6. Reports on Recent Activities

Symposium in honor of Willem van Zwet
March 23–26, 1999, University of Leiden, The Netherlands

On the occasion of the 65th birthday of Willem van Zwet, a symposium titled "State of the Art in Probability and Statistics" was held at the University of Leiden March 23–26, 1999. Thirty leading researchers in probability and statistics had accepted the invitation to attend, and twenty gave a presentation. The symposium was closed by the farewell address by Willem van Zwet to the University of Leiden.

Mathisca de Gunst, Amsterdam

Group of invited guests, all around Willem van Zwet

Discussion in one of the presentations

Semstat—Séminaire Européen de Statistique on Complex Stochastic Systems
March 15–20, 1999, Eindhoven (The Netherlands)

This meeting was the fourth in a series of postdoc workshops which are an activity of the ERC and have been held approximately biennially since 1992. Organized by the Semstat steering group, consisting of Ole Barndorff-Nielsen, Muriel Casalis, Rainer Dahlhaus, Wilfrid Kendall, Claudia Klüppelberg (chair), Hans R. Künsch and Peter Spreij, and sponsored by EURANDOM, the meeting took place at EURANDOM, a European research institute located on the campus of Eindhoven University of Technology in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, from Monday March 15 to Saturday March 20.

The fourth Semstat was dedicated to the topic of *Complex Stochastic Systems.* The program featured four main review series (each composed by three lectures): on *Markov Chain Monte Carlo Methods* by Peter Green (Bristol), on *State Space and Hidden Markov Models* by Hans R. Künsch (Zürich), on *Graphical Models and Causal Inference* by Steffen Lauritzen (Aalborg), and on *Conditional Monte Carlo on Pedigree and Chromosome Structures* by Elizabeth Thompson (Seattle). Two related individual lectures, on *Renormalization of Interacting Diffusions* by Frank den Hollander (Nijmegen), and on *Stein's Method for Epidemic Processes* by Gesine Reinert (Cambridge), completed the invited program. Most of the about 40 postdocs who attended the workshop presented their own work giving either a contributed talk or a poster in an animated poster session. The program left plenty of time for discussions which were often continued over dinner in Eindhoven's good restaurants.

The structure of the workshop offers an ideal opportunity for postdocs from all over Europe and beyond to become acquainted with an interesting and challenging research area as well as to get to know each other and each others' work.

The expository review lectures will be published by Chapman & Hall. The detailed program is available on the web at

`http://www-m1.mathematik.tu-muenchen.de/m4/lect-conf/semstat.html`

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