



## THE WAY WE ARE

**W**e hope that you enjoy this latest newsletter with its series of news and research industry member updates, along with some fascinating general interest articles.

The Network had a very good social event programme during 2022 and we include reviews of our excellent Autumn Lunch at the Royal Air Force Club, along with the AGM and Christmas Drinks held in December. There is also a synopsis of Graham Mytton's NED Talk held in September. Our Spring Lunch is already arranged and further NED Talks are planned.

Penny Briki tells us about the latest Tony Cowling Foundation activities and Ian Brace has done the same for the Market Research Benevolent Association. And of course, we also bring you up to date with our own Research Network activities, including our membership drive and Oral History Project. Frank Winter has also given us a short summary of last year's member survey results.

Apart from our other regular items from Peter Bartram and Jane Bain, we have tributes to Len Marchant and Rodney Dick, who sadly passed away during 2022.

**Important!** For our next *Newsletter* in August 2023, Nigel Spackman has suggested a great theme for members to reminisce about and hopefully contribute short articles under the topic headings 'My worst career episode' or 'A previous bad time at the office'. Nigel himself will start this off with his own experiences...

Please think about contributing an interesting or amusing article along these lines (or any other general interest topic for that matter) and make contact via [editor@research-network.org.uk](mailto:editor@research-network.org.uk).



## SPRING LUNCH: 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023 AT BRIGADE

**F**ollowing our excellent previous Spring Lunch in 2019 at Brigade Bar + Kitchen, we have arranged to return there four years on. The venue is full of character.

Conveniently located close to London Bridge Station, the restaurant is in the renovated historical fire station at 139 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2HZ.

We will have a three course lunch with drinks included, and the culinary style is modern British with European influences. They cook some of their menu



There is also a philanthropic element to the restaurant's positioning, as it provides training for disadvantaged people to help them develop careers in cooking and hospitality.

Please save the date and look out for Gill Wareing's invitation, which will be sent out 4-6 weeks in advance.

# THE WAY WE WERE

More recollections compiled by Peter Bartram

In this issue of the Newsletter, it seems appropriate for this column to look back to the year when The Research Network was set up, exactly 20 years ago.

It all began when 46 of us attended an inaugural meeting in the Research International offices at Hyde Park Corner on 19th September 2002. Sadly, 17 of these 46 have died since then, but a full total of 109 expressed immediate interest in the Research Network idea and became members.

We quickly set the ground rules which included meeting for an inexpensive lunch twice a year (i.e. "not too often"), a Newsletter in the spring and autumn (edited by **Phyllis Vangelder** and **Tom Punt**), a voluntary annual membership subscription of £25 (unchanged until 2023) and a Directory of Members (only the **Goodyears** declined, in a bold green-ink letter, to have their contact details included).

It was all organised by a Steering Group consisting also of **Pam Moy, George Brzezinski, Peter Clifton, Johan Aucamp, Jennifer Bowen, Kit Molloy**, (all now deceased) and the evergreen **Jane Gwilliam. Steve Ellis** and **Linda Henshall** provided links with the MRS Council and the MRBA.

Initial reactions were wholly positive. It was seen as overcoming the reluctance of the then Director General at the MRS to acknowledge the generation which had built the industry, and as facilitating their wish to keep in touch. Comments were along the lines of "Excellent idea", and "Very good idea", although one would-be member said "Keep it simple," and another "I feel I am too young for this club." That notion is now being challenged, with a younger cohort being warmly encouraged to come aboard.

Later in that year of 2002, the Spring Lunch was hosted at the Reform Club by **Geoffrey Roughton**, and sponsored lunches were subsequently held at the Carlton Club, hosted by **Joyce Fuller**, and at the House of Lords, hosted by **Andrew Mackintosh**.

At its peak, the Network had 265 Members, but 154 Members or researchers known to us had died by 2022, so it has become difficult to avoid some loss in numbers. Nevertheless, steered now by **Adam Phillips** (who gets everywhere) it continues to thrive, seeking a younger membership but mainly living up to Terry Wogan's description of his listeners: "We are the coffin dodgers' network; we live in cardigan country and we are proud of it." And like the Yale Alumni tee shirt emblem "The Older We Get, The Better We Were."

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## AUTUMN LUNCH AT THE RAF CLUB

A very unique and enjoyable Autumn Lunch was held on 11th October 2022, made doubly special as it celebrated the Network's 20th Anniversary.

The Royal Airforce Club in Piccadilly was our venue, thanks to sponsorship by the late John Downham. Members and their guests dined in style in the Sovereign's Room, following a welcoming drink on arrival.

The whole event was excellent, with round tables providing a sociable environment, with the three course meal with wine being served efficiently and discreetly by the serving staff.

Phil Barnard entertained us with his reminiscences on the research industry's evolution through his career. The lunch was also highly successful as a catalyst for gaining thirteen or more new members via our membership champions.

A truly fun event, thanks to John Downham's generosity, excellent organisation by Jane Bain and Jane Gwilliam, along with the superb kitchen and serving staff at the RAF Club. Photographs, a selection of which are shown on the opposite page, are available on the Network's website [here](#).





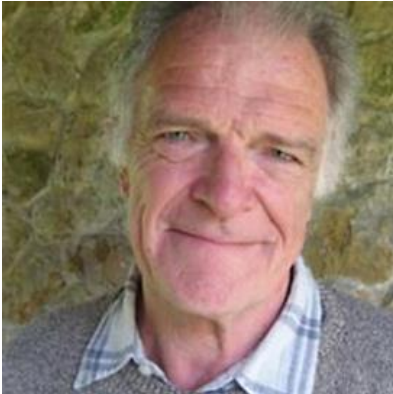


# RESEARCH NETWORK MEMBER NED TALK

Graham Mytton

The title of my talk, which was delivered on 21 September 2022, was "From Saucepan to Dish to Smartphone: 53 Years working in and researching media". There were two main themes:

- My 53 year career in media included both being a radio producer, announcer and reporter, as well as researching audiences.
- The period also spanned some of the greatest changes in media technologies from the early radio sets, including the first ever radio that could be used with battery power, The Saucepan Special in Rhodesia, through to the discovery and production of transistors, satellite dishes and microchips, the home computer and the smartphone, along with the entire digital revolution.



Following undergraduate studies in Liverpool, I joined BBC radio as a studio manager, working in music, drama, sport (including the 1966 football World Cup), current affairs, regional radio and light entertainment. After two years, I decided to continue academic studies, reading for a PhD at Manchester University. My first supervisor, the late Ken Post, a distinguished scholar of contemporary African politics, made a suggestion which was to change my entire career. "Graham, you have worked in radio. You are also interested in Africa. Why not bring the two together? Radio is beginning to spread all over the continent. Why not look at the effects of this new form of mass communication within emerging African political systems?"

He had noticed something that few others had seen. The independence of most countries in Africa, along with many in Asia and the Caribbean, had happened at almost the same time as the arrival of millions of cheap, portable transistor radios. Before these, it was between difficult and impossible for people without mains electricity—the vast majority of most colonial people at that time (early 1960s)—to use a radio set. In the early 1960s, the number of radio sets in what we began to call the Third World, rose very rapidly. For example, in Tanzania in 1960, only around 60,000 households had a radio. By 1974, the figure was 1.4 million homes. Both figures were estimated from face-to-face national sample surveys using market research techniques.

I chose Tanzania for this field research, travelled around the country and deliberately included not only four urban areas but the surrounding rural areas, including two villages in the far west that had no roads and could be reached only by ship or motor launch. It was in those two villages that I came across the extraordinary impact of the recent arrival of radio sets. I was there in the week of the debate during February 1968 in the British Parliament of the Home Secretary's proposal to restrict the right of East African Asians who held British passports to enter the UK. The quality of the discussions I had with villagers would not have disgraced a UK university seminar or common room. They had heard the story from their own national broadcaster, as well as from the BBC.

While doing this fieldwork, I was based at the University of Dar es Salaam. As a postgraduate student in the Politics department, I was required as a condition of my status to be a tutorial assistant. Among my students was Yoweri Museveni, the current president of Uganda. Another contemporary was John Gareng, who went on to lead the independence movement in South Sudan.

The small scale (880 respondents) 1967–8 survey that provided the data for my thesis 'The Role of the Mass Media in Nation-Building in Tanzania', was my first survey research. My last ever project ended 53 years later, just as the pandemic struck the world. It was a fully national media survey in Sudan with a large sample—4,051 respondents in all parts of this vast country. In 1967–8 in Tanzania, the primary medium was radio, followed by the printed press. Using the same measure (which medium was accessed or used yesterday?) in Sudan in 2019–20, the leading medium was the mobile phone, followed by TV.

After my first research fieldwork in 1967–8, I was unable to finish my thesis. I had to earn a living. An advertisement in the Observer in mid-1969 was for a Research Fellowship at the University of Zambia to design and lead a research project looking especially at language policy in national broadcasting. Zambia had several hundred different languages. Its national broadcaster used 8, including English and 7 major Zambian languages. How many people were left out by the choice of languages? I got the job and the project ran from 1970 to 1973. It involved a national survey of the country with 4,780 respondents.

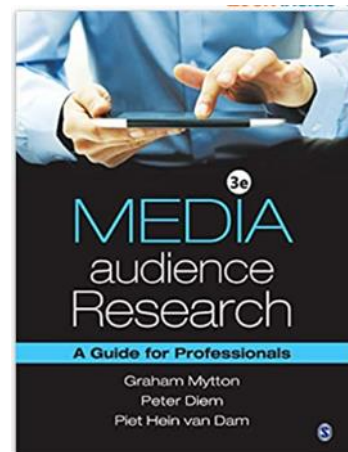


I then returned to the UK and re-joined the BBC as a script writer, producer and reporter for the BBC World Service's African section. During the next 9 years, I reported from the 1975 OAU conference in Kampala, interviewed African leaders including Presidents Nyerere of Tanzania, Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea and General Gowon of Nigeria, who was overthrown while we were both at that conference. I also, in the same year, travelled to South Africa and interviewed some of the leading figures in the growing Black Consciousness Movement as well as Winnie Mandela. And I also recruited the BBC's first ever black reporters to tell the mainly untold stories of growing opposition to apartheid in Soweto, Cape Town and elsewhere. This activity got me banned from returning to South Africa until after the release of Nelson Mandela. I also presented several programmes for the World Service and had intended to continue to be a broadcaster. In 1982, I was short-listed to be the BBC East Africa correspondent, but was pipped at the post by the far better journalist, Mike Wooldridge.

At that time, I was Head of the BBC Hausa language section, broadcasting in that major language of West Africa. But within a few weeks of the interviews for the East Africa job, there was a vacancy for the World Service's head of audience research. I did not really want to apply as I wanted to continue to be a broadcaster, but was persuaded to do so. I got the job! For the next 16 years, I led global research for the BBC World Service. The department pioneered new survey research in many countries that had never had any previous fully nationally representative media measurement surveys, including Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia, along with previously unsurveyed areas of many other countries. I and my colleagues also began using qualitative research on a global scale, encouraged very much by the training of Sue Robson and several projects invented and carried out by John and Mary Goodyear at MBL.

Circumstances changed. The World Service now (1990s) needed a thoroughly incorporated Marketing Department. I decided to create one, but soon realised that I was not qualified to run it. So after becoming the first World Service Marketing Director with a seat on the board, I decided to take early retirement in 1998 at 55 years of age.

Between 1998 and 2020, I ran a one-man training and consultancy agency doing research globally, not only on media but also in the use of market research for the improvement and better design of development projects in health, education, agriculture, peace and reconciliation in conflict areas and better governance. I produced a training manual on how to do media research which has been translated into at least 6 languages and has now reached its third edition in English. I also devised and managed the first ever national surveys in East Timor, Gambia, Sierra Leone and South Sudan.



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## RESEARCH NETWORK ACTIVITY UPDATES

**W**e have had a very lively year during 2022. Notable activities have included in particular reviving the face-to-face event programme, driving increased membership and continuing the Oral History Project.

### Membership Development Strategy

Jane A'Court has been very active in driving the strategy to recruit new members, ideally those aged 55+ or even younger, still working and keen on socialising. We would also very much like to recruit more female members to make our profile more representative of the marketing research industry.

The strategy of bringing in Membership Champions has worked very well, with 19 new members having joined following their attendance at the RAF Club Autumn Lunch. In addition, four further new members have joined, totalling 23 in 2022, which exceeds our target for the year. Our current total of 192 members is back to our 2020 level.

Current Champions in addition to Jane A'Court, are Bob Qureshi, Jonathan Wheeler and Chris Smith, while Ginny Monk has also agreed to join them. Jane hopes to find a further two Champions during 2023.

The overall aim is to recruit at least 15 new Network members per year and to retain at least 75% of them longer term. New members will now benefit from rolling membership renewal one year after joining, rather than all membership fees being due in January each year.

Jane also hopes to attract a new membership sub-group participant to focus on publicity and social media. Certainly, 2022 has seen a major step forward with the development of promotional materials to send out

across the industry, explaining the identity and purpose of the Research Network, while celebrating our 20th Anniversary.

The MRS, MRBA, SRA, BIG and IQCS have so far helped to raise awareness of the Network by distributing these new promotional materials. Contact with other industry groups to continue this process is also being organised.

### **The Oral History project**

*Frank Winter writes:*

With Paddy Costigan's completion of the final editing of the recent Oral History interviews conducted in 2021, there are now 40 interviews on the AMSR website. The latest additions are Hugh Bain (Part 2), Adam Phillips, Phyllis Vangelder, Phyllis Macfarlane and Linda Henshall.

In 2022, the transfer of the Research Network Oral History interviews from the MRS website to AMSR was completed and is running smoothly with a wider audience generated by the AMSR website. This has resulted in an easier route to accessing interviews of interest, as they are now listed in alphabetical order rather than by the date on which they were carried out.

Also in 2022, there were two Oral History Sub-group meetings to discuss the ongoing interview programme, and also to undertake a full review of the direction and structure of the interviews in the future. It was agreed that the interview focus should primarily be on each participant's perspective of market research, their personal achievements and how the industry has evolved, rather than their lives in general.

This fits with the overall objective of the Oral History Project in building a picture of the different facets of market research for future historians and to record how different methodologies have developed.

The following interviews have been planned and largely completed during 2022 and are in the process of being prepared for uploading on to the AMSR website in early 2023 following editing and the provision of brief accompanying biographies and photos:

- Joy Reynolds
- Paul Edwards
- Nick Moon
- Mike Cooke

There will be a further programme of Oral History interviews planned for 2023 which we will publicise in due course.

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## **AGM AND CHRISTMAS DRINKS: 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

**A** new venue was used for the Research Network's AGM and Christmas Drinks event, as Kantar's offices in Westminster, where we have held the event in recent years, are no longer available following the company's office space reorganisation in London.

This year, Ipsos kindly allowed us to use their attractive modern office in Thomas More Square, located close to St Katherine's Dock near Tower Hill tube station. This was ideal for our meeting, even though some of us wandered around in the dark for a while trying to orientate, as the huge busy junctions can be confusing to unfamiliar visitors to Ipsos. Hopefully much easier next time!

We were given an excellent bright and spacious meeting area, perfect for the preliminary chart presentations from Gill Wareing (finances), Jane Bain (events programme), Jane A'Court (membership development) and Frank Winter (the 2022 Members' survey and the Oral History Project). Then we mingled and chatted in the adjacent space over drinks and buffet food organised by Gill Wareing, Jane Bain and Jane Gwilliam.

Unfortunately, Adam Phillips had to stay at home as a lateral flow test showed that he still had a mild Covid infection which he did not want to share with anyone else. Nick Tanner heroically stepped in to chair the meeting at short notice, so the proceedings all went very smoothly.

The attendees approved re-election of the Network Steering Group, along with their proposals to increase the membership charge to £30 per annum.

Gill Wareing assured us that the Network finances were satisfactory and Jane Bain updated us on our planned full programme of face-to-face events for 2023. Obviously, restaurant costs are rising markedly and few venues are prepared to commit to substantial bookings more than 3 months in advance. But she will get there! We already have the first confirmed booking at Brigade Bar + Kitchen for the Spring Lunch. Further updates will follow and Jane's outline plans were also approved at the meeting.

So the AGM and social follow-up was a success and we were delighted with the generosity of Kelly Beaver from Ipsos in allowing us to meet at their offices. The photographs below are a small selection of those available on the Network's website [here](#).





# NATURE DIARY

## Extracts from Jane Bain's Nature Diary: July–December 2022

*The summer brings another heat wave. The highest UK temperature ever of over 40°C is recorded in mid-July and wildfires break out on the outskirts of London. With little rain for months, a drought is officially declared.*



**July:** The heat has burnt many wildflowers to a crisp, but flowers in parks and gardens still provide food for insects. A small skipper butterfly finds pollen and nectar in a scabious flower in Dukes Meadows.



After a relatively mild Spring, many birds are now raising their second broods. A male blackcap pauses on a twig, its beak full of juicy bugs to take to its nest.

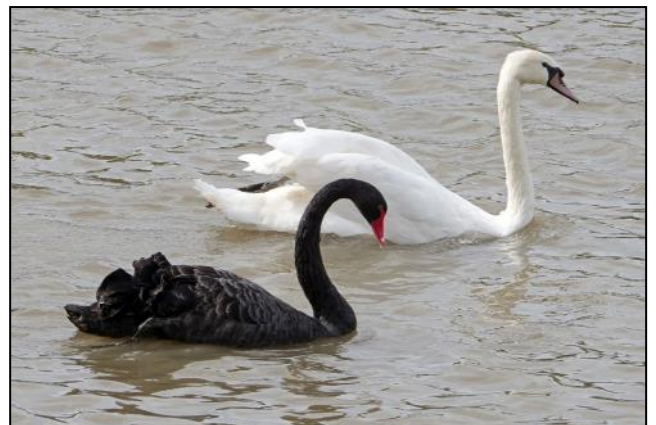
**August:** I visit my friends in France after a long break due to Covid. It is hot and dry here too and irrigated crops stand out as oases of greenery in a yellow landscape. Roe deer venture warily into the orchard early in the morning to nibble the fruit tree leaves.



Hares often come into the garden too, and we discover that one has hidden her leveret in a cool, shady form under a raspberry bush. The mother comes every evening to feed it. We don't want to disturb the baby or alarm the hare, so raspberries are off the menu.



Walking on a farm track, I come across a group of newly released pheasant poults, peeking out curiously from a maize field. I stop and laugh as the question 'Why did the chicken cross the road?' springs to mind.



**September:** Back in London, I notice the black swan has turned up again. It keeps trying to join a large group of juvenile mute swans which have congregated on the river, but the mute swans are less keen. They tolerate it, but do not appear to see it as another swan.





Squirrels are incredibly resourceful when it comes to finding food and I am amused to see this one sitting in a tree delicately nibbling a digestive biscuit.



**October:** Egrets usually leave the river in the Autumn, but one is still coming to fish regularly near Chiswick Eyot. There is a lot of competition for the tiny fish which get trapped in the shallows and the egret races and dives to try to reach its prey before the gulls.



There is a pool in the cemetery, fed from a leaking tap, which birds use to bath in. Passing it one day I notice a green woodpecker, its wings still damp from its wash, clinging to a nearby gravestone.

**November:** In addition to common ivy, castor oil plants have similar small late-blooming flowers which bees and other insects feast on. This large hornet-like bug is not actually a hornet, but a harmless hornet mimic fly.



**December:** After the summer heat and a mild Autumn, a bitterly cold spell in early December comes as quite a shock. The reservoir freezes and foxes trot nonchalantly across the ice to hunt in the frozen reed beds.



After some alarming initial skids and slides, a heron stalks on the ice too. There can't be any aquatic prey for it, but it is presumably managing to find other food.

As winter sets in, flocks of migrant redwings arrive. These small, shy thrushes are particularly partial to the abundant cotoneaster berries in the local parks.

# RESEARCH NETWORK MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Frank Winter

At the AGM in December, Frank Winter presented the results of the membership survey conducted earlier in the year. The charts below summarise the main findings.



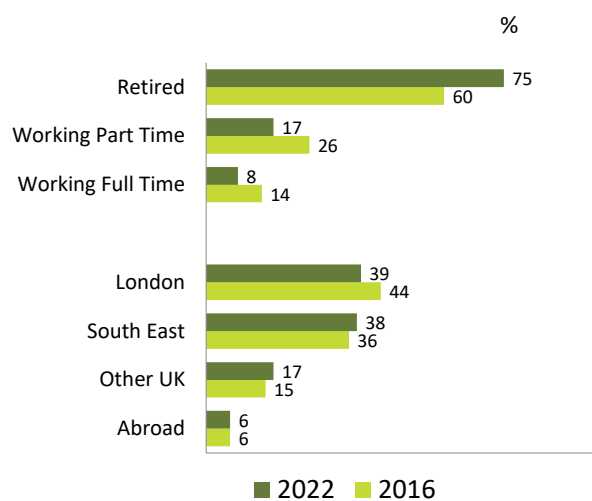
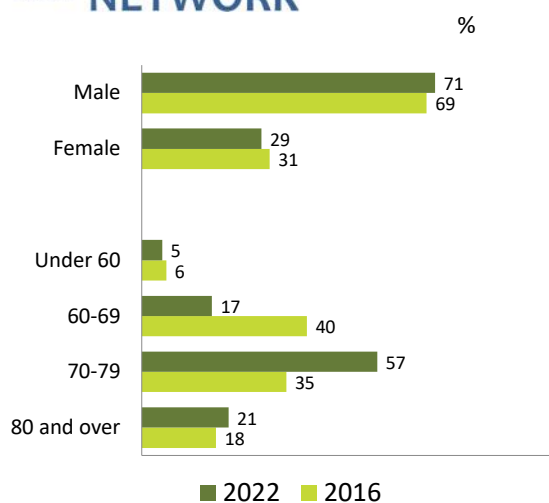
## Survey Details

- On-line survey conducted among Research Network members in February 2022
- Fieldwork and data processing were conducted free of charge by Cobalt Sky
- Sample universe: 180 members with a valid email address contacted, followed by two reminders
- Sample achieved: 107 interviews
- Response rate: 59% (NB: This was somewhat lower than the 72% obtained in 2016)

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**Sample profile: Two thirds male; mainly living in London/SE England; marked increase in the 70-79 age group compared to 2016; majority of respondents retired**

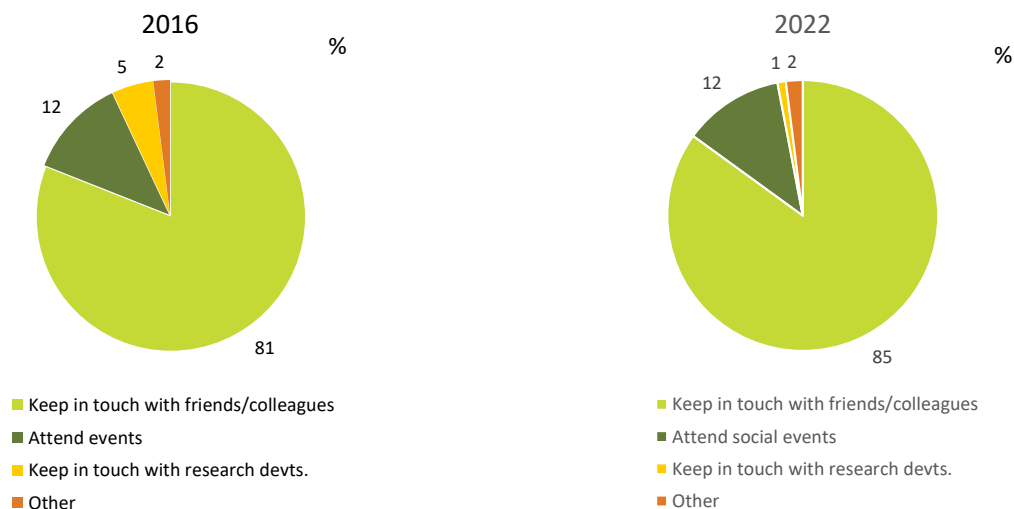


Base: All respondents (2016: 156 / 2022: 107)

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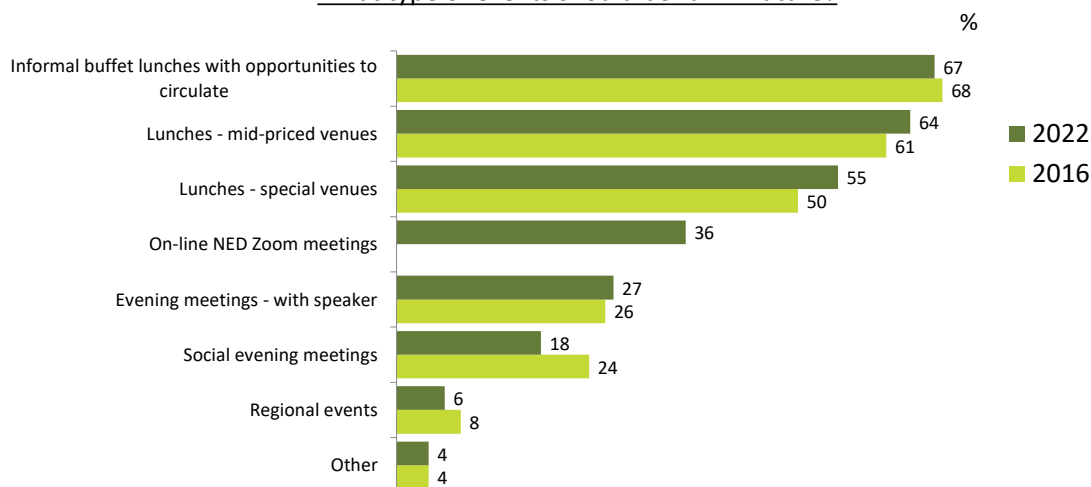
In both 2016 and 2022, overwhelmingly the main reason for joining is to keep in touch with friends and colleagues



Base: All respondents (2016: 156 / 2022: 107)

In-person lunches, particularly less formal ones, are by far the most popular events. There is greater interest in on-line NED Zoom evening meetings with a speaker, rather than in-person evening meetings.

What type of events should be run in future?



Base: All respondents (2016: 156 / 2022: 107)

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS / IMPLICATIONS

- Because of the Covid pandemic, no face-to-face events were held in 2020 and only two were held in 2021. In view of this, not too surprisingly, the importance of 'face-to-face social events', fell from 83% in 2016 to 75% in 2022.
- However, 46% of respondents considered the new area of 'social events on-line (NED Zoom Talks)' to be 'very/fairly important'.
- As in 2016, all the main communication channels were highly rated, with 78% rating 'in-person social events' as 'excellent/very good'. This suggests that the continued emphasis on in-person social events is justified.
- In fact when asked which events should be run in the future, 'informal lunches', 'lunches at mid-priced venues', and 'lunches at special venues' were all rated highly, which is in line with our current events policy.

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## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS / IMPLICATIONS

- The overwhelming majority of respondents were happy with both the number and cost of events.
- Price expectations for lunches have increased from 2016, but remain in line with current pricing.
- However, the interest in 'on-line NED Zoom meetings' at 36%, is considerably higher than the interest in 'in-person evening meetings', suggesting that these should continue into the future.
- Over half of the respondents felt that the number of NED Talks run during the pandemic was 'about right', with just over a quarter feeling that it would be 'good to run a few NED Talks in 2022'.

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## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS / IMPLICATIONS

- Readership of the Newsletter remains at a high level, with nearly 70% stating that they 'read it thoroughly' or 'read several articles'.
- As in 2016, over two thirds of respondents had visited the website with by far the main reason being looking at 'photos from past events', followed by 'details of current events', and then 'news items'.
- Finally, as in 2016, the overall demographic profile of respondents, apart from age and retirement, was still male biased and still very London/South East centric

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# A VILLAGE ON EXMOOR: THE CONTINUING STORY

Phil Barnard

*Phil Barnard gave a NED Talk two years ago on Brompton Regis, the village on Exmoor where he now lives. For those who were not present, the talk was summarised on pp 4–5 of the August 2021 Newsletter (Issue no. 38). Here he updates us on recent events in the village.*

The rural idyll portrayed in my February 2021 NED talk took a bit of a knock when last September, Brompton Regis experienced, as a national newspaper put it: "Mystery as former top terror cop 'kills himself' in fire and explosion at his home" (see picture) just a few hundred yards from where we live. A team of 30 police officers closed off the area, put helicopters in the sky and 4WD vehicles in the woods.

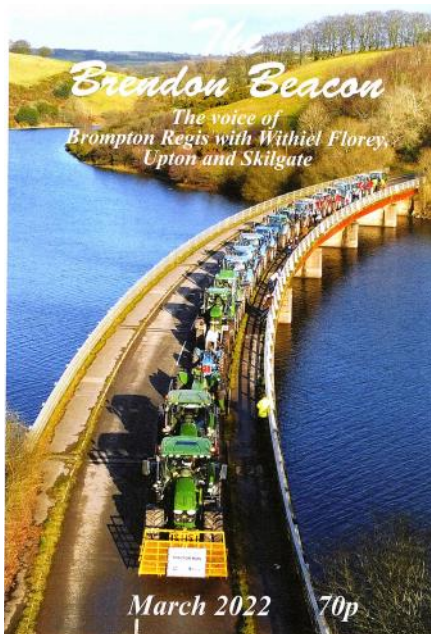


The upshot (detail supplied by our plumber/voluntary fireman 'mole' who uncovered human remains at the site) was that the owner, ex-Scotland Yard Superintendent Malcolm Baker, had committed suicide (or failed to escape the flames and smoke in time) having ignited cans of petrol that he had placed around the house and outbuildings. His partner and two children were found to be safe. Apparently, there had been a history of 'domestic' incidents as well as his antagonising of many locals.

The national interest came not only from his having played a key role in security at the London Olympics, but also having worked on the Litvinenko poisoning and 9/11 tragedy. Russian or Islamic extremist revenge was originally feared as the cause.

Back in everyday bucolic Exmoor, excitement has been more contained.

There are two pure white pheasants spending time in our field. Although the species is not renowned for its intellect, I hope they have the sense to stay until 1st February when the pheasant shooting season ends (although, as 'sports', they have a degree of 'gentlemen's protection').



The Fred Karno's Army of BR Morrismen (11 women, 5 men, 2 children + band) was astonished to be invited back to perform at various local events and notched up five public appearances in 2022. Our local Show & Gymkhana bounced back post-covid with record attendance, sponsorship and revenues. An associated tractor parade is shown mid-bridge crossing the Wimbleball Lake/Reservoir, which dropped to only 17% capacity during the drought. Currently it is back up to 90%, but the recent storms have also caused considerable flood damage and cut us off from Dulverton, our 'big smoke', with a population of 1700, located five miles away.

It's pleasing to report that The George Inn is thriving again. With a village and local population of only around 400, it is reassuring that the business is underpinned by the new owners also running Wimbleball Lake's fly-fishing enterprise, with anglers encouraged to stay at the pub too. Continuing the alcohol theme, our neighbouring village's artisan gin distillery (Northmoor Gin) is growing fast and has successfully expanded into rum production. The BR 'Men's Club' (including 'lady' members) gave it a highly rated once-over in December.

Early that month, two local events re-emerged: 'Dunster by Candlelight' and 'Dulverton by Starlight'. The former is a medieval village between us and the sea. Between them, these gatherings provide stilt walkers lighting the street candles, multiple Santas, carol singing around a Christmas tree conveniently placed outside a pub, street stalls, a model railway, Morris dancers, choirs and much more.

We have lost several local characters over the past couple of years including Robin Ashburner, a nationally renowned vexillologist. He went out with a flourish, his factory producing vast numbers of Ukrainian and Platinum Jubilee flags in his final days.

Also on the debit side, the ongoing uncertainty facing hill farmers in England isn't helped by rustling. A recent example from Avon & Somerset Police's 'Farm Watch' group: "Between 10/10 1200 hrs—11/10 0730 hrs, unknown offender/s have stolen a Brown and White Ram from within a field located off Brompton Regis road. Any information in relation to this theft, please call 101 quoting: 5222244781."

On the wider National Park front, one of the key issues in its early days nearly 50 years ago, was the plan for a large fir plantation on the Chains, a high wild plateau on Exmoor known as a 'Celtic thin place'. This was defeated, with the conservation of wildlife habitats and beautiful landscapes winning out. Now the focus has moved on to recovery and restoration. Apart from the archaeological delights provided by 8000 years of human occupation, the flora and fauna, including huge oaks and temperate rainforest as well as otters and beavers (again), has led to a re-wilding debate; pine martins next?

The post-Brexit Environmental Land Management arrangements have not yet progressed very far, although many in our local agricultural community have already diversified in several ways and accepted a degree of 'park management' in their activities. There never were "the good old days" for hill farmers and, one hopes, constructive discussions will lead to better outcomes than hitherto.

To finish where success has already been achieved, I'm delighted to report that our village community shop is still going well. The expected fall-off in sales has occurred as people venture further afield after the lockdowns, but not to a significant extent. The picture, front cover of this year's Brompton Regis Shop calendar, shows most of the volunteers.



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## TONY COWLING FOUNDATION

Penny Briki



The year 2022 flew by for the Tony Cowling Foundation (TCF) and it is hard to believe it was a year ago when we were proud to outline our planned activities. It is a real pleasure to have this opportunity via your *Newsletter* to share our progress and how we will build on these initiatives in 2023.

Those of you who registered interest in the TCF may have already read about our partnership with ESOMAR and the creation of the TCF Market Research Industry Innovation Award. We are establishing this as an annual award to celebrate and recognise work that demonstrates the potential to expand the boundaries of market research practice. The award generated submissions from twelve different countries, which was really encouraging. Topics included data quality improvements and the application of multiple data sources, operations techniques and meaningful client application changes. A shortlist of five were invited to present to our panel of judges (details on the website) who were impressed by the quality and nature of the entries. It was a difficult task, but the winning entry was announced as Dalberg Research, based in Nairobi, Kenya. To hear directly from Managing Director, Dr Jasper Grosskurth about their work with location analytics, please watch the recording of an interview with Didier Cowling on the awards page of our website: <https://tonycowlingfoundation.org/awards>. This first MR Industry Innovation Award was presented in person at the ESOMAR 75th Annual Congress held in Toronto in September 2022, and there is a further video link available to an interview between Dalberg and ESOMAR at the Congress.

Our partnership with Cambridge Judge Business School (CJBS) continues to evolve and the first three projects receiving funding from the TCF are now well underway. The projects relate to:

- Examining the impact of visual design on consumer attitudes and behaviour, with particular reference to fashion and interior design industries—building a model where choice language is imprecise and choice factors highly variable



- Studying food consumption habits to improve the understanding of the link between diet and public health—time series modelling of short and long-term predictive factors
- Quantifying the relationship between competition and price dispersion in homogeneous product markets—including isolating the impact of search.

You can find more details about these projects directly from the researchers on the research page <https://tonycowlingfoundation.org/initiatives>.

We are pleased to confirm that the TCF is now supporting three additional exploratory research projects at the CJSB and the project leads have been describing to us what excites them about the potential of their work. We will be adding details of these and the new recipients of funding on the research page soon.

In December 2022 we published our first TCF newsletter, *Connections* (<https://tonycowlingfoundation.org/News>). To receive future copies direct to your email, please register on our website—we would love to keep in touch with as many of Tony's friends as possible and welcome your feedback and support.

Lots more to look forward to in 2023 when we hope to encourage more support and donations to the foundation. We will be concentrating on the TCF mission to provoke and recognise innovation in the Market Research industry through our Research, Awards and Education programmes.

## MARKET RESEARCH BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

Ian Brace

This time last year, I wrote an article for Research Network members about the work of the Market Research Benevolent Association: who we help, the types of assistance we give and where we were as we were coming out of lockdown.



In that piece I wrote that in year ending March 2021 we had given over £62,000 in direct assistance to colleagues who worked or had worked in the market research sector, making it one of our busiest years ever. So we thought now would be a good time to provide an update on how things have gone since then.

The first thing that we noticed in late 2021 and early 2022 was that as the lockdowns eased and most people got back to something like a version of normal working, the demand for our support decreased rather more quickly than we had anticipated. In the full year ending March 2022, we gave direct assistance of £39,000, which is closer to what we would consider to be a 'normal' year. Our total expenditure for that year, which includes the administration of the help given, as well as marketing and general admin costs, was £67,000, down from £93,000 the previous year.

But that was before the impact of the war in Ukraine started to be felt, with higher fuel prices and the inflation that appears to have panicked many people. Many, if not most Research Network members will remember the extraordinary inflation of the 1970s and be a little more sanguine about the current levels. But for a generation that has rarely, if ever known inflation above 5%, this has been a worrying time. And it has resulted in real hardship for some.

The knock on from the effects of the Ukraine war took a while to manifest themselves as requests for help, and the summer months were quite quiet for us. But by October, as the first of the increased energy bills arrived, we were beginning to see an upturn in people coming to us for help. Now, in January 2023, whilst it is still not a flood, there is a regular stream of applicants for assistance. They are not necessarily being driven to us directly by the increases in living costs. That trigger is often something else that has occurred in their lives such as an accident or illness, but even for these people, energy and food bills now feature more strongly among their needs and issues than they did previously. Although we don't expect a return to the levels of 2020/21 in the amount that that we will give out, there is currently a definite upturn in demand for our help. And the winter is by no means over yet.

Once again, I would like to thank all our members and corporate supporters who provide much of our income; to the volunteers that enable the work we do to happen; and in particular to Keen as Mustard, who support our marketing from the goodness of their hearts.

# HASLEWORKS: A CO-WORKING SPACE IN THE HEART OF HASLEMERE

Paul Edwards

Cast your mind back to September 2020. Lockdown and all that. My neighbour, Helen, was walking through the town of Haslemere and noticed all the closed shops and the empty station car park. Haslemere is a Surrey town with about 15,000 inhabitants, a centre for villages around, and a station that (in normal times) sent roughly 3000 commuters a day to London.

But Covid seemed to be rewriting all the rules; would people really begin commuting again? When the word 'unprecedented' has become a cliché, then you know you are living in interesting times. This was one of those moments when the inertia of everyday life met the momentum of external events.



Helen decided to see if she could take the problem of the quiet town centre and the emergence of new working patterns within one solution, by opening a co-working space in the centre of Haslemere. And she asked her next door neighbours to help (that's where I come in!). If we could encourage people to work in town more often, then we would provide a small but significant lift to the local shops, cafes and restaurants. We thought people might be interested in working 'near home' for at least part of the week. Well, that was the theory.

Firstly, we did a bit of research (well this is the Research Network newsletter, so I had to get it in somewhere).

Obviously, a lot of people were working from home during lockdown. The challenge was to work out which behaviours developed during lockdown would continue, and which would go back to 'business as usual'. Remember when Zoom was an ice-lolly? All of a sudden, office workers (of all ages) were familiar with remote meetings.

We found a Nationwide survey (done for them by Ipsos Mori) which provided us with a wealth of (free) data. 90% of those who had been working from home wanted to continue doing so at least one day a week; 22% would like to work from home all the time. 36% expected to spend more time in their local area and over 60% reckoned that good local shops had become more important to them.

As many as 67% of those working from home said they had been glad to give up the daily commute. This freed up not only a considerable amount of money, but a substantial amount of time (the national average commute was 59 minutes every working day—rather more from Haslemere, which is 55 minutes on the train from Waterloo). 61% of people reported a better work-life balance and 50% claimed to be more productive.

But working at home wasn't always perfect; 19% rated their space to work from at home as poor, 17% said their employer didn't give them enough technology and 10% said their home internet connection was inadequate.

But just because people would like to work from home doesn't necessarily mean that their employers will be so accommodating.

However, employers in many sectors had seen that home working can work, and for them, marginal losses in terms of oversight and supervision might be balanced in cost saving by needing less office space. There were several news stories about big London firms planning to cast off some of their immense office space.

The smart money seemed to be on the concept of 'hybrid working'. Simply put, fewer people would go into the office every day and would spend more time than they used to, working from home. Of course, some people would return full time and a minority were likely to switch to 100% working from home. But a hybrid model seemed to be in tune with the general trend for more flexibility in life and work; changes in behaviour during lockdown served to demonstrate how to work from home, and that it can work successfully.

Could we make a 'third space' in Haslemere that would meet the needs of office workers and create a modest stimulus to the local economy? Simply defined, the 'third space' is not home or work (the first and second places). The phrase was popularised by Ray Oldenburg in his book 'The Great Good Place.' I suppose nowadays we would need to add the fourth place of social media and video meetings. But back in the eighties, the phrase was new and valuable.

Starbucks was a paradigm of the third place. It was not a café. Well, some people did go in to get a drink (and perhaps something to eat) and sat down and consumed it. Many though, just went in to get a drink and went

out with it, whilst others sat quietly at one of the tables working away and ordering the occasional coffee to stave off embarrassment or dehydration. Starbucks (other coffee shops are available) helped to establish the patterns that co-working spaces were able to exploit in subsequent years. Imagine the response in pre-Starbucks times if you had gone into either your local greasy spoon or the Ritz, and you had just sat at a table with your laptop for hours on end, hardly making a purchase....

So, what does a working space need to bring to the local community? Obviously, there has to be practical and comfortable accommodation as well as first class connectivity; just like an office. It needs to offer the ability to remove oneself from the distractions and temptations of home and build a psychological space between the 'work me' and the 'home me'. There is, however, a social dimension to be considered: the things that an office provides just by bringing people together. A good working space needs to be one that offers some companionship, creates an atmosphere where people are able to ask for and offer advice, along with fostering a learning environment.



This is what we were aiming for with HasleWorks. A space for working near home that cuts out the commute, yet offers the physical and social benefits of an office. A chance for people to take back a little control over their working lives.

We took out a lease on a central property that had previously been a school, a toy shop and most recently, a travel agency. We sourced excellent ergonomically designed furniture from a UK manufacturer and fitted top-notch wi-fi.



Hanging by Godfrey Blount Haslemere, 1896  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Haslemere was the epicentre of the Arts and Crafts movement at the turn of the twentieth century and the building was in that style. So we created an identity inspired by Arts and Crafts, using that for our logo (in a free to use font!) and borrowed colours from that movement. These can be seen in a hanging by local artist Godfrey Blount that the V&A have kindly allowed us to use in a reproduction on our wall.

Our members include the self-employed, people running their own micro-enterprises, remote workers and one or two small companies that bring their people together a few times a month. We have day packages, unlimited packages and most things in between. We have a fully equipped meeting room that is proving increasingly popular and three very busy acoustic 'Zoom-booths'.

We see quite a lot of members who have recently moved to the area and need somewhere to work while building work goes on. We had a rush when bad weather interrupted the wi-fi in a local village.

Whilst our members are almost exclusively open and friendly, they are definitely here to work and not just to chat. Many of them talk about the opportunity to get away from the distractions of home: children, pets, chores, the garden and so on. One of the key benefits for people coming into HasleWorks is the ability to focus on the work in hand, delivering on the productivity bonus of not commuting, yet still getting out of the house.

The founders take no remuneration and the aim is that if and when we start to make a profit, we will be able to use it to help local good causes. At the time of writing, we are just over one year in, and we are not there yet; we still need a few more members but the number of coffee cups in our bins suggest that we are providing a small lift to the local cafes!





# PLANTING MY FEET IN HIGHER GROUND: THE EVEREST BASE CAMP TREK

Nick Moon

**I**t all started 9 years ago when I went on holiday to Peru. I went to a very remote lodge in the Amazon basin (where my guide got us lost in the jungle at night, but that's another story) and I walked the Inca Trail. It was simultaneously the hardest thing I'd ever done, but not as hard as I thought it was going to be, and it gave me a taste for altitude hiking.



I thought about climbing Kilimanjaro, but the more I read about it, the less attractive it seemed. You basically spend days climbing up the side of one mountain, and then go back down the way you came up. Kilimanjaro is about the only interesting feature for hundreds of miles, and as you're standing on it you can't appreciate what it looks like. On the Inca Trail, every time you go round a bend there's another vista of amazing mountain peaks.

So I decided that trekking in the Himalayas would be the best option, but it took me 8 years to do anything serious about it. Then I received an email advertising a trek to a monastery about halfway along the Everest Base Camp (EBC) Trek. I was about to sign up for that, but then thought that if I was going to all that trouble to get there, I might as well go the whole hog.

After a lot of research (thanks TripAdvisor) I chose a local agency to organise the trek. I was planning on joining a group trek, but for a variety of reasons I ended up going just with me

and a porter/guide. The cost was no more than going as a group, which says something about wage rates out there.

One plus of going solo was that I was able to say I'd be happy to pay a bit more to have my own room, with my own loo. I knew the accommodation would all be very basic and I'm happy with that, but I'd prefer not to be sleeping in a bunkhouse with loads of strangers or to have to go outside in the middle of the (freezing) night to find the loo.

As I had done for the Inca Trail, I did as much prep as I realistically could. Hertfordshire is a bit light on mountains, but there's a circular walk including Ivinghoe Beacon, and doing that twice was an 18 mile walk with 600 m of climbing. I did that 2 to 3 times a week for a month, interspersed with hitting the Stairmaster and the incline treadmill in the gym. I had two pretty strenuous days on Kinder Scout and Mam Tor to include some long steep climbs, but of course there's no way of preparing for being at such high altitude.

The EBC trek starts from a small town called Lukla, a couple of thousand metres higher than Kathmandu, where everyone starts from. It's known as 'the most dangerous airport In the world', because the runway is so short and has a steep cliff at one end and a massive drop at the other. As if that wasn't bad enough, all flights to Lukla had been diverted to start from Ramechap, which is a 5 hour drive away along a terrible road. Luckily, help was at hand for a not ridiculous extra cost, and I got a helicopter to Lukla from Kathmandu.

My guide—the wonderful Upendra—was there waiting for me and off we went, with him carrying 10 kg of my gear, and me carrying just 5kg in a backpack—most of which was water. Lukla is at 2800 m and the basecamp is at 5364 m, but because there are a depressing number of downward sections on the way up that are followed by equivalent or greater upward ones, the total amount climbed is way more than the 2500 m difference between top and bottom.

What makes it worse is that because of the risk of altitude sickness, there are two acclimatisation days built in, but sadly these are not rest days. On each of these you make a steep climb for around 400m and then turn round and go straight back down again. You get exposed to higher altitudes this way, but crucially in terms of altitude sickness, you sleep at a lower level than you reached that day. One of the most depressing moments came when we were walking along a path and Upendra pointed to a village way down at the bottom of the valley below and said that was where we were having lunch, meaning that we had to climb all the way back up again after lunch.

There is accordingly a lot of up and down as well as a significant overall height gain, but none of it was that difficult. From Lukla to basecamp is 65 km, but that is spread over 6 days (not counting the acclimatisation days) and we would typically only be walking for 5 or 6 hours each day. Perhaps because he'd been warned about how old I am, Upendra kept expressing surprise at how fast I was walking!

It was not until about halfway, when we were getting close to the 4000 m mark, that I started feeling the effects of the altitude, and even then it only really hit me on the final climb to basecamp itself. Upendra was very good at announcing "time for a breather" and I found a 5 minute stop every hour or so made a big difference. It was certainly much easier than the dreaded day 2 on the Inca Trail, when I was reduced to counting each left foot step and when it got to 100, I would look for the closest point where I could plausibly stop 'to take a photo' and try to get my breath back.

The one downside to not being in a group was that there was no real conversation along the way. Upendra's English was very limited, and while he was very good at pointing things out along the way, and if relevant, explaining what they were for, and he knew the English and Nepali names of every mountain in the Himalayas, his response to almost every question I asked was "Ha ha. Yes!" A far cry from the Inca Trail, where I remember spending a whole afternoon discussing a single episode of 'Lost' with a dentist from Chicago and her teacher boyfriend.

Having said that, there was the opportunity for conversation at each overnight stop. Apart from one or two luxury hotels at the lower levels, accommodation is all in the form of 'tea-houses'. If this conjures up images of cottages in Devon with thick stone walls, think again. They are all very basic structures built out of plywood with zero insulation, and no heating whatsoever apart from a stove in the middle of the communal dining area. Above a certain altitude, these used dried yak dung as fuel, as there were no nearby trees to provide firewood.

Food along the way was basic but very good. I'd been advised not to eat meat because it all gets carried by porters or cows/yaks from Lukla and so is far from fresh. I had eggs in some form for breakfast every day and drank black tea. For lunch, I always had dal bhat, on the basis that porters carried vast loads and survive all day eating just that. (Though I didn't buy the popular t-shirt with "Dal bhat power 24 hour No shower" on it.) For dinner, I alternated between noodles and fried rice, each with eggs and mixed veg. Alcohol is not a good idea at altitude and all I drank was the local speciality of honey, lemon and ginger, to which I became quite addicted. They grow ginger up there, so were very generous with it. One pleasant surprise was that in the bigger villages, there were coffee shops that made a very good espresso.

It was quite warm and very sunny during the day, so while I began each day wearing a down jacket and a waterproof shell, once the sun came out, I was walking in shirtsleeves for the rest of the day. But once the sun went in, the temperature dropped dramatically and I spent as long as possible close to the stove each evening, and sometimes struck up conversation with other trekkers—especially those travelling alone or in small groups. There were some groups of 20 or more, who very much kept to themselves. Because there aren't that many tea houses, I ran into the same people on 2 or 3 different nights along the way and a certain camaraderie developed.

The scenery changed dramatically as we went along. The trail starts off winding through mountain valleys that look a lot like the Alps (though with the addition of some scary-looking suspension bridges hanging hundreds of feet above the river below), but one day involved walking through a wooded section alongside a stream that could easily have been Devon. But after you get your first tantalising glimpse of the very top of Everest after 4 days, things start to get more dramatic. Apart from two places, you don't see Everest at all





along the way, but there's no shortage of other mighty and beautiful mountains. Once you get near the end you're well above the tree line, and the valleys get wider and wider, and it was for me, the kind of scenery I've never seen before.

The final climb to basecamp is hard going—not just because of the altitude but because it also involves crossing two huge boulder fields. As I have a balance problem caused by an enlarged blood vessel near one ear, I was very reliant on a helping hand from Upendra. When you actually make it, there's nothing but an enormous sense of achievement. I chose the autumn trekking season for better weather and the climbers are only there in the spring season. There is a very large rock on which someone has painted 'Everest Base Camp 5364 m' with a lot of tired people having their photos taken in front of it, but that's it. Just that amazing feeling of achievement.

My balance problem means steep downhills are problematic, and on the way up we climbed some sections that I knew I would hate going down on the way back. Plus, as with Kilimanjaro, you go back exactly the same way you came up, which I also really don't like. And so I took the decision about a day before basecamp that I'd avoid those problems by shelling out \$400 dollars for a helicopter ride all the way back to Kathmandu. Apart from the fact that I missed out on the yak steak I was looking forward to when we got back to Lukla, I don't regret that decision one bit!

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## RODNEY DICK 1934–2022

*Peter Bartram writes:*



**R**odney Dick, who died last July aged 88, was a member of the Research Network from its very beginning in 2002 and a regular supporter of the Archive of Market and Social Research. He was not one to broadcast his health problems and we never knew when he became ill with cancer and kidney problems early in 2021. This reticence was characteristic of him: his successful life in research was accompanied by talents fully applied elsewhere without boasting or fanfare.

He lived most of his life in the Winchmore Hill area of London, but at the age of nine during World War II, he was evacuated to a farm in Cornwall where he learned to drive a tractor. Soon after the war, he joined the RAF, flying Tiger Moths, Chipmunks, Gloster Meteors and eventually Canberra bombers all over the world. Invited to pilot the famous Vulcan bomber, he had to decline as his height, at 6ft 2ins, meant its cockpit was even more cramped than that of the Canberra. So he left the RAF, initially working at Scotland Yard.

Soon after, he met his wife Solveig at the GS Royds advertising agency, working in the marketing and research departments, and they married in 1963. He went on to work at MAS (Marketing Advisory Services) and CPV (Colman Prentice and Varley), but then started his own company, Associated Market Research Services. This was held in high regard, mainly conducting product tests, and this enabled him to make many friends across the research industry, most notably Charles Clunies-Ross, Priscilla Congreve and Kay Edwards.

In later years, he never lost his association with flying, helping and leading the Air Cadets in Guildford, Islington and in Winchmore Hill itself.

Described as "a true gentleman, always kind, considerate, generous and very intelligent, helping others when needed and above all, putting others before himself" he is greatly missed by his family and those of us who have been privileged to know him.

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## LEN MARCHANT

*Bill Blyth writes:*

**L**en left Dagenham County High School in 1955 and went on to study Physics at Leicester University. For reasons we don't know, he and a number of other students failed their second year maths exam and were made to leave. Leicestershire's loss was the Army's gain when Len moved on to do National Service, which was still compulsory. At the screening stage, the officers decided that Len should work as a teacher in the Army and promoted him to Sergeant. He gained a degree during his National Service and spent his time teaching and playing the flute in the band—he had learnt the flute at school where he was one of two boys in his year who had volunteered to play and had moved on relatively fast to a high level of skill.



After National Service, Len did some supply teaching, but finding it boring, he asked at the Labour Exchange whether they had something more interesting, for example, statistics. He was told to write to A C Nielsen at Oxford, a market research company, where in 1963 he got a job as a trainee/junior statistician. From Nielsen, the training house for retail statistics, he moved to Harry Henry, a small consultancy and from there, in 1968, to the British Market Research Bureau, the largest UK based ad hoc and continuous research company, based in Ealing. There he took charge of the statistics department and acted as adviser to the company on all sampling and statistics work.

I met Len in 1970, when I joined the company as a graduate trainee, and accompanied the rest of the graduate trainees and a few client juniors on the statistics course which Len ran as part of the trainee course. It was a million miles away from the deadly world of academic statistics and I found Len's statistical skills very engaging. I was working for Colin McDonald and it was natural that I found the skills and experience of Colin and Len very necessary as I tried to come up to speed in the technical market research work place. Len became a good friend and he and his wife Christine stayed good friends after they moved from Ealing to Marlow.

Len left BMRB to work for himself, but he stayed close to the Company. He worked with us on a proposal for Essex University to carry out a very large National Survey of the British Electorate. This study involved a survey of both a panel of the electorate, who had been sampled in a previous survey, and a sample of current electors, including those voting for the first time, either by reason of age, geographical location, or change of eligibility. To cut a very long story short, we designed a totally new sampling method which maximised the overlap between the two samples and also, wave on wave, how the study would continue for future fieldwork, by recruiting fresh members of the population as they became eligible. This work was published by Len and myself in July 1973 in the Journal of the Market Research Society and was later re-published in the 'Milestones of Market Research, Vol 1' in 1996. The Blyth-Marchant method became the standard way of sampling households in the UK for many years.

Len worked for himself for the rest of his life. He specialised in complex data analysis, experimental design, multi-national studies, store research, analysis of in-store data and many other techniques. Much of his work was international, all of it was highly confidential, and most of it was unpublished. His client list included major international companies and also, large international retailers. He was highly regarded by other statisticians.

Outside work, Len pursued a number of interests. Music was a prominent and lifelong interest. His activities included the flute as already mentioned, the harpsichord which he not only played but had built for him, a church choir, an Opera Society and playing in different musical groups.

He was a very fit cyclist and had a couple of bikes on which he would ride very long distances. He raised many thousands of pounds for charity and last but not least, he was a keen walker, but never fulfilled his ambition to walk some, if not all of the way to Santiago de Compostela.

Len was a very special person; a statistician, musician, charity fund raiser, cyclist, walker, husband, father, friend and Christian. He died in July 2022 and will be very much missed by all those who came into contact with him.

## STEERING GROUP

The Research Network is directed by a Steering Group consisting at present of Adam Phillips (Chairman), Jane A'Court (Membership), Jane Bain (Website Editor and Events Co-organiser), Jane Gwilliam (Events Co-organiser), Linda Henshall (External Liaison), Nick Tanner (Website News Editor), Gill Wareing (Secretary-Treasurer), Frank Winter (Oral History and Data Protection) and Graham Woodham (*Newsletter* editor). Their names, addresses, phone and email details are in the Research Network Membership Directory. Please feel free to contact any member of the Steering Group on matters relevant to the areas they cover.