

## SOURCES

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### The British Association Mathematical Tables Committee

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The British Association Mathematical Tables Committee enjoyed a notable antiquity going back into the last century. I joined the committee in 1938 and must be one of the few surviving members. In 1948 the committee was dissolved and a Royal Society committee took over its work.

The last secretary of the British Association committee was Dr. J. C. P. Miller. When he retired, he gave me the minutes running from the end of 1928 to 1948. These I had bound and I presented them to the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

Anyone who was concerned with computing in the predigital computer period will know how important mathematical tables were. The B.A. Tables Committee carried the art of computing them to a degree of perfection never before realized. A National Class 3000 accounting machine, used both for differencing and sub-tabulation, figured largely in the methods used. The results in the form of a series of published volumes may be seen in any large mathematical library.

I did not become a member of the Royal Society Mathematical Tables Committee when it was first formed, but it fell to my lot to become chairman around April 1958. The development of digital computers had, by then, made mathematical tables obsolescent and it was my melancholy task to wind up the work of the committee.

It was on the advice of Mrs. Alton of the Contemporary Scientific Archives Centre that I presented the minutes to the Bodleian. This was a natural place for them to go, since the British Association archives themselves were in the process of being deposited there.