooled in Plymouth, he was to his roots a Devon man. After university he returned to Devonport to teach at the Royal Dockyard Schools; and although career advancement took him eastwards, it was to Devon that he returned on retirement – but to the other end of the county. It needs only a small exercise of imagination to visualise him on the Hoe, looking out to sea and conversing, in the rich accent which never left him, with his two Devon namesakes, Sir Francis Drake and Sir Francis Chichester.

His first encounter with the Association was as a student at the University of Reading. In his Presidential Address he recalled that ‘it was impossible not to be influenced by some of its prominent members. Professor Eric Neville was, of course, *the* personality. There was also a lively, rising young lecturer named T. A. A. Broadbent ...’. Neville is remembered for creating the Association Library as we know it today; Broadbent was Editor of the *Gazette* for 25 years. To these names it is appropriate to add a fourth, Walter Langford, who had been a student at Reading a few years earlier. All four served as Presidents of the Association.

Broadbent, Langford and Kellaway were amongst the most influential of those who set about reviving the Association from the etiolated state into which it had sunk as a result of World War II. With many members on active service, most branch and committee activity suspended, and a reduction in subscription income, major reconstruction was urgently needed. Moreover, the implementation of the 1944 Education Act would open up new challenges for the Association. Langford became Chairman of Teaching Committee, and one of its first decisions was to set up a technical sub-committee, chaired by Kellaway. In 1949 this produced the Association's first post-war report, on mathematics in secondary technical schools, followed in 1954 by a major report on mathematics in technical colleges.

Even more important for the Association was Kellaway's twenty years of service as Honorary Secretary. It was a difficult period, with inadequate office facilities and recurrent financial crises which placed heavy demands on the honorary officers. Partnered for twelve years by Winifred Cooke and then by Ruth Tobias, Kellaway provided much-needed stability. By the end of his term of office plans were already in hand to acquire a permanent headquarters which would secure the future of the Association.

One of the major areas of expansion in post-war years was further education, which was shedding its ‘night school’ image in favour of schemes involving day release and longer periods of full-time study. Hertfordshire established FE colleges in a number of towns across the

county, and Kellaway was appointed Principal at Letchworth – a town which not only pioneered the Garden City concept, but supported it by providing facilities for the development of local industries. It was the policy of Hertfordshire Education Committee to appoint strong leaders and to give them the freedom and resources to run their own show with a minimum of interference. (One Director of Education used to boast that he ran 600 independent schools.) Kellaway, enlisting the support of a strong team of local employers, accepted the challenge with enthusiasm and created, in Letchworth College of Technology (as it became in his later years at its head), the leading FE institution in North Hertfordshire with a reputation that extended far beyond the county boundary.

Another area of post-war expansion was the employment of mathematicians not only in universities but also in industry, commerce and government service. However, their professional development suffered from the absence of institutional support comparable with that enjoyed by their colleagues in engineering and the experimental sciences. The Mathematical Association first tried to plug the gap by setting up a Diploma in Mathematics (Technology) qualification; Kellaway and Langford were again leading protagonists, together with Theodore Combridge who was President in 1961-62. But it was soon clear that the Association could not expand to meet this need, and that a new organisation was needed to encompass the interests of this new breed of professional mathematician. Combridge and Kellaway led the way in ensuring that the Association was present at the birth of the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications and gave it the strongest possible support. Indeed, Kellaway added to his other responsibilities the honorary secretaryship of the IMA in its infant years.

It was yet another Francis whose words, written 400 years ago, were chosen by the Mathematical Association for what would now be called its 'mission statement'. You will find them on the inside cover of this and each *Gazette*, and both Broadbent and Kellaway made reference to them in their Presidential Addresses. I know of no one whose working life better exhibited the qualities of a 'debtor to his profession' than Francis Kellaway. But it is a debt which he repaid in full, and the Mathematical Association stands high on the list of beneficiaries.

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