

newsletter

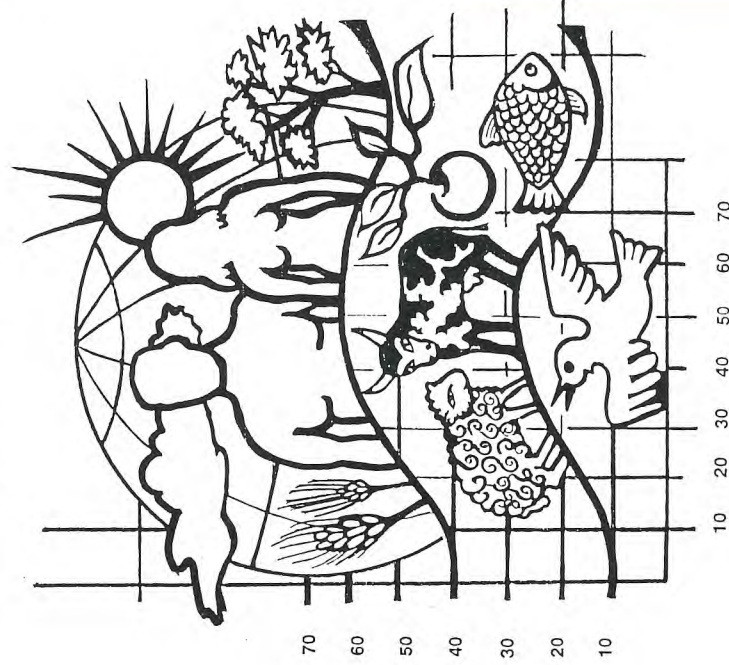
1992 International Biometric Conference



The audience at the opening ceremony of IBC92.

Reports on and photos of IBC92 and its satellite conferences feature in this *Newsletter*.

Sylve Bolstad of Artmakers Trust in Hamilton created this picture for the 1992 International Biometric Conference T-shirts.



1993 NZSA Conference

Registration forms are included in this *Newsletter*. Details are on pages 1 and 8.

1993 NZSA Conference
August 25-27
University of Canterbury
Christchurch

The conference will overlap with the NZ Mathematics Colloquium, 23-26 August. On Thursday the two conferences will combine for a Biology Day. The mathematics education conference "Maths with Class" is in the following week.

Call for Papers

Papers on any aspect of Statistics are called for. Contributed papers will be of about 20 minutes duration. **Submit abstracts before July 16 to:**

Graham Wood
Program Secretary, NZSA Conference
Mathematics Department
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8001
phone: (03) 364 2690
fax: (03) 364 2999
email: nzsa93@math.canterbury.ac.nz

Graham Wood also welcomes early suggestions for invited speakers.

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President's Column



IBC92 in Hamilton last December proved to be every bit the exciting event it had promised to be and congratulations are due to the many people who made it happen. It was an opportunity for NZ statisticians to really feel part of the world scene for a few days and from my observations it confirmed that we are right up there with the best, particularly in our very applied work.

IBC92 also provided another useful meeting opportunity for your executive and other committee members. While other conference attendees were enjoying the mid-week excursions, we got together around a table and built a strategic plan to take us through the year. The idea was to get a common feeling of what we should be doing to advance the Association along the lines expressed in our vision and mission. By pooling everyone's ideas and then selecting specific targets and setting up tasks to achieve them we are now sure of a productive year.

Some of the areas we will be focusing on are monitoring developments off-shore in the area of professional standards and producing a careers brochure and resource material for schools. These two latter areas overlap with our Suffrage Centennial Celebration Project. You can see an article in this *Newsletter* reporting on our progress towards producing an eye-catching display to show around the country. The aim is to raise levels of awareness about the value of statistics and the opportunities that exist for people who pursue our discipline as a career. The display is the "attention grabber", a leaflet will give more information and later in the year we will publish a book covering the many positive and varied experiences of women in "numerate professions", and present a history of women's representation in official statistics. The spin-off, we hope, will be more people, men and women, wanting to study statistics and so join our profession.

1993 promises to be an exciting year for us all.

Jean Thompson

New Members

We welcome 30 new members who joined at IBC92.

Education Committee News

The Education Committee decided last year not to have a vision or a mission, but it did have an aim:

To improve the quality of statistical education for NZ students.

Feedback on this aim is welcome.

The current actions on this aim could include

- 1 Investigating how NZQA will write the statistics "Unit Standards" for its framework
- 2 Getting you (NZSA) represented on NZQA's Maths Advisory Group
- 3 Supporting teachers (how?) in the uptake of the statistics "Strand" in maths in the NZ curriculum
- 4 Writing up our ideas on Maths in the NZ curriculum for NZSA
- 5 Looking at the statistics part of the NZ Association of Maths Teachers conference No.3: "Maths with Class"; Christchurch, August 93.

We accepted with much regret the resignation of David Harte. His contributions to this committee and to Science Fairs go back many years. We'll miss his humour, his sharp critical faculties, and his insight as a 'working' statistician.

The energy and time I would like to put in as convenor is not always available! For that and the above reasons, we invite members to work with us. We would like a replacement 'working' statistician on the committee.

Mike Camden

New Zealand Statistical Association

President: C Jean Thompson

Secretary: Alistair Gray

Treasurer: Antony Gomez

Editors *NZ Statistician*: R Hugh Morton

Newsletter: Peter Danaher, Harold Henderson
Committee: Katrina Sharples, Graham Wood, Garry Dickinson, Vince Galvin, Greg Arnold, Jeff Hunter

Subcommittee convenors: Stephen Haslett (SAPQC), Mike Camden (Education), John Waller (Publications), Vince Galvin (Science Fairs)

Further information from:

Secretary
New Zealand Statistical Association
PO Box 1731
Wellington, New Zealand
Email Alistair@isor.vuw.ac.nz
Phone (04) 472 1000 extn 8696

ASA adapts NZSA vision

The American Statistical Association has adapted the NZSA vision for its working definition of statistical thinking:

“Statistical thinking encompasses a) the appreciability of uncertainty and data variability and their impact on decision making and b) the use of the scientific method in approaching issues and problems.”

AMSTAT NEWS, February 1993, page 7

NZSA Logo competition

The NZSA executive has decided that the NZSA needs a new logo. The logo should reflect the nature and interests of the association and be readily identified with us. This is your big chance to show off your artistic talents! Here is our old logo and the Mathematics Society logo:



Send your logo to John Waller, Biometrics, Ruakura Agricultural Centre, Private Bag 3123, Hamilton by June 30. As an incentive to get you working on this, the winner will receive 3 years free membership to NZSA!

Suffrage Year Project

Good progress has been made on the Suffrage Centennial project. Our display was launched on 15 April at the Department of Statistics. We are currently arranging a programme of displays, starting with the Science and Technology week display in the Royal Society rooms in Wellington.

We have interviewed over 50 women in a wide range of occupations, who all display an enthusiasm for their work and for the insights that their numeracy skills bring. We have also brought together some historical information and recent statistics for the display. It is intended that the NZSA will publish all the research material in a book. This will probably be launched at the NZSA conference in August this year.

If you have any local events where you would like to see the display used, or want to know more about it, please contact me.

Helen Stott
Department of Statistics
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email hstott@stats.govt.nz

Editorial

As far as the *Newsletter* is concerned, 1992 was IBC92's year. Not only did this major conference dominate our pages for that year but even this issue is full of post-IBC92 material. This is mostly reports on how good the conference and its satellites were. We promise that the next issue of the *Newsletter* will not mention IBC92 anywhere. Instead it will be full of material on the NZSA conference at Canterbury. Murray Smith is organising the conference, which should be stimulating, and will, additionally, give North Islanders an opportunity to consume some cheap South Island electricity. The NZSA conference is timed to overlap and follow the Math Colloquium.

The NZSA has been bubbling with activity recently and many of these bubbles have frothed over into the pages of this Newsletter. After much navel-gazing the NZSA executive has come up with a vision statement, which the ASA embraced for itself, with a few Americanisms thrown in, of course. The Education Subcommittee decided it didn't want to have a vision statement, which means the Americans will have to think of one for their own Education Subcommittee. There has also been a publicity drive for women in numerate sciences to help celebrate the Suffrage Centennial. A high-powered committee has been formed to undertake the accreditation issue for NZ statisticians. Finally, the SAPQC has been making a nuisance of itself and has even been in the news. Of course, any publicity is good publicity so keep up the good work.

**1993 NZSA Conference
August 25-27
University of Canterbury
Christchurch**

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Email: Danaher@mat.aukuni.ac.nz
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Len Cook opens IBC92



Len Cook, New Zealand Government Statistician, opened IBC92 with an entertaining and challenging address. Here is the text of his talk.

It is a great honour for New Zealand to be the venue for this 16th International Biometrics Conference. Seldom has New Zealand had so many distinguished statisticians for one occasion. Such a gathering provides a national focus on the importance and value of statistical analysis to the community, and the part New Zealand's statisticians can play in that. Internationally, such conferences are the cornerstone of our discipline which is founded on the open scrutiny of ideas, assumptions and methods.

It is a great pleasure to join in the welcome of conference members and their partners to New Zealand. In a country dominated by an innovative pastoral industry, and which was for many decades called by some the social laboratory of the world, sound statistical thinking should be at home. Indeed, our own biometricians experienced considerable contact with William Gosset at the turn of the century. Earlier than this, one of the most effective statistical analysts of the nineteenth century, Florence Nightingale, turned her attention from the impact of disease in Britain to the public health of the Maori in New Zealand. She communicated extensively with Sir George Grey, the then Premier, advising on a range of public health measures which were similar to those that led her work in the Crimea to reduce the hospital mortality rate from 42.7 percent to 2.2 percent.

In the current decade of massive policy re-orientation in social, economic and political arenas, the tension between ideology and analysis is heightened. Public policy choices can be drawn from dogma, or observational studies and analysis.

Not all researchers have the choices they faced so starkly specified in this little piece from nearly 30 years ago, in *Science*:

"Sir Alexander Fleming didn't have the benefit of modern instrumentation, a dish washer and a statistician to tell him what he found - the latter, of course, could only tell him whether the results were significant. I suspect Sir Alexander knew that already, don't you?"

Public Policy Extremes

The main concern of official statisticians in the area of public policy analysis must be driven by the extent to which public policies still continue, of necessity, to be developed and presented with or without empirical evidence. The difference is that where public policies are not able to be based on statistical or empirical evidence, then the policy choices faced by the public are usually extremes and selectively based on some dogma. Such policies are usually difficult to implement and the absence of analysis at the evaluation stage means that there is no framework for monitoring the effectiveness of the policies on their implementation. Obvious examples where public policy choices have moved to extremes are given below.

The first is in considering issues of institutionalisation versus community care. For quite some decades up to the 1970s, the prevalent view was that those with psychiatric conditions ought to be institutionalised, usually away from the general population. In New Zealand this has meant that institutions such as Seacliff, Kingseat, Oakley, Templeton and Cherry Farm housed out of sight those who were in psychiatric care. For a good decade now we have seen an about turn such that the philosophy of community care has meant that those who were institutionalised in the past are now placed in situations where in practice they look after themselves or are looked after with varying levels of family or community support. Community care is not quite what it is labelled as we have yet to develop the special support structures to support either the individuals in community care or those who provide community support to enable them to be their most effective. We have no information framework to balance the change in costs to the community as a whole, public safety and personal choice, so as to measure the benefits.

Child protection has seen similar significant policy reversals where the practice of many decades in the post-war period of placing children in the care of the state or in anonymous adoptions has been reversed and where family breakdown is now generally viewed as a temporary condition. We have yet to measure the likelihood that this will apply in all cases, so as to use past experience to most effectively determine future practice.



NZSA Executive meeting at IBC92

Work incentive

The arguments of progressive versus flat tax rates have been based on the view that high marginal tax rates significantly distort work incentives and that low marginal tax rates will increase the incentive to work. The capacity of most of the workforce to significantly alter their own working hours has not been measured. Similar problems with incentives arise when we consider the fact of direct provision of retirement provision versus the targeting of social welfare benefits and the consequential effects on the incentive to save. There we need to disentangle the desire for a sustainable retirement income with a return on investment where alternative investments give significantly higher returns because of abatement formulae.

Dogma and emotion only allow us to choose between extremes while statistical analyses which describe and summarise situations may allow us to perceive discontinuities and nonlinearities in the benefits and costs of policies that span extreme points.

Another example occurred in the late 1970's in New Zealand public policy where, in the absence of information about the distribution of joint incomes in households, the Government established a single income tax rebate to support low income families. When information became available in the early 1980's, the tax rebate was changed to become a low income tax rebate because empirical evidence then showed that many low income households in fact had two incomes.

What About The Statisticians' Dogma?

If statisticians are to have a vital place for statistics in informing decisions, then our methodologies and results need to be as open to public communication as the dogma we compete with.

It is therefore important that conferences such as this are forums for increasing the capability of statisticians in communication of results and research methods, rather than to inspire the elitism of the cognoscenti.

Statisticians must continually ask: "who are they talking to?"

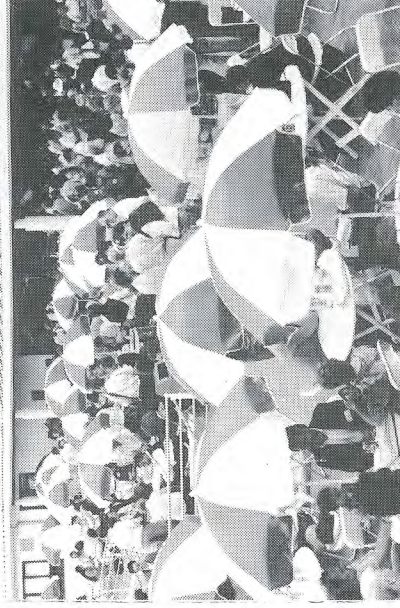
- Firstly, their communications should be understood by their peers in their field.
- Secondly, those who need the analyses must themselves be able to articulate them.
- Thirdly, those for whom your work is a relevant example must also be able to cite the communications, e.g., teachers.
- Fourthly, those who communicate information - the media, scientific commentators - must be able to relate the content of the work.

Finally, because of the vital role we place in challenging the relevance of dogma and eternal truths in public policy, science and society, it is critical that we be most open about our own dogma. This must in the end be an essential role for a conference such as this, to make transparent those elements of our work where methodology is underpinned by judgement.

Len Cook

IBC92 a great success!

The XVIIth International Biometric Conference was held at Hamilton, New Zealand, 7-11 December 1992.



On the terrace at IBC92

There were 461 delegates (with 70 accompanying persons) representing 36 countries. More than half came from outside the Australasian Region. The number of registrants by region were: New Zealand 128, Australia 95, North America 99, Europe 99, Asia 28, Africa 8 and 4 from elsewhere.

The conference was opened by Len Cook, the New Zealand Government Statistician. Niels Keiding gave the Presidential address on "The Biometric Society: Diversity and Unity".

Scientific Programme

The scientific programme of 20 invited papers in 10 sessions and 263 contributed papers in 46 oral and 6 poster sessions is published in this Bulletin. Thanks go to Jean-Jacques Clautriaux and the Scientific Programme Committee for a well-balanced invited programme and to Nye John and the Contributed Programme Committee for putting together the contributed programme. About 60% of registrants presented a paper. There would be no conference without presenters!



Mark Berman and Nye John at IBC92

IBC92 Proceedings

A limited number of copies of the IBC92 proceedings are available at \$NZ 40 for the set, airmail postpaid. The "Invited Proceedings" has 19 published papers in the 10 invited sessions (289 pages) and the "Contributed Proceedings" has 263 abstracts (268 pages) from the contributed programme.

Order from (including payment, NZ cheque, VISA/MASTERCARD):

IBC92 Secretary

Statistics Section

Ruakura Agricultural Centre

Private Bag 3123

Hamilton, New Zealand

Fax (07) 838 5012

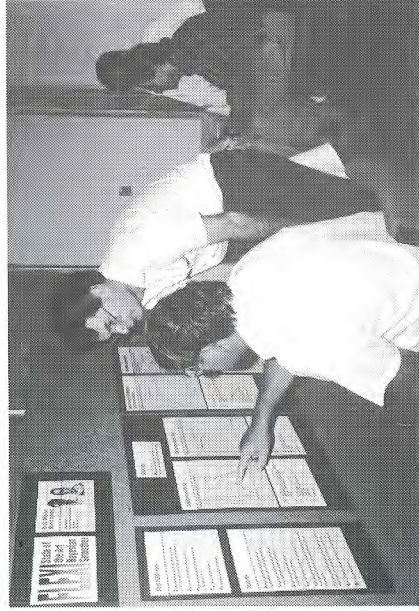
Phone (07) 838 5151

Email ibc@ruakura.cri.nz



The Black Water Rafting Tour before departure

Another group of thrill seekers went Black Water Rafting at Waitomo. Other tours took in sights at Auckland, Rotorua, Waimangu Thermal Valley and Waitomo. A memorable day was had by all! The conference dinner on Thursday night at "Vilagrad Wines" was a fun evening with excellent food, local wines, music and dancing. A video of the evening was shown the next day with copies available in plain brown wrapper.



Ken Jery at the Flexi poster paper with David Wheeler. Martin Upsdell is demonstrating on the PC.

Social Programme

Highlights of the social programme included: A cultural function on Tuesday evening at the Turangawaewae Marae. Dinner was followed by a presentation of Maori culture and action songs by the Ngaruawahia High School Concert Party. Six mid-conference tours on Wednesday took people on a wide range of activities. All eighty survived the Tongariro hike and earned their swim in hot thermal pools in Taupo on the way back.



IBC92 Hamilton, NZ, local organisers hand over to IBC94 Hamilton, Ontario, organisers



Peter Danaher, Andrew Balemi and Judi McWhirter come alive at IBC92



Biometric Society Executive at IBC92

Thank you

A big thank you to all those who came to IBC92 and to the nine satellite conferences and to the organisations that provided financial and technical help and other support. Particular thanks go to SAS Institute for generous sponsorship.

IBC92 Satellite Conferences

Nine satellite conferences and workshops were planned around IBC92. Three were in Australia and six in New Zealand.

Dynamic graphical analysis of statistical models

6 December 1992, Hamilton

Dennis Cook, University of Minnesota, conducted this short course at the University of Waikato. Graphical methods were demonstrated on a Macintosh using XLISP-STAT, a graphics programming environment developed recently by Luke Tierney, University of Minnesota. This environment allows easy access to virtually all the modern graphical methods - high dimensional rotation, animation, brushing, linking, identification, touring, slicing and so on. XLISP-STAT is available for Macintosh, PC or Unix, without charge, by FTP.

Methods for Correlated Data: Current Research

What was the highlight of this conference held in Queenstown after IBC92? Was it Mario astride a Highland cattle bull at Walter Peak after the conference dinner, sunny leisurely lunches with the urbane Alastair and company at McNeills Brewery, watching the parasailing on Lake Wakatipu in the rare moments that the conference became a trifle dull, the opportunity to spend time with most of the other HRC funded statisticians, the mind stretching experience of the conference itself or Queenstown at its best in early summer? For some of us the title of the conference was apt. Becoming more familiar with the most up-to-date ideas about estimating equations and GLMMs was all rather overwhelming. For others it was all much more relaxed, a pleasant dalliance with correlated data and a chance to meet colleagues working in the same field. Invited speakers included Norman Breslow (University of Washington), Kung-Yee Liang (Johns Hopkins University), Michael Kenward (University of Reading), Alastair Scott (University of Auckland) and Juni Palmgren (National Public Health Institute, Finland). It seemed that Katrina Sharples's worries were misplaced, the speakers were estimable, the content relevant and the company excellent, and the conference ran like clockwork. We are grateful to the HRC for its support.

Sheila Williams

Second Australasian Genstat Conference Rotorua, 14-16 December 1992



For the weekend after IBC92 we scattered ourselves from East Cape to the Whangaparoa Peninsula to Waitomo, then gathered together once more in Rotorua, really refreshed, to hear from Roger Payne, Simon Harding and Sue Welham about the facilities that will be available in Genstat 5.3, and each to make his or her own contribution as well. We numbered 35, mostly from New Zealand, Australia and Great Britain, but also Thailand, Papua-New Guinea and Canada.

Among the main developments for Genstat 5.3 will be a suite of procedures for designing experiments, the ability to fit generalized additive models within the regression framework, a spreadsheet facility for data entry, and improvements to graphics, ANCOVA and REML. An updated edition of the manual will be released along with the release of Genstat 5.3, hopefully around the middle of 1993. Updates to the procedure library are likely to become more frequent.

As with IBC, generalized linear models and REML were the subjects of most technical interest, while a number of contributed papers also dealt with interfaces for Genstat. An open forum on Tuesday evening gave everyone the chance to make constructive contributions to the ongoing development of Genstat - subsequently an electronic discussion group has been set up. To join it send the message **SUBSCRIBE GENSTAT** your name to **LISTRAL@IB.RL.AC.UK**

However, for most of us the most vivid memory of the conference will be of Ken McRae's haka at the conference dinner - who would believe that he was not a Maori? And for myself, having spent every non-conferring hour of the conference fortnight in pursuit of rare and endangered species of birds, the takaha that chewed Roger Payne's shoe deserves a special mention.

Roger Littlejohn

1993 NZSA Conference 25-27 August 1993 University of Canterbury

The 1993 NZSA Conference will be held in the Science Lecture Building at the University of Canterbury. The Conference will overlap with the **New Zealand Mathematics Colloquium** which is to be held on 23-26 August. The mathematics education conference "Maths with Class" is being held the following week 30 August to 3 September. On Thursday 26 August, the Mathematics Colloquium and the Statistics Conference will combine for a Biology Day devoted to mathematical and statistical papers of a biological nature.

Programme

A rough outline of the conference activities is:

Wednesday 25 August

- morning - Statistics papers
- afternoon - free (excursion)
- evening - mixer at Staff Club

Thursday 26 August

- morning and afternoon - Biology day, mathematics and statistics papers
- late afternoon - NZSA AGM
- evening - conference dinner at Staff Club

Friday 27 August

- morning and early afternoon - Statistics papers
- mid afternoon - conference finishes.

Registration

A registration form is inserted in this *Newsletter*. The standard registration fee will be \$60, but full-time students will be charged a reduced fee of \$20. The registration fee is payable by 31 July.

Accommodation

Accommodation for the week 22-27 August has been booked in the University Halls of Residence for the Mathematics and Statistics conferences. Charging is on a per person per night basis and includes a cooked breakfast. The charge is \$41.25 per person per night with a \$4.50 per person surcharge for a single night stay. Rooms are single occupancy, but a limited number of twin-bed rooms are available (at double rates). A deposit of \$20 for University Halls accommodation is due by **31 July**.

Participants who are also attending the Mathematics Colloquium are requested to make their accommodation bookings with the Mathematics Colloquium organization only.

A list of alternative motel accommodation in the University area will be available from the conference secretary.

Travel

Ansett New Zealand is offering 30% off the standard economy class airfare for travel to and from the conference. Travel must be completed within the 21-29 August period and can only be booked through Ansett New Zealand offices. When making a reservation quote the authority code TA53791.

Social Activities

Wednesday afternoon is free and in conjunction with the Mathematics Colloquium a tour of several (there are 13 in all) of the more prominent Canterbury wineries is being organized. The cost is likely to be \$20. An alternative (non-alcoholic) excursion may be organized for the same afternoon and if so details will be available later.

On Wednesday evening there will be a mixer at the University Staff Club.

On Thursday evening the Conference Dinner will be held at the University Staff Club. This will follow the AGM with a suitable period for libation in between. The dinner cost will be \$30 per person.

If you are planning to attend the NZSA Conference please send in the enclosed registration form as early as possible.

Murray Smith
NZSA Conference Secretary
Mathematics Department
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8001
phone: (03) 364 2683
fax: (03) 364 2999
email: nzsa93@math.canterbury.ac.nz

Call for Papers

Papers on any aspect of Statistics are called for. Contributed papers will be of about 20 minutes duration. Submit abstracts **before July 16** to Graham Wood (address on page 1). Graham also welcomes suggestions for invited speakers.

Survey Appraisals and Public Questions Committee (SAPQC)

The SAPQC has been rather more pro-active over the last year or so. There have been a number of appraisals requested and undertaken. These include appraisals of the Commerce Commission study on the Telecommunications Industry, of MRL Research's surveys for Energy Direct on community views on ownership, and of C. M. Research's surveys for Waitemata Electricity again on community views on ownership. There has also been a separate strand which has involved discussions with BERL on measurement of poverty, involvement in a panel discussion on monitoring at the Social Policy Conference in December last year, and preparation of a preliminary assessment of Valuation New Zealand's methods of assessing property values.

The survey appraisals have generated media interest. This is particularly true of the Commerce Commission study and the C. M. Research surveys. The central concern of the SAPQC has been the appropriateness of the methodology, and the statistical justification, if any, for the conclusions drawn. The SAPQC has been careful to restrict comments to questions of methodology, rather than to make comment on the substantive question under debate. This principle has been taken to include the possibility of making comment on resources available for studies and surveys - this is particularly relevant in the measurement of poverty.

Although the appraisal results have engendered a certain amount of discussion, debate and even argument, the long term objective of the SAPQC is to raise the awareness of the need for appropriate statistical methods and the resources to use them, on matters of public interest. One corollary is that the SAPQC may be filling a role of requiring minimum standards from market research organisations competing for business in the public sector. Indeed the longer term aim is not to provoke public arguments but to provide a means by which all bidders for public contracts must meet such minimum standards, rather than having bids lacking sound methodology undercutting those where statistical methods have been more carefully considered.

SAPQC - donation of fees to charity

When Telecom approached the SAPQC with a request for an appraisal of a research report prepared by the Commerce Commission in September last year, the SAPQC agreed to provide the appraisal subject to a fee. This is the first time a fee has been charged as far as I am aware, since in many cases requests for appraisals are made from organisations stretched for funds. In Telecom's case however, they also had a clear commercial advantage if the appraisal went in their favour, and so a fee seemed very appropriate. Having decided that Telecom seemed an inappropriate recipient for altruism, the question was what to do with the money, \$10,000 less \$2254.50 publication costs in this case. After some discussion about the possibility of the money going to those who had prepared the appraisal, it was decided instead to donate the money to charity. This avoided the possibility of perceived compromising of neutrality of the SAPQC and the problem of providing fees for some appraisers and appraisals and not others. (Whether this is

the best long term solution may be a subject that members may wish to discuss.)

The NZSA Committee were asked for their views of the more appropriate recipients from an initial list agreed among those who had been involved in the Telecom Appraisal. There was no clear result from this process - good reasons were given by all for their particular preferences, but different people had opposing views and an additional recipient was suggested. After more discussion and correspondence it was decided to allocate the money among all suggested recipients with the final allocation resting with those who had actually done the work.

So NZSA through the SAPQC is donating \$3500 to the Self Employment Trust to assist set up a trust fund to provide loans to people who have finished a training programme in setting up their own small businesses; \$1000 to fund research on poverty in New Zealand; \$1000 to the Brooklyn Kindergarten to put toward the approximately \$80,000 mortgage the local community has to meet; \$1000 to a foodbank; and \$1245.50 toward providing prizes at Science Fairs through NZSA. The particular foodbank to receive the funding has not been decided - perhaps members may like to record their preferences and send them to me. The matter could then be decided by a simple majority.

Steve Haslett, Convenor, SAPQC

Standards for Statisticians - Codes of Practice and Accreditation

A working party of Garry Dickinson (chair), Steve Haslett, Jeff Hunter, John Maindonald, Katrina Sharples and Dennis Trewin have started looking at this complex topic. Our first round of e-mail discussions has tried to pin down just what we are aiming to achieve. The prime aim seems to be to raise the awareness amongst the users, actual and potential, of what makes good statistics. We know how important the proper handling of numeric information is, but how do we convince our customers. One of the current uncertainties is just what the customers need and expect of statisticians. Flowing from this general issue are the standards of statistical practice - particularly their development and wider comprehension.

Two complementary lines of attack have been suggested - accreditation and codes of practice. The working party is about to start looking at them in more detail. We hope to have a report ready for the Executive Committee by June but in the meantime we would appreciate any comments and suggestions from readers. Of particular interest would be any thoughts on the expectations of users. You can send them to me by email -

gdickinson@stats.govt.nz

or by post to the

Department of Statistics, PO Box 2922, Wellington.

Garry Dickinson

Statistics in the Courtroom

During a recent trial at the Auckland District Court jurors had to struggle with statistical concepts like the two-sample t-test, the Welch and Mann-Whitney tests, and likelihood ratios. I was called as an expert witness by the Defence to respond to statistical evidence presented by the Crown. The Crown's expert witness, Dr John Buckleton of the Institute for Environmental Health and Forensic Sciences, with some assistance from Professor Alastair Scott of the University of Auckland, had earlier presented a Bayesian probability analysis of glass splinters taken from the accused's jersey and from a broken window at the scene of the crime. Dr Buckleton has collaborated with the UK Home Office scientist Ian Evett on Bayesian approaches to forensic analysis and Dr Evett has also worked with the eminent Bayesian statistician Dennis Lindley.

The trial had a lot of interest because this was the first time forensic evidence had been presented in this way in a New Zealand court. Dr Buckleton's main evidence took the form of a likelihood ratio, the probability of the glass evidence given jersey-window contact divided by the probability of the glass evidence given NO jersey-window contact, for which he obtained a ratio of about 50. I presented certain criticisms of these calculations and also undertook to rebut the possible misinterpretation that the client was 50 times more likely to be guilty than innocent.

The experience was frustrating at times because of my unfamiliarity with court procedure and because of the lack of statistical background of counsel on both sides. However the Judge understood quite a lot: I heard a rumour that his grand-daughter had won a statistics prize at a science fair! There was at least one light moment from the trial. Dr Buckleton had named Dennis Lindley the 'greatest living statistician' in his testimony. I had the counsel for the Defence put to Alastair Scott in cross-examination the question 'Who is the world's greatest living statistician?'. You may be interested to know that after appropriate temporising Alastair responded with the name of Sir David Cox.

Also at issue in the case was the credibility of the accused's accounts of events, which may have come to overshadow the glass evidence. In any event the jury returned a 'guilty' verdict after retiring for three hours.

I believe that it is inevitable that the use of statistics in the courtroom will increase. We need as a profession to understand more about our responsibilities and our roles in such situations. I also believe that there is a need for increased understanding of statistical arguments on the part of the legal profession. I have

been asked whether statisticians have a written code of ethics governing the presentation of statistical evidence; perhaps this is something the Association should consider.

Murray Jorgensen



Some of the witnesses who starred in the Maxicrop case caught at IBC92

Ken Russell in NZ

Ken Russell recently visited the Centre for Applied Statistics at the University of Waikato while on study leave from the University of Wollongong, Australia. Ken presented a talk entitled 'Confessions of a Statistical Consultant' at Waikato, and a second talk, 'Some reflections on Statistical Consulting', to the Department of Statistics at Massey University.

Both talks included a description of the lows and highs of being a consultant. As is his want, Ken finished both seminars with a limerick:

The Two Sides to the Story

When the worth of your work is ignored,
And the data appear to be flawed,
And the client gets lost
When you mention the cost,
A consultant won't want to applaud.
BUT
When there's no problem over the fee,
And a paper results easily,
And the client is rapt
'Cause your work is so apt,
A consultant's a grand thing to be!

(Ken pleads guilty to using the same limerick in two different seminars, but wishes the court to take into account the fact that there are really two limericks there.)

As Ken has been in NZ for the last 3 months there is no news from Australia!

Mathematical Sciences

Three candidates were nominated for the Mathematical Sciences position on the Interim Board of the Royal Society. As a result of the recent election Graeme Wake, Massey University, is our representative in 1993.

The election raised a number of issues. It is clear that some people are members of both the NZMS and the NZSA. Consequently, they were sent two voting papers. In the future a list of voters will be kept to ensure that each person has only one vote.

There was some discontent with the voting procedure which required a vote for only one of the three candidates. If sufficient people would prefer some other system, this could be arranged for next year.

Spurred on by the need to take combined action regarding the Interim Board, a meeting of the President and Vice-President of NZMS, the Presidents and representatives of the NZSA and the NZ Association of Mathematics Teachers, along with a representative of the Operations Research Society of NZ took place on Friday March 5. The NZ Computer Society did not send a representative but asked to be kept informed of developments.

As a result of this meeting we plan to form the Mathematical Sciences Council of New Zealand. This body will work to maintain and improve the health of the mathematical sciences in this country. Its board will consist initially of the Presidents and one nominee from NZAMT, NZMS, NZSA and ORSNZ plus our representative on the Interim Board of the RSNZ. Marston Conder will be the first President and Alistair Gray the Secretary.

A vision statement is being prepared. It is hoped that this will be available by the AGM of the NZMS Colloquium in August. Briefly, the Council will act as a means of networking existing bodies with interests in the mathematical sciences and will try to raise the profile of the mathematical sciences.

The next meeting will take place in Christchurch during the period of the Colloquium and the NZSA conference.

Derek Holton

ISO Committee

Ray Littler, Waikato, represents the NZSA on the Joint Australia/New Zealand ISO Committee for Statistical Quality Procedures.

Find the words whose initials are on the right side of each equation below. The first answer is shown.

$26 = L$ of the A (Letters of the Alphabet)

$7 = W$ of the A W

$1,001 = A N$

$12 = S$ of the Z

$54 = C$ in a D (including the J)

$9 = P$ in the S S

$88 = K$ on a P

$13 = S$ on the A F

$32 = D F$ at which W F

$18 = H$ on a G C

$90 = D$ in a R A

$200 = D$ for P G in M

$8 = S$ on a S S

$3 = B M$ (S H T R)

$4 = Q$ in a G

$24 = H$ in a D

$1 = W$ on a U

$57 = H V$

$11 = P$ on a F T

$1,000 = W$ that a P is W

$29 = D$ in F in a L Y

$64 = S$ on a C

$40 = D$ and N of the G F

Thanks to Charlie Smith, North Carolina State University, for sending this amusement for the *Newsletter*. Charlie also took this photo of Ken Dodds, AgResearch Invermay, at IBC92. Ken was a student at NCSU.



Coming Events

International Conference on

Establishment Surveys

27 to 30 June 1993, Buffalo, NY, USA

Unlike household surveys, establishment surveys have received little attention from survey researchers. This conference brings together professionals from different disciplines and countries to share the experiences in surveying businesses, farms and institutions. The objectives of the conference are to facilitate exchanges of information on existing methods, to encourage new research efforts and to promote a dialogue between producers and users of establishment survey data.

Monograph papers will be published by John Wiley & Sons as the next volume in their series on survey research methods. Invited and contributed papers will be published by Statistics Canada in a separate proceedings volume.

Copies of the registration materials and programme are available from David Archer, Department of Statistics, Box 2922, Wellington. Phone (04) 495 4627

1993 NZ Mathematics Colloquium

23-26 August 1993

University of Canterbury

A first circular is available from NZMC93, Mathematics Department, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8001

Email: nzmc93@math.canterbury.ac.nz

A provisional list of invited speakers is:

Jim Ansell (Victoria) Geophysics
Noel Barton (CSIRO Sydney) Industrial Mathematics
Peter Hilton (SUNY Binghamton) On a class of nilpotent groups and non-cancellation phenomena
Will Light (Leicester) Analysis/Approximation Theory
Curt Linder (Auburn) Combinatorics
Jean Pederson (Santa Clara) Probabilities associated with generalized dice throwing
Michael Stiassnie (Technion) Fluid Mechanics
Mike Hendy (Massey) Mathematical problems arising from DNA sequence analysis
Bruce Robson (Lincoln) Mathematical modelling in natural sciences

1993 NZSA Conference

25-27 August 1993

University of Canterbury

Statistics in Ecology and Environmental Monitoring 13-17 December 1993 Dunedin

One of the primary aims of the conference is to bring together all interested in these topics, whether they be statisticians, ecologists or managers. As well as invited and contributed papers, there will be a number of workshop-style sessions during which emphasis will be on two themes:

Modelling ecological populations:

- Endangered species
- Pest populations
- Parameter estimation (e.g., capture-recapture models)

Environmental monitoring:

- Design of sampling schemes
- Analysis to detect change
- Use of remote sensing

There will be a number of invited participants. Of these, Richard Cormack (Scotland) and Roger Green (Canada) have already agreed to speak.

For further information please contact:

Centre for Applications of Statistics and Mathematics

University of Otago

Box 56

Dunedin

Phone (03) 479 7774

Fax (03) 479 8427

Email CASM@maths.otago.ac.nz

STATCOMP93

27 September - 1 October 1993

University of Wollongong, Australia

Sessions are being organised in:

- Experimental design
- Medical imaging
- Developments in S
- Government statistical computing
- Educational software
- Optimization in statistics

Trevor Hastie (AT&T, USA) has accepted an invitation to speak on statistical modelling.

For more information contact:

Statistics '93 Conference Secretary

Mathematics Department

University of Wollongong

Northfields Avenue

Wollongong NSW 2522, Australia

Fax +61 (42) 21 4845

Email statconf@uow.edu.au

IBC92 Satellite Conferences

Repeated Measurements Workshop 3-4 December 1992, Hamilton

This workshop was held in the week before IBC92, and the IBC92 organisers used it as an opportunity to fine-tune their registration procedures (and the weather). The workshop was led by Mike Kenward, Reading, who provided a comprehensive set of notes. Mike was supported by David Fletcher, Otago, who was careful to make it clear that any hard questions were to go to Mike.

The chapter headings from the notes give an idea of the coverage: Introduction, Summary Statistics, Split-plot-in-time ANOVA, MANOVA and antecedence analysis, Likelihood methods for continuous data, Models for binary and categorical repeated measurements, and Missing Values. The audience ranged from occasional dabblers in repeated measurements to experts in the field. As one closer to the first group, I came away with a much greater armoury of weapons with which to attack repeated measurements problems, but unsure how to wean my clients from their simpler but less appropriate methods of analysis.

The workshop concluded with talks from six registrants: Edgar Brunner, Germany; Leigh Callinan, Australia; Brian Cullis, Australia; Chuck Davis, USA; Yoel Haitovsky, Israel and Philip McCloud, Australia, on their use of repeated measurements techniques.

Thank you to David Fletcher and the IBC92 organisers for bringing the Workshop to fruition, and to Mike Kenward for making it so informative.

A meeting on Repeated Measures
Reveals a vast bundle of treasures.
But to learn all this stuff
Is a task very tough -

These workshops are business, not pleasures.

A lim'rick on measurements repeated
Requires rhyming that would have defeated
A less able poet
But - wouldn't you know it?
It tends to make one quite conceited.

Ken Russell

International Workshop on Matrix Methods in Statistics 4-5 December 1992, Auckland



The workshop was co-sponsored by the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS) and the International linear Algebra Society (ILAS). Speakers were:
John S Chipman (Minnesota) 'Generalized matrix Schwarz inequality and its application to biased estimation in linear regression'
George P H Styan (McGill) 'On the efficiency of a linear unbiased estimator and on a matrix version of the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality'
Simo Puntanen (Tampere) 'Matrix tricks related to deleting an observation in the general linear model'
Garry J Tee (Auckland) 'Alexander Craig Aitken: 1895-1967'

R W Farebrother (Manchester) 'Statistical contributions to matrix methods'

Peter Clifford (Oxford) 'On the distribution of Pearson's correlation coefficient in the presence of spatial autocorrelation'

David J Vere-Jones (Victoria) 'Generalized permanents and their applications to multivariate negative binomial distributions'

Graham R Wood (Canterbury) 'How not to use matrices when teaching statistics'

Thomas Mathew (Maryland) 'Combining independent tests for a common mean: an application of the parallel sum of matrices'

Renate Meyer (Aachen) 'Invariant preorderings of matrices and approximation problems in multivariate statistics and multidimensional scaling'

Shayle R Searle (Cornell) 'Further results and proofs for the singular linear model'

Michael G Schimek (Graz) 'Problems with direct solutions of the normal equations for nonparametric models'

Chris C Paige (McGill) 'The full CS-decomposition of a partitioned orthogonal matrix'

Jeffrey J Hunter (Massey) 'Stationary distributions and mean first passage times in Markov chains using generalized inverses'

Alastair J Scott (Auckland) 'Characterizing invariant convex functions of matrices'

Members' News

Otago

Caryn Thompson, who is just finishing her PhD at Oregon State University, will be joining the staff group at Otago as a Lecturer in Statistics as soon as visa details are worked out. She is a Canadian citizen and had a background in agricultural science and microbiology before switching to statistics. Her PhD is on geostatistics applied to environmental monitoring problems.

We are aiming to get a brochure out at the end of this month giving more details about the Statistics in Ecology and Environmental Monitoring conference, to be held here 13-17 December this year (see page 12). Invited speakers include Richard Cormack and

Roger Green.

David Fletcher



Massey

Massey was well represented at IBC92 with 12 of our colleagues attending. On the Wednesday four of us slipped and staggered our way to the top of Pirongia, just managing to stay ahead of a primary school party (and keep our ageing pride intact!) As a result, the mysterious inscription "IBC92" now appears on the Pirongia trig along with all the other Kilroy's.

Of the two positions advertised last August one has now probably been filled and the other is being re-advertised. Statisticians are indeed a rare breed. As the Albany campus develops we should in future be able to conduct experiments to discover how important climate is in determining job choice.

Doug Stirling and Greg Arnold are introducing Doug's program Models'n'Data into two 100-level papers this year. Students will each spend between 20 and 30 hours during the year analysing data and performing experiments to help them learn statistical concepts. Needless to say, getting everything to work smoothly for the 450 students is taking quite a lot of their (Doug and Greg's - not just the students) time and effort!

Greg Arnold

VUW ISOR

Last summer brought some exciting events to ISOR. On Christmas Eve there was the reported sighting of 3 moas working on the SUNs in the Computing Laboratory. Unfortunately the only photo taken of them was rather blurred so we didn't bother alerting the media. On January 18 Alistair Gray moved up the hill, leaving the Department of Statistics and joining ISOR. It's great to have Alistair working with us and he strengthens our expertise in the areas of survey techniques, time series and short haircuts. At some ill-defined date Peter Thomson was back from sabbatical, having visited the US Bureau of Census, Washington (David Findley), STATSCI Seattle, (Andrew Bruce and Deborah Donnell), LSE (Peter Robinson) and Hans Kunsch (Seminar fir Statistik, ETH). Finally in early February we were very pleased to see not one but two weddings. Leigh Roberts married Phillipa Smith and Megan Clark married David Crossan. Congratulations and best wishes to both couples from all at ISOR. More recently we are glad to welcome Simon Jurke and Paul O'Connor to ISOR as part-time programmers.

On to more routine matters and there have been some new course developments. STAT 193 has split into 2 streams each containing over 200 students. Thomas Mikosch and Peter Thomson are offering a new graduate course on Financial Time Series and Stochastic Differential Equations and the 2nd year Biometrics course is being expanded to an Applied Statistics course.

Another bout of hard slog on S-PLUS implementation has seen S-PLUS made available to all mainstream courses in Statistics and OR from first year through to graduate level. Other courses are now using SYSTAT so the demise of MINITAB is complete.

But what of rest and recreation? Well, the ISOR staff cricket team achieved a second impressive loss against the students. A trivial pursuits quiz night was held and won by a staff team among accusations of conservative questions from the students. An overnight tramp in the Tararua's saw a party of 10 braving blisters and severe inclines to be rewarded by great weather and Wang Qiang's bottle of vodka.

Summer visitors have included Murray Cameron (CSIRO), Ken Russell (University of Wollongong) and Lionel Pereira Mendoza (Halifax, USA). Summer departures include Bernard (BAYES) Robertson who has left Victoria for the Law Department at Massey. His left wing views will be sadly missed in the tea room.

Peter Smith

Members' News

NZ Department of Statistics

The new year has seen Alistair Gray move to ISOR. Promises that some of his old projects might catch up with him as an ISOR consultant got a less than ecstatic reception.

We have welcomed back Max Wigbout after 7 years working in other government departments. We even found his old desk and a bundle of his old files so he would feel right at home!

Denise Lievesley visited in early March and talked extensively about the management of the Essex Data Archive and the technical, legal and political aspects of confidentiality of micro-data. This will be useful background as DoS reviews its own activities in this area.

Vince Galvin

AgResearch Wallaceville

Mick Roberts is spending six months in the UK to take part in the programme, 'Epidemic models, their structure and relation to data' at the Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences, University of Cambridge. Major funding for the trip was provided by the Trimble Fellowship.

Auckland

There have been a lot of comings and goings in Auckland over the past few months. Alan Lee took off to Southampton, while Chris Triggs was escorted onto the plane by two police officers on New Year's Day. Apparently he was due to be an expert witness at some time during his stay in Seattle and the police had to verify that he had actually left the country. That's what he told me anyway! On the subject of leaving, Peter Danaher transferred to the Marketing Department but still drinks with his old colleagues. Chris Wild is about to depart for Waterloo.

To replace all these departures, we've had some arrivals too. Two Canadians, Robert Gentleman and Arden Miller, have come as part of the trend for Canadians to drift south. They both went a bit too far. Robert's interests are in statistical computing and graphics while Arden recently graduated from Waterloo under the direction of Jeff Wu. Arden's interests are in experimental design and industrial statistics. Ilze Ziedens also joined the M&S Dept. She has been at Harriott-Watt University in Edinburgh, after finishing her PhD in applied probability at Cambridge.

Waikato

At the University of Waikato we are very busy teaching, but you don't want to hear about that! Nor do you want to hear about how we are recovering from the stress of IBC92. Instead I'll talk a bit about some of the research that we are trying to do!

Judi McWhirter is on study leave at the moment, working on the estimation and computation of information matrices for pulsatile time series data. She is doing this work under the supervision of Harold Henderson for a DPhil degree.

Jeff Knowlton has returned to the States. He has been working on a DPhil under Nye John in experimental design for computer experiments and this research is continuing. We will really miss Jeff. He was always open and positive and willing to take on work. His experience of industrial statistics in a progressive American company made his contribution to teaching this especially valuable.

Ray Littler visits Monash University, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, for two weeks in May.

David Whitaker will shortly visit the University of Queensland to do joint research with John Eccleston on multi-objective simulated annealing.

Nye John goes on study leave to the University of Queensland on July 1 for three months. Among other things he is working on a new edition of "Cyclic Designs" with Emlyn Williams.

Ken Russell, now based at the University of Wollongong, visited the Waikato Centre for Applied Statistics over the summer, working on his research in experimental design.

Lyn Hunt has written a Fortran program to fit finite mixtures of distributions to multivariate data sets having both categorical and continuous distributions. She is in the process of extending it to cope with data that is missing at random. This is research for a DPhil under the supervision of Murray Jorgensen. The program provides an alternative to conventional forms of cluster analysis.

Murray Jorgensen is investigating an approach to the computation of model-resilient parameter variance-covariance estimates for generalised linear models and robust regression.

Finally, Bill Bolstad has been adapting his multiprocess dynamic linear models to Poisson data. Murray Jorgensen

FRI Rotorua

Ian Andrew has joined Telecom in Brisbane. Oscar Garcia has returned to Chile.

Job Vacancies

The University of Auckland



Two Lectureships in Statistics

The University of Auckland invites applications for two lectureships in Statistics within the Statistics Unit of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (vacancies UAC.251) which is now part of the School of Mathematical and Information Sciences. Applicants should have a proven record in teaching, research and consulting in some branch of Statistics or Applied Probability.

Commencing salary will be determined in accordance with qualifications and experience within the scale for Lecturers, namely NZ\$37,440 to NZ\$49,088. The successful applicants will take up their duties on a date to be arranged after 1 August 1993.

Applications close on 30 May 1993.

Further information may be obtained from Professor G A F Seber telephone (64) (9) 3737599 ext 8745, fax (64) (9) 3737457 or by e-mail seber@mat.auckland.ac.nz.

Hoare Research Software

Hoare Research Software is a firm that has recently been formed by Dr Ray Hoare, to provide distribution, sales and support of technical computer programs. Ray has been distributing SYSTAT statistical products for 5 years, and now also supplies Mathcad, Mathematica, Lindo and a selection of market research, forecasting and other mathematically based programs. IBC92 attendees will have seen Ray at the SYSTAT exhibit.

Contact

Dr Ray Hoare
Hoare Research Software
PO Box 4153
Hamilton East
Phone (07) 856 2675
Fax (07) 856 2797

The University of Waikato



Lectureships in Mathematics and Statistics

The University of Waikato invites applications for two Lectureships in Mathematics and Statistics within the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

The Department wish to appoint to one of these Lectureships a statistician with a strong research record in areas associated with its graduate programme in industrial statistics, but specialists in any area of statistics are encouraged to apply. The Department's statisticians collaborate closely with colleagues in the Waikato Centre for Applied Statistics and at the nearby Ruakura Agricultural Centre.

The other Lectureship will be in pure mathematics (including mathematical logic); preference will be given to candidates with research interests in some aspect of algebra. It is expected that the persons appointed to each of these Lectureships will have research interests that link with those of existing staff in the Department.

The salary range for lecturers is currently NZ\$37,440 - NZ\$49,088.

Information on the conditions of appointment and details of the method of application are available from Academic Staffing, Personnel, The University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton, New Zealand, (Telephone (64) 7 856 2889, Fax (64) 7 856 0135, or email: rgtysec16@waikato.ac.nz (via Internet). Applications quoting reference number A93/5 should reach Academic Staffing, Personnel by 20 May 1993.

Places for applicant's children may be available in the creche run by the Campus Creche Society (Inc). Equal opportunity is University policy.

NZ email update

Check the email address list of NZ statisticians enclosed with the *Newletter* and send additions or corrections to Murray Jorgensen (maj@waikato.ac.nz).

REGISTRATION FORM 1993 NZSA Conference

Return by 31 July to:

NZSA Conference Secretary,
Mathematics Department,
University of Canterbury,
Private Bag,
Christchurch 8001.

Make Cheques Payable to

NZSA Conference.

Tick appropriate boxes; otherwise leave blank.

REGISTRATION

Title: First Name:

Last Name:

Affiliation:

Postal Address:

Email Address:

Telephone: Fax:

Name Tag: How you would like your name and affiliation to appear.

Name:

Affiliation:

Registration Fee:

Standard Fee: (\$60.00)

Full time student: (\$20.00)

Payment enclosed:

ACCOMMODATION

University Hall.

Nights required:

Tuesday, 24 Wednesday, 25 Thursday, 26

Other (specify)

Number of people in single rooms (rate \$41.25 per night)

Number of people in double rooms (rate \$82.50 per night)

Deposit (\$20.00 per person) enclosed

SOCIAL

Dinner: Thursday 26th August, University Staff Club.

Number of people (at \$30.00 each) Payment included

Winery Visit: people to be booked.

PAPER

I am interested in presenting a paper.

Preferred date: Wednesday Thursday (biology day) Friday

Electronic mail addresses for NZ Statisticians, etc
Version : April 2, 1993

Abbreviations used :

a = aukuni.ac.nz c = canterbury.ac.nz
chm=chmeds.ac.nz cr = cri.nz
f = mof.govt.nz
frc = frc.maf.govt.nz gr = grace.cri.nz
i=invermay.cri.nz l = lincoln.ac.nz
lev = levcri-1@lan.lincoln.cri.nz
lcn = lan.lincoln.cri.nz
mq = wellington.mafqual.govt.nz
m = massey.ac.nz o = otago.ac.nz
r = ruakura.cri.nz s = stats.govt.nz
v = vuw.ac.nz w = waikato.ac.nz
wa=warc.cri.nz wnm = wnmeds.ac.nz

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Peter Johnstone johnstonep@i
Laimonis Kavalieris mathlk@o
Fred Lam math19@o
Roger Littlejohn littlejohnr@i
Bryan Manly math05@o
Steve Marshall stevemarshal@o
Russell Millar greebie@o
Brian Niven math30@o
Graham Price graham@o
Katrina Sharples katrina@o
George Spears prev01@o
Hamish Spencer hspencer@o
Sheila Williams prevsmw@o

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Send additions, corrections and missing first names to Murray Jorgensen, maj@waikato.ac.nz.

AgResearch

New Zealand Pastoral Agriculture Research Institute Ltd

Scientist (Biometrics)

An opportunity exists for a Scientist to join the Biometrics Group at AgResearch's Wallaceville campus, in Upper Hutt.

The key purpose of the position is to act as a statistical consultant to scientific and technical staff, with a particular emphasis on molecular genetics. Applicants should have:

- a thorough knowledge of mathematics, statistics and experimental design;
- a basic understanding of molecular genetics;
- expertise (or willingness to develop this) in the statistical analysis and interpretation of molecular genetics data; and
- a proven track-record of successful collaboration and communication with scientists and technicians.

It is likely that applicants matching the above criteria will have a PhD or MSc qualification, and some post-graduate experience.

For further information regarding this position contact:

Mr Derek Kane - Telephone (04) 528 6089; Fax (04) 528 6605

Applications (with CV and names and contact details for two referees) quoting Vacancy Number WLV 010/93 should be sent to:

Ms Margot MacGillivray
AgResearch Wallaceville
PO Box 40 063
UPPER HUTT

Closing date for applications is 21 May 1993.

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News & Announcements & Meetings Around the World



Australia

Wollongong, New South Wales: 27 September-1 October '93

STATISTICS '93 (incorporating STATCOMP '93)

STATISTICS '93 will be held under the auspices of The Statistical Society of Australia and the International Association for Statistical Computing, 27 September - 1 October 1993, at the University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia. The Conference has three strands:

- Statistical Computing
- Statistical Education
- Quality

Contributed papers are sought in each strand. Papers related to more than one strand will be particularly welcome. The deadline for receipt of abstracts is 31 May 1993.

The Chairs of the Committees are as follows: David GRIFFITHS —Organising Committee; Tony PETTIT—Compstat Sub-Committee; Ken SHARPE—Education Sub-Committee; Chandra GULATI—Quality Sub-Committee; Pam DAVY—Local Arrangements.

For further information contact: Statistics '93 Conference Secretary, Mathematics Department, University of Wollongong, Northfields Avenue, Wollongong NSW 2522, Australia; FAX (61-42) 21-4845; STATCOMF@UOW.EDU.AU.



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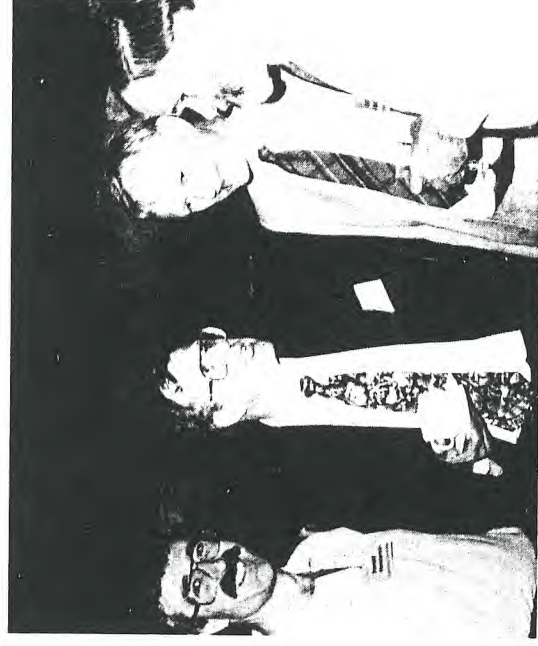
XVth INTERNATIONAL BIOMETRIC CONFERENCE

Having waved goodbye to my family and inched my way through customs, I found my seat on the plane and introduced myself to the person next to me. How would I explain to him, without reference to regression, robustness or Rothamsted, what a biometric conference was? It would surely be easier to talk first about his destination. Rotorua? The South Island? On route to L.A.? No, somewhere far more exciting - he was on his way to the University of Waikato at Hamilton, for 'a conference'. So my first IBC had, in a sense, already begun.

At Auckland airport, we were greeted warmly by local organisers congregated around a sign set up for delegates who might be a little lost. Any annoyance at having to wait an extra hour for a few Canadians to arrive, quickly disappeared on hearing of the 15 hours delay they had to endure in Hawaii. Anyway, it gave me time to call a friend in Auckland, and try out New Zealand's wonderful privatised telephone system. After less than a minute, I was cut off. My friend, who is partially sighted, must have pulled out the plug. I obtained some more change at McDonald's (one of the few shops still open) and tried again. I just had time to apologise in case the disconnection had been my fault, when we were cut off again. At this point I gave up on the exercise and cornered the first New Zealander I could identify. He explained that local calls were free from home, but metered (obviously at a fast rate) from public phones. After all that it was a relief to board the bus and begin the 2-hour drive to Hamilton.

Waikato University has an attractive campus, its spacious lawns and leafy enclaves reminding me a little of the

Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. The only problem I experienced was in buying a stamp - the equivalent of our Post Office was closed on a Monday for unfathomable reasons. The accommodation at the university college was comfortable, with staff going out of their way to be helpful. The conference venue was also comfortable, and only 5 minutes brisk walk from either the college or the university shops. The weather was pretty good too - a bit muggy, but free from the extremes more characteristic of summer in Australia.



(from left to right) Harold Henderson, Secretary, XVI IBC, Hamilton, NZ; Peter Macdonald, Chairman, XVII IBC, Hamilton, Canada; Neils Keiding, President, Biometrics Society; Roger Mead, Secretary, Biometrics Society.

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*The views of contributors to this Newsletter should not be attributed to the Statistical Society of Australia, Inc.
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And what about the main event? It was truly international, with 461 delegates representing 36 countries. By region, the number of registrants was: New Zealand 128, North America 100, Europe 98, Australia 95, Asia 28, Africa 7 and elsewhere 5. The programme began with a grand opening ceremony and a not-so-grand lunch at one of the university's food outlets. The conference was opened by Len Cook, the NZ Government Statistician, who in both content and style would have been just as much at home with a television audience. Niels Keiding (Denmark) gave a presidential address entitled 'The Biometric Society: Diversity and Unity', in which he drew attention to the benefits arising from different disciplines meeting under the umbrella of the society.

The scientific programme consisted of 20 invited papers, 263 contributed papers and 23 posters. Four sessions ran concurrently, which gave a fair degree of choice for the average biometrician. I often found myself having to choose between two equally useful or interesting sessions - not a bad problem, I guess. Of the invited papers I attended, the most enjoyable were Desmond Patterson's talk on REML, and David Hand's presentation on statistical consultancy. This partly reflected my own statistical interests, and many delegates would no doubt have found other talks more helpful.

The presentation of papers, as usual, ranged from appalling to excellent, with a normal distribution about 'OK' being a fair summary. I didn't observe any degeneration in quality as the conference wore on - in fact, some of the best talks I attended were at difficult times for the speaker (like 8.30 the morning after the conference dinner). Surprisingly, most people managed to cram their presentations into the allowed 15 minutes - if they didn't, the chairperson usually did a good job of hounding them off the stage.

The informal aspects of the conference were even more valuable than the formal ones. To establish contact with people who were doing work related to mine, and to swap notes, was immensely worthwhile. To suddenly meet, for the first time, someone whose 1980 paper I'd used extensively, was another unexpected pleasure. And it's nice to put faces on all those E-mail addresses. Meeting with a broad mix of nationalities and cultures broadens your view of statistics and the world in general. I was impressed at the excellent English so many people spoke, and realised how easy we English-speakers have it these days.

I couldn't report on this conference without mentioning the mid-conference tours - they were unforgettable. The one I attended began at dawn with a 3-hour bus trip, during which I chatted to a Polish biometrician whose employer had had to raise US\$2000 to get him there. The main part of the tour was a 7 hour walk through the volcanic mountains of Tongariro National Park. We began in T-shirts and sunscreen, before being suddenly overcome by freezing winds and alpine mist. The scenery was rugged but breath-taking, a bit like the moon (not that I've ever been there). Our exhausted limbs were later soothed by a swim in a hot thermal pool, followed by another long bus trip during which some Australians made a fruitless attempt to get everyone singing Waltzing Matilda. The

soreness we felt for days afterwards didn't diminish the excitement of the trip. The other tours received similar rave reviews.

Another extra-curricular activity was a visit to a local marae (meeting ground), with a traditional dinner and presentation of Maori dance and song by high school students. Then there was the conference dinner, which was unforgettable in its own way. The food was fabulous, but it took an hour and a half for people at the back of the queue to reach the counter. The hospitality was warm, but the host's self-aggrandisement must have been a bit embarrassing for the organisers. The event wasn't cheap either, though most people didn't seem too worried, having been paid for by their employers. The band wasn't bad, once they realised we weren't a bunch of 90's teenyboppers and started to play Beatles songs. A few brief speeches were given, encouraging delegates to come to IBC '94 in Hamilton (!), Canada. Most of us won't need much encouragement - it'll be our employing organisations (some of whom are debt-ridden governments) who will need persuading.



The Barbershop quartet, "Science of Sound", with scientistis from Ruakura Agricultural Centre at the University of Waikato, is joined by Roger Mead.

Overall, IBC was great, and will go down as a highlight of my year. The conference was a credit to the organisers, who remained approachable and helpful throughout the week. The programme appeared to run smoothly, with sufficient variety in it to keep most people interested, and enough time set aside for informal interaction. Having a whole day's break in the middle seemed extravagant at first, but actually helped in maintaining one's concentration till the end. This was of particular benefit for me, as my contributed paper was in the last session on Friday afternoon - every conference delegate's dream!

Graham Hepworth
Victorian Department
of Agriculture