

ZMATH 2011a.00035

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The appointment of the first four professors of mathematics in the University of Melbourne.

Aust. Math. Soc. Gaz. 33, No. 1, 14-21 (2006).

From the text: Sir Thomas MacFarland Cherry was the fourth professor of mathematics in the University of Melbourne and is the most highly regarded of all, before or since. The circumstances by which he was appointed to the chair of “Mathematics, pure and mixed” are in stark contrast to the processes used for his predecessor, John Henry Michell, six year earlier. In fact, there were differing approaches used for each of the first four professors. What is more, Cherry’s appointment over one of the other applicants will be a surprise to many and a cause for some debate. The details have not previously been published. This article is adapted from a forthcoming book [*G. L. Cohen*, Counting Australia in: The people, organisations and institutions of Australian mathematics, Sydney: Halstead Press (2006)] on the history of mathematics in Australia, written as part of the Australian Mathematical Society History Project in connection with the Society’s 50th anniversary in August this year.

Classification: A30