



Ian Stewart



Ian Stewart was born in the coastal town of Folkestone, in England, in 1945, where he attended the Harvey Grammar School, founded in 1674 by the family of William Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood by the heart. He obtained a first class honours degree in mathematics at Churchill College, Cambridge, where he was also lead guitarist in a student rock band, The Shades of Night. The band's high points were to be support band for Long John Baldry and Screaming Lord Such. In 1967 he moved to the University of Warwick to study for a PhD in mathematics. Two years later he was appointed as a lecturer at Warwick, and he has been working there ever since, apart from a year in Germany, two years in the USA, and six months in New Zealand. He retired in 2009 but remains active in research. While at Warwick he supervised 30 PhD students.

He is now an Emeritus Mathematics Professor at the University of Warwick. He has been a Fellow of the Royal Society since 2001, and recently served on Council, its governing body, for three years. He has five honorary doctorates (Open University, Westminster, Louvain, Kingston, and Brighton). He is also an honorary wizard of Unseen University on Terry Pratchett's fictional Discworld. He is author or coauthor of over 190 published research papers on topics including abstract algebra, singularity theory, quality control for wire, pattern formation, chaos, network dynamics, and mathematical biology.

He wrote the Mathematical Recreations column for *Scientific American* from 1990 to 2001. His 90 television appearances include the 1997 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures for the BBC. In one lecture he brought a live tiger into the lecture room, and in another he vanished in a puff of smoke after demonstrating time travel using a wormhole. He has made over 450 radio broadcasts, most of them about mathematics for the general public, and has delivered hundreds of public lectures on mathematics, including the Queen's Lecture in Berlin. He was Gresham Professor of Geometry at Gresham College, London from 1994 to 1998, delivering six public lectures each year.

He has published over 120 books, including undergraduate textbooks, research texts, home computer books, and science fiction novels. He is best known for more than 40 books popularising mathematics. The most recent include *Significant Figures*, 25 biographies of trailblazing mathematicians; *Calculating the Cosmos*, on the long-standing relationship between mathematics, astronomy, and cosmology; and *Infinity, a Very Short Introduction*. Other books include *The Beauty of Numbers in Nature*, *Professor Stewart's Incredible Numbers*, *Mathematics of Life*, *Professor Stewart's Hoard of Mathematical Treasures*, *Professor Stewart's Cabinet of Mathematical Curiosities*, *Why Beauty is Truth*, *Flatterland*, *What Shape is a Snowflake?*, *Nature's Numbers*, and *Does God Play Dice?* His books have been published in more than 300 translations in 18 languages.

His awards include the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics Communications Award, the Royal Society's Faraday Medal, the Gold Medal of the Institute for Mathematics and Its Applications, the Public Understanding of Science Award of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Zeeman Medal of the London Mathematical Society and the Institute for Mathematics and its Applications. In 2006 he won the Science Writing Prize of the British Association of Science Writers for the best article in a specialist periodical. His *Letters to a Young Mathematician* won the Peano Prize and *The Symmetry Perspective* (coauthored with Martin Golubitsky) won the Balaguer Prize. His iPad app *Incredible Numbers* won the Digital Book World award for adult nonfiction. He shared the Lewis Thomas Prize for Writing about Science with Steven Strogatz in 2015, and won the Euler Book Prize of the Mathematical Association of America in 2017.

Ian leads a second life in the science fiction community. He has written six science fiction novels: *Wheeler*, *Heaven*, and the forthcoming *Oracle* with Jack Cohen, *The*

Living Labyrinth and *Rock Star* with Tim Poston, and *Jack of All Trades*. He has published science fiction short stories in *Analog*, *Omni*, *Interzone*, and in *Nature's* 'Futures' series. He owns a collection of about 8,000 science fiction books and magazines, and is a member of the local Birmingham Science Fiction Group. In 2017 he was Science Guest of Honour at Worldcon75, the World Science Fiction Convention, in Helsinki. With Terry Pratchett and Jack Cohen he coauthored the bestselling series *The Science of Discworld I, II, III, and IV*, and he is a regular guest at the British Discworld Conventions. He was presented with the Bloody Stupid Johnson Award for Innovative Uses of Mathematics at the 2016 Discworld Convention. *The Science of Discworld* was a finalist for science fiction's prestigious Hugo Award in the 'Best Related Book' category, at the World Science Fiction Convention in 2000.

Aside from science fiction, his hobbies include electric guitar, Egyptology, and geology. With his wife Avril he has travelled to destinations including New Zealand, Egypt, Jordan, the Galapagos Islands, Peru, Easter Island, Laos, Cambodia, Botswana, Namibia, and Tanzania.