



Julian Besag FRS, 1945–2010

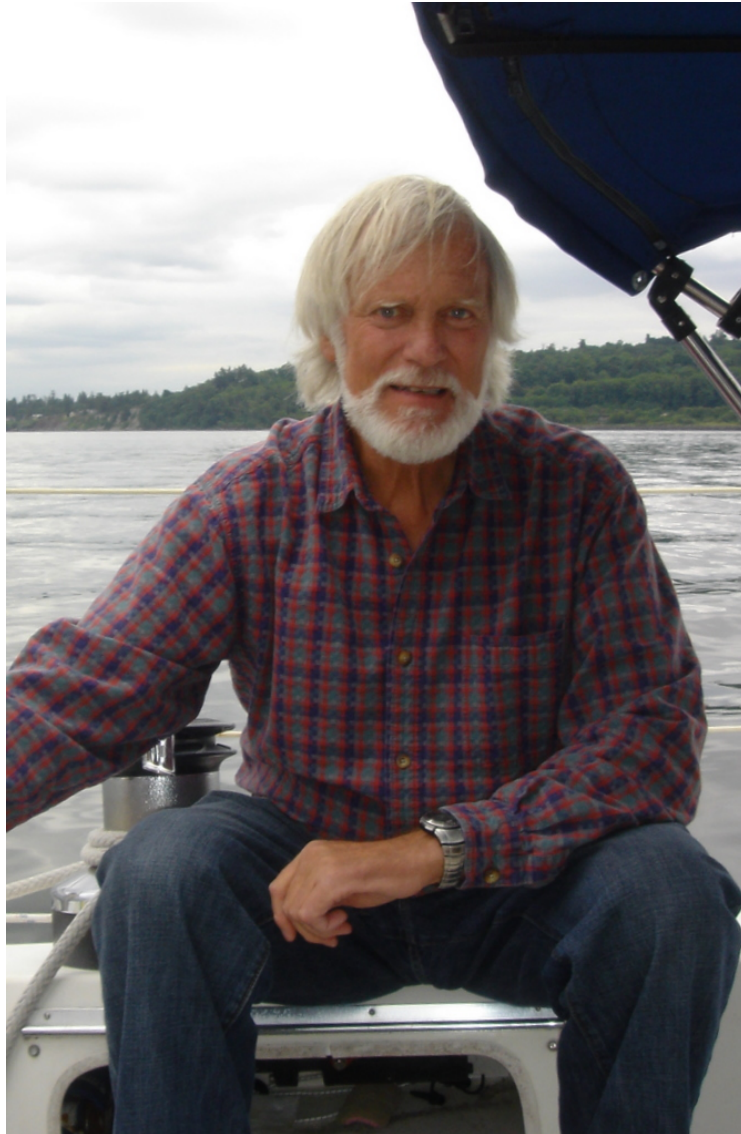


## Index

Anonymous, 18, 42  
Arjas, Elja, 42  
Baddeley, Adrian, 26  
Besag, Valerie, 4  
Bhansali, Raj, 8  
Bird, Sheila, 22  
Coleman, Shirley, 30  
Cressie, Noel, 13  
Diggle, Peter, 7  
Dryden, Ian, 43  
Duffy, Stephen, 27  
Ford, Ashley, 43  
Geman, Donald, 26  
Geman, Stuart, 43  
Glasbey, Chris, 44  
Gneiting, Tilmann, 36  
Green, Liz, 17  
Green, Peter, 19  
Harding, Ted, 23  
Held, Leo, 32  
Jennison, Chris, 24  
Kelly, Frank, 9  
Lindgren, Finn, 38  
Madigan, David, 44  
Mardia, Kanti, 11  
Mason, David, 31  
Matthews, John, 28  
Mengersen, Kerrie, 28  
Milne, Robin, 21  
Mondal, Debashis, 41  
Møller, Jesper, 31  
Nasmith, Judy, 44  
Petronne, Sonia, 45  
Porteous, Bruce, 27  
Renshaw, Eric, 45  
Robert, Christian, 45  
Seheult, Allan, 13  
Silverman, Bernard, 10  
Stanberry, Larissa, 40  
Stein, Alfred, 37  
Stephens, Michael, 35  
Titterington, Mike, 21  
Übelacker-Besag, Hilde, 1  
Valle, Honey Vincent, 39  
Wolfram, Julian, 15  
Zachary, Stan, 46

**Stan Zachary (Heriot-Watt)**

I was very shocked and saddened to see your mail about Julian, of whom I have nothing but the fondest of memories, and who was a very good and supportive friend to me and to many others.



## **Preface**

Julian Besag will long be remembered for his many original contributions to statistical science, spanning theory, methodology and substantive application. This booklet arose out of a two-day memorial meeting held at the University of Bristol in April 2011.

The first day of the memorial meeting was devoted to personal reminiscences from some of Julians many colleagues and friends. These collectively paint a vivid portrait of an unforgettable character who could infuriate on occasion, but was universally admired and much loved. Their informality also complements the scientific obituaries that have been published in the open literature, for example in the April 2011 issue of the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A.

Peter Green, Peter Diggle, September 2011



### **Sonia Petrone (Milan)**

I am so bad at expressing things in words, especially in English! I met Julian only a few times, after all, but when I met him in Bristol after so many years, it was amazing how we were still good friends. I think Julian was like this, he had such a strong and direct way to communicate his torment and passion for living, with no filter. Life in its essence, joy and drama. His intelligence in research was also like that, I think, essential and deep.

There is another thing about Julian I liked so much: his passion for water, for the ocean. Perhaps you could post a little line from me, it's a line by Baudelaire, but I would like to say it to him in Italian:

Uomo libero, amerai sempre il mare.  
(Free man, you will always love the ocean.)

Homme libre, toujours tu chériras la mer!  
La mer est ton miroir; tu contemples ton âme  
Dans le déroulement infini de sa lame,  
Et ton esprit n'est pas un gouffre moins amer.  
*Charles Baudelaire, Les Fleurs du Mal*

### **Eric Renshaw (Strathclyde)**

Very sad to hear about poor old Julian. The last time I saw him was at the Royal Society of Edinburgh some time ago and he seemed to be pretty shaky then. By all accounts he was slowly getting more poorly thereafter so the news has not come as a complete surprise. I just hope that following the major surgery he was able to be kept sufficiently sedated not to suffer any pain.

### **Christian Robert (Paris)**

I have just learned that Julian Besag passed away yesterday morning in Bristol after being admitted to the hospital two weeks ago. He was a leading figure of our field, a fiercely independent thinker, a brilliant statistician, and undoubtedly the clearest pretendent to having fathered MCMC. His influence on the field of spatial statistics will be felt for years, but he will be sorely missed. My first meeting with Julian was in 1993 in Laramie, Wyoming, and my last memory of him will be the visit George Casella and I made to Bath and Bristol in October 2008, and where Julian attended both of our talks as well as the dinner in Bath and the after-seminar beer in Bristol. He will be missed.