



15th Australian Statistical Conference

The 15th Australian Statistical Conference was held at the Adelaide Hilton International Hotel from 3 to 7 July 2000. It was attended by a total of 313 participants, as follows: ACT 42, NSW 51, Qld 24, SA 59, Vic/Tas 48, WA 21, NZ 38, USA 13, UK 5, Canada 3, South Africa 2, South Korea 2, with one each from Poland, Singapore, Hong Kong, China and Germany.

The conference opened on Monday morning with an address "Predictive data mining and multiple adaptive decision trees" by Jerry Friedman, describing ways of improving the performance of CART techniques by producing multiple decision trees and averaging them. The theme of large and complex data sets continued through the first two days of the conference, with sessions on environmental modelling, MCMC, signal analysis and financial modelling. The program also featured invited papers on a range of topics throughout the week, delivered by Adrian Baddeley, Mark Berliner, Bruce Brown, Thong Ngee Goh, Jae Chang Lee, Kerrie Mengersen, David Moore, Jon Rao, Phillip Ross, Donald Rubin, Bimal Sinha, Patty Solomon, Terry Therneau and Peter Thomson.

It was standing room only on

Monday afternoon for an address by David Moore on the use of technology in teaching statistics, and this was followed by a forum led by Nick Fisher on the role of the Society in accrediting University courses, something that the Accreditation Committee does by default in deciding whether applicants are eligible for Graduate Statistician status. A panel discussion then considered the problems and opportunities for statistical education in Universities.

On Tuesday, Donald Rubin from Harvard gave a very illuminating plenary address on "Multiple imputation for missing data in clinical trials", covering a variety of scenarios for missing data, including those related to assignment (patients might only see one of the treatments), those which occur at random (ignorable), those which might be related to treatment (nonignorable), and those related to noncompliance. Sessions on industrial statistics, robust statistics and experi-



Petra Kuhnert, Kerrie Mengersen, Fiona Stevens, Peter Baker, Jason Boland and Michele Haynes enjoying a break at the Conference.

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Disclaimer

The views of contributors to this Newsletter should not be attributed to the Statistical Society of Australia, Inc.

Subscriptions

The Newsletter of the Statistical Society of Australia is supplied free to all members of the society. Any others wishing to subscribe to the Newsletter may do so at an annual cost of A\$10.00 (A\$8.00 if also a subscriber to the ANZIS), for an issue of four numbers.

Advertising

Advertising will be carried in the Newsletter on any matters which the Editors feel are of interest to the members of the Society. For details of advertising rates, etc. contact the Editors at the above addresses.

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mental design complemented the continuing sessions on large and complex data sets. A new innovation for the Society was the presentation of a "discussion paper" by Dennis Cook from the University of Michigan on "Dimension reduction and visualisation in discriminant analysis". This paper, jointly authored with X. Yin, together with the invited discussion from Simon Sheather and Alan Welsh, will be published in a forthcoming issue of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Statistics*.

Wednesday continued the tradition of having an afternoon free for tours or other activities, but before that was an interesting session on Statistical Consulting, organised by Ken Russell. The first session contained a number of talks about what it is to be a consultant and various aspects of "making it work", and this was followed by a panel discussion with contributions from a number of people directly involved with consulting. This was a useful precursor to the afternoon meeting of the Young Statisticians who undertook a review of the past and some planning for the future, under the general guidance of Jason Boland and forever-young statistician Paul Livingstone.

The major themes for Thursday and Friday were Medical Statistics and Survey Sampling. Terry Therneau, Donald Rubin and Patty Solomon all gave invited talks within the medical statistics strand, while Jon Rao from Carleton University in Canada gave a pair of invited talks on regression composite estimation and small area estimation.

The Presidential address on Thursday afternoon was preceded by the presentation of awards. Ian James announced and presented Honorary Life Memberships to Richard Jarrett, Des Nicholls and Dennis Trewin (who was not able to be present),

and then presented the Pitman Medal to Graham Wilkinson for his original work and pioneering contributions across many areas. More details of Graham's award will be given elsewhere. Ian then spoke on the subject "How big is my cyclone, and other statistical tales", concentrating on conveying the "essence" of statistics to school children and others through meaningful and useful applications. This was followed by a most enjoyable conference dinner, attended by 140 people, free of speeches and with entertainment by the Adelaide group "JC Jazz".

The conference concluded on Friday with another thought-provoking presentation by David Moore on "Statistical literacy and statistical competence in the new century", raising the challenge: what are the key things that people attending a first course in statistics should remember five years down the track when they are confronted with something that requires some statistical reasoning? At this final session, it was my great pleasure to announce that the Pitman Prize for the best presentation by a young statistician went to Anne Young from the University of Newcastle.

A workshop on Statistical Education was held at the University of South Australia on the weekend before the conference, and David Moore from Purdue University was the special guest for that workshop. On the Sunday before the conference, Jerry Friedman of Stanford University and Glenn Stone from NRMA ran a full-day workshop on Data Mining. Terry Therneau from the Mayo Clinic provided a workshop on "Survival Analysis" at the end of the conference on Friday afternoon and Saturday. Each of these workshops attracted an audience of about 40 people.

There are a few people to thank for their part in making the conference

work. Brenton Clark, Jerzy Filar, Ross Maller, Tony Pettitt, Ken Russell, David Steel and Rodney Wolff were of great assistance in organising sessions, and a special vote of thanks is due to Gary Glonek whose superb organisation of the program and book of abstracts gave a solid foundation for a very successful conference. Dave Griffiths led a team consisting of Alan Branford, John Henstridge, Petra Kuhnert, Judi McWhirter and Steve Stern in evaluating and deciding on the winner of the Pitman Prize. I would also like to thank the other members of the or-

ganising team, Sandra Pattison, Gary Glonek, Brenton Dansie and Ian Saunders, for their hard work in preparing and running the conference and a particular thanks to Kelly Coats from SAPMEA, the company we engaged as conference organisers. I am sure all those who attended appreciated the smoothness with which the conference ran and the courteous and efficient staff behind the desk.

Richard Jarrett,
Chair, Organising Committee
15th Australian Statistical
Conference



Macquarie University's postgraduate Applied Statistics program is offered in distance mode, in addition to on-campus. Distance students receive tuition through the medium of course notes and the Web; communication with lecturers and fellow students is facilitated through the use of bulletin boards and e-mail.

The degree of **Master of Applied Statistics** is an eight-unit course, including a project, which can be completed in one year full-time, or two to four years part-time.

The **Diploma in Applied Statistics** and **Certificate in Applied Statistics** comprise six and three units respectively.

Topics covered in the coursework are Statistical theory, Generalized linear models, Stochastic finance, Information management, Statistical design, Epidemiological methods, Multivariate analysis, Statistical graphics, Nonparametric regression and density estimation.

more information about the postgraduate Applied Statistics program is available at:

<http://www.stat.mq.edu.au/Postgrad/pgradset.htm>

for enquiries, please contact Dr Gillian Heller on (02) 9850 8541,
e-mail gillian.heller@mq.edu.au



Ian James (centre) with long time Central Council members Des Nicholls (left) and Neville Weber. The contributions of Des and Neville will be sadly missed.

MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS of the STATISTICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC

(SSAI) held at 12.45 p.m. on Tuesday, 4 July, 2000 in Ballroom A of the Adelaide Hilton Hotel.

The meeting was chaired by the President, Professor Ian James.

1. Attendance, Apologies & Proxies

As per the attendance book.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes of the 1999 Annual General Meeting, held on 14 July, 1999 were confirmed. (Moved J. Boland / D. Shaw.)

3. 1999-2000 Annual Report (Report appears on page 6)

The Annual Report was presented by I. James. Several items were highlighted including special awards made to members during the year, the financial state of the Society and the slight decline in membership. Those present were asked to encourage their colleagues to join the Society.

The President thanked several groups for their outstanding contributions to the Society over the past year. First he thanked Simon Sheather, Murray Jorgensen and the Editorial team for the smooth operation of the journal in 1999. He also thanked Nick Fisher, the Accreditation Committee and the Accreditation Marketing Committee for their exceptional work both in processing applications, developing a marketing plan for accreditation and working with the Executive to develop a new logo and accreditation website. Finally he thanked Treasurer, Eden Brinkley, Vice President, Des Nicholls and Secretary, Neville Weber for their support and input over the past year. The last two completed their terms on the Executive at the Central Council AGM.

4. Treasurer's Report

The audited report was circulated. The President noted that although the Society had considerable reserves we have not been covering costs over the past few years. Several actions have been approved by Central Council to reduce costs and Council has also approved an increase in

capitation fees for 2001 specifically to help cover the cost of the journal. The overall picture for the combined SSAI and ASPAI accounts for 1999 was a deficit of \$5719. However if the early payment from Blackwell is taken into account the real deficit is \$19719.

The report was accepted. (Moved A. Pakes / D. Nicholls.)

5. Signatories to operate accounts

The following were appointed as signatories to the Society's accounts: E. Brinkley, J. Wood, G. van Halderen and A. Welsh. (Moved N. Fisher / J. Boland.)

6. Accreditation Committee Report

N. Fisher reported that 16% of members had applied for accreditation. Currently there are 113 members with AStat status and 22 with GStat. Education Image has been contracted to develop a marketing campaign to raise sponsorship money for accreditation marketing. The seed money for this development has been provided by Roche. A new web page and logo have been developed and a regular column on accreditation will appear in the Newsletter giving profiles of some recently accredited members.

Australia is at the forefront in accrediting statisticians. The American Statistical Association and the Canadian Statistical Society are closely examining our model as part of their discussion of accreditation.

Continuous professional development courses are another area of current activity and the Accreditation Committee plans to introduce regular short courses in the non conference years to supplement the workshops run in conjunction with the conferences. Nick thanked Michael Adena and Tony Swain who are retiring from the Accreditation Committee after three years of dedicated service. He closed by thanking Ian James for his strong support of the

accreditation groups and his help with the website development.

7. Election of Section Chairs

The Chairs for the following Sections were elected unopposed:

Industrial Statistics: G. Robinson

Statistical Education: B. Dansie

Statistics in the Biological Sciences: S. Barry

Survey and Management: D. Steel

Young Statisticians Section: J. Boland

No nominations have been received for the Chairs of the Statistical Computing Section and Statistics in the Medical Sciences Section. The Executive will act as a search committee to fill these positions.

8. Any other business. Nil

9. Date and place of the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held in Canberra in July, 2001 in conjunction with the planned Professional Development Workshop. The precise date and place will be advertised in the Newsletter and Branch Secretaries will be notified.

The meeting closed at 1.12 p.m.

Neville Weber
Hon Secretary

**MINUTES of the AUSTRALIAN
STATISTICAL PUBLISHING
ASSOCIATION INC. ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Australian Statistical Publishing Association Inc. (ASPAI) held at 1.15 p.m. on Tuesday, 4 July, 2000 in Ballroom A of the Adelaide Hilton Hotel.

The meeting was chaired by the President, Professor Ian James.

1. Attendance, Apologies and Proxies
As per attendance book.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes.

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held 14 July, 1999 were confirmed. (Moved D. Shaw / J. Boland.).

3. 1999 Annual Report by the Editor of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Statistics*.

S. Sheather presented the Annual Report of the Editor of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Statistics* (ANZJS). The journal is in a very healthy state with 31 papers accepted awaiting publication. There have been a number of improvements in processing that reduce costs and turn around times such as sending page proofs electronically as pdf files. The editors hope to introduce an annual Best Paper Award for each section of the journal commencing this year.

Simon thanked the Editorial team, the Copy Editor (Ann Milligan) and Compositor (Eileen Dallwitz) for their help and support during the year and announced that he will be standing down as editor at the end of this year.

4. 1999 Annual Report by the Newsletter Editors.

D. Shaw presented the Newsletter Editors' Report. He commented on some production problems that resulted in the late distribution of recent Newsletters and noted some planned changes to improve the situation by making more use of the Society's Office to coordinate the various stages in the production of the Newsletter. In future many matters of record will go onto the Society's web site and will not appear in the Newsletter.

He thanked the Branches for appointing liaison officers. This has lead to an improvement in regular branch contributions. He encouraged more articles like the one by Alan Welsh in the May, 2000 Newsletter reflecting members' experiences as consultants.

T. Brown raised the possibility of the Newsletter being distributed electronically. The President replied that the matter had been discussed by Central Council and the option will be offered to members later this year. Not all members have the facility to receive the Newsletter electronically so a paper version will continue to be produced for those who prefer to receive it in that format. Moving to an electronic format does have implications for advertising revenue that need to be carefully examined.

5. Treasurer's Report.

The audited financial statement was accepted. (Moved A. Pakes / D. Nicholls.)

6. Appointment of signatories to operate the accounts.

The following were appointed as signatories to the ASPAI accounts: E. Brinkley, J. Wood, G. van Halderen, and A. Welsh. (Moved N. Fisher / J. Boland.)

7. Any other business. Nil

8. Date and place of the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held in Canberra in July, 2001 in conjunction with the planned Professional Development Workshop. The precise date and place will be advertised in the Newsletter and Branch Secretaries will be notified.

The meeting closed at 1.25 p.m.

Neville Weber
Hon Secretary

ANNUAL REPORT

April, 1999 to March, 2000

The Society was founded in 1962 as a national "umbrella" organisation to support and further the work of the state statistical societies. The overall objective of the Society is to further the study and application and good practice of statistical theory and methods in all branches of learning and enterprise. The Society is incorporated in the Australian Capital Territory (A.C.T.). The constitution was revised in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1991 (A.C.T.) on 7 May, 1993.

In order to hold Annual General Meetings of both the Society and the Central Council in association with Australian Statistical Conferences or other mid-year conferences, the financial year for the Society is from 1 April until 31 March. Branches may choose, through their own constitutions, to retain a different financial year.

1. Membership of the Society

Based on the capitation fees in 1999 the Society had 800 ordinary members, 98 student/retired members, and 17 honorary life members, making a total of 915. Equivalent figures since 1992 are 897, 910, 954, 952, 958, 887 and 938.

2. Central Council

All meetings for the past year were held at the University of Sydney. The Annual General Meeting of the Society and the Annual General Meeting of the Central Council were held on 14 July, 1999, and a general meeting of the Council was held on 18 February, 2000.

The Central Council for 1999 - 2000 comprised :

President: Professor Ian James

Vice-President: Professor Des Nicholls

Editor: Professor Simon Sheather

Secretary: Associate Professor Neville Weber

Treasurer : Mr Eden Brinkley

Accreditation Committee Chair: Dr Nick Fisher

Circulation Manager: Dr Michael Adena

Delegates:

Canberra Branch: Dr Terry O'Neill, Dr Alice Richardson, Dr Ian McDermid

New South Wales Branch: Ms Jenny Kelly, Mr Rodger Robertson & Dr Abie Ekangaki

Victorian Branch: Dr Geoff Laslett, Mr Geoff Bruton & Dr Neville Bartlett

Queensland Branch: Assoc Prof Kaye Basford, Dr Rodney Wolff

South Australian Branch: Dr Ian Saunders, Ms Lynne Giles

West Australian Branch: Dr R. Milne, Ms Jane Speijers

Scholarships for the Honours Year in Statistics were awarded to :

SA: Kylie Lang

VIC: Oanh Dinh, Robina Nankervis, Natalie Roberts

WA: Kathryn Brown.

3. Association with other bodies

The Society is an affiliated organisation of the International Statistical Institute, with the President as the Society's (*ex-officio*) member.

The Society is a constituent member of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Council, and through this Council a member of the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS). Professor Des Nicholls and Dr Neil Diamond represented the Society on the Council.

The Society was represented on the National Committee for Mathematics of the Australian Academy of Science by Professor Ian James.

The Society is a corporate member of the New Zealand Statistical Association.

The Society is represented on the Australian Statistical Advisory Council by Dr Ron Sandland, and on Committee QR/4 - Statistical Quality Procedures of the Standards Association of Australia by Dr Geoff Robinson.

The Society is an Associate Member of the Australian Geoscience Council, and its representative is Dr Nick Fisher.

The Society is a member of the Australian Foundation of Science. Professor Chris Heyde is a member of the Board of Directors and Professor Sue Wilson was the Society's representative this year.

4. Finances

The Society's financial affairs for the year are detailed in the Financial Statement.

The capitation fee for 2000 was set at \$60, comprising an ASPAI (Australian Statistical Publishing Association Inc) component of \$30 and a general component of \$30. Costs associated with the production of the Newsletter and journal have increased in the past year and these increases can no longer be absorbed by using past conference profits.

Central Council warmly thanks Mr David W. Siström for his time and effort in auditing the accounts.

5. The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Statistics.

The Society would like to thank the Editors, Simon Sheather and Murray Jorgensen, and the Editorial Board for their contributions to the smooth production of the journal in 1999.

6. Accreditation

The accreditation process is running smoothly thanks to the continuing efforts of the Accreditation Committee and the Society's Administrative Officer, Ms Lesley Sieper. The Committee has had to process a significant number of applications and make many difficult decisions. It meets once a month, generally via telephone conference, and spends a considerable time examining each of the applications and referees' reports to ensure that a high standard for accreditation is established. Those members granted GStat and AStat status are listed in the Newsletter once the recommendations have been approved by the Executive.

An Accreditation Marketing Committee consisting of Nick Fisher, Jenny Kelly, Phil McCloud and Des Nicholls was established to develop and implement a Marketing Plan to support professional accreditation. Details of its activities can be found in the regular Accreditation column in the Newsletter.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the committees for their efforts, especially Nick Fisher who is the current Chair of the Accreditation Committee and Michael Adena and Tony Swain, retiring members of the initial Accreditation Committee.

7. Conferences, Workshops and Symposia

The Young Statisticians Section was very active during the year in several Branches with the annual Workshop being held in Wollongong on 7-8 October. The Industrial Statistics Section held a Statisticians Networking Forum in Wollongong on 7-8 October in conjunction with WAYS'99. Reports on both of these meetings appear in the November Newsletter (Number 89).

8. Awards

Joe Gani was awarded Membership of the Order of Australia in the General Division in the Australia Day 2000 Honours list.

This year Adrian Baddeley was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and two members of the Society, Warren Ewens and Peter Hall, were elected Fellows of the Royal Society (UK).

At the February meeting of Central Council Des Nicholls was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Society. Also at the February meeting the Society awarded a Service Award to Jeff Wood to recognise his sustained and significant service to the Society over many years.

The recipients to date of SSAI Service Awards are:

- Eden Brinkley
Canberra Branch
- Helen MacGillivray
Queensland Branch
- Robert Forrester
Canberra Branch
- John Field
South Australian Branch
- Jeff Wood
Canberra Branch
- Malcolm Clark
Victorian Branch
- E. Ann Eyland
NSW Branch
- F. Nick Garnham
Victorian Branch

9. Named Lectures

The **Belz Lecture** was given by Dr Oliver Mayo, Chief of the CSIRO Division of Animal Production at a meeting of the Victorian Branch on 26 October, 1999. His lecture was entitled 'Assessing Interaction In Genetical Systems'.

The **Knibbs Lecture** for 1999 was given by Dr Nicholas Fisher from CSIRO, CMIS at a meeting of the Canberra Branch on 25 November. Dr Fisher's lecture was on 'Statistics and Performance Management'.

The **H.O. Lancaster Lecture** was given at the Annual General Meeting of the New South Wales Branch on 23 March, 1999 by Professor Milo Schield from Augsburg College, Minneapolis. The title of his lecture was 'Statistical Literacy and Simpson's Paradox'.

The **E.K. Foreman Lecture** was given at the Canberra Branch Workshop on 26 October, 1999 by Associate Professor David Steel from the University of Wollongong. The title of his lecture was 'Analysis Combining Survey and Census Data'.

10. Sections

Current Sections and their 1999 - 2000 chairs are:

- Survey and Management Statistics
Associate Professor David Steel
- Statistical Computing
Dr Glenn Stone
- Statistics in Medical Sciences
Dr Lynette Lim
- Statistics in Biological Sciences
Dr Simon Barry
- Statistical Education
Dr Brenton Dansie
- Industrial Statistics
Dr Geoff Robinson
- Young Statisticians
Mr Jason Boland

Other Sectional and Branch activities have been detailed in the Society's Newsletter.

11. In Memoria

The Society recorded with deep regret the passing of David Saunders and Bruce Hall.

For the Society,
Professor Ian James, President
Dr Neville Weber, Secretary
April, 2000

Accreditation: Recent developments

Changes to the Accreditation Committee membership

Michael Adena and Tony Swain, who have been foundation members since the inception of the Committee, retired at the end of June 2000. Each of them has made an outstanding contribution to the work of the Accreditation Committee.

Central Council has approved the appointment of Kaye Basford (Queensland), Matt Knuiman (WA) and Des Nicholls (ACT) to serve on the Accreditation Committee from July 2000.

Progress with marketing Accreditation

The Accreditation Marketing Committee has been closely involved in obtaining a new logo for the Society, and in the professional design and implementation of a new SSAI Web site. The new site should be operational by the end of July.

Both these developments are important for the preliminary step of the Accreditation marketing plan, which is aimed at raising sponsorship money to fund the general marketing campaign. The sponsorship campaign will also commence around the end of July.

Professional Development Courses

An important responsibility for the Accreditation Committee is to be active in supporting the needs of Accredited members, particularly in the area of ongoing professional development. Central Council has agreed in principle to commencing a biennial activity each July in the years when the Australian Statistical Conference is not being held. This would comprise short courses and workshops in areas of need identified by surveying accredited members, and would probably be linked to a short related Special Topics conference. The first of these meetings is scheduled for July 2001, probably in Canberra.

Accrediting University programs of study in Statistics

During the recent Australian Statistical Conference, issues relating to the possible accreditation of University curricula were discussed in an open session.

Professional Accreditation provides a significant opportunity to academic statisticians to sustain and develop their statistical curricula. Students may well be attracted to a specific undergraduate Statistics curriculum if satisfactory completion of the curriculum results in their being awarded a GStat. It may also help academic Statistics groups to argue for the retention of specific courses, and for the teaching of specific courses by suitably qualified staff.

This raises a number of important matters, such as how the content of such a curriculum might be determined, and how the overall quality of the course might be assured. The purpose of this session was to provide a forum for discussing such matters, and for deciding how the whole issue of accrediting programs of study might be explored further.

A small committee, not involving any current members of the Accreditation Committee, has been formed to devise a process for exploring the whole issue (rather than to do the exploring). A major element of the process will be to provide ample opportunity for all interested parties to contribute to the discussion.

Meet some recently accredited SSAI members

David Steel, University of Wollongong

Areas of interest: Sample Survey design, Analysis and Methodology. Analysis of Aggregation Data

I have extensive experience in survey methodology, sample survey design and analysis methods for complex social and economic data. I am undertaking projects that consider the

interaction between the way the data are obtained and how they should be analysed when the data are obtained using sampling and/or aggregation.

Rob Hyndman, Monash University
Areas of interest: Time series analysis, forecasting, data analysis, statistical computing

I am currently Director of Consulting in the Department of Econometrics and Business Statistics at Monash University, and have had 15 years consulting experience working with several hundred clients. I recently co-authored the textbook *Forecasting: methods and applications* (Wiley, 1998). My research interests include time series analysis, forecasting and smoothing.

Ingrid Baade

Areas of interest: Proportional Hazards Models, Model Fitting Diagnostics, Statistical Education

My primary research has been on influence, particularly for proportional hazards models. I am a qualified teacher. Recently I have been doing consulting work, "statistical editing" of theses and papers, six months work at the DPI and tutoring of post-graduate students.

Peter D Baade, Queensland Health
Areas of interest: Medical statistics

After my undergraduate and honours degrees with majors in statistics and operations research, I completed two research degrees (Masters and PhD) applying statistical theory to a public health environment (focussing on skin protection and community perceptions of melanoma) in addition to working part time as a statistical consultant. For the past three years I have worked as a senior analyst in the Queensland Health department conducting detailed investigations of Cancer Registry data, as well as other population-based data collections such as hospital activity, mortality and perinatal.

Fearnley Szuster, Public Health Information Development Unit

Areas of interest: Applied social research/health and population statistics

With an educational background in mathematical statistics and applied social research I have worked in a range of government and university positions. I have maintained an interest in population and labour force statistics along with studies in health labour force career paths and career choice.

Philip McCloud, Roche Products Pty Ltd

Areas of interest: Applied statistics, categorical data, medical statistics, biostatistics

I graduated from Flinders University in 1976, and subsequently gained a PhD in 1988. I was employed by the South Australian Department of Agriculture until 1987, commenced at Monash University in 1989 as a Lecturer in Statistics, and was Director of the Monash University Statistical Consulting Service from 1989 to 1997. The Service was employing five statisticians full time in 1997. I took a position with Roche Products in Dee Why, Sydney, as Head of Biometrics in 1997.

Quanxi Shao, CSIRO Mathematical and Information Sciences

Areas of interest: Environmental Monitoring and Risk Assessment; Censored Data Analysis; Embedded Model Problem; Change Points Detection; Spatial Statistics.

After three years' PhD study and a short period of time working in medical statistics, I joined CSIRO Biometrics Unit and then Environmetrics of CSIRO Mathematical and Information Sciences. I am interested in exploring various statistical methodologies that are (potentially) used in environmental sciences, such as Risk Assessment, Cen-

sored Data Analysis and Spatial Statistics.

Enquiries, Comments and Feedback

To find out more about how to apply for Accreditation, or to make enquiries or comments about marketing matters please contact Lesley Sieper at the SSAI Office:

phone / fax: 02 6249-8266
e-mail ssai@interact.net.au.

Accredited Members.

The following applications have been approved by the Central Council.

Accredited Statisticians:

Brenton Clarke
Geoffrey Lee
Philip McCloud
Robin Milne
Helen Nicol
Gemma van Halderen

G. Bruton
Secretary

Inaugural Moyal Medal and Moyal Lecture

On June 19 the Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University presented the inaugural Moyal Medal to Professor Joe Gani. Professor Gani then delivered the first Moyal Lecture on the subject of "Stochastic Processes in Literature".

Jose Enrique Moyal was Professor of Mathematics at Macquarie University from 1973 to 1978, when he retired to live in Canberra. He died on 22 May 1998. Joe Moyal made significant contributions to the fields of mathematics, physics and statistics, and the Moyal Medal will be presented each year to a person who has made a distinguished contribution to at least one of these three fields.

Professor Gani's lecture, delivered to a large and diverse audience from Macquarie University and other Sydney Universities, deftly incorporated references to Joe Moyal's work and to Gani's long friendship with Moyal.

Doug Shaw

**Centre for Mathematics and its Applications
School of Mathematical Sciences
The Australian National University**

**NATIONAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIA
IN THE MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES**

PROPOSALS INVITED

The National Program Committee now seeks proposals for Symposia for the year 2001. These can be in mathematics, statistics and in applications such as bioinformatics, financial mathematics, and computational mathematics. The proposals should be submitted no later than 15 November 2000.

Funding is available to support 20-30 people for 5 days generally at The Australian National University. It is envisaged that travel for participants will be covered by funds from other sources. In certain circumstances funding may be available for some travel expenses.

For further information please refer to our website address: <http://www.maths.anu.edu.au/symposia/proposals.html> or contact

Annette.Hughes@maths.anu.edu.au

All proposals should be addressed to:

Professor Alan McIntosh
Chair, National Research Program Committee
Centre for Mathematics and its Applications
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A Statistical Approach to Situation Assessment

The South Australian Branch had two speakers from the new Business Intelligence Group of CMIS for the April meeting, Professor Daniel McMichael and Dr Geoff Jarrad. Both speakers were previously at the Data and Information Fusion Program at the CRC for Sensor Signal and Information Processing.

Daniel gave a brief survey of Bayesian networks and related research.

Situation assessment involves extracting subtle and complex summary relationships from large bodies of data. Examples could be derived from diverse areas to determine the state of: a chemical plant, the financial market, a business or a military battle. Filtering the information can be approached from different philosophical perspectives such as fuzzy logic and probability and statistics. Daniel elaborated with military examples describing "tracking" - associating a number of sequential observations then inferring the overall track. Enemy courses of action (COAs) undergoing situation assessment can be provided with summary descriptions of dynamic state histories of such multitarget models. From the product-of-marginals approximation of the posterior distribution of these models it is possible to evaluate the likelihood of asynchronous multistage situations involving multiple interacting elements. Such situations include individual and multiple target manoeuvres.

A dynamic programming algorithm solves the problem of associating the stages of multiple situation elements with discrete time instants. The search space is much reduced by reparameterising the problem as an

optimisation of the interaction times. The problem of associating tracks with situation elements is solved by selective enumeration. Methods are available for eliminating a priori the vast preponderance of uninteresting possibilities, so that they never need to be calculated.

Geoff described a military scenario where a military base had to be protected but was surrounded by a network of roads. Monitoring each cross produced signals (- or + to indicate "Friend or Foe") derived from observations such as type of vehicle approaching, exact location, type of driver etc. The situation assessment consisted of three threats 1) being okay, 2) warning - foe approaching base and 3) threat foe has entered base.

Kalman Filtering eliminates mistakes in the identification of an observation to estimate position and speed and provides better clutter elimination.

Patterns of Repeat-rates for Dichotomous Attitude Questions

Dr Cam Rungie of the School of Mathematics at the University of South Australia addressed the May meeting on an area of market research. Cam was able to draw upon his experience in market research both as a practitioner and academic and provide real life examples to which the audience responded.

Market researchers depend largely on surveys to derive their data. The audience was asked to describe how three dichotomous questions differed given each discrete choice is an observation from a Bernoulli trial.

Q1. Gender: Female/Male

Q2. Last brand choice: Coke/Pepsi

Q3. Flip a coin: Head/tail

The distributions of probabilities for these three questions vary considerably as did the variance. It is known that repeat-rates for free choice at-

tribute questions follow regular patterns. The similarities between these patterns and the repeat-rates which the Dirichlet model predicts for brand purchases. Deviations from the Dirichlet patterns by allowing for non-response are modelled. The major outcome of the modified model is that there is a single statistic, consistency, which summarises repeat-rates. Consistency is an adaptation of the Dirichlet S statistic and, like S, measures heterogeneity.

The consistency statistic has important implications in marketing indicating the brand loyalty of consumers. Consistency can be demonstrated in trivial cases as with Q1 and Q3 with special cases that include brand purchase, brand attributes and attitudinal questions. It is useful to know that consistency can be estimated a priori.

Margaret Swincer

CANBERRA

Bayesian analysis of a calibrated model

Professor Andy Weiss of the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, was the speaker at the May meeting of the branch. Andy, in collaboration with the Economics department of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, has been analysing the core model in the bank's Forecasting and Policy system.

This core model "incorporates behavioural relationships among the key macro economic concepts that are central to monetary policy issues". It is made up of about 150 equations, implying that there are at least equally as many parameters. The core model is a calibrated model, that is, the parameter values have been set rather than estimated. The set values are based on theory, vector automated regressor models and shock responses, among other things.

An advantage of calibration is that the model has sensible aggregate properties. Disadvantages of the calibration are the absence of measures of parameter uncertainty and uncertainty of the applicability of results to real data. However, the bank is using the model so it is appropriate to see if it can be improved.

Bayesian analysis of a model can be viewed as a process of learning about its parameters - prior beliefs about the parameters are updated by Bayes Theorem, in light of the data, to obtain posterior beliefs. Calibration can be viewed as a part of a Bayesian analysis of a model. In particular, it can be viewed as a way of specifying the measure of central tendency of the prior density of the parameters. A scaled-down version of the large and complex core model was developed by the bank and can be described as a small simultaneous macroeconomic model with a well-defined steady state, explicit and forward-looking representations of expectations, and an endogenous monetary policy. Andy analysed this model to investigate modifications to calibrated values and to measure effects of model uncertainty on policy. He concluded by illustrating what effect a shock might have on the model.

The statistical problem of relating diet and disease

The motivation for the talk by Professor Ray Carroll, Texas A&M University, at the June meeting of the branch, was the controversy about the role of fat intake on the development of breast cancer.

For some time, nutrient fat intake has been suspected of being a promoter of breast cancer; animal studies and ecological studies have clearly shown it. For this reason and other considerations, the USA National Institute of Health is undertaking the Women's Health Initiative (WHI), a huge and expensive (> USD\$10 mil-

lion) clinical trial. One arm of WHI is to compare two groups of women over 10 years for fat intake, even though no study to date that follows women prospectively has ever found a statistically significant effect of fat intake on breast cancer. So far, there has been nothing in the data to indicate that there is an effect.

The most cheap, simple and fast method to 'measure' usual nutrient intake is the food frequency questionnaire (FFQ). It is generally thought that other instruments, such as food diaries, 24-hour food recalls, and biomarkers, are less biased (but are perhaps more variable). However the cost of conducting these means that they are not feasible, and thus the FFQ is used in essentially every large epidemiological study concerned with measuring nutrient intake. Ray described the common errors-in-variables model for nutrient intake data (based on FFQ), and also explored a new model that more adequately describes the issues inherent in self-report of dietary intakes. He then applied the models to a broad variety of nutrition data sets, including one in which a biomarker for protein intake has been obtained. He found that the FFQ is a far less precise instrument for measuring protein-disease relationships than had been previously thought. In conclusion, Ray stated that the lack of an observed dietary fat-breast cancer relationship is possibly due to the poor quality of the FFQ and also because nutrient fat intake can not be measured explicitly (ie there is no biomarker for fat).

The Blue Elephant Indo-Lanka restaurant was the venue at which the curry-lovers in the audience concluded the evening.

Playing mathematics with the Stuart & Sons piano

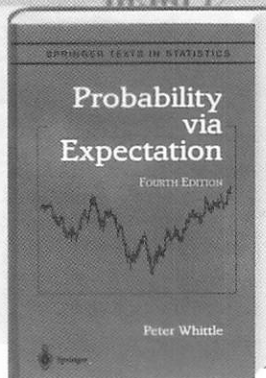
Dr Bob Anderssen, an industrial mathematician from CSIRO Mathematical and Information Sciences,

Canberra, presented an application of the interface between music and mathematics at the July meeting of the branch, namely "Playing mathematics with the Stuart & Sons piano". The meeting, open also to members of the ACT Musicology Society, commemorated the 250th anniversary of the death of the great baroque composer, J.S. Bach.

For the professional musician, the sound radiated by a violin or a flute "sings" more clearly and strongly than the sound radiated by a piano. In fact, piano music is written to disguise this difficulty by having the notes follow each other more rapidly than is necessary for the violin or flute. Technically, singing can be defined in terms of the sustain and clarity of the sound it radiates. The first and foremost activity which determines the sustain and clarity of a sound from a grand piano is the vibration of the strings. Weinreich (1977), a physicist who was interested in the physics of music, recorded sound intensity and found that a note on a grand piano begins vibrating vertically but then develops an elliptical vibration and eventually ends up vibrating horizontally (parallel to the sounding board).

The combination of the results of the Weinreich study and Bob's background in research on the mathematics of vibrations were used to solve the problem of how to make a grand piano "sing" more. The Stuart piano, being built at the Conservatorium of Music at the University of Newcastle, Australia, has been proven mathematically to have the potential to "sing" better than other concert grand pianos. Various aspects of the Stuart piano were compared with the traditional grand piano (ie length, number of keys, etc), with the major difference in their singing capabilities being how the string was clamped to the soundboard. The Stuart piano uses an Agraffe (vertical zig-zag) clamp whereas the grand

Springer for Statistics



P. Whittle

Probability via Expectation

This book will provide a background in probability theory for those wishing to work in the area of mathematical finance.

4th ed. 2000. XXI, 352 pp. 22 figs. (Springer Texts in Statistics) Hardcover *
DM 129,-; FF 486,-; £ 44,50; Lit. 142.460
ISBN 0-387-98955-2

D. Edwards

Introduction to Graphical Modelling

Graphical models are of great interest in statistics and computer science. This book is more oriented towards applications than other books on this subject.

2nd ed. 2000. XV, 333 pp., 83 figs. (Springer Texts in Statistics)
Hardcover * DM 139,-; FF 524,-; £ 48,-; Lit. 153.520
ISBN 0-387-95054-0

H. Thorisson

Coupling, Stationarity, and Regeneration

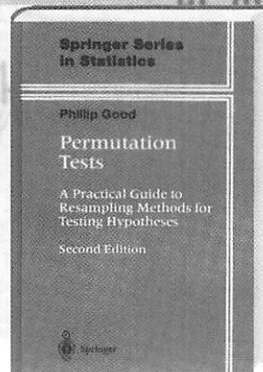
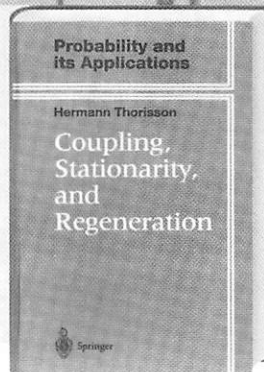
This monograph on important new developments in the field by a leading researcher will be of interest to researchers in mathematics and statistics with interests in pure and applied probability.

2000. XIV, 516 pp. 27 figs. (Probability and its Applications)
Hardcover * DM 159,-; FF 599,-; £ 55,-; Lit. 175.600
ISBN 0-387-98779-7

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Y. Dodge, J. Jureckova

Adaptive Regression

This book presents some recent developments in the theory of robust estimation of linear regression models.

2000. XII, 177 pp. Hardcover * DM 98,-; FF 370,-; £ 34,-; Lit. 108.230
ISBN 0-387-98965-X

P. Good

Permutation Tests

A Practical Guide to Resampling Methods for Testing Hypotheses

Valuable techniques for reducing computation time - practical advice on experimental design - comparisons with bootstrap, parametric, and nonparametric techniques.

2nd ed. 2000. XVI, 270 pp. 14 figs. (Springer Series in Statistics) Hardcover
* DM 139,-; FF 524,-; £ 48,-; Lit. 153.520
ISBN 0-387-98898-X

M. Rosenblatt

Gaussian and Non-Gaussian Linear Time Series and Random Fields

2000. XIII, 246 pp. (Springer Series in Statistics) Hardcover
* DM 139,-; FF 524,-; £ 48,-; Lit. 153.520
ISBN 0-387-98917-X

D.A. Sprott

Statistical Inference in Science

2000. Approx. 265 pp. 49 figs. (Springer Series in Statistics)
Hardcover * DM 139,-; FF 524,-; £ 48,-; Lit. 153.520
ISBN 0-387-95019-2

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<http://www.springer-ny.com/stats>
<http://www.springer.de/statistic/index.html>



Springer

piano uses a horizontal zig-zag clamp. The Agraffe clamp keeps a piano string vibrating vertically which will improve the harmonicity of the sound that it radiates, thus creating a new standard for composing for the piano.

News from the Canberra branch

Congratulations to Dr Simon Barry, Bureau of Rural Sciences, on receiving the 1999 P.A.P. Moran Prize for his PhD thesis "The Regression Analysis of Group Truncated Data." The prize, worth \$600, was established by the ANU Council in October 1986 from an endowment from the Applied Probability Trust, together with donations in recognition of the important part played by the late Emeritus Professor P.A.P. Moran in the development of probability and statistics at ANU and within Australia. The Prize is awarded triennially to the candidate whose work has been judged to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in probability or statistics.

Congratulations to Dennis Trewin on his appointment to the position of Australian Statistician.

Melissa Dobbie

VICTORIA
Predicting the quality of Penfolds Grange

Professor Simon Sheather, Australian Graduate School of Management, spoke at the March 2000 AGM of the Victorian Branch.

This talk was a gem because of the subject, the interesting statistical techniques used and the passion that drove Simon Sheather to persist until an excellent model was achieved.

Penfolds Grange is a very highly regarded premium wine and has a relatively long history for an Australian wine. First produced in 1951, it has become internationally recognised and much sought after as each vintage becomes available. The quality

of Penfolds Grange varies from year to year with some vintages recognised as being superior to others. A passion for wines and their consumption led Simon Sheather to take a statisticians look at four special data sets that relate to the quality of Penfolds Grange. One of these data sets consisted of the ratings obtained from the Ultimate Grange Experience held in 1994 where all vintages from 1951 to 1990 were rated by three well-known judges using the 20 point system employed at Australian Wine Shows. The other three data sets were generated by different judges and covered various time intervals that featured considerable overlap with the main set described above. Analysis revealed that the judges were consistent and in strong agreement with each other so it was fairly straight-forward to generate an overall rating of the quality of each vintage.

Penfolds web site (www.penfolds.com.au/grange) provides technical data for alcohol content, pH, total acidity and percentage of shiraz used in each vintage. Comparison of this data showed significant differences for alcohol content, pH and total acids between the three wine makers who have produced Grange since 1951. In view of these differences, only data from the vintages produced by the current wine maker (John Duval) were used in an attempt to build a model to predict the quality of Penfolds Grange using the technical data available just before the release of each vintage.

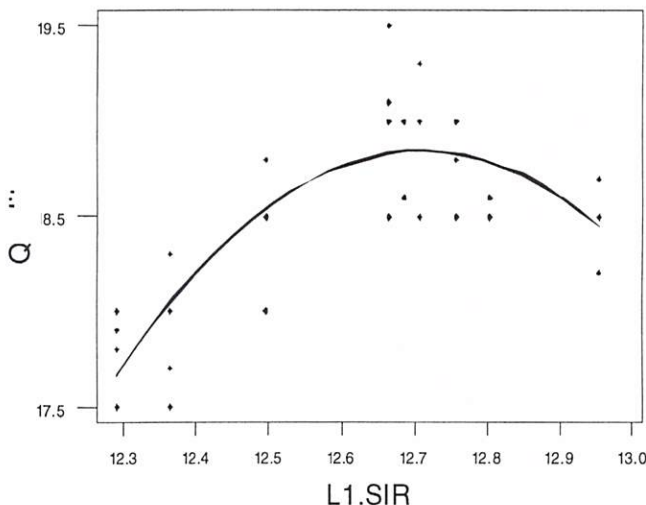
First attempts to produce such a model were unsuccessful because the resulting models "failing to pass standard diagnostic procedures including pure error tests for lack of fit" (Sheather, 2000). Undaunted, Simon switched to using sliced inverse regression (Duan & Li, 1991) to develop a model that results in a single linear combination (L1.SIR) of the predictor variables (alcohol concentration, pH, total acids and percentage shiraz) that best relates to slices of the wine quality measure. The diagram below illustrates is the result of Simon's analysis. Quality and L1.SIR exhibit an approximately quadratic relationship.

While this model represented a substantial step forward, it did not provide an accurate means of predicting the wine quality. Many It will be interesting to see how the existence of such a strong model may influence the wine maker, Penfolds' pricing strategy and marketplace reaction to future vintages.

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 Fuller, P and Walsh, B (1999). *Barossa Vintage Classification 1947-1998 : Winetitles*, Adelaide.
 Sheather, S. (2000). *Predicting the quality of Penfolds Grange*. Australian Graduate School of Management.

Neville Bartlett



Conference Report

The XXth International Biometric Conference

1-7 July 2000

This is the biennial meeting of the International Biometric Society (IBS) and was held this year at the University of California at Berkeley. As usual there was a large number of participants from overseas with 48 countries being represented amongst the more than 700 registrants. There was a sizeable contingent of seventeen from Australia.

Three one-day short courses preceded the conference: "Analysis of Data from Longitudinal Studies", presented by Kyung-Lee Liang and Scott L. Zeger; "Overdispersion: Models and Estimation", presented by Clarice G.B. Demetrio and John Hinde; and "Group Sequential Design and Interim Monitoring of Clinical Trial Data", presented by Christopher Jennison, Bruce W. Turnbull and Cyrus R. Mehta.

In keeping with tradition the conference began with an opening address from the President of the IBS, Nanny Wermuth, who spoke about the need to use good methods for representing statistical information, particularly to scientists in the Life and Social Sciences. Scientists working in these areas do not usually have a strong mathematical background and find it difficult to understand statistical results. She illustrated good presentation methods using diagrams to illustrate Pythagoras' theorem and the summation of an infinite series.

In all other sessions of the conference there was an Invited Session which was run in parallel with up to 7 Contributed Sessions. On several occasions this made it difficult to choose a session to attend as there were often papers in more than one session that were of interest. In the invited session on Joint Modelling of Longitudinal and Event Time Data, Peter

Diggle, a former Chief of DMS, outlined two methods for the joint analysis of this type of data. In a second paper in this session, Marie Davidian considered modelling the relationship between a failure time process and time-independent and time-dependent covariates. Time-dependent covariates were assumed to follow a linear mixed effects model with normal measurement error and the hazard of failure was assumed to depend on underlying random effects and other time-independent covariates through a proportional hazards relationship.

In the invited session on Mixed Model Methodology in Biometrical Research, Ari Verbyla discussed his latest work on the use of branching splines in the analysis of longitudinal data. The paper used two sets of data to illustrate the use of residual maximum likelihood methods (REML) to determine the smoothing parameter and the variance-covariance components, and best linear unbiased prediction was used to estimate the branching splines. In another paper in this session, John Nelder discussed further joint work with Youngjo Lee on the generalisation of GLMs to hierarchical GLMs which have additional random ef-

fects in an augmented linear predictor. He described the methodology for fitting such models.

The only other Australian to feature in an Invited Session was Ted Catchpole, in the session on New Statistical Methodologies for Conservation Management. The paper was entitled Animal Survival Methodology and was presented by Byron Morgan (Ted was not present at the IBS conference). Talks were presented by most of the remaining Australian attendees with topics ranging from medical to agricultural. Unfortunately it was not possible to attend all of these talks, although those I did attend were interesting and well presented.

In the invited session on Spatial Analysis in Agriculture, Joe Perry discussed the use of spatial analysis in Biometry in three special areas: spatial distribution of pests and weeds, precision agriculture, and modelling. In the precision agriculture example it was of interest to know where the worst weed infestation occurs in a crop so that selective herbicide spray could be administered only to areas where weed density is above the economic threshold. The second speaker in this session



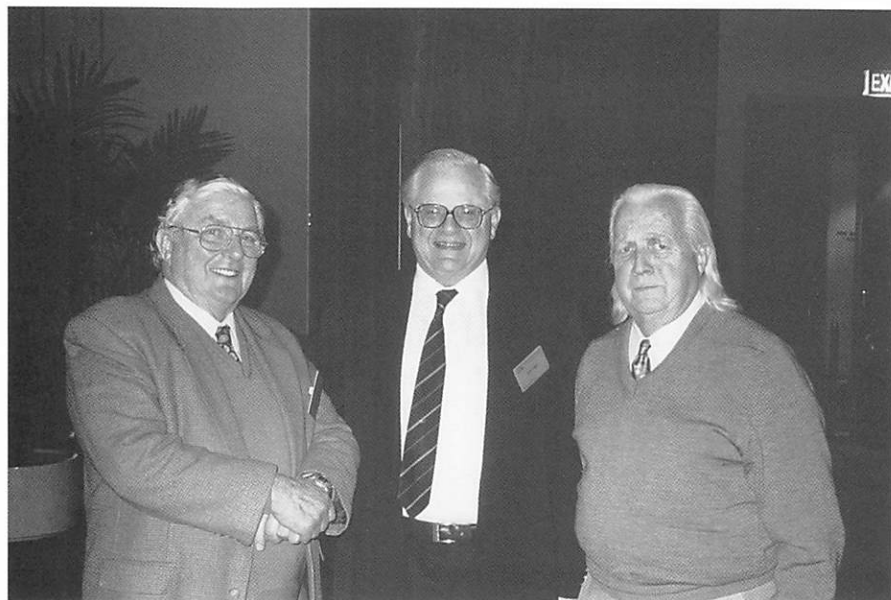
Kaye Basford, Heather Forrester, Joe Perry, Bob Forrester and Richard Morton enjoying a meal in Berkeley.

discussed the difficult problem of modelling the three dimensional movement of weed seeds in a field. The approach being taken involved using fast fourier transforms to model the horizontal movement and transition matrices to model the vertical movement.

One of the most interesting and well attended contributed sessions at the conference was on Statistical Methods for Microarrays. The three talks in this session looked at the use of methods such as cluster analysis, discrete wavelet transforms and the parametric bootstrap to examine the patterns in the two-way array of data. There was another invited session at the conference which included papers on issues involving the detection of Quantitative Trait Loci. Current methodology in this area was outlined and some of the shortcomings associated with this approach were mentioned. The usual assumption in the genetic model that the QTL alleles are fixed in each line is not sensible for outbred populations. The process of a genomic scan has potential risks, and in the hypothesis testing a number of correlated tests is carried out and this makes the significance of the whole set of tests not equal to the nominal significance level. The considerable interest in these two sessions amongst the delegates at the conference, reflects the growing application of statistical methodology in modern genetic research.

Meetings such as this enable biometricians to catch up with international colleagues, to see some of their work and to chat more informally about the issues that affect the way they do their work. It was also good to see that the quality of the statistics and the standard of presentation by the Australian contingent compared very favourably with the world's best.

Bob Forrester



Graham Wilkinson (left) being congratulated on winning the Pitman Medal by previous winners Joe Gani and Alan James.

Dr Warren Ewens has recently been elected an FRS. Warren is Professor of Biology at the University of Pennsylvania.

His research is in mathematical genetics, in particular in evolutionary processes and in the statistical analysis of human diseases. He is presently Director of the University of Pennsylvania Program in Bioinformatics, created to analyse data from the Human Genome Project. Warren was in the Department of Mathematics at La Trobe University from 1967 to 1972, and in the Department of Mathematics at Monash University from 1977 to 1996.

Professor Peter Hall was also recently elected an FRS.

Peter is Professor of Statistics, Centre for Mathematics and its Applica-

tions, School of Mathematical Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra.

His citation read in part: "Professor Hall has made outstanding and wide ranging contributions to statistics and probability which have impacted on many different scientific areas. Of particular significance are his research on sequential analysis leading to fundamental improvement of sampling methods; his studies of rates of convergence for sums of independent random variables; his research on geometric probability; and his research on extreme values and order statistics.

His mathematical developments to the theory of the now widely-used bootstrap represents a major breakthrough in statistics."

Honorary Life Members

The award of Honorary Life Membership is made in recognition of service to the discipline of statistics at both branch and national levels. The service should have achieved a significant impact and distinction and/or have been effective in fostering change.

This year three awards of Honorary Life Membership were presented at the Statistical Society of Australia Conference in Adelaide.

The recipients were:

Richard Jarrett

Richard held the positions of SSAI Vice-president (1988) and President (1989-90), during which he was instrumental in implementing a number of major initiatives. He was a founding member of the Accreditation Committee and is still on that Committee, contributing significantly to its successful operation. He has also served on the Committee for Honorary Life Members and Pitman Medal, as delegate, Treasurer and President of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Council, and as Associate Editor of *The Australian Journal of Statistics* (1984-9).

At the Branch level Richard has been a Councillor, Secretary and President of the Victorian Branch and a Council Member of the South Australian Branch and he was convenor of the 15th Australian Statistical Conference held in Adelaide in July of this year. Richard has held senior statistical appointments in CSIRO, The University of Melbourne and The University of Adelaide, spanning all aspects of statistical education, consultancy and research. His research into, and applications of, statistical methodology have made a significant impact on the statistics discipline, and he is a most worthy recipient of Honorary Life Membership in SSAI.

Desmond Nicholls

Des Nicholls has been active for many years in the professional side of SSAI. He was national President in 1997-9 and Vice-President for a

year either side. He is a foundation member of the SSAI Accreditation Marketing Committee and has been a member of the Canberra Branch Council for 10 years, two of them as Branch President.

Des has played a major role in the organisation of statistical conferences over the past 25 years, including Program Chair for the 1988 Bicentennial Conference, organiser of the *Festschrift* for E.J. Hannan, Deputy Director of the 1996 Sydney International Statistical Conference and Scientific Program Chair for the 13th Australian Statistical Conference.

He has made significant contributions to the teaching of statistics at the Australian National University, his research has had a major impact on the discipline, particularly in the area of time-series analysis and he has promoted the discipline actively through professional consulting and policy direction. He has been honoured with election to Fellowship of both the International Statistical Institute and the American Statistical Association, and is again a most worthy recipient of Honorary Life Membership.

Dennis Trewin

Dennis has made an outstanding contribution to the statistics discipline from both within and outside the Society for more than 25 years. His scientific contributions in official and survey statistics, in particular, have played a real part in the high international reputation enjoyed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. He has held the position of Deputy Government Statistician in New Zealand (1992-5), President of the International Association of Survey Statisticians, Vice-President and President of the International Statistical Institute.

Within SSAI, Dennis was President 1987-8, founding Editor of the *Newsletter*, President of the ACT Branch 1985-6 and Chair of the Survey Management Section for eight years. He also played a major role in the introduction of accreditation and was inaugural Chair of the Accreditation

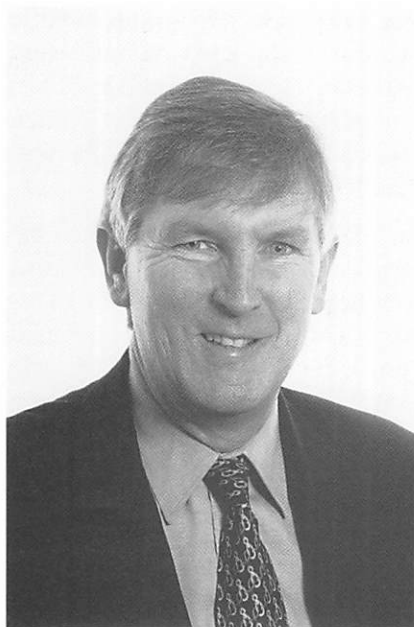
Committee. He has been a leading figure in statistics in this country for over two decades and a wonderful ambassador for the Australian statistical profession. Once again, an outstanding contributor and a most worthy recipient of Honorary Life Membership.

New Australian Statistician

Dennis Trewin, a longstanding member of our Society, has just been selected from a strong field of candidates to fill Australia's top statistics job - Australian Statistician, head of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Congratulations Dennis!

Dennis takes over the reins from outgoing Australian Statistician, Bill McLennan, who retired in early July. In his new role, Dennis will be responsible for managing the Bureau's \$270 million annual budget and more than 3000 staff in all States and Territories of Australia. He is also formally responsible for over 1,000 publications each year covering statistics on a wide range of economic and social issues.

Dennis completed his BSc (Hons) at Melbourne University (majors in statistics and pure mathematics) before joining the ABS, and later undertook a MSc at the London School of Economics (majors in statistics and econometrics). While Dennis has spent most of his career at the ABS, most recently as Deputy Australian Statistician in charge of Economic Statistics, he has also worked as Deputy Government Statistician in Statistics New Zealand (1992-1995). Indeed, the ABS is very lucky to have Dennis at the helm, as he was offered the job of head of Statistics New Zealand just prior to accepting the Australian job.



Dennis Trewin – the new Australian Statistician.

Dennis has been extremely active in the statistical community. Some of his more notable appointments have been: President of the Canberra Branch of the SSAI (1985-1986); President of the SSAI (1987-1988); Editor of the International Statistical Review (1991-1995); President of the International Association of Survey Statisticians (1995-1997); Vice President of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) (1995-1997); and Chair of the SSAI Accreditation Committee (1997-1999). He is currently President-Elect of the ISI. Dennis has published widely and has edited or co-edited a number of books. He has

also been awarded Honorary Life Membership of the SSAI and the Henri Willem Methorst Medal from the ISI for his outstanding contributions and service to the statistics profession.

When asked about any special messages he wanted to pass on to members, Dennis highlighted the fact that it will be the Centenary of the ABS in 2005. As part of the celebration the ABS will be hosting the ISI meeting in 2005. Dennis hopes the whole of the Australian statistical community will join in the celebrations. Speaking further, Dennis believes it is important for the ABS and its staff to be active in the broader statistical community, and he will be encouraging this in his new role. He also hopes to play a personal part in this work. Dennis felt there was increased scope for collaboration between the ABS and the broader statistical community and he will be looking for ways to actively promote this collaboration. His concluding comment was that the ABS continues to provide great career opportunities for young mathematical statisticians, and the ABS will continue to be very active in recruiting graduates in the coming years.

I'm sure everyone will join me in congratulating Dennis on his achievement and in wishing him all the very best for the challenges ahead.

Eden Brinkley

Australasian Conferences

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

International Congress on Intelligent Systems and Applications (ISA'2000), 12-15 December 2000, University of Wollongong.

Information: <http://www.icsc.ab.ca/isa2000.htm>.

There is a list of Australasian statistics conferences for 1999 and 2000 at:

<http://www.maths.uq.oz.au/~gks/webguide/conf.html>

Australasian Genstat Conference 2001

The biennial Australasian Genstat Conference is to be held at the Mercure Resort, Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia from Wednesday 31 January to Friday 2 February. Conference themes are:

- * New developments in Genstat
- * Visual programming
- * Experimental design
- * Mixed models
- * Environmental statistics

Invited speakers include Roger Payne, John Eccleston, David Baird and Simon Harding.

Registration fee is AUD\$350 (registering by 27 October) which includes lunches, morning and afternoon teas, a welcome barbecue on Tuesday evening and a conference dinner on Wednesday night.

The conference committee is calling for papers which address the conference themes or other applied statistical topics. Deadline for submission of abstracts is Friday 27 October. Details for preparation and submission of abstracts can be found on the web site (<http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/genstat>)

Two one-day workshops will be held at the Mercure Resort prior to the conference. These are:

* 'Environmental sampling and statistics' to be presented by Jennifer Brown, University of Canterbury, NZ on Monday 29 January.

* 'Extensions of GLMs for modelling discrete data' to be presented by John Nelder and Roger Payne, UK, and Steve Candy, Tasmania on Tuesday 30 January.

Cost for each workshop is AUD\$150 (paid by 27 October)

Special package: Fee for the full package of both workshops and confer-

ence registration is AUD\$600 (a discount of \$50).

Further details about the conference and workshops are available on the Genstat 2001 web page (<http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/genstat>). The web site, including the registration form is currently being updated. When the update is complete you will be notified with a call for registrations.

The e-mail address for communication regarding the conference is genstat01@dpi.qld.gov.au.

Overseas Conferences

Royal Statistical Society Conference, 11-15 September 2000, University of Reading, UK.

Information: www.rdg.ac.uk/rss2000/ or contact Dr Dave Collett, Dept. Applied Statistics, University of Reading, Reading RG6 6FN, UK; d.collett@rdg.ac.uk; tel +44 118 931 8024; fax +44 118 975 3169.

International Conference on Recent Developments in Statistics and Probability and their Applications, 30 December - 3 January 2001, New Delhi, India.

Information: Kanwar Sen, Department of Statistics, University of Delhi, Delhi 110007; tel. +91 11 723 1427 (h) or +91 11 725 6617 (o); email dustats@del3.vsnl.net.in; <http://www.stat.ohiostate.edu/~hnn/IISA.html>.

Sixth International Conference on Mathematical Population Dynamics, 3-8 June 2001, Marrakech, Morocco.

Information: Department of Mathematics, Chalmers University of Technology, and University of Goteborg, S-412 96 Goteborg, Sweden; tel. +46 31 772 35 30; fax +46 31

772 35 08; email: mpd6@math.chalmers.se; <http://www.math.chalmers.se/~ziad/popdyn/Mpd6/index.html>.

Bayesian Nonparametrics (BNP) Workshop, 27 July - 2 August, 2001, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Information: Contact Paul Damien (pdamien@umich.edu) in Canada and the USA, Stephen Walker (s.walker@is.ac.uk) in Europe.

Fifth International Chinese Statistical Association (ICSA) International Conference will be held at the University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong, 17-19 August 2001.

These dates are chosen with the purpose that potential participants can easily make arrangements to attend the International Statistical Institute meeting to be held in Seoul, South Korea, on the following Wednesday.

Keynote speakers will be Professor Peter Hall and Professor Tze-Leung Lai.

Information: Professor W.K. Li <hrntlwk@hku.hk> or visit website at <<http://www.hku.hk/statistics/ICSA2001/>>

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