New president takes over

John Pullinger became the 108th president of the Society on 1 January, succeeding Valerie Isham. We look back here to the work he has already done for the Society and to his career as a government statistician and at the House of Commons.

John has been active in the Society for many years. He has chaired the National Statistics working party and been a member of the long term strategy group, executive committee, statistics users executive, membership group and recordings group. He has been on Council since 2008 and a speaker at and chair of many RSS meetings and conferences.

Most notably, John has chaired the getstats campaign since its launch in 2010. In this role he has been guided by a strong belief that if people are better informed they make better choices in their lives. In a world where numbers are everywhere around us, better statistical understanding will improve decision making in politics, enhance the quality of journalism, be beneficial to business competitiveness and be a vital feature of education for every child at school. A deeper appreciation of the importance of the discipline of statistics and the profession of statistician will also benefit many fields of scientific and academic endeavour across the physical, natural and social sciences. His passion for the subject, drawing on the ideas of the founders of the RSS, comes from how statistics makes an impact on society.

Born in south London, John won a free place at Alleyn’s School in Dulwich before becoming the first person in his family to progress to university. His degree in geography and statistics from Exeter University gained him entry to the statistics stream of the civil service in 1980. His first postings were to the Department of Trade and Industry where he worked on design and delivery of surveys into investment in manufacturing industries, compilation of industrial cost and price indices and estimation of monthly retail sales.

On promotion to the civil service principal grade at the Department of the Environment he took responsibility for statistics on local government revenues before becoming a policy advisor on urban development corporations and later on local government finance reform, including the legislation on the Council Tax. A further promotion took him to the Office of Manpower Economics where he headed the pay research team conducting comparative research to inform pay levels in the civil service, armed forces and teaching profession.

In 1992 John entered the senior civil service as director of policy and planning at

RSS 2013

As submissions for contributed talks and posters are currently open, we here outline the main themes of the Society’s forthcoming conference.

Commemorative plaque for W S Gosset

On the 75th anniversary of Gosset’s death a plaque was erected on Saint Patrick’s Boys National (Primary) School, County Dublin.

Befriend a book

As part of the Society’s 175th anniversary celebrations in 2009 the ‘Befriend a book’ scheme was launched to raise funds for the conservation of historical books held by the Society. Janet Foster reports on how the scheme is progressing.
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**NEXT ISSUE**

The copy deadline for the next issue is Wednesday 13 March
Advertisers should contact the advertising manager (details in panel) for submission deadlines.
the Central Statistical Office. In this role he was project manager for the creation of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) from the merger of the Central Statistical Office, Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and statistical units of the former employment department, was policy lead on development of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and was responsible for international relations. In this latter role John represented the UK at the United Nations Statistical Commission as well as at the European Union, OECD, Commonwealth and many other international forums where statistical issues were discussed.

Taking the role of director of the Social and Regional Division, John became editor of the flagship Social Trends publication and a host of other publications seeking to communicate complex statistical information to wide audiences. Following the 1997 general election he also built up a social analysis function to support new government policy units working on social exclusion, equality, drugs and many other issues.

By 1999 he had been promoted twice more and was an established member of the ONS board, responsible for the management of a large proportion of the staff of the Office including those working on labour market, demographic, health, social and regional statistics and analysis, the census, social surveys and use of administrative records. As an established head of profession for statistics, he chaired many of the GSS committees and played an active role in the government’s accountability and incentives project, chairing expert panels assessing the validity of performance measures being proposed by government departments. He went on to lead the neighbourhood statistics programme and was actively involved in the developments in statistical governance which resulted in the creation of National Statistics and the Statistics Commission in 2000.

In his later years at ONS, when his remit also included economic analysis, John chaired the ONS productivity programme board and the pensions contributions statistics review committee and was a ‘Friend of the chair’ advisor to the director of Eurostat on the statistics needed for the Economic and Monetary Union. He was also Caldicott Guardian and chair of the ONS advisory group on medical research. During this period John increasingly had government-wide responsibilities including being chair of the Cabinet Office e-government central infrastructure board and member of the e-government programme board.

Having become the longest serving member of the ONS board, and after graduating from Harvard Business School’s flagship advanced management programme, John decided to seek pastures new. He applied for the job of librarian of the House of Commons and became, in 2004, the 14th holder of that post, the first to be recruited from outside the House.

Inside Parliament, John is known for his commitment to marketing library, research and information services with the aim of delivering services that are beneficial to the greatest number of MPs and their staff. By 2012 numbers of research enquiries were some 60 per cent higher than in the same period in the previous parliament and the vast majority of MPs are regular customers. John’s commitment to supporting politicians in their work has been recognised by his role as chair of an inter-parliamentary union conference on informing democracy and his election as chair of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Section for Library and Research Services for Parliaments.

As a member of the House of Commons management board, John has worked closely with the Speaker and several committees in both Houses to develop the connection between Parliament and the public. His management responsibilities encompass the education service, visitor service, website and intranet, outreach and information office and media office. The aspiration for this work has shifted from providing services to the tens of thousands who are already minded to contact Parliament to engaging with the tens of millions who are not. Several of these teams have won UK and international awards and their achievements are highlighted and celebrated in the 2012 Global Parliamentary Report.

John’s managerial responsibilities also include the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology and the Curator’s Office which looks after Parliament’s collection of 8000 works of art and sculpture.

Throughout his time at Parliament, John has maintained his active involvement with statistics. As well as his contribution to the RSS he was a long standing advisory board chair of the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research at Manchester University, advisory board chair of the ESRC Understanding Population Trends and Analysis programme led by Leeds University and advisory board chair of the Economic and Social Data Service. He also chaired the UK Data Forum between 2007 and 2011. He is a member of the International Statistical Institute.

Married with three adult children, John is active in his local community in Tunbridge Wells and has been chairman of Great Culverden Park Ltd since 1999.
Befriend a book – update

As part of the Society’s 175th anniversary celebrations in 2009 the ‘Befriend a book’ scheme was launched to raise funds for the conservation of books in the historical collection held by the Society. Our archives and records management consultant, Janet Foster, reports on how the scheme is progressing.

THE COLLECTION CONTAINS books relevant to the history and development of statistics from the 17th century through to 1850 as well as more recent donated items. A survey had shown that more than 200 of the 900 titles in the collection could not be handled without remedial conservation to prevent further deterioration and to allow them to be consulted again without the risk of further damage. Damage had been caused by past use and general wear as well as chemical deterioration with acids accumulating in the leather bindings and in the paper which makes them brittle and fragile.

The books needing conservation were grouped into price bands according to the amount of work required and therefore the cost. Conservation prices ranged from £30 for single small volumes with minimal damage to £450+ for multi-volume titles needing extensive repair. The conservation treatments required included consolidating leather bindings, re-sewing of text blocks, reattaching cover boards and repair of torn pages with Japanese tissue. Further details are in the table below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>price band</th>
<th>condition</th>
<th>conservation work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>spine damaged; covers with bumped edges; paper tears</td>
<td>repair spine with toned Japanese papers and reattach; repair tears with Tengujo Japanese paper; flatten bumps and consolidate corners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>covers and/or spine worn and/or detached; textblock or pages detached</td>
<td>repair corners and/or spine with toned Japanese tissue; reattach original spines as necessary; consolidate damaged leather and repair joints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>covers and spine detached, endpapers acidic, text pages dirty and torn, oversize inserts, sewing broken</td>
<td>clean, replace acidic endpapers, strengthen inserts, resew textblock, repair/reconstruct and reattach covers and spine, gold tool title onto spine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>multi-volume works in severely deteriorated condition</td>
<td>as above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A list of the books with details of the repairs needed and the price band was made available on our website and donations were invited for the repair of specific books or as a contribution to the general book conservation fund. The Society pledged a pound for pound matched funding. The first to donate to the scheme was David Hand, then president, who sponsored the repair of De Moivre’s 'The Doctrine of Chances' (1838) as featured in the cover story that launched the scheme in the June 2009 edition of RSS NEWS.
In the three years since then 21 donations have been received raising more than £3,000. Most recently £350 was given by staff of the Office for National Statistics in memory of Frank Nolan, deputy director and a prominent member of the Society, who died suddenly last October. This memorial donation is to be used to conserve books in the fields of social statistics or statistical methodology and the books selected by ONS include three with the bookplate of Udny Yule, indicating that they are from the library which he bequeathed to the Society. They are:

- Pearson’s ‘Tables for Statisticians and Biometricians’ (1914) – Band A: detached spine
- Bowley’s ‘Elements of Statistics’ (1920) – Band B: part of spine missing and loose front board
- Westergaard’s ‘Theorie der Statistik’ (1890) – Band C: missing spine and detached front board

An illustration of the transformation that conservation brings can be seen here in these before and after pictures of the three volumes of Quetelet’s ‘Physique Sociale de l’Homme’. The conservation work was sponsored by former president David Bartholomew.

All of the spine leather is detached from the book and is in two pieces with approximately 15 per cent losses. The spine leather is very degraded, brittle and missing much of the grain layer. The labels on the spine are also very degraded – cracked with some losses (pictured right).

The endpapers are both split all the way along the joints (pictured right).

Strips of Japanese paper tinted with watercolours were adhered along the broken joints on the endpapers (pictured above).

The repaired volumes are shown right. The original damaged spines were also preserved in a housing made from archival materials (pictured far right).

Photographs copyright of Elizabeth Neville, Book Conservation

Problem column

The problem set in October remains unsolved and is still open for offers.

It was inspired by an incorrect answer submitted to a Christmas quiz question several years ago. It was noted that people with the surnames Grant, Martin, Clark, Stevens, Cooper and Connolly have had UK number one hit singles (Eddy, Dean, Petula, Shakin’, Alice and Billy respectively), and that people with the same six surnames have starred as guest murderers on the American television series 'Columbo' (Lee, Ross, Susan, Fisher, Jackie and Billy again). What is the probability that six surnames chosen at random will all appear on the same cast list of any film or television series, past or present? Readers may interpret this question and make simplifying assumptions as they wish.

Solutions should be sent to the quiz editor, at trfanshawe@gmail.com.
Honours for statisticians

We are delighted to note that three prominent fellows of the Society have featured in the New Year Honours List.

A knighthood has been awarded to Ian Diamond, former chief executive of the Economic and Social Research Council (2003 to 2010) and current principal and vice-chancellor at the University of Aberdeen. The renowned social statistician was hailed for his ‘world class reputation in the field of social statistics’ and his ‘outstanding contribution to leading the UK social science research community’.

Former Society president David Hand has received the OBE for services to research and innovation. Now emeritus professor of mathematics at Imperial College, London, David has won various prizes and awards for his research, including the Society’s Guy medal in silver (2002). He has served on the statistics advisory boards of GSK and AstraZeneca and is currently chief scientific advisor to Winton Capital Management and a member of the UK Statistics Authority Committee for Official Statistics.

Frank Kelly, professor of the mathematics of systems at the University of Cambridge, has received the CBE for services to the mathematical sciences. Another Guy medallist (silver medal in 1989), Frank served as chief scientific advisor to the Department for Transport and he chairs the Council for the Mathematical Sciences, of which the RSS is a founding member.

The following have been elected as fellows of the Society:
- Gboyega Adebayo
- Muhammad Al-Saadony
- Martine Jayne Barons
- Shearin Bawa
- Neil Duncan Bennett
- Maurice Berk
- Peter Broad
- Raymond Candlish
- Kiara Chang
- Zhi Qiang Chen
- Haeran Cho
- Hugh Christensen
- Lorraine Croke
- Maria Crow
- John Cummings
- Hakim-Moulay Debi
- Alex Douglas
- Thomas Dowling
- Pierre Dutey-Magni
- Paul Edwards
- Mary Elliott
- Claire Frew
- Roberto Furlan

Lizzy Gatrell
Mamode Hossen Gendoo
David Grover
Sara Izzeldin Hamad
Hossein Hassani
Siew Wan Hse
Samantha Hickey
Rachel Mary Holland
Thomas Howe
Uchechukwu Ikeaba
David William James
Inman
Reuben Adeyemi Ipinyomi
Rhiain Catrin Jacob
Richard William Job
Elinor Mair Jones
Clare Kobusingye
Derek Ong Lai Tek
Simon Philip Lyddon
Magid Maatallah
Antonia Marsden
Stewart James Mash
Gionata Merlin
James Daniel Bryan Nelson
Jeremy Edward Oakley
Dare Samuel Owatemi
Alun John Owen
Satyabrata Pal
Bharat Patel
Gwilym Benjamin John Pryce
David Randell
Evelyne Nathalie Rathbone
Richard Peter Roberts
Brian Anthony Roper
Yolanda Ruiz
Golnaz Shahtahmassebi
Adam Barnett Smith
Isabelle Louise Smith
Stephen David Springate
Efthathios Stefanidis
Thomas Edward Sutch
Christian Silime Tendeng
Siobhan Touhy-Smith
Patrick Tudor
Claire Louise Weber
Andrew Ernest Wileman
Jack Wilkinson
Emily Wilson
Kenny Wong Kee You
Florian Ziel

Other news of fellows

The career and contributions of David Findley, former senior mathematical statistician for time series methods at the US Census Bureau, have been honoured with a Festschrift, ‘Economic Time Series: Modeling and Seasonality’ edited by William Bell, Scott Holan and Tucker McElroy and published by Chapman Hall/CRC Press.

Shahjahan Khan, founding professor of statistics in the department of mathematics and computing, University of Southern Queensland and chief editor of Journal of Applied Probability and Statistics, has received the Q M Hossain gold medal from the Bangladesh Statistical Association.

Thomas Leonard has been elected a fellow of the International Society for Bayesian Analysis. This honours his role in founding the ISBA with Arnold Zellner. He devised the name of the society in 1992.

Deaths

It is with regret that we have to report the death of:
- Stephen Frank Buck
- Francis John Chatterley
- Mikhaila Paul Kizito
- John Desmond Richards
1. Readers were asked to identify winners of annual awards.
   (a) **The Super Bowl** (Rams, Ravens, Colts and Patriots)
   (b) **The Stirling prize** (Peckham Library, Sainsbury Laboratory, Gateshead Millennium Bridge, ‘The Gherkin’)
   (c) **Miss World**
   (d) **The Nobel peace prize** (several winners were listed, including the European Union)

2. Titles of films starring Edward G Robinson (A Hole in the Head, Double Indemnity, Smart Money), Robert De Niro (everybody’s Fine, Mad Dog and Glory, Cape Fear), Katherine Hepburn (On Golden Pond, Long Day’s Journey into Night, Without Love) and Kate Winslet (Sense and Sensibility, Titanic, The Reader) were disguised as synonyms or antonyms.

3. The calculations 44 + 62 = 136 in base 7 and 25 + 135 = 204 in base 6, both of which equal 76 when converted to base 10, may have helped to suggest that songwriter Meredith Willson put ‘76 trombones’ in the van(guard) of the big parade in the musical film ‘The Music Man’.

4. The titles of six popular ditties were disguised using numbers and initials.
   1MN (M5) – One more night (Maroon 5)
   2H (PC) – Two hearts (Phil Collins)
   K3T (TOAD) – Knock three times (Tony Orlando and Dawn)
   8DAW (TB) – Eight days a week (The Beatles)
   21Q (50CFND) – 21 questions (50 Cent feat. Nate Dogg)
   50WTLYL (PS) – 50 ways to leave your lover (Paul Simon)

5. Several gold medal-winning Olympians were listed – arguably the only such – whose first and second names not only contained the same number of letters, but also had identical patterns of consonants and vowels, as did the question title and the names of British equestrians Scott Brash and Mary King (the implication that the latter’s medal was gold was wishful thinking on the part of the setter – apologies).

6. A series of clues indicated prominent people whose surnames correspond to names of countries (loosely defined) or capital cities: Jack London, Angela Brazil, Henry Holland, Matthew Paris, Denzel Washington, Nevil Shute Norway, Alex Kingston, Irving Berlin, Chrissie Wellington, Anatole France, John Ireland, Jimmy Wales. Paris and France are closely linked, the first being the capital of the second.

7. Rewriting the 100-letter string in a 10 x 10 square, and reading down the columns sequentially, maintaining word lengths and punctuation, yields the message

   About binomial theorem I’m teeming with a lot of news,
   With many cheerful facts about the square on the hypotenuse (Stanley)
   which is sung by Major-General Stanley in Gilbert and Sullivan’s operetta ‘The Pirates of Penzance’.

8. The question required readers to pair members of two groups.
   (a) **Portraits and the artists who created them**: Adele Bloch-Bauer – Gustav Klimt; Joseph Roulin – Vincent Van Gogh; Suzanne Bloch – Pablo Picasso; Eight Elvies – Andy Warhol; Beata Beatrix – Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
   (b) **2012 Best Actress Oscar nominees and the characters they portrayed**: Meryl Streep – Margaret Thatcher; Glenn Close – Albert Nobbs; Viola Davis – Aibileen Clark; Rooney Mara – Lisbeth Salander; Michelle Williams – Marilyn Monroe

9. Given various constraints, readers were asked to allocate crops (C) and sheep (S) to fields that did not contain bears (B), wolves (W) or thieves (T). The only possible arrangement is:

```
S T W B C
C W T S B
T B S C W
B S C W T
W C B T S
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When THE SOCIETY gathers in Newcastle in September for its annual international conference it will aim to build on the highly successful re-launch of the event in 2012 in Telford when over 400 attended.

This year’s event will take place on the University of Northumbria’s city centre campus from Tuesday 3 to Thursday 5 September, with pre-conference courses and a welcome reception on Monday 2 September at the Baltic Art Centre on the bank of the River Tyne.

International and relevant
Marian Scott, the society’s theme director for meetings and conferences, comments: ‘This year is of course the International Year of Statistics and as ever the society’s conference will have a strong international flavour with speakers and attendees gathering from around the world. The topics will aim to reflect the impact of statistics on all aspects of society with open data and big data promising to be recurring themes. We will also mark the 250th anniversary of Bayes theorem’.

Record numbers
A record number of invited session proposals have been submitted to the conference board for consideration. The board will be making the decision on which of these will appear on the final programme over the next month.

Shirley Coleman, conference chair, says: ‘We have received proposals from nearly every specialist section and group across the Society and so the final programme will encompass the vast breadth of areas in which statistical methods are studied and utilised’.

Topics
Among the many topics expected to appear on the programme are:
- probability, statistics and social networks
- statistical challenges of quantitative finance
- improving quality
- predictive analytics
- election forecasting
- visualisation of multivariate data
- dynamic communication of statistics
- communicating and interpreting statistical evidence
- disclosure control
- sports analysis
- functional data analysis
Professional development
Following a successful introduction at last year’s conference, the main programme will again include a stream of professional development workshops. The topics for these workshops as well as the pre-conference courses will be announced at the end of February.

Abstract submission
Online submissions for contributed talks and posters are currently open via the conference website www.rssconference.org.uk/submissions – the deadline for abstracts is 25 March. Submissions are welcomed on any topic or area of interest related to statistics and the use of data.

The broad streams for the conference will be as follows:
- bioinformatics, genomics and biostatistics
- communication of statistical ideas
- data science (including experimental design)
- emerging topics (including big data)
- environment and ecology
- industry and commerce
- medical, clinical trials and epidemiology
- public sector and policy evaluation (including open data)
- sports statistics
- statistical methods and theory

Information about the topics that fall within each stream can be found on the website.

Contributed talk presenters will be allocated 20 minute slots in parallel sessions for their presentations. Meanwhile, posters will be displayed in the main exhibition area where all refreshments will be served.

Submissions from statisticians and users of statistics in the early stages of their careers are positively encouraged.

Full information about the requirements for abstracts can be found at www.rssconference.org.uk/submissions.

Keep updated
Updates on the programme, speakers and other plans for the conference will appear at www.rssconference.org.uk.

The provisional programme will be available and registration will open during March.

You can also follow the conference on twitter: http://twitter.com/RSSannualconf.

RSS 2014 heads to Sheffield
It has been announced that next year’s annual international conference will take place in Sheffield 1-4 September 2014.

More details will be available from www.rssconference.org.uk in due course.
ON 16 OCTOBER, the 75th anniversary of his death, a plaque was erected on Saint Patrick’s Boys National (Primary) School, Holly Park, Blackrock, County Dublin to remember the fact that W S Gosset (‘Student’) had lived in Hollyville Park between 1913 and 1935 when he was employed at the Guinness Brewery. The dwelling house, which had stood on the site of the school, was demolished in the early 1960s.

The erection of the plaque was a joint venture between the Irish Statistical Association and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, the local authority. It is carved on a piece of smooth textured purple-blue coloured slate from Valentia Island, County Kerry, which is in the south-west of Ireland (see photo below).

The inscription is in both Irish and English, the two official languages of the state, in accordance with the national government policy and the inscribed curves are based on Diagram II of Gosset’s March 1908 Biometrika paper ‘The probable error of a mean’.

The logos of the Irish Statistical Association and the school are incorporated in the plaque in addition to that of the County Council.

An Cathaoirleach, chair of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, Councillor Tom Joyce and Brendan Murphy, vice president of the Irish Statistical Association, spoke on behalf of their respective organisations.

A poster outlining the life and work of Gosset, which incorporates period photographs of him with his brothers and children and with his fellow Guinness employees, a later photograph of the original house and a reproduction of the first two pages of the March 1908 Biometrika paper were presented to the principal of Saint Patrick’s School, Helen Kelly, jointly by Councillor Joyce and Professor Murphy. This poster has been put on display in the school.

Phil Boland, emeritus professor of University College Dublin, concluded the proceedings with a short talk on Gosset’s life.

Report by Anthony Kinsella

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**CECIL KING TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP**

The London Mathematical Society annually awards a £5,000 Cecil King travel scholarship in mathematics to a young mathematician of outstanding promise. The scholarship is awarded to support a period of study or research abroad, typically for a period of three months. Study or research in all areas of mathematics is eligible for the award. The award is competitive and based on a written proposal describing the intended programme of study or research abroad and the benefits to be gained from such a visit. A shortlist of applicants will be selected for interview during which they will be expected to make short presentations on their proposals.

Applicants should normally be nationals of the UK or Republic of Ireland, either registered for or having completed a doctoral degree within 12 months of the closing date. Applications should be made using the form available on the LMS website (www.lms.ac.uk/content/cecil-king-travel-scholarship) or by contacting education@lms.ac.uk.

The closing date for applications is Friday 8 March.

It is expected that interviews will take place in London in late April or early May.
ACME report on supporting able mathematicians
Following on from its recent work on how best to support able mathematicians, the Advisory Committee for Mathematics Education (ACME) launched its report ‘Raising the bar: developing young mathematicians through the curriculum 5-16’ in December. The report suggests that rushing able mathematicians through the curriculum means England is producing pupils with only a ‘superficial’ grasp of the subject. Instead pupils should have ‘a deep, rigorous and challenging’ school maths experience. The report says that England is ‘significantly underachieving in terms of developing able mathematicians’. It calls for an enriched curriculum to be available in all mainstream schools and suggests that around 30 per cent of pupils would find it ‘a challenging but satisfying experience’.

Ofqual announces changes to A levels
From September, students will no longer be able to sit AS and A level exams in January. Examinations will only be available in the summer. This change is the first phase of proposed wider A level reforms.

Changes to post-16 funding
From September, schools and colleges will be funded for each student rather than for each qualification. The new formula places a limit on the number of hours of study for which students are funded. The government says that this will remove ‘perverse incentives’ which can lead to students taking too many easy qualifications. However, there are concerns that this could lead to a reduction in the provision and uptake of AS Further Mathematics (often taken as a fourth AS) and A level Further Mathematics (often taken as a fourth A level).

New post-16 maths qualification focus
ACME has published two reports with recommendations on how to increase the uptake for mathematics in England for all pupils post-16. The first report, ‘Post-16 mathematics’, provides an overview of how the current system needs to change. The second, ‘Planning for success’, describes practical steps that will need to take place in order for this to happen.

‘Post-16 mathematics’ recommends that a new ‘problem solving’ based maths qualification should be distinct from A level Mathematics and taken by those not studying maths at advanced level. It recommends that the new qualification be studied over two years but contain less work than an A level with an emphasis on solving realistic problems. ‘The key goal for any new post-16 qualifications in mathematics should be to develop [...] an understanding of mathematics through motivation and engagement,’ the report states in its executive summary. ‘This is more likely to be achieved if the qualifications concentrate on using mathematics to develop and solve problems in realistic contexts.’

ACME recommends that A and AS levels should still be clearly seen as the route into advanced study of maths and science. It also recommends that the mathematical content of other qualifications be raised to show how maths is applied in different contexts.

Roeland Beerten, the Society’s director of professional and public affairs, said ‘We welcome the ACME recommendation to develop a qualification which should have significant statistical content. Statistics is a key component in everyday numerical problem solving and it is essential we equip all pupils with the statistical skills necessary to successfully move into employment or higher education. The RSS will be a key stakeholder in the development of such a qualification and we will be working with relevant bodies to promote and implement this recommendation.’

Maths teacher training scholarships
Around 150 new teacher training scholarships in mathematics, worth £20,000 each, are to be made available as part of a wider government strategy designed to drive up standards in mathematics in schools. The RSS will help deliver the scholarships along with the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (IMA) and the London Mathematical Society (LMS). Graduates with a 2.1 or above degree on a postgraduate mathematics initial teacher training (ITT) course will be eligible to apply, and candidates will be expected to have a strong mathematical background and a commitment to education and teaching. As well as £20,000, mathematics ITT scholars will receive additional benefits from the IMA, LMS and RSS including...
membership offers, free access to journals, free entry to conferences and training and career support. Applications for the scholarships opened last month. Graduates interested in applying can register online at www.ima.org.uk/careers/teacher_scholarships.cfm.

**IMA Early Career Mathematicians’ spring conference**

The IMA Early Career Mathematicians’ 2013 spring conference will take place at the University of Cardiff on Saturday 27 April. The event is designed to bring mathematicians together who are in the early stages of their careers and who have different interests for a fun-filled day of games and fascinating talks. Previous conferences have been described as ‘lively and informative’, having ‘a friendly and relaxed atmosphere’ and being ‘educational, informative and entertaining’.

The spring conference will include several talks including the use of mathematics in video games and how mathematical models helped to develop the UK’s renowned super-sonic car, Bloodhound.

For registration and further information on this conference, please contact the Conference Office at conferences@ima.org.uk or 01702 354020 or visit the conference webpage: www.ima.org.uk/conferences/conferences_calendar/early_career_mathematicians_conference_spring_2013.cfm.

**Teaching Statistics in Health Sciences**

The autumn 2012 issue of this newsletter is now available at http://community.amstat.org/TSHS/Announcements/Newsletters.

**Statistics Education Research Journal**

The November edition of *SERJ* is available to download free. It is a special edition concentrating on attitudes to statistics: www.stat.auckland.ac.nz/~iase/publications.php?show=serjarchive.

**HEA STEM annual conference**

The next HEA STEM annual conference will take place on 17-18 April at the University of Birmingham and is entitled ‘When practice and pedagogy meet’. The conference includes a strand dedicated to mathematics, statistics and operational research. Further information about the conference can be found by selecting the STEM 2013 conference option on the HEA STEM events page www.heacademy.ac.uk/events. Registration is now open.

**National Teaching Fellowship Scheme**

The National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) recognises and rewards excellent learning and teaching. It is open to all higher education institutions and further education colleges in England, Northern Ireland and Wales with more than 100 (full-time equivalent) students. Full details of the scheme are available at the HEA NTFS page www.heacademy.ac.uk/ntfs. The call for nominations is now open and the closing date is Monday 4 March.

**US Conference on Teaching Statistics 16-18 May**

The P&B (posters and beyond) session provides an opportunity for conference participants to display a poster of their ideas or provide a small demonstration of their favourite examples, activities and teaching methods. Final abstracts should be submitted by 1 April. For more details see the USCOTS webpage www.causeweb.org/uscots/call4posters.php.

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**Radical Statistics conference**

Registrations are now being accepted for the 2013 Radical Statistics conference, taking place on 23 February in York.

See www.radstats.org.uk/conference/york2013/ for further information on all speakers, topics, location, social events and registration, or view an A4 flyer to post or distribute at www.radstats.org.uk/conf2013/A4Flyer.pdf.

Address any further enquiries to admin@radstats.org.uk.
UK measure of inflation
The number of UK inflation measures is set to grow. Following a consultation on options for improving the retail prices index (RPI), the National Statistician Jil Matheson has concluded that the arithmetical formula used to produce the RPI does not meet international standards and has recommended that a new index be published.

From March 2013 a new RPI-based index will be published using a geometric formulation (Jevons) to be known as RPIJ. In addition, a new measure of consumer price inflation (CPI) will be launched which includes owner occupiers’ housing costs. This will be known as CPIH.

The existing monthly CPI and RPI will continue to be produced.

ONS consultations
The Office for National Statistics is seeking user views of its cancer incidence and survival statistics and how these should be developed in the future. It is also asking about possible developments for its statistics of human capital and how they are used. Responses on cancer are required by 20 February and on human capital by 28 February. For further details see www.ons.gov.uk.

Healthy spending?
UK Statistics Authority chair, Andrew Dilnot, took issue with recent government statements about real terms changes in health spending, which were not necessarily supported by the latest National Statistics. The Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, conceded the need for better consistency and clarity when ministers use these figures publicly. For further details see www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk.

Statistics in Parliament
The public administration select committee continued its scrutiny of statistics and their use in government. Most recently this included two evidence sessions on communicating and publishing statistics. The first was with Will Moy from Full Fact, Michael Blastland, and Chris Giles from the Financial Times. The second session was with the National Statistician and Andrew Dilnot, chair of the UK Statistics Authority. A transcript is available via www.parliament.uk.

US economy app
The US Bureau of the Census has launched its first app, ‘America’s Economy’, providing real-time updates for official economic indicators. The app gives an overview of 16 key variables and access to a detailed page for each with trend data. It is free and available for Android and Apple devices. For further details see www.census.gov.

Subscription payment reminder
Fellows, CStats, GradStats, affiliates and members of sections and local groups are gently reminded that 2013 subscriptions were due on 1 January, so if you haven’t already done so now is the time to dig out the renewal notice that was sent to you in December. Prompt payment is appreciated as it saves us the cost of sending out reminders.

Paying online? Help us speed up our processing
This is one of the most efficient ways for the Society to collect your subscription – and hopefully straightforward for our members. You can pay via the ‘My RSS-> My Subscriptions’ area of the RSS website (www.rss.org.uk). If you have any problems logging in, contact Anna Mair at a.mair@rss.org.uk.

Please note that only the balance shown on the renewal notice can be paid off using this method. If an amendment needs to be made (eg changing the number of journal series received), you should contact Anna prior to making your online payment.

If you have lost your renewal notice, or have any queries about the subscription due, contact Anna at the Society’s address or email as above.
News of RSS staff

On 25 November, Martin Owen, executive editor of the journal, completed 25 years working for the Society. The event was celebrated by the staff who enjoyed a games evening in the Errol Street lecture theatre.

Martin is the longest serving member of our staff. His dedication to the production of the Society’s prestigious publications is second to none. He has a meticulous attention to detail and the many editors with whom he has worked over the years will bear testament to his exacting standards. The RSS journal series is world renowned and owes much of its success to Martin and the team of volunteer editors. Martin’s institutional knowledge is a great asset to the Society and both colleagues and volunteers frequently call upon him to advise on many aspects of our work.

Amelia Conolly joined us in September as receptionist and member of the venue hire team. Amelia has a background in administration working for a variety of different organisations. She is currently complementing her work for the Society by studying for higher education qualifications in art and design.

Moussa Haddad has joined the Society as policy and research manager, a new post to help strengthen the Society’s external-facing work, allowing it to play a stronger thought leadership and policy development role.

Moussa joins the Society from Oxfam, where he was a policy officer, working over four years on a range of issues relating to UK poverty, with a particular focus on themes around social protection and inequality. Prior to that, he spent two years advising on equality and diversity policy in higher education with the Equality Challenge Unit and two years as a researcher across a range of public policy issues at the Social Market Foundation think tank.

He will initially focus particularly on opportunities to influence education policy in a time of great change but also with an eye on developing a more proactive approach to policy influencing in general from the Society.

Dev Virdee has joined us on a secondment from the UK Statistics Authority to manage the Statistics User Forum. Dev is a statistician with extensive experience in regional and local statistics and worked in the Office for National Statistics where he provided expert input on Regional Accounts and Neighbourhood Statistics.
Industrial measurement error

At the Business and Industrial Section meeting in February 2012, Steve Ellison of LGC Ltd, Maurice Cox of National Physical Laboratory and Roland Caulcott of Caulcott Associates spoke on the topic of measurement error and statistical uncertainty. 

Steve Elliot gave a technical 'Overview of numerical methods for uncertainty evaluation' in the context of uncertainty from a measurement equation.

Two main classes are numerical gradient and simulation methods. He cited finite difference and Kragten's method as examples of the former and Monte Carlo simulation and Bayesian Markov chain Monte Carlo as examples of the latter. The general problem is that we observe an output given some input(s) and we wish to estimate the uncertainty of the output given the uncertainty of the input. Gradient methods assume a linear relationship between these two uncertainties whereas simulation methods essentially yield a posterior distribution for the uncertainty of the output.

Maurice Cox's more philosophical presentation 'An overview of measurement uncertainty (MU)' focussed on a metrology context and the work of the joint committee for guides in metrology. MU is a growing field, in part because of the international standard ISO 17025 concerning general requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.

A definition of MU is a non-negative parameter characterising the dispersion of the quantity values being attributed to a measurand. In a scalar case MU would be defined by a standard deviation with suitable generalisations in the multivariate case. Since measurands are not measured directly a model is needed. Both inputs and outputs are deemed random variables and available knowledge, either observational data or non-statistical information, is used to characterise probability density functions for these. Maurice gave several examples of these.

Roland Caulcott's descriptive presentation 'Measurement error' cited procedures where measurements are used, for example assessing the capability of a process or classifying a product or service. If measurements are subject to error this must be estimated to permit amendments to such procedures.

Unfortunately some tools and terminology have different meanings in different fields and usage has changed over time, including British standards documents. Definitions use various standard deviations such as for a typical operator, for an individual operator or between operators. Definitions of repeatability and reproducibility were cited in the chemical and in the mechanical engineering industries, while MU was defined for the former and measurement variability for the latter.

Roland illustrated different scenarios with plots of chemical lab measurements of viscosity and of operator diameter measurements. Recommended procedures for acquiring relevant data were cited for both fields.

Report by Ben Torsney

Migration statistics

A meeting of the Official Statistics Section was held in December on whether official migration statistics could be improved. Speakers on this topical issue were from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Home Office, with University College London's John Salt as discussant.

Paul Vickers of ONS gave an overview of the developments made by the migration statistics improvement programme which improved the international passenger survey, used administrative data and made methodology more transparent. Paul's colleague Sarah Crofts described how the reporting of migration statistics has been made coherent across government through the migration statistics quarterly report.

From the Home Office, Chris Kershaw and David Matz discussed the importance of understanding the policy drivers behind migration statistics and how Home Office administrative data can provide insight into the reasons for changing migration patterns. Whilst acknowledging the strides made in recent years, John Salt suggested that any further development is limited whilst ONS relies so heavily upon the international passenger survey.

The presentations led into a lively discussion amongst the audience, where topics covered included the recent decline of skilled migrants, the potential of the eBorders programme and the problem of clear reporting of confidence intervals to a non-specialist audience.

Report by Mark Fransham
Medical measurement error

The Medical Section held a meeting in December on covariate measurement error. Jonathan Bartlett, from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), introduced the session by giving an overview of the impacts of classical measurement error in covariates of regression models.

He described some of the most popular statistical approaches for accommodating error in covariates and highlighted their relative advantages and disadvantages. He concluded by highlighting a number of areas for future work, including the development of methods which allow for more realistic error structures and which allow for substantive models in which the covariate measured with error is assumed to have a non-linear effect on the outcome.

Ruth Keogh, also from LSHTM, then presented work on the effects of exposure measurement error when the shape of the exposure-disease association is assessed by categorising the exposure.

Despite widespread criticism of this approach within the statistical literature it remains a commonly adopted method in epidemiology and so understanding how it is impacted by exposure error is clearly of importance. She explained how categorising an error-prone measurement of the exposure results in misclassification of subjects and consequently that the shape of the exposure-disease association is distorted. Simulations were used to demonstrate that moment reconstruction and multiple imputation methods appear to be promising approaches for accommodating exposure error when a categorised exposure analysis is desired.

The methods were illustrated with an application in nutritional epidemiology.

In the final presentation Roseanne McNamee and Evridiki Batistatou, from the University of Manchester, presented work on cost-efficient design of studies in which allowance for covariate measurement error needs to be made.

They presented results for the two distinct settings of validation and replication data showing how the various parameters impact on cost-effectiveness of competing designs. When planning new studies in which correction for covariate measurement error will be performed their results will be of direct applicability in terms of deciding how large a validation or replication study should be performed.

Report by Jonathan Bartlett
Analysing genetic data
On 3 December the Merseyside local group hosted a day of presentations relating to current issues in the analysis of genetic data. The day began with Dan Carr from the University of Liverpool providing an overview of genetic research, explaining the nature of genetic data and equipping attendees unfamiliar with the field with the terminology required to follow subsequent talks.

Klaudia Walter from the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in Cambridge delivered a presentation on the UK10K collaboration, specifically the cohorts project in which almost 4,000 participants from two population-based studies underwent whole-genome sequencing. Klaudia described some of the procedures involved in the analysis of next-generation sequencing data, such as quality control and population stratification analysis. The focus then shifted to exome sequencing, with Vincent Plagnol of University College London addressing the challenges in calling copy number variants (CNVs). Vincent presented a robust statistical procedure for increasing the accuracy of CNV calling from exome sequence data, which is freely available through the R package 'exomeDepth'.

Following a break for lunch, Peter Holmans of Cardiff University reviewed a number of methods for pathway analysis of genome-wide association study (GWAS) data, including his own ALIGATOR program. Peter then presented an example of pathway analysis using a late-onset Alzheimer’s disease GWAS.

The final talk was delivered by Eleftheria Zeggini from the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in Cambridge, who covered the importance of low frequency and rare variants, given their potential large effect sizes and contribution to extreme phenotypes or use as predictive markers. Eleftheria explained how rare variants may be accessed and presented examples from a number of projects, including isolated population and trans-ethnic mapping studies.

Details of the meeting, including presentation abstracts, may be found at: https://sites.google.com/site/rssmerseyside/research-meetings/genetic-data.

Report by Laura Sutton

Micromorts and microlives
The first joint ExISTA (Exeter Initiative for Statistics and its Applications) and RSS South West local group seminar took place at the University of Exeter on 19 November with invited speaker David Spiegelhalter. David, Winton professor of the public understanding of risk at the University of Cambridge, is not only a well-known figure in the statistical world, but often appears in the wider media, including as a guest columnist in The Times and on Radio 4’s More or Less series. Just last month he could be seen on BBC4 in his documentary ‘Fails you win – the science of chance’, described by its makers as ‘a combination of wit and wisdom, augmented-reality graphics and gleeful nerdery’, not to mention being a recent contestant on the BBC’s Winter Wipeout!

Much of David’s work aims to help improve the way that uncertainty and risk are discussed in society, and in his talk he introduced two measures of risk that help to describe both the acute and chronic health risks that we all face: the regularly used micromort and the new microlife. The micromort represents a one-in-a-million chance of dying and, as David described, is useful as ‘a friendly unit of deadly risk’. To put this measure into context, with 50 people dying of non-natural causes in England and Wales per day and a population of approximately 50 million, just by living, we experience one micromort every day (on average). Using micromorts to describe deadly or acute risks is advantageous for, not only are they easy to understand and communicate, but they can be compared across different activities. For example, if we consider the risks associated with different modes of transport, we would find that for every one micromort you can drive 250 miles in a car but only 6 miles on a motorbike.

But what about the risks that we take that don’t kill you straight away, such as smoking, drinking, eating badly and so on? David introduced a new measure of risk in his presentation that he has called the microlife. A microlife is defined as 30 minutes of your life expectancy and makes chronic risks comparable by showing how much life we lose on average when we’re exposed to them. Examples of everyday activities that cost us a microlife include eating red meat, smoking two cigarettes and drinking alcohol (although the first drink gains you a microlife, so there is only an overall loss of microlives after the second drink). Interestingly, David pointed out that microlives are also a metaphor for the ‘speed of ageing’ since those of us who participate in...
activities that accumulate a greater number of microlives (smoking, drinking and eating unhealthily) are speeding through our lives faster than those who do not.

In the final section of his talk, David discussed the communication of uncertainty and the importance of acknowledging deeper uncertainties (or the ‘unknown unknowns’). This issue is of vital importance in science and this couldn’t be demonstrated better than by the recent controversial trial of the L’Aquila scientists. David finished a fascinating talk on this note, which prompted much discussion from the audience on how deeper uncertainties could be assessed and communicated and whether microlives could be applied to other risks such as climate change.

Report by Lynsey McColl

Medical statistics in real life
The latest meeting of the West Midlands group was held on 13 December and hosted by Coventry University. The meeting started with the group’s 67th annual general meeting. The financial statement was approved and all nominated candidates for the committee were elected. Tony Lawrance was elected as honorary chair and Peter Kimani as honorary secretary.

The speaker for the evening was Gill Furze, a professor in adult nursing and health care at Coventry University. She described some of the challenges faced by non-statisticians when designing randomised clinical trials and also highlighted some of the changes in this area in the last 15 years. She originally trained as a nurse and then studied psychology before moving into research with a particular focus on heart diseases.

Between 1998 and 2011, she planned a total of five quantitative studies and consulted several statisticians for the planning and evaluation of these studies. Due to the rapid progress in the design of randomised clinical trials, each study was designed and analysed differently despite the fact that the objectives were quite similar. Power calculations became more complex, taking potential dropout and secondary outcomes into account. The analysis plan expanded from one paragraph to a 16-page document. The analysis itself moved from an ANCOVA of mean change scores to the use of models, such as negative binomial regression. While producing p-values was sufficient in 1998, later studies required the provision of confidence intervals, assessment of the influence of nuisance variables and also discussions of qualitative outcomes.

In parallel with the development of the design of randomised clinical trials, the statisticians designing and analysing these trials became more organised. Now clinicians can often contact clinical trial units that can ensure that many potential sources of errors or bias can be excluded by providing data management services in addition to the design and analysis of the studies.

Gill concluded her talk by highlighting that, while she was not a statistician herself, she always sought to understand the methods the statisticians used and the rationale behind them. While the constant use of new methods and approaches meant that she always had to continue learning, this allowed her to reproduce the results the statisticians delivered. She closed by saying that it was important for clinicians to allow statisticians to do their work and cope with the potential use of new, unfamiliar methods.

Report by Markus Elze

Challenges for the ONS
The first West Midlands local group meeting of the 2012/2013 academic year took place on 11 October at the University of Warwick. The speaker was Gary Brown from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) who gave a talk on ‘Challenges facing National Statistical Institutes – the 2020 vision’.

Gary structured the talk around the ‘six challenges for the statistical community’ identified in Alan Krueger’s president’s address at the 2012 Joint Statistical Meetings in San Diego, addressing what these challenges mean to a statistical agency and how they will shape the future.

Gary began by introducing the ONS and its role in producing official statistics, reporting to parliament and developing good practice in statistics. The first challenge identified was that of big data. Gary spoke on several issues including addressing privacy issues when releasing statistics (eg stripping of personal data, amalgamation of small/specific categories), but also on how the ONS must weigh up the risks of disclosure versus the utility of a data set. He spoke about the impact mandatory business surveys can have in terms of time (and hence money) and that these so-called ‘compliance costs’ should be minimised. Finally in this first section, the specific challenge of collecting census data was discussed in relation to the ONS’s ‘Beyond 2011’ project. This looks at the needs and options for collection of future national
population and socio-demographic statistics (i.e., alternatives to the national census as we know it).

The second challenge was that of sample weights. Gary spoke about the need to develop standard errors for more (or all) the ONS outputs. There is progress on this in some areas such as indices (e.g., PPI) and social surveys, but there is a lot of work to be done. Also under this heading, the issue of non-response was addressed. In relation to institutions like the ONS, this appeared to be framed as not only a statistical analysis issue but also a data collection/survey implementation matter – for example, making it ever easy for businesses to provide relevant data.

Thirdly, Gary discussed the idea of seasonal adjustment. He mentioned that within the time series domain, non-European countries tended to use X-11 based software which is unable to produce suitable standard errors for the components, unlike the TRAMO-SEATS software used in mainland Europe.

The next two challenges warranted less discussion. The fourth, evidence-based policy, is a major challenge with the public's trust in statistics being very low compared with that in some similarly developed countries. The fifth challenge, of a shrinking middle class, was acknowledged as a US issue, but Gary expressed his belief that an ageing UK population is a larger challenge.

Finally, Gary chose to replace the sixth of Krueger's challenges to do with statistical tools for financial market surveillance with four specific challenges for the ONS:

- staffing – instilling the vision and values of the ONS in all the employees
- software – SAS (currently used) is not free but R is – should the ONS consider new software?
- well-being – developing well-being as an alternative to GDP as a measure of national success
- money – due to civil service budget cuts the ONS needs to work more effectively on less money.

Gary concluded by noting that the ONS needs to reduce costs and burdens, utilise existing data better, accurately monitor the state of the economy and the nation, improve supplier relationships and communicate more effectively with users of the data.

Overall, Gary gave a very interesting and enjoyable overview of some of the challenges the ONS faces. The talk was well attended and the particularly high number of questions that were asked could be put down to the accessibility of the presentation.

Report by Nathaniel Shiers

FORSOOTH!

They are among the best experiences in the world but it turns out thousands of stay-at-home Brits have never enjoyed them.

A fifth of over-30s have never swum in the sea, a tenth have never strolled along a Mediterranean beach and 13 per cent have never been abroad at all.

[Ed: One wonders who are the 3 per cent who have walked along a Med beach without going abroad.]

Daily Mail
13 December 2012

Why you could be heading for an early grave if you can’t get off the floor without using your hands

- Simple test asked 50 to 80-year-olds to sit on the floor and stand up with as little support as possible
- Adults who needed to use a number of aids such as their hands and knees were six times more likely to die than those who didn’t.

Daily Mail
13 December 2012
**ORDINARY MEETING**

**Wednesday 13 February**, 5pm at the RSS.
Refreshments from 4.30pm

Large covariance estimation by thresholding principal orthogonal complements

JIANGING FAN (Princeton University)
YUAN LIAO (University of Maryland)
MARTINA MINCHEVA (Princeton University)

Covariance matrices are often not sparse due to the common factors, eg, financial returns depend on the equity market risks and gene expressions can be stimulated by cytokines. A new easy-to-compute high-dimensional covariance estimator is proposed that has appealing theoretical properties and performs well in the presence of common factors.

Organised by the Research Section

Meeting contact: Abdel Khairoun (journal@rss.org.uk)

**SECTIONS**

For all section and study group meetings held at the RSS pre-registration is recommended (unless otherwise stated). Register by email at events@rss.org.uk or phone 020 7638 8998. You can download a booking form from www.rss.org.uk/eventforms.

**APPLIED PROBABILITY**

This meeting is funded by and organised in conjunction with the Heilbronn Institute for Mathematical Research.

**Tuesday 19 March**, 9.45am–5.30pm, Engineers House, Bristol (refreshments: lunch and afternoon tea)

Large evolving networks

Speakers to include:
- CHARLES BORDENAVE (University of Toulouse)
- COLIN COOPER (King’s College London)
- MOEZ DRAIEF (Imperial College London)
- NICK HEARD (Imperial College London)
- DES HIGHAM (University of Strathclyde)
- GESINE REINERT (University of Oxford)

This one-day workshop will introduce the audience to a broad spectrum of work on modelling and inference for large evolving networks.

Deadline for registration: 19 February

Meeting contact: Alice Adams (heilbronn-coordinator@bristol.ac.uk)

**GENERAL APPLICATIONS**

**Monday 25 February**, 2–5pm at the RSS

New challenges for longitudinal data analysis

DON HEDEKER (University of Illinois)
RUWANTHI KOLMUNNAGE-DONA (University of Liverpool)
ARDO VAN DEN HOUT (University College London)
DANIEL FAREWELL (Cardiff University)

The enormous scope of longitudinal data for understanding the complex dynamics of change over time is well known. In this meeting, approaches to some of the new challenges in this area are proposed. These challenges include how to exploit the full potential of ‘real time’ high frequency repeated measures, handling the impact of ageing and mortality, and joint modelling of the relationship between two or more time-varying processes.

Charges:
- £25 retired fellows/student fellows/EDA fellows;
- £27 CStats/GradStats;
- £30 RSS fellows;
- £45 linked associates/student members/section members;
- £60 everyone else.

The meeting is sponsored by the LEMMA 3 node of the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods and the ESRC Centre for Market & Public Organisation.

**OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

Organised jointly with the Quality Improvement Section and ENBES (the European Network for Better Establishment Statistics)

**Tuesday 19 February**, 10am–5pm at the RSS

Statistics: for businesses, about businesses

A one-day seminar about collecting and producing official statistics on businesses and showcasing potential uses in business for research and for policy making.

BORIS LORENC (ENBES)
Introduction

DAVID HAZIZA (Université de Montréal and CREST/ENSAl)
Sampling and estimation procedures in business surveys: a discussion of some specific features

JACQUI JONES and KATE DAVIES
(Office for National Statistics)
Survey and statistical communication

GORDON BLUNT (Gordon Blunt Analytics Ltd)
Intelligent data analysis to aid decision making in a commercial environment

STUART COLEMAN (ODI)
Open Data Institute
STUDY GROUPS

HISTORY OF STATISTICS
Organised with the Centre for Economic History at the University of Reading

Friday 22 March, 10am–5pm, University of Reading, Whiteknights, Reading

Conference on the history of business and economic forecasting
This conference reviews the growth of the forecasting industry with special reference to the US and UK. It addresses the philosophical roots of forecasting, the development of practical forecasting methods the evolution of the commercial market for forecasts and the impact of forecasting on business consultancy.

There is no charge for attendance but it is recommended that you register early to secure a place. Email Amanda Harvey (a.h.harvey@reading.ac.uk).

Meeting contact: Mark Casson (m.c.casson@reading.ac.uk)

LOCAL GROUPS

EDINBURGH

Monday 18 February, 6–7pm, ICMS, 15 South College Street, Edinburgh EH8 9AA (refreshments from 5.30pm)

Using statistics to study wildlife
KATE SEARLE (Centre for Ecology and Hydrology)
Analysis of ecological data: ecology isn’t rocket science, it’s harder
MEGAN TOWERS (Scottish Natural Heritage)
Working as a statistician within Scottish Natural Heritage
RUTH KING (University of St Andrews)
Incorporating individual time-varying covariates within the analysis of capture-recapture data

The meeting will include the group AGM.

Meeting contact: Adam Butler (adam@bioss.ac.uk)

LEEDS/BRADFORD

Wednesday 20 February, 4–5pm, University of Leeds, Room MALL 2, Level 9, School of Mathematics (refreshments from 3:30pm School of Mathematics foyer)

You and the RSS
JOHN PULLINGER
(RSS president and Information Services, House of Commons)

What can the RSS do for you and what can you do for the RSS?
John Pullinger will talk to the group about where the RSS is now and how it might develop in future. The idea is to have a lively and interactive meeting with a two-way flow of ideas on how our Society and all its members can get something out of it and make a contribution to its success.

Meeting contact: Claire Keeble (mm07cmk@leeds.ac.uk)

MERSEYSIDE

Wednesday 6 February, 5pm, Lower Peter Jost Conference Room, Liverpool John Moores University, Byrom Street (refreshments served after the meeting)

EMMA WHITE (Office for National Statistics)
Statistics from the census
The event will provide an understanding of how the North West region compares with the rest of the country and what changes have occurred since the last census was conducted in 2001. It will be of interest to anyone involved in policy or analysis work or of general interest to anyone living in the North West region.

Meeting organised by the RSS Merseyside local group and the Health and Safety Executive

Meeting contact: Paul Cushion (Paul.Cushion@hse.gsi.gov.uk)

WEST MIDLANDS

Joint meeting with the Midland Hub for Trials Methodology Research

Thursday 7 February, 4-5pm, Room UG06, Learning Centre, University of Birmingham, (refreshments at 3.30pm in the foyer)

REBECCA TURNER (MRC Biostatistics Unit)
Bias adjustment in evidence synthesis

Thursday 7 March, 5-6pm, Room A1.01, Zeeman Building, University of Warwick, (refreshments at 3.30pm in the foyer)

PETER CHALLENGOR (University of Exeter)
The statistical analysis of complex numerical models in the environmental sciences

Meeting contact: Peter Kimani (peter.k-u.kimani@warwick.ac.uk)
DIARY

For more information visit: www.rss.org.uk/events

UK

Payment-for-performance: incentivising quality in public services
9 February, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London
www.piru.ac.uk/?current-event=9

2013 Radical Statistics conference: inequality and statistics
23 February, York
www.radstats.org.uk/conference/york2013/

36th annual research students’ conference in probability, statistics and social statistics
25–28 March, Lancaster University
www.maths.lancs.ac.uk/~rsc2013

5th annual adaptive designs in clinical trials conference
8–9 April, Copthorne Tara Hotel, London
Contact: Cem Tuna  Email: ctuna@smi-online.co.uk
www.smi-online.co.uk/pharmaceuticals/uk/adaptive-designs

PSI 36th annual conference
12–15 May, Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow
Email: PSI@mci-group.com
www.PSIweb.org

32nd Leeds annual statistical research (LASR) workshop
2–4 July, University of Leeds
www1.maths.leeds.ac.uk/Statistics/workshop/lasr2013/

IBS 4th channel network conference
3–5 July, University of St Andrews, Scotland
Contact: Roland Langrock  Email: roland@mcs.st-and.ac.uk
http://bir.biometricsociety.org/events/channelnetworkconference

Burwalls meeting
16–17 September, Oxford
www.phc.ox.ac.uk/burwalls2013

NON-UK

NTTS 2013 conference
5–7 March, Brussels
www.ntts2013.eu

Symposium on recent advances in extreme value theory honouring Ross Leadbetter
18–20 March, Lisbon
Contact: K F Turkman  Email: kfturkman@fc.ul.pt
http://extremes-lisbon2013.weebly.com/

3rd joint statistical meeting Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Statistik
18–23 March, Freiburg
http://dagstat2013.uni-freiburg.de

Diary entries:
Conference organisers may wish to consider a full advert in RSS NEWS or a banner advert on the RSSeNews website. Contact Toni Young advertising@rss.org.uk for details.

For diary entries contact
Paul Gentry
p.gentry@rss.org
Conference on applied statistics in Ireland (CASI)
15–17 May, Westgrove Hotel in Clane, Co Kildare
www.casi.ie

3rd international conference: quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the economic and administrative sciences (QMEAS 2013)
23–24 May, Athens
http://users.teiath.gr/cfragos/index_files/Page1327.htm
http://goo.gl/XeYCV

Statistics and its interactions with other disciplines (SIOD 2013)
5–7 June, HoiChiMinh City, Vietnam

4th Nordic-Baltic biometric conference
10–12 June, Stockholm
http://nbbc13.org/

International workshop ARS’13 on ‘Networks in space and time: models, data collection and applications’
20–22 June, University of Roma Tre
Email: ars13@uniroma3.it
www.ars13.unisa.it

Third Italian conference on survey methodology (ITACOSM2013)
26–28 June, University of Milan-Bicocca
Email: info.itacosm13@statistica.unimib.it
www.statistica.unimib.it/itacosm13/

GDRR 2013 – third symposium on games and decisions in reliability and risk
8–10 July, Kinsale, Cork, Ireland

22nd International workshop on matrices and statistics
12–15 August, University of Toronto, Canada
Contact: S Ejaz Ahmed
Email: sahmed5@brocku.ca
www.fields.utoronto.ca/programs/scientific/13-14/IWMS/

59th ISI World Statistics Congress
25–30 August, Hong Kong
www.isi2013.hk

ENBIS-13 conference
16–18 September, Ankara
Contact: Sonja Kuhnt or Murat Caner Testik
Email: kuhnt@statistik.tu-dortmund.de or mtestik@hacettepe.edu.tr
www.enbis.org

Statistics 2013: socio-economic and sustainable challenges and solutions
International conference organised by C R Rao
28-31 December, University of Hyderabad, India
www.statistics2013-conference.org.in/