



Sir David Cox

- 2005 George Box Medal report -

One of the highlights of the 5th ENBIS conference in Newcastle this year was the award of the George Box Medal to Sir David Cox.

The Box Medal is named after George Box and is awarded to recognise an extraordinary statistician who has contributed remarkably with his/her work to the development and the application of statistical methods in European business and industry.

The medal was presented to Sir David by Professor Henry Wynn from the London School of Economics. Henry gave a very warm and interesting account of David's contributions and achievements. The presentation of the award was followed by a fascinating talk in which David ranged across his many fields of interest in particular some observations about wool including its growth patterns and the way it is smooth only when stroked in one direction.

David studied Mathematics at the University of Cambridge, obtained his Master's from St. John's College, and also obtained his PhD in 1949 from the University of Leeds. He worked for the Royal Aircraft Establishment from 1944 to 1946 and at the Wool Industries Research Association in Leeds from 1946 to 1950. He was an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Cambridge and also a Reader in Statistics and a Professor of Statistics at Birkbeck College and Imperial College of Science and Technology, London University. He served as Warden of Nuffield College in Oxford from 1988-1994 and is currently a member of the Statistics department at the University of Oxford.

David has written over 250 papers and 16 books on various subjects dealing with statistics. One of these books includes "Planning of Experiments", which was published in 1958. In writing this book, his purpose was to put emphasis on topics that in the past had not been heavily discussed. Some of these topics include the justification and practical difficulties of randomization, Latin squares, and various factors that can occur in factorial experiments.

Henry applauded David for making significant breakthroughs in several areas of theoretical and applied statistics, a most unusual feat. David has touched the lives of many people with his lively interest in statistics and associated subjects. His modesty and open-mind make him an inspiration.

Ron Kenett, president-elect of ENBIS, in his closing comments, attributed his interest in statistics to the Statistics 101 class taught by Sir David at Imperial College he attended in 1971, "Having Professor Cox as an instructor in the introductory course was a memorable experience, moreover Sir David was later conducting tutorials for the advanced statistics courses presenting extraordinary insights by his ability to link topics in theoretical statistics to pure algebra functional analysis, numerical analysis etc..." He said.

"In a sense, your acceptance of the ENBIS Box medal is somehow "closing the loop" for me. It definitely provides a sense of satisfaction and pride in my profession as an Industrial Statistician". Ron dedicated his 1998 book with C. Fuchs on *Multivariate Quality Control: Theory and Applications* to David Cox, "a mentor who helped shaped my interest in industrial statistics".