



INTERNATIONAL
BIOMETRIC
SOCIETY



BRITISH AND
IRISH REGION

Newsletter
July 2012

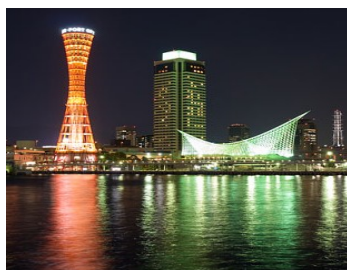
IBC 2012 Kobe 26-31 August

The 26th IBS conference in Kobe is quickly approaching. Take some time from the packed programme (details later) and enjoy Kobe. One too many talks on GWAS? Wind down with a visit to the famous Arima Onsen, one of the oldest hot springs in Japan. Set behind Mount Rokko, they are an accessible yet tranquil haven.



Too much thinking making you Hungry? Why not try Kobe beef as a steak or in dishes made for sharing such as shabu shabu or sukiyaki.

Too much Kobe beef? Walk it off by hiking up Mount Maya! It has stunning views over the city and bay — and can also be accessed by cable car.



Going out after the conference? Night time cruises of the bay are a highlight of the stay. You will be amazed at the

colourful Kobe port tower and the stunning Maritime museum.

Fancy a tippie? Kobe Chinatown is the most vibrant chinatown in Japan full of bars, restaurants and food stalls.

In need of some spiritual solace after a hectic day of statistics? Visit the beautiful Ikuta Shrine. This Shinto shrine was founded in 3 AD and is one of the oldest in Japan.



Roundup of Newsletter

Kobe is the main draw of this year's conference season and we take a look at the programme and events. BIR members have also been busy organizing a number of local conferences. The [Summer meeting](#) was held this month in Medway Park Kent. A meeting on Integrated Population

models is planned for [September](#). 2012 is a historical year of statistics as it has been 40 years since the seminal papers on GLMs and Proportional hazards models were published. Two meetings will be held in [November](#) and (a little late) in [March](#) 2013 to celebrate. The November meeting will

include the 2012 AGM. 2013 is the [International Year of Statistics](#), Richard Elmsley tells us what this means. James Carpenter gives us the roundup from the [BIR secretary](#). We end with goodbyes to former [BIR members](#) and welcome some potential new members.

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President's corner



John in the sugar canes

First, I would like to welcome Sara Geneletti as the new Editor of the BIR Newsletter. While the BIR website is now the primary means of communication to our members and for announcing meetings, this newsletter provides a forum to reflect on our activities, the Society, and biometry in general. In future issues we hope to

develop these ideas and produce a wider range of material to interest our members — if you have any specific ideas, or anything to contribute, then please contact [Sara](#).

Since the last newsletter we have had several interesting meetings and plans for the future are also in place, as you will see in the following

President's corner continued



Sugar cane data

pages. Having just returned from the Summer Meeting at the Centre for Sports Studies, University of Kent, I have been thinking about the value of these outings. This year we saw how technology has completely changed sports science with the ability to collect vast amounts of real-time data, but, as is often the way,

methods of analysis are lagging way behind. But perhaps the essence of these visits is to see aspects of biometry in practice, with hands-on data collection, experimentation, etc. On a recent trip to Brazil, to attend their region's annual RBras meeting, along with a group of MSc students I was able to visit a sugar cane

research station and see field trials of a major breeding programme – this really brings experimental statistics to life and motivates the students. Is this the way to attract more students to biometry? Can we make better use of the Summer Meetings to this effect?

Summer meeting

Rachel McCrea

**“THE TOPIC FOR
THE MEETING
WAS STATISTICS
IN SPORT”**

A successful summer meeting was held in June 2012 at Medway Park in Kent. The topic for the meeting was Statistics in Sport and the event attracted a mixture of sport scientists and statisticians. Three speakers were invited to present their research: Eryl Bassett a lecturer at the University of Kent talked about a new statistical test designed to detect growth hormone abuse in athletes; Norma Coffey a lecturer from Uni-

versity College Dublin presented work from her PhD studies on common functional principal component analysis applied to human movement data and Louis Passfield the director of the Centre for Sport Studies at the University of Kent discussed the challenges of modelling the training of competitive cyclists.

In the afternoon a demonstration of the Centre for Sport Studies lab facilities

at Medway Park was held and Byron Morgan kindly volunteered to be a test subject on the bike ergometer.



Aerial view of Medway Park

GLMs 40 years on and AGM 2012

John Hinde

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Generalized Linear Models

By J. A. NELDER and R. W. M. WEDDERBURN
Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, Herts

SUMMARY

A technique of iterative weighted linear regression can be used to obtain maximum likelihood estimates of the parameters with observations fitted according to some exponential family and systematic effects that are made linear by a suitable transformation. A generalization of the analysis of variance is given for these models using log-likelihoods. These generalized linear models are illustrated by examples relating to four distributions: normal, binomial (probit analysis, etc.), Poisson (contingency table analysis), and gamma (variance components). The implications of the approach in designing statistics courses are discussed.

[Title and abstract from the original GLM paper](#)

The November meeting of the Region will include the AGM and will be held at Rothamsted on Thursday 29th November.

The meeting is to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the [paper](#) by John Nelder and Robert Wedderburn introducing generalized linear models.

The meeting will include John Hinde's Presidential Address and other talks related to GLMs and their extensions.

Integrated population modelling Diana Cole

The integrated population modelling meeting will be held Monday 24th September 2012 at Charles Darwin House in London.

This is a joint meeting of the Environmental Statistics Section (ESS) of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS), British and Irish region of the Biometric Society and the Computational Ecology Special Interest Group of the British Ecological Society (BES).

The meeting will start with a tutorial on integrated population modelling by Takis Besbeas. This will be followed by a sandwich lunch, where there will be an opportunity to present a poster. In the afternoon there will be 4 speakers: Takis Besbeas, Fitsum Abadie, Jason Matthiopoulos, and Allan Tucker.

Further details on this meeting are available on our

website at:

<http://bir.biometricsociety.org/events/integratedpopmodelling>

If you are interested in presenting a poster, or would like further information about this meeting please contact [Diana Cole](#).

"IF YOU ARE
INTERESTED IN
PRESENTING A
POSTER PLEASE
CONTACT
[DIANA COLE](#)"

Celebrating 40+ years of the Cox Model Daniel Farewell

Save the date!

The British and Irish Region are pleased to give advance notice of a scientific meeting to celebrate 40+ years of the Cox model. The

event is planned for the 8 March 2013 (the 41st anniversary of the [original read paper](#)) and will take place in London. The program will include presentations of novel research in event-

history analysis, and a historical perspective on the impact of the "proportional hazards" model.

Regression Models and Life-Tables

By D. R. Cox

Imperial College, London

read before the ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY, at a meeting organized by the Statistical Section, on Wednesday, March 8th, 1972, Mr M. J. R. HEALY in the

SUMMARY

analysis of censored failure times is considered. It is assumed that individual are available values of one or more explanatory variables. The hazard function (age-specific failure rate) is taken to be a function of the explanatory variables and unknown regression coefficients multi-

Title and abstract from the original paper

Kobe conference highlights

This year's IBC promises to be action packed. It kicks off on Sunday 26th of August with a number of short courses. Then after a welcome address the same evening the academic programme begins in earnest on the 27th. This year there will be 14 sessions with 4 or 5 streams covering a breadth of biometric methods and applications. Topics range from clinical trials to fisheries, agriculture and biodiversity, from survival analysis to high dimensional data problems, from gene se-

quencing to latent variable models. Highlights include our own ex-president's session on advances in statistical ecology, Biometrics and Jabs showcase sessions a session celebrating young statisticians. A session dedicated to collaborations between biometricians to tackle global statistical issues looks like a must for junior biometricians who want to learn how to collaborate and network internationally.

On the Wednesday there

will be an IBS general meeting and awards will be presented. These include 2 for best student presentations and 2 for best posters.

The conference dinner, held on the Thursday in the Kobe Kachoan a botanical gardens/greenhouse/bird park where you will dine with toucans and penguins!

BIR have awarded 7 bursaries to PhD students. These were jointly funded by the British and Irish Region and the Fisher Memorial Trust.



Toucan being fed at Kpbe Kachoan the conference dinner venue

Secretary's comments James Carpenter

"JOHN HINDE
ELECTED
PRESIDENT OF
THE
INTERNATIONAL
BIOMETRIC
SOCIETY"

As you know, John Hinde was elected IBS president. Congratulations from all of us at BIR. We are looking for new committee members - anyone interested please [email me](#). Also, look out for the announcement of the next BIR / Fisher Memorial Trust prize for career-young

researchers in September. These are members of BIR who completed full-time education within the last 5 years. The award will recognise the research of one published paper published, or accepted for publication, in a refereed journal. This award comprises a diploma

and a prize of £1000. For more details see the [BIR website](#). Forthcoming conferences include the celebration of 41 years since the Cox proportional hazards model paper next spring and the Channel Network conference in St Andrews in July 2013.

2013 International Year of Statistics Richard Elmsley



The International Biometric Society has joined other leading statistical societies to celebrate 2013 as the International Year of Statistics, also known as Sta-

tistics2013. The purpose of the International Year of Statistics is to promote the importance of Statistics to the broader scientific community, business and government data users, the media, policy makers, employers, students and perhaps most importantly of all, the general public.

The goals of Statistics 2013 include: **increasing public awareness** of the power and impact of Statistics on all aspects of society; **nurturing Statistics as a profession**, especially among young people; and **promot-**

ing creativity and development in the sciences of Probability and Statistics.

The [Statistics 2013 website](#) has now been launched and contains information on which other organisations are participating, some of the planned activities and the Steering Committee. The website will be the primary source of information, and is being continually updated and new features added.

The British and Irish Region is one of the participating organisations in Statistics2013, and we would like to encourage all members to think of ideas for how indi-

viduals, groups and the Region can contribute to make the International Year of Statistics a success.

[Richard Elmsley](#) (BIR Region and The University of Manchester) is serving as the International Biometric Society representative on the Statistics2013 Steering Committee, and can be contacted directly, along with any other members of the [Steering Committee](#).



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In Brief

The Channel Network Conference: To be held in St Andrews between the 3rd and 5th of July. Updates will be available on the [BIR website](#)

BIR Website: Members can now pay their membership fees [online!](#)

In Memoriam: Members of the BIR would like to remem-

ber three former members who passed away recently.

Clifford Pearce was a member of the British and Irish Region of the International Biometric Society for over 58 years and was present at the inaugural meeting of the Biometric society - British region.

John N. R. Jeffers who served as President of the British Region from 1985-86.

George Dyke a long-standing member of the region.

Michael Horatio Westmacott also passed away in

2012. He worked at Rothamsted and was a member of the 1953 expedition to Mount Everest

Births: On a totally personal note, I now have a lovely son Elias! He probably won't be a statistician, let alone a member of BIR but you never know!