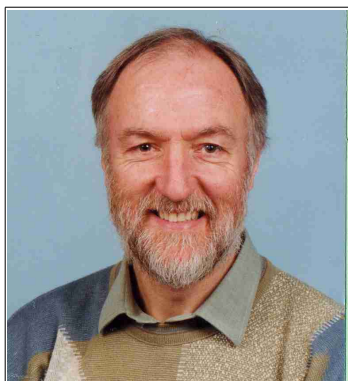




British & Irish Region Newsletter — December 2007



Byron Morgan incoming regional president

We are delighted to announce the Professor Byron Morgan (University of Kent) has accepted the committee's invitation to serve as the next regional president.

Byron is well known for his substantial contributions to statistical theory and its application to biomedical problems. He is a long standing member of the society, and his insights will be valuable for our future planning.

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Money matters

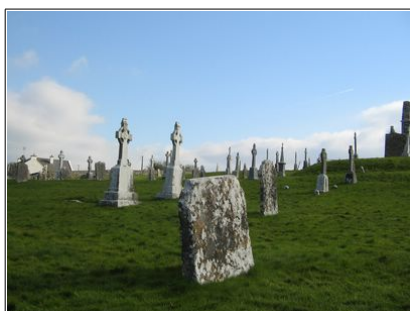
Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2008 are due on 1st January 2008

Peter Rigsby — A separate invoice sheet gives full details of the current subscription rates (unchanged from 2007). This form should be completed and returned to the address given on the form by all those who do not pay by standing order. For Regional members based outside of the United

Kingdom, a reminder that as we now have a Euro bank account, we are able to accept payment of subscriptions in Euros. The current rate has been set at 65 Euros for full members and 22 Euros for associate and student members.

International Biometric Conference

July 13 – July 18, 2008. University College, Dublin, Ireland



The International Programme Committee, of which both David Balding and Andrew Mead are members, have organised an exciting programme of 20 invited sessions with four full-day short courses organised on the Sunday before the conference starts. Full details can be found at www.tibs.org. Three satellite conferences, in St Andrews, Paris and Belfast, are also planned.

A range of accommodation is available, from 4* hotels to good quality student rooms on campus at UCD, all within easy reach of the UCD campus. An array of social events have also been planned, from the opening Welcome reception on Sunday 13th July, through Irish Music Evenings, mid-conference tours (after a half-morning of scientific sessions on the Wednesday morning), to the

Gala Dinner in the O'Reilly Hall at UCD on the Thursday evening.

The conference provides the Region with a great opportunity to present the British and Irish approach to Biometry to our colleagues from around the world. Therefore I urge you to submit a paper and attend the conference. **The deadline for submitting abstracts for oral or poster presentations is 31st January 2008.**

Secretary's corner

JAMES.CARPENTER@LSHTM.AC.UK

I'd like to reiterate the thanks expressed at the AGM to Andrew for his work as secretary over many years. There's a lot more to this role than meets the eye! Andrew continues to work extremely hard for the Society in the run up to the international conference in Dublin, which will be very successful.

As David Balding reported at the AGM, we had a very good committee meeting in November. Plans for stimulating future meetings are in hand; some details are found here and others will be on the web shortly. We are grateful to those who organise these meetings, and are keen to receive suggestions for meeting topics.

While recent meetings have been both stimulating and well attended, unfortunately membership continues to decline both in the region and internationally. The region has now only around 270 full members. Although some might feel such decline is inevitable, I don't agree. The Royal Statistical Society and the Institute of Mathematical Statisticians have both increased their membership

recently.

The committee is working hard to address this: an attractive recruitment leaflet has been produced by Angela Wood and others, and Peter Colman has moved the regional website so it is now hosted by the international society (no mean feat!). Over the next year we hope to improve the website with, amongst other things, a members' area where presentations from past meetings will be available.

This brings me to the newsletter, which you have probably noticed has been reformatted. I'm also keen to expand the content to include more news and views from around the region. However, I can't do this myself, so am keen to hear from those who might be prepared to contribute from time to time.

Most people join a society like ours because someone asks them to. With the international conference in Dublin this year, it's a great time to invite colleagues or students to join. Over to you...

Membership update

Suzanne Clark, membership secretary

Unfortunately Membership has declined again this year. We currently have a total of 252 paid up members (a loss of 31 compared to 283 in 2006). However, it should be noted that 13 of these 31 were people who signed up at our November 2005 meeting and did not renew in 2007 (see below). The realistic loss is therefore still large at 18. We currently have an additional 32 people on our local mailing list who have not paid for 1 or 2 years and who we try to entice back before removing them in the third year.

Current membership can be broken down into the following categories (2006 figures in parentheses):

	2007	2006
Full members	210	(217)
Associate members	31	(47)
Student members	6	(14)
Life members	4	(4)
Retired members	1	(1)
Pending removal	32	(31)
Total	284	(314)

Overall there were only 6 new memberships. Four Associate members increased to full membership. Two Full members reduced to Associate membership. There were 14 formal resignations and another 19 members were removed due to non payment of fees for over two years. Three members transferred out to other Regions: ENAR, WNAR and Kenya, respectively. Three pending members rejoined after not having paid for one year (two Full, and one Student who increased to Full), but sadly the number of members on the pending (i.e. not paid up) list is still large at the end of this year (32).

I was asked to report back on the retention rate after the November 2005 meeting (where we offered non-Members the chance to take up Associate or Student membership for 2006 in exchange for their higher registration fee). Eleven people took up Associate membership and seven took up Student membership. Only three of these Associates (one increasing to Full membership) and two Students rejoined in 2007. ■

November meeting & AGM: brief report

James Carpenter

We are very grateful to Chris Glasbey for organising the November meeting joint with John Wittaker and the Royal Statistical Society's General Applications Section. This was held at the RSS building in London on 13th November and attracted a large number of participants.

It focused on the statistics of networks. This is an active research area, and the talks covered a wide range of applications. Jean-Jacques Daudin introduced networks from a statistical point of view. The focus then moved to applications: Michael Stumpf on inference of molecular networks; Lorenz Wernish on reconstructing regulatory networks by nonparametric methods; Stephane Robin on uncovering latent structure in valued graphs; Tom Snijders on statistical modelling of networks in the social sciences and Azra Ghani on sexual networks and the evolution of sexually-transmitted diseases. Full details are on the regional website, where we hope to make speakers' slides available in the new year.

The AGM took place during the lunch-break; around

25 members were present. The regional president, David Balding, was in the chair.

The secretary, treasurer and membership secretary presented their reports, which are elsewhere in this newsletter and on the regional web site. On behalf of the meeting, David thanked the officers for their reports, in particular Andrew for his work as secretary over many years. Andrew is now standing down to concentrate on his role as international president.

Committee elections were un-opposed, and we welcome Peter Lane (GlaxoSmithKline, Greenford), Alistair Murray (Central Science Laboratory, York), and James Carpenter (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine) as regional secretary.

The accounts were approved (full statement on the regional website); they show a surplus so no increase in membership fees is needed. Robin Thompson was elected auditor for 2008. ■

Annual Report 2007

Andrew Mead, outgoing regional secretary

This is my seventh and final annual report as Secretary of the British and Irish Region of the International Biometric Society. Personally the year has been dominated by additional activities in my role as IBS President-elect, a post to which I was appointed from 1st January 2007. This additional role has resulted in a number of foreign trips during the last 10 months (to Atlanta and Washington for IBS Executive Meetings, as well as the ENAR Conference in Atlanta, and to IBS Regional and Network Conferences in Denmark, Spain and Ghana). Whilst possibly detracting from my effectiveness as British and Irish Region Secretary, these visits have provided useful insights into how other parts of the society operate, hopefully providing some useful lessons that we will be able to apply within the British and Irish Region. Another continuing activity during the past year has been my involvement in the organisation of the next International Biometric Conference in Dublin from 13th to 18th July 2008 (of which more later).

There have been four regional meetings during the past twelve months, plus the First Channel Network Conference in the Netherlands. In November 2006 we held a full-day meeting on *Statistical Ecology — Statistics and Animal Populations* at Rothamsted Research. This meeting included sessions on *Avian Flu* with talks by Rowland Kao (University of Oxford) on *Preparing for an Emergency: Avian Influenza and the UK Poultry Industry* and Simon Cauchemez (Imperial College — a last minute replace-

ment for Neil Ferguson) on *How mathematical modelling can help in pandemic planning*, and on *Bovine Tuberculosis* with talks by Sir David Cox (Nuffield College, Oxford) on *Bovine Tuberculosis: Some Statistical Issues* and Graham Medley (University of Warwick) on *Transmission of Bovine Tuberculosis within GB Cattle Herds*, with Robert Curnow (University of Reading) as an invited discussant. These two sessions sandwiched the Presidential Address by retiring Regional President, Joe Perry on *Biometry in England from 1975 — a personal view*. The meeting was well attended with about 50 participants. Many thanks to Suzanne Clark for local organisation for the meeting, and to Joe Perry for assistance with the scientific programme.

The second meeting of the year saw the British and Irish Region return to its old home for a joint meeting with the Royal Entomological Society on *Analysing Arthropod Observational Data*. The meeting included talks by Patsy Haccou (University of Leiden, The Netherlands) on *The statistical analysis of behavioural data: approaches based on time-structured models*, Judith Pell (Rothamsted Research) on *Coping with observational data from experiments on behavioural interactions amongst aphids and their natural enemies*, by Bill Budenberg (Tracksys Ltd., Nottingham) on *Examples of the use of software for analysing arthropod observational data prior to statistical testing*, by Archie Murchie (AFBI, Belfast) on *Gall midge sex ratios* and by Duncan Sivell (Rothamsted Research) on *Quantifying migration in Lepidoptera*. Following the after-

noon meeting, Joe Perry presented an evening talk on *Insects in Space*. Although the meeting was reasonably well attended with 31 participants, only 6 of these were from the IBS-BIR. Many thanks to Joe Perry and colleagues at the RES for assistance in organising this meeting.

The First Channel Network Conference was hosted by the Netherlands Region of the IBS at the Rolduc Conference Centre in the south of the Netherlands, the conference venue being the imposing abbey of Rolduc. Invited sessions included the Opening Keynote address by Ulrich Mansmann (University of Munich, Germany) on *Groups, graphs, network: new strategies to handle genomic data* and the Closing Keynote address by Marc Buyse (IDDI, Belgium) on *Fast and Sensitive Trials — New Paradigms in Clinical Research*. Between these were three further invited sessions on *High-dimensional data* with speakers Age Smilde (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands) and Cajo ter Braak (Wageningen University, Netherlands), on *Methods in Epidemiology* with speakers Daniel Comenges (INSERM, France) and Stijn Vansteelandt (University of Ghent, Belgium), and on *Adaptive design in clinical trials* with speakers Chris Jennison (University of Bath) and Fabian Tibaldi (Eli Lilly and Company, Belgium), plus a Biometrics Showcase session featuring authors from the British and Irish Region, French Region and Belgium Region, twelve contributed oral sessions containing 48 papers, and a poster session with 13 further papers. Prizes were awarded for the best presentations by young statisticians, and the best poster presentations, with Andrew Brown (Imperial College London) receiving the first prize in the poster competition. With 113 delegates the conference should be considered a success — but the support for the conference from the British and Irish Region was disappointing with only 14 delegates. For the future it is important that the British and Irish Region as a whole commits to the Channel Network, as I believe that this is an important way for the IBS in North-Western Europe to grow. The next conference is in Ghent, Belgium in April 2009. The Channel Network Steering Group will be meeting in April 2008 to agree on plans for the scientific programme for that conference, so please let the BIR Representatives Tim Cole and Joe Perry have any suggestions for possible topics and speakers for the invited sessions and themes for the conference.

There was a gap over the summer with the last two regional meetings organised in September. On September 11th an extremely successful meeting was organised on *Statistical Methods for Genome-Wide Association Studies* at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Hinxton, near Cambridge. Jointly organised by David Balding and David Clayton on behalf of the IBS-BIR and Richard Durbin from the Sanger Institute, there were nine papers presented during the meeting: *Statistical Issues in Genome-Wide Association Studies* by David Clayton (Cambridge Institute for Medical Research), *Imputation of genotypes for Genome-Wide Association Studies* by Jonathan Marchini (University of Oxford), *CHIAMO*, a new algorithm for genotype calling, by Chris Spencer (University of Oxford), *Design and analysis issues and effect size estimation for Genome-Wide Association Studies, with applications to breast and prostate*

cancer by Doug Easton (Strangeways Research Laboratory, University of Cambridge), *Haplotype clustering methods for association studies* by Andrew Morris (Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics, Oxford), *Genome-wide association analysis in genetically isolated populations* by Yuri Aulchenko (Erasmus University, Rotterdam), *Testing copy number variants in association studies* by Vincent Plagnol (Cambridge Institute for Medical Research), *Haplotype structure of CNVs in the human genome* by Lachlan Coin (Imperial College London) and *The future for association studies based on resequencing* by Richard Durbin (Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Hinxton). There were over 150 participants at the meeting, with a number of the non-members present taking advantage of our offer of membership as part of the registration fee.

The last meeting of the year, on September 26th, was another joint meeting with the Royal Statistical Society Environmental Statistics Section, again organised by Ruth King, on *Modelling Ecological Dynamics*. The meeting aimed to present a range of papers covering different modelling approaches, different spatial scales, and different ecological populations. The presented papers were *Density-structured models for population dynamics: parameterisation and application* by Rob Freckleton (University of Sheffield), focussing on weed dynamics, *Everything must go: predator-prey dynamics and biological control* by Dave Skirvin (University of Warwick), focussing on insect-plant interactions, *Random effect modelling of great tit nesting behaviour* by Bill Browne (University of Bristol), focussing on birds, and *Understanding the causes of population declines in apex marine predators* by Jason Matthiopoulos (University of St Andrews), focussing on seals. The meeting was completed with a presentation by Byron Morgan (National Centre for Statistical Ecology, University of Kent) who presented work on a new tool for model assessment *Model identification, parameter redundancy and exhaustive summaries*. There were about 40 participants, fairly evenly split between the two societies.

Other activities during the year included work on a new recruitment leaflet and poster, led by Angela Wood. These were produced in time to be distributed at the two meetings in September, and copies have now been distributed to all the Statistics Departments in British and Irish Universities, and to other organisations with significant groups of quantitative scientists who might be persuaded to join the IBS. Members are requested to consider recruiting their colleagues to join the society, and should contact the Regional Secretary if they need additional copies of the recruitment leaflet.

We have also been working on developing a new web-site during the past year, with efforts on this led by Peter Colman. Hosted within the main IBS web-site (at www.tibs.org) the new web-site address is <http://www.britishandirish.tibs.org/live> Whilst still being populated, we hope that this new location will make it easier for responsibility for the web-site to be passed between web-site managers in the future, and it is the intention of the international society to encourage all Regions, National Groups and Networks to host their web-sites in this common environment in the future.

The Committee continues to maintain links with both

the RSS and PSI, exploring the potential for improving on these links for the benefit of our membership. Mostly these links result in successful joint meetings, but other possibilities exist, and both organisations will have a presence at the IBC in Dublin in July 2008. Future plans for meetings include a joint meeting with the RSS-GAS on *Statistics of Networks* in November 2007 and another joint meeting with the RSS-ESS in May 2008. We are also grateful for the continued support of the Fisher Memorial Trust for the activities of the Region, with funds provided to support the attendance of three young biometricians at the First Channel Network Conference in May 2007. We are currently negotiating with the Fisher Memorial Trust for funds to support a reception for IBS Student Members at the IBC in Dublin, as well as to provide travel grants to help young biometricians attend the conference. In addition, the Fisher Memorial Lecture will be included as part of the IBC.

This neatly brings me to developments with the planning for IBC Dublin 2008! The International Programme Committee, of which both David Balding and I were members, have organised an exciting programme of 20 invited sessions with four full-day short courses organised on the Sunday before the conference starts. Other scientific sessions include those mentioned above, plus showcase sessions for the society's journals. Three satellite conferences, in St Andrews, Paris and Belfast, are also planned. The online abstract submission system opened on 1st October, with the associated online registration system opening on 1st November. The deadline for the submission of abstracts for contributed papers is January 31st — so please submit your contribution in plenty of time. A range of accommodation is available, from 4* hotels to good quality student rooms on campus at UCD, all within easy reach of the UCD campus where all the scientific sessions will take place. An array of social events have also been planned, from the opening Welcome reception on Sunday 13th July, through Irish Music Evenings, mid-conference tours (after a half-morning of scientific sessions on the Wednesday morning), to the Gala Dinner in the O'Reilly Hall at UCD on the Thursday evening. Whilst hosting the IBC is certainly hard work, and the LOC may well be looking for additional input from members of the British and Irish

Region over the next few months (in particular at this point with attracting sponsors, advertisers and exhibitors to the conference), it does provide the Region with a great opportunity to present the British and Irish approach to Biometry to our colleagues from around the world. Therefore I do urge you to submit a paper and plan to attend the conference. Together with the Organising President for the conference, Tom Louis, and the members of the International Programme Committee and Local Organising Committee, I look forward to seeing you in Dublin next July.

As I complete my seven years as Secretary of the British (and Irish) Region I need to express my thanks to all of those who have supported me during the last seven years. Firstly, my thanks to the various Committee and Council members during that time, too many to mention individually, who have helped with the organisation of meetings and the identification of topics and potential speakers, and who have critically supported my various ideas to develop the IBS both within and outside the British and Irish Region. I must also thank our contacts at the Institute of Biology, who continue to produce and distribute the regional newsletter, and Anthony Edwards and the other members of the Fisher Memorial Trust, for their continued financial support of the Region. Secondly, my thanks to the four Regional Presidents with whom I have worked in the last seven years — Rosemary Bailey, Mike Kenward, Joe Perry and David Balding — and who have again given me much needed support and friendship throughout that time. And finally to the other continuing officers of the Region, Treasurer Peter Rigsby (and his predecessor Gillian Arnold) and Membership Secretary Suzanne Clark (and her predecessor Sue Chinn), who, with the Secretary, provide the continuity of knowledge and activity that is needed for the Region to operate. It has been a great pleasure to work with all of these committed members of the IBS British and Irish Region. I wish my successor as Regional Secretary every success as he takes on the role, and, as I move onto the even greater challenges presented as I take over as International President of the IBS, look forward to a continued interaction with the British and Irish Region membership and committee over the next three years and beyond. ■

In Brief

Spring meeting

Steve Gilmour (s.g.gilmour@qmul.ac.uk) is co-ordinating a Spring meeting around design methods for screening food compounds. Full details will be on the regional website and circulated early in the new year

Autumn meeting

Bianca DeStavola (bianca.destavola@lshtm.ac.uk) is co-ordinating a September meeting on survival analysis with competing risks. Another reason to watch the regional website

Send in your news, please

We are keen to keep members in touch — so please email

James.Carpenter@lshtm.ac.uk for any news for the next issue

New membership secretary needed

After many years of much appreciated work, Suzanne Clark has decided to stand down as membership secretary at the AGM in 2008. If you are interested in taking on this key role (or know someone who might be!), please let me know.

Statisticians in the making?

Many congratulations to committee members Angela Wood and Ruth King, who have both had a baby in the last year. Full details and pictures on *Facebook!*

Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2008