



## THE WAY WE ARE

**S**o here is the Summer edition of the Newsletter with its updates on our activity and members, along with some very interesting articles for you to enjoy.

2023 has had an excellent Network social programme so far, made even better by the involvement of many more new members and guests than in recent years, primarily thanks to the dedicated work by our team of Research Network Champions. There is more specific news of our increasing membership in our Network Activity update section.

We also have reviews and photos of our Spring Lunch and Summer Party, which were very successful, and we hope to continue this positivity with our Autumn Lunch, previewed in advance of the official invitation.

Peter Bartram has provided his usual entertaining Way We Were recollections, along with a news story about Doreen Blythe who is bravely recovering after a being hit by a London bus. And of course, Jane Bain's Nature Diary is a photographic treat as always.

Our general interest articles are by David Cooper on his quirky 'swinging sixties' early career in Holland and Penny Measure, when she was working at BMRB supplying the Pop Charts to the media. Nigel Spackman and Nick Tanner are also starting a series (hopefully) with the theme of 'A Bad Day at the Office'. Do read these articles; they are all very intriguing and please submit your own 'worst career episodes' for future newsletters!

We also have tributes to Frankie Freedman, Ted Hudson, Juanita Byrne-Quinn and Marie Alexander who we have sadly lost during this year.

Future articles on any subject will be very welcome. Please make contact via [editor@research-network.org.uk](mailto:editor@research-network.org.uk).



## AUTUMN LUNCH: 17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER AT BRASSERIE BLANC

**O**ur Autumn Lunch this year sees a return to the excellent venue where we first went in 2019: Brasserie Blanc at 9 Belvedere Road, Southbank, SE1 8YP which is very close to Waterloo Station and the Royal Festival Hall.

We will have private dining rooms and on our last visit, we found the food and service to be excellent. There is also a bar at the restaurant for our optional use.

This is part of Raymond Blanc's restaurant group with French and other European influences. As we all know, London's

restaurant prices have risen sharply, but Jane Bain and Jane Gwilliam have negotiated an excellent deal with the management, so that a three course lunch with a welcome drink and wine costs £60 for members and £65 for guests and non-members. This great value pricing has also been enabled by kind sponsorship from Elizabeth Norman International and Prevision Research.

Gill Wareing sent out the official invitation on the 14th August in case you missed it. Do book your place now!



# THE WAY WE WERE

More recollections compiled by Peter Bartram

Having sifted once again through old newsletters from 30, 40 and 50 years ago, I have come to the conclusion that 1983 (40 years ago) was probably the high watermark of our collective commitment and enjoyment of the life in research. I am not sure that current MRS Members get together and enjoy the life in the way that we did.

To illustrate this difference, in 1983 ...

- As many as 96 Full Members and 19 Associates attended the MRS AGM. Maybe this was because the ground rules of the industry were still being formed and debated hotly and in 2023, those battles are mostly settled and further discussion is not so contentious.
- We had fun—**Richard Kottler** described the MRS Thames Boat Trip thus: “The drink flowed well all afternoon, the conversation was rarely serious and the atmosphere was genuinely convivial.”
- Plans were in place for Members to participate in the following MRS sports tournaments, mostly with companies competing against each other: five-a-side football, golf, netball, squash, badminton, darts, bridge, tennis, cricket and a Fun Run. Which of these are still included in MRS-led activities?
- The MRS Winter School in January 1984 at the Grand Hotel, Eastbourne was convened by **John O’Brien** with speakers including **Ruth Morgan, David Smith** and **Mary Bartram**. (This presumably was not the year when the half-naked Winter School convenor was found playing a late-night game of strip poker with three delegates in the hotel lobby).
- A light-hearted description of the ESOMAR Congress in Barcelona recorded the following comments by UK delegates:
- As delegates remained drink-less for the first half-hour of the evening at a winery: “This is the Spanish equivalent of not being able to organise a piss-up in a brewery.”
- On the performance of a small Catalan strolling band: “Are they tuning up, or is that it?”
- On taking a table situated close to a much larger and louder Catalan brass band: “This table is reserved for the deaf.”

More seriously, some real issues preoccupied us in that time, 40 years ago:

- **David Lowe-Watson’s** report on the Barcelona ESOMAR Congress highlighted a presentation by **Ramon Masip**, General Manager of Nestlé Spain, in which he related how he began with the company as an interviewer, subsequently climbing up through the ranks. The importance which the Nestlé organisation attached to market research was demonstrated not only by the size of its market research department, but also by the impressive list of senior executives who had come from it at the start of their careers.
- **Marie Alexander**, who sadly died a couple of months ago, reported on a joint MRS/SRA evening meeting on proposed Data Protection legislation, in which **Tony Cowling** asserted that the MRS Code was a very strong code, and there was no need for the legislation then going through parliament to tamper with it. But he did add that we needed to communicate that it is effective to those outside our industry.

Internationally, two stories from 1983 are worth recalling:

- **Gordon Heald** was commissioned by Boris Yeltsin to measure across Russia, opinions related to an upcoming referendum on his viability as a Presidential candidate. In later years, Gordon was able to display proudly on the walls of his office the photos of his most prestigious clients – The Pope, Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev and Margaret Thatcher.
- In an article by **Dr Mike Foster** on research in India, he revealed a direct quote on the role of the customer from a surprising source – Mahatma Gandhi: “He is not dependent on us, we are dependent on him. He is not an interruption to our work, he is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business, he is part of it.”

# SPRING LUNCH AT BRIGADE BAR + KITCHEN

We greatly enjoyed going back to Brigade Bar + Kitchen at The Fire Station, 139 Tooley Street, London SE1 2HZ on the 25th April this year, after our first Spring Lunch there in 2019.

The lunch menu was delicious: wood-fired spatchcock Suffolk free range chicken, sour cherry harissa, cherry molasses, chargrilled corn salsa with the chef's choice of side dishes, followed by a Peach Melba dessert with mascarpone ice cream and raspberry tuile. Welcoming drinks and wine were included in the £55 Members' price; excellent value and generously subsidised by Teneo Translations UK's sponsorship.

One highlight was the presence of at least four new Research Network members and eight non-member guests among the 59 attendees. In Adam Phillips' speech, he welcomed four new members personally by name: Giulia Baldi, Pippa Brown, Kirsty Fuller and Ian Roberts.

The excellent restaurant staff had all previously benefited from The Brigade's founder Simon Boyle's charity, The Beyond Food Foundation, designed to build careers for disadvantaged people. The Research Network donated to this charity as part of our lunch arrangement, organised brilliantly as always by Jane Bain and Jane Gwilliam.

More photos from the event are on the Research Network website.





## RESEARCH NETWORK: ACTIVITY UPDATE

The New Member Strategy group, led by Jane A'Court has been very active and successful this year in conjunction with our Champions: Bob Qureshi, Chris Smith, Jonathon Wheeler, Ginny Monk, Jo Cleaver, John Kelly and Liz Norman. We are really grateful to them all.

So far this year, we have 20 very welcome confirmed new members, recruited via the Champions, our stand at the MRS Conference, and our lunch events. These are: Jackie Brett, Ian Roberts, Giulia Baldi, Kirsty Fuller, Pippa Brown, James Turner, Michel Olszewski, Juan Popelka, Kevin Ford, Neil Grantham, Stephen Bairfelt, Frances Dobson, Simon Glanville, Robert Lewis, Trish Parker, Judith Passingham, Anita Emery, David Burdon, Andy Booth and Trevor Wilkinson.

There are other potential members who have shown interest in joining, again through contact with our Champions, existing members and the MRS Conference on 14th March.

The hope is to return to at least 200 Research Network members by the end of 2023. A wide range of research industry organisations have agreed to publicise our awareness-building communications, including the MRS, MRBA, SRA, BIG and IQCS. We are also trying to contact other organisations such as AURA and EPhEMRA with the same aim.

For the Oral History Project, two more interview audio files have been added to the Archive of Market and Social Research website: Paul Edwards and Joy Reynolds, giving a total of 41 interviews free to access. A further interview with Nick Moon has also been edited by Paddy Costigan and is ready to be uploaded to the archive. Paddy is now working on interviews with Mike Cooke and John Kelly. Additional interviews are being scheduled during 2023.

Apart from members of the research industry, these archive interviews have proved very popular among university academics and students studying research and advertising. They give excellent insights into some of those who helped to shape the market research industry, with additional background into their life stories.

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## SUMMER PARTY AT DOGETT'S COAT AND BADGE

The Summer Party took place on Tuesday 4th July this year at the Doggett's Terrace Bar, very well attended by members and guests, who managed their travel arrangements despite an overtime working ban by ASLEF train drivers.

We were very pleased with 61 bookings, thanks to Jane A'Court and our Champions for raising awareness and identification with the Research Network's purpose and objectives. Among the attendees were Stephen Bairfelt, Andy Booth, Frances Dobson, Anita Emery and Trevor Wilkinson, who are all now new members.

Jane Bain and Jane Gwilliam had negotiated a more balanced, varied and healthier buffet lunch this year with their new contact at Doggett's, which we greatly enjoyed. This was based on their Gold Buffet menu with some salad and other additions.

The weather was periodically kind enough for us to use the open roof terrace with its lovely Thames landscape. A few retreats indoors were necessary to escape the rain showers, but nothing too prolonged.

We are very grateful to Perspective Research Services for their generous sponsorship, which kept the prices very low at £30 for members and £35 for guests and non-members.

There are more photos to be found on the Research Network website.







# 'HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE' TO 'MUD SLIDE SLIM' – MY TIME WITH THE POP CHARTS AT BMRB

Penny Measure

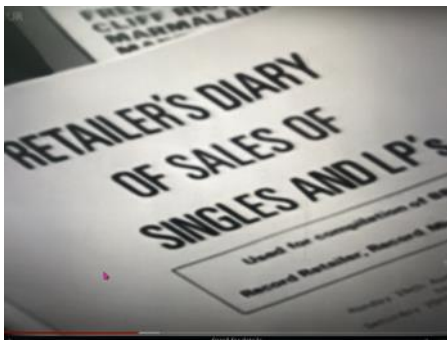
## Background

I was recently approached by Richard White, who is writing 'the definitive history of the chart countdown on British radio'. As part of his research, he had come across a TV programme: 'Pop Charts Britannia, 60 Years of the Top 10' (it can be found [here](#)), which includes a section (about 29 minutes in), where a pair of 22-year-old BMRB Research Executives solemnly explain the 'science' behind the 'revolutionary' new top 50, launched in 1969. One of them was me.

As a result of viewing this documentary gem, and with Gill Wareing's help, he tracked me down and asked for information about the process and 'the key people' involved. I hastened to say that I was not really a key person, but I did my best, unearthing some hilarious memories along the way.

When I joined BMRB as a Graduate Trainee in 1968, Peter Menneer was working on a new methodology that would deliver Pop Charts based on accurate over the counter sales data. We called it BARS (British Analysis of Record Sales). At that time, there were three different Record Charts, produced by various trade publications, "all of whose systems were technically inadequate (for example, relying on retailers' memories of their sales) and wide open to abuse" (quoted from 'BMRB International—The First 60 Years'). The new methodology was designed to be 'hype proof' as well as delivering an accurate reflection of sales. It was backed by the BBC, by Record Retailer (the leading trade paper) and by a number of record companies through the British Phonographic Industry organisation.

## Methodology



In those days, records were identified by unique serial numbers; both singles and albums (LPs) carried these serial numbers. For the BARS survey, a stratified, nationally representative sample of record shops was drawn from a master list and the shop managers were approached and signed up to join a Panel. There were 300 record shops on the Panel. I don't remember that they were paid; they did it for the good of the Industry. Every week, a Diary was posted to them and used to record sales for that week. When a record was sold, a shop assistant wrote the serial number, date and time in the Diary by hand. At the end of each week, the Diary was posted back to BMRB and a new Diary was started for the following week.

Returned Diaries were sent to BMRB's Coding Department where they were checked and sent to the Punching Department to be transferred on to punch cards. These were given to a lovely man called Ernie, who cycled with them to a nearby IBM 1130 computer that was owned by Mass Observation. BMRB had the use of that single computer only on a certain number of evenings per week. And it was huge. How times have changed!

The weekly output consisted of computer tables listing the records sold, in order of numbers of sales, grossed up across the whole Panel. The Charts! The Number 1 record had sold the most and so on. There was also some fancier analysis, including market share data, but for us the Charts were the main attraction. They were used by the BBC as the basis for radio programme planning and of course, Top Of The Pops on TV. Artists were mad keen to be on Top of The Pops ...

In all-important Coding Department. BARS had a dedicated team of coders, headed up by Wyn Barton, who thoroughly checked all the Diaries. They had lists of serial numbers for all the records that were on sale at that time and they could spot and query any mistakes made by the sales assistants. Coders were also trained to highlight anything suspicious, which could be a string of sales of an unknown record with a particular serial number that might indicate that a 'hacker' had discovered that the shop was on the Panel and had gone in to buy multiple copies to get the record into the Charts. Whenever a case like this was spotted, Wyn would alert the Research Executive and we would telephone the shop and ask the Manager to explain the entries. If there was any doubt at all, that Diary would be excluded from the analysis for that week and the shop's Diaries would be monitored especially carefully thereafter. The record companies knew this, so these occasions were rare, although they caused great excitement when they did happen. Suspected hackers generally wore Columbo-style macs and trilby hats pulled down over their faces. Or that was how we pictured them!

Wyn became highly expert at her job and was in charge of the team for many years. The researchers who ran the survey changed quite frequently. In 1970, I became involved. Basically, my job was to manage the project, which included managing the Panel, keeping in close touch with Wyn and her team and generally making sure that nothing went wrong. I also had to manage the vested interests who were keen to undermine what we were doing! (See later).

## Managing the Panel

It was important to keep the record shops happy. They had been statistically selected and if a shop dropped out, it had to be replaced with a similar shop. This was expensive and problematic, as there was a finite pool of shops and it was important not to exhaust the supply. Not all shops welcomed the extra work that being on the Panel involved, so part of my job was to travel round the country from time to time, visiting them and keeping them motivated. I also wrote a weekly newsletter with snippets of information from the pop industry that I thought would interest them and make them feel special. Collecting this information was quite a task, but also fun. The travel was not so much fun. I loved visiting the shops and chatting to the managers and staff, but I became very bored staying in hotels on my own. As a young woman in those days, it was not appropriate for me to go into a hotel bar, and I was always placed in the corner or at the back of a restaurant when hurriedly dining alone. Eventually I asked BMRB if I could book hotel rooms that had a TV. This helped a lot. I was also often subjected to unwanted male attention on solo train journeys – especially late at night. I survived it all, but it was scary at times.

## The Hypers

Now to the vested interests. Being in the Charts was obviously very important to the artists and their managers, who often rang me at work and asked if I would like to have lunch with them so that I could 'explain how the Charts were compiled'. I had many lunches, but never, ever, too many glasses of wine! I patiently explained the methodology and why it was not possible to move a record into, or up the charts unless the data put it there. The Panel was a representative sample of all the record shops in the country. The data represented all record sales in the country for that week. It was what it was. The vested interests offered me gifts, which of course I was unable to accept. They could not find a way around it as there wasn't a way around it. Sometimes the artists themselves tried to influence things. One female artist, who was getting on a bit, was desperate to be on TOTP. The BBC had told her she could be on if her record made it into the Top 30. It never did. She bombarded BMRB with telephone calls – at one point, she rang pretending to be calling from a hospital and asked to speak to Peter Menneer as 'his wife is dangerously ill'. This was terrible, as Peter's wife was in fact far from well at that time and he was rightly furious. You would certainly have heard of this lady, so I won't give you her name. We were all very sorry for her, but we could not change the data even if we had wanted to. I was also pestered by the Jim Reeves fan club (he was the 'late, great Jim Reeves' by then so I don't blame him personally) and once got called from the USA by Glen Campbell's manager—'Glenny would be very appreciative if something could be done ...' It all fell on stony ears. Nothing could be done.

So then two things happened. Firstly, the vested interests officially accused BMRB of falsifying the chart data. It is easy to make an accusation. My job was to persuade a senior officer from Scotland Yard that this was groundless. It took weeks. 'Knacker of the Yard', as I called him, visited BMRB several times. I gave a very long statement explaining the science behind the BARS methodology and why it was impossible to alter the data. The statement was about the length of War and Peace by the time we had finished and I had to sign every page ... But he was satisfied, which was what mattered.

The other thing that happened was that the BBC made a short documentary programme about the Pop Charts in which I was asked to explain the methodology. Looking back, they probably did it to help head off the hackers. I had to come into work on a Sunday to get the recording done and the programme was shown at a time when none of us could watch it, so I never saw it at all. I forgot all about it until a clip popped up a few years ago on Pop Charts Britannia: 60 Years of the Top Ten. I was quite photogenic in those days and went viral on Twitter for about a millisecond when the programme was shown!

However, I was a small player in this story. Peter Menneer deserves the glory for his vision in creating this rigorous approach and for having seen that it was needed (and represented a great business opportunity for BMRB!). Barry Lee deserves recognition for setting up the study. Wyn Barton was probably the single most important person in the mix, long term. I was just the RE who took over from Barry Lee, ran the survey for just over a year and happened to be the person who dealt with Scotland Yard and was in the BBC film.

As a final anecdote, just after I stepped away from the role, I was contacted by James Taylor's agent and asked if I would like a free copy of James's latest album. I explained that I was not allowed to accept gifts and did not work on the survey anymore. The agent sent me the album anyway and I was allowed to keep it. It wouldn't have needed any help getting into the album charts. It was Mud Slide Slim and the Blue Horizon. I love it to this day.



# NATURE DIARY

## Extracts from Jane Bain's Nature Diary: January–June 2023

*I have become increasingly aware of climate changes since I started keeping this diary. The seasons of the year no longer follow the expected pattern and this year in particular has been extraordinary. So far, we have experienced the driest February for 30 years, the sixth wettest March on record and a heatwave in June.*



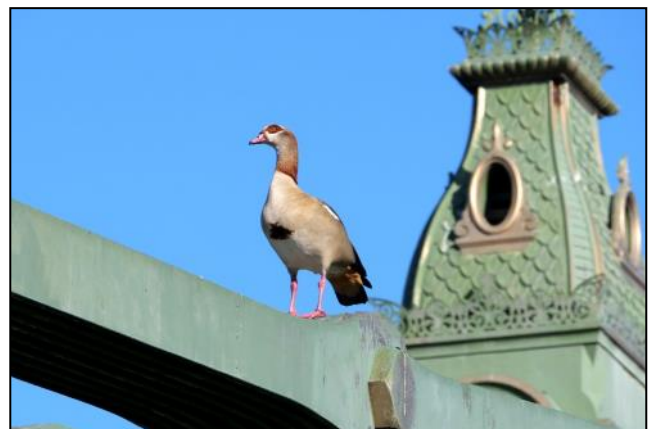
**January:** The month starts unseasonably mild, with some beautifully clear, bright days. By the reservoir, a goldfinch clings to a sycamore ball in the winter sunshine, feeding on the ripe seeds.



Then bitter cold returns. I take bird food for hungry robins on my walks and am surprised when two come to feed close together. I assume the mild start to the year has made them prepare for nesting already.



**February:** The cold weather has definitely delayed the start of the nesting season at the heronry. Finally, in early February, repairs to their high nests begin in earnest, with spectacular aerial stick deliveries.



Egyptian geese like to nest in holes in trees and every year they investigate the oval openings in the towers of Hammersmith Bridge. These are covered in mesh grilles, but the geese still try their best to get in.

**March:** It is unrelentingly wet, so I avoid the muddy tow path and walk in more urban locations. Magpies are confident city dwellers and a street sign makes a convenient perch from which to look for food, safe from cats and passing dog walkers.



Pausing in Chiswick Cemetery I hear a cheep behind me and turn to see a female stonechat, a small heathland bird which I have never seen in London before. It is presumably on migration to a more suitable habitat.



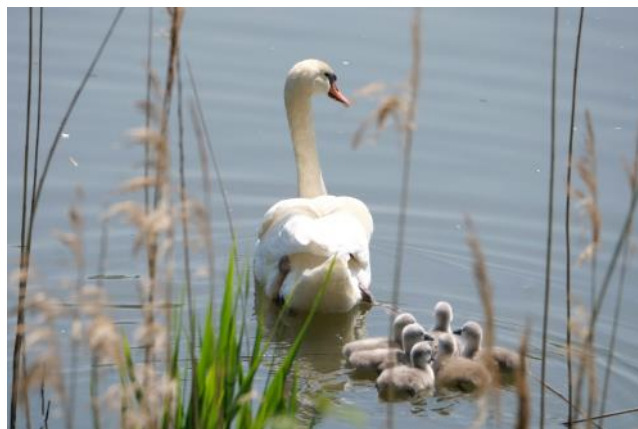
**April:** Parakeets love elm tree blossom and I enjoy watching noisy flocks of them feasting in the branches which overhang the path by the reservoir.



Wild flowers are quite scarce along the river, but there are small red deadnettles in the cemetery which provide food for the delightfully named hairy footed bee.



**May:** I have seen very few butterflies so far this year, so I am pleased to find quite a number of brimstones at the London Wetland Centre. These spectacular creatures are the only lemon yellow butterflies in the UK.



Swans nested in a reedbed at the reservoir in April and I have been following their progress. I visit when the eggs are due to hatch and, over three days, watch the cygnets emerge, then take their very first swim.



**June:** At last the weather is warmer. A pair of great crested grebes swim close to the river wall at high tide, fishing then performing their elaborate courtship dance.



Wood pigeons have also become adept at city living. I notice this one outside a small Tesco near the river. It is sitting with a stick in its beak, quite unperturbed, on a rail in front of a window display advert for fruit and veg.



After a spell of hot dry weather the first rain for weeks is very welcome. A group of sparrows have a wash and brush up in a pool in a rusty cogwheel, left as a riverside memento of the busy wharf which once stood there.

# HOW I MISSED THE SWINGING SIXTIES AND LEARNED TO LOVE AMERICANS

David Cooper

**About the author:** David Cooper was Group Financial Director of Research International for 20 years as it passed from Unilever into the New York based Ogilvy Group and eventually on to WPP. His early career, from which this story is taken, was spent as a young man making his way in the Unilever Internal Audit Department. He then spent three years with SSCB-Lintas (as it then was), mostly based in Copenhagen as Group CFO of their agencies in Denmark, Sweden and Finland. He joined RI in 1974.

Freshly qualified as an utterly impecunious accountant, I joined Unilever in 1963 to see the world at their expense and find a future beyond my early life in Birmingham. My placement in Internal Audit was second only to the UCMDS as a training ground, all very hands-on in factories all over the country. The future developed at pace, but it was 18 months before 'world travel' started with an invitation for me to swap jobs with a Dutchman based at Unilever NV's HQ in Rotterdam. It was January 1965 and I was 'Jack the Lad', living with friends in the only glorified slum in Hampstead Garden Suburb, blissfully unaware that the swinging sixties were not scheduled to reach Holland until about 1978. I jumped at the chance.



My precious TR3A is hoisted off the ferry at Hoek van Holland. Roll-on/roll-off had not yet become available at Harwich.

I drove up from the Hook of Holland in my treasured Triumph TR3 sports car, parking handily alongside Unilever House in what turned out to be the Directors Car Park, from which I was swiftly evicted. My status dropped further when the company housing officer pointed out that in a city still rising from the ashes of WW2, housing was strictly rationed and single, young, foreign, male supplicants had nul points. So I moved into a basement bed-sit on the nearby Mattenesserplein with a gas ring, a lumpy bed and a constant tone poem of passing traffic.

I soon got a grip on the work side of things—it was the same as in the UK, but the palm oil refineries mainly fed margarine production rather than soap factories (the ingredients are much the same for both products, but the outcome depends somewhat on what you do with the hydrogen content). My favourite audit

was a washing up liquid factory in the small rural town of Zwolle in central Holland. My office window overlooked the market square where I was astonished to see the locals arriving every day dressed in traditional clogs, the women in bonnets and long skirts. I remember that the factory was disappearing under mountains of returned glass bottles. Someone had decided to abandon glass and switch to newfangled non-returnable plastic. (It only took us about 50 years to cover the world in plastic from the day it was invented). The problem was that nobody knew how many returnable glass bottles were still out there and after the switchover, they just kept on returning, returning and returning until even the car parks were stacked high with them. It was costing a fortune in 10 cent pieces.

My colleagues were great people and I gradually acquired an insight into the Continental (Napoleonic) mindset which is far more 'Rules and Tribunal'-based than the more pragmatic British approach which is just different, not necessarily always better. My future was going OK but my social life most certainly was not.

Everyone else was married and naturally preoccupied with young families. After some lonely evenings I resolved to seek lifestyle enhancement in the nearby University Town of Delft. Instinctively I headed for the VVV (Tourist Office) to ask its solitary occupant in broken Dutch for guidance to bright lights. He was about my age and responded apologetically in fluent English that term having ended, the University was closed but if I could wait 10 minutes, he would be off duty and could introduce me to a few people. We wound up in the St Laurent's Kelder, a sort of youth club in a Church Crypt with a (rather limited) bar, music and a dance floor. I had clearly found the Dutch equivalent of Fulham Road on a Friday night. My Dutch just wasn't good enough to start with, but I soon got up to speed by watching English Norman Wisdom films with Dutch subtitles and reading Dutch language versions of familiar Peter Cheyney crime novels which I'd already read in English. Soon I was quite fluent, but my vocabulary raised eyebrows at the office for its wealth of common slang. Nevertheless, I became quite popular at The St Laurent's Kelder, although I suspect in truth that the passenger seat of the Triumph had a lot to do with that.

Then everything changed. A group of us at the 'Youth Club' were invited to a 'Getting to Know You Fancy Dress Ball' at the American Embassy in The Hague—a typical PR effort aimed at the young. Having no money, we went dressed in the customary towels and bed sheets as cheapskate Arabs. On arriving, we headed straight for the bar to find it dominated by a lonesome figure dressed in full Lederhosen, idly toying with a Margarita. I'd discovered my first American. He introduced himself as Fuzz. While my friends went off to



mingle with other guests, we swapped hard luck stories about our respective lousy living quarters and began to bond. Rather like 'Cooler King' Hiltz in *The Great Escape*, he never used his real first name, which I later discovered from one of his coat hangers, was Purvis. He was a Lieutenant JG (Junior Grade) in the US Army, part of a small detachment at Rotterdam docks overseeing the transit of military goods through the port. US Army housing rules allotted living accommodation to single soldiers only after pairing them off with another of equal rank. The only other single officer in this small unit was his boss, a Major, so very unsatisfactorily they had to share. Several drinks later he came up with an inspired solution to our common problem. Why didn't I become a Lieutenant JG and make a joint application with him? I prevaricated. I wasn't American, let alone in its Army. He countered that the Army Housing Unit was in Germany, so they would have no idea who I was anyway (only he phrased that more succinctly).

Next day, stone cold sober, he arrived at my bed-sit bearing an application form made out in our joint names, both designated as US Army Lt JG. His boss had already authorised it in euphoric anticipation of an unexpectedly easy way of getting their existing pad all to himself. Thus, with my fingers crossed, I became an American.

Two weeks later, we were allocated a two bedroom fully furnished apartment on the prestigious Robert Baelderstraat. As icing on the cake, it transpired that the US Army's landlord was The Unilever NV Pension Fund, but we were able to avoid raising eyebrows by paying all bills incognito in cash at the Post Office Giro Bank. The cherry on the icing was that I now shared the benefits of Fuzz's access to the duty free PX at the nearby Soesterburg USAF Base, so we could live like kings. Job done; tick!

Living with Fuzz for the next two years had its moments. His North Carolina natural southern courtesy was endearing, but he could also be infuriatingly casual, especially towards authority. I didn't mind his shiny new Porsche, fresh from the PX, outshining my ageing Triumph, but I winced at the number plates it wore. His mother had sent him outdated American plates from the family car in response to his urgent cry for help in circumventing what he saw as the 'intolerably bureaucratic' Dutch registration process. He was naturally generous. I alone bit my lip whenever at parties, our guests brought cheap bottles of undrinkable Jonge Genever, in grateful recognition of the cases of Pomerols and Pauillacs they got through at our duty free expense.

Some guests did invite us back to 'their place', notably a bunch of Royal Navy submarine officers moored in central Rotterdam for a courtesy visit. Their wardroom hospitality knew no bounds. I learned to operate the periscope, rotating it laterally with my heels and vertically with handlebars which also operated Zoom. The common Dutch practice of leaving curtains open all night greatly assisted our quest for knowledge of what went on behind the windows of the new tower blocks around us.

On a different occasion as I was preparing for bed, ahead of another day at the office, Fuzz called out that he was out for the night, so "if some guy phones, tell him Berth 5". Before I could question him, he was gone in a 'rasp' of Porsche. At 3am, the telephone rang. A Dutch voice announced itself in English to be the harbour-master at Hoek van Holland. "Your USNS ship is entering the Maas. Where should I tell her to berth?". I struggled to remember, opted for Berth 5, and hoped that I hadn't doomed 30,000 tons of cargo ship to something she couldn't get into.

It all ended suddenly when he came home one day looking glum. Why? "I've been made Captain. This means I'm being transferred to Vietnam on Thursday". Soon after his huge leaving party, I was serendipitously posted back to the UK, from where before long, I found myself heading out to do an audit in the Philippines. Then as now, we were expected to hit the deck running on arrival, so I qualified for first class travel. (Business class had yet to be invented). As our Qantas 707 approached Vietnam on its way to Manila, the captain came on to reassure us that the fighter jets now at each wingtip were American, there to protect us as we flew over the active war zone below. Sipping a pre-dinner Bloody Mary, I looked down at the foetid jungle six miles below and wondered how Fuzz was getting on. Sadly, I could not find out, nor did I ever see him again. However, I remain to this day a Potemkin veteran of the US Army.



Robert Baelderstraat in Rotterdam. The flat I shared with sundry Americans was at the extreme right of the 2nd floor (partly obscured by trees)

# 'IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE'

**An Update on Doreen Blythe by Peter Bartram**



**M**any readers of this Newsletter will know or remember Doreen Blythe, a long-term member of the Network, whose main occupation in recent years has been as Assistant Clerk to the Worshipful Company of Marketors. Her late husband Ian was her business partner for many years, and among other distinctions, he wrote the most comprehensive history of the MRS from 1946 to 1986 (freely accessible on the AMSR Archive).

Readers may also wish to know that Doreen is now engaged in a lengthy process of recovery after a terrible accident which occurred in October last year. While on a zebra crossing in Parliament Square on the way to a meeting of the Debating Group at the House of Commons (of which she had been Group Secretary for 29 years), she was violently struck down by a bus, fracturing her skull and sustaining bleeds in two separate areas of her brain. Passers-by quickly picked her up and organised an ambulance to take her to St. Thomas' Hospital just over the river, and it took her two days to recover consciousness. In the months since then, she has undergone various treatments in several different hospitals and although she is now back home, recovery is proving to be a very slow process. She is helped by a community carer visiting every morning and evening, but impeded by persistent headaches and a loss of balance. Her colleagues at the Marketors have been kept informed and are very supportive, but visits by friends there and elsewhere must wait until her recovery is more fully advanced.

Doreen nevertheless remains articulate and cheerful, while the driver of the bus responsible has been charged at Westminster Magistrates' Court with causing serious injury by dangerous driving. Though this accident was caused through no fault of her own, it serves as a warning to us all: 'Mind How You Go.'

And I am sure we all will wish to express our sympathy and our hopes that her recovery will soon be complete.

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## A BAD DAY AT THE OFFICE

*In this new occasional series, members recall episodes at work that might, with hindsight, have gone better. The Editor would welcome more contributions for future editions! Here, Nigel Spackman and Nick Tanner describe their own 'bad days at the office'.*

### THE WORST DAY OF MY RESEARCH CAREER, by Nigel Spackman



**I**n 1972, I was at Harris Research, a sub-brand of ORC, having joined the agency after six years on the client side. ORC was at that time the premier polling company in the UK and was the only polling business to get the 1970 election right. ORC was also the first UK agency to carry out exit polls at by-elections and had a very successful record, so when the general election came up in February 1974, they were asked to do an exit poll by ITV. Humphrey Taylor, our MD, who was not one to miss a revenue opportunity, approached the BBC and said that since ITV were using ORC, then the BBC could commission Harris to run an exit poll for them, and they happily agreed.

For some reason, Humphrey asked me, with no background in the field to manage it. We followed the same approach as ORC in taking a stratified random sample of constituencies, a further stratified random sample of Polling Stations within those constituencies, and then asked every "nth" voter to re-vote in our own box. Come Election Day, we had a team of about 30 in a big room at BBC headquarters ready to take down results through the day from our teams at the selected polling stations. By 10pm, there were only a few latecomers' votes to phone in, so by 10.05pm we had the answer which I rushed along the corridor to the studio.

In retrospect it surprises me that there was no informal communication between the ORC and Harris sides as our 'votes' came in, but this was in pre-mobile phone days, and it would no doubt have been seen as breaching client confidentiality. So, whatever we each came up with was what we reported.

I can't remember the exact share of votes we predicted, but it certainly suggested a Conservative win by a few % points, so David Butler announced this forecast to the waiting world on TV. Breathing a sigh of relief



that we had produced a result on time, and confident that we would be right, I hung around in the studio for the real results...The first one went slightly against our forecast, but no matter, I thought, it's just one constituency. Then the next was the same and I started to feel anxious, and when two hours had passed and it was looking like a probable Labour win, I slunk off to a hotel for a few hours' sleep.

On waking at about 7am with a feeling of dread in my mind, I turned on the TV only to see Humphrey being interrogated by Robin Day on the reasons for our failure! In one sense we had been right, as the Conservatives won the popular vote by 37.9% to 37.2%, but they lost the election by 301 to 297 seats.

Again in retrospect, it is clear that any exit poll would be hard pressed to predict the results of so close an election, but nonetheless our failure almost made me bury my head under the covers again. But the music had to be faced, so I went into the office, where I found my Research Exec had placed a handkerchief and a small bottle of brandy on my desk to console me!

Despite a major investigation, at our cost of course, into the sampling processes and the possibility of calculation errors, we could not find any reason why we got it wrong – particularly when ORC using the same approach got it right for ITV. My only conclusion was that it was sampling error. Not surprisingly, the BBC said they would never carry out an exit poll again. They did change their mind on this eventually, but needless to say, they did not commission Harris to do it.

Looking back on it now, what we should have done was to recognise that we were trying to predict the winner rather than the share of vote. Had we done this we could have ignored all safe constituencies and focused solely on marginals, thus putting the measurement where it mattered—but too late now!



## A QUESTION OF VOLUME, by Nick Tanner

**A**s a young trainee at RBL (Research International) in the late 1970s, I was asked to perform all manner of roles. Interviewer, coder, questionnaire designer, report-writer, delivery driver... Yes that's right, delivery driver. Someone in the team was setting up an in-home product test for General Foods; the product in question had to be collected from Banbury and brought down to our offices in Wapping for distribution to the field interviewers. "Nick, are you busy? Fancy a day out in Oxfordshire?"

I'd fairly recently acquired an Austin Mini Traveller and my first thought was that I could use that, but I couldn't envisage how much space 600 boxes of Angel Delight would take up. However, I located a pack of the product and carefully measured it: 4" x 5" x 1½". That gave it a total volume of 30 cubic inches, so 600 boxes would take up 18,000 cubic inches. Envisaging 18,000 cubic inches was no easier than picturing 600 boxes of Angel Delight, but dividing 18,000 by 144 gave me an answer of 125 cubic feet – that is, a space 5' x 5' x 5'. Too much for my little Mini, but a long wheelbase Transit van would do it, so I got approval and hired one.

The rest of the team presented me with a Yorkie bar (the chunky chocolate bar had recently launched an advertising campaign depicting it as suitable for lorry drivers) and I set off for Banbury. I met up with the client (David Solly, for those who remember him), who led me to the storeroom where the boxes were awaiting collection. I had imagined a forklift truck might be involved in the proceedings somewhere, too. The product, however, was neatly packaged into 50 outers, each containing a dozen boxes. I shifted them all by hand into the back of the van, where they wallowed forlornly in one small corner ...

At some point during the drive back to Wapping, it finally dawned on me that to convert cubic inches to cubic feet, I should actually have divided 18,000 by 12 cubed (the clue is there somewhere) rather than 12 squared. I had overestimated the space required by a factor of 12 and felt a complete fool. I don't doubt I made far worse arithmetical (and other) mistakes in my research career, but that is one that has remained with me for the past 40-odd years.



# MARIE ALEXANDER (1931–2023)

## ***Nigel Spackman writes:***

Marie, who was a long-term member of the Research Network, sadly died on 6th June. Perhaps because I recruited Marie to work for RSGB, which turned out to be her longest role in market research, I was asked to pen a few words about her for the Newsletter. What amazed me when I began to research her background was quite how varied it was, and what it said about her personality.

One thing that struck me was her ability to cope with the unexpected. As a child of a constantly moving Air Force serviceman, she went to six primary schools before the age of nine, an experience I shared and know how difficult it can be. Later in life, she was quite prepared to take on a role, find it was not what she expected and change course promptly.



On leaving school, she was expected to take up an Oxbridge place to study Mathematics (always her favourite subject) but decided instead to become a nurse, a decision which she quickly regretted. Then having worked for a few years in the retail fashion industry, she decided that a degree would be useful and went as a mature student to Durham University to read Philosophy and Psychology. She maintained a great fondness for Durham throughout her life and went there with her family to celebrate her 90th birthday.

Marie's first job in market research was in the Unilever-owned Research Bureau Limited, after which she worked as a buyer of research for various advertising agencies. In 1973, she found her niche in employment research, becoming Personnel Research Director at Social Policy Research, followed by a five-year contract within the Manpower Services Commission of the Civil Service. In 1981, she joined RSGB and stayed there until 1994 as Head of our Social Research Division, this role also encompassing employment research. Marie was a very committed social researcher, a good people manager and had very high ethical standards in her work. At first, I think she found the commercial nature of work at RSGB hard to come to terms with, having not previously worked at a senior level in an agency business, but typically she came to terms with this and did a great job over the years.

Following her retirement from RSGB in 1994, she worked successfully for several years as an independent consultant, including a role as Chair of various panels investigating complaints about the NHS. During her career, Marie was a full member of the MRS, serving on the Professional Standards Committee and Code of Conduct query panel. She was a member and later Chairman of the Independent Consultants' Group and a founder member of the Social Research Association. She became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 1993.

## ***Pam Walker writes:***

Although I had not worked particularly closely with Marie at RSGB, she was always keen to keep in touch, and on my retirement, introduced me to the Research Network. We met a few times a year for canal-side lunches, sometimes followed by a stroll. Last Autumn, when she had become too frail for this, she entertained me for lunch at her flat, where she asked about colleagues and exchanged reminiscences (mostly hers) for some four hours; Marie also insisted that we finish the wine. What a fascinating life. Immaculately dressed and coiffured as always, she was a warm, charming and gracious host.

Marie was a committed Christian who worshipped regularly at the Anglican church in Primrose Hill where her funeral service took place on 4th July. Here, the personal tributes emphasised her varied interests and love of travel. Always delighted to see people, and a generous giver of hospitality, she was above all devoted to her family, who also clearly thought the world of her. She is survived by her son James, daughter Susan and four grandsons.





## JUANITA BYRNE-QUINN (1932–2022)

**Peter Bartram writes:**



Juanita was born in Birmingham in 1932 and died in her family home in Poole, Dorset towards the end of 2022 at the age of 90. She will be remembered by many as a meticulous but kindly client with strong Catholic religious beliefs and a perky sense of humour.

She was educated at St Paul's Grammar School in Birmingham and at Birmingham University, gaining a BCom and a teaching certificate. Following three years as a teacher, she became a Research Statistician at the Newman Demographic Survey and then worked at Lintas as a Research Officer from 1959 to 1967. But for the main part of her career until her retirement, she will be remembered as a highly effective Research Manager at Proprietary Perfumes Ltd at Ashford in Kent, which (based on Juanita's research) was later re-named Quest International, and in that time, she was also elected Chairman of AURA.

Much of her work was technically innovative and international in scope:- most notably in preparation for her company's entry into the US market, she commissioned the first-ever nationwide segmentation study of American women's attitudes to perfumes. As a major PR event, the results were presented to the US fashion industry via three actresses on stage, showing how their tastes in perfume differed.

In retirement, she moved from her country cottage in Kent to her deceased parents' family home in Parkstone, Poole where she was a regular church goer leading a very active life water-skiing, windsurfing, swimming in the sea near her own beach hut at Sandbanks, and supporting the women's volunteer movement, the Soroptimists.

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## FRANKIE FREEDMAN (1944–2023)

**Frank Winter writes:**

Frankie Freedman, who passed away after a short illness on New Year's Day 2023, started her market research career at BMRB in the late 1960's under Paul Berent. This developed in time into an overseas research post with EMRB, offering research on a European and Global basis.

Whilst at EMRB, Frankie was a Senior Research Executive working on major accounts including De Beers. On a major global study, she collated hundreds of depth interviews with women from Scandinavia to Japan, highlighting insights into the traditions and rituals of engagements across various cultures.

Frankie's talents as a market researcher working with De Beers spilled over at the annual BMRB Revue, with by all accounts a very spirited rendition of 'Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend.'

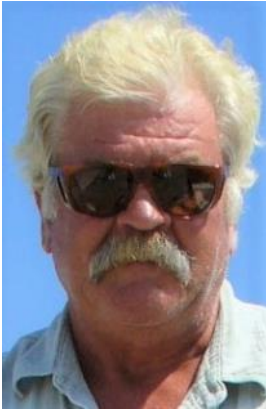


After BMRB, Frankie moved into advertising agencies, first with Masius Wynne-Williams and then at Ogilvy & Mather. At a time when planning at advertising agencies was in its infancy, she fought many battles for recognition of her work and contributions, and in doing so, inspired many who followed her.

One instance of this was at Ogilvy & Mather in her planning role, as shown by the analysis of the target group for fresh cream cakes. It turned out that heavy buyers not only bought for their families, but also loved a sneaky purchase just for themselves. This developed into the 'Naughty but Nice' campaign, on which Frankie worked closely with a copywriter called Salman Rushdie!

Frankie inspired many of her colleagues, who in turn became her friends. One summed her up as follows: "A big personality and enormous intellect, talent and generosity, and of course, there was the hair. Big hair. It marked her out as she walked through customs at airports. The hair had to be big to cover that big brain; the one that made her ask the questions, pull together the disparate facts and arrive at conclusions that many others wouldn't even have suspected. This made her the brilliant researcher and planner that she was."

## TED HUDSON (1944–2023)



### **David Iddiols writes:**

**A**fter graduating from Brunel University with a degree in Social Sciences, Ted Hudson trained as a qualitative researcher and began to nurture several loyal clients while working at the KTA Consortium. That gave him the confidence to establish his own boutique agency, and along with colleagues Geoff Payne and David Iddiols, he formed Ted Hudson and Partners in 1978.

The offices were based above a 'blue-rinse' hairdressers in Camden Town, but these rather inauspicious surroundings did not prevent the agency from building an impressive blue-chip client list, with Ted to the fore with his laid back but persuasive style of delivering research insights, whether good or bad.

The eighties saw a change of name to Hudson Payne and Iddiols, or HPI as it became known, a move to trendy Covent Garden and a growing reputation for undertaking sensitive, creative or strategic development research for a wide range of leading advertising agencies.

However, while Ted's affable, measured and thoughtful persona without doubt played a significant part in building the HPI brand, he became less comfortable as the company grew in size with quantitative and international research being increasingly important parts of the offering. Consequently, he finally opted to become a freelancer and for many years continued to work for clients who valued both the insights he garnered and the person they got to know, with several staying friends as Ted moved towards his retirement.

### **Derek Simonds writes:**

The seventies and eighties, when Ted and his partners grew their business, was a formative period for market research as it evolved from a niche business to a serious industry. There was growth and much innovation, often driven by some larger than life characters, of which Ted was probably larger than most. When not eating and drinking his way through various establishments where he and his many friends were familiar and welcome guests, he was a keen fisherman. Ted co-founded MARSAC, a market research sea angling club, and was a regular visitor for big game fishing in Florida...no small fish for our Ted!

The American lifestyle suited him and he spent many of his freelance and retirement years at his apartment near Key West. A truly big and interesting man—very much missed.



## STEERING GROUP

**T**he Research Network is directed by a Steering Group consisting at present of Adam Phillips (Chairman), Jane A'Court (Membership), Jane Bain (Website Editor and Events Co-organiser), Jane Gwilliam (Events Co-organiser), Linda Henshall (External Liaison), Nick Tanner (Website News Editor), Gill Wareing (Secretary-Treasurer), Frank Winter (Oral History and Data Protection) and Graham Woodham (*Newsletter* editor). Their names, addresses, phone and email details are in the Research Network Membership Directory. Please feel free to contact any member of the Steering Group on matters relevant to the areas they cover.