Famous Mathematicians

I can explore how mathematics impacts the world and the important part it has played in advances and inventions.

Leonardo Da-Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci was born in Italy in 1452 and lived until 1512. He lived during the Renaissance which was an important time when there were many developments in areas like art and science. He is best known for his painting and his famous works include the Mona Lisa, the Vitruvian Man and the Last Supper. He wasn't only an artist though, he was also an inventor, scientist, mathematician, engineer, writer, musician and much more! Some say he is one of the most talented people ever to live!

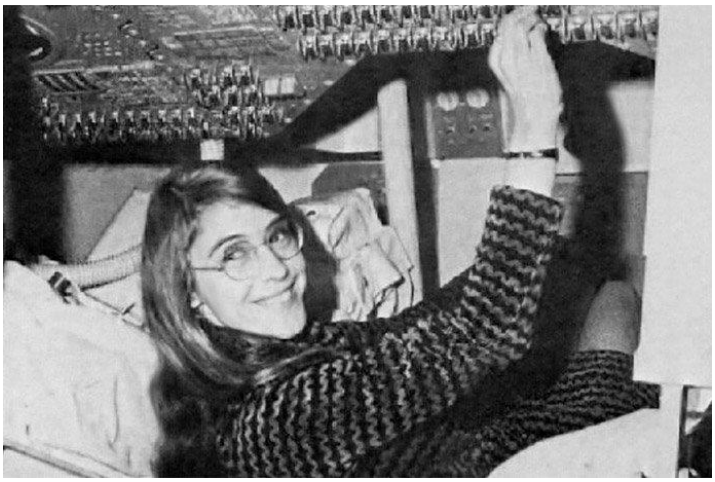
One of his areas of interest was the human body and he studied the proportions and geometry of the body. His painting and interest in maths were combined when he created The Vitruvian Man. This painting showed the link between human proportions and geometry.

He made thousands of pages of notes and drawings and was always studying the world around him and looking for scientific knowledge and inventions.

Da Vinci was interested in flight and he studied the flight of birds and made plans for flying machines. Some say that he drew designs for the bicycle, aeroplane, helicopter and parachute about 500 years before their time! He also drew designs of musical instruments along with many other things.

Bill Gates who own Microsoft is said to have paid around 30 million dollars for a 500 year old notebook written by Da Vinci!

Margaret Hamilton



In the 1960s, when she was in her early 30s, Margaret Hamilton was famous for leading the team that developed the computer code which guided the Apollo moon landings. A lot of the things that the Apollo Moon Landing needed for it's guidance system were new and she was in charge of developing the new software which led to the successful moon landing.

Margaret had advanced maths degrees and learned about computer programming while she was working on developing software to predict the weather.

The software her and her team developed for the spacecraft had to be able to take input from lots of sensors which tracked speed, location and other details and manage data to answer questions from the astronauts in real time and then signal if there were problems. There were no codes or software like this that they could learn from so the programming had to be invented from the start.

One of the things that she developed was code that helped the computer to decide which bits of information were the most important to focus on. This piece of software saved the moon landing because 3 minutes before landing, the computer was overloaded with useless data when one of the astronauts accidently hit a switch that turned on a radar system. The computer set off alarms to show that it had to deal with useless data and ignored the data that wasn't important and focussed on the data needed to put the lander in position for the astronauts to fly the final short distance to land on the moon. If her coding hadn't done this, the lunar lander might have crashed or the mission might have been abandoned!