



British & Irish Region Newsletter — December 2009

IBC on the praia (beach)

Sara Geneletti



One of the many beautiful beaches on the *ilha da magia*

The much anticipated XXVth International Biometric Conference (IBC-Floripa-2010), will be held in Florianopolis, Brazil in just under a year from now. It is organised by the Brazilian and Argentinean Regions and the venue is the Federal University of Santa Catarina in Florianopolis. Florianopolis, also known as la Ilha da Magia (Island of Magic), is the capital city of the Santa Catarina state in the southern of Brazil. There are 42 superb beaches, beautiful scenery, hills, lagoons, dunes, natural reserves, interesting culture, good food and friendly people. There are also some very good presentations and short courses scheduled if you have a moment between sun-bathing and dinner! Invited sessions include Epidemiological surveillance, Statistical ecology and conservation (chaired by our own president Byron Morgan), Spatial methods for tropical disease epidemiology and a veritable cornucopia of genetics and genomics related sessions. In short, there is something for everyone! Deadline for submission of abstracts is the 16th April and acceptance will be announced in July 2010. Don't forget to register, buy your flights and pack your swimming costume. More details can be found at <http://www.rbras.org.br/~ibcfloripa2010/>

Joint meeting with RSS

Assessing out biological capital, 5th November 2009

This was a busy day at the RSS, comprising 6 talks and 2 AGMs. The meeting started with Steve Buckland (University of St Andrews) reporting the conclusions of a RSS-convened committee with respect to the 2010 Biodiversity Target. They considered existing surveys and current approaches used to measure biodiversity trends and tried to evaluate whether these

are fit for purpose. They concluded that whilst most surveys were suited for their original purpose, they were not necessarily right for estimating diversity at a regional scale. Ideally, random sampling of sites within regions is required, as opposed to the usual random sampling of locations within non-randomly selected sites. (*continued on page 3*)

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President's corner



The Annual General Meeting, see p. 2, took place in London on the 5th November. During the past year we successfully incorporated in our programme meetings outside London (Ghent and Edinburgh), a meeting with talks by young members of the Region, and a revival of the Regional Summer Meeting. All three of these ingredients will also feature in the coming year. In addition, plans are well advanced for the commissioning of a new Regional web site. Also described elsewhere, we welcome the new Committee members of the Region, including the President elect, John Hinde, from the National University of Ireland, Galway. In the picture on the left, taken by Peter Macdonald, current and future Regional presidents are shown at the International Biometric Conference in Montreal in

2006. The Region is now a Member Organisation of the new Society of Biology, which was launched on the 5th October by the merger of the Institute of Biology and the Biosciences Federation, and we look forward to the exciting opportunities that this will offer the Region; see www.societyofbiology.org.

The photograph shows Byron with John Hinde the next BIR president.

SUBS NOW DUE: PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU WANT PAPER COPIES OF THE JOURNALS

Membership news

Diana Cole

I have just completed my first year as membership secretary. I would like to thank Suzanne Clark for her help with my first year as membership secretary.

Unfortunately there has been a decrease in overall membership this year. We currently have a total of 229 paid members, compared to 263 last year. This is in part due to members only joining for the International Biometric Conference last year, but also due to ex-members trying to save money. We currently have an additional 57 (compared to 45 last year) people who are pending removal. They have not paid for 1 or 2 years and are not members of the Biometric Society but remain on our local mailing list for up to two years.

During the year we gained 11 members (4 new full members and 7 new student members), but unfortunately had 11 resignations (6 full, 1 associate, 3 students and 1 on the pending removal list). Also 21 people were automatically resigned as they had been on the pending removal for more than 2 years.

For January 2010 there is a major change to the membership options. These are detailed below. Associate Membership Category is closed. Associate members can choose to upgrade to full membership or become a retired or supporting member if appropriate. The retired membership category is reopened. The retired membership cost is £20 per year. The retired membership category is open to anyone who has been a regular member (including current associate members) for at least 10 years, and who is retired from full time work (working at less than 20% FTE). If you wish to change to retired membership, and haven't already please contact myself. If you pay by standing order, please then update the amount to £20. If you pay by cheque please send payment to Peter with the renewal form at the back of the newsletter. A supporting

membership category has been created for anyone who is a member of another region of the International Biometric Society, but has an interest in the British and Irish region. Supporting membership is free. An application form for this category is available on our website.

Student membership from January 2010 is free. There is now a separate form for student members, which requires your supervisors signature as well as the end date of your course. This form can be found at the end of the newsletter. You will no longer need to renew your membership every year. Instead it will automatically come to an end at the end date of your course, at which point you have the option to upgrade to a full member. Full members will receive electronic copies of Biometrics, JABES and the Biometric Bulletin, for the same cost of £40 a year.

There is an option to receive paper copies of publications at an extra cost.

- Biometrics and the Biometric Bulletin: £7
- JABES and the Biometric Bulletin: £7
- JABES, Biometrics and the Biometric Bulletin: £14

Please notify myself if you wish still to receive paper copies of the journals (if you have not already), and increase your standing order if appropriate. If you pay by cheque a renewal form can be found at the end of the newsletter.

If you know of any students who could benefit from free membership to the Biometric society please could you pass the student membership form (at the back of the newsletter) on to them.

Please contact me by email (d.j.cole@kent.ac.uk) if you have any questions on the new membership categories. If you don't want your paper copies of biometrics to stop, you must email me before 12 February 2010. ■

FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

£20 book token for each new full member

James Carpenter

At the AGM, held on 5th November, we agreed that

- student membership for 2010 will be free;
- all new members introducing a new full member to the society will receive a £20 book token (up to 2 new members), and
- members of other regions resident in the UK are eligible to apply to be come supported category BIR members. They pay no fee and receive the regional newsletter electronically.

I therefore encourage you to take advantage of this offer, by using the forms at the end of this newsletter to recruit new students and full members of the society.

To claim a book token for recruiting a new member, complete the 'New member introduced by' field on the bottom line of the new members form on page 7, then invite a new member to apply using this application form. To qualify under this scheme, the new member's application form must be received before 31st January 2010.

Election of Officers and Committee

The following were elected at the AGM: Professor John Hinde (incoming Regional President); Sara Geneletti and Richard Emsley to serve on the regional committee for 3 years. We thank Chris Glasbey and Bianca DeStavola, who have been most energetic committee members over the last three years. Chris rejoins the committee as a

newly elected member of the IBS Council, but we say farewell to Bianca.

Election of Auditor

Robin was thanked for his work as auditor in 2008 and for many previous years. Geoff Freeman was elected auditor for 2010.

Full details of the AGM, including the audited accounts, can be downloaded from the Regional website. ■

MEETING REPORT: NOVEMBER 5TH 2009

Assessing our biological capital

Sue Welham

(continued from p. 1) The next talk reviewed the same topics from the point of view of an ecologist, Jan Dick (CEH), who was a member of the same committee. The BIR Region AGM took place during the lunch break, and after lunch, there were four talks on different aspects of modelling ecological data. Paul Blackwell (University of Sheffield) showed how empirical models based on a combination of diffusion processes can be used to give a realistic representation of animal movement. This can be used with radio-tracking data to understand aspects of wildlife behaviour. Mark Brewer (BioSS) then described a simple method used to account for observer effort in a survey of birds in Tanzania. This allowed a model for presence/absence data to spatially adjust estimates for the probability of detection of each species. After tea (and the RSS ESS AGM), Chiara Mazetta (Warwick University) described models for the spatio-temporal dynamics of closely monitored populations, which require <10% of

the population observed on a regular basis. She described a complex model that took account of the seasonal nature of hazards on the population and gave a good fit to the observed data. The day ended with a talk from Jon Barry (CEFAS) on two topics related to monitoring marine species. The first challenge was checking the validity of a sampling method proposed to give a fast estimate of abundance for epibenthic fauna (eg. starfish). Jon showed that this method was biased for rare species and suggested and evaluated various alternatives. He then discussed the estimation of the total number of species from samples taken as scoops from the seabed, and discussed a new estimation method that accounted for species clustering. Jon bravely showed a brand new estimate of the number of species that was 1000 times larger than previous estimates - it remains to be seen whether this is a startling new result or a computing error. ■

MEETING: THURSDAY 4TH FEBRUARY 2010, 10.30-4.30-M, YORK

Cost Benefit Analysis: current perspectives and future directions

James Carpenter

This meeting, organised by the British and Irish region of the International Biometric Society and the Statistics and Informatics team at the Food and Environment Research Agency, aims to bring together researchers in Cost Benefit Analysis in health economics and agri-ecological and environmental science, in order to draw out key methodological themes in cost benefit analysis and encourage cross fertilisation.

Programme

10.30-10.50am, Registration and coffee.

10.50-11.00am, Alistair Murray (Food and Environment Research Agency, York). *Welcome, and overview*

11.00-12.00pm, Graham Smith (Food and Environment Research Agency, York) *Costs and Benefits of culling Badgers for control of bovine TB*

12.00pm-1.00pm Glyn Jones (ADAS Ltd) *Cost Benefit Analysis and the Evaluation of Agri-Environment Schemes*

1.00-2.00pm, Lunch

2.00-3.00pm, Andrea Manca (Centre for Health Economics, York University) *Cost benefit analysis: why? which? what?—a NICE example*

3.00-4.00pm Richard Grieve (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine) *Developing statistical*

methods in cost effectiveness analysis of health care interventions: where should we focus our energy

4.00–4.30pm, Panel discussion

4.30pm, Close

To register

Pre-registration is essential. To register, email conferences@fera.gsi.gov.uk with the subject heading: *Cost Benefit Analysis*, and include your name, contact telephone number, whether you are vegetarian (for the lunch menu) and whether you wish to park your car on the site (with car registration please)

Closer to the conference date you will be contacted with the security arrangements for access to the site/conference.

The cut-off for registrations is noon, Friday 29th January.

Cost

BIR members: £20; non-members £40; students: £10.

Payment: post a cheque (payable to 'Biometric Society') c/o Carol Hill/Nicola Smith, Conference Office, FERA, Sand Hutton, YO41 1LZ, or pay on-the-door by cheque or cash.

The cost includes buffet lunch, tea/coffee plus mid morning and afternoon tea/coffee. Parking on site is free.

Directions

The Lakeside Conference Centre at the Food and Environment Agency is a lovely setting for meetings and is easily accessible by road and rail — see www.fera.defra.gov.uk/contactUs/howToFindUs.cfm. For further details of our facilities go to www.fera.defra.gov.uk/conferenceCentre. Follow the link to 'Accommodation and travel' for a list of discounted hotels—you may need to mention that Fera used to be CSL until 1 April 2009 to obtain the discounted rate.

CLOSING DATE FOR REGISTRATION: NOON, FRIDAY 29th JANUARY ■

MEETING: LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE & TROPICAL MEDICINE, WED 28TH APRIL

Measurement error bias: new developments and future directions

Bianca DeStavola

I am delighted to announce this meeting, to be held on Wed 28th April at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The day will begin with an optional tutorial before lunch, so those not experts in this area can gain some insight into the commonly used methods and key issues, in preparation for the afternoon presentations.

We are delighted that the following speakers have

agreed to present, Laurence Freedman, David Cox, and Jouni Kuha. The provisional programme is for registration at 10.00am, an introduction to measurement error before lunch (including a brief computer session) followed by the main talks in the afternoon, finishing up around 5.30pm.

PLEASE BOOK THE DATE AND INVITE YOUR COLLEAGUES ■

In Brief

Bursaries for IBC 2010

We are delighted to announce the Fisher Memorial Trust has agreed £2000 toward bursaries for career young biometricians to attend the IBC in Brazil. Further details to follow in the new year.

Summer meeting

Plans are in hand for a Summer meeting in the stunning David Douglas room in the recently opened and acclaimed Gateway centre at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh. We are planning a half day programme; provisionally 12.00-1.00 Lunch, 1.00-2.30 tour of the Gateway centre, gardens and labs 2.30-4.30 presentations by

Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh scientists and Biometrics members. Full details as soon as they are available.

Website update

I am delighted to report that the current website is now up-to-date, with details and minutes from the November AGM and infor-

mation about forthcoming meetings. Development work continues on the new site, including the provision of a members area, and provision for on-line meeting registration and on-line payment. We continue to be grateful to Peter Colman for all his work on this.

Copy Deadline for next issue: Monday March 8th

Production: James Carpenter & Sara Geneletti

Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2010



International Biometric Society, British and Irish Region

RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP for (name)

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY: Please check

FULL member

☐

(Annual Subscription 40 pounds sterling) Full benefits of the Society including electronic subscription to Biometrics, Journal of Agricultural, Biological, and Environmental Statistics (JABES) and the Biometric Bulletin, voting privileges and the right to hold elective office.

RETIRED member

☐

(Annual Subscription 20 pounds sterling) All the rights of Full Membership. The retired category is open to anyone who has been a member for at least 10 years, and who is no longer in paid employment (working less than 0.2FTE).

Members have the options of receiving paper copies of the journals. Please check if applicable:

Biometrics and
Biometric Bulletin
£7 extra

☐

JABES and Biometric
Bulletin £7 extra

☐

Biometrics, JABES and
Biometric Bulletin
£14 extra

☐

Please detail any changes to contact details here:

Title

Organization

Address

Telephone

Fax

Email

Please send this form with a cheque made payable to 'BIOMETRIC SOCIETY' to Peter Rigsby, National Institute for Biological Standards and Control, Blanche Lane, South Mimms, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, EN6 3QG



International Biometric Society, British and Irish Region

APPLICATION FOR STUDENT MEMBERSHIP.

The subscription for student membership of the International Biometric Society, British and Irish Region is FREE. It includes electronic subscription to Biometrics, Journal of Agricultural, Biological, and Environmental Statistics (JABES) and the Biometric Bulletin. However as a student member you do not have voting privileges and cannot hold elective office.

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Course _____ (eg PhD in statistics)

End date _____ (date your course is due to end)

Check 3 in each category if applicable:

| Fields of Application | | M. Marketing | i. Operations Research |
|----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A. Agriculture | | N. Business | k. Statistical data processing |
| B. Biology | | O. Other | Activities |
| C. Chemistry | | Methodological Techniques | 1. Research |
| D. Demography | | a. General | 2. Professional consulting |
| E. Economics | | b. Sampling | 3. Administration |
| F. Engineering | | c. Design of Experiments | 4. Operational activity |
| G. Genetics | | d. Tests | 5. Teaching |
| H. Medicine, Public Health | | e. Forecasting | 6. Professional writing/editing |
| I. Psychology | | f. Research in Stat. Methods | 7. Student |
| K. Physical Science | | g. Theory | 8. Other |
| L. Sociology | | h. Quality Control | |

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form must be signed by your supervisor to certify that you are a full-time student.

Name of supervisor _____

Supervisor's signature _____

Date _____

This form should be returned to Diana Cole, School of Mathematics, Statistics and Actuarial Science, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NF, UK.

As a student member you do not need to notify us each year. Your free student membership will end at the date given above, unless you inform us of an extension or continuation of your studies. Once you have finished your studies you can choose to upgrade your membership to full membership, by notifying Diana Cole (d.j.cole@kent.ac.uk) and by paying the full membership fee (currently £40).



International Biometric Society, British and Irish Region

APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

The annual subscription for full membership of the International Biometric Society, British and Irish Region is £40. It includes electronic subscription to Biometrics, Journal of Agricultural, Biological, and Environmental Statistics (JABES) and the Biometric Bulletin, voting privileges and the right to hold elective office.

Name _____ Title _____
 Organization _____
 Address _____

 Telephone _____ Fax _____
 Email _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY: Please check

FULL member ☐ (Annual Subscription 40 pounds sterling) Full benefits of the Society including electronic subscription to Biometrics, Journal of Agricultural, Biological, and Environmental Statistics (JABES) and the Biometric Bulletin, voting privileges and the right to hold elective office.

Full members have the options of receiving paper copies of the journals. Please check if applicable:

Biometrics and
Biometric Bulletin
£7 extra

☐

JABES and Biometric
Bulletin £7 extra

☐

Biometrics, JABES and
Biometric Bulletin
£14 extra

☐

Check 3 in each category if applicable:

| Fields of Application | | M. Marketing | i. Operations Research |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| A. Agriculture | | N. Business | k. Statistical data processing |
| B. Biology | | O. Other | Activities |
| C. Chemistry | Methodological Techniques | | 1. Research |
| D. Demography | a. General | | 2. Professional consulting |
| E. Economics | b. Sampling | | 3. Administration |
| F. Engineering | c. Design of Experiments | | 4. Operational activity |
| G. Genetics | d. Tests | | 5. Teaching |
| H. Medicine, Public Health | e. Forecasting | | 6. Professional writing/editing |
| I. Psychology | f. Research in Stat. Methods | | 7. Student |
| K. Physical Science | g. Theory | | 8. Other |
| L. Sociology | h. Quality Control | | |

Signature:.....

Date:.....

New member introduced by:.....

This form should be returned with a cheque made payable to the Biometric Society, British Region, for the appropriate amount to: Peter Rigsby, National Institute for Biological Standards and Control, Blanche Lane, South Mimms, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, EN6 3QG

Notes:

Please note that the membership year runs from 1st January to 31st December.

Applications dated on or before 30th September will be assumed to be for the current year (unless specified otherwise).

For applications dated on or after 1st October, please indicate (by circling the required option) whether you wish your membership to:

(a) be backdated to the 1st January of the current year

(b) start on 1st January of next year