

## Caseload

**Marian Stringer** writes 'Do I have to be a member of the MRS or the MRBA to qualify for help?' The answer to both these questions is definitely 'no'. Anybody qualifies for help provided they have worked within the market research industry for a certain time period.



One such interviewer who was under the misconception that she had to be a member of one of these bodies was a lady who lived alone. As an interviewer she had always managed to make ends meet. She had never allowed debts to build up and

by taking all the work available made her income and expenditure balance. Having experienced difficulty and pain in walking she was devastated to find out that her doctor recommended a hip replacement operation and he would be signing her off work for two months. She was desperate, wondering how to manage to pay the continuing bills with no income. This lady was aware of the MRBA but was firmly convinced that you had to be a member of the MRS to qualify. Luckily she worked for a well-informed supervisor who had herself received financial assistance during a particularly difficult time in her life. The supervisor immediately put her in touch with us and we were able to give her two months loss of earnings to cover the period she was unable to work.

## Fund raising

The MRBA has benefited from raffles held at the Market Research Society Scottish Branch, and the 2003 Field Conference. Raffles in aid of the MRBA will also take place at the forthcoming 2004 Field Conference and the BIG Conference. Linda Henshall is organising a Grand Industry Raffle. (Let her know about any contributions you can make: linda.henshall@newfieldwork.co.uk).

The MRBA is grateful to David Smith, Andy Dexter and Peter Mouncey who have donated lecturing fees to the Association.

**The MRBA is grateful to NOP World for hosting Management Committee meetings and to TNS for setting the newsletter. Helping Hand is printed by BMRB International.**

## Interest Groups

As part of its objective of making its benefits widely known across the market research industry, the MRBA has invited the various Interest Groups to appoint MRBA Representatives whose main purpose will be to help ensure that each of their members are fully aware of the help that the MRBA can give. To date, six Interest Groups have appointed such Representatives.

## New Accountants

Baker Tilly (Chartered Accountants) have been appointed as successors to John Barnes and will be the Independent Examiners of the MRBA accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004.

### Trustees of the MRBA

Bryan A Bates · John Downham · Michael Brown

### Management Committee

Michael Brown (President) · Ian Brace (Vice President) · Peter Bartram · Kit Molloy (co-opted) · Ed Ross (co-opted) · Nick Palmer (co-opted)

Linda Henshall (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  
Registered office 15 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0JR

# Helping Hand

MRBA Newsletter

No.10 SPRING 2004

## From the Vice President

I am currently honoured to be standing in for Michael Brown as Vice President. This was a post to which I acceded last autumn when it became clear that Michael would not be able to take his place as President of the Management Committee with such regularity as previously.

The last six months have been as busy as ever for the Association. The number of cases never seems to diminish. We were sorry to lose Stephen Ellis and Mike Cooke from the Management Committee, and I would like to thank both of them for all the hard work that they put into the MRBA in the previous few years. We shall miss the enthusiasm with which both of them approached the Association.

We have recruited three new co-opted members to replace them and they are introduced elsewhere in this issue. Linda's knowledge of interviewer and field matters will add to our understanding of the problems which many of our beneficiaries face, and she is a natural arm-twister when it comes to fund-raising; Nick's long experience in banking will help us to ensure that our financial affairs are in order, and with increasing interest taken by the Charities Commission in such matters, they do, as always, need to be; Ed brings a new perspective to the Committee which is likely to see the Association reaching out to more people in the research industry who perhaps in the past did not realise that we are here to help them. We welcome our new members.

There was no MRBA presence at the MRS Conference this year. With the change of venue and no obvious event around which to arrange fund-raising, we felt that we should look elsewhere for fund-raising this year, and an industry raffle is being planned for later in the year. We expect to be back at Conference next year though, with fund-raising linked to the party planned for the Thursday evening.

The Research Network continues to go from strength to strength and provides a link for many of our retired colleagues both to the industry and to the MRBA. This, we know, is valued by so many of its members who may otherwise feel out of touch with what is going on both in the industry and amongst their old friends. Long may the Research Network flourish.

**Ian Brace**

Personal circumstances have, unfortunately, kept me away from the Management Committee table since late 2003 and may continue to do so for some time to come. I am extremely grateful to Ian Brace for so ably stepping into my shoes, and I hope that we may regularise the useful title of 'Vice President' in the future. Many interesting plans for the Association are now under discussion and I look for fruitful outcomes.



**Michael Brown**

## Marketing the MRBA

The MRBA Management Committee has increasingly recognised there is a need to raise the profile of the MRBA and that, to do this, a proper marketing plan needs to be drawn up and put into effect.

The aim of this should be two-fold – to ensure that the MRBA is well-known to those who may be eligible for its assistance, so the number of cases taken up is maximised; and in support of that, to encourage more people to offer the necessary financial and other voluntary support.

The Management Committee has agreed that the process should begin with research. In order to target our efforts and make any marketing plan effective we first need to ask wider questions – what do people across the industry currently know of the MRBA, and what do they think it could and should be doing in the future?

For this purpose, the Management Committee will be co-ordinating the following over

the coming months: an enquiry among the Regional Welfare Managers, to solicit their opinions on the MRBA's future activities; consultation with similar professional charities, to solicit ideas from which the MRBA might benefit and a telephone enquiry among relevant individuals across the whole market research industry.

Hopefully this research exercise will in itself help to raise the profile of the MRBA. But more importantly it should help to identify gaps between what the MRBA now does, and what it should be doing.

The resultant Marketing Plan, to be drawn up and agreed in the latter half of this year, is likely to involve an investment of the MRBA's resources in a properly-funded programme of promotional activities, which may include regular advertising, mailings, events, awards and sponsorships. If done properly, such a programme will be more than self-financing: it can be expected that any increase in outgoings resulting from a greater case-load will be offset by a better-justified promotion and solicitation of donation income.

## The Research Network

The Research Network now has 208 members. There were around 30 people present at the first AGM on 2 December 2003 and they gave the Steering Group valuable indications of the way in which members would like to see the Network develop. The MRBA has been very supportive while the Network was being set up. However, it has not been necessary for it to take up funds allocated to it by the Association.

During its first full year the Network held two very successful lunches: at the Reform Club in April 2003 and at the Carlton Club in October. The spring lunch on 22 April is being held in a less imposing venue – the stylish but informal Singapura in Limeburner Lane, EC4.

In October, thanks to Lord McIntosh (aka Andrew McIntosh), the Network hopes to meet in the House of Lords.

Three successful Newsletters have been distributed to members and it is looking into the establishment of a website, in order to have an on-going communications vehicle.

In addition to its social benefits, the Network aims to act as a conduit for people who need financial, social or any other support. Without being intrusive, members of the Network will be alert to such needs, so that appropriate cases can be referred to the MRBA.

## Co-options strengthen Management Committee

**Linda Henshall** is Managing Director of The New Fieldwork Company which she founded in 1983. She has served on the MRS Council for three terms and is now Vice Chairman. In her position as a member of the Research Network Steering Committee she acts as liaison between the MRS and the Network.



As a new member of the MRBA Management Committee, Linda Henshall has a special remit for fundraising. She comments: "MRBA just doesn't seem to be at the top of people's mind. It needs a lot more publicity about its background and objectives. For most people working in market research, £25 a year is not a hardship, but if they became MRBA members it would make a tremendous difference".

**Nick Palmer** joined Barclays Bank in 1966, eventually retiring from that bank in 2000. His banking career included the establishment and management of the first formal market research department in any UK bank. This led to a three year period in the Directors' /Chairman's Office dealing with a variety of special projects, followed by the remainder of his career in senior management in the corporate bank.



A Fellow of the MRS, he is a long-serving member of the MRS Professional Standards Committee and since leaving Barclays has become closely involved with a range of Professional Development activities in the Society. He says: "As a new member of the Management Committee I am inevitably still learning my way around. The collective wisdom and compassion shown by the members at each meeting is very striking indeed, as is the sensitivity which is demonstrated when faced with some tough decisions. I feel honoured to be a part of this process, which helps so many beneficiaries who through no

fault of their own are faced with very difficult circumstances indeed".

**Ed Ross** was brought up and educated in the US, studying Mathematics at Harvard. He came to the UK in 1964, for an intended six months 'working holiday' and has been here ever since. In the UK he worked at varying computing posts in the University of London, until in 1965 he answered a small-ad placed by Henry Durant of the Gallup Poll, who wanted someone to design and write a computer system for analysing data. After being rapidly re-educated into the requirements of market research, and giving up his first idea which was to simply get rid of multiple-response, Ed went on to design and write a number of analysis programs, culminating in the Quantum program which is still in wide use. In 1978 he started Quantime, serving as Chairman (as well as designing Quancept and Quavert) until selling it to SPSS in 1997. Since then, he has divided his time between consultancy, charities, working towards better and more open technical standards for survey research computing, and, recently, studying for an M.A. degree in Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies.



He says: "The MRBA does an excellent job and its case management is superb. One area where I feel we might further develop in future is in terms of raising our profile, both among possible clients and in the MR industry in general, and possibly expanding the range of our activities. The modern MR industry has a large variety of participants, and it is important that we are able to (and recognised as) serving them all. Another question for the future is that, in an era in which job security can no longer be assumed at any level, we might provide more help in the way of 'services' to people at all levels in our industry who are facing increasing job insecurity and often redundancy. These can often be more important than cash subventions".