



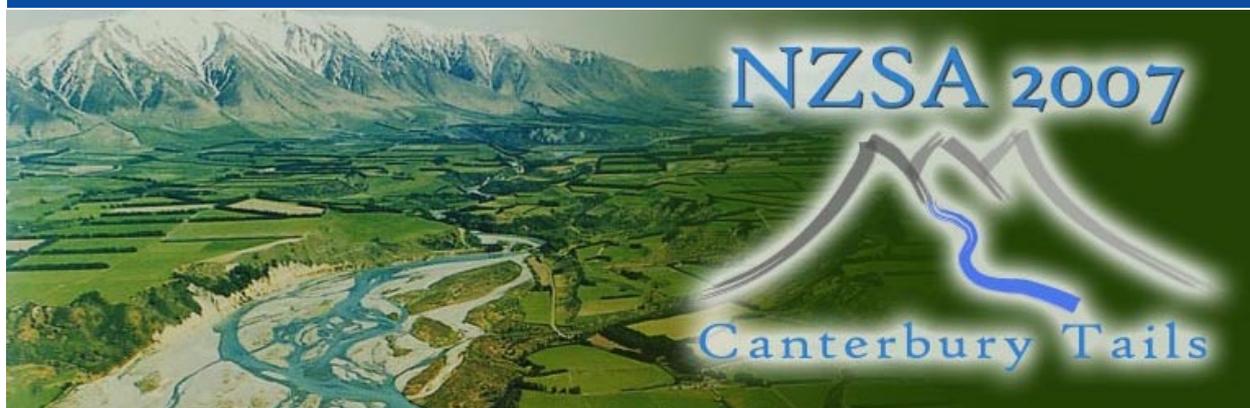
The New Zealand Statistical Association

nzsa.rsnz.org

# Newsletter

Number 66

September 2007



## NZSA2007 Conference - Official Report

The NZSA conference was held at the University of Canterbury on 4 July, followed by the Conference in Honour of John Deely over 5-6 July. John (pictured right) gave a lively and welcoming talk, in his entertaining style, outlining milestones in his long history with Canterbury (over 28 years) and fond stories of many of the folks that have influenced his career. The wealth of contributed papers for the conference, led to a full day of 39 talks running across 3 streams. The conference had 100 attendees at main sessions, with 20 educators for the Statistics Education afternoon session.



The smooth running of Conference was down to the sterling work of the local organising committee: Carl Scarrott, Dominic Lee, Marco Reale, Jennifer Brown, Ian Westbrooke, Richard Penny, Rebecca Bangma, Easaw Chacko and Mik Black. The organisers thank our sponsors for their generous contributions which added to the success of the conference: Hoare Research Software, Hearne Scientific Software (suppliers of Systat by Cranes Software) and SAS. Statistics New Zealand provided major contributions, in particular from the Official Statistics Research part of the Official Statistics System and Official Statistics Research and Data Archive Centre.

We thank Ray Hoare of HRS for sponsoring the

student prizes. The two first-equal winners this year, out of 13 student presenters, were Matthew Schofield, University of Otago, who gave a talk on climate reconstruction and Jason Bentley, University of Canterbury, who spoke on Bayesian analysis of linear regression models using exact Markov chain Monte Carlo. They received \$500 each from HRS.



*Jason Bentley (left) and Matthew Schofield after receiving \$500 each from HRS*

Whilst many of us were enjoying alcoholic delights the Staff Club has to offer, or the equally invigorating discussion at the AGM, Jim Young passed on his enthusiasm for statistics and some words of wisdom for the next generation at the Young Statisticians event sponsored by SNZ, attended by over twenty of the freshest additions to the statistics fold.

*Carl Scarrott*



*Local organising committee members*

## Conference in Honour of Professor John Deely- Report

The Conference in Honour of Professor John Deely was held at the University of Canterbury on July 5-6, 2007, and attracted more than 60 national and international attendees. The conference was preceded by the annual NZSA conference on July 4, where John had the honour of giving the plenary address - an emotional, enlightening and entertaining event, which set the tone for three wonderful days. After the hustle and bustle of the concurrent sessions of the NZSA meeting, the Deely meeting retired to the calm of the basement, where attendees were treated to a series of talks that blended statistics with sermonizing, anecdotes with asymptotics, and Bayes with everything. On the surface, the speakers were a somewhat diverse bunch, but as the meeting progressed it became obvious that they were united by their deep admiration for the man they had come to honour. Frank Lad opened the conference, Jim Berger (pictured right) provided the keynote, Ron Christensen and Wes Johnson were a dynamic Bayesian duo, Steve Samuels spoke of matters Secretarial, Jessica Utts unraveled the secrets of John's teaching success. For two fun-filled days John's colleagues and former students presented on a broad range of statistical topics, all the while leaving no doubt in the minds of their audience just how much John's friendship and guidance had meant to them over the years. The conference ended with a feast - bread, soup, animals on spits - courtesy of Frank and Belle, all in the comfort of their own home. The night was a celebration, the perfect end to a wonderful week. John's family and friends relaxed as the wine, tears and speeches flowed. John spent the entire evening wearing a broad smile - he was as "happy as Larry". Or perhaps he was just enjoying showing us his new teeth.



*Mik Black*



*John leading a discussion on "Why I am (or am not) a Bayesian".*

## NZSA2007 Conference: A Student's View

In my opinion the highlight of the NZSA2007 conference was the plenary by Professor Deely on the opening morning. In a very humble manner Prof. Deely looked back over his career and in particular, looked at the events that led to him coming out to NZ. As a student just starting out, it was very encouraging to me to see how he progressed throughout his career. One thing that stood out to me was the friendship and respect he has from his collaborators and students. This reminded me that I must put effort into cultivating friendships with those I work with.

Another highlight of the conferences was the roundtable discussion. Prof. Deely opened the discussion by proclaiming:

*"I hate p-values!"*

What followed was a discussion on the reasons why people choose Bayesian or frequentist inference. I found it very profitable gaining a wider understanding as to why people choose either approach. It has given me much food for thought.

*Matthew Schofield*

## PANZ2007

The PANZ biennial conference was held on 3-4 July at Te Papa, Wellington.

There were over 150 attendees who represented a range of people working with population statistics across central and local government, academia and the private sector. The programme highlighted a range of demographic topics reflecting the theme of the conference "Looking into the Future: People, Diversity and Social Outcomes". Sessions covered aspects of internal and international migration, aging, fertility and childlessness, labour force issues, population estimation, ethnicity and ethnic diversity, and subnational population trends.

Three international keynote speakers addressed the conference. Professor Miles Corak (School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa) spoke on inter-generational earnings mobility among the children of Canadian migrants. Dr Gerald Haberkorn (Head Demography/Population Statistics and Demography Programme, Secretariat of the Pacific Community) spoke on demographic trends and issues in the Pacific. Associate Professor Natalie Jackson (School of Sociology and Social Work, University of Tasmania) spoke on attitudes to retirement among Australia's baby boomers.

*Sarah Voon*

## Conference - ICOTS8

The next International Conference on Teaching Statistics is being held in Ljubljana, Slovenia 11-16 July 2010. The Conference Theme is *data and context in statistics education: towards an evidence-based society*. The conference topics and committees are named below. Anyone interested in being associated with or organising a session under one of the topics can express their interest to any of the topic convenors or to the Chair of the Programme Committee, John Harraway ([jharraway@maths.otago.ac.nz](mailto:jharraway@maths.otago.ac.nz)). The sessions within each topic will be developed over the next nine months.

### Topics And Topic Convenors

1. Data and context in statistics education: towards an evidence-based society  
Brian Phillips [bphillips@swin.edu.au](mailto:bphillips@swin.edu.au)  
Irena Ograjensek [irena.ograjensek@ef.uni-lj.si](mailto:irena.ograjensek@ef.uni-lj.si)
2. Statistics education at the school level  
Mike Shaughnessy [mikesh@pdx.edu](mailto:mikesh@pdx.edu)  
Doreen Connor [doreen.connor@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:doreen.connor@ntu.ac.uk)
3. Learning to teach statistics  
Katie Makar [k.makar@uq.edu.au](mailto:k.makar@uq.edu.au)  
Joachim Engel [engel@math.uni-hannover.de](mailto:engel@math.uni-hannover.de)
4. Statistics education at the post secondary level  
Elisabeth Svensson [elisabeth.svensson@esi.oru.se](mailto:elisabeth.svensson@esi.oru.se)  
Larry Weldon [weldon@sfu.ca](mailto:weldon@sfu.ca)
5. Assessment  
Beth Chance [bchance@calpoly.edu](mailto:bchance@calpoly.edu)  
Iddo Gal [iddo@research.haifa.ac.il](mailto:iddo@research.haifa.ac.il)
6. Statistics education, training and the workplace  
Gabriella Belli [gbelli@vt.edu](mailto:gbelli@vt.edu)  
Peter Petocz [peter.petocz@mq.edu.au](mailto:peter.petocz@mq.edu.au)
7. Statistics education and the wider society  
Richard Gadsden [R.J.Gadsden@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:R.J.Gadsden@lboro.ac.uk)  
Oded Meyer [meyer@stat.cmu.edu](mailto:meyer@stat.cmu.edu)
8. Research in statistics education  
Arthur Bakker [a.bakker@fi.uu.nl](mailto:a.bakker@fi.uu.nl)  
Tim Burgess [t.a.burgess@massey.ac.nz](mailto:t.a.burgess@massey.ac.nz)
9. Technology in statistics education  
Deborah Nolan [nolan@stat.berkeley.edu](mailto:nolan@stat.berkeley.edu)  
Paul Darius [paul.darius@biw.kuleuven.be](mailto:paul.darius@biw.kuleuven.be)
10. An international perspective on statistics education  
Delia North [northd@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:northd@ukzn.ac.za)  
Enriqueta Reston [edreston@yahoo.com](mailto:edreston@yahoo.com)
11. Contributed papers  
Gilberte Schuyten [Gilberte.Schuyten@UGent.be](mailto:Gilberte.Schuyten@UGent.be)  
James Nicholson [j.r.nicholson@durham.ac.uk](mailto:j.r.nicholson@durham.ac.uk)
12. Posters  
Mojca Bavdaz [mojca.bavdaz@ef.uni-lj.si](mailto:mojca.bavdaz@ef.uni-lj.si)

## Workshop - Applied Bayesian Statistics: with a focus on diagnostic tests in the absence of gold standard

December 10th - 14th, 2007, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

A hands-on workshop introducing current state of the art methods of evaluating diagnostic assays when gold standards are not available. The workshop addresses human and veterinary epidemiologists, researchers, staff in industries, and statisticians who want to update their knowledge in OIE approved basic and advanced statistical procedures modelling discrete and continuous diagnostic test outcomes.

The main presenters are leaders in the field Prof. Wes Johnson and Prof. Ian Gardner, both University of California, and Dr. Geoff Jones and Dr. Alasdair Noble from Massey University. They are supported by EpiCentre staff.

For details see <http://epicentre.massey.ac.nz/Default.aspx?tabid=284>.

This event is linked to: WAVLD pre-symposium workshop "Assay Validation From Theory to Praxis" 11-14 November 2007

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## Agreement signed between Statistics New Zealand and New Zealand's universities

An agreement between Statistics New Zealand and the NZ Vice Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has been signed recently by Geoff Bascand (Government Statistician) and Lindsay Taiaroa (Executive Director, NZVCC). The objective of this agreement is to help build statistical capability within NZ universities by making access to statistical products and services both easier and cheaper.

The statistical data package will include access to INFOS, basic NZ CURFS (Confidentialised Unit Record Files), the long-term time series developed by the Treasury, plus a data package for the Social Sciences network. The final details of this later data package is still being finalised, but the package is expected to be available before the next academic year.



The new Government Statistician, Geoff Bascand (left) and the Executive Director of NZVCC, Lindsay Taiaroa.

## President's Column



Tuesday morning, my son and I are heading north on an epic journey to Christchurch, it is the first fine day for a month and the sun dazzles off Blueskin Bay. We listen to Simon and Garfunkel in Central Park. I drop Jeremy off at his friend's place in Belfast and return to campus.

Next morning John Deely takes centre stage, a passionate, intense autobiography, a sequence of freakishly improbable actualities, with lots of photos of wine glasses held by semi-recognisable, hairy characters, against a lurid purple desktop. Remember that his students are throwing this party. The energy continues throughout the day, and on into the conference dinner.

The next day there are tributes to John, more photos from the past, even some talks that are not explicitly Bayesian. There is laughter and tears. The energy is high, but I crash for a while before the soirée at the Staff Club. John's daughter asks me if I am a Bayesian or a Frequentist. I say I am a pragmatist and she asks if it has a capital-P, but I refrain from invention.

Next day the forum, in Praise of the Bayesian Paradigm, why I am, or am not. More laughter, and anger, focussed, righteous anger - p-values! Why do we bear with them? Why don't we Bayes them?

We're getting to the climax, party at Frank's, spit roast, Belle's art, word of a drama, Mik plays John with Jessica as the journalist. Every line is a punchline, Ron's John is larger than life, like New Mexico large. We laugh till we cry.

John's son asks for the Greyhound bus story. When John was a boy the Greyhound bus was the only place he felt at home, snuggled up against his Mom as they moved from town to town. We have stopped laughing. His son gives him a parcel. John rips it, tears it, stabs it open. It is a model Greyhound bus. Here is a man who set out to look for America, and ended up finding New Zealand.

*Roger Littlejohn*

*Jim Berger, Ann and John Deely*



## Editorial

Like quite a few other people, apparently, I've been thinking about foundational issues recently. The big schism for statisticians is, of course, between the Bayesians and frequentists, but there are others taxing my brain at the moment, such as the one between design-based and



model-based estimation in survey analysis. This clash of paradigms is particularly evident in small-area estimation, and caused a few rumpuses at a conference on survey methodology that I attended last year.

One often comes across people who have a strong belief in something, or a great love of something, and who insist on expressing that belief, or that love, through an unconditional hatred of something else. Whether it be Western Values, or p-values, I don't think it's the way to go.

Personally I'm still striving for that great overview that will encompass all these apparently conflicting points of view. There's a danger of course of becoming like the man who "grew so broad-minded he was scatter-brained", but it seems to me that the other extreme is far worse.

I'm not saying that foundational issues are unimportant. I think it's right and proper that these matters are raised at conferences, and it's both fun and educational to watch the two sides fighting it out. But the least we can try to do is to remember that the person on the other side of the fence is probably not an idiot, or a charlatan. However much it might seem like it.

As usual I'd like to thank all those who have contributed articles and photographs. In addition to the usual sections and snippets of news from or about the statistical community, we have reports of the very successful NZSA and John Deely Conferences in Christchurch. A more extensive collection of photographs from these events will be available in the online version of the newsletter (see opposite).

My favourite quote from the conference was given to me by Ron Christensen, quoting a colleague of his: "I don't like to do research, but I like to understand things". I'm looking forward to trying this out on the next PBRF panel!

*Geoff Jones*

## Submissions to the Newsletter

The Newsletter welcomes any submissions of interest to members of the NZSA. News about New Zealand statisticians, statistical meetings, statistical organisations, statistics in education, or statistical curiosities are suitable for inclusion. Letters that raise issues of importance to statistics in New Zealand are also welcomed. Photographs of recent gatherings and new appointees are of particular interest. Electronic submissions are preferred.

*Next deadline 22 February, 2008*

## Advertising In the Newsletter

The Newsletter accepts advertising of interest to statisticians in New Zealand. Advertising is placed subject to space considerations. Personal advertising by NZSA members will be published free. Other advertising is \$250 per page, \$140 per half page, and \$75 per quarter page. Other sizes can be quoted on request. All advertising requests should be directed to the editor.

### Editor

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## Newsletter on Web

An online version of this newsletter is available at <http://nzsa.rsnz.org/Newsletter66/index.htm>  
It will be regularly updated with information and your letters.

Email: [g.jones@massey.ac.nz](mailto:g.jones@massey.ac.nz)

## NZSA Membership rates

Given rates apply from April 2007 - March 2008 and are in NZ\$.

	NZ	Overseas
Ordinary	75	80
Student & Retired	37.50	42.50
No paper journal (electronic only - see next column)	-5	-5
SSAI Member (journal funded from SSAI membership)	45	50

## Join the NZSA

A membership application / change of address form is available at <http://nzsa.rsnz.org/form.php>

## New members

A warm welcome to 19 new members of the NZSA who have joined since February 2007, taking our current membership to 401.

Regular members: Guan Yu Zheng, Alan Bentley, Olivia Son, Rudi van der Mescht, Emma Mawby, Murthy Mittinty, Lisa Henley, Maik Wagner, Nathaniel Pihama, Antony Kennedy, Walter Davis, Angela Forbes, Peter Fieger.

Student members: Yihong Zhang, Arier Lee, Andrew Gormley, Andrew Richens, Marina Zahari, Jason Bentley.

## Campbell Estate Fund

The NZSA was the recipient of a very generous donation (\$48,000) from Professor Campbell's estate.

There is roughly \$1500 funding available each year for special projects that are in the realm of Professor Campbell's interests. Refer to <http://nzsa.rsnz.org/funding.shtml> for more details.

The fund has now grown to over \$59,000 with accumulated interest since 2001.

Applications are received twice a year (April/October) and are invited for funding for projects in 2007/08. There is no formal application process but please supply details of your project, the full project budget, the amount you are requesting, a short statement about why your project is within Professor Campbell's interests, and your full contact details.

Please send your applications to the Secretary, ([fletcher@maths.otago.ac.nz](mailto:fletcher@maths.otago.ac.nz)), NZSA, PO Box 1731, Wellington.

For more details contact Jennifer Brown ([j.brown@math.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:j.brown@math.canterbury.ac.nz)) or Harold Henderson ([harold.henderson@agresearch.co.nz](mailto:harold.henderson@agresearch.co.nz)).



*Jennifer Brown*

## Back Copies of NZ Statistician

A CD archive of "The New Zealand Statistician" is available from the NZSA. For details see [http://nzsa.rsnz.org/archive\\_NZS.shtml](http://nzsa.rsnz.org/archive_NZS.shtml).

Copies of this CD are available for

Current members \$5

Past members \$25

Non members and libraries \$55

To order a copy email Harold Henderson ([Harold.Henderson@agresearch.co.nz](mailto:Harold.Henderson@agresearch.co.nz)).

# Awards

## McMeekan Memorial Award - Ken Dodds

The New Zealand Society of Animal Production (NZSAP) recently presented two of its top awards to AgResearch Invermay staff members, David Stevens and Ken Dodds.



Ken, a statistician with the AgResearch Bioinformatics, Mathematics & Statistics Section, won the society's McMeekan Memorial Award that recognises outstanding individual contribution to New Zealand animal production during the previous five years. He was nominated for almost single-handedly providing analytical and statistical leadership and support to the gene discovery programmes run at AgResearch Invermay that have led onto world-leading industry applications of marker-assisted selection in sheep during the past 20 years.

His major achievement during the past five years was his contribution to the development of the fractional-parentage DNA pedigree system that forms the basis of the Catapult Shepherd product. The fractional-parentage system uses DNA marker information to calculate the pedigree of animals in a breeding programme so that the most accurate breeding values possible can be estimated.

## McDiarmid Young Scientist Runner Up - James Russell

Congratulations to James Russell (University of Auckland), runner up for the 2007 McDiarmid Young Scientist for his project 'Invasion



Ecology of Rats on New Zealand Islands'. James was also first in the Understanding Planet Earth category.

The MacDiarmid Young Scientists of the Year Awards are presented by the Foundation of Research, Science and Technology and are designed to recognise excellent research, science and technology while also promoting the importance of good science communication.

## NZSA Education Committee

We're having a quieter year than the last couple of years, now the NZ school curriculum has been put to bed at the printers. It will emerge in its final form in October. We hope that it keeps NZ at the forefront in having well-designed and highly useful statistics in our schools. The next task will be to ensure that teachers are supported with written resources, datasets and other information.

The education sessions at this year's conference were well attended by a score or more of Canterbury teachers, as well as some of the other conference goers. Congratulations to the organisers, notably Ian Westbrooke and John Harraway, for providing this event that seemed to meet the needs of the audience. Teachers would have gone away with several disks of resources.

The 10th biennial conference of the NZ Association of Maths Teachers, 'The Power of 10', is in Auckland in September. See [http://www.cce.auckland.ac.nz/conferences/index.cfm?S=CCE\\_NZAMTC](http://www.cce.auckland.ac.nz/conferences/index.cfm?S=CCE_NZAMTC). NZSA is sponsoring a keynote speaker, Maxine Pfannkuch. We hope that this NZAMT, like the recent ones, helps to liberate energy for the teaching of statistics. The Committee is promoting other statistical workshops.

If you want to have a hand in policy or support for statistical education, please contact us:

[Alex.Neill@nzcer.org.nz](mailto:Alex.Neill@nzcer.org.nz),

[Mike.Camden@stats.govt.nz](mailto:Mike.Camden@stats.govt.nz).

*Mike Camden*

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### One Day Meeting of Palmy-STATISTICIANS Presented by Crop & Food Research &

**Institute of Information Sciences and  
Technology  
Massey University, Palmerston North.**

Venue: Bernard Chambers A

Date: 26 October 2007 (Friday)

Time: 9 am - 5 pm

Keynote speaker: Ian Westbrooke, DOC

Lunch and Refreshments will be provided on the day.

The purpose of this forum is to bring statisticians in and around Massey University together for a day at our Institute for the presentation of their current research work and group discussion on issues relevant to applications.

Coordinators:

Ganes ([s.ganesalingam@massey.ac.nz](mailto:s.ganesalingam@massey.ac.nz))

Alasdair ([a.d.noble@massey.ac.nz](mailto:a.d.noble@massey.ac.nz))

**\* Please feel free to pass this invitation to anyone else in the local area who might be interested.**

## Statistics Education News

### International News

**Joint ICMI/IASE Study, Statistics Education in School Mathematics: Challenges for Teaching and Teacher Education.** The International Commission on Mathematics Instruction (ICMI) Executive committee invited IASE to cooperate in a joint study focused on statistics. The invitation was accepted by IASE, which proposed to merge the Study Conference with IASE's next Roundtable Conference to be held in 2008 in Monterey, Mexico. Carmen Batenero is chair of the International Programme Committee (IPC) of the joint study. Planning is underway for this study, which will result in a book being published in 2010. Meetings of the IPC are planned for ISI-56. The deadline for submitting papers is October 1st 2007. For more information see: [http://www.ugr.es/~icmi/iase\\_study/](http://www.ugr.es/~icmi/iase_study/).



**International Census in Schools.** A workshop in Melbourne in March of participating countries, Australia, Canada, UK, and South Africa, was attended by Chris Wild, Rachel Cunliffe, Sharleen Forbes, Kim Cullen and Ian Stevens. The workshop enabled participating countries to report back on their progress and lessons learned and common

international questions were drafted. The workshop formed an international committee (with Sharleen Forbes as New Zealand member) with a view to extending the programme to more countries such as the US, Singapore and France.

### Local News

**The CensusAtSchool Project.** This project, sponsored by the Department of Statistics of The University of Auckland, Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry of Education, was launched on August 13 2007. The project is directed by Rachel Cunliffe and aims to give 10 to 18 year-old students the experience of participating in a census. CensusAtSchool has previously been run in 2003 and 2005 and this latest snapshot will enable students to compare themselves with data from the last two surveys. Over 1250 teachers registered their classes to take part. Rich classroom resources for students using the CensusAtSchool data are also available on the website. CensusAtSchool is part of an international effort to boost statistical capability among young people, and is also conducted in the UK, Australia, Canada and South Africa. For more information, photos, press releases, news clips, exciting classroom resources see: <http://www.censusatschool.org.nz/>

Maxine Pfannkuch

Submit your manuscript

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Professor Kerrie Mengersen

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## Course - Practical Bayesian Data Analysis

In December you have the opportunity to attend an Australasian version of the popular Practical Bayesian Data Analysis course that has been run by the Statistical Services Centre (University of Reading, UK) for the past few years (<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/ssc/courses/bayes.html>). This course is aimed at statisticians, people involved in data analysis, and those who use Bayesian methods as implemented in packages such as those for QTL analysis. The course trainers are experienced teachers, and the emphasis in the course is on a practical explanation of Bayesian ideas, rather than more theoretical aspects of Bayesian methods. Participants will learn how to use the WinBUGS software for Bayesian analysis. The course will also use the R package. No previous knowledge of either package is assumed, and both packages are free. The course will be run over 3 days, starting mid-morning on the first day and finishing mid-day on the third day, to allow for travel. The course fee is NZ\$850, and covers course notes, a CD with example data-sets, lunches and morning/ afternoon teas.

The course will be run twice:

- 1) Crop & Food Research in Lincoln (outside Christchurch) on Wed 12th Dec - Fri 14th Dec
- 2) AgResearch in Palmerston North on Mon 17th Dec- Wed 19th Dec.

For more details and an application form, see: <http://www.crop.cri.nz/home/conferences/bayesian-data-analysis> or contact Ruth Butler ([ButlerR@crop.cri.nz](mailto:ButlerR@crop.cri.nz)).

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## "Biometrics by the Beach"

The International Biometric Society Australasian Region (IBS AR) will hold its next biennial conference from Sunday 2 December to Thursday 6 December 2007 at the Novotel Pacific Bay Resort in Coffs Harbour, NSW.

The conference theme, Biometrics safeguarding our future: our health and our air, land and water, broadly encompasses the intended topics of our eight local and international invited speakers, whose abstracts and biographies appear on the conference website ([www.biometrics.org.au/conf](http://www.biometrics.org.au/conf)).

On Sunday 2 December, the program will feature two short courses. Peter Diggle is presenting a course on model-based geostatistics and Kerrie Mengersen will present a course on "Bayes for Beginners". Full details of both courses can be found on the conference website. We look forward to seeing you there!

*Melissa Dobbie*

## Conference Brief

See Gordon Smyth's Australasian conference list  
<http://www.statsci.org/conf/index.html>

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### Spring Bayes 2007: Australasian Society for Bayesian Analysis

*Coolangatta, Queensland*  
September 26-28, 2007

Web: <http://www.maths.qut.edu.au/asba/docs/Sb07/>

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### Workshop on non-linear and complex systems analysis

*Brisbane, Queensland*  
September 27-28, 2007

Web: <http://www.bus.qut.edu.au/rodneynwolff/wshop.jsp>

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### Bioinformatics Australia 2007 Conference

*Brisbane, Queensland*  
October 23-24, 2007

Web: <http://www.ausbiotech.org/bioinformaticsaustralia2007>

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### Workshop for Women in the Mathematical Sciences in NZ

*Long Bay, Auckland*  
November 5-7, 2007

Email: [v.kirk@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:v.kirk@auckland.ac.nz)

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### Biometrics by the Beach

*Coffs Harbour, NSW*  
December 2-6, 2007

Web: <http://www.biometrics.org.au/conf/>

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### BioInfoSummer 2007: ICE-EM Summer Symposium in Bioinformatics

*The Australian National University*  
December 10-14, 2007

Web: <http://www.maths.anu.edu.au/events/BioInfoSummer07>

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### ISBA2008 Conference of the International Society for Bayesian Analysis

*Hamilton Island, Queensland*  
July 21-25, 2008

Web: <http://www.maths.qut.edu.au/asba/docs/isba08/>  
Email: [c.alston@qut.edu.au](mailto:c.alston@qut.edu.au)

*Frank Avery Haight, who was the author of NZ's first statistical PhD thesis, died last year. The obituary below first appeared in the NZMS newsletter.*



## Frank Avery Haight 1919-2006

Frank Avery Haight was born in 1919 in Des Moines Iowa, and he studied from 1936 to 1940 at The State University of Iowa, where he graduated as BA and MSc in Mathematics. The State University of Iowa was then a leader in agricultural statistics, and Frank attended lectures on statistics given there by Allen T. Craig. Later, Frank was knowledgeable about mediæval Russian history - could he have studied that at the State University of Iowa?

In 1941, Frank published his first mathematics paper 'On the independence of operators on a lattice', in the *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*. World War 2 then intervened, and when it ended in 1945 Frank was an historical researcher, in the USA army of occupation in Japan.

In about 1948, he chose to take his discharge from the army in New Zealand, where he worked as a truck driver. One day in 1949, while driving a truck through Parnell in Auckland, he decided that it was time to get back to mathematics. He parked the truck alongside a telephone box, and he telephoned the Professor of Mathematics at Auckland University College (then a branch of the University of New Zealand), and asked whether there might be any chance of becoming a lecturer in mathematics there.

Professor Henry George Forder (1889-1981) was a distinguished mathematician, renowned particularly as a geometer. He was very English in manner, quiet and reserved but witty. Nevertheless, Forder realized that this brash lanky Yank had much ability in mathematics and statistics, and Frank was appointed as Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mathematics. His wife Ernestine became a Tutor in the Department of Physics.

Marin Segedin was appointed in 1949 as Lecturer in Mathematics. He recalls that, soon after Frank was appointed, he told Marin that he had telephoned Professor Forder and reported that he had bought a house in Auckland. "Very good. Are you on the

phone?". "???" "I say - are you on the phone?". "Well - I'm standing by it". "?!".

In 1950 I took Frank's Pure Mathematics 2 course. His lectures were not carefully organized but his exuberant manner, and his skill in providing clear responses to questions, made him an effective lecturer. One morning he came to the lecture theatre, looking somewhat bemused. After a few minutes, he explained to the class the problem which had been distracting him. A few days previously, he had received a telephone call from an Army officer, telling Frank that the Chief of Staff would like him to deliver a lecture to the highest officers in the NZ Army, about "American Military Strategy in the Pacific". "But I don't know what American military strategy in the Pacific is", he responded. "Fine!" said the officer. Frank thought that was the end of the matter - but a few minutes before our lecture started he had received a telephone call from an aide-de-camp of the Chief of Staff, telling him the date, time and place at which he was to address the Chief of Staff and his top officers!

Frank explained to us that he still did not know what American military strategy in the Pacific was; but since he was an American then he would expound his own strategy. He would talk briefly about outposts in Guam, and the strategic significance of Antarctica. But since he was addressing the top officers of the NZ Army, he would concentrate on those aspects of his strategy which related most directly to NZ. Accordingly, he would explain to the officers that the most strategic spot for the defence of NZ is Gibraltar! Indeed, Gibraltar is antipodal to Whangarei; and hence if The Enemy occupied Gibraltar, then they could invade NZ from all directions at once!

Since about 1930, many people had urged that the Maori language be taught at Auckland University College. In 1950 the conservative majority of academics reluctantly agreed to a Stage 1 course in Maori, but in 1952 they rejected a proposal for a Maori 2 course. Early in 1953, the historian Keith Sinclair attended a crucial Faculty meeting on that issue. He reported that "an American mathematician on the staff, Frank A. Haight, passed the word around that, according to his arithmetic, the liberals had a majority. They were contacted and attended Faculty; not one of them spoke, they listened to the conservatives, who were looking very pleased with the situation until the vote was taken and Maori 2 was overwhelmingly approved".

Frank had intense interest in chess, and he played in the NZ Chess Championships in the 1950s.

In 1951, Frank started a new course on Mathematical Statistics 1, which he taught at the level of Stage 3 or 4 papers. He had kept his notes from Allen T. Craig's course at Iowa, and also Erich

Lehmann's mimeographed notes on estimation and significance testing, and those provided the basis for his first lectures. Also in 1951, Frank began working on a Ph.D. thesis *An investigation of queue stability with reference to the traffic intensity*. At that time, there was nobody in NZ who could supervise a Ph.D. thesis in statistics. Pat Moran (at Australian National University) was the external examiner, and Hamish Thompson (in the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Applied Mathematics Division, Auckland branch) was the internal examiner.

Frank used to spend much of his summers in Wellington, so that he could consult *Biometrika* and other journals not kept in Auckland, at the library of DSIR Applied Mathematics Laboratory.

In 1957, Frank published his second paper on 'Queueing with balking', in *Biometrika*. Also in 1957, he received the only Ph.D. in Mathematics which was awarded by the University of New Zealand. Indeed, Frank's thesis was the first Ph.D. thesis with any statistical content which had been produced in NZ.

At the end of 1957 Frank moved to UCLA, but he continued to visit NZ for another 30 years. In 1971, John Butcher edited a Festschrift for Henry George Forder, with tributes from many eminent mathematicians. Frank (then at the University of Pennsylvania) contributed a chapter 'On a generalization of Pythagoras's theorem', ending with "I wish to express my gratitude to H. G. Forder; during our professional association between 1949 and 1957 he showed me that geometry is not yet exhausted" (pp.73-77).

Frank quickly became acknowledged as the leader in traffic statistics, and his pioneering book *Mathematical Theories of Traffic Flow* (1963) had great influence. At the 1966 International Congress of Mathematicians held at Moscow, I again met Frank. A Russian translation of that book had just been published, and Frank was happily spending the royalties on books and records. I asked him where had he gathered the data for the examples in that book. He told me that no such data existed when he wrote the book, and so he invented all data for those examples. But in direct response to his book, much data had since then been gathered on traffic statistics.

Frank joined the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California - Irvine. He created 3 major journals, which he edited vigorously for many years. In 1967 he founded *Transportation Research*, which fissioned into *Part A: Policy and Practice* and *Part B: Methodological*. He became intensely interested in traffic safety, and in 1969 he founded the journal *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. During the 1980s he commuted frequently between Irvine and Melbourne, on a major research collaboration on

traffic injuries between UCI and Monash University.

Frank retired as Professor at UCI in 1998, and I have a copy of his lengthy list of publications up to 1998. He received the 2002 Distinguished Career Award from the American Public Health Association.

"After a stewardship of over 35 years, Frank recently handed over the reins of his three journals to a new generation of four editors, located in three countries. They have a tough act to follow. Frank always felt that, as an editor, he worked for the authors, not for the publisher nor for academic institutions that used peer review publications as evaluation criteria. He also went about his business as he did everything in his life, with great gusto and humor." [Golob & Haight].

Frank Avery Haight died on 2006 April 30, at the age of 86. Two days later, his colleague Tom Golob announced that

*The world is a less interesting place today.*

Garry J. Tee

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## Local Scene

### AgResearch

We recently farewelled our leader Peter Johnstone, who retired from being section manager in June. Peter and his wife Anne have since been travelling overseas for a couple of months. Upon his return, Peter will work as a biometrician for two days a week at AgResearch Invermay. In Peter's place, we welcome Anette Becher, who was previously the senior person in the bioinformatics part of our group. At this time, a review of our group is being carried out by Bryan Manly to help Anette crystal-ball-gaze into our future. One thing that is evident without the crystal ball, however, is that we are short of biometricians in our section, and are actively seeking out new staff.

Our annual section meeting and "team bonding" get-together (see photo opposite) was held in April at Ruakura, for two days following the Baddeley workshop at Waikato University. Almost all of us gave talks about our work. As light relief, we also tried to identify wines and fruit juices, some with notable success and most of us with notable failure!

Congratulations to Ken Dodds for being the 2007 recipient of the prestigious McMeekan Memorial Award, presented by the New Zealand Society of Animal Production for his contribution to animal production in New Zealand. These contributions include the development of the fractional-parentage DNA pedigree system and contributions to gene discovery programmes. Great work, Ken!

Fred Potter was co-author on a prize-winning paper entitled "Drenching adult ewes: implications of anthelmintic treatments pre- and post-lambing on the development of anthelmintic resistance" which was awarded the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists prize for the best scientific paper published in the New Zealand Veterinary Journal. Also, Dave Saville's 1990 paper entitled "Multiple Comparison Procedures - The Practical Solution" has recently been listed as the 15th most cited paper in a list of the 200 most cited papers in the 60 year history of the *The American Statistician*.

On the conference scene, Zaneta Park-Ng, Manasa Ramakrishna, Rajiv Chaturvedi and Anar Khan presented work at the 6th International Endophyte Symposium in Christchurch in March. Tanya Soboleva and Dave Saville were invited participants at a week-long weeds workshop at Hanmer in April, as part of a New Zealand Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (NZIMA) program on "Modelling invasive species and weed impact". Ken Dodds attended the SmartGene for

Beef workshop in Brisbane in May to discuss the integration of marker test information into genetic evaluation systems. Roger Littlejohn, Harold Henderson and Dave Saville attended the Statistical Association Conference in Christchurch in July, with Roger talking on "Hidden Markov models for feeding data from groups of red deer".

*Dave Saville*



*The AgResearch team bonding at Ruakura*

### Department of Conservation

Statistical staff at DOC remain at two but with different faces. Maheswaran Rohan joined the department in November last year based in Hamilton, after Adam Smith left to take up a position at NIWA, Wellington.

At present, we are really busy running workshops and courses for DOC staff. Richard Duncan, Maheswaran Rohan, and Ian Westbrooke have conducted a three day workshop on analysis of repeated measures with R in Christchurch, which will be run again at the end of October. In the meantime we will be conducting statistical modelling courses in Christchurch, Wellington and Dunedin, and Dr John Leathwick from NIWA will be giving a two day workshop on boosted regression trees.

Rohan gave a talk on analysis repeated measures at DOC's Winter Science Convention, in Wellington in June. In July, Ian Westbrooke organised and gave a talk at the NZSA conference education session, and presented a paper on public favourability towards DOC at the Conserv-vision Conference, Hamilton. Ian then took time out to spend time with his mother, up to her death on 20 July.

Ian will be giving an invited keynote talk at Palmerston North Stats Forum in October, and is planning to run the workshop on regression at the Mathematics Teachers' Conference in Auckland in September. Ian and Rohan enjoyed catching up with many in the maths/stats communities at the NZIMA Modelling Invasive Species and Weed Impact workshop at Hanmer, and the NZSA conference in Christchurch.

*Maheswaran Rohan*

## University of Otago, Preventive and Social Medicine

The biostatisticians at the University of Otago's Department of Preventive and Social Medicine are slightly short handed at the moment as Katrina Sharples is on study leave for a year in Cambridge, working with Mike Kenward, and Peter Herbison is on six months study leave. He has just returned from working with colleagues at the Australasian Cochrane Centre, Monash University. Vicki Livingstone will be leaving us to go back to Ireland in 2008, and we are actively looking for a replacement at the lecturer/senior lecturer position. Melanie Bell has been working with the Department of Mathematics and Statistics developing a proposal for a Masters of Science in Biostatistics to begin in 2009. This joint divisional programme (Science and Health Science) will largely be a taught masters degree, with workplace consulting experience which she may ask for help with from her colleagues around New Zealand! If you are interested in hearing more give her an email ([melanie.bell@stonebow.otago.ac.nz](mailto:melanie.bell@stonebow.otago.ac.nz)). Also, Melanie and Katrina are working with Stephen Vanderhorne in Auckland to organize a two day workshop on longitudinal data analysis, probably in February. More details to come.

*Melanie Bell*

## University of Auckland

Our completing PhD students have had several major successes recently. James Russell came second in the 2007 MacDiarmid Young Scientist of the Year Competition, and was overall winner in the category Understanding Planet Earth. The result was announced at a grand awards dinner in Auckland on 20th June, and James's research was discussed on TVOne News, Breakfast Programme, and Nine to Noon with Kathryn Ryan.

Meanwhile, Richard Umstaetter won a University of Auckland Best Doctoral Thesis award: one of five awarded by the university for 2006. Richard has now commenced his postdoc at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Caltech. Christian Roever, who (like Richard) has just completed his PhD on Bayesian astrophysics with Renate Meyer, won a major student prize at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Salt Lake City, in the Bayesian Statistical Science section.

We extend a warm welcome to three new staff in the department: Stephane Guindon, Ivan Kojadinovic, and Mark Holmes. Stephane is a bioinformatics specialist from CRNS in Montpellier, France; Ivan is an OR specialist from the University of Nantes, France; and Mark is an Auckland graduate who is

completing his postdoc in probability theory at EURANDOM. Welcome also to four new PhD students: Assad Ali (working with Renate Meyer), Bobby Wilcox (working with Alan Lee), Sohail Chand (working with Patricia Metcalf), and Irene Zeng (working with Sharon Browning).

Patricia Metcalf is involved in a \$150,000 grant from the HRC for studies relating asthma and diet, and Alan Lee has gained a \$70,000 OSResearch grant from Statistics New Zealand. Paul Murrell ran two R courses using an online discussion board: "Introduction to R" and "Graphics in R", each four weeks long. Stephanie Budgett has been invited to give a summer course on "An Introduction to Statistics" by the New Zealand Social Science Network, and Andrew Balemi drew 35 attendees at an in-house Statistics New Zealand course with the title: "How I Stopped Worrying and Fell in Love with the Survey Cycle". Andrew's winning aphrodisiac has not yet been revealed.

Finally, the Impact Factor of the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Statistics rose from 0.387 to 0.537 from 2004 to 2005, as a result of one paper by Marti Anderson. The publishers flagged this as a significant achievement for the journal, quoting in their recent report that: "The reason for this success ... is the Anderson article from 2003 which has received 29 citations". Never one to sit back, Marti has recently settled a new contract with the US agency NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration) on analysis of habitat restoration projects.

*Rachel Fewster*

## University of Otago, Maths and Stats

John Harraway attended ICOTS 7 in Salvador Bahia, Brazil in July. The conference was very worthwhile with 550 registered but about 15 not able to attend because of the collapse of the Brazilian Airline, Varig. A further 100 high school teachers from Bahia attended workshops in the two days before the conference. John presented a paper on Item Response Theory, took part in an invited debate about the teaching of statistics in context and organised the session on multivariate statistics within the tertiary education topic. He was Scientific Secretary for ICOTS 7 and has been asked to Chair the International Programme Committee for ICOTS 8 which will take place in Slovenia in 2010. John also visited the Federal University of Santa Catarina in Florianopolis where he is working with Dalton Andrade on a project in Brazil.

David Fletcher presented a paper on “Confidence Intervals for Expected Abundance of a Rare Species” at the NZSA meeting in Christchurch in July. This is joint work with Malcolm Faddy (Queensland University of Technology) and will appear in JABES in September 2007.

Mathew Schofield, Janine Wright, David Fletcher and John Harraway all presented papers at the NZSA Conference in Christchurch. Matthew Schofield shared the prize for best student presentation for his talk: Climate Reconstruction. In his talk Matthew highlighted problems in existing methods used for modeling climate from proxies such as tree rings and outlined how this should be done properly.

*Irene Goodwin*

## Victoria University

Arrivals and departures are always big news and we have a few comings and goings to report since the last Newsletter. Colleen Kelly completed her two year term as the University’s Consulting Statistician in March 2007. Colleen will be missed very much by all of us and by the many staff and graduate students around the University that she assisted over the last two years. Also, Colleen and her husband, Cliff, will be missed in the Wellington cycling scene, where they had become pretty well known. Colleen and Cliff have returned to southern California (near San Diego), where Colleen has now started work for a private firm, following several years spent in academia. We wish them both all the best. Our group is now looking forward to a new arrival: the next Consulting Statistician is due to start work at VUW later this year, so there’ll be more on that in the next Newsletter.

Another departure this year was of Junko Murakami, who completed her postdoctoral position that was funded by the NZIMA programme on Hidden Markov Models, coordinated by David Vere-Jones. Junko is now in the US, but she wrote that her impression of New Zealand, after living here, is “something like a ‘tiny giant’. Incredible in many aspects.” She will miss NZ and the blue Wellington bay, and we will miss Junko too.

While not directly linked to the Stats and OR group, Sharleen Forbes joined VUW this year as Adjunct Professor in Official Statistics, in the School of Government. This is a half time position, shared with Statistics New Zealand. Sharleen is deservedly well known throughout the NZ statistical community, and her new professorial role is to promote official statistics: we wish her well with that. In fact she’s got off to a pretty good start, since Sharleen is organising an Invited Paper Meeting and speaking in a contributed Paper Meeting at the 56th International

Statistical Institute in Lisbon, Portugal at the end of August; both meetings focus on teaching/education and official statistics.

In news from our research students, Nuovella Williams completed her PhD (“Robust Methods for Analysing Quantitative Trait Loci”), supervised by Richard Arnold and Ross Renner. Nuovella is now working for the Office for National Statistics in the UK. Two of our Masters students also recently submitted their MSc theses: Jason O’Sullivan (“A Taxonomy of Seasonal Patterns”) supervised by John Haywood, and Sarah Marshall (“Analysis of Reliability Data”), supervised by Stefanka Chukova. Jason is now working in London for dunnhumby, a Relevance Marketing company, while Sarah is heading off to the University of Edinburgh to start a PhD with full financial support. Clearly the UK is an attractive destination for our graduate students and we hope they all do well and enjoy themselves over there.

Sabbaticals are also prominent in the current news from VUW. Dong Wang returned from his travels at the end of April 2007, and restarted teaching immediately (welcome home Dong!). John Haywood continues to enjoy himself living in Santa Monica and visiting the UCLA Department of Statistics. John travelled to Europe in June 2007, where he presented a paper at the 3rd International Workshop on Correlated Data Modelling in Limerick, Ireland and also briefly visited Lancaster University, England, to help progress some work with Granville Tunnicliffe Wilson. In contrast to the extremely dry year that southern California (and John) is experiencing, it rained almost every day while John was in Europe. John now has a newfound appreciation for Colleen Kelly’s somewhat negative view of Wellington’s weather (Colleen is a SoCal native). In September John will present some research at the 2007 NBER/NSF Time Series Conference, which this year is to be held in Iowa City.

Richard Arnold began his sabbatical at Waseda University, Tokyo, visiting our former colleague Yu Hayakawa, who has been at Waseda since early 2004. Estate Khmaladze also started a sabbatical at the same time as Richard. Estate will travel quite widely, but initially he was based in Tbilisi, Georgia, where he reports it was very hot indeed. In Estate’s absence, back at VUW Yuichi Hirose has taken over the organisation of the group’s seminars. Yuichi also organises a separate stochastic process study group meeting each week.

Prof Michael Trick (Carnegie Mellon University), the 2007 ORSNZ Visiting Lecturer, visited the group (9-10 August) and gave two seminars: “Integer and Constraint Programming Approaches to Sports Scheduling” and “The Science of Better: Practical

Operations Research". Mark Johnston reports that the first talk was a fascinating insight into the computationally extremely-difficult problem of scheduling Major League Baseball in the USA, while the second talk outlined how Operations Research lies at the heart of businesses such as Google, FedEx and Amazon.

Some bad news concerned the free half-day workshop that Ivy Liu had organised on "Bayesian Analysis of Case-Control Data: Studies of Gene-Environment Interaction", which was to be given at VUW in July 2007 by Bhramar Mukherjee, University of Michigan. More than 40 people had registered for the workshop but unfortunately it had to be cancelled, due to certain issues with New Zealand Immigration. The organisers extend their deepest apologies to all those affected. At the end of August Ivy will be presenting a paper at the 56th International Statistical Institute in Lisbon, Portugal, as will Dong Wang.

Shirley Pledger had a week of research meetings in July at the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, Germany, followed by an invited speaker slot at a conference on Recent Developments in Capture-Recapture Methods and their Applications, at the University of Reading, England. En route she visited Goettingen, where Walter Zucchini took her to see Gauss's grave. Shirley and the rest of us will see Walter Zucchini at VUW next year, since he will be the 2008 recipient of the Shayle Searle Visiting Fellowship in Statistics.

*John Haywood*

## Wellington Statistics Group

The Wellington Statistics Group (WSG), a local group of the NZSA, continues to meet regularly. Since the last NZSA Newsletter there were WSG talks given by:

6 August: Nick Longford, SNTL, Reading, UK, "Allocation of limited resources and related problems in small-area statistics".

9 May: Shirley Pledger, Victoria University of Wellington, "Something for Nothing: Estimating age-related survival rates from capture-recapture data when age is unknown".

18 April: Stephen E. Fienberg, Carnegie Mellon University, USA, "When Did Bayesian Inference Become "Bayesian"?"

22 March: Richard Arnold, Victoria University of Wellington, "Using earthquakes to measure stress in the earth's crust".

Abstracts and further details of past and known future WSG talks can be found on the NZSA Local

Groups web page: [http://nzsa.rsnz.org/local\\_groups.shtml](http://nzsa.rsnz.org/local_groups.shtml).

That web page also contains contact details for the group and information on how to subscribe (subscription is free) or how to update email contact details.

WSG gratefully receives regular sponsorship from the Ministry of Social Development, Statistics New Zealand, Statistics Research Associates Ltd, and Victoria University of Wellington.

*John Haywood*

## University of Waikato

It has been a while since there has been any news contribution from the Statistics Department at the Waikato University. That is rather symptomatic of the ways things are here. As we are short-staffed (no replacement yet for James Curran or Nye John), we have all been busy with our University commitments.

As for recent activities in the department, we welcomed Lyn Hunt back after illness. She is still having to take things easy but did manage a visit to Brisbane in early June to work with Kaye Basford. The department hosted Professor William Reed from the University of Victoria, Canada, who was here to work with Murray Jorgensen. Murray also went to Barcelona in July to the International Workshop on Statistical Modelling 2007 where he presented a paper entitled "Multivariate Mixture Models in official statistics". At the same time, Judi McWhirter attended the NZSA 2007 conference in Christchurch where she presented a paper entitled "Who has mud on their hands? A bootstrapping technique for determining a fingerprint for sediment tracing in the Whangapoua Harbour". The second edition of Bill Bolstad's book "Introduction to Bayesian Statistics" has just been released.

The department ran another successful workshop in April. Professor Adrian Baddeley, from the University of Western Australia, presented a Spatial Statistics Workshop, which was well attended. Waikato University has been decided as the venue for the next NZSA conference. It is likely to be held in early July 2008, but dates are still to be confirmed.

Recent seminars in the department:

Murray Jorgensen (University of Waikato) "Where have all the Young Men gone?"

Bruce Weir (University of Washington) "The Birthday Problem and DNA Profiles."

William Reed (University of Victoria) "Normal-Laplace Distributions and their Applications"

Hadley Wickham (Iowa State University) "Interactive

Graphics.”

John Leathwick (NIWA) and Jane Elith (University of Melbourne) “Boosted Regression Trees - a major advance in statistical modelling tools.”

*Judi McWhirter*

## Statistics New Zealand

As usual I'll start with arrivals and departures to Statistical Methods since March 2006, so many of you can find out where your students have ended up. Arrivals: Jing You, Rudi van der Mescht, Emma Mawby, Deborah Brunning, Olivia Son, Guan Yu (Fish) Zheng, Lisa Henley, Lilian Morrison, Chang (Lisa) Li, Kee Chang, Chris Hansen and Val Cox. Returning: Frances Krsinich and Diane Ramsay. Departures: Sue Brown (Timaru) Jo Shrigley (Australia), Polly Stuart (Qatar), Joh Prebble, Zoe Wood (OE), Karla Helgason (StatCan), Steve Johnston, Eleanor Posadas (MSD), Katrina Young (Tourism), Tim Duke, Alan Bentley, Emma Hooper (ONS), Jeremy Wilhelm (ACC), Simon Leong (NZER), Andy Smith (SSC) and Tiri Sullivan (Emirate Airways). There have also been people moving to and from Statistical Methods to and from other areas of Statistics NZ which I haven't logged. All this shows that I need to report more regularly to keep the list to a manageable size!

In other news, Jamas Enright has recently been seconded to Treasury for 2 years. There has been the welcome return of Diane Ramsay as Manager Statistical Methods. She's just had the joy of going through the 50 odd (as in approximately, not a comment of the personalities of Methodologists in Statistics New Zealand) performance reviews, and still seems cheerful. Victoria Wei had a baby girl in February, and Claire Sun and Sela Appleton have recently gone on parental leave to await their happy events. In March we had colleagues from Tonga, Palau and Samoa here to upskill themselves on various aspects of official statistics, and many from Statistics NZ assisted in this. The Pasifika statisticians very much appreciated the opportunity, though not Christchurch's weather. We also hosted Stephen Fienberg for a week prior to his visit to VUW. Steve has been doing confidentiality work in association with Fraser Jackson and us as well as for the U.S. official statistics system, so it was an excellent opportunity to talk confidentiality (confidentially of course).

We have also been a peripatetic lot. Rebecca Bangma, Sela Appleton and Claire Sun went to the Australian Young Statisticians conference in Melbourne. John Crequer and Frances Krsinich are off to the ISI meeting in Lisbon. John is talking about

our use of the electronic transactions data (EFTPOS data to you and me). He also is taking the opportunity to visit various researchers in Europe to discuss temporal disaggregation and seasonal adjustment issues. John Pearson went to the 3rd International Conference on Establishment Surveys in Montreal where he presented a paper on our programme for generic survey systems. He also took the opportunity to visit Statistics Canada. We sent Walt Davis, Mike Camden, Tim Duke and Jing You to MISG07 at Wollongong. Local conferences with SM attendees and presenters included Social Policy Research & Evaluation, Population Association of New Zealand and of course the recent NZSA conference, which Rebecca Bangma also assisted in organising.

Recent Statistics New Zealand news include a new Government Statistician, Geoff Bascand. Also we have received some money from government to enable us to make much more of our data available free. The projects approved for funding by OS Research programme have been decided. They cover confidentiality, organising administrative data, quality assessment of linked data and sampling the Maori and Pacific populations. However I need to stress that relying on my report to know what work is being done in Statistics NZ is much, much less useful than going to [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz)!

*Richard Penny*

## Massey University, Turitea

We welcome two new graduate students: Nafees Ahmad has arrived from Pakistan, Sarojinie Fernando has arrived from Sri Lanka. Sigrid Panisch from Austria will come later in the year.

Chin Diew Lai attended and presented a paper at the ISSAT International Conference on 'Modeling of Complex Systems and Environments', Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, 16-18, July, 2007.

Around Easter, Doug Stirling had another visit to Nestlé in Switzerland and the University of Reading in England, finishing one CAST project and starting work on another. He also released a new version of CAST (accessible at <http://cast.massey.ac.nz>) with improvements to the basic e-books and extra e-books about multiple regression and design of experiments.

A large contingent from Palmy attended and presented at NZSA2007. Wes Johnson visited briefly on his way home to work with Geoff Jones.

Another Palmy Statisticians meeting is being planned for 26th October. See p6 for details.

*Geoff Jones*



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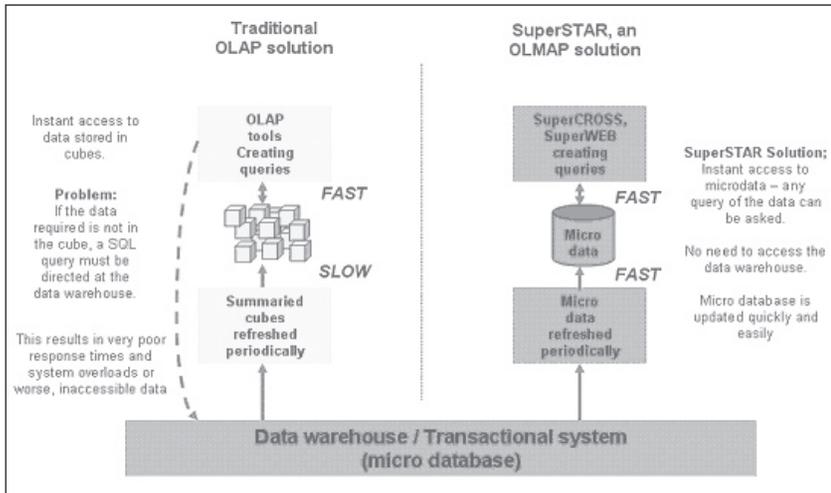
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