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PRIVATE BAG PALMERSTON NORTH

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE NEW ZEALAND STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION

**AUGUST 14 - 17 1988
MASSEY UNIVERSITY, PALMERSTON NORTH**



The conference will be held in the gracious and peaceful setting of Wharerata, the original homestead which has now been converted into the Staff Club for Massey University.

The conference will begin on Sunday evening with registration and a welcoming social event; Monday and Tuesday will have a full program of invited and contributed papers; an exciting Conference Dinner is planned for Monday evening; Wednesday will be given over to workshops on statistical software. During the course of the conference, there will be a book display and computer software displays.

Being centrally located in New Zealand, Palmerston North has become a popular conference location with considerable motel accommodation. Inexpensive and convenient accommodation will also be available in the university hostels.

Renew acquaintances, make new friends, have a great and an informative time.

In this issue:

- * Statistics: At what price?
- * Statistical evidence in litigation
- * NZSA Annual Conference Details
- * News from members

President's Column



This is the first issue of the *NZSA Newsletter* for 1988. I hope that you all had an enjoyable and relaxing Christmas break and arrived back at work refreshed, rejuvenated and ready to face the new year. State Sector Bills, reports from Royal Commissions and other committees, yet more deregulation and reorganisation promise to make 1988 a demanding and stressful year for many if not all of us.

Despite this, 1988 looks like being a good year for the NZSA. Since the last *Newsletter* an eminent member of the Association, Dr Hamish Thomson, was invested with an MBE for his significant and considerable services to statistics and DSIR. We congratulate him on his well deserved honour. Congratulations are also due to Dr Harold Henderson who, in the latter part of last year, became the Association's third recipient of a Prince and Princess of Wales award. (See article elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Turning to other matters, you will all have been impressed with the 'new look' *Statistician* which arrived on our desks late last year. Thanks are due to our new editor, Jocelyn Dale, for this welcome initiative - she has done a marvellous job. While on the subject of publications, an excellent review of *StatLab* is due out in the next issue of *The American Statistician*. Moreover, we are now in a position to take orders for the surveys booklet, *Understanding Surveys*, edited by Vic Duoba and John Maindonald. This booklet is based on a document prepared by members of the Section on Survey Research Methods of the American Statistical Association. *Understanding Surveys* is advertised elsewhere in this newsletter together with two books by John Bibby entitled *Notes towards a History of Teaching Statistics and Quotes, Damned Quotes, and...*. The Association has entered into an exchange agreement with John whereby he will, in the first instance, market 100 copies of *Statistics at Work* within the UK (mainly to UK schools) and we will market an equivalent number of his two books within New Zealand. So be in and purchase these reasonably priced books while stocks last!

You will be pleased to hear that an enthusiastic group headed by our Newsletter Editor Dick Brook has offered to organise the 1988 NZSA Annual Conference. The Wellington dominated Executive Committee accepted this generous offer with alacrity! The conference will be held at Massey University in Wharerau, the beautiful old home that houses the Massey Staff Club, from August 15-17. A detailed report of the highly successful 1987 NZSA Conference written by Richard Penny and Graham Wood has been passed on to the Massey team; it will form the basis of an 'NZSA Conference Manual' which will help with the smooth-running of future NZSA conferences. The Association has also agreed to sponsor the Fourth International Meeting on Statistical Climatology to be held in Rotorua

from March 27-31, 1989. Further details on these conferences are given elsewhere in the newsletter.

Alistair Gray is organising a membership drive principally targeted at graduate statistics students. A membership brochure and a poster have been created and these will shortly be sent out to key people for distribution etc. The contents of the brochure plus a membership form are reproduced in this newsletter. Note the introductory offer for first-time members. Why not photocopy off a few copies and distribute them to people who you feel would benefit from membership. If every member introduced at least one new member to the Association, then our membership would at least double (I always was good at arithmetic!) thus increasing our penetration into the community and advancing the aims of the Association and NZ statistical education in general.

In his new role as External Relations Officer, David Harte has been writing to the national statistical associations of neighbouring countries to encourage links with the NZSA. These might involve the exchange of information about conferences, visiting statisticians etc together with the exchange of newsletters and other publications. The neighbouring countries written to come from Asia, North and South America, and all Pacific basin countries. This is an important initiative which will provide a natural medium through which to encourage regional activities such as ICOTS, the Pacific Statistical Congress etc as well as other activities.

We welcome John Revfeim as the new convener of the History Project, John Rayner as the new convener and Fred Lam as a member of the Publications Committee. We are grateful to them for taking on these roles. In particular we thank Sharleen Forbes, the previous convener of the History Project, and John Maindonald, the previous Publications Committee convener, for their considerable contributions. Both were instrumental in promoting and setting up these initiatives which have significantly added to the life and vitality of the Association.

The activities of our enthusiastic and hardworking Education Committee continue unabated and are reported elsewhere in this newsletter. The Royal Society of New Zealand has agreed to sponsor ICOTS 3 and has made available a grant of \$2000 which will be put towards the costs of the Local Organising Committee in the period leading up to the conference in 1990. Mr Lange, as Minister of Education, has written a letter of support for ICOTS 3 and the Director-General of Education has also written indicating ways in which the Department will support this conference.

Any further suggestions for topics of projects for ICOTS 3 (see President's Column Newsletter No. 16)?

Warm regards

Peter Thomson

Statistician Receives MBE

Former President of the NZSA, Hamish Thompson, was invested with the MBE in November, 1987, for services to New Zealand science. Hamish has recently retired after 40 years with the DSIR.

Hamish joined the Applied Mathematics Laboratory of the DSIR in 1947 and was stationed at Plant Diseases Division in Auckland. In 1951, he went to Manchester University and studied for his PhD with M S Bartlett, returning to Auckland in 1953, where he became a leading authority in the application of mathematical and statistical methods for improving agricultural and horticultural experiments. He also successfully pioneered the DSIR's role as an advisor on statistical and quantitative methods in industry.

In 1963 Hamish was appointed Director of Applied Mathematics Division at the comparatively young age of 36. During his administration AMD evolved from a small group of about 7 mathematicians to 40 mathematicians and about 20 support staff. He oversaw many major developments including the

move of the divisional headquarters from a small suite of rooms above a billiard parlour in Courtenay Place, Wellington, to the Rankine Brown Building at Victoria University of Wellington. The new location enabled the development of the present close relationship AMD mathematicians have with their VUW counterparts. Other developments included the start of Operations research and the introduction of electronic computing facilities, which brought New Zealand's first scientific computer onto the VUW campus. Hamish anticipated the need for expanded and improved consulting, particularly to the commercial and industrial sector, but also recognised that a strong base in excellent research was crucial to the long term vitality of AMD.

In 1982 Hamish was appointed a Chief Director of the DSIR with responsibility for the Resources Group of Divisions, the position he held at his retirement. He still maintains a keen interest in the work of AMD and the application of statistical ideas to all facets of decision making.



The citation read:

Dr Thompson has given 40 years service in the DSIR. 1947-1963 he was improving design in agricultural experiments through the application of statistical methods. He became a leading authority in this area and was frequently asked to contribute his ideas to other organisations and was a visiting professor at overseas universities. 1963-1982 he was DSIR's Director of Applied Mathematics, guiding its application to New Zealand's agricultural and industrial development. From 1982 to May 1987 he was the Chief Director of DSIR, Head Office, with oversight of all the Divisions of DSIR concerned with increasing knowledge of New Zealand's resources.

Jean Thomson

A NEW STATISTICS JOURNAL

David Harte passed on this letter from the **SINGAPORE INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS**

Thank you for your letter of 12th February 1988 inviting us to exchange information on a regular basis. We would, of course, be most happy to do so and I would raise your proposal at our next Council meeting.

With regard to your proposal to exchange newsletters, I am afraid that we do not presently publish newsletters on a regular basis. However, we are in the process of launching our journal, the Singapore Journal of Statistics (SJS), the first issue is targeted to be published in November this year. This issue on the theme "Statistics: The Practitioner's Viewpoint, Problems and Issues" will be oriented towards the statistics profession. We would appreciate your conveying this to your members and would welcome papers on a subject relevant to them.

Soon Teck Wong