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THE WAY WE ARE

The last few months have been busy ones for the Research Network. We have held our two regular events of the Autumn/Winter season, with a lunch at Jamies restaurant in London Bridge in October and our AGM and Christmas party in December. In addition, there has been considerable activity on the Oral History project, which now has ten interviews available on the MRS website (www.mrs.org.uk/campaign/video/oralhistory), another four in the process of editing and nine further interviews now awaiting editing. And as described on page 7 of this *Newsletter*, the Network's new website is now up and running, and well worth a visit itself (www.research-network.org.uk).

Inside you will find a selection of anecdotes and lyrical *divertissements* painstakingly collected, and ruthlessly edited, by Peter Bartram for his column, *The Way We Were*; photos from the two recent social events; Jane Bain's nature diary; and obituaries of Sir Claus Moser and Pat McCarthy. In the latest of what is also turning into a regular series (following contributions from John Downham and Adam Phillips in previous editions), we publish Nigel Spackman's recollections of the process by which he became a market researcher; other members are invited—nay, encouraged—to add to this series with their own stories of their recruitment. The more improbable, the better.

We hope you will enjoy this edition of the *Newsletter* and look forward to receiving a flood of contributions in due course.



SPRING LUNCH: 12TH APRIL AT SMITH'S BAR & GRILL

The Spring Lunch this year will be held at Smith's Bar & Grill—a new venue for us and outside of our regular Thames-side stomping ground. Smith's is a smart, airy restaurant facing the Grand Union Canal in the new Paddington Central development. Describing itself as "a traditional British eatery with a modern edge", Smith's is very close to Paddington Station. It is, by the testimony of its own website, "known for



its high ceilings and almost full length windows...the natural light in Smith's is just as nourishing and wholesome as the comfortable furnishings and exquisite selection of food and drink that we serve."

The Spring Lunch will take place on Tuesday 12th April. An invitation and booking information will be sent out before long but if it's not in your diary already, please make a note of it now.

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THE WAY WE WERE

Anecdotes from a frivolous past

Over the past 12 years we have exhausted the pickings from nearly 200 issues of the MRS Newsletters 1970-1990, so readers were asked to contribute their own mischievous recollections. Unfortunately most of their offerings have had to be omitted or cloaked in anonymity to protect the guilty, but anyway thanks to Nigel Spackman, Pat Molloy, Jane Bain, Mervyn Flack, and Roger Gane, who told us of ...

- The important client sitting at a major supplier's table at a Conference Ball who had a jug of water emptied over his head by the CEO's wife. She had taken exception to something he had said. There's client service for you.
- The senior researchers who, unable to get tickets to the Ball, overcame the problem by getting themselves officially hired as waiters for the evening.
- The Sinclair C5, given as a conference raffle prize, being driven late into the night up and down the corridors of the Metropole Hotel.
- The request to RSGB from a farmer in deepest Wales for "a research on sheep, particularly black-faced Welsh mountain sheep."
- The respondents in a survey of 'Women in London' for the Evening Standard who were all very happy to answer many detailed questions on their marital (and extra-marital) sexual activities, but as many as 30% refused to answer the income question.

As one of our contributors said, "It all seems much more fun than the 21st century research business."

As further proof of that, many readers may recall the 1983 Conference Ball at which Jeannette Charles, impersonating the Queen, dubbed the Conference Chairman Fred Johnson with a knighthood, and the Band of the Royal Marines counter-marched across the dance floor, exciting further patriotic fervour.

We have also obtained from John Wigzell the lyrics from the Red Braces Cabaret (or was it called Ad Nauseam?) which was memorably performed there. He was accompanied by John Samuels, plus David Broadbent and Andrew Milne-Watson, with Carol Coutts at the piano. We are told that a certain Salman Rushdie, then working as a copywriter at Ogilvy & Mather, had a hand in writing their songs, which included these.

The Researcher's Lot (with apologies to Gilbert & Sullivan)

When a client's not engaged in his employment
Of writing out his complex research brief
His propensity to query our statistics
Is legendary and beyond belief.
Our lunches and expenses must be hidden
When the client starts to think that he's been done;
When Fred starts asking penalties for lateness --
A researcher's lot is not a happy one.

When the fieldforce isn't cheating on its mileage
Or demanding extra fees if there's a snag,
Their capacity for fluffing awkward questions
Means questionnaire design is quite a drag.
They keep recruiting samples out of quota
'Cos interviewing neighbours is more fun,
With group discussions full of bum respondents --
A researcher's lot is not a happy one.

When the coders put most answers under 'others'
 And our output is so badly VDU'd
 It's no wonder that our terminals malfunction
 And our standard deviations are all skewed;
 When there's no time left to play with your peripherals
 And there has to be a new computer run
 You'll be tempted then to jockey with your software –
 A researcher's lot is not a happy one.

When the conference time comes round again at
 And wine like water flows in every bar [Brighton
 The Agencies are free with gin and tonic
 And each one tries to beat the rest by far,
 All liquor we with eager swallows guzzle
 As soon as every party has begun
 And when you're lying underneath the table --
 A researcher's lot is not a happy one.

The Research Omnibus (with apologies to Flanders & Swann)

Some talk of postal surveys
 And some prefer ad-hoc
 And some like self-completion
 But all three we would knock
 Types of data collection
 That seem so dull to us:
 Directors and Designers
 Of a Research Omnibus!

Hold very tight please, ting-ting
 Fill in this form please, ring-ring.
 When you are lost for data
 And you don't know what to do
 You'll hear my voice a-calling
 "Got just the thing for you."
 Just write yourself some questions
 And pass them on to us
 ... For our Random Sample
 Syndicated
 20,000 housewife
 Omnibus!

Through all the Standard Regions
 Our interviewers ride
 And north of Caledonia
 Is the one place you can hide.
 They never drive in convoys
 They're not gregari-us,
 ... In our highly clustered
 Low response rate
 Random Sample
 Syndicated
 20,000 housewife
 Omnibus!

When others undercut me
 And try to pinch the work
 I gives a healthy discount
 And puts it out to Burke.
 The other research houses
 Can only swear and cuss
 As we take the profitable load
 Ignoring the MRS's Code
 ... On our highly clustered
 Low response rate
 Random Sample
 Syndicated
 20,000 housewife
 Omnibus!

We don't ask much for payment
 Not exorbitant amounts
 So we cut out all the breakdowns
 And only give straight counts.
 If questions cost too much apiece
 There's always more of us –
 So take your pick from BMRB,
 Gordon Simmonds, RSGB,
 Gallup, MAS, NOP,
 As we take the profitable load
 Observing the MRS's Code
 ... On our highly clustered
 Low response rate
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AUTUMN LUNCH AT JAMIES

This year's Autumn Lunch was held on 20th October at Jamies restaurant, close to London Bridge station—our second visit to the venue since it transformed from the previous Borough Bar. It was, as always, a convivial affair. The selection of photos below is part of a larger collection that can be viewed on the Network's website—just go to www.research-network.org.uk and click Gallery to find photos of this and other Network events.



CHRISTMAS DRINKS AND AGM

The AGM, along with our Christmas drinks party, was held as usual at the TNS-RI offices in More London Place, on 8th December. It was attended by about 50 members in addition to the Steering Group. The agenda was shorter than in previous years, concentrating on the past year's activities, the financial report, the new website, the oral history project and planned social events for 2016.

Minutes of the meeting were circulated at the beginning of January. One important theme running through a number of agenda items was a slow but perceptible decline in membership of the Network. It had for many years been constant at about 250 but we had ended 2014 with 242 members and were finishing 2015 with 235. This is a matter for some concern, especially as it coincides with a sharp rise in the prices charged by central London venues for the lunches. The venues that we use normally specify a minimum spend, now typically £2,500 or more; this is viable with just a small subsidy from Network funds as long as at least 80 members and guests attend. If attendance figures regularly start to fall below this threshold, then we shall need either to raise the price per lunch (currently £30) or to re-think entirely the nature of the events we run. The main message of the meeting was that we need to maintain or ideally increase current levels of membership of the Network and participation in events; the new website, together with increased activity on social media, should contribute to this objective but all members are urged to help by inviting guests to events and promoting membership among others in the research community.



HOW (NOT) TO BECOME A MARKET RESEARCHER

Nigel Spackman

As a born pessimist, or maybe out of idleness, I couldn't see much point in applying for jobs before I took my Economics finals at Liverpool in 1966. After all, having spent my three years there rock climbing, chasing girls, going to clubs (well it was the height of the Mersey Beat boom, so one had to), and drinking, the odds of passing were not that great.

To my amazement I managed to get the very lowest 2.1 of my year, and went back home to Oxford to ponder my future. Those many members of the Research Network who went to Oxford University, will probably remember the Perch, a delightful pub by the Thames in Binsey village, which just happened to be up the road from my parents' house...so much of my pondering took place there. That is, until George the landlord decided that my talents could be best used on the other side of the bar, and I began my graduate career as a barman.

Not many people came to the Perch on weekday lunchtimes, so I had plenty of time to scan the paper (I hardly dare confess it was the Daily Telegraph) for appropriate vacancies for an economist, and if necessary to take time off and go for interviews. I cannot recall why, but I felt that advertising might be a suitable route. I managed to get interviews with a few agencies including JWT where I was deleted from the crowd of bright eyed young men (they all were) at the lunch time cut off point. Thank God, in retrospect, since I am sure I would have been a total failure in advertising.

Then one day I noticed an ad for a graduate trainee in the Market Research Department of Nestlé. I had no idea what market research was, but I knew that one of my more organised and industrious student colleagues, who had applied for jobs pre-Finals, had got a job in that field working for BMC—then the largest British car manufacturer. "Well" I thought, "if Roger Twigg can do whatever that is with an economics degree, I guess I can", so I applied and was delighted to be asked for an interview with the Personnel Department (no HR in those days).

Since it was only an interview with Personnel I didn't bother to expand my miniscule knowledge of MR, but just turned up in Croydon in my best (well, my only) suit. Having gone through the usual rigmarole of background, education, and interests, I was somewhat taken aback to be asked: "Well I expect you'd like to come and meet some of the people in the department wouldn't you?" At this point I felt the game would soon be up as there was no way I could bluff my way through a proper interview, but I didn't feel I could say no, so up we went to the 20th floor. There I was even more taken aback to be ushered into a room with about ten people sitting around a huge boardroom table, with one empty seat, clearly intended for me, at the end.

I sat down nervously, and a large man at the other end introduced himself as Joe Gilchrist, the MR Manager, who began by saying, "I expect you'd like to know what we do in market research wouldn't you?" Sensing a lifeline I agreed this would be fascinating. Mr Gilchrist then said "As you know it's vital for companies to understand their customers, and know what they think about our products. And that's what we do. We carry out surveys, to find out how aware the public are of what we sell, how we stand up against our competitors, what they think about our new product ideas" ... and so on and so on. Ah I thought, as a light finally dawned, so market research is another word for surveys.

At the end of what became a lengthy speech he then said to me: "So why do you want to be a market researcher?" Now fully briefed I launched into a précis: "Well" I said, "I've always thought it vital for companies to understand their customers, and know what the public think about their products. So carrying out surveys to discover how aware they are of what one sells, finding out how a company stands up against its competitors, and what customers think about new product ideas is an absolutely essential task for any forward thinking, modern business, and that's what I would like to do in my career".

And with this magnificent piece of bullshit I somehow managed to get the job, and eventually find out what market research really was!

GERALD GOODHARDT RECEIVES HONORARY DOCTORATE

Gerald Goodhardt received an honorary doctorate from the University of South Australia at a ceremony in Adelaide in December. Gerald has been closely involved for many years with the University's Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science, where he is an Adjunct Professor. The award was made in recognition of his distinguished service to the community. To honour his legacy, the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute is endowing a scholarship fund—the Gerald Goodhardt Postdoctoral Fellowship—to retain its best PhD students. In his address at the ceremony, he noted that "I am not the only one graduating today, only the oldest!"



The Steering Group and, we are sure, the entire Network would like to add its own congratulations to our distinguished colleague and friend.



RESEARCH NETWORK WEBSITE

As most members will be aware, Jane Bain and other members have recently been working on a complete overhaul of the Research Network website. Working with web design company Unique Websites, who were recommended by other Network members, they produced a draft version in time for the AGM, so many members were able to get a preview of how the new site would look. In the subsequent weeks, the rest of the copy was written, archive data uploaded and final tweaks made to the design. The new site was announced to members and launched on an unsuspecting world in mid-January.

The site was created with three main objectives:

- To explain to potential new members what the Network does and what it is for;
- To provide information and news of relevance to members, including (for example) dates of forthcoming events and updates on the Oral History project;
- To provide an accessible archive of previous editions of this *Newsletter* and a gallery of photos of past events.

It is thus both a tool for existing members and a showcase for potential new members. If you haven't yet done so, do please visit the site at www.research-network.org.uk and take a look around. If you have any comments, suggestions or (in particular) news items that you think we might include on the site, please get in touch with Gill Wareing at secretary@research-network.org.uk.

NATURE DIARY

Extracts from Jane Bain's Nature Diary: July–December 2015

After an exceptionally dry spring, summer bursts upon us at the beginning of July with searing temperatures and blazing sunshine. Even by the river, the vegetation is sparse and dry.

July: After months with little rain, the footpaths by the reservoir are baked and dusty. Blackberries are ripening early and bees and butterflies search for nectar on the few remaining flowers. I come across blackbirds, magpies, robins and even tiny wrens dustbathing and enjoying the hot sun on their feathers.



August: The nesting season started very early this year and many busy parents are now raising a second brood. House martins wheel in the air above the river by Chiswick Mall catching insects for ever hungry youngsters and a pair of dabchicks at the Wetland Centre have two tiny new chicks to look after.

September: All birds have to spend a lot of time looking after their feathers and I never tire of watching swans wash. They dunk their heads under water and splash their wings repeatedly until they are completely soaked in water, then finish with a magnificent series of shakes of their wings, before retiring to the bank to preen and oil their feathers.



October: A very proud pair of black swans at the Wetland Centre have produced an egg. It is not clear whether they are confused by the mild weather, or whether they are fitting in with the breeding season in their native Australia. The warmth has extended the insect season too and there are still dragonflies and bees around as the end of the month approaches.



November: The mild autumn continues and in early November I am astonished to see a tiny blue butterfly, barely the size of a thumb nail, feeding on ivy flowers in the cemetery.



One of the interesting things about living by the river is the juxtaposition of the urban environment and the river's wildlife. Looking downstream a forest of cranes building luxury riverside properties forms an industrial backdrop to the cormorants as they stretch and dry their wings on the posts of the rowing pontoons.



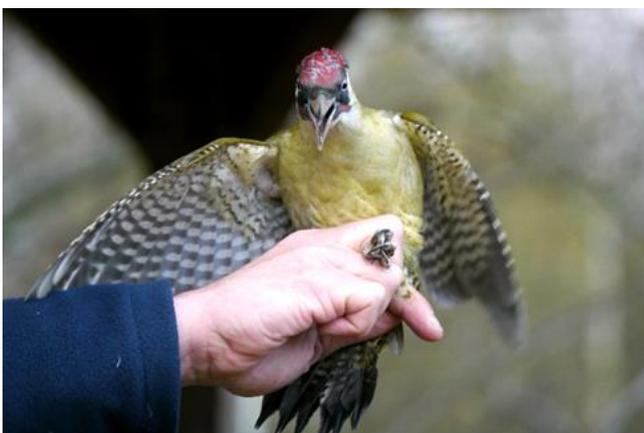
Right beside one of these building sites is a disused draw dock and grey wagtails use the slope to search for food at the water's edge, oblivious to the bulldozers and cement mixers on the other side of the wall.



The warm weather continues to bring surprises. In mid-November, a mallard hatches a large clutch of eggs at the Wetland Centre. I find her with fifteen tiny ducklings, all feeding happily among the fallen pine needles in a sheltered pond beside a stand of tall trees.



December: As well as being unusually mild, the end of the year is also exceptionally wet. Even in the local park, the ground is saturated and the side of the reservoir is a slippery quagmire. As a change from the mud by the riverside, I have taken to visiting the Wetland Centre more often.



On one of my visits I hear a clamour of bird calls coming from a small wood where the bird ringer has set up his mist nets. He emerges from the trees with a green woodpecker in a bag and I stay to watch. He holds the bird briefly so we can see it, then rings and weighs it before allowing it to make a swift retreat.



Generally, there seem to be fewer migrant birds so far this year, so the mild weather must extend further north as well. Towards the end of the month a flock of yellow siskins arrive at the Wetland Centre and one sunny day just before Christmas I come across them feeding in an alder tree right above my head.

WHEN AIR TRAVEL WAS LESS FOOLPROOF?

While sorting some old documents at home recently, Network member Graham Woodham came across a 1983 edition of an RBL magazine. In addition to this photo of Graham in his early 30s, it also contained the anecdote reproduced on the right. The phrase "there was no-one to guide us" seems difficult to believe in this day and age and hard to credit even for 1983.



If any other members have long-lost publications such as this that they think might make interesting articles, they are encouraged to get in touch with Nick Tanner at editor@research-network.org.uk.

Where did you say we were landing?

Oslo airport is very small and informal, peopled by friendly ground hostesses working in a casual Scandinavian sort of way. All their aeroplanes tend to be DC9's and look the same. When departure time for Amsterdam came around, we were invited to walk through a nondescript corridor to the departure gate. We emerged on to the tarmac to find ourselves confronted by a short row of identical looking aeroplanes. There was no-one to guide us but being experienced travellers we assumed we should get on the nearest aeroplane, which we did. In due course we took off for Amsterdam. After an appropriate interval, we started to descend. The scenery as we approached was interesting and, in particular, the mountain valley through which we were flying was most beautiful. It was a short while before we began to wonder why we had not noticed the mountains around Amsterdam before. We were in fact in Stavanger, which is sort of in the other direction. *David Cooper, Research International Head Office, ex RBL Director.*

PAT McCARTHY

Peter Bartram writes:

Although she was not a Research Network Member, many of us fondly remember Pat McCarthy, who died last September aged 85, after suffering a relatively short but intense encounter with cancer.

Having started her working life at the BBC, AC Nielsen, and the ad agency Foote, Cone and Belding, she worked at NOP from 1964 to 1970. She spent much of her career with Ian and Doreen Blythe at European Marketing Surveys (EMS) and then from 1984 was a Director of the company they formed together, BLM Research and Marketing Ltd. She mainly specialised in qualitative research and is remembered as a very capable and conscientious colleague until she retired in 1998. She also served on the MRS PR/Publications Committee, masterminding its Schools Pack project; and throughout her life retained a love of classical music, regularly attending concerts at the Royal Festival Hall.

She was happily married to a distinguished artist, Jack McCarthy, and their son Patrick followed her into the world of market research, working successively at IPSOS, Research Now, NOP Mystery Shopping, and ICM Direct.

LORD MOSER 1922-2015

Lord (formerly Sir Claus) Moser, a past president of the MRS, died in September 2015. The following is an edited version of an obituary that appeared in The Guardian.

Claus Moser, Lord Moser, the government statistician and former chairman of the Royal Opera House, who has died aged 92, could have become a professional musician, but he chose academia, and academic honours were thrust upon him. Later, banking and business claimed him too, but his passion for the arts underpinned the many roles he undertook with a quick mind and dedication.

His cultured Jewish parents, Lotte and Ernest, had to flee to Britain from Berlin with their two sons in 1936 to escape Nazi persecution. Claus thrived at school in Surrey, where his musical talents were quickly recognised; he joined the choir and played the piano in a quartet. In 1940 he was given a place at the London School of Economics, but with the fall of France, he was interned at Huyton Camp, Liverpool, along with hundreds of other 'friendly enemy aliens', many of whom, like him, went on to have distinguished careers in their adopted country.

It was there, he said, that his vocation crystallised. "If you put 5,000 Jews behind barbed wire we will all find something to do," he told the Guardian in 2007. "We counted the number of internees, who they were and what they did. I discovered a love of numbers. That's how I became a statistician." He was released in time to take up his place at the LSE and graduated with first-class honours.

In 1946 he returned to the LSE as an assistant lecturer in statistics and in 1961 became professor of social statistics. Moser left the LSE in 1967 to become director of the Central Statistical Office (now the Office for National Statistics) and head of the Government Statistical Service. The appointment was inspired, for he had the capacity to carry through a much needed major reorganisation of the service, as well as the knowledge and imagination to develop social statistics, which had been seriously neglected over the years.

It was his vision that established in 1971 a major pioneering study, the General Household Survey, which gathers data every year about Britons' domestic arrangements, and it was his inspiration that lay behind the publication of the Central Statistical Office's esteemed annual publication, Social Trends. At the same time he both consolidated and developed economic statistics, showing a firm grasp of what was needed to put economic forecasting on a sounder basis. He served through the governments of Harold Wilson, Edward Heath and Jim Callaghan, and was knighted in 1973. He was made a life peer in 2001.



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), 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.