

ANDERS H. HALD

Anders Hjorth Hald, one of Denmark's most distinguished statisticians, died on 11 November 2007. In 2001, he had become one of the first group of eminent foreign scholars elected to our new category of Corresponding Fellows. Unfortunately, he never had any subsequent opportunity to visit Edinburgh and so to develop his intended role as an academic link between Denmark and Scotland.

Anders, born in 1913, was the son of a village schoolmaster in Jylland. Like many Scandinavian statisticians, his university studies were in actuarial science. Doubtless his early success in winning a gold medal for a student paper on: "Mathematical exposition of R. A. Fisher's Theories" was a factor in his appointment as a statistical assistant to Georg Rasch at the internationally renowned State Serum Institute. His rapidly developing interest in diverse practical applications of mathematical theory was evident in his deservedly successful 1948 textbook: "Statistical Theory with Engineering Applications" [English edition 1952]. In 1960 he became the first Professor of Mathematical Statistics in the University of Copenhagen, an influential post that he held until retirement in 1982.

His researches in industrial quality control and associated sampling studies were always informed by his deep practical sense. This brought him international repute as teacher and consultant. His own travels and his encouragement of foreign visitors to his Department were important to the growth of cooperative statistical activities especially in Europe but also further afield. An involvement in writing the history of his university turned his mind to surveying the history of statistics. This resulted in two splendid volumes. First in 1990 was "A History of Probability and Statistics and their Applications Before 1750"; next in 1998 came "A History of Mathematical Statistics From 1750 to 1930", which will be his memorial for many years to come. He deployed his own great mathematical powers to "rewrite the original papers in a uniform modern terminology and notation", so permitting him to add illuminatory comments from a modern standpoint on researches that extend from De Moivre to Fisher. He did much to clarify the importance of early Danish contributions.

Hald's many honours included Membership of the Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters and of the Danish Academy for the Technical Sciences, Fellowship of the American Statistical Association and of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Statistical Society and honorary doctorates.

David Finney

I am indebted to Professor Niels Keiding for information taken from his more detailed notice in the ISI Newsletter number 1 for 2008.

Anders Hjorth Hald. MSc, Dr Phil (Copenhagen), Drhc (Danish Technical University), Member of The Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters, Member of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, FASA, HonFRSS, Hon Member, Danish Society for Theoretical Statistics. Born 3 June 1913, elected CorrFRSE 5 March 2001, died 11 November 2007.