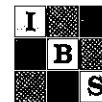


# Region and Group News



## AUSTRALASIAN REGION

### The Australasian Region Celebrates 50 Years

Early last year the Australasian Region, the fourth Region formed in the Biometric Society (BS), turned 50. So it was decided to hold our celebrations during our biennial meeting, Biometrics99, in Hobart last December (<http://www.cmis.csiro.au/Biometrics99/index.htm>). The following snippets summarising our early years were gleaned mainly from early editions of Biometrics.

The first IBC was held at the Marine Biology Laboratory in Woods Hole on Cape Cod, in September 1947. During this conference the Biometrics Society (BS) was formed. Dr Belz (then Associate Professor of Mathematical Statistics, University of Melbourne) was present at Woods Hole, and became a member of a committee established to consider the form of international cooperation and a member of the first BS Council. By early '48 EA (Alf) Cornish (Commonwealth of Australia, CSIR, Section of Mathematical Statistics, University of Adelaide; CSIR, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research was the forerunner of the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization) was organising the 'Australian Region' by sending 'relevant material to everyone in Australia likely to be interested' and [he did not think there would] be any difficulty in setting up the region. Helen Turner (Consulting Statistician to the CSIR\* Division of Animal Health and Production) was acting as secretary-treasurer. Cornish forwarded a list of 21 who

wished to become charter members in the Society.

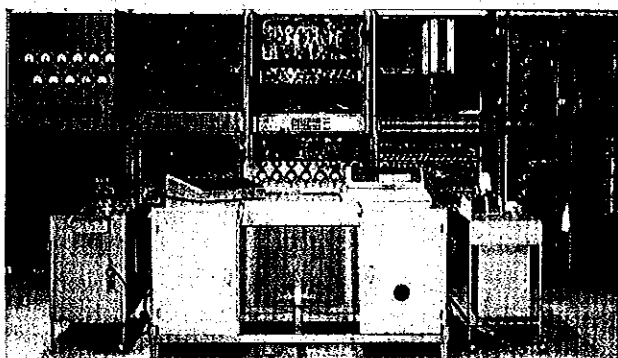
By April there were 23 and later in Biometrics we read 'The Australian Region is well along in formation with EA Cornish and Helen N Turner carrying the ball. A Regional meeting is planned at Hobart in January [1949], in conjunction with the meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science. Permanent officers will be named at that time, and decisions made as to future policy and regional meetings. Across the Tasman, several New Zealanders, interested in the Society, have proposed organizing a New Zealand Region because of their distance from Australia. Dr JT Campbell, senior lecturer in mathematics at Victoria University in Wellington, has arranged a gathering of New Zealand statistical workers at the University in late August and plans to bring up the question at that time.' However, the two groups combined and the Australasian Region was organized, 'with 37 members, as of December, 1948, from Victoria, New South Wales (NSW), Queensland, South Australia (SA), and New Zealand. The first meeting of the Region as a whole was held in Melbourne on January 8th with 30 or more in attendance from NSW, SA, Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory. (There is no record of what happened to the plan to meet in Hobart.) The Victorian Branch of the Region was already active, with program sessions in August, October and November, 1948.

According to Bliss (1958) 'in our (BS's) regional organisation we have had to break new ground. Our objectives were two-fold: (1) to give each member a greater opportunity for direct participation in Society activities, and (2) to minimize exchange difficulties. At the same time each Region needed sufficient autonomy to develop the pattern best adapted to its needs. The problem has been

solved in varying ways.' So, how did AR "solve its problems"? Again, according to Bliss, reporting on the first 10 years of the BS, 'our members in the AR have had to cope with long distances, so that their activities have concentrated on the biennial meeting of the Australian-New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS).

Since its organization in 1949, 4 meetings with the ANZAAS are on record, in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, and most recently in Dunedin, NZ, plus a few meetings of the Region alone in Melbourne and elsewhere. In recent years (NB mid-50's), proportionately more members have been enrolled in this Region than in any other of similar age [ie Region that started in the late 40's]; in the same period the President of the Society has been appropriately an Australian, E.A. Cornish. Alf Cornish was President, Biometric Society 1956-57, and the only person from this Region to hold this position for over 40 years. Why the two dates for the formation of the AR? Essentially the Region was being organised during late 1948, with the AR Constitution being formally adopted in January 1949, apparently at the Melbourne meeting. Nevertheless, according to the records, ENAR was organised straight after the formation of the BS, then the British Region in May '48, WJAR in July, AR in November (1948, according to Bliss), a French-Italian Region in February '49 and an Indian Region in May '49, so the AR can be regarded as the fourth region formed in the BS.

In 1953 we read in Biometrics that the Victorian & NSW Branches of the Region 'are quite active and have held monthly meetings throughout the year.' There are some personal snippets, such as Dr Mildred Barnard (Biometrician in the Division of Forest Products, CSIRO\*) and her four children joining her husband 'after great difficulty in finding a house' in Brisbane where her husband, S. Prentice 'has for some time been Professor of Engineering at the University of Queensland.' In 1956 (the year the Olympic Games were held in



Melbourne), an AR meeting was held in Melbourne.

Visits were arranged to the Olympic site, and to the University of Melbourne to view the 'Electronic Computer' CSIRAC (Council for Scientific & Industrial Research Automatic Computer) which was the fifth electronic stored program computer ever developed.

Both Jim Douglas (University of New South Wales) and Evan Williams (who was for many years associated with CSIRO and later the University of Melbourne) wrote to me concerning activities during the sixties. In particular, their impression was that the relative lack of formal Biometrics Society activity in NSW was due to the early existence of the Statistical Society there, but the relatively late development of a Statistical Society presence in Victoria was due to the existence of strong Biometric Society activity.

The AR Executives are well-documented, thanks to Biometrics (back to 1959). Before 1959, the record is patchy. Concerning meetings after 1958, again the record is not complete, but nearly all biennial meetings seemed to be joint with ANZAAS, and occasionally with the Statistical Society of Australia.

A postscript: The completeness of the AR record depended on the diligence of the Regional Executive in reporting our activities. Today, the *Biometric Bulletin* is an important publication concerning your Region/Group's activities and will be the main record you will have when it is time to write your history. So do ensure your Bulletin Correspondent is active in reporting all your past, present and planned activities.

Sue Wilson

## BRITISH REGION

The Summer Meeting and 194th Ordinary Meeting was held on Wednesday June 21, 2000 at the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control under the title "Applications of Biometry in Biological Standardisation".

There were about 35 members present and as well as a number of presentations there was a poster session and members were shown around the site. (Abstracts can be found on the IBS Web site: <http://www.tibs.org/meetingabstracts.html>).

The following presentations were given by staff of NIBSC and other colleagues.

In an introduction M.J. Jordan (Assistant Director (Scientific), NIBSC) gave an overview of the history of NIBSC starting in 1925 with the formation of NIBS under the aegis of the MRC who continued to run the Institute until 1972 when NIBSC was set up. Early work of Dale, Gaddum, Finney, Emmens, and Bliss was discussed as well as the material presented in successive editions of the *British Pharmacopoeia*.

75 Years of Britain's Contributions to Biological Standardisation: D.R. Bangham, Mill Hill, London. Terminological Inexactitude and Bioassay Practice: D.J. Finney, Emeritus Professor of Statistics, University of Edinburgh. Botulinum toxin - Are Units necessary? D. Sesardic, Division of Bacteriology, NIBSC, South Mimms, Potters Bar. Viral markers in blood: Standards and quality assessment: D. Sands, Informatics Laboratory, NIBSC, South Mimms, Potters Bar. Computational modelling of heparin and protein growth factors: M. Forster, Informatics Laboratory, NIBSC, South Mimms, Potters Bar. Bioassay design: The assayer's perspective: J. Robinson, Division of Endocrinology, NIBSC, South Mimms, Potters Bar. Incorporating Historical Control Data: P. Terrill and B. Morgan, Zeneca Agrochemicals and University of Kent at Canterbury. In addition, there was a poster session with optional tours of the Institute.

The Annual General Meeting and 195th Ordinary Meeting will take place on November 23, 2000. This is planned to be an all day meeting including the Presidential Address. There will be a poster session. There will be a charge for the whole meeting (around 20 GBP for members, around 30 GBP for non-members).

Regional records are being transferred to the RSS Archives; these already include "Tracts in Biometry" dating from the 19th century. About 100 replies were received from members in response to a questionnaire concerning the format of meetings. A 3-day meeting in 2001 is being considered.

Clive Moncrieff

## COLOMBIAN REGION

### 2000. Simposio de Estadística. Universidad Nacional de Colombia

August 5-12, 2000, San Andrés, Colombia. Sponsored by National University of Colombia. This year the symposium is dedicated to Census, Surveys and Systems for Statistical Information. Programmed activities are conferences, communications and short courses. Available short courses are: Planificación de Censos: Magda Ruiz (UDB-Spain), Tratamiento de Datos Faltantes en Encuestas: Adriana Pérez (PUJ/UN-Colombia), Planeación de Encuestas y su Ejecución: Leonardo Bautista (UN-Colombia), Sistemas de Información Estadística: Alvaro Montenegro (UN-Colombia), Homogenización y Comparabilidad de Variables de Censos: Ciro Martínez (UDB-Spain), Estudio de Poblaciones Biológicas: Hugo Robotan (UDP-Chile), Estimación del Error Muestral en Muestras Complejas: Ismael Florez (Westat-USA) and Búsqueda de Información con SQL: Jorge Ortiz (UN-Colombia). This year IBS Colombian group meeting will be held during this event. For complete information: <http://www.matematicas.unal.edu.co/simposio/index.html> or fax +(571) 316-5327 ext 13210 or Email: <simposio@matematicas.unal.edu>. Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Ciudad Universitaria, Bogotá-Colombia.

## DUTCH REGION

On May 24<sup>th</sup> the 2000 Dutch Biometry Award has been presented on the Dutch Biometric Day.

**Biometrische  
Sectie**



This award has been established by the Netherlands Region of the International Biometric Society (ANed) to both stimulate the writing of biometric papers among its members and to place good papers in the spotlight. The Award comprises a diploma and a money prize. The award is granted every second year to the author(s) of the best biometric paper. The international jury of the 2000 Biometry Award consisted of three persons, chairman prof dr Geert Molenberghs (Limburgs Universitair Centrum Diepenbeek, Belgium), prof dr David Balding, prof dr David Balding (Department of Applied Statistics, Univer-

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