

# THE RESEARCH NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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Summer 2003 Number 2

## OUR FIRST YEAR

As the Research Network approaches its first anniversary, its success has become more and more evident. Its growing numbers of members appear to find it worthwhile and enjoyable, and recognition of this is spreading around the market research industry.

With very little systematic effort, we now have as many as 160 members who value the contact and communication which the Network aims to provide. The Steering Group has worked enthusiastically to make everything happen as promised, and the first issue of the Network Newsletter was successfully produced earlier this year.

This was followed by the highly enjoyable lunch at the Reform Club in April (see below). The success of this encouraged Joyce Fuller to make the Carlton Club available to us for our next Lunch, on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup>

October; details are given elsewhere in this issue.

Looking to the future, we are conscious that the Network should confine itself to benefits which are sustainable and valued by members. Subject to those considerations, we are aiming to communicate the most immediate and relevant types of news by email at any time; and members with requests, news, or offers to make are invited to send them in to [gwareing@lineone.net](mailto:gwareing@lineone.net) so we can circulate them either by email or in this Newsletter.

Also, we are encouraging members to add to our library of CVs. If you have such a CV, just send it to the same email address and we will be able to ensure that your life's achievements so far are on record and are remembered.

## THE RESEARCH NETWORK AT THE REFORM CLUB

Thanks to the great generosity of one of our members, Geoffrey Roughton, the Reform Club was the venue for the Research Network's second lunch, held on 10 April. It was attended by no fewer than 80 members, twice as many as the inaugural lunch in September 2002. In spite of the august setting, the lunch was an informal and convivial occasion, with a great deal of table-hopping as members renewed their friendships and business relationships.

Among the attendees were several ex-Chairmen of The Market Research Society as well as former CEOs of leading market research companies. Harry Henry, the only remaining founding member of the Society was also present. As someone was heard to say "It was a meeting of platinum oldies, rather than golden oldies".

At 4.30 the Reform Club was quite ready for us to leave. But the last stragglers could not bear to say

goodbye, so a neighbouring pub was found and the nostalgic conversations continued.

We are very grateful to Geoffrey Roughton for organising and sponsoring the event.



**SEE PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS OF THE NEXT LUNCH TO BE HELD IN OCTOBER**

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## **WHO ARE WE TODAY?** *An Update of the Profile of Research Network Members*

Since the last report on the profile of members we have had a net gain of 38. There have been one or two resignations and, regrettably, four deaths so membership when this was written stood at 154.

Not surprisingly the general profile of membership has not changed all that much but there have been one or two minor changes which are worth reporting.

**GENDER** The proportion of female members at 30% is marginally less than in February when it was 32%.

**RESIDENCE** We are even more centred on Greater London and the Home Counties than we were in February 2003, 33% of us giving an address in Greater London (28% in February) and 42% in the Home Counties (41%). Amongst the 25% of us living outside these areas there continues to be a large proportion in the South West counties, 8% currently (9%).

**MRS MEMBERSHIP** About the same proportion of us as in February, 79%, are current members of the MRS. Of those of us who are MRS members nearly two-thirds are Fellows or

Full members, still only 17% of us electing for Retired membership, the same percentage as in February.

**INTERNET** At the time of writing 77% of members had given permission for their email address, or one or their email addresses, to be published and used for communication, a slight increase on the February 2003 figure of 73%.

### **To summarise**

- 33% of us live in Greater London and 42% in the Home Counties. 8% of us live in the South West Counties, 10% in other English counties, 3% in Wales and Scotland and 4% outside the British Isles.
- 70% of us are male
- 79% of us are current MRS members. Of the 121 who are members 43 are Full, 33 Fellows, 5 Associate, 5 Honorary, 15 Field and 20 Retired members.

## **THE WAY WE WERE**

### **25 Years Ago – From the Newsletters of 1978**

Major issues under discussion were low standards in Group Recruitment (plus ça change) and the never-ending saga of the Interviewer Card Scheme, which prompted Don Osborne to tell us that he was “filled with gloom by what has emerged after six years of debate”.

Eileen Cole was Chairman of the MRS, and John Treasure was finishing his term as President, to be succeeded by (Sir) Harold Wilson. This prompted an agitated letter from Brian Allt: “I am unaware of any singular qualities which fit Sir Harold for the post ... and it may now be disadvantageous to be associated with the MRS”.

Ivan Gale, Secretary to the Society, died in March that year, and was remembered by Andrew Elliott as “a man of probity and integrity in whom MRS Members reposed their trust; ... our affairs were in good hands”.

The ESOMAR Congress was held in Bristol ... the MRBA congratulated itself on having accumulated the vast sum of £3,000 ... Peter Menneer was elected Hon Sec Treasurer ... and Marvin Honig, Creative Director of Doyle Dane Bernbach told us that “Research is a crutch for people unwilling or unable to make decisions... it robs advertising of its most effective force --- human judgement “.

### **30 Years Ago – From the Newsletters of 1973**

The correspondence columns seemed much livelier in those days, and people were often very cross. As an antidote to this, the following excerpt from *Cosmopolitan* Magazine was quoted in the April Newsletter: “Thumbs up to the guinea pigs who have taught us not to take market research too seriously: asked for comments about a non-existent publication called Supermarket Age, 92% of the sample claimed to have read at least two issues “.

In the same month, Michael Foot was quoted as saying: “I have always regarded public opinion polls, audience ratings and a sizeable chunk of what passes under the name of market research as tosh, and dangerous tosh at that”.

In July, Gerald Goodhardt introduced himself as the new MRS Chairman, saying: “What market research is largely about is information and communication. So it is perhaps not very surprising that, in the best traditions of the shoemaker’s barefoot children, this is an area where our Society has never particularly excelled”.

Other news: In September, Martin Maddan MP, Chairman of AGB Research, died at the age of 52 ... in December, Peter Mouncey became an Associate Member, and Sally Ford-Hutchinson joined Benton & Bowles as a Research Executive.

## LIFE AFTER MARKET RESEARCH

One of the discoveries to emerge from the formation of the Research Network is the variety of things that longstanding researchers get up to, both during and after their life on the market research treadmill.

If you can add to this list, please let us know.

**Gone West – or to Wales** (Peter Menneer, Michael Brown, John Bound)

**Gone Opera-Crazy** (Nick Palmer, Eric Adler)

**Masters of the Worshipful Company of Marketors** (John Treasure, Ian Blythe)

**Become Expert Witnesses in Legal Cases** (John Barter, John Samuels)

**Gone Cruising** (Colin McDonald, Phil Barnard)

**Lectured on Cruise Ships** (John Samuels, Jill Carter, Ivor McGloughlin)

**To Poland, and Poetry** (Gordon Coulson)

**To Channel Islands** (Frank Teer, Mary Agar, John & Mary Goodyear)

**Further Afield** (Humphrey Taylor – New York, Graham Peters – Toronto)

**To Academia** (Andrew Ehrenberg, John Bound, Gerald Goodhardt, Terry Hanby, Peter Mouncey)

**To Lunch and Laughter With Friends** (Kit Molloy, Geoffrey Roughton, Rudy Goldsmith)

...and many others, to Charities, Painting, Crossword Compilation, Pig Farming, Lecturing at the University of the Third Age etc, etc

### ***DON'T MISS THE THIRD RESEARCH NETWORK LUNCH***

***16 October 2003.***

***The Carlton Club, 69 St James's Street, Pall Mall, London SW1***

Those of you who attended the first two Network lunches at the offices of Research International in September 2002, and at the Reform Club in April 2003 will remember the great pleasure of meeting colleagues and friends whom you had not seen for many years and will want to renew acquaintance again at our third lunch meeting.

This year is the 70th anniversary of the founding of BMRB and, to mark the occasion, we are grateful to a number of ex-employees of the company for sponsoring the next lunch, which will be in the stylish surroundings of the Carlton Club in St James's Street. Our host will be Joyce Fuller, an ex-BMRB interviewer and a member of the Network and of the Carlton Club. A consortium of ex-BMRB staff have generously donated funds so that the cost can be kept to £15 per head for a two course English Fare lunch with accompanying wines. The lunch must be limited to 100 people. This notice will be followed by a general mailing, but since places are limited to 100 and will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis you are invited to book a place now by sending a cheque for £15, payable to The Research Network, to Gill Wareing, 6 Walkfield Drive, Epsom Downs, Surrey KT18 5U.

The Carlton Club was founded in 1832 in the aftermath of the Great Reform Act. Originally the founders, a small group of Conservative MPs, met in premises in Carlton Terrace: hence the name. In 1835 the Club moved to purpose-built premises in Pall Mall designed by Sir Robert Smirke. These premises were destroyed in the Second World War and the Club moved again to the present building in St James's Street that runs between Pall Mall and Piccadilly. The Club remains the Club of the Conservative Party.

## ANCIENT WISDOM

A science which hesitates to forget its founders is lost

A.N. Whitehead

The 'good old times', when old, are good.

Lord Byron

Things do not change. We do.

Henry David Thoreau

Age only matters when one is aging. Now that I have arrived at a great age, I might just as well be twenty.

Pablo Picasso

Should we slow down because we are getting older, or hurry up because we will not get any younger?

Anon

I used to dread getting older because I thought I would not be able to do all the things I wanted to do. But now that I am older I find I don't want to do them.

Nancy Astor (at age 80)

The man who is too old to learn was probably always too old to learn

Henry Haskins

Getting older is fabulous. The longer you do it the more technique you acquire. That makes the game easier.

Cherie Lunghi

Find an aim in life, before you run out of ammunition.

Arnold Glasgow

## MADELEINES AND METHODOLOGIES

Continuing our series on classic theories and practices in market research.

### Kelly's Repertory Grid

The Repertory Grid technique was widely used in market research in the 1960s and 70s. W.A.K. Frost, then of Advertising Assessments Ltd and R.L. Braine, then of Audits of Great Britain, gave a paper to the MRS Conference in March 1967 'The application of the repertory grid technique to problems in market research' which was subsequently reprinted in *Commentary (Journal of the Market Research Society)*. In 1970 Peter Sampson, then at NOP, presented a paper to the American Marketing Association Conference 'Attitude research reaches new heights' and a synopsis of this paper was subsequently published in the *Journal of Marketing Research* in 1972 as 'Using the Repertory Grid Test'.

The following notes have been compiled from these papers.

The technique is known to its friends as 'Kelly' and to a few, less affectionately, as the 'the three card trick'. It is based on Kelly's Personal Construct Theory. In essence the theory sets out the notion that people use their thought processes in order to predict and control their environment to their own comfort. It is argued that, as experience is gained, people learn to codify their observations (of events people and things) into a framework of personal 'constructs' by means of which they learn to anticipate future events.

A construct is quite different from a concept in that whereas the latter is essentially only a label or a group name a construct is specifically required to have, amongst other things, a dimensionality. The theory states that a person continues to employ constructs in contexts in which they are found to have predictive usefulness, but reacts to changes in his environment by broadening or narrowing the 'range of convenience' of his constructs i.e. the range of contexts in which he will attempt to apply them. Another important claim is that a person's system of constructs sets limits on the complexity with which he can regard things meaningfully.

The technique, as applied, has a number of forms which have been tailored to specific purposes. The original method was designed for use with mentally disturbed patients by clinical psychologists. In the market research context the stimuli usually consist of brand names, test products, trial packs, advertisements etc. and the responses are consumer constructs or attitude dimensions.

In this context the test stimuli, in the form of cards depicting products, brands or actual packs, drawings and the like are presented to respondents. An initial screening removes any stimuli unfamiliar to respondents. Stimuli

are presented in groups of three, one triad at a time, according to a predetermined random order which ensures that identical triads are never repeated. The respondents are asked to state in which way two stimuli are alike, and different from the third, and descriptions for likeness and difference are recorded on a specially designed grid sheet. For the second and subsequent triads the respondent is asked to mention another similarity/difference than the one already mentioned. The process is repeated until the respondent cannot provide any more 'new items'. Stimuli cards with names may be replaced with objects such as test products, packages or advertisements.

From the test a grid emerges which has the properties of a two-dimensional matrix. Thus any row may be described in terms of all the columns or any column in terms of all the rows. The association between any pair of rows may be measured by counting the number of columns on which they match and the same may be done for the columns.

Probably the most generally useful application in market research is as a preliminary operation in the development of semantic differentials which are highly specific to the product field under study and produce a high definition, multi-factorial configuration.

Some other applications might be:

- a case where there is a need to assess the degree of 'identification' that is established between a consumer and a promotional figure e.g. a presenter or a cartoon character in a TV commercial.
- the identification of target groups within the population. It is possible to apply taxonomic procedures to the patterns of response and thus to detect and identify types of consumers who differ from each other, not in all aspects but in certain fundamental areas e.g. attitudes to convenience foods.

Repertory Grid interviews are best used in conjunction with conventional qualitative research methods. They are of immense use in objectively obtaining attitude scale items (or constructs) in the consumer's own language.

[Peter Sampson](#) has written about the background to his paper, not so much the subject matter but the art of writing in general. Peter took physics, chemistry and maths at 'A' level then switched from an intention to read for a degree in Chemistry to study Psychology. After describing his first university essay for which he received a beta plus, for six closely written pages consisting of only one paragraph, Peter goes on to say:

My tutor commented 'You have never written an essay before have you?' "No", I replied "only written lab reports." He advised "I want you to go away and read Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and try to write like them".

I did and by my third year I was writing much of the University Newspaper and edited the Rag magazine. I thought I had learned to write like Hemingway and Forster.

I came into market research thinking that was the case. However, writing up page after page of two-way tables was daunting. Hemingway and Forster did not seem to help but several of the people I subsequently worked with did. First was Keith Marshall at Foote, Cone and Belding, in the mid-1960s. He taught me to keep sentences short. Then Frank Teer at NOP in the late 1960s taught me not to split infinitives. In the early 70s I worked with Martin Simmons at GSR, unquestionably the finest 'writer-up' of boring market research data I have ever come across. A great deal of reporting in these days was of the '70% said Yes and 305 said No' variety. I learned from Martin that two-way tables could read like Ernest Hemingway. Finally in the late '70s Stuart Jackson, a walking, talking 'Fowler's Modern English Usage' did more polishing.

So where does repertory grid come in? My original script to JMR ran to about a dozen pages. It was returned, professionally edited, cut down to three. This was a salutary lesson in conciseness that I picked up and have run with for over thirty years.

## The Growser

**OH, MR G-R-R-R-OWSER, SIR!\***

This series provides an opportunity for you to write, anonymously if you wish, about anything, vaguely connected with our collective experience perhaps, about which you have strong feelings.

I bought a book, the other day. This was an unremarkable event. In our house, the pace of allocation of book space falls far short of their rate of acquisition. Walking some town new to me, I may be observed to veer in my course as uncertainly as any compass entrapped in the Bermuda Triangle, magnetised by a window full of alluring bindings or some tray of potential treasurers, cast off from others' shelves. But *this* book cost me one hundred and twenty five pounds, sterling; and as an owner of books, a reader of books, but not a collector, I would seldom pay as much.

The reasons for the pricing – I hesitate to say 'justification' – were that this was a book of 'papers' (the quotation marks will shortly explain themselves) and, had it been cheaper, too many potential patrons of the conference concerned might have decided to eschew the free lunch, miss the questions from the floor and read what had been said, rather than hearing it, for less – considerably less, in fairness – than the fee for a day's attendance. I myself was a little dubious whether what I might learn would justify the fee's investment, but felt I should have the papers, for selective mis-quotation, for inaccurate citation, for plagiarising in future contributions of my own and for the sundry, other ends for which one employs others' material. Given these needs, whilst not signing my cheque with any great joy, I did not choke on £125, until I opened the book's covers: the conference gave houseroom to nine substantive papers, but no less than six of the ten authors severally or jointly concerned offered no paper at all, but only the output from that presenters' panacea, PowerPoint, printed in what I believe is termed 'Greyscale' meaning, in practice, mud-tones of varying density against which words and images may sometimes be distinguished, and often not.

I have three complaints.

First, I blame those conference organisers, in their rôle as publishers, for ever allowing this to happen. Agreed, in our industry, conferences and seminars have long since ceased to centre on learning, or the sharing of information, or discourse and debate; but so long as the hotel is reasonable, the sun (preferably) is shining and there is time to be taken (or made) for the beach, perhaps we should accept that these events still serve a purpose as marketplaces and as providing boardwalks and tobers for our suppliers, feeling no severe stab of conscience as we gannet-up any free food or as we creatively complete our expenses' claim on our return. But, for all that, there are still *some* 'professional' organisations (and explaining those quotes would require another, much longer grouse) that will not allow a speaker onto a platform without prior approval of a synopsis *and* a full paper.

Secondly, I blame Bill Gates. I don't grudge him his fortune (I think), but in sliding PowerPoint onto almost every hard disk, he has created a cult of iconolatry and convinced the majority of conference *artistes* that, as they sit happily at their keyboards, ingeniously manipulating fonts, background colour schemes, slide changes and custom animations, they are actually engaged in *communication*: that picture which is worth a thousand words is not, I am sorry to say, to be found in any clipart gallery, even online. I won't go so far back as the ages of reliance on the magic lantern or even the epidiascope, but when a speaker's scribbles had to go, first, to a studio, to be turned into graphics, and then to be photographed and converted into slides (some of which, preciously, would unerringly arrange themselves out of order or upside down), the sheer cost and timescale of the process focused greater attention on what was to be put on a screen and kept apart the skills of graphic artistry and the ability to formulate a coherent argument and put it into comprehensible terms.

Thirdly, and most severely, I blame the lazy, short-changing speakers. I am as happy as most to sit through an entertaining picture show, and nothing can match the skill of a true busker as he sways an audience. But, after the event (or before, if I am hoping to debate with a speaker), I want to be able to *read* the case put forward, to trace the lines of the argument, to learn the relationship of this particular story with other work that has gone before and to test the relevance and strength of any evidence that is cited. For this purpose I need – I must have – words. By all means let them be communicated electronically, or 'published' on a disk or CD or website; even if I personally savour the smell of ink on paper and take joy from the thunder of a press, I am a friend of pine trees. But let no speaker think he or she has done an adequate and complete job without writing the words, carefully and painstakingly, revising them until he is sure they say clearly what he wishes to convey, and then sharing them with me...Next time I'll keep the £125 safe in my back pocket.

**A little l..a..a..a..mb**

\*For the title and the by-line our acknowledgement to the late S.G. Hulme Beaman

## REMEMBERING NORMAN

Norman Webb, a renowned market researcher and statistician, died in March 2003 aged 76. His first job in market research was chief statistician of TAM. In 1967, Norman then worked for five years as an independent consultant before joining Gallup in 1972 as Managing Director; he, with other directors, bought out the company in 1973. In 1975 Norman became Secretary–General of Gallup International. He earned many honours including the status of Chartered Statistician. He served on many committees of the MRS and ESOMAR where he was involved with the production of a new code for opinion polls.

**Ivor McGloughlin writes:** A memorial celebration was held for Norman Webb on Sunday 31 March 2003 in the Great Hall at Berkhamstead Town Hall. He had battled with cancer for over a year before his death.

The occasion was a happy one with some 150 persons attending, family, local and other friends and a few of us who had known Norman from market research.

Following drinks and food, Norman's son Alexander and daughter Louise introduced over a dozen speakers, who covered Norman's life from school, university, the army and research. I mentioned some of the good times we had at the Attwood Group in the sixties and seventies where we were, respectively, the chief statisticians of Attwood Statistics and TAM. Norman and I shared the same birthday and this was a bonanza for two statisticians. We always thought we would make money with the birthday problem.

Meril James then covered Norman's spell with Gallup where he became a world traveller as Secretary-General of Gallup. Meril had collected tributes from members of Gallup countries all over the world.

Following some refreshment, the group reassembled to hear more tributes including readings from grandchildren. The proceedings ended with the singing of a favourite song of Norman's 'Susanna's a funnical man', with appropriate farmyard noises, that he delighted in playing (he was an accomplished pianist) and singing for foreign visitors.

Norman was a good friend and we miss him.

### A favourite quotation of Norman's (verse by Henry Aldrich)

"If all be true that I do think  
There are five reasons we should drink,  
Good wine, a friend, or being dry  
Or lest we should be by and by -  
Or any other reason why"

## ... And Others Not Forgotten

We mourn the recent passing also of the following people who contributed so much to the research industry.

**Peter Doyle** who died in March aged 59, was a marketing expert who led the field in the development of brand management and brand identity. He played a major role in establishing the Warwick Business School and was a consultant to many blue-chip companies. He taught in other universities and business schools in Europe and America and published extensively on marketing strategy and brands. He was an advisor to several government bodies and worked with the ESRC. He was awarded a fellowship for his contribution to the profession by the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

**Robert Merton** who died in February aged 92 was formerly a Professor of Sociology at Columbia University. He is said to have invented the 'focus group'. At Columbia he formed a partnership and friendship with Paul Lazarsfeld, and they co-founded the Bureau of Applied Social Research. His name will be permanently associated with the development of sociology and social research in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Betty Shreeve** died on 12 May aged 72 after a long battle with cancer. She began her career as an interviewer in the legal profession, then worked in qualitative research with Bill Schlackmann before joining Ogilvy and

Mather in 1968, becoming a Planner where she added marketing and advertising skills to her research capabilities. She became a director of O & M in the 1970s, one of the first, and earliest, of the few women on the board of a leading agency. She became an independent consultant on retirement.

**Alan Wicken** died on 7 June aged 72. He began his research career with BMRB in the early 1950s and became well known for his skill in, and understanding of research techniques. He joined AGB shortly after its foundation and worked with the company in various senior positions for over 20 years. His early work included a landmark study into smoking and health the results of which were presented to the Royal Statistical Society. In the 1980s Alan was a member of the AGB team in Boston that introduced the USA to the latest peplemeter techniques. He retired in 1988 but continued as a consultant specialising in trademark litigation. He attended and enjoyed our last lunch at the Reform Club and is seen in conversation with Geoffrey Roughton the host of the lunch.



**Dr Jeremy Wyndham**, a Fellow of the MRS, former agency head and author of many widely read books died suddenly on 23 May, aged only 46, following a heart operation. His achievements were already substantial and varied. He worked for Deloitte as a management consultant before joining the MRS in 1984. He spent five years at AGB (including two years in the USA) and then worked for Nielsens 1988-93, becoming head of Nielsen Media International. A period as Strategic Development Director at the MRB Group was followed by his appointment as CEO of Public Attitude Surveys (PAS) 1994. He nursed PAS back to health and then successfully negotiated its sale to Infratest Burke (which itself later became part of NFO). In that time he found time to co-author the best-selling book *Why do buses come in threes?* and followed it with a similarly popular work *How long is a piece of string?*

### **THE MARKET RESEARCH BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION**

The Research Network was launched under the auspices of the MRBA from which it has received continuing support, including the promise of seed money in the early stages.

The MRBA was set up in 1977 to help people working in research, and their dependents, if at any time in their lives they needed support. During these 25 years, it has quietly and unobtrusively assisted hundreds of people in the industry, sometimes in only small ways. In some cases, however, the Association provides major support over a period of years. In all cases the help is sensitive, appropriate and, of course, confidential.

**It is hoped that the Research Network will act as a conduit for people who need the support of MRBA. If you know of anyone from the research community who may be in need of help please contact Gill Wareing for further information. Tel: 01737 379261.**

**The Research Network is organised by a Steering Committee consisting of Johan Aucamp, Peter Bartram (Chairman), George Brzezinski, Stephen Ellis, Jane Gwilliam, Linda Henshall, Tom Punt and Phyllis Vangelder.**

**The next issue of this Newsletter will be produced in February 2004  
Contributions and letters are invited especially on opinions, reminiscences and current perspectives on  
'life after market research' as well as contributions to  
'The Growser' etc**

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