

Editor: Nick Tanner

Editorial Advisors: Phyllis Vangelder, Tom Punt

THE WAY WE ARE

Writing this in the immediate aftermath of the Scottish referendum, one is taken back to the debates in the media and within the industry during the latter half of the previous century about the accuracy and validity of opinion polling (see *The Way We Were* for an example). It's true that they were pretty accurate this time as to the direction of preference but the magnitude still seems to have taken everyone by surprise. Presumably the various adjustments that are now routinely made to election polling data to improve its accuracy are harder to apply when no historical comparison can be drawn between forecasts and actual outcomes. There is a sense, though, in which it is quite gratifying to find that even nowadays, not every political result can be reliably forecast by the pundits.

These newsletters are definitely getting shorter! It's certainly not that we're doing any less as a Network, and I can't believe it's because Network members are any less active than they were—nor that they are engaged in less interesting activities. Perhaps we have been less active in seeking contributions. Whatever the reason, here's a plea: if you've ever felt like writing a few hundred words about what you're up to, or on your early career in market research, do please consider putting together something that might interest fellow-Networkers. This is your network and your newsletter!



AUTUMN LUNCH: 15TH OCTOBER AT UNION JACK CLUB

When we last visited the Union Jack Club in October 2008 (seems like only yesterday), the event proved enormously popular. In the words of the subsequent edition of the *Newsletter*, "We were impressed by the food and wine, still more with the efficient way it was served. The consensus was that we should return at a future date!"



Well, it's taken us six years but at last, here we are again. Details will be coming out by separate email very shortly—indeed, may already have reached you by the time you receive this. Here are some reminders of the previous event at the Club—there

are many more on our website at www.research-network.org.uk/17.html, images 136-147.



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THE WAY WE WERE

Peter Bartram's selections from MRS Newsletters of yesteryear

40 years ago (1974):

It was announced that **John Treasure**, Chairman of BMRB and J Walter Thompson, would succeed Sir Claus Moser as President of the MRS.

A joint MRS/Marketing Society evening meeting discussed the issue of whether the market research function should include marketing decision-making advice. **Peter Kraushar**, Chairman of the Marketing Society, said that research could not be part of the marketing business. **Alan Wolfe** of RSGB (but also a member of the Marketing Society) did not refute this, arguing that the decision-making process included other areas of management such as R&D, production, and sales. Marketing researchers are rarely party to all of the client's problems and therefore are not in a first rate position to provide for realistic marketing decisions. (*Not what we think today?*)

A course held in Cambridge on 'Sampling and Statistics for Market Researchers' was convened by **Cliff Holmes** with **Paul Harris** in a supporting role as Senior Tutor. The report on the course by **Anne Wrangham** included the comment that "despite the preponderance of females on the course, social activities were not lacking. The local disco was patronised ... but the social highlight was a long evening of drinking and singing at one of the Cambridge pubs whose landlord was a friend of one of the delegates."

Following the 1974 General Election there was a great deal of argument about the accuracy of the opinion polls and their impact upon the reputation of market research. **Ian D Hurdley** of CRAM reported that a client had "cancelled a product test already commissioned. Nothing wrong with the methodology; no criticisms of the questionnaire; the cost was acceptable. But the client asked why should we spend money on research when it couldn't come up with the right answer?" (*Which brings to mind the P&G Chairman's comment that "if the opinion poll results make my competitors give up using market research I will be very happy."*)

Frank Teer (ex-NOP) wrote "One of the most problematic features of opinion polling is the treatment of polling by the press. There is a love-hate relationship between them. Few journalists understand them and most dislike them. The polls have deprived both journalists and politicians of an unchallenged ability to speak for public opinion."

And 30 years ago (1984):

In a report on the Japan Marketing Association Conference, **Bill Hall** wrote that "the lack of questions from the floor is not unusual in Japanese meetings ... since matters of substance have been worked out privately prior to the meeting. Thus the person who asks questions at a meeting is either a troublemaker or a person not important enough to be consulted in advance."

In March, **Susie Fisher** wrote: "It's a pity about market research. Our public image is deadly dull. As an industry we have gained far-reaching credibility but as a profession with a strong professional image we are nowhere ... A few individuals have broken through, acquiring doubtful notoriety in the process; **Bob Worcester** spring to mind. He may have his detractors but at least he has moved the debate on from the clipboard to the Cabinet chamber. (But) what has gone wrong with the rest of us?"

On the other hand, in his keynote conference speech, **Lord Kearton**, President of the MRS, set a tone of confidence and encouragement by asserting "market research has moved rightly to professional status with professional standing: it has an admissions system, an educational system, and educational and qualification procedures. It is an indispensable link in the chain of wealth-creating activities in our society."

Describing the social scene at the conference, **Gerald Hahlo** reported that: “Unexpectedly the Thursday morning conference session provided some of the best entertainment. Things really began to liven up in a paper on the need for improvement in market research presentation skills.” Midway through his paper, the speaker was confounded by an overheating slide projector which a conference technician tried to alleviate by lifting and fanning its underside while the speaker continued undeterred. The result was that the slides slowly began to rise up the back wall, and track their way back across the ceiling, causing cricked necks and rising hilarity among the audience. The speaker carried on regardless and recovered some shred of credibility by claiming that this was ‘simply a deliberate demonstration of how to manage unexpected presentational problems.’ *(And who was that speaker? Clue: his name appears in the byline to this article)*

Under the heading ‘A Dane in Brighton’ **Ole Christensen** reported that “apart from the Royal Pavilion, Brighton does not have many cultural attractions. Brilliant restaurants exist, but they are few in number, the hotels are not outstanding with the exception of the Grand, and even a good pub is hard to find. Brighton can in no way compete with Monte Carlo, Vienna, Geneva, Amsterdam or other cities where MR congresses are typically held. But the MRS Conferences have something special – the atmosphere, which I can best describe as warm, friendly and relaxed.”



SPRING LUNCH AT AZZURRO

The Spring Lunch this year was held at Azzurro, near Waterloo station, on 29th April. For a time it seemed touch-and-go whether a threatened tube strike would force cancellation of the event but a poll of those who had booked revealed that the vast majority expected to make it by one route or another, so the Steering Group decided to hold its nerve, a decision justified by the healthy turnout of members and guests on the day. Some people clearly had difficult journeys but Gill Wareing reported afterwards that she had heard “nothing but favourable remarks” about the venue.



We celebrated Hugh Bain’s birthday over lunch. It was also Adam Phillips’s first lunch as Network Chairman, and the occasion was marked by the failure of the PR system. Hopefully most of those attending managed to hear his unamplified speech; there is a video available for anyone who would like to re-live it or find out for the first time what he was actually saying!

On this and the following page are a few photographic reminders of the occasion—or, for those who could not or chose not to attend, a flavour of what you missed.





SUMMER PARTY AT DOGGETTS COAT AND BADGE

Honestly, to look at this *Newsletter* sometimes, you'd think the Network was one long round of lunches and parties. Well of course in a sense it is, with a few more serious activities thrown in. Anyway, here are recent memories of another one—this time the summer party at Doggetts Coat and Badge, a hostelry on the south bank of the Thames at Blackfriars Bridge. The weather was less kind than last year but still afforded some opportunities to use the balcony overlooking the Thames; over 70 members and guests attended and according to one Steering Group member, Adam Phillips delivered the "shortest speech from a chairman to date."

Some of those attending were disappointed at the standard, selection and quantity of food provided. This has been raised with the management at Doggetts: if we are to return there next year, we need to ensure that improvements are made. The price to members of the Summer Party has remained constant at £18 for as long as anyone (or at least, the editor) can remember and it may be that the time has come to reconsider it, though no decision has yet been reached on this. In any event, regardless of weather and other shortcomings, the party spirit seemed un-dampened, as the pictures below and opposite testify.





AGM AND CHRISTMAS DRINKS

Just a little advance notice: the Research Network Christmas Drinks and AGM will take place at the usual venue (the offices of TNS RI at More London Place) on the afternoon of Thursday 4th December this year. Details of timing and formal notice will be provided in due course but diaries do get packed in December, so please save the date.

'PANORAMA OF THE THAMES' PROJECT

Jane Bain

Readers of this newsletter may recall that a couple of years ago I was asked to contribute photographs for an exhibition about the Hammersmith Mall Conservation Area – the area of Hammersmith in West London which includes the Thames riverfront. Nick Phillips very kindly wrote a review of the exhibition for the Newsletter at the time.

Through this connection, local historian Georgina Williams and I were asked if we could help by providing historical and contemporary information about the Hammersmith riverside for the very exciting 'Panorama of the Thames' project. We both jumped at the chance.



The 'Panorama of the Thames' project is the brainchild of retired film-maker John Inglis and Jill Sanders who live and work from an island near Hampton Court. Some years ago, John and Jill discovered an 1829 panorama published by bookseller Samuel Leigh, depicting 15 miles of the Thames upstream of Westminster at the end of the reign of George IV. They had this digitally restored and used it to create a visual history of Georgian London. In tandem, John has been taking photographic panoramas of the river as it is today.



The incredibly ambitious 'Panorama of the Thames' Project brings together these two visual portraits of the river on the same website, complete with historical and contemporary information about the buildings and other features along the riverside.

John and Jill have spent the last five years painstakingly recording the river as it is now, gathering historical information from local groups, giving presentations of their plans (Georgina and I spent a wonderful morning with them on their island hearing about the project and looking at some of this material) and building this into the website.

The project is still a long way off completion, but the website finally went 'live' last week and the results are truly stunning. Currently, it contains the whole of the 1829 Georgian Guide, historic views of the City from 1543, 1616 and 1647 and contemporary photo panoramas of Richmond, Isleworth, Strand on the Green, Chiswick, Hammersmith and Westminster. Jill and John hope to add more photo panoramas and historical information in due course.

Please click [here](#) and have a look—and then sit back and drift along the Thames as the panoramas roll past. You can dip in and out of the history along the way, or just watch as the banks of the river slide by. And you can choose whether to make your journey through Georgian or 21st Century London. For anybody who is interested in London—or who is intrigued at seeing a truly magnificent piece of research—I can thoroughly recommend it. Then, if you are as excited by this project as I am, do tell your friends and spread the word.

PLEASE CONSIDER A LEGACY TO THE MRBA

Sue Robson

Like many other Research Network members, I have been a Friend of the MRBA for many years. I have therefore received *MRBA Matters* twice a year and read of the good work that the committee does to help those in need. But until I was invited to join the MRBA committee in 2008 I had never even thought about adding a legacy in my will donating money to the MRBA. I have had this conversation with other MRBA Friends and I know I am not the only one with this 'blind spot'.

So when I had to update my will recently, I rectified this. It is very simple to do and I would like to encourage other Research Network members to consider doing this. Many, hopefully all, of us have had an enjoyable and successful career in market research and are now able to have a fulfilling retirement. I feel this is certainly true of me and I decided that I could do more to give back to the industry that has treated me so well by providing a legacy when I die as well as by being a Friend and helping on the committee. Now that I share some of the responsibility for marketing and promoting the MRBA to the industry, I would love to see others joining me in helping the MRBA to carry on the good work it does for years to come.

So why consider leaving a legacy?

Well you may just not have thought about it yet. If so, you are in good company. According to the organisation *Remember a Charity*, whilst 74% of the UK population support charities and when asked, 35% of people say they'd happily leave a gift in their will once family and friends had been provided for, only 7% actually do. (I know you researchers would like the source of this data, so I can tell you that found it on www.rememberacharity.org.uk but they do not give their research source. Oh dear!)

The need for the MRBA is not declining. Even though the nature of market research has changed radically since I entered the business, with the decline in face-to-face interviewing and thus interviewers, there is still a constant demand for our support. Firstly, it is not only interviewers that we help. Secondly the amounts of money that are needed to provide any kind of realistic financial support are becoming ever more significant.

We also face the financial constraints experienced by all savers and investors nowadays; diminishing returns on our investment portfolio. To increase our income so that we can increase the amount of financial help we can give our claimants, we have to increase our capital.

Of course, I know that even if all Research Network members were to contact their solicitor tomorrow to add a legacy, we would not see the benefits immediately. Indeed I hope not, in that I want us all to live happily and healthily for many more years. However, if all of you did add a legacy to the MRBA in your will, the long term benefit to the charity would be considerable. There is also a benefit to yourselves and your beneficiaries as leaving a legacy can be tax-efficient. Since April 2012, where an estate includes a qualifying charitable legacy of more than 10% of the net estate the taxable estate will benefit from a 36% rate of Inheritance Tax, rather than the current 40% rate. Thus, if you are already planning a legacy of less than 10% of your taxable estate, you can increase this to 10% or more with no additional cost to your beneficiaries. You can leave more to charity without reducing the amount available to the beneficiaries.

It is simple to do

If you want to leave a gift to the MRBA charity but have already made a will, it's not a problem. You can either write a new will (probably the simplest way) or add a codicil. We are preparing a leaflet and a web page to provide more advice on this, but the best first step is probably for you to seek the advice of a solicitor.

When writing your will, it is important that you use our full name, The Market Research Benevolent Association, our registered charity number, 274190 and our registered address, 15 Northburgh Street, London, EC1V 0JR.

Please do consider this request seriously and act as soon as you can. Any legacy, small or large, would be immensely helpful to the MRBA. It would also be helpful to let us know when you have done this so we don't continue to contact you about this!

NATURE DIARY

Extracts from Jane Bain's Nature Diary: January-June 2014

These extracts from my Picture Diary begin at the height of the winter storms. The Thames Valley is lashed by rain and the river swollen to levels not seen before. Londoners find themselves extremely grateful for the Thames Barrier and I become quite nerdy about flow rates and other riparian statistics.

January: With the Thames Barrier closed a record number of times this winter, the regular ebb and flow of the tide ceases for days on end and the river undergoes subtle changes. The foreshore disappears and with it the herons which usually fish there. Cormorants become the dominant avian fishermen, gathering in large numbers to feast on the profusion of fish swept downstream by the floodwaters.



February: The violent storms continue, but otherwise the weather is quite mild and there are signs of an early spring. There are catkins in the hedgerows and the heronry by the reservoir is buzzing with activity. A large flock of lapwings has gathered at the London Wetland Centre and occasionally takes to the air in a spectacular flying display.

March: New leaf buds begin to appear on the trees and, to my great surprise, I come across a glossy pheasant, perched just above my head in a tree by the tow path, nibbling these tender morsels.



Birds of all shapes and sizes are busy staking out and defending their nesting patches. Any swan unwary enough to encroach on the territory of our local pair rapidly learns it has made a big mistake.

April: Hugh calls me in great excitement one day with news that that, after a gap of several years, the tawny owl is back in her nest hole in a tall black poplar tree near the reservoir. Her owlets leave the nest a few days later and we find the family in the nearby woods. The two babies are snuggled together, with their mother standing guard in a tree very close by. They are still unable to fly properly and this stage is known as 'branching' – literally, climbing and jumping around in the trees, holding on to branches with their claws.





We are able to follow the progress of the owlets for several weeks, until the leaf canopy becomes too dense and hides them from sight. We sometimes see them exercising their developing wings and taking short test hops from one branch to another.

May: The nesting season is now in full swing. A pair of long tailed tits take it in turns sitting on their nest, then warming their feathers in the sunshine on a nearby twig. I ponder whether this helps them keep their eggs warm without using up their own body heat .



I come across a very large, bright emerald green, rose chafer beetle on the dense cow parsley by the reservoir. This stunning creature gleams in the sunlight like a piece of Egyptian jewellery.

All along the river, birds are working flat out gathering food for their babies. The hedgerows are full of tiny demanding blue tit and great tit chicks and a pair of baby parakeets peek hopefully out of their nesting hole, hoping for a meal delivery.



June: The owner of Dove Pier calls me excitedly one evening to tell me the goslings on her 'garden boat' have hatched. The nest is in the shelter of a large olive tree, right beside two beehives. The geese and the bees have become accustomed to each other's presence, but the goose is still very wary of people. Tip-toeing as quietly as I can along the deck of the adjacent houseboat, I just manage to catch a glimpse of two of the goslings nestled in their downy bed before she tucks them back under her wing again.

This is definitely a year for unusual insects. One morning I find a large moth clinging to the wall of our hallway. I pick it up gently and put it outside on the trunk of a nearby plane tree, where it blends in perfectly with the bark. It turns out to be a lime hawk moth and must have hatched on the lime tree just outside our front door. Curiously, its camouflage seems much better suited to the plane tree than to the lime.



NOT FORGOTTEN—THE ARCHIVE EDITION

We have perhaps tempted providence too frequently in recent editions with comments on lack of the recent need for obituaries. At the Spring Lunch, however, Peter Bartram was discussing with friends a list he had recently compiled of the 98 Network members and other prominent researchers (or similar) who have been remembered in these columns since the first edition in Spring 2003. Given the level of interest expressed at that time, it was felt that readers might appreciate a copy of this list, arranged by *Newsletter* edition. If you would like to read any of these obituaries, they are still available in the archive collection of *Newsletters* that can be found on the Network's website at <http://www.research-network.org.uk/10.html>.

Spring 2003 (No 1):

Simon Broadbent
Michael Maister
Malcolm Mather
Rosemary Murray
Neale Pharoah
Janet Pottinger
Prosper Riley-Smith
Peter Schmidt
Norman Squirrell
Jan Stapel

Summer 2003 (No 2):

Norman Webb
Peter Doyle
Betty Shreeve
Alan Wicken
Jeremy Wyndham
Louise Bahns

Spring 2004 (No 3):

John Treasure

Summer 2004 (No 4):

Mia Bartonova
Eileen Cole
John Parfitt
Wim de Jonge

Spring 2005 (No 5):

Tom Corlett
Peter Hyett
Philip Hill
Kit Molloy

Summer 2005 (No 6):

Brian Pymont
Bert de Vos
John Nolan
Richard Braine
George Owen
Barry Lee
Lynette Fenley

Spring 2006 (No 7):

Sandy Johnston
Alec Davies
Ron Artingstall
George Brzezinski

Summer 2006 (No 8):

Naomi Sargant
Stephen King
Stanley Orwell
John Fuller
Barbara Martin
Jetty Plasschaert
Bill Dunning
Stuart Jackson

Winter 2007 (No 9):

John Davis
Alan Swindells
Mary Bartram

Summer 2007 (No 10):

Michael Wilsdon
Jim Inglis
Philip Kleinman
DavidLowe-Watson
Kasuo Kobayashi

Winter 2008 (No 11):

Rudy Goldsmith
Sir Bernard Audley
Howard Biggs
Jennifer Owen

Summer 2008 (No 12):

Brian Allt
Monty Alexander
Mike O'Leary

Winter 2009 (No 13):

Harry Henry
Frank Teer
Gill Courtenay
Keith Boyd

Summer 2009 (No 14):

Andrew McIntosh
Johan Aucamp
Ian Blythe
Ralf Dahrendorf
Aubrey Wilson
Norman Glass

Summer 2010 (No 15):

Jimmy Adams
John Bound
Andrew Ehrenberg

Winter 2010 (No 16):

Mary Wallis-Jones
Sue Bradley
Peter Cooper
Martin Fishbein
Robert Fletcher
Prof. Michael Thomas

Winter 2011 (No 17):

Robert Tofts
GinnyValentine

Summer 2011 (No 18):

Jennifer Bowen
John Clemens

Winter 2012 (No 19):

Bill Davies
Janet Katz
Sheila Kemp
Sir Roger Jowell

Summer 2012 (No 20):

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Winter 2013 (No 21):

Pat Brown
Tony Lunn
Stephan Buck
Cliff Holmes
Peter Jenkins

Summer 2013 (No 22):

Tina Berry
Ted Whitley
Jocelyn Jeffreys
Sue Amberton
Daphne Cookson
Sybilla Dance
Ann Hughes-Hallett

Winter 2014 (No. 23):

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JERRY ROBERTS, 1920-2014

We learned in March of the death of Jerry Roberts MBE. Although not a member of the Research Network, Jerry spent some years in market research and will have been known to some of our members.

As a linguist and codebreaker, he had an illustrious career at Bletchley Park in WW2 as one of the team that helped to decipher the German High command messages. His recruitment to this team was described in the Daily Telegraph: "Roberts found himself facing an enigmatic recruitment process at a War Office building just off Trafalgar Square during which he was asked by an anonymous major if he played chess. When he responded in the affirmative, the major asked if he could also 'tackle crosswords'. Another nod of the head was sufficient to see him sent to the codebreakers' War Station at Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire, where John Tiltman, the chief cryptographer, recruited him into his research section, warning him that 'absolute silence must be preserved' about what happened there." His contribution was only recognised in the 1990s; he was awarded the MBE in 2013 "for services to the work of Bletchley Park and to code breaking."

After the war, he spent two years in Germany with the War Crimes Investigation Unit before being demobilised in 1947, when he started out on a career in market research. He worked for advertising agencies here and abroad before setting up his own consultancy. Over the period 1975–1995 he carried out a number of studies on behalf of British Gas, most notably the long-running and large scale postal surveys monitoring customer service and satisfaction.

With thanks to Richard Ellis for information and acknowledgements to the Daily Telegraph's obituary.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In a brief update on the Oral History project Frank Winter, who is overseeing it from the Network's perspective, reports that Lawrence has now conducted an interview with Nick Phillips and intends to complete two further interviews by the end of the year, bringing the total to fifteen. In addition to its preparation for inclusion in the archive, a 30-minute video of the Bill Schlackman interview is being prepared that will then be available for members to watch—details will be provided when the edit is complete.

As many readers will be aware, the speed with which further work can now be completed is being increasingly dictated by the time required for editing the completed interviews. Five have now been fully edited and a sixth is close to completion. An additional editor has just been recruited and the rate of progress has definitely increased; with the help of the new resource, Lawrence is confident that he will be able to report far more rapid progress to the AGM in December and that the entire archive will be available for members to enjoy, and for academic researchers to use, during the first half of 2015.

STEERING GROUP

The Research Network is directed by a Steering Group consisting at present of Adam Phillips (Chairman), Jane Bain, Jane Gwilliam (Events Organisers), Linda Henshall (Relations with other MR bodies), Sue Nosworthy (New Members), Tom Punt (Webmaster), Nick Tanner (*Newsletter* Editor), Gill Wareing (Secretary-Treasurer) and Frank Winter (Data Protection and other regulatory matters). Their names, addresses, phone and email details are in the Members List. Please feel free to contact any member of the Steering Group on matters relevant to the areas they cover.