

Preface

This Discussion Meeting was conceived in collaboration with the Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences, the programme being planned to take advantage of the presence in the UK of mathematicians participating in the two programmes of the Newton Institute being held at that time, namely Singularity Theory (July–December 2000) and Geometry and Topology of Fluid Flow (September–December 2000).

An outstanding group of lecturers presented talks revealing a common topological thread in a fascinating range of physical applications, ranging from string theory and knotted solitons at one end of the spectrum to knotted magnetic fields in astrophysics and chaos induced by stirring protocols at the other.

We hope that this collection of papers will provide a glimpse of a field that is evolving rapidly, and in which important interdisciplinary developments are to be expected over the next decade.

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