

# Helping hand

MRBA Newsletter

No.13 WINTER 2005-6

## From the President



It is with great sadness that I have to record the passing of Kit Molloy. Although Kit retired from the MRBA Management Committee in 2004, we shall all greatly miss him. He was a stalwart supporter of the MRBA since its inception and served on the committee for around 25 years, although he was always reluctant to give too many clues as to exactly how long. He was also one of the kindest, most generous people I have known. On the committee, he would always see the need for help in any application and would propose to give as much as we could. He was thoughtful of others and always had a kind word to say, or action to take, that would help someone else. His easy charm was also always a great asset in fund-raising and he could twist arms so gently that the arms usually did not realise that they were being

twisted. It is true to say that without Kit the MRBA would not be what it is today, and he will be sorely missed.

The AGM was held, as usual, in September this year. I would like to thank all of those members who attended, albeit for what turned out to be a fairly short meeting (although not as short as the MRS AGM which followed!).

I had hoped that the AGM would be able to discuss the proposed changes to the Association's Rules that I have written about in previous issues of *Helping Hand*. However, progress towards revising them has not proceeded as quickly as I had hoped. Our proposals have been revised by the lawyers and have yet to go the Charity Commissioners for their comments. It is now our intention to bring them to an EGM as early as possible in 2006. The proposals will be circulated to all members for comment, and an EGM held as soon as possible after that.

Progress towards being able to offer a suite of non-financial advice and counselling services has also been slower than hoped. This is not because we do not want to be able to do this. Indeed, the demand for these types of services has been

demonstrated in several new cases this year. However, we are still searching for a model under which we can operate such services. Partly because of the lack of progress in this area, and partly because we wished to digest the findings of the survey, which are reported in this issue, we have not been as aggressive in marketing the Association this year.

However, the MRS has been very kind in giving us advertisements in *Research* magazine whenever possible, as well as entries in the 2006 *Research Buyers Guide*. We are extremely grateful to the MRS and to Peter Greenwood in particular for making this happen.

The MRBA's Regional Welfare Managers are highlighted elsewhere in this issue. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their work on behalf of the Association and on behalf of the cases for whom contact with an RWM is often as important as any financial help that we can give. The annual conference with the RWMs was held in October, and it was a great pleasure for the Committee to entertain them to lunch, and to hear their views first-hand.

Ian Brace

# The Front-Line Faces of the MRBA

The work of the MRBA would not be possible without the dedicated, discreet and highly approachable people who respond to those in need of the help it can provide throughout the UK. The MRBA Regional Welfare Managers and their HQ support colleagues are profiled below.

## **Delphine Anderson** (Midlands)

Delphine joined MAS in 1968 and worked there for many years as a Supervisor, Training Officer, and Area Manager. In 1990 she went to the National Centre for Social Research (formerly SCPR), and joined the MRBA just before retiring in 1998. She feels that "the MRBA offers not only financial help and advice, but also contact with a friendly face and someone who is prepared to listen."

The case she remembers best was that of a seriously ill researcher for whom the MRBA was very speedily able to provide a much-needed chairlift.



## **Jennifer Bowen** (Southwest England)

Jenny has been with the MRBA since it was founded 26 years ago, previously serving as Committee Member, Cases Manager, and President. Her distinguished career in market research began with Thomas Hedley, and having worked in research at three advertising agencies, culminated in her role as Director and Partner in the leading research company, MAS. She remains full of admiration for all that the MRBA does: "It may be small compared with a lot of other charities, but it manages to stretch its resources wonderfully - for very many people it has been a lifeline and a lifesaver."



## **Kathleen Hamilton** (Scotland and N. England)

Kathleen began as an interviewer in 1978 but soon became an Area Manager for the Independent Research Bureau, and 1980 a Supervisor and Interviewer Trainer. She also became a Life Skills Tutor for Glasgow District Council Further Education Department. Subsequently she was elected to the Chairmanship of the MRS in Scotland.

About 15 years ago she joined the MRBA as an RWM, since when the case she recalls being most happy with was one where help was given to a former director of a Scottish company who had lost her sight and was in failing health.



## **Doreen Harwood** (Northwest)

Doreen has worked in market research for 23 years, with BARB, Harris Research, and subsequently Fieldcontrol, where she retired from her position as Area Manager at the end of 2005. She has been with the MRBA for five years and says she values her role as a Regional Welfare Manager as a means of keeping in touch with the research industry. More particularly, she feels "privileged to be part of an organisation which can make such a difference in giving help when most urgently needed."



## **Pam Moy** (West Midlands and Wales)

Pam's career began in the market research department of Unilever in 1960. Having then worked for various other companies, she



worked in the offices of Gordon Simmons Research and subsequently became their Field Manager.

She has been with the MRBA for about 13 years, bringing with her valuable experience of working with the Citizens' Advice Bureau. She says "With the MRBA it is nice to be able to *do* something, -- to say 'We are there, we want to help you.' With the CAB you can only advise"

## **Marian Stringer** (National Cases Manager)

Marian started in market research as an interviewer in 1972 and soon became an area Manager for MIL. In 1982 she joined MAS as Field Director and from 1990 until her retirement in 1997 was Field Director for SCPR (now the National Centre for Social Research).

She became a member of the MRBA Management Committee in 1983 and brings to its deliberations her experience as coordinator for all the Regional Welfare Managers.



## **Gill Wareing** (Hon. Secretary/Treasurer)

Gill joined the MRS Secretariat in 1971, and became its Assistant Secretary-General before leaving in 1982. She has been Hon Secretary/Treasurer of the MRBA ever since it started 26 years ago, and has held similar positions with the IQCS since 1986 and the Research Network since 2002.

Gill sees the role of the MRBA as one of "helping people who are not so fortunate as the rest of us", and she finds it particularly rewarding to see life-enhancing financial or practical support getting them back on track.



# Results of the MRBA Survey undertaken early in 2005

As reported in the last issue of *Helping Hand*, the MRBA Management Committee has been studying the results obtained from their recent survey across the market research industry. Its main aims were to investigate awareness of the MRBA, and identify the services and benefits expected of the MRBA now and in the future.

This survey was carried out by telephone interviewers from Facts International, to whom our thanks are owed. 105 interviews were completed, with at least 6 and up to 18 being completed within each of the ten categories of interviewers, support staff and current and former researchers being covered.

The principal findings were that...

- There is a widespread demand that the MRBA should make itself much better known to people across the industry. The need for the MRBA to do this is reinforced by the fact that among interviewers - the main category of people needing and benefiting from MRBA help - less than half had ever heard of the MRBA.
- People are not clear as to exactly what the MRBA can do, and for whom.  
Many do not realise it is independent from the MRS, and many erroneously think you need to be an MRS member to be eligible for its help
- There is a widespread expectation that the MRBA should be a source of advice as well as financial support

- The number of requests for MRBA help is thought to be heavily reduced by a reluctance to ask for it.

If ways could be found to overcome the pride or embarrassment mainly causing this, the MRBA caseload would increase substantially - and especially among categories other than those in fieldwork.

- Most people appear willing to donate to the MRBA, and do not believe the MRBA has little or no need for additional financial support. Very few are critical of the job currently being done by the MRBA, and their main reason for not donating in the past is that they have not been asked to do so.

Despite the relatively small sample sizes in each of the categories covered by this research - which necessarily has meant that its findings have been treated as qualitative, and not quantitative - this survey has for the first time provided clear messages on which action urgently needs to be taken. That being so, the MRBA Management Committee is immediately focusing on...

- Planning to increase its promotional activity, with an

immediate focus on interviewers of all kinds, and back-office support staff

- Consulting other similar charities in order to evaluate how advice of the kinds needed can best be made available to those who need it
- Investigating ways to overcome the reluctance of the many eligible for MRBA help to come forward and ask for it.

Fuller information on the research method, and a copy of the full presentation of its results, are available to MRBA Governors and Members, and to other bona fide recipients of *Helping Hand*, upon request.

Please contact **Gill Wareing**, MRBA Hon Secretary Treasurer, on 01737-379261 or at [gillm.wareing@ntlworld.com](mailto:gillm.wareing@ntlworld.com)

## Caseload



*Marian Stringer writes*

During 2005, the MRBA provided help to 23 individuals, with 19 grants, 4 new loans, and various other forms of advice and support. The purposes which it covered were very varied, including bills for Council Tax, electricity, gas, telephone, credit cards, rent arrears, driving lessons, legal expenditures, plumbing, other

household bills; provision of a stairlift in the event of immobility, a recuperative holiday following medical treatment, and advisory help in getting back into paid employment.

It must be stressed that those receiving help were not necessarily Members of *The Market Research Society*, and all areas of market research - fieldwork, operational support, and executive - were represented among them. Situations giving rise to the need for help included loss of earnings through

accidents, cancer and other ill-health, the pressures of becoming a carer for a sick relative, redundancy, eye disease leading to loss of a driving licence, and stress-induced indebtedness.

If this long list brings to mind anyone who has similarly fallen on hard times, please do contact Gill Wareing on 01737-379261 or E-mail: [gillm.wareing@ntlworld.com](mailto:gillm.wareing@ntlworld.com) in total confidence.

# Update on the Research Network

The Research Network ends its third year of existence in robust health, its membership having increased to 242. Its financial reserves have accumulated to the point where it has for the first time been able to repay the MRBA for the support provided in its early days. As agreed

at its Annual General Meeting in December, the Network has made a donation of £750 to MRBA funds.

In order to reinvigorate the Network with fresh leadership, Peter Bartram has stepped down as Chairman of its Steering Group. By a unanimous vote

at the AGM, he has been succeeded by Nick Phillips whose stature in the research industry is widely acknowledged. Until recently he was Director General of the IPA; and previously he had worked at Granada TV, Beechams, the COI, SH Benson and AGB

## Fundraising

The Silent Auction at the Market Research Society Conference in 2005 was very successfully organised by Linda Henshall, raising as much as £3,950 for the MRBA. The MRBA Stand was a popular meeting-place for delegates who were able to bid for a wide range of donated items including

wine, IT equipment, holiday accommodation, knitwear, cameras, magazine subscriptions, autographs of the famous, original paintings, and professionally executed photographs. Spurred on by the success of this, Linda Henshall will be organising another Silent Auction for the MRBA

at the next MRS Conference in March 2006. If you have any items which could be included in the Auction, please let her know as soon as possible:

Tel: 01932-830083 E-mail: Linda.henshall@newfieldwork.co.uk

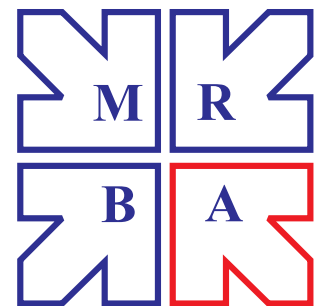
## Editorial Note

Readers of *Helping Hand* will wish to know that, owing to other commitments, Phyllis Vangelder has had to give up the responsibilities of its editorship as from late in 2005.

Phyllis took over from Michael Brown, its original founder, designer and editor, upon his election to the Presidency of the MRBA in 2001. Our thanks are owed to her for her diligent service in maintaining the quality of this important channel of communication in the years since then.

The editorship has now passed to Peter Bartram who will aim to uphold the standards set by Phyllis and Michael, and ensure that *Helping Hand* continues to be a vital mouthpiece for the MRBA among all those with a current or potential interest in its effectiveness.

In doing that, and as indicated below, he will always welcome contributions from MRBA Governors, Members, Committee Members, Regional Welfare Managers and, not least, those throughout the market research industry who have benefited in any way from its activities.



### 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

Registered office: 15 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0JR

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.

The next issue of *Helping Hand* will be published in Spring 2006.

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

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