

International Biometric Society
British Region
Minutes of Annual General Meeting, 2005

The Annual General Meeting of the British Region of the International Biometric Society was held at 12.25 pm on Wednesday 23rd November at the Wellcome Trust Conference Centre, Hinxton, Cambridge, CB10 1RQ. The President, Professor Joe Perry, took the chair. About 24 members were present.

1. The President opened the meeting by reporting on the recent announcement of the election of British Region member, John Nelder, as an Honorary Life Member of the International Biometric Society, on the establishment of the “Channel Network”, to be reported during the Secretary’s Report, and on recent committee deliberations on future plans for British Region meetings.
2. The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting were approved as read.
3. The Secretary briefly summarised his written report on the activities of the Region during the past year. It had been less busy than the previous year, with three planned meetings and a conference. The November meeting featured Mike Kenward’s Presidential Address “What’s missing? Principles and procedures in the handling of missing data” followed by an afternoon focussing on “Biometry and Biometrics – the interaction between Statistics/Mathematics and Bioidentification” with speakers from both fields. The July meeting at the Central Science Laboratory outside York had been cancelled due to limited numbers of registrations, prompting a detailed review of the British Region programme of meetings by the regional committee. There had been a joint meeting with the RSS Environmental Statistics Section on “Impacts of Climate Change” in October. The highlight of the year had been the Multi-Regional Conference at Leicester in April, bringing together biometricians from the British, Belgian, French and Netherlands Regions of the IBS, with invited sessions of Bioinformatics, Climate Change, Microarrays, Biometry in the EU and Biometry in Society. A meeting of Regional officers during this conference had resulted in the proposal for the “Channel Network” to provide a formal link between the four regions – this had recently been approved by Council, with Andrew Mead elected as the first Network Coordinator. The Secretary also presented plans for the future British Region programme of meetings, with two main one-day meetings each year, supplemented by a conference each year (IBC in even-numbered years, Channel Network Conference in odd-numbered years) and other meetings organised jointly with other societies, particularly focussing on non-statistical societies to pursue the IBS policy of outreach. He finished by presenting a provisional programme of meetings for the next 18 months.

In the absence of any questions for the Secretary, the President thanked him for all his hard work for the British Region over the past year.

4. The Treasurer briefly summarised the presented accounts and his written report. The Region was in a reasonably strong financial position with assets of over £20,000 at the end of the financial year. The increase in funds was primarily due to the success of the two recent conferences (2003, 2005), both of which had yielded a profit, with relatively few other expenses. The Region had again received a donation from the Fisher Memorial Trust to support the attendance of young biometricians at conferences, and there should be similar bursaries available to support attendance at IBC 2006. The Region had also set up a Euro account to make it easier for Irish members to pay their subscriptions and to aid payment of speaker expenses to any European speakers. The US dollar exchange rate continued to be advantageous, and there was therefore no need to change British Region subscriptions for 2006.

Again, in the absence of questions for the Treasurer, the President thanked him for all his work for the British Region over the past year.

5. The Membership Secretary briefly summarised her written report. Although the report showed 306 members, it was noted that 36 of these had not paid their subscriptions for 2005, and were therefore pending removal. The reduction in numbers from 2004 was almost entirely due to those removed because of non-payment in the two previous years, with the number of new members matching the number of resignations. On a positive note a number of delegates to the November 2005 meeting had now joined as associate members. There was, however, still a strong decline in numbers over the past 10 years.

The President commented that the committee were paying serious attention to the questions of recruitment, and invited ideas from the membership. It was pointed out that one major contribution to declining numbers (not just in our society) was the increase in electronic publishing, so that journals were more easily available.

The Membership Secretary was thanked for her work for the British Region over the past year.

6. As no other nominations had been received, the following were declared elected:

President-Elect	Prof. David Balding (Imperial College)
Secretary:	Mr. Andrew Mead (Warwick HRI, University of Warwick)
Treasurer:	Mr. Peter Rigsby (NIBSC)
Membership Secretary:	Miss Suzanne Clark (Rothamsted Research)
Committee Members:	Dr Angela Wood (MRC, Cambridge)
(2005-2008)	Prof. Steve Gilmour (Queen Mary, University of London)

7. Amendment to British Rules – The Secretary explained the reasons behind the proposal to rename the British Region as the British and Irish Region. A postal ballot had been held, with 39 completed ballots received by the start of the AGM. Of these 34 were in favour of the amendment and 5 against. The amendment was therefore carried with the required 2/3 of ballots in favour of the amendment. This change will now have to be ratified by Council.
8. Robin Thompson (Rothamsted Research) was thanked for his work as auditor for the past year, and was nominated (proposed by Janet Riley, seconded by Joe Perry) and elected as auditor for the coming year.

There being no matters raised under Any Other Business, the President closed the meeting at 12.50 pm.