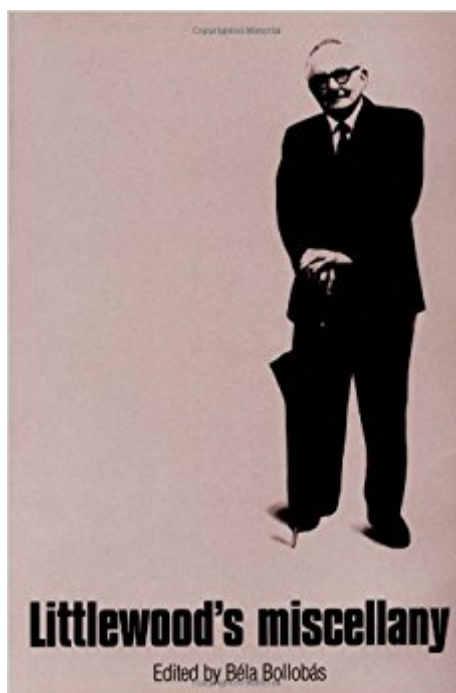


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Littlewood's Miscellany



Synopsis

Academic life in Cambridge especially in Trinity College is viewed through the eyes of one of its greatest figures. Most of Professor Littlewood's earlier work is presented along with a wealth of new material.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Every line will delight lovers of mathematics, but even readers who have never had a mathematical thought will--if they love evidence of humane intelligence and wise wit--find here much to savor. A very special classic." SciTech Book News

Academic life in Cambridge especially in Trinity College is viewed through the eyes of one of its greatest figures. Most of Prof. Littlewood's earlier work is presented along with a wealth of new material.

The stories are still funny, and the advice still sound. Aged better than Hardy's Mathematician's Apology, though it is (sadly) less well known. I think the young like romantic figures. Littlewood, by surviving, thriving and having as good a time as can be managed, is not romantic. But is excellent company.

A great read.

There has been a flood of recent books detailing the agony and even the mental illness of mathematicians. This book is a rare and refreshing exception. A collection of the popular writings of J. E. Littlewood, a leading mathematician of the twentieth century, it demonstrates and celebrates the intellectual excitement and even the joy of doing creative mathematics.

"The surprising thing about this paper is that a man who could write it - would." The book contains many similar quips, more or less connected to mathematics or the process of doing mathematics. There are also many interesting and deep mathematical puzzles (some of them have become classics since the book was written), linguistic paradoxes, short anecdotes about mathematicians, amusing mathematical errors, unintentionally funny formulations from books or papers, references to contemporary results. The book is a collection of fragments assembled by Littlewood, refreshingly lacking any serious organization. Based on the 1953 "A Mathematician's Miscellany", the book has stood the test of time, the few parts that feel outdated do so only because of the attention to detail of the author that seems uncommon today.

Littlewood is the kind of historical scientific figure people look up to, not only because of his legacy in mathematical research but also for his towering intellectual reputation. I (shamelessly) admit here that I've read and reread this book so many times, each time picking up some nuances and details that Littlewood subtly convey between his lines. It is a glimpse into the mind of a genius. His style of writing is not out-of-fashion even many years after he put it on paper, probably in between replying to math letters from Hardy, and proving a theorem in analysis. Miscellany is nothing short than the last century's most incredible mathematical essay.

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