

Helping hard



Newsletter from the Market Research Benevolent Association

No.15 AUTUMN 2006

From the Chairman



I am pleased to say that we hope that we are close to launching a service for anyone in the market

research industry to call for advice on a range of financial, employment and other topics. We are able to offer this thanks to the kind co-operation of NABS who are offering their telephone Helpline to anyone eligible for assistance from the MRBA. More details of this will be announced as soon they are finalised, but we hope to be launching this service very shortly. This represents an important expansion of services beyond those we have been able to offer to date. We hope that it will benefit field workers, who have traditionally accounted for the majority of our cases, but that it will also offer a valuable service to office based-workers, whose requirements are often more for advice than for financial support. This is one step in making the Association more relevant to more people in the industry.

The Research 2007 Conference is the 50th MRS Annual Conference and, as usual, provides the Association with its main fund-raising opportunity of the year. The Conference returns to Brighton and, in keeping with the theme of both looking back and looking forwards, we anticipate having some old favourites in terms of

fund-raising combined with the new. It is hoped that both the Fun Run and the Bike Ride will be held, so dust off your trainers and oil your chains for what is likely to be last time for both of these events. There will also be a silent auction, more about which is written on page 4 of this issue.

The new constitution came into force at the AGM in September, which is described more fully on page 2. In accordance with the changes to the Constitution whereby the members of the Management Committee are now the Trustees of the Association, John Downham and Michael Brown are stepping down from that role, and thanks are owed to them for their many years of service to the MRBA.



John Samuels has also stepped down from the Management Committee after 15 years of service

remarkable for his longstanding knowledge and insight into cases, and his legendary performances as fundraising auctioneer. However, he will be retaining his connection with us, by helping with new cases south and west of London as and when he can.



A major change can also be expected from the much-regretted retirement of Gill Wareing

from her position as Secretary/Treasurer as soon as a replacement can be found. Gill has held that position ever since the inception of the MRBA and has been a strong influence on making the MRBA what it is today. We are currently advertising for a replacement (see page 4).

We are also sorry to announce the resignation of Ed Ross from the Management Committee, who has found the demands on his time too great to be compatible with his new status as a full time student. We have to thank Ed for providing the thinking behind much for the Association's strategy in the last few years, in particular the move to address better the needs of office-based workers.

On the positive side, I am delighted to be able to report that joining the Committee is Claire Harris. Claire is known to many for her work at NOP and also for her time given to a range of MRS activities. I am sure that Claire will quickly become a valuable member of the Committee

Ian Brace

On other pages

- Page 2** - The MRBA AGM
- Page 2** - The MRBA Rejoins The ACO
- Page 3** - Fundraising - Justin Gutmann's Snowdonia Marathon
- Page 3** - MRBA Casebook by Marian Stringer
- Page 4** - The Search for a New MRBA Secretary/Treasurer
- The Research Network
- MRBA Fundraising at MRS 50th Annual Conference

The MRBA AGM

Following its approval at the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 6th July, the new Constitution of the MRBA took effect from the start of the AGM on 28th September. In accordance with that, Ian Brace introduced himself as Chairman rather than as President of the Association.

The meeting was attended by 10 Members and Governors (both categories to be labelled simply as Members henceforth), including 5 members of the Management Committee. After a unanimous show of hands, all six nominees for membership of the Management Committee were re-elected - Ian Brace, Peter Bartram, Linda Henshall, Nick Palmer, Marian Stringer, and Ed Ross. In addition, David Barr and Pat Molloy indicated they would continue to serve as co-opted Members.

In presenting the Trustees' Report, Ian said that the MRBA had provided grants or loans to 23 new cases during the year, up from 19 in the previous year. The new grants totalled £26,460 and the loans £11,816

- both also up on the previous year. Other significant items of expenditure were legal fees for the new Constitution, the survey of people across the research industry, and small amount of advertising cost.

Total income was £38,100, of which £15,800 was derived from investments and bank accounts, nearly £9,000 from fundraising and donations, and £7,400 from Members' subscriptions. At £43,000, total expenditure was greater than income but, thanks to a rising stock market, total assets increased from £500,000 to £525,000. Since this last figure is fairly high for an organisation of its size, a Working Group has been appointed to examine alternative income profiles and sources.

As mentioned in his comments on the previous page, Ian paid tribute to several longstanding servants of the Association who are now departing, including John Downham, Michael Brown, John Samuels, and our Secretary/Treasurer, Gill Wareing. He also offered

thanks to Peter Bartram for producing the two most recent issues of Helping Hand, to all of the Regional Welfare Managers for their hard work over the past year and most particularly to Marian Stringer for her nationwide coordination work and for her cases work in the Southeast.

An exciting new venture for the Association is its impending cooperation with NABS, the charity for the advertising and communications industry. Further details will follow, but this should enable the MRBA to offer relevant advice as well as financial support to those seeking help. Ian concluded by thanking GfK NOP for continuing to provide a venue for the meetings of the Management Committee. Following questions from Gerald Goodhardt, Nigel Spackman, Kathleen Hamilton and Frank Winter on points of detail and plans for 2007, a resolution to accept the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements was carried unanimously.

MRBA Re-joins The Association of Charity Officers:

Now that the ACO - the Association of Charity Officers, to which more than 200 Registered UK charities belong -- has established a study group for charities with fewer than five employees, it has been

agreed that the MRBA should re-join. Through our access to their comparative information and the regular meetings of their Under Fives Group, it is hoped that the MRBA can more easily keep abreast of regulatory

changes and new ideas gleaned from charities of similar size and type. Peter Bartram has offered to be our representative at the Under Fives Group meetings.

Fundraising: Justin Gutmann's Snowdonia Marathon



Justin Gutmann

By completing the Snowdonia Marathon on 29th October, Justin Gutmann, Chairman of the MRS in 1999-2001, has made an outstanding

contribution to the fundraising effort of the MRBA in 2006. By dedicating his efforts to the MRBA, Justin has enabled a total of almost £5,000 to be raised for the Association from as many as 63 sponsorship donors. Seen off at the crack of dawn by David Smith, Justin completed the run in 5 hours 6 minutes.

This remarkable enterprise was Justin's fitting tribute to Kit Molloy who died in 2005 having served the MRBA for many years. Thanks are owed to Justin, for his splendid efforts in completing the gruelling run itself, and to Pat Molloy for the easy web-based donation process via Justgiving.com. And of course grateful thanks are owed to the corporate sponsors, Harris Interactive and Cobalt Sky, and to all those who willed him onwards and upwards with the generosity of their donations.



The Late Kit Molloy

Caseload

Marian Stringer writes



So many requests for help come our way but one of the saddest I can remember is that of a male interviewer who unexpectedly discovered that he had cancer and would need to go into

hospital for an urgent operation. He and his wife lived entirely on their state pension supplemented by his earnings as an interviewer. He was particularly concerned about the need to make HP repayments on furniture that he would not have bought if he had known he was going to be unable

to work for a time. But he was greatly relieved when the MRBA paid two instalments whilst he was in hospital, as he knew it would enable his wife to cope financially until he returned to work.

Unbelievably, while he was recovering in hospital, his wife was also diagnosed with cancer, and she too needed an operation followed by weeks of chemotherapy. So instead of being able to come home to convalesce, he had to spend time supporting and nursing her. Worse still, her condition deteriorated rapidly and she had to be taken back into hospital, where she died soon afterwards.

In addition to keeping in regular contact with him to offer a small

amount of comfort, we were able to help with the funeral expenses he was very worried about. And to help him through this traumatic time, the MRBA used their Convalescent Fund to pay for him to have a holiday.

After a lot of help from family and friends he managed to recover from his own illness and the tragic loss of his wife, and a few years down the line we are glad to say he is now fully recovered and is managing to get pleasure from life once again.

Please don't hesitate to contact the MRBA should you or anyone you know need assistance.

We are there to help.

The Search for a New MRBA Secretary/Treasurer

Following the impending departure of the long-serving Gill Wareing, the MRBA urgently needs to recruit a new part-time Secretary/Treasurer. The process of identifying a suitable candidate is now well advanced but if any reader of *Helping Hand* knows of anyone who may have the necessary skills, time, and commitment to such a worthwhile and vital position, please do contact Ian Brace at the address shown below.

The job of Secretary/Treasurer mainly involves:

- a) Organising and taking minutes for the eight Management Committee meetings in each year, and the AGM
- b) Handling applicants' initial enquiries, and sending them the application forms
- c) Liaising with the Cases Manager to inform her of potential new cases
- d) Sending cheques to cases as approved by the Management Committee

- e) Managing the Association's bank accounts, maintaining all financial records, and liaising with the auditors at end of year.

The work is equivalent to one day per week but may not be evenly spread, and the response to those in need often has to be quick. Committee meetings, planned well in advance, are held in central London, on days of the week which may vary.

The position would suit someone with flexible availability, and ideally both secretarial and financial experience. Discretion is required as all applications for assistance are confidential. Salary is £5,000 p.a. Travel and other expenses are paid in addition. Please contact **Ian Brace**, Chairman, MRBA on **020 7891 1231** or e-mail: **ian.brace@tns-global.com**

The Research Network

Under the chairmanship of Nick Phillips, the Research Network continues in robust health. Its Autumn Lunch was enjoyed by 70 Members and their guests on 18th October at the Singapura Restaurant off Ludgate Circus - a happy second visit there.

The Annual General Meeting of the Research Network starts at 6.30pm on Tuesday 5th December at the new offices of Research International, 6 More London Place, SE1 (which is off Tooley Street on the left, going from London Bridge).

MRBA Fundraising at the MRS 50th Annual Conference in March 2007

Following on from the success of the MRBA Silent Auction at the Research 2006 Conference, Linda Henshall is once again putting together a similar show for the next Conference, being held in Brighton on 21-23 March 2007.

As this is the 50th MRS Annual Conference, it is clearly a special Golden Jubilee occasion which warrants a special set of auction gifts and prizes, all in the good

cause of the MRBA. Readers of *Helping Hand* are now asked to scour their minds, (and maybe their attics) for items and ideas which can be donated and fought for by what will probably be a record number of Conference Delegates and auction bidders.

It is not too early to do this, and to do so please contact **Linda Henshall** at **Linda.henshall@newfieldwork.co.uk** or tel: **01932-841036**.

MRBA Management Committee & Trustees

Ian Brace (Chairman) · Peter Bartram · David Barr (co-opted) · Claire Harris (co-opted) · Linda Henshall · Pat Molloy (co-opted) · Nick Palmer · Marian Stringer

Secretary-Treasurer

Gill Wareing

Regional Welfare Managers

Delphine Anderson · Jennifer Bowen · Kathleen Hamilton · Doreen Harwood · Pam Moy · Marian Stringer (Cases Co-ordinator)

Until further notice, all applications for assistance should be addressed in the first instance, to Mrs Gill Wareing, 6 Walkfield Drive, Epsom Downs, Surrey KT18 5UF Tel: 01737 379261

Market Research Benevolent Association

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The MRBA is grateful to GfK NOP Ltd for hosting Management Committee Meetings, and to TNS for artworking *Helping Hand*, which is printed by Millward Brown.

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Contributions are welcome and should be sent to the Editor: Peter Bartram,

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