

## WA Maths Book Club Review

July 2019

### Humble Pi, Matt Parker, 2019

You may recognise Matt from the popular global you tube channel Numberphile. A mathematician comedian based in the UK, you may not have known that he is originally a mathematics teacher from WA and once a committee member of MAWA. This called for an extra special #MathsBookClubWA meeting and a Friday sundowner was held at the MAWA office with Matt attending by Zoom.

So the first thing you will notice about this book is that the wings on the aeroplane on the front cover are the wrong way around. Take that as your warning – do not read this on a plane, the engineering mistakes that Matt highlights throughout the book could give the most seasoned flyer something to think about. Simple mistakes converting units can create all sorts of trouble for aeroplanes for example if the maximum cargo is measured in kg instead of pounds.

Matt loves cogs and it was great to see he kept the controversial three cogs of education, teachers, students and parent on his wall. For all the fellow cog lovers out there you have to check out his latest numberphile video that explores if an odd numbered Mobius-loop cog is possible?

Is this one for the kiddies? Let's say it does come with a warning. Some of the language used could be controversial – but hey isn't that how comedians work. His chapter on the geometry of soccer balls (OK footballs it's a UK book) created some great maths inspiration for a young ten year old and he is now determined to explore geometrically correct footballs and their misrepresentation on images across the UK.

Now getting from Page 1 to Page 4,294, 967, 289 can be a challenge for those easily confused. The US edition comes with a health warning for the protection of its readers. But as our readers are from the WA Maths Book Club we loved the quirkiness of his numbering selection process. You must check out the index as well, not only does it give you the page number but allows the reader to find the word in question in a co-ordinate plane.

Mega giants Pepsi and Macdonalds each had a chapter dedicated to their mathematical errors. Nobody is immune to Matt's litany of glitches, near misses and mishaps as he reveals how maths is essential in our everyday lives and just what happens when it goes wrong. Highlighting the errors in global mathematical calculations allows us to highlight the fact that we are human, and we do make mistakes. So let's celebrate our mistakes, share these in the classroom and allow students to see that mathematical mistakes are a part of being human.

Book Club recommends this book for all those wanting a bit of a laugh and some inspiration for the classroom. So time for me to sign off now, I am going to find TheJosh and Justin\_27 in a body builder chatroom – absolutely hilarious!!