

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE APPLIED PROBABILITY TRUST

Edited by
S. ASMUSSEN, P. JAGERS, I. MOLCHANOV and L. C. G. ROGERS

Part 1. Historical reflections

50 YEARS OF THE APPLIED PROBABILITY TRUST, 1964–2014

JOE GANI, *Australian National University*

Mathematical Sciences Institute, Australian National University, Bldg 26B, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia.



APPLIED PROBABILITY TRUST
DECEMBER 2014

50 YEARS OF THE APPLIED PROBABILITY TRUST, 1964–2014

By JOE GANI

2014 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Applied Probability Trust (APT), an event celebrated by the present volume. This article sketches the APT's history from its beginnings in 1964 to the present.

In 1952, Pat Moran established the Department of Statistics in the Research School of Social Sciences of the Australian National University (ANU). The group soon became internationally known for its research in statistics and applied probability; in 1961, five years after I had obtained my PhD under Moran at ANU, I was able to join his department as a Senior Fellow. It soon became clear that the existing journals such as *Biometrika* and the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society* were not ideally suited to work in the area of applied probability: the former would reject papers which were deemed to contain excessive mathematics, while the latter declined papers with too much statistics.

By 1963, when I was about to take some sabbatical leave, it had become obvious that what was required was a publication specifically devoted to applied probability. Before leaving Canberra for University College London (UCL), I enlisted the support of two colleagues, Norma MacArthur of the ANU Demography Department, and Ted Hannan of the ANU General Studies Department of Statistics, both of whom offered financial backing when needed.

While overseas, I was able to convince some colleagues, such as Maurice Bartlett of UCL and David Kendall of the Statistical Laboratory, Cambridge, to serve as future editors of an applied probability publication. Encouraged by these tokens of support, I returned to Canberra ready to launch such a publication. Before doing so, I asked Miriam Balaban of the Jerusalem Academic Press for an estimate of expected costs based on two projected issues, each of about 250 pages, of appropriate production quality. This estimate exceeded the amount that Norma MacArthur, Ted Hannan, and I could raise privately; fortunately, David Kendall suggested that I approach the London Mathematical Society (LMS) for help with the startup capital, so I flew to London to make my case. To my delight, the LMS agreed to support the venture, and in June 1964, with the help of the LMS and its lawyers, the APT was created as a nonprofit foundation, with four Trustees: Sir Edward Collingwood (as LMS Treasurer), Norma MacArthur, Ted Hannan, and me. The relationship with the LMS continued until 2010, when the LMS decided to withdraw from the Trust.

The first issue of the *Journal of Applied Probability* (JAP), consisting of papers solicited from established probabilists, appeared in June 1964. It was followed in 1969 by its sister publication *Advances in Applied Probability* (AAP), which encouraged longer submissions and developed a special section on stochastic geometry. In the same year, the APT extended its scope with *Mathematical Spectrum* (MS), a magazine for students and teachers of mathematics, as well as anyone interested in mathematics. In 1976 *The Mathematical Scientist* (TMS), a journal for general mathematicians, began as a CSIRO journal, but later reverted to the APT after a brief period under the aegis of the Australian Mathematical Society. JAP and AAP established applied probability as an important field of research, and in 1990 the Institute of Mathematical Statistics recognized this fact by launching its *Annals of Applied Probability*. I served as Editor-in-Chief of JAP and AAP until 1989, and was followed by Chris Heyde, who served until his death

in 2008. He in turn was succeeded by the present Editor-in-Chief, Søren Asmussen; thanks are due to Aarhus University for allowing him time to carry out his editorial responsibilities. David Sharpe is the current Editor of *MS*, while I now edit *TMS* jointly with Randall Swift of the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

The APT also publishes occasional volumes and Festschriften, the most recent being a volume in honour of Søren Asmussen in 2011 entitled *New Frontiers in Applied Probability*. The APT's support for mathematics education continues, with prizes offered to undergraduate students in 17 universities and institutions in the USA, Canada, Europe, and Australia to encourage the students to pursue their studies in probability and statistics.

The APT's publishing office continues to be located in Sheffield, UK, where it was established during my professorship between 1965 and 1974 at The University of Sheffield. The first executive (managing) editor, Mavis Hitchcock, was followed by Dr Linda Nash, and later in 2013 by Dr Emma Talib; the office now has four administrative and editorial staff. It is these dedicated staff members who have ensured the continuity of the journals, the health of the Trust's administration, and the journals' excellent relations with their constituency.

The APT has had fifty years as a viable publishing operation, and has successfully adapted to the electronic revolution, currently producing both print and online products. By publishing mathematical research of the highest quality, it continues to serve the mathematical community. The current Trustees (Søren Asmussen, Daryl Daley, Peter Glynn, Frank Kelly, Peter Taylor, and myself) look forward to maintaining the APT's support for mathematics, and especially applied probability for the foreseeable future.

JOE GANI, *Australian National University*

Mathematical Sciences Institute, Australian National University, Bldg 26B, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia..