



# UKMA news

The newsletter of the UK Metric Association  
For a **single** *rational* system of measurement

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[www.ukma.org.uk](http://www.ukma.org.uk)

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## UKMA Committee 2018-19

The number of nominations received on the closing date of 16 July was equal to the number of vacancies, with the exception of the post of Chair for which there was no nomination.

The Committee for the coming year takes office at the conclusion of the AGM. It is:

Treasurer: Tony Wilson

Secretary: Derek Pollard

Other members: Ronnie Cohen,  
John Frewen-Lord,  
Raphael Sofair,  
Martin Ward

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## AGM and Annual Conference 2018

The AGM of UKMA will take place on Saturday 1st September 2018 at 10:15 at Canada Water Library, 21 Surrey Quays Road, London, SE16 7AR.

The Annual Conference will begin immediately after the AGM. The agenda for the AGM and the programme for the Conference will be available in August. The Conference will conclude at around 16:00.

The Canada Water Library, London SE21, has proved perfect for our annual get-together for the past five years. However, it was difficult this year to reconcile availability of rooms at the Library in late June and July with existing commitments of Committee members, and for this reason the event was postponed until after the summer break.

# **UKMA news - the newsletter of the UK Metric Association**

## **Association News**

### **Conference programme 2018**

The Committee will be considering the programme for the Conference at its meeting early in August. Suggestions are welcome from members. Please e-mail [secretary@metric.org.uk](mailto:secretary@metric.org.uk)

The Committee will also be considering if holding the AGM and Conference on a Sunday in future years would be more convenient for members. Please let us have your views.

### **Web site upgrade**

Earlier this year the hosting and maintenance of UKMA's main web site were upgraded, although the content was left largely unchanged.

The new arrangements simplify the editing of the content of the web site, and your suggestions for improvements and additions are always welcome. Please e-mail [secretary@metric.org.uk](mailto:secretary@metric.org.uk)

In future, the Committee will be looking to update the content and appearance of our second web site, [www.thinkmetric.org.uk](http://www.thinkmetric.org.uk). Again, suggestions from members are welcome.

Credit for these improvements goes to a Committee member, Martin Ward, who carried out most of the work single-handed. Thank you, Martin.

### **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

The Committee has adopted a privacy policy, obtainable from the Secretary.

Members automatically receive information relating to the business of the Association – Committee elections, AGM notice and papers, annual accounts, Conference programme, and so on. They also receive UKMA News.

Former members receive UKMA News unless requesting otherwise.

The Secretary will contact those who in the past have expressed support for the aims of UKMA without joining to determine if they wish to continue receive information about it.

UKMA does not share members', former members' and supporters' personal data with anyone. As far as possible, the information is held securely.

### **'Turn the UK fully metric now'**

The owner and moderator of the Facebook page, 'Turn the UK fully metric now', who is independent of UKMA, is looking for assistance. If you think you might be able to help, please leave a comment to this effect on the page or e-mail [secretary@metric.org.uk](mailto:secretary@metric.org.uk)

TtUKfmn has always been supportive of our campaign.

# UKMA News - the newsletter of the UK Metric Association

## UK News Stories

### UK to apply to stay in the European Standards system

The UK is to apply to stay in the European Standards system for industry products and services after Brexit, the *Financial Times* reports. According to the newspaper, the Government's Business Secretary has written to the Director of the British Standards Institution (BSI) urging him to 'take the steps you feel are necessary' to maintain national influence in the setting of European Standards and international benchmarks.

BSI aims to continue to provide UK experts with the standards development framework to support trade in the UK, across Europe and globally.

UKMA awaits developments.

### British estate agents (and their clients) slow to change

While British real estate agents work almost exclusively in square feet, elsewhere in the developed world, excluding the USA, square metres are used. The photo is of an advert in Luxembourg for a ground floor car park that shows its size in square metres. It is rare to find such an advertisement in the UK. When square metres are shown in real estate adverts, it is almost always alongside square feet.



This is a paradox because British buildings are designed and built exclusively in metric units. Also, British retailers sell fixtures and fittings for buildings using metric units. Perhaps estate agents prefer measuring in Imperial as it makes a space seem ten times larger!

### Plus ça change. Toujours la meme chose

The editor of UKMA News is pleased to pass on this short article that he came across in a copy of the magazine *New Builder* for 25 January 1990.

#### “Measuring up

As you may have noticed, *NB* is all metric. Any attempt to sneak an Imperial unit into our stories is firmly sat on by our dedicated sub-editors, despite our anguished protestations that certain Imperial units are still in common use.

A perfect example of this metrological schizophrenia that afflicts the earnest reporter is to hand at the moment, a typical developer's brochure on a new shopping centre.

On the back page is a table of facts and figures. Retail area is given in square feet, site area in acres, distance to nearby towns in miles. But the area of cladding is in square metres, the height of the façade in metres, and the thickness of insulation in millimetres.

Why?”

*NB* ceased publication over twenty years ago. Now the units in developer's brochures ...?

### “m” for miles, metres and muddle



The photo shows a pedestrian sign post. This sign follows the practice of the Department for Transport of using "m" for miles. If the sign said 300 metres instead of 0.3 kilometres, it is likely that a lower-case "m" would be used: "Kew Gardens Victoria Gate 0.2m / 300m". And what would that tell visitors, other than that UK measurements are in a muddle?

So long as a pedestrian sign has planning permission under the Town & Country Planning Acts and regulations, any measurement units are permitted.

### NHS – joules versus calories

Philip Bladon, one of our long-standing members, is particularly interested in the use of SI and non-SI measurements in the NHS. He has sent UKMA News a query that relates to a comment he made on 24 June on an article on Metric Views he had written previously about the use of joules, etc.

<http://metricviews.org.uk/2010/03/joules-on-the-menu-please/>

He wonders if there is any member working in the NHS who may be able to help with information about the measurement units used in the training that Health Education England provides. He is particularly concerned about references to ‘sugar targets’, ‘calorie caps’ and ‘calorie intake’.

If you feel you can help Philip, please e-mail the Secretary, [secretary@metric.org.uk](mailto:secretary@metric.org.uk), for his contact details.

### Heating information for the elderly

The illustration is of a card with a built-in thermometer that uses the Celsius and Fahrenheit scales. It is sponsored by Help the Aged charity, British Gas and the Mayor of London. The advice given on the card also uses dual units. It is easy to see why the sponsors require dual measures – if only one in a hundred of the users of the card is unfamiliar with Celsius, it could be that one whose life is saved by it. But by doing so, are they perpetuating the measurement muddle? And how long will this practice continue? The Met Office added Celsius temperatures to its weather forecasts in 1962, so the elderly have had over 50 years to get used to them.

That said, the editor of UKMA News admits to having such a card, but showing Celsius only. Readers, now is the time to check yours.



## UKMA News - the newsletter of the UK Metric Association

### Recent articles posted on Metric Views

Here is a summary of the articles posted on Metric Views, [www.metricviews.org.uk](http://www.metricviews.org.uk), since the last edition of this newsletter:

“A storm in a champagne glass.” Posted on 3 March. 8 comments.

“Deficits, the global measurement system and global trade.” Posted on 24 March. 2 comments.

“The Curiosity rover makes a curious discovery.” Posted on 1 April. 4 comments.

“Metric vs Imperial. Which?” Posted on 4 April. 1 comment.

“Minutes, TfL and ‘Legible London’.” Posted on 12 April. 6 comments.

“It’s a boy.” Posted on 23 April. 10 comments.

“A lesson from Sweden.” Posted on 26 April. 7 comments.

“An Imperial Royal baby.” Posted 3 May. 5 comments.

“cm versus mm.” Posted on 11 May. 14 comments.

“Ignorance is bliss, or perhaps not.” Posted on 17 May. 3 comments.

“Carry on muddling.” Posted on 25 May. 12 comments.

“Liberia joins the club.” Posted on 31 May. 5 comments.

“Road traffic signs make a soft border.” Posted on 7 June. 4 comments.

“Remembering a tenacious campaigner.” Posted on 14 June. 11 comments.

“Metric Underground.” Posted on 22 June. 2 comments.

“Energy units - muddle in the making.” Posted on 30 June. No comment so far.

“Isolationist or Imperialist?” Posted on 5 July. 2 comments.

“Mixed messages from Farnborough.” Posted on 16 July. One comment.

Draft articles for Metric Views are welcome and should be e-mailed to [secretary@metric.org.uk](mailto:secretary@metric.org.uk).

### A few words about Brexit (just in case you have not yet read enough!)

UKMA takes the view that completing the metric changeover is in the public’s interest whether or not the UK remains a member of the EU. In or out, over 90% of our trade will be with metric countries. Large sections of the UK economy have made the switch to metric measures, including the supermarkets from which we buy over 75% of our groceries, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, aerospace, defence, science, education, medicine and athletics, and even DIY superstores. If we are to prosper in a largely metric world then we need a SINGLE, simple and rational system of measurement that all understand and are familiar with.

## UKMA News - the newsletter of the UK Metric Association

### Vinyl overlays on road traffic signs

One of our readers has written to UKMA News as follows:



“Here is an example of a 40 mph sign that uses a vinyl overlay. Presumably, the speed limit was changed at some point in the past. Successive Transport Ministers and the UK Department for Transport have said that changing speed limits from mph to km/h would be very expensive as this would require total replacement. However, they appear to have no objection should a Highway Authority wish to use vinyl overlays to change from one mph speed limit to another. It shows you that where there is a will, there is a way. The will to metricate road signs and markings appears to be lacking.”

### Can you help?

The Committee is looking for volunteers who may be able to help in the following areas:

- Editing UKMA News. Rudimentary desktop publishing skills and a few spare hours once every three months are all that you will need.
- Preparing web-friendly versions of UKMA News for PCs, i-pads, i-phones and android devices such as tablets and mobile phones.
- Responding to calls to appear on broadcast media, for example local radio.
- Reviewing printed media for stories to link to our Twitter and Facebook pages.
- Assisting with the production of material for uploading to YouTube.

If you think you may be able to help, please contact [secretary@metric.org.uk](mailto:secretary@metric.org.uk)

### Where to find UKMA on the internet

UKMA began as an internet forum, and the internet is our principal vehicle for carrying our message to the public. We now have:

The main UKMA web site, [www.ukma.org.uk](http://www.ukma.org.uk)

A factual web site, [www.thinkmetric.org.uk](http://www.thinkmetric.org.uk)

A blog, [www.metricviews.org.uk](http://www.metricviews.org.uk)

A Twitter page, <http://twitter.com/UKMetric>

A YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com/user/UKMetric](http://www.youtube.com/user/UKMetric)

These are available to all, not just members.

There is also a Facebook page and a Facebook group, open anyone who can log onto Facebook.



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## About UKMA News

UKMA News is published by the UK Metric Association, the object of which is to promote the full adoption of the International System of Units (SI), commonly known as 'the metric system', as the legal and default system of weights and measures throughout society in the United Kingdom.

The Editor welcomes your feedback and comments on UKMA News. To submit, please e-mail [secretary@metric.org.uk](mailto:secretary@metric.org.uk)

## Sadly missed

We are sad to report the passing of three visionaries who made significant contributions to the campaign to end Britain's measurement muddle:

*Alan Young aka Dr Metric*

Alan died this time last year. He was a former headmaster, who saw the harm that the continued use of medieval units caused to our children's education in mathematics, science and technology. We will report on Alan's work in a future edition of UKMA News.

*Bill Bauer*

Bill died in December 2017. He was a founder member of UKMA and audited the accounts of the Association for many years.

*Anne Attlee*

Anne died in May. An account of Anne's Metric Sense campaign appears on our blog, <http://metricviews.org.uk/2018/06/remembering-a-tenacious-campaigner/#more-7153>

We shall miss them, but we are privileged to be continuing the project they did not see completed.

## Membership of UKMA – a note for readers who are not members.

An application form for membership of UKMA appears on the final page of this edition of UKMA News. The Annual subscription is £15 or £10 paid by standing order, concessions £5. The subscription year runs from July until the following June.

Benefits of membership include:

- Participation in a Google Group, open only to members.
- Participation in the annual election of the Committee.
- Participation in the AGM and annual Conference
- Eligibility for election to the Committee

## UKMA News - the newsletter of the UK Metric Association

### UKMA membership application form

Thank you for your interest in joining the UK Metric Association (UKMA).

Please fill in your details below:

Name	
Home postal address	
Town	
County/Country	
Postcode	
Daytime telephone	
Evening telephone	
Mobile telephone	
e-mail address	

(Please delete below as applicable.)

I wish to support the UK Metric Association through membership.

I understand the objectives of the UK Metric Association (UKMA) and agree with them. I have received the Constitution of UKMA.

I agree that my participation in UKMA activities will be legal, ethical and consistent with its objectives.

I am willing to be contacted by e-mail at the e-mail address above

I enclose a cheque (payable to 'UK Metric Association') to cover:

Individual subscription of £15 (annual)

Concessionary subscription of £5 (annual)

I enclose a completed standing order form in favour of UKMA for £10.00 per year.

I have made a payment through Paypal using the UKMA web site, [www.ukma.org.uk](http://www.ukma.org.uk)

Signed .....

Date .....

Please return to Secretary, UKMA, 34 Wroxham Gardens, London, N11 2BA, or to [secretary@metric.org.uk](mailto:secretary@metric.org.uk), from whom a standing order form may be obtained.