



THE WAY WE ARE

We hope that this latest edition of the Research Network newsletter will bring you up to date with a lively year so far for social events and our second evening debate at The IPA on the role of automation in our industry today. A full account of the fascinating discussion content is included in this issue.

You can be reminded of our Spring Lunch and Summer Party by the selections of photos demonstrating the convivial atmospheres at both events, which were well attended by members and guests.

We always welcome new members to The Research Network and in this newsletter we introduce you to six recent new joiners; we really hope they will have fun at our future events, including the Autumn Lunch at an excellent new venue for us: Brasserie Blanc at Southbank. We don't expect Raymond Blanc to be there to greet us in person on the 17th October, but judging by previous customer reviews, this bar and restaurant should be very hospitable. Save the date and the invitation will be sent out soon.

We also include two very enjoyable articles: John Kelly on his bizarre adventures in Iran, early in his research career and in contrast, Phil Barnard's account of his rural farming lifestyle, following a radical change of direction after his superb contributions to the research industry.

We also hope you will enjoy Peter Bartram's 'Way We Were' reminiscences and Jane Bain's amazing nature photography.

We also have tributes to Ken Parker and Bill Schlackman who we have sadly lost this year.

Any members who would like to contribute to future newsletter editions are very welcome to do so on any topic of interest which you choose. Please make contact via editor@research-network.org.uk.

AUTUMN LUNCH: 17TH OCTOBER AT BRASSERIE BLANC

Our Autumn lunch this year is to be held at an excellent new venue discovered with their usual flair by Jane Bain and Jane Gwilliam. This is Brasserie Blanc at 9 Belvedere Road, Southbank, SE1 8YP, near the Royal Festival Hall and just a short walk from Waterloo station.

The venue is very stylish and with easy access. There is a private bar where we can all meet beforehand adjacent to



the private dining rooms where we will be served a three course lunch.

As the name subtly implies, the restaurant is part of the Raymond Blanc empire and has excellent customer reviews. As you would rightly assume, the menus are French but with influences from Raymond Blanc's overseas travels.

Gill Wareing will be sending out the official invitation soon and we hope to see many of you there.

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THE WAY WE WERE: ANOTHER SAMPLE OF ONE

Compiled by Peter Bartram

I trust it will not be taken amiss if this column augments the one in the previous issue of this Newsletter by sharing a few more recollections from a long and varied life in research:

Projects and Clients from Way Back

The **Polaroid Camera Company** wanted to use our Omnibus Survey to measure their UK potential market, having only recently been surprised to discover via qualitative research the real source of their success: more of their photos were taken in the bedrooms of the nation than anywhere else.

The **Daily Mail** combined with the MCC to commission a survey measuring interest in cricket at all levels. Presenting the results to the lordly Ted Dexter and other luminaries in the hallowed Long Room at Lord's, we explained (to no-one's surprise) that cricket was very popular at Test Match level and on village greens throughout the nation, but county cricket was not, partly because it was not played on Sundays or in the evenings when those at work could actually attend. Despite our recommendations, county cricket matches remain poorly attended and it took the MCC more than 20 years to correct other identified deficiencies.

The Times and Sunday Times: the current prominence of his son Jacob brings to mind recollections of presenting readership results to his father William Rees-Mogg, then Editor of The Times, who displayed a lofty disdain, perhaps because it was said that his only concern was that his opinion columns should be read by the Queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury. His political views were also set out trenchantly in the Sunday Times each week, often overturned by facts which emerged by the following Thursday. As with his son Jacob, the patrician authority conveyed by the Etonian accent seemed to obviate any need for correction and amendment.

Star Struck: when travelling to Zurich for American Express to visit our Swiss marketing and research team, I was accompanied by my colleague Shirley Brent from our European HQ. Waiting in the airport taxi queue, I thought I noticed Ursula Andress several places ahead of us. But Shirley would not agree that it was the famous star from the recent Bond film, Dr No. "Alright" I said, "I'll prove it to you" and moving up the queue, I asked the lady for her autograph, adding that I needed it to prove her identity to my colleague. Ursula then boldly signed her name on a postcard I had to hand, adding my name and a large heart sign. When I triumphantly took this back to Shirley, she still refused to believe it, saying I had merely conned some unknown lady into writing it. And, to this day, I am still not sure that she really believes it. But it was Ursula, who was very willing and friendly.

Japan is Different: when organising a Worldwide Positioning Study for Price Waterhouse, one of the countries I had to visit was Japan where the CEO of a leading research company in Tokyo we were planning to work with, took me out to dinner. Half way through the meal, he stiffened, drew himself upright, and apologetically said: "There is something I must tell you. I am not Japanese". "Oh, that's no problem" I said. "Where are you from?" "My family are from China" he said. "Fine" I said, "And when did they come over from China?" "It was 400 years ago" he confessed. Which told me a lot about the closed culture of Japan; after 400 years, he was still 'Not Japanese'.

Charging Rates: On completing the worldwide research for Price Waterhouse, my main contact there asked me to stay on as a consultant. I suggested that I might want to charge £1,000 a day for my time, and he responded by saying "For heaven's sake double it, otherwise my colleagues (regularly charging their accountancy clients £2,000+) will think you're no good". So I did, hoping to foster a belief that advice from researchers is as valuable as it is from other types of consultant.



NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome six new members to the Research Network in the last six months. Here they are, with a brief pen-portrait of each of them:

SHARRON GREEN (née Goodwin): I graduated in 1987 with a degree in French and Spanish with German translation, and was looking for a career where I could use my languages and travel—market research has proven to be ideal! I started off as a Graduate Trainee at MRB International where I joined the MRS and enrolled on the diploma course, which I enjoyed—except for the statistics!

After a couple of years in Ealing I joined an employee communication consultancy in Mayfair, then backpacked round the world, stopping for a few months at RI Australia and Link International in Switzerland. On my

return in 1993, I joined The Research Business International in Islington and worked my way up to Director in the qualitative unit (with a short diversion to RI Qualitatif) before leaving in 2000 to start a family.

I set up as a freelance researcher in 2002 and since then have been involved in both UK and international projects of all types—including consumer, medical and employee research. Now an 'empty nester', I'm looking forward to the next phase of my career. It has been great to see familiar faces at The Research Network lunches and recently I caught up with some of the latest issues in qualitative research at the AQR conference. My hobbies are writing poetry and photographing the beautiful gardens and views around the Surrey Hills where I live.



GRAEME GRIFFITHS: I am currently Head of Research at The IPA, but this is a fairly recent move.



I have worked as a researcher for nearly 25 years, mostly in the media sector. I started my research career in the nineties when I joined The RONIN Corporation, an American IT focused full service agency. From a modest start as a telephone interviewer as I had missed their graduate intake window, I progressed to call centre head supervisor after 4 years and then as an exec running one of their largest trackers for IBM.

In 2000, I made the move to Media research when I joined what was then RSGB, but later became TNS Media and subsequently Kantar Media Custom (now just Kantar). For the next 15 years I had the privilege to work with some of the brightest researchers in the business on some of the best contracts.

At the start of 2016, I defected to join Ipsos Connect where I took over the reins of RAJAR following the project director's departure. Late in 2018 I joined The IPA as Head of Research.

Here at the IPA, I now also sit on numerous media technical committees representing UK advertising agency interests, and I consult on the various member agency surveys we conduct covering diversity, equality, salaries, benefits and charge out rates.

Cooking has always been a passion of mine and when I left school I pursued that for a number of years working as a professional chef in the Royal Lancaster Hotel. I decided the kitchen wasn't right for me but wanted to stay in hospitality, so I worked for a while on a cruise ship sailing the Bahamas and later as a conference organiser in Surrey Quays. University was then the springboard to the research industry.

Outside of our research bubble, I still love cooking, as does my wife, but I'm not sure our two children share our passion. A cat and a dog complete the Griffiths household.

CHRIS MINTER: I started my market research career in 1964 at BMRB in London and stayed there until 1974, when I moved to the Survey Research Group (SRG), working there until 1986. During this period, I started out in Kuala Lumpur and later ran SRH in Hong Kong. That ran its course and I became self-employed as a marketing and media consultant for two years.

I then returned to the UK to work for Reader's Digest, but my travelling continued as my MR Director role took me to the United States frequently. This role lasted for another 10 years until 1998.

My career has paralleled many well known industry figures: I joined BMRB on the same day as John Samuels and Philip Mitchell when Jack Fothergill was MD and I worked mainly for Dr Timothy Joyce. Together, we founded the Target Group Index (TGI) in 1968 and I was pleased that in 1973, Simon Broadbent chose a paper of mine (The TGI: Understanding Changes in the Market) for inclusion in his book 'Market Researchers Look At Advertising'.

During my time in Hong Kong I became interested in global stocks and shares and property investment. I have also always been very interested in history and politics. I was mostly in Kenya for my National Service and I would have been happy to extend my time in the army for another 5 or 6 years and then studied for an MBA. In reality, I learned more history as a scholar of Winchester College than at Cambridge University.

Latterly, I have fulfilled my interest in politics and ran the Vote Leave campaign in Chelsea, Fulham and Hammersmith.

MARK SPEED: I joined MORI in 1988 as a trainee research executive after forays into real estate in New York and lighting design in the music industry, and getting Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Government and Political Sociology respectively at the LSE.

Having started as a Trainee Research Executive and developing expertise in the classic research techniques



and in qualitative and quantitative studies, within six years I was an equity Partner and Director at MORI. I became a Group Head that year (1994) and was a key member of the small team developing social research at MORI—often competing with SCPR, NOP, BMRB and academics for large government contracts (and quite often winning them).

By 2000, I needed a new challenge (and MORI could survive without me!) so after a brief time in a small b2b agency where I learnt a lot about how not to run a small company, I moved on to IFF Research to develop their 'branding, marketing and communications' and 'health and wellbeing' sectors, as well as large central government projects. Notable large scale studies included the Infant Feeding Survey, the NHS Hepatitis C Tracking survey (over seven years), and the Dementia Pilot Evaluation study that won the 2015 MRS Healthcare Research Award (<http://files.basekit.com/2f/cb/2fcbcb85-1f89-41a2-b8c8-8d6342aeecdc.pdf>).

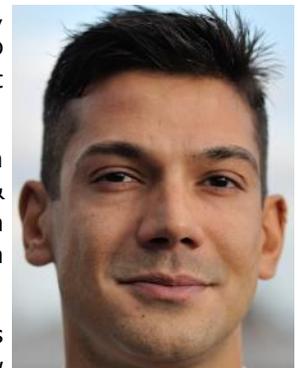
I became Joint Managing Director at IFF in 2007, and amicably left IFF in the autumn of 2016 for a new challenge and to start my own independent consultancy, xSpeediency focusing on campaign evaluation, especially internationally—with three recent projects in Nigeria for DFID and the World Bank.

I am an MRS Fellow and have served for many years as a judge for the Annual Conference Awards, as well as now being an MRS fast-track assessor. Outside the research world, I am an advanced motorcycle instructor, a professional demonstration driver of classic cars (and was recently a body double for the model David Gandy for a publicity film involving a classic Porsche), as well as an avid music fan and live music goer.

NICK SAMI: I started out in cable TV research at Helen Harrison & Co. back in 1998, and after a stint at Carat Insight to broaden my media research skills, I moved to Ipsos to run a volumetric forecasting department, and one of the highlights of that role was launching a new Guinness variant in Africa!

I then made a foray into strategy at GroupM and got really into the data world, which culminated with me going to OMG to co-lead the transition of an OMG EMEA tech & data division into Annalect EMEA. Moving over to Annalect UK, I immersed myself in the world of visualisation tech. I am now working with OMG Global on their data intelligence strategy across EMEA and APAC.

A major highlight of my research days was serving on the MRG Committee for 3 years and I am pleased to be joining the Research Network as a member to meet some new and not so new faces!



SIR ROBERT WORCESTER KBE DL: Sir Robert Worcester is the Founder of MORI (Market & Opinion Research International), London. MORI was founded in 1969 and he served as Managing Director 1969-1994; Chairman 1973-2005; International Director and Chairman, Public Affairs Advisory Board, Ipsos Group 2005-2008) and is now a Senior Advisor to Ipsos MORI. He is also Chairman of MORI Caribbean.

In 2005 he was appointed by Her Majesty the Queen a Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE) in recognition of the "outstanding services rendered to political, social and economic research and for contribution to government policy and programmes". He was made a Freeman of the City of London (25 June 2001) and is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers.

He is a Past President (1983-1984) of the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR). He is Patron (2012-) and Fellow (1997-) of the Market Research Society and Patron of the Archives of Market and Social Research (AMSR) (2018-).

Sir Robert is a Trustee and since 2009 Deputy Chairman of the Magna Carta Trust; from 2009-2015 he was Chairman of the Magna Carta 2015 800th Anniversary Commemoration Committee.

Sir Robert was Chancellor of the University of Kent (2006-2013). He is Visiting Professor of Government (1992 -), a Governor (1995-2010), Chairman of the Emeritus Governors (2015-), and an Honorary Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). He is a Visiting Professor at the Institute of Contemporary British History at King's College London and is a Fellow. He has previously been Visiting Professor in the Graduate Centre for Journalism at City University, London (1990-2002), and Visiting Professor in the Department of Marketing at the University of Strathclyde (1996-2001).

Sir Robert was a Trustee (1984-1994) and served as the Senior Vice President of the International Social Science Council (UNESCO) (1989-94).

SPRING LUNCH AT BRIGADE

The Spring Lunch at Brigade, held on Tuesday 30th April, was a great success and this new venue seemed to be very popular with our 65 attendees. The location and environment seemed ideal, and our excellent three course meal with smoked free range chicken as the main course was generously accompanied by Molino Loco wines from Murcia in Spain.

We had a brief explanation by Jon Cannon from the management team of Brigade's policy of philanthropic staff employment designed to enhance professional career opportunities, alongside Adam Phillips's welcoming speech.

Adam welcomed our guests: Jennie Beck, Debrah Harding and Simon Chadwick's wife Johnnie. Given that they had only just arrived from North Carolina USA for a UK family visit, Simon and Johnnie showed remarkably few signs of jetlag during the event.

And as a show-biz bonus, the open plan kitchen and serving area revealed that the staff were being advised and helped by Ping Coombes, winner of BBC Masterchef Series 10 in 2014. We were told that she was acting as a short term consultant in the Brigade kitchen. So a happy coincidence for us to benefit from her expertise and friendly personality for those who spoke to her.

This venue, cleverly found by Jane Bain and Jane Gwilliam, seemed to work perfectly, so many thanks for their skilled judgement. More photos from the event are on the Research Network [website](#).



NATURE DIARY

Extracts from Jane Bain's Nature Diary: January–June 2019

If ever evidence of climate change was needed the start of the year provided it in spades, with February alone bringing temperatures ranging from bitter winter cold to hot summer sun, all in the short space of 28 days.

January: The mild December weather continues into January, kick-starting the nesting season very early. Several herons are already sitting on eggs at the heronry, the squirrels are back in the roof of the church porch, and a parakeet peeks from a favourite nest hole.



The local herons often hunt by the houseboat moorings and one lands on a nearby narrowboat while I am there visiting a friend. It stalks across the roof, clearly with its eye on something tasty. It has seen a dog bone and is intent on stealing it before the sleeping hound notices.



February: The reservoir has frozen over, with just one tiny corner which catches the winter sunshine free of ice. A dazzling kingfisher is there, repeatedly dropping into the water to catch tiny fish, before returning to an overhanging branch. It is clearly hungry and stays there for some time while I watch it fly back and forth.

The month ends with an astonishing spell of warm summer sunshine. Drifts of purple crocus in the park provide welcome nectar for early-emerging bees.

March: Winter returns and with it violent storms and gale force winds. At the reservoir, the water is whipped into rolling breakers. A swan struggles to ride the huge waves and then gives up, thundering down the reservoir till airborne, to fly to a more sheltered spot.

A slight movement makes me look at a pile of dry wood by the path. A tiny wood mouse is peeking out at me. We stare at each other briefly, then it swiftly vanishes.



April: The tawny owls' usual nursery wood has been decimated by winter storms, so my search moves to other likely places. Eventually I find three, very young, very fluffy owlets, huddled together on a distant branch in a dense and impenetrable part of the wood. I see them and their mother several times over the coming weeks, until the foliage grows too thick and hides them.



Near the heronry, I meet a young couple carrying a baby heron which has fallen out of its nest. It is too young to survive on its own, so they are on their way to meet a wildlife rescue volunteer. I discover later this is a friend of mine, who tells me that she has taken the bird to the Swan Sanctuary, where it will be cared for and reared.

May: Alerted by the sound of insistent cheeping, I find a great spotted woodpecker's nest beside the tow path. I notice that the parents often fly directly across the river, returning with their beaks full of food. I learn from one of the artists in the studios opposite, that the birds are visiting the feeders in the garden there.



The three cygnets on the reservoir are growing fast and, like all small birds, they carefully copy their parents. The cygnets have learnt how to wash, then flap their wings to shake off the excess water. They do so diligently, just like grown swans, despite not yet having any proper wing feathers to flap or shake dry.



June: On a visit to Margravine Cemetery to watch the young peregrines on their nest ledge at the hospital, I notice there are lots of small skipper butterflies. These tiny orange-brown creatures are exquisite close up. Their bodies and wings are quite furry, more like moths, and their wings shine gold in the summer sunshine.



As I approach a walkway through the reedbeds at the Wetland Centre, a reed warbler flashes past me into a nearby small tree. A few moments later it returns, landing on the handrail right in front of me. It has caught a damselfly, which it is holding in its beak. It pauses briefly, then disappears back into the reeds.

SUMMER PARTY AT DOGGETTS COAT & BADGE

The weather was very kind to us at this year's summer party at Doggetts—ideal for alfresco chatting on the rooftop terrace without the searing heat, rain or windy extremes which have characterised much of this year's summer.

The event took place on the 2nd July and was attended by around 50 members and guests. The new catering management at the pub made us very welcome and the buffet menu was very generous; we are not aware that anyone was hungry by the time they made their way home.

As ever, the photos below are just a small selection of those to be found on the Network [website](#).



EVENING MEETING: 6TH MARCH 2019 AT THE IPA

Graham Woodham

Our second evening debate was a great success in tackling the very current topic: Can the research business survive without increased automation?

Brian Jacobs chaired the meeting as before with his characteristic humour and expertise, initially introducing himself as 'a media chap' and then greeting the expert guests:

- Stephen Blouet, Survey and Normative Systems Domain Lead at Kantar
- Sabine Cronick, Head of Quantitative Research at 2CV
- Helen Rose, Head of Insights and Analytics at the7stars
- Ben Haley, Insight Director at Initiative UK

Brian Jacobs summarised the topic in terms of whether automation is the future in the changing world of market research and how its role overlaps with Artificial Intelligence. He said that 'Programmatics' is now the key media process for identifying target audiences and ensuring that advertising reaches the right people. At the same time however, he gave examples where this does not work well, quoting Private Eye magazine's Malgorithms column which quotes examples such as media reporting that Donald Trump is obese but in good health, directly next to an ad for MacDonaldis.

He started the discussion with his view that what is needed is a combination of automation and human good sense.

Ben Haley was the first guest speaker, who reminded us that during the Industrial Revolution, back in 1811, greater use of machinery was used to speed up formerly manual tasks and people wary of this change were labelled as 'Luddites'. In today's businesses, we must also 'change or die'...

Ben argued that market research industry survival in this context depends on profitable work which is genuinely insightful. The industry has come a long way since street interviewing and manual tabulation by DP departments, with companies like Amazon and Facebook disrupting business processes at the same time as being allies to the research industry if they help to measure human behaviour.

Increased automation of human behaviour measurement is a good thing, so human insight researchers can concentrate less on 'how many', 'which' and 'when' and more on 'how' and 'why' questions.

He argued that there is still a need for bespoke research and analysis, but it is not worth paying humans to carry out basic analysis work. Let machines do the 'boring stuff' and allow clever people to interpret the resultant insights and their strategic implications. Automation allows people to add value and increase their job satisfaction at the same time by concentrating on nuanced interpretation of the data.

Sabine Cronick spoke next, saying that her company, 2CV is still essentially a 'people business' and that most processes remain bespoke as they use interpretation frameworks and models, but not standard trackers.

She certainly requires automation where it increases efficiency, and one target during 2019 is to increase business efficiencies further. True insights cannot be generated by machines, but we do need more tools and technologies because clients are demanding 'faster' and 'better'.

She feels that some automation comes with compromise and overall efficiencies have to be discussed with clients to ensure that work is fast but also high quality. When clients commission work to choose between concepts for a fast launch, automation can really help, but other projects are inevitably slower, strategic and more complex, demanding payment for extra analysis time.

Sometimes 2CV has to use tools supplied by clients, and this can create problems when a client stipulates a research tool which is not 2CV's preference.

Sabine argued that automation is best when it speeds up repetitive processes. It's all about educating business partners on how automation benefits insight and she is sometimes frustrated by the limitations of some automation, even though discerning use does help.

Stephen Blouet began by saying that he did not consider himself as a researcher as he is strictly an 'automation lead' at Kantar. His view is that research cannot survive without automation. He recognises that clients want research to be cheaper and faster and they know that humans cannot keep up without automation. He has built automation systems designed for humans to adapt and use intuitively.

He recalled that going back 18 years, he developed automated charting processes which researchers initially resisted. Then they did adapt to single purpose tools and now it is easier for them to move on to newer multi-purpose automation processes.

Nowadays he says 'you researchers must tell us what's needed and we'll build a tool to help'. In this way, researchers can pick and choose the research functionality they need. So the research process stays essentially the same, but automation genuinely makes it more efficient.

Stephen does believe that automation will only get us so far, then we still need market researchers. We have 'mounds of data' now and perhaps in 20 years' time researchers will still be interpreting those same data sets.

Helen Rose started by referring to predictions of huge numbers of skilled people being displaced by automation, with children now studying coding courses even at primary school. Her own 9 year old child is already working with automation in education, so of course we will inevitably see a continuous change in our industry.

Helen uses automation readily for data collection and data processing, and is now seeing that automation is merging well with traditional research functions. She has qualitative and quantitative researchers working collaboratively with data scientists, who are naturally complementary to the research team.

She feels there is a big 'but' however, concerning automation: the fundamentals are that a machine just cannot replicate tasks which humans can do, such as understanding a brief and recommending the best method; and it is the people who interpret and tell the story at the end of a project.

Automation complements the work we do and of course, no research briefs ever specify only automated services so in the near future, humans will always matter. By way of example, Helen's company is making a current business pitch where the client brief referred to 'drowning in masses of data' so she is not recommending a machine learning process, but a people based approach on the understanding that you cannot improve on 'talking to real people'.

Brian initiated a very lively debate among audience members with many good points made and quite a measure of realistic consensus. Key points emerging from audience members in response to Brian's questions included:

Clients buy the ability to draw insights from data while automation is used to collect information which does not demand intellect, interpretation and human insight. Behavioural data collection can be automated but clients need much more than this. For example, media measurement is best carried out with automated behavioural measurement as you cannot ask consumers what they did because they simply cannot answer accurately. But automated data still needs to be interpreted properly.

The research industry does need data scientists and people to interpret data. Data analytics and interpretation are merging closer together and multi-talented people are needed now.

Some researchers may struggle to adapt to using automated data unless clever, user-friendly automation is developed to allow proper insight interpretation.

The major consensus was that behavioural data collection can be automated effectively but subsequent interpretation of the reasons why and motivations behind those behaviours will always necessitate intelligent human interpretation. Strategic implications will always be a human insight process. Automation will never create full understanding of brand images and consumer brand relationships. Programmatic and behavioural data alone will never be enough. And our industry must never overlook our individual privacy obligations when collecting behavioural data.

Helen from the panel endorsed that there is no substitute for focus groups and other ways of talking to people, and most participants in the discussion seemed to agree that brand strategists must meet and understand real consumers.

The ultimate question about whether specific data sets make sense will always ensure that the human side of the industry will remain vitally important to provide the interpretation. Machines will never do this. There was strong agreement that automation creates good foundations for this human interpretation and there is plenty of scope for improving automated data in parallel to maintaining the human element.

Lastly, it was argued that we need better quality smart data rather than big data, and data sources must be curated carefully for clients, giving the best scope for high quality interpretation. Clients may need to be persuaded that digital data isn't everything, and data sets need to be chosen carefully as a sound basis for interpretation.

Brian concluded a stimulating and fascinating discussion by insisting that whatever data you have, you need someone to interpret it intelligently. After all, remember the famous Cadbury gorilla TV ad...data alone would never have indicated that it would be a good strategy to 'put a gorilla behind a drum kit to advertise Cadbury's chocolate'.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE SUN THRONE

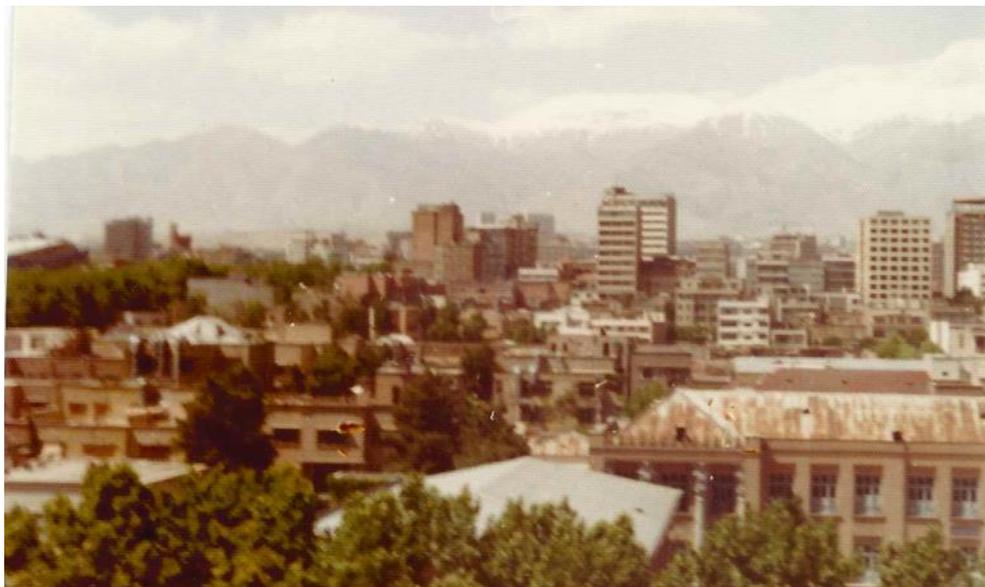
John Kelly

The events that led to the downfall and eventual departure to exile of the Shah of Iran in January 1979 also heralded the demise of another short-lived dynasty—the nascent Denjon Iran Ltd.

In October 1974, when Tony Dent suggested that I and a colleague should go to Tehran, little did I know what would ensue over the next 4 years. Denjon were in the process of undertaking a national B2B study in Iran—it would be our task to assess its process and progress, and to see how we might continue to offer services to other clients.

First impressions are the most lasting!

My first experience of Iran was, to say the least, inauspicious. I approached Passport Control with some optimism. This was soon dashed as I was led away into a cramped and windowless cell to await 'interrogation' by a member of Savak (the notorious secret police force that underpinned the Shah's rule). What I hadn't realised—and nor had the travel agent when I asked about visas—was that holding an Irish passport, I



needed one. I can forgive the travel agent as I lost my Irish accent many years ago; it was not a particular advantage in the playground of my junior school in Staines.

The grilling, which lasted some hours, might have been curtailed had the interrogator, who seemed a very inept counter-spy, had more than a smattering of English. I, having only been in the country some hours, was understandably less than fluent in Farsi. Eventually, we were both put out of our misery due to the intercession of a friend of our local colleagues. I was released, with the proviso that I present myself at their equivalent of the Home Office at 10 a.m. every day for the duration of my week's stay.

Intervening Visits

Following this first visit, I returned in February 1975 with suitable visa in hand, for a 3 month stay. I was to set up an office, establish appropriate systems and not least, win some clients.

During this extended visit, for reasons of cost and convenience, I was to stay with the family of one of our local colleagues, an arrangement which would also assist my attempts to learn some of the language. However, the law of unintended consequences prevailed, and while I gained a smattering of Farsi, the family's English improved markedly!

I did grasp enough of the language to be able to get around the city by taxi and to order food and drinks in restaurants and the few bars that were available. What I had experienced on my first visit—and did so again—was the feeling of isolation fostered by an inability to comprehend the advertising on the multiplicity of billboards—right to left cursive is impenetrable to the untutored.

Taking taxis, as I did on a daily basis as there were no company vehicles, was an eventful and exciting activity. There were essentially two types: the majority were yellow/orange cabs which cruised around; you had to stand in the road and shout into the window. If they had space and were going in your direction they would stop and it was a standard fare. Blue cabs went from specific start to end points. If you were at the start point, you queued and then got into a cab which waited until it was full before departing—it was a fixed fare and you could alight anywhere along the route. You could also 'shout' anywhere on the journey with the same provisos as for the yellow cabs. It was at first, an alien concept to share a cab with four strangers, but I quickly adapted to it.

The Iranian approach to driving was to speed as fast as possible, as if the roads were F1 circuits, until there was a compulsory stop such as a traffic light. Then, with the appearance of the green light, they used their

horn even if they were the 100th car in the queue—it set up a cacophony akin to an orchestra practising a Schoenberg piece.

Working Environment

Telex was the most immediate means of communication with the outside world—I became adept at transmitting questionnaires et al, using this medium. Telephone calls had to be booked at least two days in advance and the delivery was not always guaranteed.

We undertook a variety of quantitative projects, both B2C and B2B, much as would be the case in a UK agency, but all with added logistical difficulties. We did not attempt anything of a purely qualitative nature.

One of the first projects was a joint national study for the BBC and a major blade manufacturer. I reasoned that it would work given that neither question set would influence the other. Well that was the theory! A week into fieldwork we were informed that because the BBC had 'insulted' the Shah some years previously, we could not continue so we removed the BBC section. When presenting the results, I was taken aback when I outlined the estimated market figure and was told that it was twice the local production, but 'not to worry' as smuggling accounted for the other half!

One other project stands out, for many of the wrong reasons. We undertook an on-street product test, conducted from the back of pick-up trucks for a well-known beverage manufacturer. We had to abandon the study before completion, not because the supervisors and interviewers struggled to implement the incomplete block design methodology (which they did), but because one night, the sample bottles were tampered with at the bottling plant—a sprinkling of sand had been added to each. I felt that, at the very least, this might make any investigation of 'mouth feel' somewhat difficult. We were never to discover the reason why, but there was the view that it might have been motivated by religion.

Life Outside Work

Living with an Iranian family opened the door to Iranian society as I was invited to most family events and dinners with friends. The Iranians are extremely hospitable and have a sophisticated cuisine. However, this did lead me to commit several faux pas, which while not serious, led to amusement on the part of my hosts and fellow guests—as I generally chose the wrong rice for a specific dish. I tried to explain that in rural Ireland, it was not an issue as we always had boiled potatoes, irrespective of any other ingredient.

Weekends were a strange time, as the Iranian weekend was Thursday afternoon and Friday, and it galled me to be working on Saturday and Sunday when I knew my UK counterparts were not.

I joined the Tehran Club, as I felt it would be a useful means of meeting potential contacts and this did prove to be the case. However, when I applied, the response was that the membership was full. When I enquired further, they said that the 'English' quota was full. When I presented my Irish passport, I was enrolled on the spot—odd how an erstwhile liability was quickly turned into an asset. Fortunately, I was not obliged to re-kindle my long-lost Irish brogue whilst on the premises.

Travelling the Country

I had the opportunity of visiting many areas of the country.

I swam in the Caspian, climbed (well clambered) to dizzying heights in the Alborz mountains, crossed the border (sans passport) to Pakistan from Zahedan in Baluchistan, did some vodka-fuelled night time fire jumping in the desert during the Now Rouz (New Year) celebrations, visited 'Half the world' or Isfahan as it is known, but was surprised to find that 'Half the world' had no onions for the lunchtime kebab. I hitch-hiked from Isfahan to Tehran (another story), explored the deserted mud-built city of Bam, gathered wild garlic in the mountains outside Zahedan, ate freshly butchered goat in various houses and tasted, depending on the season, a number of excellent street food offerings.

The End

My final visit to Iran was in November 1978, exactly 4 years since the first.

It was clear by this time that the days of the Shah were numbered. It also became quickly apparent that mine would be also. It had become 'uncomfortable' to walk in the streets and daily interactions with the locals were no longer pleasant affairs.

I suppose what gave me the final clue, if further evidence were needed, was when I saw that our branch of The Irano-British Bank had been burnt down, along with our overdraft—an ill breeze if ever there was one.

Of course, my biggest regret is that I didn't establish an import/export business selling Persian rugs!

RURAL REFLECTIONS

Phil Barnard

Old friends and colleagues sometimes ask about my current farming activities. I'm pleased to say these have always been over-estimated. At our previous farm in Berkshire, Jeannie, my wife, was a magistrate with pig breeding as her day job! Now, in Somerset, our neighbouring farmer runs his sheep on our land and takes a cut of hay each year. The remaining land is gardens and our barns are primarily used for storage.

Moving to Exmoor in the early 2000s brought us into direct contact with the Foot & Mouth crisis which, although narrowly missing the National Park itself, saw intense animal culling nearby and a near killing of the tourist trade too.

Paradoxically, this introduced us to the rich cultural life of the area. Ex-pats recently returned from Oman created the Two Moors Festival (Exmoor & Dartmoor) to lift spirits and help raise money for those depending on farming and tourism for their livelihoods. The festival is now an internationally acclaimed annual fixture in the classical music calendar.

This injection of outside funds was particularly valuable as West Somerset District Council was the poorest (bar none, including inner city boroughs) in England with poorly paid tourism and agriculture as its key business sectors. This relative poverty fed into the affordable housing debate, but many ignored the fact that Exmoor lacked jobs more than housing. There was a risk that new affordable housing in the NP would be occupied by people who then commuted out of Exmoor to their work!

The potentially negative effect of second-home owners was another issue raised nationally but not encountered by us. In fact, we and many others in the Park migrated from owning 'holiday homes' to permanent residence ... and it is this influx that keeps our village, Brompton Regis, alive.

It is the relatively affluent incoming retired residents who have the time, money and 'nous' to keep and develop the old village ways. Brompton Regis has a population of about 200, with a further 200 or so in the surrounding farms and hamlets. It is remarkable that so small a community still has the BIG 3—church, pub and shop—although all rely on 'management by incomers' and the shop is run largely by volunteers.

The lands originally belonged to Gytha, King Harold's mother, who was permitted to keep them after the Norman Conquest. The community reached its peak of about 1500 in the 19th century when iron ore was mined locally.

Until 2008, the Post Office's annual £15K payment supplemented the village store's revenue, and together just about supported a family. When the post office closed it was no longer viable and the village, with no public transport, would have been 5 miles from the nearest shop, in Dulverton.

So a group of us set up a new 'community shop' in the skittle alley of our local, 'The George Inn'. The shelving was on wheels so the shop fittings could be rolled back to the walls when skittles were being played in the evenings. Change of pub landlord led to our eviction and migration of the shop to another 'sporting' venue: The Men's (!) Club's snooker room in the village hall. Much angst was involved, only partially relieved when a second-home owner offered to have the table removed to his barn, with club member access.

The replacement of the original village shop by this peripatetic community enterprise was a good example of the symbiotic relationship between the traditional villagers and the incomers. We secured grants of £44K in all from a variety of sources led by the Lottery Fund. However, it seems no grant-giving body employs anyone with questionnaire design skills.

The combination of repetition and irrelevance in the application forms would have daunted most locals, especially as the phrasing of some EU-inspired sections had to accommodate Bulgarian farmers as well as Somerset's aspiring shopkeepers. Fortunately, some of us incomers had encountered such 'bureaucratise' in our working lives and knew that we had to put something/anything in all spaces!

Communication can be a challenge. Most of the village has no mobile phone coverage, although there is a fitness pay-off in walking to the top of a field to get a signal.



Internet access is also an issue. Broadband speed via our BT copper wire connection fluctuated between 0.0 and 0.5 Mb/s. So, we joined a 'line-of-sight' system involving roof top dishes starting somewhere in Dorset and stretching to our part of Somerset. Unfortunately, a fast-growing hedge blocked the signal between a barn roof and the pub chimney. Although a helpful farmer cut the hedge, we then lost the signal between the pub's roof and ours as the intervening oak trees sported leaves in the summer! Next solution was satellite which worked well most of the time but had a high 'latency'.

Now we're back to a new line-of-sight system, but this time the key mast is only two fields away with no arboreal intervention. Even this had teething troubles as initially the mast equipment was configured to spot incoming missiles.



There is, of course, no public transport (nor any nearby taxi service) but a group of village volunteers provide lifts for non-drivers at modest rates. The narrow, often one lane roads provide their own excitement. A Polish lorry stuck for two days between the walls of the cemetery and a friend's house, reached national TV ... but it's an ill wind as they say; the compensation our friend received for the damage enabled him to rebuild a crumbling section of his property that he'd been unable to afford to fix before.

Crime is negligible. It's mainly 'agricultural theft', usually quad bikes and occasional rustling. In the main,

villains use the M5 link from the Midlands and generally only ply their trade a few miles either side of it once they reach the West Country.

We have a hidden layer of protection in that Exmoor attracts a goodly share of retired military, especially SAS and SBS, some of whom have written (remarkably good) 'fictionalised' stories that just creep below the censorship threshold.

'Archers' style 'human stories' are an on-going backdrop to village life. The latest concerns Trish, the landlady who set up the shop in the pub's skittle alley. She and her second husband had to leave the inn, bankrupt, when the freeholder got even greedier about their rent. She and Paul then left the village and divorced. Trish reappeared a few years later to manage a B&B for its ex-pat owner. Serendipity reared its beautiful head as we were just 'removing' our part-time shop manager— 'for cause' as they say in HR circles.

So, Trish took over the 'snooker room' shop as well as her B&B duties. As she settled back into the village, David, an old flame (American, living in Oxford) became a regular visitor and got to know us all. Then, a couple of months ago, when Trish was having a drink in The George, in burst Ken, another old boyfriend (whom she had ditched for Paul about 30 years ago – keep up!) and they embraced as in a teenage love affair.

Ken, an Englishman (!), who owns a very successful pub near Aberdeen, had tracked Trish down (via her in-line skating entrepreneur daughter!) following his wife's death. After a few trips to Scotland, Trish is now moving there permanently at the end of August and David is history (again). A possible happy ending for Brompton Regis as (déjà vu all over again!), the daughter of The George's current landlady is becoming the new part-time shop manager.

To finish on what many will no doubt dispute is a cultural note, but could be construed as the final episode in a 'Rake's Progress': Morris dancing! Many years ago, an eccentric client occasionally regaled me with stories of his Morris dancing activities. It was with some relief that I bade him farewell as a career move took him to Tokyo – where he fully intended to create a Morris 'side'!

Fast forward to Spring 2018 and Kevin, a new arrival in the village, said we had everything except Morris dancing. Jokingly, he said he'd create a 'side' and laughingly approached people in the pub to join. Eventually, the Parish Magazine editor hoisted him with his own petard by putting an item in one of the issues last summer, purportedly from Kevin, inviting prospective dancers to an inaugural meeting and practice. The joke was turned back on the editor when Kevin decided to run with it—and 20 people turned up.

So, after several months practising, the highlight of the 2019 Brompton Regis Village Show in August will be the world premiere of the Brompton Regis Morrismen (aged from 8 to 78 and with more women than men). I find I'm not a farmer but a dancer!

KEN PARKER

Elaine Francis writes:

With great sadness we were sorry to hear that Ken Parker passed away with his family by his side on May 2nd 2019, aged 66.

Ken's market research career spanned over 40 years, starting as a trainee at NOP and then moving to RSL (now Ipsos MORI). He worked his way up over a number of years at RSL to become Joint Managing Director. He was a key Business Development Manager and created Sponsorship Research as a research category in its own right.

In 1995, Ken left to set up a new company, Discovery Research, with his wife Trish. His entrepreneurial talent continued with the joint founding of Criteria Fieldwork with Trish and Elaine Francis in 1995, and over the following years, Spectrum Viewing Facilities and The Thinking Shed, a qualitative platform. He was appointed a fellow of the Market Research Society in 2004 and also served on the AQR Committee as chair.

We will always remember Ken for his passion for market research and his 'can-do' attitude. He would light up a room with his ebullience and positivity—he always had a funny story to tell. He gave his time to people willingly and supported many charities, always getting involved personally. He was a very proud parent and was thrilled to become a grandparent. He spent the last couple of years travelling to many places around the globe with Trish and living life to the full.

We are devastated by his loss and he will always be remembered for the truly exceptional and outstanding man that he was.



BILL SCHLACKMAN

Lawrence Bailey and Simon Patterson write:

William 'Bill' Schlackman passed away on 31st May 2019, aged 88, at the Shell Point residential retirement complex, Florida. Earlier in the month he had sustained injury in a fall, and ultimately suffered a heart attack that proved fatal. His funeral took place on 4th June in Fort Myers.

Bill is regarded by many as the father of UK qualitative market research, having brought the methods and processes of motivational research work to London in 1960. In recognition of his influence and contribution to the industry, he was made a Fellow of the Market Research Society.

Born in December 1930, in the Bronx, New York, Bill grew up in Brooklyn. Bill described the family as "quite poor", relating how he would often come home from school and see the family's furniture in the street because his father couldn't pay the rent. Despite the adverse circumstances, he did well at school, eventually studying Psychology at Brooklyn College, and at City College gaining a Masters' degree.

Working as a delivery boy in 1954, Bill collected a package from Ernest Dichter's Institute for Motivational Research for delivery to a magazine office. He opened the package and discovered a report on motivational research. Realising this was work that he could have done, he approached Dichter for a job. Rejected at that time, he returned in 1956 with reports he had written whilst freelancing, and was hired immediately.

At Dichter's Institute, Bill was at the centre of a dramatic expansion of applied psychology in market research. Paul Lazarsfeld, the first psychologist to advocate the package of techniques now known as qualitative research, had been Dichter's tutor and supervisor in pre-war Vienna. In America, Dichter became the pre-eminent populariser of those methods throughout the 1950s. Bill described Dichter as "the most brilliant man I've ever met in the marketing and advertising field".

At Dichter's suggestion, Bill spent a year in London to support David Collins' Motivational Research Centre. Soon after his return to New York, Bill married Jone Pannaman, an English woman; Dichter then asked Bill to set up a new London office, in 1960. Bill and Jone stayed in England for the rest of his career.

Bill set up his own business in London in 1961. The ultimate establishment of qualitative research legitimacy, and thus the trigger for the 1980s expansion owes much, if not most, to the Schlackman Research



Organisation. Bill Schlackman thoroughly enjoyed ideas, creativity, and the analysis of both clients' problems and qualitative data: activities that he shared with colleagues. He liked to employ psychologists, or people who at least knew something about psychotherapy or psychoanalysis, and frequently used concepts from those fields to arrive at explanations for respondent desires and anxieties, with which to derive advice for clients.

Offering both qualitative and quantitative research, the Schlackman Research Organisation, with David Drazin as Bill's partner, recruited stellar researchers who eventually became MRS Fellows and leaders of their own companies, including Tim Bowles, Martin Callingham, Terry Hanby, Bob Dance and Susan Owen. On the primarily-qualitative side, Bill's employees at this time read like a Who's Who of those who influenced the development of such research over the subsequent three decades, including Peter Cooper, who founded Cooper Research And Marketing (CRAM), Wendy Gordon, Pat Cockett, Colleen Ryan, Roddy Glen, Lawrence Bailey, Susie Fisher, Freda Bear, Peter Lovett, Prosper Riley-Smith and more. Bill Schlackman's importance, especially in the history of UK qualitative research, could hardly be overestimated.

Bill and Jone had no offspring, but Bill became a much-loved uncle to the children of his sister Ruth and Jone's brother, Irvin. One nephew, Nick, reports how Bill was more fun than other adults: possibly because of Bill's mischievous non-conformity. Jone tried to keep to 'healthy food'; Bill would take the nephews and nieces out for a burger or a hot dog.

A memorial service for Bill Schlackman was held on Thursday 11th July in Fort Myers, Florida.

For more information on Bill's life and work, see Lawrence Bailey's article *The origin and success of qualitative research* published in edition 56,2 (2014) of the *International Journal of Market Research*; and *The influence of Bill Schlackman on qualitative research* by Simon Patterson and Francesca Malpass in edition 57,5 (2015) of the *International Journal of Market Research*.

The oral history interviews conducted by Lawrence Bailey and Simon Patterson can be found at <https://www.mrs.org.uk/resources/oralhistory#12> and a video extract of these is also available on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vSdFRpd6Vc>).



STEERING GROUP

The Research Network is directed by a Steering Group consisting at present of Adam Phillips (Chairman), Jane Bain (Website Editor and Events Co-organiser), Jane Gwilliam (Events Co-organiser), Linda Henshall (External Liaison), Roger Holland (Membership), 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 Members List. Please feel free to contact any member of the Steering Group on matters relevant to the areas they cover.