Recent Mathematical Stamps: 2007–2008

Al-Khwārizmī (780–850)

The Persian mathematician Muhammad ibn-Mūsā (al-) Khwārizmī lived in Baghdad and wrote influential works on arithmetic and algebra. The latter, *Kitab al-jabr wal-muqabala*, gives us our word *algebra*, whereas in medieval Europe the word *algorism* (after his name) came to mean arithmetic. We now use *algorithm* to mean a finite step-by-step procedure.

L. E. J. Brouwer (1882–1966)

Luitzen Egbertus Jan Brouwer was a geometer and a topologist and the founder of intuitionism. He spent most of his life at the University of Amsterdam and is remembered for his invariance and fixed-point theorems in topology and for his refusal to accept proofs by contradiction. The stamp, issued to commemorate the centenary of his Ph.D. thesis, features his formula symbolizing the fallibility of the principle of the excluded middle.

Al-Khwārizmī

L. E. J. Brouwer

Croatian Arithmetic

Leonhard Euler

Metrication

Yerevan Institute

Croatian Arithmetic

On 25 January 2008, Croatia issued a stamp to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the publication of the first Croatian mathematical instruction book. Mihály Šilobod Bolšić's book *Arithmetika Horvatszka* (Croatian arithmetic), published in Zagreb in 1758, presents the arithmetic of integers and fractions, the rule of three, practical work in accounting, and mathematical tables.

Leonhard Euler (1707–1783)

In 2007, Switzerland issued a stamp to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Euler's birth in Basel. It shows his portrait, with a polyhedron and his polyhedron formula. Euler had introduced the concept of an edge, and writing to Christian Goldbach in 1750, he stated his formula in the form $H + S = A + 2$, where $H = \text{bedrae}$ (faces), $S = \text{anguli solidi}$ (vertices) and $A = \text{acies}$ (edges).

Metrication

Many countries have issued stamps featuring the metric system and metrication. This stamp was issued in 2007 to commemorate the centenary of the introduction of the metric system to Denmark.

Yerevan Institute

This stamp was issued by the Armenian Post Office in 2007 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Yerevan Scientific Research Institute of Mathematical Machines, which is involved with the development of high-reliability computing systems.

➤ Please send all submissions to the Stamp Corner Editor, Robin Wilson, Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology, The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, England, e-mail: r.j.wilson@open.ac.uk