Circles

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Bernoulli’s numbers are also apparent, as they “appear in several of Ramanujan’s formulas” [2, p. 7]. He developed “Magic Squares, an array of (usually distinct) natural numbers so that the sum of the numbers in each row, column, or diagonal is the same” [2, p. 16]. During most of the last year, before he went to England, he worked with the “general formulae in the theory of definite integrals” [4, p. 186]. Despite many ingenious results, “some of his theorems on prime numbers were completely wrong” [5].

In 1987, the centenary of Ramanujan’s birth was celebrated all over the world. At the University of Illinois the celebrations included “a series of 28 expository lectures and several contributed papers that traced Ramanujan’s influence to many areas of current research” [6, p. 1]. At Anna University, Madras, the University organized a number of “academic programmes throughout the centenary year and concluded the celebrations with an International Conference” [7, Preface]. Janaki, Ramanujan’s widow, inaugurated the conference.

Ramanujan’s notebooks would intrigue and frustrate whole generations of mathematicians. His life and works would captivate many. Kanigel wrote, “[the] more I learned, the more I, too, came under Ramanujan’s spell” [3, p. 4]. Ramanujan’s life leaves the reader captivated by an inexplicable force, Ramanujan’s spell.

Ramanujan and Hardy’s names would be “linked forever in the history of mathematics” [3, p. 253]. Hardy’s remarks in Ramanujan give teachers food for thought:

There was no gain at all when the College at Kumbakonam rejected the one great man they had ever possessed, and the loss was irreparable; it is the worst instance that I know of the damage that can be done by an inefficient and inelastic educational system [4, p. 7].

REFERENCES