

Helping hard



Newsletter from the Market Research Benevolent Association

No.14 SPRING 2006

From the President



At last we are in a position to put to the membership the proposal for new Rules of the Association,

or, as they will become, the MRBA Constitution. I have written before that the Management Committee has been reviewing these for about eighteen months now, since our new auditors suggested that they might not meet current charity law requirements. The proposals have been discussed, lawyered, discussed and lawyered again so that we are now have what we believe is a constitution that meets the needs of the MRBA for the foreseeable future and meets all current legal requirements. I shall shortly be writing to all members of the Association with a copy of the new Constitution and inviting your comments. It is our aim to hold an Extraordinary General

Meeting of the Association in July to seek approval from the members for the new Constitution. If we get that approval, it can then come into force from the AGM in September.

My thanks go to Linda Henshall and Pat Molloy for a successful fund-raising auction at the recent Research Conference. I understand that the final total raised will be in excess of £5,000, which is more than was announced at the end of the Conference because Linda was able to sell some of the items twice! There is a fuller report elsewhere in this edition. Next year the Research Conference will be back at Brighton for what I understand will be a one-off reprise. So perhaps it will be time to dust off those old fun-run t-shirts and oil up the bikes for one more time.

In the meantime, two former MRS Chairmen are going to be

raising money for the MRBA by running the Snowdonia Marathon in October. Again there is a fuller report on the madness of Justin Gutmann and David Smith elsewhere in this issue, so may I just urge all members to give these two as much encouragement as possible, with both moral support and sponsorship.

The caseload continues unabated with a number of new cases that require help and guidance for the individual concerned rather than simply paying bills to get the applicant through an emergency. We now have a small nucleus of people in the industry who are prepared to give time to help these people through talking to them and advising them on career choices. However, we can always do with more mentors of this kind, and if anyone would like to become involved in this way please let me know.

Ian Brace

MRBA Charity Christmas Cards

Once again the MRBA is participating in the charity scheme whereby a percentage of the purchase price of Christmas cards obtained through the *Card Aid Business Initiative* will be donated to the MRBA. If you or your company wish to participate this year, please contact them at cardaid@cardaid.co.uk or tel: **0207 433 3636**.

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The New Constitution

Ian Brace writes:

As I have referred to in From the President, we are now in a position to send out for consultation with members, the Management Committee's redrafted Constitution for the MRBA. This is the first major review of the Rules since the founding of the Association nearly thirty years ago. The requirement to review our current Rules was first brought to our notice by accountants Baker Tilly when they became our Independent Financial Examiners two years ago. The issue that they raised was that the Management Committee should, under the most recent Charities Act, also be the Trustees, as they are primarily responsible for the financial well-being of the Association. After consideration of several options we are recommending that we do away with the current structure of three Trustees, one of whom is a member of the Management Committee, and make the members of the Management Committee the Trustees.

At the same time we are taking advantage of this change to incorporate a number of other changes. The main additional changes are that:

- 1) the elected members of the Management Committee are elected for a three year term rather than the one year term at present, which currently means that an election has to be held every year for all of the six elected positions.
- 2) the President is restyled the Chairman
- 3) the 'Rules' are replaced by the 'Constitution'
- 4) several new enabling clauses are added to the powers of the Association.

The additional enabling clauses to enable the Association to do things which, although not prohibited under the current Rules, are not explicitly allowed. These include activities such as providing advice, opening workshops, opening a home, publishing information and carrying out

research. Some of these we already do - last year we carried out a survey and we publish this document twice a year - whilst others, such as opening a home, we do not envisage being done within the life time of any of the current Committee. However, to make the Constitution fit for the next thirty years, these enabling clauses have been included in case they come to be needed.

The revised draft Constitution will be mailed to all members early in May for consultation. We are planning to hold an EGM on 6th July at Auriol Kensington Rowing Club, Hammersmith, (see below) at which the Management Committee will seek the endorsement of the members of the Association.

I hope that all members will take the time to read the revised Constitution and will endorse the Management Committee's recommendation that it be accepted at the EGM.

Please note for your diary:

All MRBA members are invited to attend the **Extraordinary General Meeting** at which a decision is to be taken on the proposed New Constitution. This will be held on the top floor of the **Auriol Kensington Rowing Club**, 14 Lower Mall, Hammersmith W6 on **6th July** at **11.45am**, immediately preceding the **Research Network Summer Party** which starts at **12.30pm**.

The Research Network

The special theme of The Research Network Spring Lunch held on 25th April was a celebration of the 90th birthday of Harry Henry. Harry is not only one of the oldest and liveliest of the Network's Members but also he is now the only survivor among the 23 original founders of the Market Research Society who met in the

offices of The London Press Exchange on 5th November 1946.

The Lunch was held aboard the TS Queen Mary, moored by the Thames Embankment, and attracted 119 participants - a record for Network lunches of this kind.

Nick Phillips, Chairman of the Research Network Steering Group, presented to Harry a splendid birthday cake and a volume containing tributes, recollections and birthday wishes compiled by 42 of Harry's friends and former research colleagues.

Former chairmen climb a mountain in the Snowdonian Marathon 2006



©National Trust

Two former chairmen of the MRS are in training for the Snowdonia Marathon later this year. Justin Gutmann and David Smith will be running on behalf of the MRBA in the marathon on 29th October. The course seems fairly bleak - see photograph above - and in October will no doubt be cold and wet!

But judging from last year, when over 800 runners took part, Justin and David should

have plenty of company en route.

The runners, and the MRBA, are seeking sponsorship, so please give generously. We are now looking for corporate sponsors - perhaps the runners will wear your logo - as well as individual supporters. Justin is also running on behalf of a charity set up by Virginia Barstow in memory of her son which supports the drilling of wells in Africa. Sponsors can

choose which charity to support when sponsoring Justin.

There is plenty of time for others to enter, and David and Justin would welcome more market research runners, so if you run, or if you know anyone who runs, log on to the website: (http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-global/w-localtoyou/w-wales/w-snowdonia_marathon/w-snowdonia_marathon-enter.htm) to get further details.

If you are not a runner, a number of supporters are proposing to organise a support party that can have a great weekend in North Wales, cheer on the intrepid runners and generally have a good time. To sponsor the runners go to www.mrba.org.uk to download a sponsorship form, or to find out about the weekend e-mail to ian.brace@tns-global.com.

Caseload

Marian Stringer writes



The MRBA has helped many people during periods of illness, of which cancer is sadly the most common reason. However, we provide help in response to a wide range of needs and, as an example, have recently given a considerable amount of emotional support in addition to financial assistance to an interviewer who had suffered a severe nervous breakdown some years ago. This was due to the stress of interviewing combined with caring for a disabled partner. (I am calling this person Pat though that, of

course, is not their real name.) The partner died, but Pat was not well enough to return to work and existed on benefits whilst living in temporary accommodation. Pat was keen to return to work but was anxious about coping with the everyday stresses and strains, and about no longer having suitable clothing or any documentation which could be used as proof of their identity.

The MRBA found an experienced person within the market research industry who took them under their wing, boosted their confidence and gradually got them onto the right path to be able to return to work. This mentor met Pat, and over a cup of coffee discussed all the problems.

On the mentor's recommendation the MRBA bought them a mobile phone so that research companies were able to communicate with them, obtained a new passport for purposes of identification, bought some suitable clothing, and made contact with companies to get Pat on to appropriate training courses.

So far this has all worked admirably and Pat is slowly returning to a more normal life. The MRBA is most grateful to this mentor who has made it all possible, and in sending Pat our best wishes we sincerely hope the recovery continues.

We are there to help.

The MRBA Auction 2006 : a record-breaking event

The Auction at the Market Research Society Annual Conference this year proved to be the most successful of its kind ever organised for the MRBA. At £4,950, the sum raised from generous MRS Members and other delegates exceeded last year's total by £1,000.

For their hard work in making this happen, thanks are owed to -

Linda Henshall, who coordinated the project, attracted many of the sponsors, and organised the lively MRBA stand at the Conference
Pat Molloy and **Pulse Train Ltd**, who constructed the on-line website, chased up more sponsors and provided the administrative back-up essential to success.

Special thanks are also owed to the sponsors who donated the 36 prizes offered in the auction.

These included:

- Holidays in the UK, France, and New Zealand (*Barbara Lee, Jenny Bowen, Eamonn Santry, Ruth McNeil, Mary and Peter Bartram*)
- Special lunch and dinner invitations (*Peter Greenwood*)
- A round of golf in Hertfordshire (*Laurence Curtis*)
- Cases of wine (*Cobalt Sky, Research Magazine*)
- Framed photographs and original paintings (*Hugh and Jane Bain, Virginia Valentine, Valerie Farbridge, Peter Bartram*)
- A portrait photography session (*Barrie Parker*)
- Pamper and therapy sessions (*GfK NOP, RP Cushing*)
- Custom-designed porcelain pottery (*GfK NOP*)
- A custom-knitted baby's jumper (*Jane Gwilliam*)
- A new Apple iPod nano (*Skopos*)

- A wrist-mounted GPS personal training device (*Pat Molloy*)
- Subscriptions to Research Magazine (*Peter Greenwood*)
- Quantitative (*New Fieldwork Company*) and qualitative (*Peter Allan/Qualitative Lab*) research sessions.

Encouraged by this year's success, plans are afoot to ensure that an even bigger auction is organised at next year's MRS Conference, which will be in Brighton. If you have prizes to offer for that, it is not too early and Linda.Henshall@newfieldwork.co.uk will be delighted to hear from you. Meanwhile, thanks again to all concerned: without the generosity of this year's organisers, sponsors and bid winners the vital benefits of the MRBA could not be sustained.



Trustees of the MRBA

John Downham · Michael Brown · Ian Brace

Management Committee

Ian Brace (President) · Peter Bartram · David Barr (co-opted) · Linda Henshall · Pat Molloy (co-opted) · Nick Palmer · Ed Ross (co-opted) · John Samuels · Marian Stringer

Secretary-Treasurer

Gill Wareing

Regional Welfare Managers

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

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

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