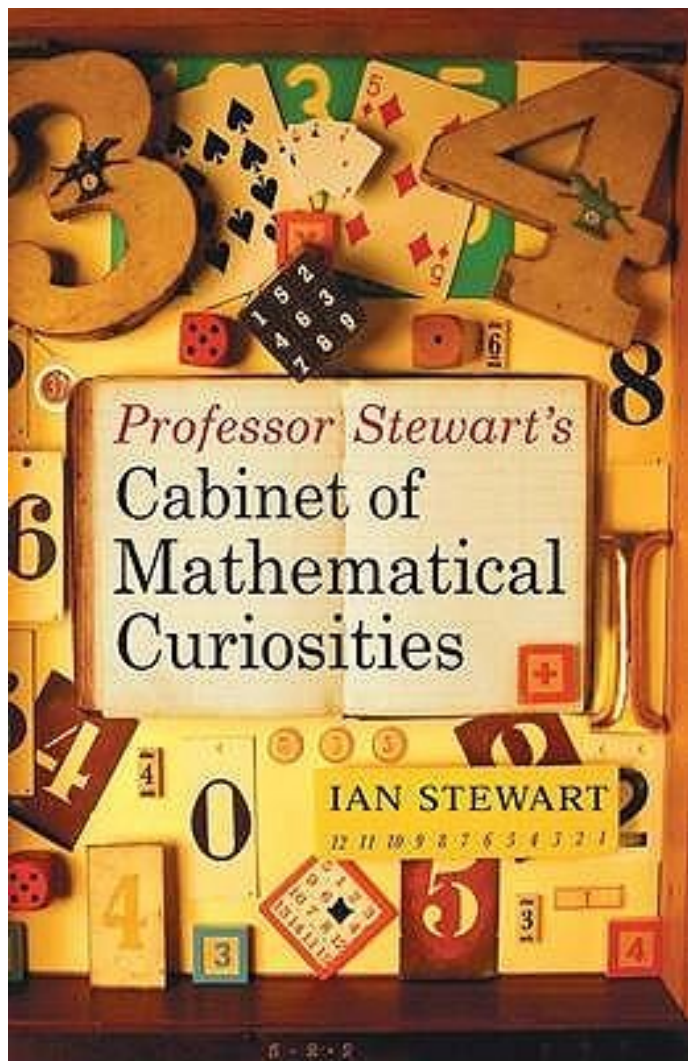

Ian Stewart

Professor Stewart's Cabinet of Mathematical Curiosities



Title: Professor Stewart's Cabinet of Mathematical Curiosities

Author: Ian Stewart

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Description

What's maths got to do with it? Delve into this curios cabinet to find out for yourself:

- How to slice through your fingers without cutting them off
- How to deduce without looking whether the rabbit under the hat is black or white
- Why the M25 is shorter anti-clockwise than clockwise and by how much
- Why minus times minus equals plus
- And how to extract that cherry from a cocktail glass (harder than you think!)

Forget sudoku. For keeping your brain limber, nothing can compete with Professor Stewart's tasty assortment of numerical nibbles.

Insightful reviews

Brian Clegg: This is the second review of a trilogy, I'm reading in entirely the wrong order (book 3, then 1 here, and 2 to follow), so for me, this book is a predecessor to Professor Stewart's Casebook of Mathematical Mysteries. The format is very similar - a collection of factoids, logical puzzles, mathematical expositions and more to entertain any recreational maths enthusiast. I think it works significantly better in this first book of the series because, to be honest, by volume 3 there is probably a bit of barrel scraping going on. Here the topics are fresh and fun.

There is arguably something for everyone here, which inversely means that there are probably some bits, depending on your mathematical knowledge and interests, that you will either find too trivial or too heavy going. But the format makes it easy to skip through to the next. I personally most enjoy the logic problems (though a small black mark for featuring a near-identical "moving the cups" problem to one in the third book) and, much to my surprise, the geometry, which I suppose took me back to a more innocent time. There were inevitably some entries where there was a strong feeling of 'so what?', leaving the reader suspecting that mathematicians need to get a life. And at least one where I think the answer is wrong, if you apply the same logic as applied in an earlier tricky question. (It's the one about pigs and umbrellas, if you must know.)

Funnily, what works least well are the bits that are most like a conventional popular maths book, that describe famous mathematical problems and their context, such as the four colour problem and Fermat's last theorem. The entries for these are rather longer than the rest, but obviously much shorter than, say, Simon Singh's brilliant book on Fermat. That means that you get concentrated fact, but none of the interesting detail that makes a popular science or maths book appealing. For me these sections just don't work and I largely skipped them.

But - and that's the joy of the format - it really doesn't matter. Because in a few pages there will be something else, and something else, and something else again to entertain and tickle the brain cells. It made me think, reminded me of some old favourite problems and puzzles, introduced plenty of new ones and entertained. What more can you ask from maths?

Paulette: I put this one down because I thought Bruce might be interested sometime and it's not yet available at the library

Stephen Dawson: Lots of mathematical snippets, ranging from the odd joke to detailed proofs of interesting theorems. I suppose this means that there is something for everyone, but it also means that the range is too wide for most. A couple of errors slightly take the gloss off, but nevertheless this makes for an interesting and informative book to dip into.

Justin: A enjoyable little well known math book. a piece asymmetric (most of his factors have been outstanding, yet a few left me scratching my head) yet total worth reading, specially for secondary college math teachers. many of the math puzzles discovered inside of have been excellent, and i am anticipating sharing them with my students.

Nizar Hawamdeh: ?????? ??? ?????? ??????? .. ?? ?????? ????? ?? ????? ?????? .. ?????? ????? ?????????? .. ?????? : ??? ????? ?????? ????????? ????? ????????? ?? ?????? ??????? !!

Pvw: great book approximately many recognized and not more recognized mathematical problems. a few of the puzzles are quite complicated, so it takes a while to completely grab them so as to have the capacity to delight in the solution. this isn't a booklet you simply learn via from begin to finish. it truly is extra anything to have on you shelf, deciding on it up sometimes to take pleasure in one or discussions after which letting it leisure for a while. As an introduction to maths for the non-mathematician, Stewart's e-book is simply too assorted and does not persist with a chronological story. a greater assessment of math's historical past will be Mathematics: The technological know-how of Patterns.

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