

THE RESEARCH NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

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THE WAY WE ARE

The Network and its members seem to have a lot to celebrate at the moment. The surprise reappearance of summer (and there were many who believed we'd be skipping it this year and launching straight from late winter to autumn) is worth celebrating, of course, and the Olympics have been something of a triumph, but other more personal achievements have surely also been causes of some jubilation.

Two Network members—Liz Nelson and Steven Bairfelt—were elected to MRS Council in the spring and we congratulate them on this achievement. More recently, the indefatigable Jane Gwilliam was made a Fellow of the Society, in well-deserved recognition of her contribution to qualitative research over the last ... well, over a considerable number of years. And then very recently, the same Jane Gwilliam, in a sign that she is perhaps not *entirely* indefatigable, announced her retirement from TNS-RI and from the industry and her intention to "do a lot more knitting". It is believed (and fervently hoped) that she still intends to put the knitting-needles down occasionally and venture out with Jane Bain, in order to track down still more establishments prepared to host the Network's ever-popular lunches.

If we need yet another cause for celebration, a glance at the back of this *Newsletter* will reveal that for the first time in my tenure as editor, we have not a single obituary to publish. For fear of tempting providence it might be better not to celebrate this too loudly, but it is surely an achievement of sorts.

That aside, you will find most of the regular features to amuse you in this edition, together, of course, with a number of more individual contributions. Peter Bartram has once again found a terrific collection of stories from his extensive archive of MRS Newsletters with which to amuse us, not to mention a collection of mugshots with which to baffle us (or perhaps not most are reassuringly recognisable). Colin MacDonald and Christine Eborall offer us clues as to what retired researchers get up to and Peter Daniels explores what it is to be a Welshman in exile. Jane Bain's photographic talents are described by Nick Phillips and then demonstrated to us all again in her regular *Nature Diary*. Add to all this reviews of the Spring Lunch and the Summer Party, and advance news of the 10th Anniversary Autumn Lunch, and it all adds up to a bumper collection of jottings. Now, where has that sun gone ...?



AUTUMN LUNCH: 23RD OCTOBER AT THE SAVILE CLUB

It can hardly have escaped many members' attention that the Network celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, in recognition of which the Autumn Lunch will be held on 23rd October at the prestigious Savile Club, in Brook Street, Mayfair. Hold the date now and look out for the e-mail from Gill Wareing announcing the opening of



bookings, which should reach you around 25th September. Numbers are limited to 100 and the event is expected to sell out, so we are unable to invite non-members on this occasion. But it promises to be a memorable event and we look forward to welcoming members old and new. Book promptly, and we hope to see you there!

ON OTHER PAGES

Page 2 The Way We Were
Page 4 Spring lunch
Page 5 Summer Party

Page 6 Preserving Hammersmith Mall
Page 6 Stitch-up in Ealing
Page 8 The Way they Were

Page 8 In Search of Welshness
Page 10 Classics for All
Page 12 Jane Bain's Nature Diary

THE WAY WE WERE

Peter Bartram's selections from MRS Newsletters of yesteryear

40 years ago (1972):

At the MRS Lunch held in May at the Criterion Grill, the guest speaker was **John Hughes** of Hobson Bates and Partners who offered this advice to aspiring new entrants to media research:

- 1 Never say yes or no.
- 2 Do keep your jargon up to date.
- 3 Try to get your name attached to something specific in this business—ie. 'the Farnes-Barnes Method' or 'the Heathcliffe Histogram' etc. This is the way your name will be made.
- 4 Do write incomprehensible articles for publications media men are supposed to read, but don't.
- 5 Do not use simple words when difficult ones are there for you, ie. not 'bar chart' but 'histogram'.
6. Invent your own phrases with a fine ring to them, ie. 'point of oblivion', 'polychromatic function,' etc.
- 7 Do remember a graph can show anything you want, if you adapt the scale appropriately."

But in case his audience got the impression that he thought UK media research is rubbish, he was careful to add: "We are poor media researchers but, comparing with the rest of the world, unfortunately I do not know where to find better."

An obituary for **Dr Patrick Malone**, who died of a heart attack at the age of 40, contained the following translation from the ancient Greek poet Callimachus:

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead;
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed,
I wept as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.

And 25 years ago (1987):

Mary Goodyear gave her impressions of the third World Advertising Congress in Beijing, with sentiments which could largely hold true today:

"Everything was on a mammoth scale, from the auditorium seating 1,500 to the banquet in a room resembling a football pitch ... One dish consisted of jellyfish and sea cucumber (not a vegetable but a very large marine slug) ...

Sea slugs aside, there were lots of good moments in

the five-day conference, for example rent-a-delegate locals apparently brought in off the street at the last moment to compensate for a shortfall in numbers, and the group of Chinese who laughed their way through endless re-runs of the Benny Hill Show in preference to other programmes on offer at the Thames Television stall.

Most of the papers seemed to have a disregard for intellectual content, and the potential wall-to-wall flow of 'creative excellence from around the world' (ie. commercials) was only impeded by the need to have very long, slow, official speeches from Chinese officials. Now I know why their culture is 4,000 years old."

Following a number of mega-mergers and acquisitions, MRS Chairman **Bill Blyth** offered some prescient thoughts on the integration of market research into the broader information industry. He anticipated that, coupled with changes in the technology of data collection, this would bring a number of problems, especially in relation to data quality, whose minimum standards had so far been safeguarded by the Society's Code of Conduct. "Market research data will sit alongside other data on linked electronic databases where there is no independent guarantee of the quality of the data." He added: "I believe that on-line data attach to themselves a spurious authority..."

One month later, **John O'Brien** reinforced the same message in his report on a Technical Development Conference, by quoting from a paper by **Patrick Clarke** of AGB: "In a world where data are plentiful and their collection is automated it will become increasingly difficult to ensure standards are maintained."

In another of his monthly missives, Bill Blyth quoted comments by **Lord Kearton** on his departure as President of the MRS. Looking back on his years among people in the industry he offered two thoughts: the first was "What pleasant and intelligent people my wife and I have met" and the second was that "Market researchers tend to undervalue themselves and the potential importance of their work, and they still need to overcome this."

Gordon Heald told us that he and 100 others from 33 countries had been invited by President Reagan to

a lunch in the State Dining Room at the White House. Gordon had been asked by 'The Council to Advise the President on the Image of the United States Overseas' to devise a semi-structured questionnaire to be distributed among the 100 delegates, who included Kissinger, Kirkpatrick, Murdoch, Maxwell and the Duke of Westminster. The survey worked well and Gordon achieved a 60% response.

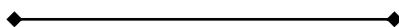
Less impressive was the cuisine: "A very chic French woman sitting next to me raised her eyebrows in disbelief at the menu consisting of 'cold peanut soup' (left over from the Carter days someone quipped), a 'variation of ravioli', and 'sorbet and pears.'

Afterwards, 'As we waved goodbye to the President on the South Lawn, a delegate from Argentina turned to me and said: "I will never forget this day for the rest of my life. I will be able to tell my children and grandchildren that I shook hands and had lunch with the President of the United States.'"

And 20 years ago (1992):

A competition to devise terminological (in)exactitudes for a new edition of the Dictionary of Market Research was won by **Roger Gane**, with:

- Focus Group Discussion: Trying to get the answer the ad agency wants
- Snowballing: Looking for a respondent you haven't got a snowball's chance in hell of finding
- Social research: 'What are you doing after work?'
- Image battery: Opinion polls' effect on politicians
- Adding Value (as in a research proposal): 'We're competing against a bloody management consultancy again.'
- Harmonisation: The art of persuading people who speak foreign languages that our way is right.



YOU HAVE A DIRECT LINE TO US ALL

A message to all from the Steering Group members

This is a Network run by the members and you elect a Steering Group at every AGM to organise affairs on your behalf. The Steering Group can only do its job if it is constantly aware of what **you** are thinking. But you don't have to wait for a Network lunch/party or the AGM to let us know your views on how we are running things. You have direct access to us 24/7.

It's not a telephone line. It's called "YOUR FEEDBACK" and you can find it on the website (look at the Tabs on the left of the page). You are asked to type in your name and email address to authenticate that you are a member and you can then add any comments or criticisms about the way the Network is being run or any suggestions that you'd like to make. You can also (if you wish) type in comments about the website. When you have done this click on "OK" which is on the right, underneath the spaces where you type. When you have clicked OK your comments will disappear from the page (you can check this by going to another page and then back to the YOUR

FEEDBACK page, which will then be blank again). But the webmaster will be able to see what you have written when he logs in to the website host server and he will immediately copy this by email to all other Steering Group members.

This is a service provided for you with the explicit purpose of keeping us in touch with members. Of course you may also speak to/telephone/email individual members of the Steering Group but if you use the website facility you will know that all members will benefit from your views. Although you must provide your name and email address these, like your comments will be invisible to everyone except the Steering Group so there is no danger of increasing the amount of spam you receive by using the facility.

Please use it! Then even if you can't make the AGM (and we hope you can) we will know what you have to say.

SPRING LUNCH AT EV



Our Spring Lunch in April was held at Ev, underneath the arches (no singing, please, out of respect for the memory of the recently departed Mr Bygraves) close to Waterloo Station. This charming Turkish restaurant, part of the Tas chain who have hosted us on a previous occasion, served selections of dishes direct to our tables, which

made a pleasant change from the more usual buffet service. A total of 76 members and guests attended—slightly fewer than for most lunches recently but this seemed to be a result of last-minute cancellations rather than any lack of interest. A selection of photos from the lunch is shown below.



SUMMER PARTY: DOGGETT'S COAT AND BADGE

We broke with tradition for this year's Summer Party and moved from Hammersmith to another riverside location, Doggett's Coat and Badge, a modern pub building on the southwest corner of Blackfriars Bridge. We had the use of a bar on the upper level with a terrace overlooking the river and offering glorious views of Unilever House and St Paul's Cathedral. The odd shower was far too light to dampen the proceedings to any appreciable extent—indeed, by the standards of this summer we felt the weather had been very kind to us—and the event

meandered, as Network events, especially those attended by Linda Henshall, so often do, well beyond its lunchtime billing and into a long evening.

The photos below are but a small selection of those available on the Network website, www.research-network.org.uk. Caption competitions in the *Newsletter* tend to generate few, if any, entries—perhaps due to a lack of prizes on offer—but readers might consider, at least in private, how they might label the photo of our illustrious webmaster, Tom Punt, shown here with the ever-patient Gill Wareing.



PRESERVING HAMMERSMITH MALL

Nick Phillips

Many members of the Research Network will be familiar with the delights of Hammersmith Mall from summer parties at the Auriol Kensington Rowing Club. In the coach house of William Morris's Kelmscott House there has been a wonderfully evocative exhibition organised by the Hammersmith Mall Residents' Association (HAMRA), with old photographs, maps and stories of famous past inhabitants such as Turner, Eric Gill and AP Herbert—as well as William Morris himself. In a stretch of barely a mile on the north side of the river, the wealthy, the artistic and workers from various industries lived in close proximity.

But the story told by the historical black and white pictures was brought to life by additional photographs in colour from our Research Network colleague, Jane Bain—a splendid panorama of the mile stretch and a series of studies of people and places, birds and wildlife through the year. HAMRA's Victoria Timberlake said: "This exhibition gives a real feel for the history of this stretch of the Thames as well as its current life throughout the seasons. Jane



Bain's photography is quite spectacular"—a sentiment shared by Network members who have enjoyed her regular Nature Diary in the Newsletter (for the latest edition of which, see page 12).

On one level the exhibition was just a very good description of the idyllic enclave that lies to the south of the Great West Road. On another level the exhibition as a whole, and particularly Jane's contribution, was persuasive communication at its best, effectively saying: "We have something very special here. Treasure it. Don't ruin it."



On the day I attended the exhibition the local Council announced its revised plans for the town hall extension (just the other side of the Great West Road from Hammersmith Mall)—reducing the size of the proposed building from 14 to eight storeys. It would be good to see other examples in the *Newsletter* of Network members who have developed another skill alongside their research expertise, and used it for a purpose.

STITCH-UP IN EALING

Christine Eborall

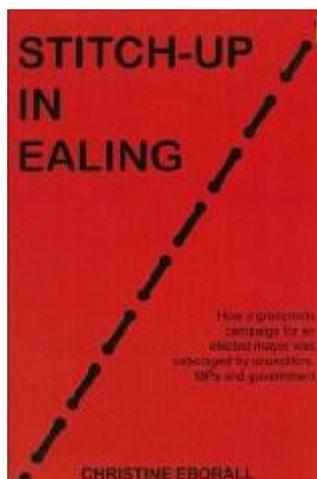
One of Christine Eborall's first retirement projects was to write a book about her ill-fated attempt in 2001-2 to get an elected mayor for the London Borough of Ealing, where she lives.

You may remember that, in May this year, there were referendums in ten English cities on whether their councils should be led by elected mayors. With the exception of Bristol, all voted No. Did this mean that people in England really

do not want their cities led by elected mayors? Or could it be that they are unclear about the implications of having a mayoral system, so are easily deterred from voting for one?

The May referendums were the British government's latest attempt to reform local government by introducing elected mayors. A tried and tested municipal leadership model, common in Europe, the USA and elsewhere, an elected mayoral structure

gives more power to the people, who choose their municipal leader themselves rather than having local councillors choose one of their own. The reform process was begun, tentatively, in the late 1990s by Tony Blair. The Local Government Act 2000 gave most local councils in England a choice of three new structures: leader and cabinet, elected mayor and cabinet or elected mayor and council manager. These ranged in terms of separation of powers between the executive and the full council from the least, the Westminster-like leader and cabinet structure to the most, the presidential-type elected mayor and council manager structure.



From the start, the cards were stacked against elected mayors. Most local councillors saw (and continue to see) them as a threat to their power, to be avoided at all costs. A local referendum has to be held before an elected mayor structure can be adopted, while a leader and cabinet can be in place straight away. Local authorities were not required to publicise the reforms extensively; the government gave them no publicity at all. Hardly surprising, then, that most councils went for the leader and cabinet option and that there are still so few elected mayors in England today.

Councils did have to take "reasonable steps" to consult their communities. Most did the minimum possible, but Ealing Council's consultation was surprisingly thorough. It sent an eight-page newspaper explaining the options, plus a two-page questionnaire and prize draw incentive, to the all 115,000+ council tax-paying households in the borough, plus some 10,000 residents' and community groups, local businesses and school governors. No fewer than 10,563 usable questionnaires were returned, the largest response in London and one of the largest in the country. When asked to rank the three options in order of preference, the results were those shown in Table 1.

The council's analysis was perfunctory and no further breakdown of the data was ever made available. Nevertheless, to me, and probably to most researchers, it showed a clear desire for an elected mayor for Ealing. It also corroborated other information on how fed up local people were with Ealing Council's dismal performance, nearing the bottom of the Audit Commission's rankings. Government guidance stated that such consultation results should trigger a referendum. But Ealing's councillors refused to call one, treating the results as "first past the post" with leader and cabinet getting the most "votes". Unhappy with this, I and others forced a referendum by collecting a petition of over 12,000 signatures, 5% of the borough's electorate. My book tells the story of how the petition was sabotaged by local politicians and the David and Goliath referendum campaign where Ealing's councillors conspired to win a NO vote with a reprehensible barrage of lies and misinformation on a turnout of 9.8%. A research thread runs through it, including the not insignificant part played by the late Lord McIntosh, my boss when I was at IFF Research, in attempting to get redress for the worst of the political shenanigans.

Ten years on, despite Westminster visions of empowered communities and the Big Society, councillors are still holding onto power and keeping the community at arm's length. But elected police commissioners will soon be upon us. How will they change the balance of power in local communities? Will elected mayors make a comeback? We shall see.

"Stitch-up in Ealing: how a grass-roots campaign for an elected mayor was sabotaged by councillors, MPs and government" is written and published by Christine Eborall. Priced at £6.99, ISBN 978-0-9572063-0-4, it is stocked by Pitshanger Bookshop in Ealing and obtainable from other bookshops. A Kindle version is also available at £1.90.

Base = 10,563 usable responses (unweighted)	1 st choice	2 nd choice	3 rd choice
Leader and cabinet	40%	25%	17%
Elected mayor and cabinet	36%	33%	13%
Elected mayor and council manager	15%	19%	44%
<i>Subtotal: Elected mayor, either structure</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>57%</i>
No preference expressed	8%		

Table 1: Rank order of options

THE WAY THEY WERE

Peter Bartram's photo archive

Peter Bartram's trawl through the archives for our column *The Way We Were* (see page 3) has once again revealed some interesting photos. The Rogues' Gallery below features pictures from 1983 (top row) and 1984 (bottom row)—which can you identify? And for a bonus point, which University Challenge presenter does photo (j) most closely resemble? Answers at the foot of page 9 opposite.



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)



(g)



(h)



(i)



(j)



IN SEARCH OF WELSHNESS

Recollections & Reflections of London Welsh Exiles by Peter Daniels

The Welsh like to talk a lot. The Welsh like to talk a lot about themselves. They have this desperate need to tell the world that they are Welsh, as otherwise they are assumed to be English.

I too have felt this need to announce and explore my Welshness, and I don't know how many members of the Research Network are Welsh, or of Welsh descent, but even if you have Welsh friends, you may be interested in the book I have just had published which takes a humorous look at the nuances and idiosyncrasies of the Welsh character, and makes a more serious comment about the challenges we Welsh face in preserving our identity in an English world whose media and politics largely ignores our existence.

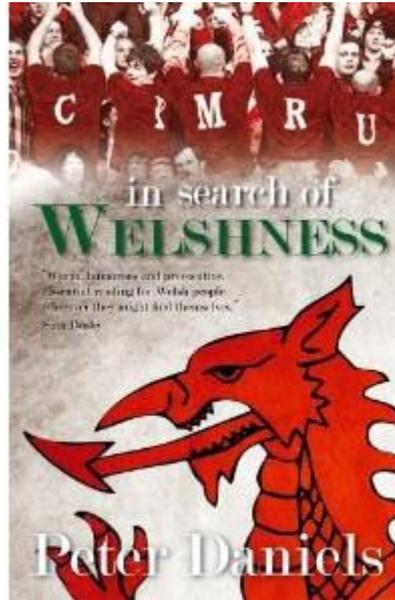
My friends and family, for whom the book was

originally written, enjoyed the first drafts, and friend Graham said I should get it published. But his daughter, Dawn, who worked for The Book People, said 'it's too short'. So, as a true qualitative researcher, I interviewed 8 other London Welsh exiles, to see if their views coincided with mine.

The oldest Welsh exile I have written about is 80 year old Alan Rees, a Welsh-speaking Welshman (Cymro Cymraeg) who hails from the industrial Amman Valley in Carmarthenshire. His father was imprisoned, both as a conscientious objector in the First World War and as a striking miner in the 1920s. Half of his mother's family went to university, ironically all to become French teachers, whilst the remaining siblings went down the mines to pay for the other half's education.

Then there is Dafydd Davies, born in Essex, whose father, brought up on a tenant farm on the Llyn Peninsula in North Wales, came to London, Dick Whittington style, to escape the Depression of the 1930s. Dafydd's father found himself standing alone on the platform at Euston, a monoglot Welsh speaker without a word of English, not knowing which way to turn. As a policeman approached, Dafydd's father assumed he was about to be arrested for loitering. The policeman turned out to be a fluent Welsh-speaking north Walian, placed on the beat precisely for such an eventuality.

I have also interviewed a first generation Welshman born in Paddington and a first generation Englishman born in Colwyn Bay, both now claiming to be 100% Welsh; and a younger Welsh girl who took her O-Levels through the medium of Welsh, compared to a young female barrister motivated to learn Welsh, despite growing up in England with an English mother and a Welsh, but not Welsh-speaking, father. And finally, to obtain



a more independent view, I have interviewed a German girl, so taken by Wales whilst working as a consultant at Morryston Hospital, Swansea, that she now speaks fluent Welsh in a Welsh Wales accent, has a Welsh boyfriend, and, most important of all, is a Llanelli Scarlets' season ticket holder.

What is it about the Welsh? Talkative. Friendly and caring, nurtured by a latent hypochondria. Lovers of learning, music and rugby. One-time religious, reflected in their need to be respectable despite a natural tendency to over-indulgence. A masculine-oriented society dominated by women. Lazy, but obsessively active when it's something they really believe in. Vocal and politically radical, except when it comes to their own independence. And a love of committees which tends to negate positive action on anything.

Further information on Peter's book, *In Search of Welshness*, can be obtained from the publisher, Y Lolfa, at www.ylolfa.com.

NARROW DOG RIDES AGAIN (JUST)

News of Terry Darlington, by Nick Tanner

Readers may remember a review I wrote a couple of years ago of Terry Darlington's books, *Narrow Dog to Carcassonne* and *Narrow Dog to Indian River*, about taking his canal boat first through the French rivers and canals, and subsequently down the east coast of the USA. Not long after those reviews were published, Terry's narrowboat, Phyllis May, was destroyed by fire—fortunately while he and Monica were absent.

Since then, Terry has undertaken a third adventure, tales of which appear in his new book *Narrow Dog to Wigan Pier*. Unfortunately I've been too preoccupied

with a university course to have read it yet, but I'm hoping to write a review for the next edition of the *Newsletter*. In the meantime, however, the planned launch party for the new book had to be cancelled when Terry suffered a stroke—as his e-mail put it, "The launch was cancelled and so damn near was I—see website. I recovered but tragically my personality was unchanged". I take it from that that he's doing well; his website (www.narrowdog.com) seems to confirm this. Friends and well-wishers can find more news on the "News, Extract" page of his site. More on this next time, I hope.

Answers to *The Way They Were* (p.8): (a) Adam Phillips; (b) Cliff Holmes; (c) Liz Nelson; (d) Lorna Winstanley; (e) Phil Barnard; (f) Bill Blyth; (g) Geoffrey Roughton; (h) Jacqueline Servat; (i) John Samuels; (j) Nick Phillips, or possibly Bamber Gascoigne.

THINGS RESEARCHERS GET UP TO IN RETIREMENT

Colin McDonald

In late 2008 I fell in with Peter Jones, who was guest lecturing on the cruise we were on. Peter, as Spectator readers will know, writes brilliantly on modern topics from a classical slant. We got talking and he told me about the Friends of Classics society which he and Jeannie Cohen run, and about their plans to launch Classics for All (see the following article), a charity whose aim is to ensure that every child in the state education system has the chance to encounter classics. To them, it is a crime that politicians should have declared classics, basic as it is to our civilisation, to be 'elitist' and then made sure that it became exactly that by making it impossible for anyone outside the independent system to teach it. This is a view I share in spades, so when Peter said he wanted to do some market research I jumped in with both feet and said 'can I help?'

Since then I have helped organise three projects: a mail survey of classical teachers in schools which teach some form of classics (two thirds of which were state schools); a very brief survey of 3000 state schools not in this group to see if they would consider starting if they had a little help (47% said yes); and an on-line survey on YouGov's freshly-qualified panel among people who had included classics in their education, to see how with hindsight they felt about it.

Results were almost uniformly positive and confirmed our feeling that we were pushing at an open door:

there is a big unsatisfied demand out there. Half of our respondents to the teachers' survey were from state schools: of these, nearly four fifths were teaching Latin, three quarters of them with parental approval (and virtually none with any parental objection). If they could only get space in the timetable, many of them would do much more. On the YouGov panel we aimed at a sample of 2000 and got more, with an 81% response. At least three quarters, and often more, gave a great hurrah to almost all the questions we asked about the benefits of their classical studies for their work and their general quality of life, and this included, without diminution, those who had only taken the subject as far as GCSE or equivalent.

Classics for All was duly launched in 2010, with a stellar range of patrons, and I have found myself to some surprise at receptions in City Hall and, just the other day, at the Mansion House: both the mayors in London are enthusiastic supporters. Donations have come in well and a number of projects have been started and/or approved for support. Details are on the websites for Classics for All (www.classicsforall.org.uk) and Friends of Classics (www.friends-classics.demon.co.uk), from which you can download the summary report of the YouGov survey.

I hope you have all read the 'Pindaric' ode for the Olympics?



THE RIGOUR AND DISCIPLINE OF CLASSICS

foster the skills for success in business and life, writes Peter Jones

This article first appeared in the online publication CityAM (<http://www.cityam.com>). Peter Jones writes the Ancient and Modern column in The Spectator.

WHEN education ministers talk about the skills that business needs, their main focus usually seems to be vocational, especially the so-called Stem subjects: science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Obviously, these are absolutely crucial, but the implication is that non-vocational subjects do not count.

But all businesses need people with different skills to manage, develop, finance and promote them. So, vocational subjects and 3 Rs apart, how does the rest of the school curriculum prepare pupils for those other skills needed by the business community?

This simple question has, as far as we are aware, never been seriously posed for any subject. So we decided to answer the question for the subject that always gets the crowd baying for blood, the most elitist, old-fashioned and useless of all – classics. Under this umbrella we include any of Latin, Greek,

ancient history and classical civilisation. Today, classics is studied in only around 1,100 out of 4,000 state secondary schools. Intelligent priority? Or intellectual deprivation? By contrast, 70 per cent of private schools teach it. Blind stupidity? What conceivable advantages could classics offer such market-oriented institutions?

To find an answer, the charity Friends of Classics asked the market researcher Colin McDonald to conduct a professional, nationwide survey to discover how far people who had done something classical at school and/or university valued it, if at all. YouGov turned out to hold the educational details of 80,000 of their e-survey cohort, of whom 10,000 had done something classical, and a random sample of 2,700 was invited to answer the questionnaire. Nearly 2,200 replied – an astonishing 81 per cent. So whatever one thinks about such surveys – and many branches of business depend on them – the result is definitive.

Colin McDonald's summary report can be found on the Friends of Classics website. I home in on two of its features. First, about one third of the respondents had studied something classical up to 16 – and never again. It is a fair assumption, I think, that most of these probably did so under compulsion; and that the classical subject in question was Latin. The findings amazed us: on the traditional five-point scale, around 80 per cent of this cohort rated their study of the subject to 16 and no further as "beneficial" or "very beneficial" in the following areas: verbal, writing, reasoning skills and quality of life. Under use for training, creativity, adaptability and strategic thinking, a respectable 49-56 per cent scored the subject in the same categories. These levels were similar across the two-thirds who had continued after 16.

Second, we asked respondents the reasons for their evaluation. Typical among thousands of comments were "Rigorous attention to language. Need for precision in expression" ... "an attention to detail

which I directly attribute to my classical education" ... "it really does improve memory and concentration" ... "interesting but useless" ... "particularly useful if wishing to write commercially" ... "important as a life subject rather than a career subject" ... "a background in studying the syntax of classical languages helped to hone my analytical skills, which was helpful during my time as a maths student" ... "greater tolerance in the belief/non-belief systems of others" ... "took me into a wonderful world of words and how they came to be" ... "appreciation of the basis of modern European/western culture and civilisation" ... "I need to write cogent and well-researched opinions which carry a level of authority and I have found that my understanding and use of English are better than peers who did not receive the same education".

So while the perceptions of the 20 per cent of respondents who found classics irrelevant cannot be denied, it is the opinions of the 80 per cent that explain why private schools offer classics, and why 600 state schools in the past ten years have started Latin. For most pupils it delivers the goods on a large number of fronts.

Successful business, of course, entails far more than a display of measurable skills, though one will not get far without them. But that surveys like ours are needed at all, when the ancient prejudice against classics is generally on the wane, is the consequence of the government view that only Stem subjects are real education, while any non-vocational discipline is of little value unless it can demonstrate that it is a vocational one in disguise. That surely is to get the priorities wrong, as if the discipline itself somehow gets in the way of the really important stuff. It is the demands and rigour of the discipline-in-itself, vocational or not, Stem or not, that make the difference. That will generate all the skills one needs to prepare oneself for business or any other work. In these tough economic times, that is the message business and ministers should be driving home.



NATURE DIARY - SPRING/SUMMER 2012

Jane Bain

These extracts from my *Daily Picture Diary of life along the River Thames at Hammersmith* cover a period of extremely difficult weather conditions for wildlife, with a cold winter followed by a wet spring and summer.

January: The month begins with relatively mild weather and some of the birds start looking for suitable nesting places. A female parakeet spends several weeks excavating a likely looking hole in a willow tree by the tow path - pausing occasionally to look at her mate who watches in admiration but fails to provide any practical assistance!



Then we are gripped by a bitterly cold spell and all nesting activities come to an abrupt halt. A heron who had already laid her eggs on a small island on the Leg o' Mutton reservoir in Barnes finds her nesting site surrounded by ice.

All efforts now are concentrated on survival. Gulls discover that they can keep warm by standing on the chimneys of the houseboats on Mr See's moorings by Dove Pier.



February: The cold continues and the local ponds freeze solid. Coots and moorhens slip and slide on the ice in search of food.



In Dukes Meadows in Chiswick, I see a normally shy green woodpecker digging for insects in the frozen grass quite close to nearby homes.



March: At last some warmer weather returns and the first signs of Spring appear.



Tiny wrens carry dried leaves and plants to build their delicate nests and their loud songs can be heard from the bushes along the tow path.

Blossom appears on the trees and provides a welcome feast for birds and squirrels.



The cold and wet come as quite a shock for some young birds after the comfort of a warm nest. One chilly day I manage to spot a row of newly fledged long-tailed tits huddled together on a branch keeping warm while they wait to be fed.



April: The herons have established a proper heronry in a big plane tree at the side of the Leg 'o Mutton reservoir and we stand transfixed as these large birds expertly fly in and out of the treetop delivering sticks and food for their mates.



June: A pair of swans breed every year on the pond in the Harrods Village housing estate. The male attacks anything remotely swan-like which comes into his field of view. Unfortunately, this includes his own reflection in parked cars—much to the dismay of unwary drivers.



In Chiswick Cemetery one day I come across a fabulous cockatoo looking for food among the gravestones. Sadly, despite many phone calls, all attempts to locate its owners prove unsuccessful.



While the swan defends his brood at ground level, high on the roof of Charing Cross Hospital and directly beneath the flight path to Heathrow, Charlie, the female of a pair of peregrine falcons, keeps a watch on her three growing youngsters in their nesting box on the ledge beneath.



May: After a dry winter, we are now in the midst of the wettest drought on record. Many water birds find this weather very tough and there are far fewer goslings and ducklings on the river than usual.

AN APPRECIATION OF THE LIFE OF ROGER JOWELL

Tom Punt

An obituary of Sir Roger Jowell (1942-2011) appeared in our February 2012 edition. Here Tom Punt reports on a memorial event for him.

Roger died before his time. He was 69 when he passed away, after a heart attack, on Christmas Day 2011. On the 14th of June 2012 a memorial meeting was held in St. John's Smith Square before a large audience of those who had worked for or with Roger in SCPR (later NatCen), and in government, politics and academic statistics.

Speakers included the pre-eminent social statistician Lord Moser, looking remarkably fit though approaching his 90th birthday at the end of this year; Sir Michael Scholar, the Founding Chair of the Office of National Statistics; Penny Young the present CEO of NatCen; Sir Chris Powell, who was Chairman of BMP-DDB when the agency handled Labour Party advertising; Professor David Rhind, former Vice-Chancellor of City University where Roger latterly held a professorship; and Dr Max Kaase of the European Social Survey, for which Roger had been the first co-ordinator. Roger's brother Sir Jeffrey Jowell QC also spoke and Roger's widow Sharon Witherspoon gave a final personal memory.

All these speakers paid tribute to the zeal and enthusiasm with which Roger had established Social Community Planning and Research in 1969—one of the first and finest independent social research organisations. Among his manifold achievements mentioned were British Social Attitudes, a series of 19 annual surveys commencing in 1983 and

ultimately published by the government, and his many contributions to the organisation of government statistics (as Deputy Chair of the National Statistics Office). Mention was also made of his informed insights, offered in a separate and personal capacity, which contributed much to the development of the post-Callaghan Labour Party, leading up to the great victory of 1997.

Those who knew Roger, and I can personally vouch for this, were also charmed by the whole man: witty, physically active (a great cricket and tennis lover), humorous and satirical, a wise judge of personality. Many of us wished he had himself stood for political office but on reflection he was perhaps both too intelligent and too nice for that. His brother told a wonderfully amusing story of the "cute" four year old who captivated all with his mop of curly hair but who was persuaded to play a game called "barber" by Jeffrey, who thereby robbed him of his locks, only to see them grow back even thicker and curlier than before.

These memories of a much-loved and admired man were surrounded by music played in the first instance on two pianos by Claus Moser and Michael Scholar (Bach and Mozart) proving the oft-noted associations between the statistical and musical senses, and later on by the wonderful Sacconi Quartet (elegiac Dvorak and Beethoven),

Altogether this was a fine tribute to one of the greatest social researchers who ever lived.

STEERING GROUP

The Research Network is directed by a Steering Group consisting at present of Nigel Spackman (Chairman), Jane Bain & Jane Gwilliam (Events Organisers), Sue Nosworthy (Membership & Recruitment), Linda Henshall (Relations with other MR bodies), Tom Punt (Webmaster and *Newsletter* Editorial Advisor), Nick Tanner (Editor *Newsletter*), Gill Wareing (Secretary-Treasurer) and Frank Winter (Data Protection and other regulatory matters). Their names, addresses, phone and e-mail 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.