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LATENT MIXED MODELS

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SUMMARY

The linear mixed model has been a major research interest of Dr Arthur Gilmour, motivated by problems arising in research data generated by agricultural scientists. He has developed a variety of computer packages associated with the linear mixed model. He has tirelessly assisted researchers in the analysis and interpretation of their data using these packages. In this quest to help researchers he has made several important innovations. The purpose of this paper is to review some of these innovations, including improved iterative schemes for estimating variance parameters, developing a powerful scheme for specification of linear mixed models and exploiting sparsity to reduce the computational burden. Some of these innovations are only implicitly described in computer user guides and deserve wider recognition.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper we review some of the contributions of Dr Arthur Gilmour to the analysis of correlated data, especially that generated by agricultural scientists. He has developed several packages that help with this analysis including REG (Gilmour 1993a), a generalised linear model program, TwoD (Gilmour 1992), a program for the analysis of spatial data, BVEST (Gilmour 1993b), a program for the prediction of breeding values using best linear unbiased prediction (BLUP) and more recently ASReml (Gilmour *et al.* 2006) a program for the analysis of mixed models. In this paper some of the features involved in the development of this program will be reviewed, including some of the theory behind the program, the specification of the model and taking account of sparsity in various algorithms introduced to reduce the computational burden.

THEORY

Some of the main points arise by considering a linear model of the form

$$\mathbf{y} = \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\tau} + \mathbf{Z}\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{e} \quad (1)$$

where \mathbf{y} is the vector of phenotypic measurements and \mathbf{X} is the design matrix for fixed effects, $\boldsymbol{\tau}$, \mathbf{Z} is the design matrix for random effects, \mathbf{u} , and \mathbf{e} is the vector of model residuals and where effects vector, \mathbf{u} , and the residual vector, \mathbf{e} , are assumed to be multivariate normally distributed with $\text{var}\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{u} \\ \mathbf{e} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{G} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{R} \end{bmatrix}$. Because this linear model includes fixed effects, $\boldsymbol{\tau}$, and random effects, \mathbf{u} , this is called a mixed model. It has many applications. In the analysis of experiments interest is in estimation of treatment effects, $\boldsymbol{\tau}$, taking account of the correlated variance structure. In some genetic applications there is interest in estimation of the genetic variances and covariances in \mathbf{G} , adjusting the data for the fixed effects $\boldsymbol{\tau}$. In other applications, which particularly motivated Henderson, there is interest in predicting the random effects \mathbf{u} and Henderson (1973) introduced the system of equations

$$\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{X}'\mathbf{R}^{-1}\mathbf{X} & \mathbf{X}'\mathbf{R}^{-1}\mathbf{Z} \\ \mathbf{Z}'\mathbf{R}^{-1}\mathbf{X} & \mathbf{Z}'\mathbf{R}^{-1}\mathbf{Z} + \mathbf{G}^{-1} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \hat{\boldsymbol{\tau}} \\ \hat{\mathbf{u}} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{X}'\mathbf{R}^{-1}\mathbf{y} \\ \mathbf{Z}'\mathbf{R}^{-1}\mathbf{y} \end{bmatrix} \quad (2)$$

$$\text{or } [\mathbf{C}] \begin{bmatrix} \hat{\boldsymbol{\tau}} \\ \hat{\mathbf{u}} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{X}'\mathbf{R}^{-1}\mathbf{y} \\ \mathbf{Z}'\mathbf{R}^{-1}\mathbf{y} \end{bmatrix} \quad (3)$$

and showed that the solutions for the random effects are the Best Linear Unbiased Predictors (BLUPs) of those effects. Given \mathbf{R} and \mathbf{G} , the solution for the fixed effects given by these equations is the same as given by solving $\mathbf{X}'\mathbf{V}^{-1}\mathbf{X}\hat{\boldsymbol{\alpha}} = \mathbf{X}'\mathbf{V}^{-1}\mathbf{y}$ where $\mathbf{V} = \mathbf{R} + \mathbf{Z}\mathbf{G}\mathbf{Z}'$. Because of the similarity of these equations to least squares equations, which are the same as (2) but without the \mathbf{G}^{-1} term, these equations are now called Henderson's mixed model equations.

In other cases there is interest in parameterizing \mathbf{R} and \mathbf{G} , as a function of variance parameters and estimating these variance parameters. Patterson and Thompson (1971) introduced a residual maximum likelihood (REML) method based on maximising the likelihood of error contrasts i.e. contrasts that contributed no information on fixed effects. This REML method agreed with analysis of variance methods in balanced cases and effectively eliminated bias in variance estimation due to not knowing the fixed effects. Convenient forms of the residual log-likelihood (Harville 1974, Smith and Graser 1985) are

$$L = -(0.5)(D+S), \text{ where } D = \log\det(\mathbf{V}) + \log\det(\mathbf{X}'\mathbf{V}^{-1}\mathbf{X}) = \log\det(\mathbf{G}) + \log\det(\mathbf{R}) + \log\det(\mathbf{C})$$

and $S = \mathbf{y}'\mathbf{P}\mathbf{y}$, is a residual sum of squares with $\mathbf{P} = \mathbf{V}^{-1} - \mathbf{V}^{-1}\mathbf{X}(\mathbf{X}'\mathbf{V}^{-1}\mathbf{X})^{-1}\mathbf{X}'\mathbf{V}^{-1} = \mathbf{R}^{-1} - \mathbf{R}^{-1}\mathbf{W}\mathbf{C}^{-1}\mathbf{W}'\mathbf{R}^{-1}$ with $\mathbf{W} = [\mathbf{X} \ \mathbf{Z}]$.

This residual likelihood is of the same form as the full likelihood with the addition of the last term in D that is sometimes thought of as a penalty for estimating the fixed effects. Smith and Graser (1985) introduced the form that is a function of \mathbf{C} that naturally leads to sequential formation of the likelihood. The terms D and S can be formed sequentially by using terms associated with eliminating, or absorbing, the fixed and random effects one by one from the MME. An advantage of this is that \mathbf{C}^{-1} is not calculated and, because of the large number of zero elements in \mathbf{C} , computation can be substantially reduced by using sparse matrix methods. One disadvantage was that the differentials of the likelihood were not easily available. To maximize the likelihood with one parameter Smith and Graser (1985) suggested using a quadratic approximation. With more than one parameter, methods that avoid calculating derivatives become a popular flexible alternative, and the DFREML program written by Meyer (1991a) was used extensively. For example, these methods were used for Animal and Reduced Animal Models, both for univariate and multivariate data (Meyer, 1989, 1991b). The basic framework was extended to include more biologically appropriate models with genetic components, including maternal models with both Wilham and Falconer terms (Koerhuis and Thompson, 1997), and models with mutation terms (Wray, 1990).

A major disadvantage of derivative-free methods is that the computational effort increases dramatically as the number of variance parameters increases. An important advance in derivative-based methods was the rediscovery (Misztal and Perez-Enriso, 1993) of an algorithm (Takahashi *et al.* 1973) allowing calculation of the terms in \mathbf{C}^{-1} required for forming the first differentials, what might be called the sparse inverse of \mathbf{C} , without calculating all the elements of the inverse. Meyer and Smith (1996) introduced an alternative way of calculating these first differentials by performing the 'automatic' differentiation of the Cholesky decomposition of \mathbf{C} . These techniques for forming first derivatives both require twice the computational effort of forming the likelihood. An alternative derivation in terms of sequential formation of the sparse inverse of \mathbf{C}^{-1} parallels the sequential formation of the likelihood (Thompson *et al.* 1994). This result allowed the implementation of EM algorithms to estimate variance parameters (Misztal 1994). These were an improvement on derivative free methods but could still be slow to converge. It is possible to calculate second differentials using automatic differentiation (Smith 1995) but the computation of each second differential requires six times as many multiplications as those involved in a single likelihood calculation (Smith 1995), and this becomes more costly as the number of parameters increases. A convenient suggestion (Johnson and Thompson 1995; Gilmour *et al.* 1995) is based on manipulation of the alternative information matrices. They show that the average of the observed and expected information (AI) is relatively easy to calculate. The AI matrix is based on

the differential of the sum of squares S , and can be written in the similar way to S itself, using working variables based on estimates of the fixed effects and predictors of the random effects.

A synthesis of comparisons of different algorithms used to compute REML estimates was carried out by Hofer (1998) and is updated in Table 1. These comparisons show the expected improvement of EM methods over derivative free methods. The comparisons also show that most second differential methods converge in relatively few iterations.

Table 1. Results of empirical comparison of REML algorithms with regards to rounds of iteration (function evaluations for DF) and total time to convergence ^a

Ref ^a	MME ^b	Par ^c	DF ^d		EM		NR/AI ^e	
			F.Eval	Time (h)	Rounds	Time (h)	Rounds	Time (h)
1	4895	3	26	0.01	24	0.05		
	9790	9	238	0.31	33	0.26		
	14685	18	583	1.77	45	1.02		
2	6192	9	699	1.27			6	0.45
	10230	12	1236	2.33			8	0.90
	14274	18	4751	11.10			18	3.33
3	5731	5	169	0.34			6	0.07
4	8765	6	927	70.6	109	1.14	7	1.86
5	5073	2	39	0.02	23	4.97	5	0.02
6 ^f	233796	55	37021	2083			185	40.10
7	46581	12	1435	15.2	1006	88.6	6	0.58
	55410	19	5813	30.6			6	1.00

^a References 1 Misztal 1999; 2 Meyer and Smith 1996; 3 Johnson and Thompson 1995 ; 4 Gilmour *et al.* 1995; 5 Madsen *et al.* 1994 ; 6 Neumaier and Groeneveld 1998; 7 Jensen *et al.* 1997

^b Dimension of mixed model equations (MME).

^c Number of (co)variance components.

^d 'DF' = derivative free

^e 'NR' = quasi-Newton using computed analytic differences.

^f quasi -Newton using finite differences.

APPLICATION

With the availability of an efficient algorithm for the calculation of the sparse inverse of \mathbf{C} and for the calculation of an AI matrix there was interest in developing a general program for estimating variance parameters. This program, now called ASReML (Gilmour *et al.* 2006), was designed taking into account features in existing programs. These included REG (Gilmour 1993) a program for estimation of generalized linear models, TwoD (Gilmour 1992), a program for spatial analysis, REML (Thompson 1977, Robinson *et al.* 1982), a program developed for the analysis of variety trials that had been ported to Genstat, (Welham and Thompson 1990) and DFEML (Meyer 1991a).

Linear model specification. The specification of the design matrices \mathbf{X} and \mathbf{Z} in (1) initially followed the Wilkinson and Rogers (1973) syntax that allowed interaction between factorial terms and the specification of polynomial and regression sub models associated with factorial terms. This specification of models was very general but several modifications were found to be of value to ease the setting up of the linear model terms.

Conditional factors. Sometimes effects are only required to be fitted for subsets of the data. The at() function allows this. For example at(HERD.1).SEASON allows SEASON effects just for data with HERD =1. If no levels of the conditioning factor (at(HERD).SEASON in this case) are specified in the at() function, a complete set of conditioning terms is generate and this allows estimation of variance models for SEASON effects for each level of HERD.

Combining design matrices. There is sometimes the need to combine or overlay design matrices. The and() function allows this. For example SIREBREED and(DAMBREED) allows models with equal SIREBREED and DAMBREED effects to be fitted and this might be useful in the analysis of diallel crosses .Sometimes there is the need to associate competition effects from animals in the same group(Bijma *et al.*,2006). For example if there are 4 animals in each group and DIRECT is a factor indicating each animal and INDIRECT1, INDIRECT2, INDIRECT3 are factors indicating the 3 animals in the same group this can again be modelled using DIRECT and(INDIRECT1) and(INDIRECT2) and(INDIRECT3).

Functions of covariates and factorial effects. ASReml originally allowed model terms that were polynomials of covariates but there is sometimes interest in forming other functions ,for example when fitting splines. To add generality the facility to form user generated functions was added .For example, if the values of a covariate **c** are **cv**₁, ..., **cv**_L then reading in a file with i-th row **cv**_i **f**_j(**cv**_i) with i=1,...,L and j=1,...,L* and allows the functions **f**_j(**c**) with j=1,...,L* to be constructed and used in a model. Similarly if the effects, **u**_i, for a factor with L levels are required to be replaced by **u**_i = **Fu**_i^{*}, for example if some elements of **u**_i are constrained, then again the ,possibly non-zero, elements of the L×L* matrix **F** can be read in and the L* effects **u**_i^{*} incorporated into the linear model.

Variance specification. In the simplest case when the random effects were all uncorrelated allowed easy specification of the variance structure of the model. However the programs REML and TwoD and the need of users for various models including seperable spatial processes, random regression models and multivariate animal models inspired a wider class of models. Firstly both **R** and **G** were allowed to be expressed as a direct sum of respectively *s* and *b* parts i.e.

$$R = \bigoplus_{j=1}^s R_j = \begin{bmatrix} R_1 & 0 & \dots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & R_2 & \dots & 0 & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & R_{s-1} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 & R_s \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad G = \bigoplus_{i=1}^b G_i = \begin{bmatrix} G_1 & 0 & \dots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & G_2 & \dots & 0 & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & G_{b-1} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 & G_b \end{bmatrix}$$

The effects associated with each part are uncorrelated with effects in the other parts. This generality of **R** was partly to allow the analysis of a series of trials with possibly different numbers of plots and different variance parameters in each trial. The parameter *b* relates to the number of sets of random effects embedded in the random effects **u**. Models for the component matrices **R**_{*j*} and **G**_{*i*} are allowed to be formed as the direct product of models for up to three correlated random factors of the form **R**_{*j*} = **R**_{*j1*} ⊗ **R**_{*j2*} ⊗ **R**_{*j3*} and **G**_{*i*} = **G**_{*i1*} ⊗ **G**_{*i2*} ⊗ **G**_{*i3*}.

A range of models are available for the components of both **R** and **G**, They include correlation models and covariance models. Correlation models generate variance matrices, **C** , with diagonals one, include uniform, banded and general correlation and models motivated by time-series analysis including autoregressive, moving average and autoregressive-moving average models. The covariance models, generate a variance matrix **V**, include diagonal, ante dependence, unstructured and factor analytic models. There is also the facility to form homogeneous variance matrices **V** = **σ**²**C** and heterogeneous variance matrices **V** = **D**^{1/2}**CD**^{1/2} and estimate the parameters in the

correlation matrix \mathbf{C} , the scalar σ^2 and the parameters in the diagonal matrix $\mathbf{D}^{1/2}$ (Gilmour *et al.* 1998). There is also the facility to form an additive relationship matrix from a pedigree, and fit cubic splines by incorporating an equivalent mixed model (Verbyla *et al.*, 1999). Typically a variance structure applies to individual terms in the linear model but the facility is available to impose structure on a combination of terms, for example if there are effects ANIMAL and ANIMAL.TIME with ANIMAL representing animal effects and TIME a covariate and wish to impose random animal terms and animal regression terms and a covariance between these two sets of terms.

Despite the generality of the variance models one cannot always predict the ingenuity of users (for example Jaffervic *et al.* 2004) and so there is the facility to read in a user generated relationship matrix or its inverse and there is a facility to allow users to define variance matrices (or their inverses) as functions of parameters to be estimated. One problem with user generated relationship matrices is that they may, perhaps due to sampling, be singular. For example a relationship matrix \mathbf{A} may have rank r and have s singularities, then if we reorder \mathbf{A} so that \mathbf{A} and the associated random effects \mathbf{u}_a can be partitioned as $\mathbf{A} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A}_{11} & \mathbf{A}_{12} \\ \mathbf{A}_{21} & \mathbf{A}_{22} \end{bmatrix}$ and $\mathbf{u}'_a = [\mathbf{u}'_{a1} \ \mathbf{u}'_{a2}]$ with \mathbf{A}_{11} of rank r then if $\mathbf{A}_{11}^{-1} = \mathbf{A}^{11}$ then because of the s singularities $\mathbf{A}_{22} - \mathbf{A}_{21} \mathbf{A}^{11} \mathbf{A}_{12} = \mathbf{A}_{22.1} = \mathbf{0}$ and the random effects are given by $\mathbf{u}'_{a2} = \mathbf{A}_{21} \mathbf{A}^{11} \mathbf{u}'_{a1}$. One might extend \mathbf{u}_a using $\mathbf{u}'_{a*} = [\mathbf{u}'_a \ \mathbf{u}'_{a2*}]$

with \mathbf{u}_{a2*} the same size as \mathbf{u}_{a2} and setup MME using \mathbf{u}_a^* and $\mathbf{A}^- = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A}^{11} & \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{A}^{11} \mathbf{A}_{12} \\ \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{0} & -\mathbf{I} \\ \mathbf{A}_{21} \mathbf{A}^{11} & -\mathbf{I} & \mathbf{A}_{22.1} \end{bmatrix}$

replacing \mathbf{u} and \mathbf{G}^{-1} in (2). Note that if $\mathbf{A}_{22.1}$ is positive definite then with absorption of \mathbf{u}_{a2*} the mixed model equations reduce to the usual form. If $\mathbf{A}_{22.1} = \mathbf{0}$, \mathbf{u}_{a2*} can be thought of as introducing Lagrange multipliers to take account of the constraints on \mathbf{u}_a .

Exploiting sparsity. The MME and the inverse variance matrices involved in the MME are typically sparse with a large number of zero elements. Some of the computational work can be reduced if due account of this sparsity is taken. This reduction includes calculation of the likelihood and its differentials, calculation of variances of linear functions of the effects, and calculations involved with factor analysis models.

Calculation of the likelihood and its differentials. This involves the sequential calculation of the weighted sum of squares, S , and the calculation of the sparse inverse of \mathbf{C} depend on the order that the order of terms in \mathbf{C} . For example in a simple example with model with a grand mean and h uncorrelated herd effects, then \mathbf{C} has $h+1$ rows and columns and $1+3h$ non-zero elements in \mathbf{C} . If the sequential formation starts by eliminating the grand mean the resulting updated \mathbf{C} matrix fills in the non-zero elements of \mathbf{C} and the sparse inverse requires calculation of all elements of \mathbf{C}^{-1} . By contrast, if in the sequential formation the grand mean is the last term then there is no in-fill of \mathbf{C} and only the $1+3h$ elements, corresponding to the non-zero elements in the initial \mathbf{C} , need calculating in the sparse inverse of \mathbf{C} . The computation time with the initial ordering is proportional to h^3 and proportional to h in the later scheme.

In order to reduce the computational time and effort several different orderings were investigated. A simple algorithm would be to (i) count the non-zero elements in each row, (ii) absorb the row with the least number of non-zero elements and update \mathbf{C} , then repeat the process of the updated \mathbf{C} matrix. Potentially this requires a large number of ordering operations and so a nested search (NS) algorithm (Gilmour and Thompson, 2007) was suggested. This involves step (i) and step (ii) is extended by finding the row with the least number of non-zero elements and finding the decile of the number of non-zero elements in a row. This decile is used as a cut-off and in step

(iii) absorb rows shorter than the cut-off at the time they are considered for absorption, starting with the shortest row. Once all rows with non-zero elements less than the cut-off have been absorbed then the program goes back to step (i) and the process is repeated until all the rows have been absorbed.

After experimentation an extra grouping step was introduced giving a grouped nested search algorithm(GNS).This grouping step identifies rows which have the same columns present. Each such group of rows is represented by just one member in the list of equations yet to be absorbed; the whole group is absorbed when that representative is absorbed. This has little impact on the order obtained but does reduce the work required to determine the order.

Timings for two examples are given in Table 2 for these two ordering algorithms (NS and GNS) and another suggested ordering (MeTiS). Ducrocq and Druet (2003) identified the MeTiS suite of ordering algorithms (Karypis and Kumar, 1998) as being very suitable for the solution of

Table 2. Fill-in(size of coefficient matrix after absorption) and timing for ordering and one iteration for two examples and three algorithms run on a 32bit Linux.

Example	Algorithm	Fill-in	Order(secs)	Iteration (secs)
Multivariate	MeTiS	7,477,499	1	582
	NS	6,726,733	195	415
	GNS	6,703,056	124	412
Random Regression	MeTiS	39,724,222	33	473
	NS	38,228,850	1984	487
	GNS	38,202,783	45	432

mixed model equations. These algorithms are based on a multilevel k-way partitioning of graphs. MeTiS uses initial coarsening, partitioning and then uncoarsening resulting in multilevel, nested dissection involving top-down and bottom-up ordering. Meyer (2005) evaluated MeTiS in her software, comparing it to a range of other published algorithms including the multiple minimum degree routine GENMMD (George and Liu, 1981, Lui, 1985) and various refinements extracted from the MUMPS package (Amestoy *et al.*, 1998, 2001). She concluded MeTiS ordering algorithms which required about half the execution time of the minimum degree algorithms although the times vary a little with the particular characteristics of the example.

The first example is a six trait multivariate sire model analysis of data from 26875 animals fitting 31745 equations and 39 variance parameters. The second example is a multivariate random regression of 437,632 data records fitting 536,288 equations and 116 variance parameters. The MeTiS ordering routines quickly find a good order for solving mixed model equations. However, in the context of ASReml, the MeTiS order is on balance not the optimum order when compared with the GNS ordering algorithm. This is often 10-20% faster per iteration.

Calculation of variances of linear functions of the effects. It sometimes required to estimate a linear combination of the fixed and random effects $\mathbf{x}_p \hat{\mathbf{t}} + \mathbf{z}_p \hat{\mathbf{u}}$ and with $\mathbf{w}_p = [\mathbf{x}_p \mathbf{z}_p]$ the variance of this combination is $\mathbf{w}_p \mathbf{C}^{-1} \mathbf{w}_p'$. By replacing the right hand side of equation (3) by \mathbf{w}_p' it can be shown (Gilmour *et al.* 2004) that the variance of the linear combination could be found in a sparse way in exactly same way as the fitted sum of squares from the linear model (1).

Factor analysis models. These models have been suggested as a way of giving a parsimonious way of modelling variance structures. They can be motivated by writing a vector of p random effects \mathbf{u}_i as $\mathbf{u}_{i1} = \mathbf{L}_1 \mathbf{f}_i + \boldsymbol{\delta}_{i1}$, $\mathbf{u}_{i2} = \mathbf{L}_2 \mathbf{f}_i$ with \mathbf{u}_{i1} , \mathbf{u}_{i2} and \mathbf{f}_i of size r , s and k respectively. The vector

\mathbf{u}_i may represent the performance of the i -th genotype in p environments or p different traits. This is motivated by writing the elements of \mathbf{u}_i as linear combinations of the k elements of \mathbf{f}_i and the first r of the elements of \mathbf{u}_i having extra components based on δ_{i1} . The variance matrix of \mathbf{u}_i can be then be written as $\mathbf{FA} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{L}_1\mathbf{L}'_1 + \mathbf{D}_1 & \mathbf{L}_1\mathbf{L}'_2 \\ \mathbf{L}_2\mathbf{L}'_1 & \mathbf{L}_2\mathbf{L}'_2 \end{bmatrix}$ with $\text{var}(\delta_{i1}) = \mathbf{D}_1$. If $r=0$ then we have a reduced rank model (Meyer 2005). If \mathbf{u}_{i1} and \mathbf{f}_i are used instead of using \mathbf{u}_i , in the mixed model equations then the sparsity increases especially if k is much less than p because the inverse matrix associated with these terms is sparser than the inverse variance matrix associated with \mathbf{u}_i . Thompson *et al.* (2003) give examples where the alternative parameterization had savings of 50% of computational time when $p=3$ and $k=3$ and savings of 90% when $p=62$ and $k=3$.

Also if the effects \mathbf{u}_i are associated with genotype i , and are combined into a vector \mathbf{u} , and the genotypes have an additive relationship matrix \mathbf{A} then $\text{var}(\mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{FA} \otimes \mathbf{A}$. The calculation of the average information matrix requires the calculation of terms such as $\mathbf{s} = \mathbf{Ar}$ where \mathbf{r} is a vector of residuals (Kelly *et al.* 2009). As \mathbf{A}^{-1} is much sparser than \mathbf{A} , Kelly *et al.* (2009) found it useful to think of \mathbf{s} as the solution to $\mathbf{A}^{-1}\mathbf{s} = \mathbf{r}$. This solution can be found in a recursive way first adjusting the right hand sides of ancestors for direct descendants and then adjusting direct descendants for ancestors (Kelly *et al.* 2009). This computation avoids the formation of \mathbf{A} and the computational effort is linear in the number of genotypes.

DISCUSSION

The initial motivation in developing the computer program was to generate a kernel to be ported into Genstat. Such was the enthusiasm for the methods that a standalone program was developed, partly using code from REG to allow a wide range of data transformations. This has needed much more support but has the advantage that the algorithm has been made available to a wider user community. The user guide has been cited in over 1,000 publications. These publications are an appropriate testimony to the insight and innovations of Arthur Gilmour.

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