

International Biometric Society — British and Irish Region

Secretary's report, November 2009

James Carpenter

This year has seen some exciting developments for the International Society and the Region, which place us in a very good position to go forward. Further details will be given by Diana and Peter in due course, but briefly:

1. The international society, responding to inputs from the BIR amongst others, has created the option of electronic only access to the journals for members. This means membership dues can be fixed, so that the BIR provides outstanding value for money for members.
2. The current regional website has been updated, and a new website, with substantially increased functionality has been commissioned.

Since the well attended meeting last November—joint with the Southern England Genetic Epidemiology Group—at which David Balding gave his presidential address, the BIR has been involved in the following meetings:

1. The channel network conference in Gent. This consisted of two short courses on P-splines and competing risks; nine invited sessions covering biological versus statistical interaction, mixture models and growth curves, and multivariate survival analysis; 48 contributed papers and 17 posters; and a lively keynote lecture on Exploiting graphical models to model and solve pedigree analysis problems by Thomas Schiex. After an excellent conference dinner participants left the meeting with warm feelings of time well spent. Many thanks to Stijn Vansteelandt and his colleagues for their organisation.
2. The memorable and enjoyable Summer meeting at Down House, home of Charles Darwin, in the centenary year of his birth.
3. A half-day meeting, Topics in Statistical Ecology, held in Edinburgh in June, organised by Byron Morgan. There were four excellent talks, all given by members of the EPSRC National Centre for Statistical Ecology (NCSE), a joint research centre established in 2005 between the Universities of Kent, Cambridge and St Andrews.
4. Today's meeting, Assessing our Biological Capital, joint with the RSS environmental section.

Further details of these meetings can be found in the regional newsletters. As usual, we thank the committee members involved for their enthusiastic and energetic commitment to making them a success.

A further meeting, Cost Benefit Analysis: current perspectives and future directions, unfortunately had to be postponed, but will take place in early February 2010.

Following elections to the IBS council, we were delighted that the following BIR members were elected to serve for 3 years from January 2010: Dr Ruth King (St Andrews), Dr Sue Wellham (Rothamsted Research) and Professor Chris Glasbey (Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland). Council members are also ex-officio members of the BIR committee and we look forward to working with them. We thank our council members who are standing down in January, Prof David Clayton and Prof Robin Thompson, for their work on behalf of the society, internationally and locally, over many years.

I am sorry to report that there has been a slight decrease in membership this year. The committee continues to work to make BIR membership attractive. Colleagues need to be asked to join a society like ours, and to that end the BIR committee has agreed that this year we will offer a £20 book token to every member who signs up a new member.

I, and the committee, are always keen to hear from members about what they would like the society to be doing (or what it is doing now that it shouldn't be doing): do feel free to email me (james.carpenter@lshtm.ac.uk). The committee continues to believe the BIR has an important role to play in bringing together statisticians working in environmental, agricultural, biological and medical applications—but we need your input, and help in encouraging new members to take up and retain membership.

Finally, it is a pleasure to thank Bryon for his leadership of the region, Diana and Peter for their work as membership secretary and treasurer respectively, and members of the committee, especially Bianca DeStavola and Chris Glasbey who stand down this Autumn.
