Maths is the language of the universe, so what have you got to say?

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Kurt Gödel - mathematician and one of the last century’s most influential thinkers – yet very few people have even heard of him. His work established the limits of mathematical logic and laid the foundations of modern computer science, yet his centenary has hardly made it into the mainstream media.

Public awareness of mathematics is low, although it lies at the heart of science and technology and is of ever increasing importance in modern society. Of course no one can be expected to start perusing mathematical journals with their morning coffee – we need good science writers to bring maths to life.

Plus magazine is launching the “Plus new writers award” in May to find the people who can bring mathematics to life. Published online and free of charge, Plus is an award-winning magazine about maths which is aimed at the general public. Its articles by top mathematicians and science writers provide a window into the world of maths with all its beauty and applications, and cover fields as diverse as art, medicine, cosmology and sport.

The competition is open to new writers of any age and from any background who can explain a mathematical topic or application they think the public needs to know about. The winning entries will be read by an international audience of over a hundred thousand in the December issue of Plus, and the prize pool includes an iPod. The closing date is 31st September 2006, and more information on the competition can be found on the Plus site, http://plus.maths.org/competition.

“It was people telling the big mathematical stories that made me realise at school that there was much more to maths than simple long division,” says Professor Marcus du Sautoy, author of the best-selling book “The music of the primes” and one of the judges of the Plus new writers award.

“Reading these stories inspired me to want to make my own mathematical breakthroughs. The future of mathematics depends on capturing the imaginations of those who will become the next generation of mathematicians.”

Gödel’s centenary highlights the need for writers who can share their passion for maths with the general public. With the 2006 new writers award, Plus hopes to celebrate these writers and encourage those of the future.

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