

# Oceania MathsJam Gathering

[www.mathsjam.com](http://www.mathsjam.com)

Over the weekend of Saturday 30th November - Sunday 31st December 2019, I had the pleasure of attending the inaugural Oceania MathsJam Gathering in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Started by Matt Parker (the stand-up mathematician) in London in 2008 as a way to meet up with other maths enthusiasts to talk about maths, enjoy puzzles, solve problems and play games, there are now 117 MathsJams being held in pubs around the world, usually on the second last Tuesday of the month from 7pm onwards. Inspired by the Gathering for Gardner event, Colin Wright then organised the first UK gathering, which was so successful that it became an annual event.

Fast forward to 2019, the members of the three New Zealand MathsJams who couldn't make it over to the UK felt that things were going well enough to hold a gathering here in the Southern Hemisphere. I contacted the organisers, explaining a bit about who we are, and they were happy for us to set up a Mensa information stand.

The Oceania MathsJam Gathering (OMG) was set up for the same weekend as the annual UK event, and it followed a similar format. Saturday morning after registration, items were set out on tables for

Sunday, which included puzzles, games, books, several unusual Rubik's Cubes, and a couple of puzzle boxes. Over the two days, attendees were each invited to give an informal 5-minute talk, with the opportunity for further discussion afterwards. Topics included: an interesting link between the Fibonacci sequence and Pascal's triangle, AI and programming, Hilbert's paradox of the Grand Hotel, Music and Harmony, Calculators: what they are and how they do what they do.

Saturday highlights included an enjoyable and informative ride on the iconic Christchurch tram. In the evening, Dr Ross Atkins' keynote speech (with encore) titled "1,3,2,6... what comes next" was open to the public. In talking about this sequence, he covered game theory and Wythoff's game (or Corner the Lady), touched on Beatty squares, L-systems, Grundy numbers and brought us back around to the Fibonacci sequence.

The weekend was a lot of fun, and I met some great people including YouTuber, Dr Nic (Dr Nic's Maths and Stats). Organisers Rata, Tom, and Mark were very welcoming and managed to keep everything on schedule. By the end, there was lots of positive talk about setting up the next gathering, and a Dunedin MathsJam had been organised.

**Darren Bird**