

THE CAMBRIDGE STATISTICS DISCUSSION GROUP

Monday 4th February 2013 7:15 for 7:45

The Statistical Laboratory,
Centre for Mathematical Sciences,
Wilberforce Road, Cambridge, CB3 0WB

The Early Years of the Medical Research Council's Biostatistics Unit: Science and People

Vern Farewell
MRC Biostatistics Unit

Abstract: The Medical Research Council's (MRC) Biostatistics Unit is approaching its centenary, having been established in 1914. In the UK, the development of medical statistics as a discipline has been closely linked to the Unit's development. In this talk, I will consider the scientific and political contexts which contributed to the establishment of the Unit. In addition, the lives and work of the first two Directors of the Unit, John Brownlee and Major Greenwood, will be discussed. Their scientific contributions and leadership roles will be highlighted. The roles of two other members of the Unit during these early years will also be examined, one individual well known, Austin Bradford Hill, and one less well known, Hilda Mary Woods.

Speaker: Prior to moving to the MRC Biostatistics Unit in 2001, Vern Farewell held professorial positions at the University of Washington, the University of Waterloo and University College London. He has published widely in the statistical and medical literature and is co-author of the four editions of the book "Using and Understanding Medical Statistics". Since 2007, he has been Editor of "Statistics in Medicine". His current research has a primary focus on the analysis of observational longitudinal data.

Directions: The main entrance is reached from Clarkson Road by going along the footpath to the right of the Newton Institute, and turning left through the gatehouse towards the main building (Pavilion A), which has a glass front and a curved grassed roof. The main entrance is in the middle of the glass front. Coffee before the talk will be in the common room in Pavilion D, and the talk will be in Meeting Room 4 in Pavilion A. Free parking is available after 5pm on Clarkson and Wilberforce Roads.

Provisional Next Meetings:

5th March - Peter Treasure (Easter Cancer Registry and Information Centre & Department of Public Health and Primary Care) on 'Constructing a Predictor of Treatment Benefit when there is no Overall Treatment Effect: *A Cancer Vaccine Study*'.

25th March - Stephen Kaptoge (Cardiovascular Epidemiology Unit).

25th April - David Greenberg (Eastern Cancer Registration & Information Centre).

15th October - Mike Bithell (Geography).

25th November - James Wason (MRC Biostatistics).

Supper: Some members eat before a talk at the University Centre meeting in the downstairs bar at 6pm. All welcome !

Subscriptions: of 1 pound are now due for attending the 2012-2013 session.

Secretary: Peter Watson, MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, 15 Chaucer Road, Cambridge CB2 7EF;
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Take a look at our website: <http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/people/peter.watson/csdg.html> (soon to be moving to <http://cbsu.mrc-dev.org/people/peter.watson/csdg.html>)