
The Market Research Society



Annual Review

2003-04



Message from the President



Michael Thomas

OFFICERS 2003-04

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Lists of those serving on MRS Committees, Advisory Boards and Task Forces are available on the MRS website (www.mrs.org.uk).

I am writing this in a camp (cottage) in the Green Mountains of Vermont, where the spirit of Robert Frost is more enveloping than the spectre of Saddam Hussein. The President of the United States only gets a four-year term to make good or cause chaos. The President of The Market Research Society gets five, time enough to make some sort of mark and thus to be held accountable.

I would like to thank the Society for granting me the privilege of serving as President. My first Brighton conference was in 1959 when I was a fledgling researcher at the Metal Box Co. In my wildest dreams I could not then have conceived of occupying the presidential suite at the very same Metropole Hotel forty years later.

I came to the Presidency confident in the knowledge that the Society represented a truly professional body of knowledge workers. The best brains in the business served it in some role. The Society is inclusive of the best researchers and the best research developments. Having spent more than thirty years as a University educator, and done my time as Chairman of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, I knew what I wanted to do.

My task was to support the education and training infrastructure of the Society.

I was aware that nothing stands still in business, and that the rate and scope of change is faster than most can grasp. I knew that the Society has a worldwide reach and influence, that the best market researchers are truly global players. MRS must keep abreast of all these developments. We needed to modernise our Constitution and terms of governance and we have succeeded in this.

I take particular satisfaction in the redesign of our Annual Conference. It is now a dynamic market place of ideas. The average age of delegates has dropped considerably. Like it or not (and you can never forget it if you are a University professor), the young are the brightest and frequently the best. The Society must continue to capture and engage their enthusiasm. Our publications will continue to offer them, and members of the Society, a platform for the exchange of ideas.

I had a good Presidency. I hope that my successor, Jeremy Bullmore, has an even better one! It was a great pleasure to serve The Market Research Society.

Chairman's Report

The principal objective I set for my Chairmanship was to encourage wider involvement in the Society by researchers from across the spectrum, and by other industry and marketing organisations.

The first step on this path was the approval, at last year's AGM, of changes to the MRS Constitution to enable Associate Members and new Full Members to be eligible for election to Council.

Partly as a result of that, the subsequent election attracted a wide field of candidates and two who would previously have been ineligible were successful in being elected.

Throughout 2003-04, Council devoted considerable time and effort to a far-reaching (and long overdue) Constitutional review. The focus was on the Society's mission and principal responsibilities, on rationalisation of access to membership grades, and on modernising and streamlining governance.

Council also gave attention to the

development of an MRS Company Partner Scheme, to be introduced in 2005. This is designed to recognise that MRS already delivers many services for individuals via the organisations which employ them. The Scheme is also being designed to enhance inclusivity by introducing excellent value-for-money packages to facilitate participation in MRS training courses and conferences by some who were previously deterred by price.

Looking ahead to 2004-05, exploratory discussions with BMRA and AURA are expected to be completed in the summer of 2004, and may lead to rationalisation of the way the market research sector is served and represented. It is the firm view of the MRS Council that working towards a single industry body would be in the best overall interests of market research.

This is a radical programme of reform that is only possible because of the firm financial footing that the MRS now enjoys. Proposals for change in all these areas will be put to the membership over the coming months.



Jennie Beck

Director General's Overview of Operations

A third successive year of economic downturn fortunately split into a 'year of two halves' with the second half showing patchy signs of recovery. The total income for MRS (allowing for the effect of asset sales and outsourcing) remained roughly equal to last year's. A 2% surplus was achieved by virtue of further reductions in staff and expenditure.

A relatively modest percentage of MRS income is derived from membership subscriptions, which fund its responsibilities as a professional association and a self-regulatory body. All other MRS activity depends on creating and selling high-quality products and services. MRS is as exposed as any other company to changes in market conditions.

We can be justifiably proud that our business model proved sufficiently robust to have come through the downturn well ahead of breakeven.

The focus of policy work this year (described in the Chairman's report) gives

grounds for optimism that MRS can build on success to become more fit for purpose in the 21st century. Without impairing the huge residual value of what has been achieved in the past, MRS should now anticipate a much wider purpose than the one envisaged when it was founded nearly 60 years ago.

Even in its present form, MRS undertakes a diverse range of activities which are covered in this Annual Review. Its membership continues to grow and to encompass an eclectic 'broad church' of professionals.

As in previous years, I wish to pay tribute to the indispensable contribution made by many MRS members on a voluntary basis. Without it, MRS would be unable to thrive. A note of special appreciation is due to Michael Thomas. MRS has benefitted enormously from his wisdom and experience during his Presidency. We look forward to Jeremy Bullmore's insights from a very different perspective.



David Barr

Professional standards

The MRS *Code of Conduct*, its associated guidelines and compliance procedures remain fundamental to the Society's activities. A communications campaign was implemented during 2003-04 to highlight to members the depth and breadth of the work undertaken and the resources and services available to them. A re-write of the *Code* and a review of the disciplinary procedure were also instigated.

Professional Standards Committee (PSC)



Under the direction of PSC members, much work was undertaken to ensure that the ethics within the *Code* remain relevant and accessible to research practitioners. In conjunction with this, PSC implemented a communications campaign to inform and involve the MRS membership in the

work of the Committee. This included production of presentation materials detailing the role of PSC, the *Code* and researchers' responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998, and advertisements for Codeline. More is planned for 2004-05.

MRS Code of Conduct

During 2003-04, an essential re-write of the MRS *Code* was instigated. Since its last update in 1999, the associated guidelines have been expanded to enable greater understanding of the *Code's* application. However, it was recognised that detailing the key information in one document would greatly assist users. PSC spent the year rationalising key issues from the guidelines into an enlarged *Code of Conduct*. Consultation with the membership will be undertaken to gather feedback on the proposed revisions.

Guidelines

Irrespective of the necessary changes to the *Code*, there is still a need for specialist guidance particularly on issues such as legislation. During 2003-04, this included:

- *Market Research Processes (Client) and the Data Protection Act 1998* in association with AURA
- *Guidance on the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003*
- *Internet Research Guidelines*
- Draft guidance was also prepared on the use of automated diallers.

Details relating to general professional standards including the activities of PSC, the *Code* and all associated guidance can be found in the Code/Guidelines section of the MRS website.

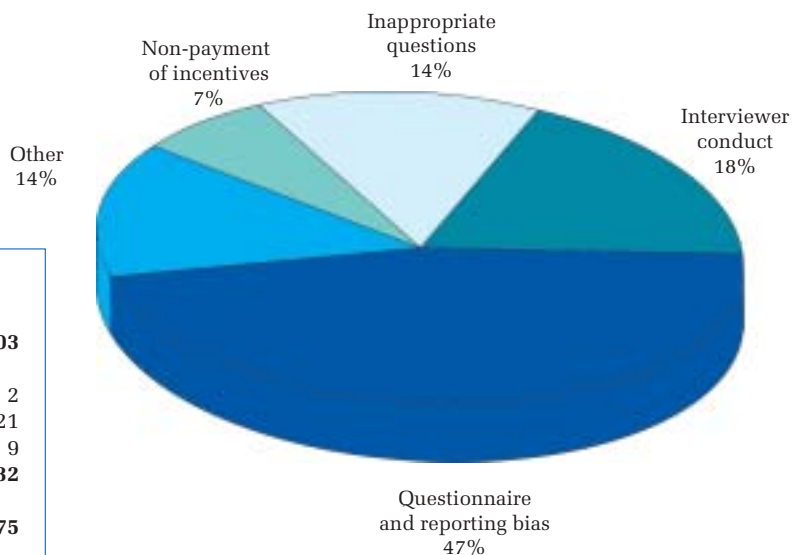
Professional Standards Advisory Board (PSAB)

Individual PSAB members were consulted direct on appropriate issues throughout the year. They will have an important role during the consultation on the revised *Code of Conduct* in 2004-05.

Disciplinary Authority (DA)

The MRS Disciplinary Regulations were last updated in September 2000 to meet Human Rights Act 1998 requirements (the right to fair and independent trial), and in recognition of some of the problems with the old procedure (PSC conducting all stages of the investigations including appeals). Since applying the revised procedure to the investigation of complaints, many benefits have been realised but further refinement is required to make it run more smoothly and reduce

Disciplinary Complaints 2003-04



Complaints Received

	2003-04	2002-03
Disciplinary cases		
Upheld	3	2
Not upheld	18	21
Ongoing	7	9
Total disciplinary cases	28	32
Minor complaints resolved by the Secretariat	40	75
Total complaints received	68	107

the time taken to investigate complaints. Generally, most complaints are resolved within 2-4 months; however, more complex investigations can take longer to complete. PSC conducted a review of the procedure, identifying key changes required which will be introduced during the second half of 2004. There was a welcome decrease in the number of complaints about market research during the year. However, the nature of the complaints and types of complainants have significantly changed. This has placed under greater public scrutiny MRS procedures plus the ability of MRS and all stakeholders in market research to support the mechanism of self-regulation.

Schemes Supporting Professional Standards

- **Codeline**

The Codeline service, which supplies advice and guidance on the interpretation and application of the MRS *Code of Conduct*, guidelines and associated legislation, continued to be an essential service for members. For the first time in a number of years, there was a reduction in the number of queries submitted to Codeline. This was accompanied by increasing use of the Code/Guidelines section of the MRS website, particularly the Frequently Asked Question pages which were expanded to address many of the common queries raised with Codeline. The subject matter of the queries continued to reflect the trend of the previous year: the majority related to data protection, with issues regarding children and mystery shopping remaining a concern.

- **Interviewer Identity (IID) Card Scheme**



The IID Card is a vital tool for many interviewers when approaching respondents. During 2003-04, a major re-design was completed. Enhancements to the service included: introduction of an online proofing procedure; slimmed down administration process enabling a

faster turnaround time; and subscribers being offered the opportunity to print their own cards and to use digital ID photography. During the period, 114 organisations subscribed to the revised Scheme and 93,500 cards were issued.

- **MRS Freephone**

This service enables respondents to verify whether an organisation undertaking research is a bona fide company within MRS criteria. It continued to provide an essential support mechanism for interviewers and respondents. During 2003-04, 11,502 calls were received by the UK Freephone service and 1,289 by the International Freephone service.

- **Job Dictionary**



An electronic version of the *Occupational Groupings - A Job Dictionary* was made

available to facilitate immediate access to updates for subscribers.

- **The MRS Thank You Leaflet**

The specification and production of the Thank You Leaflet were reviewed as a result of the consultation exercise during 2002-03. The proposed changes will be discussed with the membership in 2004-05.

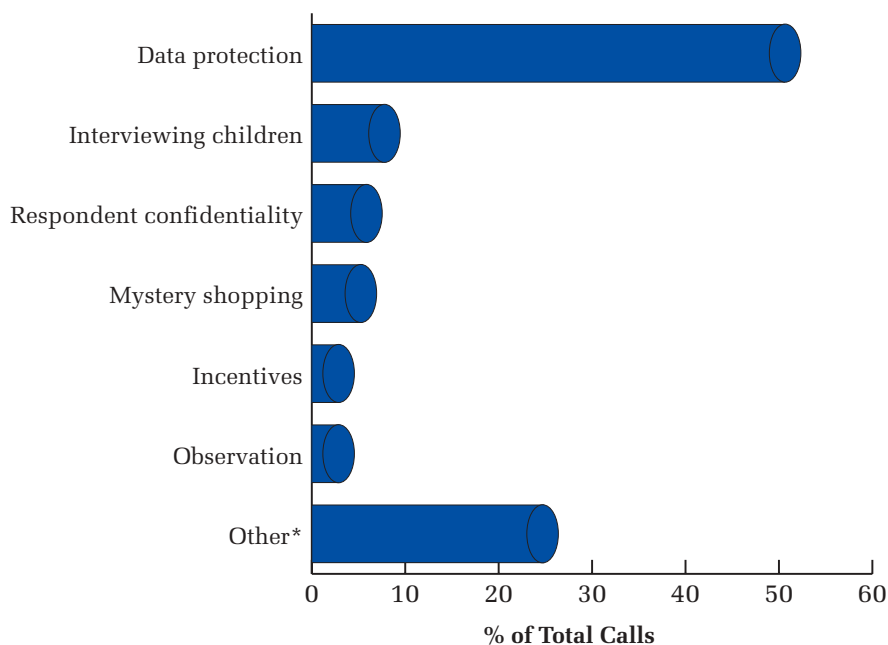
- **Accredited Interviewer Training Scheme (AITS)**

The AITS continued to gain stature as the accepted standard for interviewer training. The training materials were expanded and revised. New organisations signed up to the Scheme including the first non-market research organisation, Southampton Business School.

- **Operating Standards**

MRS continued to contribute to the development of the process standards through its membership of the Board of the Market Research Quality Standards Association (MRQSA) and the associated committee at the British Standards Institution.

Codeline Queries 2003-04



* Other includes all enquiry types equal to or less than 3%

Representing market research

MRS actively campaigned during 2003-04 to increase the visibility of the Society and the profession it serves, and to promote the value of research, via its media relations and public affairs activities. Media and government regularly approach MRS as a valued and authoritative information source, thus assuring the Society's position as the 'voice of profession'.

MEDIA RELATIONS

Deploying its excellent relationships with a wide range of media, the MRS Press Office (run by Camargue) was well equipped to continue to secure high levels of quality coverage during the year. By positioning itself as the leading commentator on a range of market and social research issues, the Society's profile continued to rise. The results speak for themselves, with an increase in exposure in both national and trade media, as well as continued high levels of coverage in specialist and online titles.

Industry Authority

The Press Office is widely recognised as the leading information source for journalists writing on market and social research and connected topics. The standard of comment provided by the panel of MRS spokespeople was evident from the consistently high quality of the coverage achieved during 2003-04, promoting both the Society and the market research sector. To improve the service it provides in responding to approaches from journalists, the panel was extended during the year, and its members now embrace a broad spectrum of subjects, from conducting social surveys to the use of wireless technology, and from ethnic research to leisure and tourism. This helped ensure that the maximum number of enquiries were translated into coverage for MRS.

National Press Coverage

MRS increased its presence in the national press during 2003-04 with coverage in quality print and broadcast media. Particular highlights included:

- *The Financial Times'* coverage of MRS initiatives on the 2001 Census outputs



Marketing

indicating how businesses could benefit from the new free data.

- *The Guardian's* focus on working as a market researcher in its 'Jobs Worth' column to promote MRS qualifications and training programmes.
- *The Daily Telegraph's* announcement of Jeremy Bullmore's appointment as the new MRS President.

Heightened Trade Coverage

The trade press remained the core focus of the Society's PR campaign. It is important both for keeping members of the research profession up-to-date on the latest industry initiatives and promoting the use of market and social research to the wider marketing community. Effort was concentrated on negotiating regular coverage in leading trade titles with the result that MRS spokespeople provided comment for each of the 13 market research features run in *Marketing* and *Marketing Week* throughout the year. In many of these instances, the Press Office was involved in shaping the synopsis for the feature and MRS spokespeople led the stories.

Research is vital, yet creatives often see it as a barrier to the creative process. But change is afoot as researchers and creatives realise the value of working together, says Martin Croft

Desktop News

The range and readership of online media websites has grown exponentially in recent years: they are now amongst the most widely-received news sources and instantly accessible to an international audience. To benefit from this growth, MRS targeted online news sources and achieved a coverage on many media websites. These included:

- FT.com
 - itv.com
 - brandrepublic.com
 - worldopinion.com
- in addition to all the UK research news websites.

Access All Areas

The 'vertical' press remains an important medium for communicating with sectors beyond research and marketing. During 2003-04, the Press Office set up interviews for MRS spokespeople covering a diverse range of issues in a variety of titles in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, business and employment.

Movers and shakers

Bullmore takes helm of market research

The Daily Telegraph

Promoting RESEARCH 2004

The level of pre-event media coverage for the Annual Conference, RESEARCH 2004, exceeded that of previous years with the range of topical and thought-provoking papers at the Conference providing strong stories for the national, specialist and trade media. Altogether, the campaign secured 14 pieces of coverage directly relating to the Conference on a range of topics, including:

- pharmaceutical marketing
- the strength of online brands
- ethnic research
- creating emotional maps for brands
- the power of advertising
- political research

For the fourth consecutive year, an article was secured in *FT Creative Business*. This feature was based on a paper assessing anti-US sentiment in the UK.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Society's commitment to leading representation for market research continued apace in 2003-04 with MRS having contact with more government departments, legislators and regulators than ever before.

Data Protection

MRS continued to lead representation in this area:

- Throughout the year, it maintained contact with the **Office of the Information Commissioner**, the regulator responsible for data protection and the forthcoming freedom of information legislation. Activity was concentrated on clarifying interpretation of the legislation with the development of case law in this area.
- In June 2003, the **European Commission** issued a report from its consultation on the Data Protection Directive. Following representations made by a number of organisations including MRS, the Commission confirmed that the Directive would not be reviewed before 2005.
- Also in June 2003, MRS responded to the **Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)** consultation on the Privacy and Electronic Communications Directive. The Society stressed the difference between commercial communications (such as direct marketing) and market research, and the need to ensure that the sample universe available to research is not restricted through the expansion of the scope of the existing opt-out schemes.

Other Legislation

MRS was also engaged on a wide range of other legislative issues:

- In July 2003, the then telecomms regulator, **Oftel**, issued a statement on the misuse of electronic communications networks. This had a significant impact on telephone researchers that use power diallers in predictive mode. MRS led representations to Oftel and its replacement regulator, Ofcom, on the impact of this statement on market research. In January 2004, **Ofcom** agreed that MRS should provide guidance in this area for market research. Some draft guidance was produced following extensive consultation with users of the technology; it is due to be discussed with Ofcom for implementation by MRS in summer 2004.
- In September 2003, MRS made a written submission to the **Department of Health** in response to the consultation on the Research Governance Framework (RGF) for Health and Social Care. MRS argued against some of the proposed restrictions within the RGF stressing the role of codes, such as the *MRS Code of Conduct* and its associated disciplinary procedures, in the control of external providers for social research.
- Throughout the year, MRS continued discussions with the **Qualifications & Curriculum Authority** and the **Learning & Skills Council** in relation to matters arising from the Society's Awarding Body status. In November 2003, MRS responded to consultation by the **Disability Rights Commission** on its Code of Practice for Awarding Bodies.
- In November 2003, MRS submitted a document in response to the drafting of the RESPECT Code for the Conduct of Socio-Economic Research by the

Institute of Employment Studies (IES).

The Society stressed the need to recognise the role and content of existing codes such as the *MRS Code of Conduct* when developing guidance in this area.

- Throughout the year, MRS was represented on the **DTI** Stakeholder groups for the Directive on Unfair Commercial Practices and Directive on Services. The major policy issues for the year ahead, aside from the on-going issues with the Information Commissioner's Office, the DTI and Ofcom, will include discussions on the self-regulation of the opinion-polling sector.

Other Related Activities

During 2003-04, MRS continued to have membership and representation on the following organisations:

- The International Chamber of Commerce UK Committee on Marketing and Advertising
 - The British Standards Institution Committee responsible for the maintenance of the standard for market research (BS 7911)
 - The Advertising Association
 - Market Research Quality Standards Association
- The Census and Geodemographics Group continued its relationship with the Office for National Statistics and its associated committees involved in the Census. In addition, it is the MRS representative on the National Statistics Harmonisation Group.
- MRS is now a member of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, an association which provides a voice in the development of government policies and regulations relating to professional qualifications.



Marketing Week

Membership, communications & networking

Progress was made during the year in the areas of broadening access to membership, further integration of membership communications and consolidating networking relationships.

MEMBERSHIP

Effort during 2003-04 on increasing membership numbers resulted in a third successive year of growth. Work continued on improving access to Full Membership via the Intensive Professional Development (IPD) Scheme. Materials used to support individual candidates on the Scheme were updated. The one-year corporate IPD Scheme launched in 2003 proved successful. The pilot organisation encouraged its experienced data processing and operations staff to register in addition to researchers: the first of these employees will become Full Members early in 2004-05.

A task force met to re-evaluate the membership structure as part of the Constitutional review. The aim was to make membership application procedures less complicated and to overcome an impression held by some that there are high barriers to entry. The task force's recommendations were accepted by Council and these will be proposed to the membership in 2004-05.

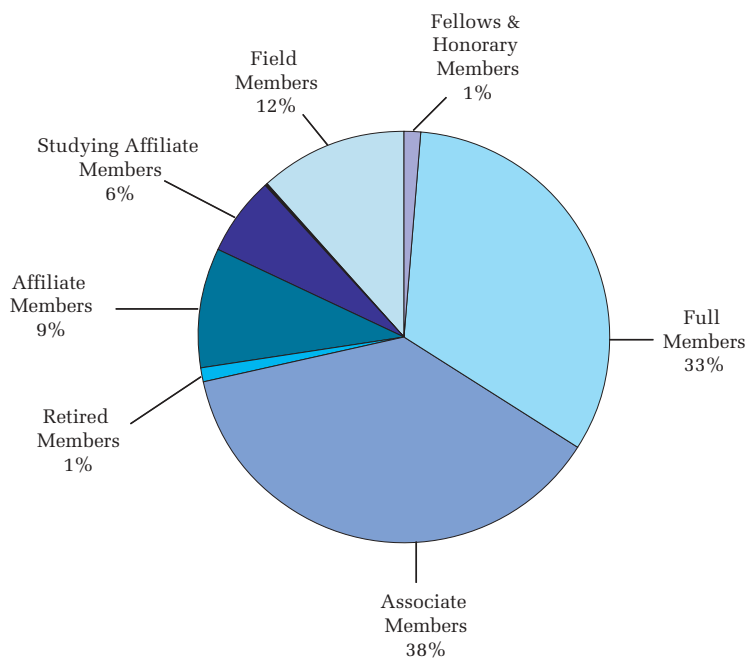
COMMUNICATING WITH MRS MEMBERS

The MRS website, *MRS News*, *Annual Review*, and the library and information service are the main channels for providing information to members. The focus during 2003-04 was on closer integration of these with the Society's other communication channels.

Further development of the [website](http://www.mrs.org.uk) (www.mrs.org.uk) was undertaken which included:

- The networking section was re-structured and expanded to enable more online communication and the development of a rich resource-base.
- The promotion of products and services, such as conferences, training, events, awards and publications, was closely linked to marketing campaigns including referrals to the website for additional information and online booking.
- The professional standards section was

MRS Membership 2003-04 (Total = 8204)



enlarged incorporating links to the Professional Standards Committee's initiative to improve communication with the membership (see p4).

- A monthly e-bulletin, *mrs e-news*, was launched in April 2003 to promote new information posted on all four of the Society's websites. Within its first year, it acquired over 800 subscribers.

These developments resulted in increased traffic: an average of 28,500 visits per month were made to the main MRS website (up almost 20% on the previous year), reaching an all time high of 35,890 in November 2003.

MRS News and the *Annual Review* continued to be produced in-house. Both are used to provide key facts with referrals to the website for supplementary information. They are now available online.

The [Library and Information Service](#) is

highly valued by members visiting the library or requesting literature searches. The introduction of 'frequently asked questions' on the website and provision of more detailed information about the Society's products and services has reduced the number of general telephone enquiries considerably.

NETWORKING

In addition to its representational activities (see p7), during the year the [Census & Geodemographics Group \(CGG\)](#) focussed on disseminating specialist advice about the Census. It worked in conjunction with the ONS on *A Guide to the 2001 Census: Essential Information for Gaining Business Advantage* due for publication by The Stationery Office in June 2004. It also organised two seminars on *The 2001 Census – How to Benefit from the New Census Data* and *Adding Value to*

the Census. Its Geodemographics Knowledge Base continued to thrive (www.geodemographics.org.uk). Visits to the site peaked at almost 2,500 in September 2003 and it had over 300 registrations for its e-mail bulletin by the end of 2003-04.

The Employee Research Group (ERG), formerly the Human Resources Interest Group, organised a series of evening meetings. The presentations from these were posted on the website together with case studies and articles promoting best practice in employee research. ERG had a continuing dialogue with the CIPD, and provided major input to the latter's employee survey.

Since its launch in September 2002, the Ethnic Research Network (ERN) has flourished. During the year, it held regular meetings at which case studies were presented and discussed. The new steering group concentrated on developing links with other networks and associations to build awareness of ethnic and cultural issues when undertaking research. It completed a set of FAQs which were posted on the website, together with the case study summaries, and started to draft best practice guidelines. ERN organised a session, *Not all Black and White*, at RESEARCH 2004, which won the Best Contribution to Conference Award.

The young members' network, R-Net: for researchers on the way up, held its official launch in September 2003. Organised by a steering group of enthusiastic young researchers and supported by MRS, R-Net aims to help young researchers by providing networking opportunities,



Members of the R-Net Steering Group

organising regular presentations and social events, sharing training materials and offering mentoring. Since its launch, it held two events, conducted a survey amongst young members and organised a debate on *Market research will still be my dream career in three years' time* at RESEARCH 2004.

The Scottish Branch continued to achieve good attendance at its regular programme of events and co-operated with the Edinburgh branch of the CIM in reciprocal publicity for meetings. It undertook a survey of local members to help plan future activities. The Northern England Network organised a successful meeting in Manchester in 2003 and is working with the R-Net steering group to run activities for young local members. The CIM and MRS organised their annual joint event in the East Midlands.

MRS continued to work more collaboratively with external organisations



Kathleen Hamilton, former Scottish Branch Chairman, with husband, Jim, receiving her MRS Fellowship

to increase the networking and development opportunities available to members. Following the network reforms, the General Insurance Market Research Association (GIMRA) became a special interest group within the Association of Users of Research Agencies (AURA) from January 2004, which fits well with GIMRA's client-side orientation. The Society also worked on various projects in partnership with:

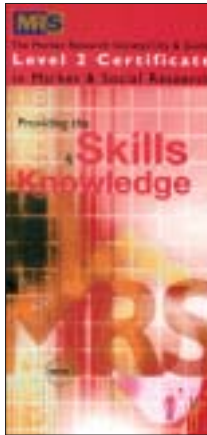
- Association of Qualitative Research (AQR)
- Association of Survey Computing (ASC)
- Business Intelligence Group (BIG)
- Independent Consultants Group (ICG) and
- Local Authorities Research & Intelligence Association (LARIA).

This resulted in reciprocal publicity, sharing information, joint events and awards, discounted fees for network events, and collaboration on guidelines and media representation. MRS also facilitated closer co-operation amongst and between the internal networks and external associations.



Professional development

Under the guidance of the Professional Development Advisory Board, work during 2003-04 concentrated on enhancing accessibility of professional development opportunities for research practitioners, often in partnership with external organisations.



Qualifications

MRS forged links with City & Guilds to provide a new **Level 2 Certificate in Market & Social Research**, designed to introduce non-researchers (eg small business owners and potential users of research) to the basics of effective research practice. This link will allow the qualification to be rolled out via the examination board's 6,500 centres, thus reaching a broad audience.

Major developments in 2003-04 with the **MRS Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research Practice** included:

- The CD-ROM based distance learning programme was taken over by BPP Professional Education, which also plans to publish study support materials for candidates, such as examination practice books, in association with MRS.
- Partial exemptions are now offered against the MRS Advanced Certificate for candidates taking the Chartered Institute of Marketing Advanced Certificate, which incorporates a substantial market research module.
- The International Institute of Business in Kiev, Ukraine, became the first centre outside the UK to be accredited to deliver the qualification.

Development continued on the new **MRS Diploma in Market & Social Research Practice**, a postgraduate level qualification for experienced researchers. It will be piloted from September 2004, with plans

to increase the number of providers by September 2005.

Professional Development Scheme (PDS)

Partner companies in the PDS have now firmly established the MRS Advanced Certificate as the first milestone in their training of new researchers, and are preparing for the introduction of the new Diploma. To date, 716 people have entered MRS membership via this route, most of whom will become Full Members.

Training

Core skills training courses continued to attract client and agency delegates in a ratio of three to one. Many major business areas and top 100 companies were represented amongst the delegates, 10% of whom are international. Most (66%) of the 38 courses offered at four skills levels are for practitioners with up to one year's experience underlining the importance of MRS training courses to researchers during

the early stages of their careers. The courses were rated highly, with the overall average satisfaction rating remaining at 85%.

In-company training experienced further growth. During 2003-04, MRS trained 200 delegates for 16 companies. Feedback was very positive with many companies returning to MRS as their preferred training provider.

In 2003-04, MRS launched the second of its **online training programmes**, *Market Research: An Introduction*. It is linked to the MRS/City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate and provides non-researchers with an insight into the profession and the principles and practices of effective research. It is anticipated that the launch of this new qualification will spark interest in the online programme from a wide range of sectors.



Professional Development Facts & Figures

	2003-04	2002-03
Training delegates	798	848
Online training delegates	34	38
PDS registrations	180	134
Qualifications candidates	647	582
Total	1,659	1,602

The Society has continued to strengthen its offering in all areas of publications, both in print and online. In addition to its three principal publications, all leaders in their fields, it has expanded the portfolio of textbooks produced in association with other publishers.



Research

Under new editorship, *Research* continued to strengthen its editorial offering. News, features and analysis were predominantly generated by the in-house team of journalists, further enhancing the magazine's reputation for contentious and independent reporting. *Research* was at the hub of hot industry debates, hosting roundtable discussions on subjects as diverse as the industry's image and what clients want from agencies. The flow of reader feedback increased greatly in response to challenging and thought-provoking editorials. Design changes resulted in a cleaner and easier-to-read magazine, and powerful front covers and increased cover lines did much to lure readers inside.

Research in Business, a quarterly guide designed to address the business needs of the research community, was launched. These practical guides, designed to fulfill the needs of both research providers and buyers, will cover areas such as IT, recruitment, marketing and winning new business.

The website (www.research-live.com) underwent a major transformation. It now offers searchable archived features including some that are exclusive to the website, feedback links to all articles, a daily editorial blog, and a library of special reports.

The magazine's circulation continued its year-on-year growth (25% since 1998-99), reaching 9,140 - 6.8% higher than 2002-03. Subscriptions also grew, rising by 7% over the previous year. Despite difficult trading conditions, both magazine and website performed well in financial terms.



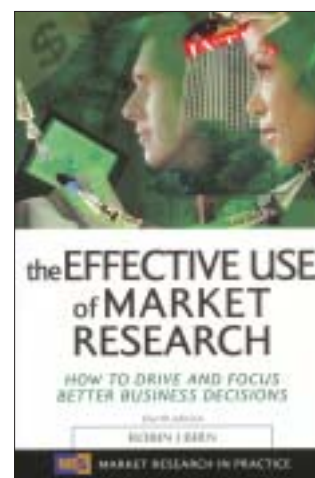
The Research Buyer's Guide (RBG)

The *RBG* is the premier directory of organisations in the UK and Ireland offering market research and related services. Despite another year of industry consolidation, listings remained buoyant for the 2004 edition and included over 40 new company entries. The fully searchable online database (www.rbg.org.uk) was redesigned and experienced a significant increase in traffic. Page requests averaged over 33,000 a month throughout 2003 compared with 23,000 in 2002, increasing

to 40,000 for the first quarter of 2004. The website has over 7,700 non-member subscribers, growing at a rate of 300 per month, in addition to over 8,160 MRS members.

International Journal of Market Research (IJMR)

During 2003-04, plans were drawn up to expand the journal further by moving to six issues per annum from 2005 and incorporating online access for subscribers. The Society is immensely grateful to Stephan Buck and James Rothman who are standing down as Honorary Editors during 2004 after serving for 37 and 30 years respectively in this role. They oversaw *IJMR's* development into a highly respected, award-winning journal.



Textbooks

One of the publishing objectives of MRS is to ensure a flow of high quality titles not only to support its qualifications and training but also to raise the profile of research. The Society joined forces with publisher Kogan Page during the year to prepare for publication of a new series of textbooks, *Market Research in Practice*, due for release in early 2004-05.

Conferences & events

The Society's Annual Conference and Awards Dinner are now firmly established as the leading industry events in the sector, providing showcases for market research. MRS continued to expand its programme of events, occasionally in collaboration with other organisations, to ensure professional development and networking opportunities for more experienced researchers.



RESEARCH 2004

Building on the excitement and innovation of *The Thought Leadership Revolution* in 2003, RESEARCH 2004 broke further new ground by bringing the Annual Conference to London for the first time. Its theme was *Welcome to the Dream Economy* and the move to a new venue proved popular with many. It also succeeded in attracting more delegates to the two-day event, particularly younger researchers. The high quality service and flexible space offered by the Barbican enabled MRS to take the Conference to the next level in terms of professionalism and value for delegates. The audience enjoyed keynote speeches from Kjell Nordström, Paul Feldwick and Michelle Mone, and the challenging and inspiring programme attracted participants from all marketing disciplines.

Sponsors and media partners joined in the conference 'hub' to create an excellent networking environment for delegates. Opening drinks at the Barbican Conservatory and a party at the Pacific Oriental created the framework for the social dimension of the Conference.

RESEARCH 2005, which will also be held at the Barbican, will be the last in the trilogy. The Conference's theme will be *Reconstructions*.

One-day Conferences

MRS ran six spin-off events in the *Thought Leadership* series to follow on from RESEARCH 2003. This programme continued after RESEARCH 2004. The forthcoming events in 2004-05 include mystery shopping, public services reform, brand dreams and cynicism (supported by the Account Planning Group) and The Qual Remix (a development of the paper that won the 2004 Best New Thinking Award). In addition, MRS will run a one-day conference in Edinburgh in the autumn incorporating some of the best speakers from RESEARCH 2004. Other events in the conference diary included *Delivering Good Practice Research in Local Government* supported by LARIA.



RESEARCH 2004 Keynote Speakers: Paul Feldwick, Michelle Mone and Kjell Nordström

Field Conference 2003

The *Field Conference* programme alerted delegates to the issues surrounding the recruitment and retention of interviewers. Speakers shared their experiences in managing a remote workforce. Then, during workshops, delegates identified the key issues, shared best practice, put forward solutions and took steps to prepare an implementation plan which clarified both personal and organisational responsibilities. A representative from the Criminal Records Bureau also informed delegates about the need for adequate checks on those involved in working with children. The Conference received its first international delegates with researchers attending from Nigeria and Holland. MRS also ran its first *Field Seminar* in March 2004 to provide an update on case law relating to some of the legal issues addressed at the *Field Conference*.

Awards Dinner

The 2003 Research Excellence & Effectiveness Awards was a night to remember with new Awards, participating organisations, venue and format. Staged at the London Mayfair Millennium Hotel, it was the largest event of its kind as the research industry gathered to celebrate the achievements of individuals and organisations. The event took place on the first evening of *Insight 2003* (formerly *The Research Show*, see opposite), run by Centaur Exhibitions in association with MRS.

The Dinner was organised by MRS, which presented its Fellowships and other Awards. *Marketing Week* was once again the principal sponsor and media partner. Len Cook, the ONS National Statistician, acted as MC for the evening, and the event closed with a late-night casino.

The BMRA supported the event and presented its own Research Business Effectiveness Awards. In addition, the ASC joined the proceedings to present the inaugural ASC/MRS Award for

Technology Effectiveness. Two MRS Honorary Fellowships, which are a rare distinction, were conferred on Michael Thomas and Richard Webber for their services to market research. Full details of the Society's Award winners and judging panels are available on the MRS website.

Insight 2003

The Society sold its *Research Exhibition*, which had run alongside the Annual Conference, to Centaur Communications in 2003. The MRS exhibition was incorporated into Centaur's *The Research Show*, which had taken place at Olympia for the previous seven years. The joint exhibition was re-launched and re-branded as *Insight 2003*.

The event was also supported by AIMRI,

AURA, BIG, BMRA and ICG so that, for the first time, many research organisations were associated with a single industry exhibition. Several innovations were introduced at the show including the MRS Academy, which the Society used to showcase its training programme and highlight the qualifications and professional development options available to researchers.

Other Events

During the year, the Society ran many other events which were organised by the networking groups (see p9). It also collaborated with events run by several other organisations including ASC, CIM, IPA and WARC.



The 2003 Research Excellence & Effectiveness Awards (Clockwise from top left): MC Len Cook; MRS Honorary Fellow Michael Thomas with Jennie Beck; Best Presented Paper Award Winner Victoria Brooks with Ken Parker; MRS Honorary Fellow Richard Webber.

MRS Calender of Events 2003-04

April 2003

CIM Market Research - Doing it Right
(in association with MRS)

June 2003

WARC Media Research Seminar (in association with MRS)

July 2003

The Census 2001 - How to Benefit from the New Free Census Data
Art is the New Science
Free Yourself from Research Field Conference 2003

September 2003

MRS AGM
Delivering Good Practice Research in Local Government
WARC Advertising Research Seminar
(in association with MRS)
ASC 4th International Conference (in association with MRS)

October 2003

Young Researchers' Forum

November 2003

The Research Excellence & Effectiveness Awards
Centaur's Insight 2003 (in association with the MRS)
IPA Measuring Media in the Future (in association with MRS)

January 2004

Art is the New Science
The New Wisdom

February 2004

Female Decision Making
Social Policy Research in the Information Age

March 2004

Adding Value to the Census
RESEARCH 2004: Welcome to the Dream Economy
The Future of Creativity
Field Seminar

Key facts & figures

Key Performance Indicators (£'000 unless otherwise stated)

Year end	31/03/04	31/03/03	31/03/02	31/03/01	31/03/00	31/03/99	31/03/98	31/03/97
Members								
This year (No)	8,204	8,151	8,116	7,894	8,258	8,353	8,269	8,200
% Change	0.65	0.43	2.81	(4.41)	(1.13)	1.01	0.84	N/A
Membership subscriptions	649	639	652	634	592	588	633	577
Subscriptions as a % of income	19.56	18.90	18.29	16.83	17.18	17.13	18.99	21.00
Average subscription value (£)	79	78	80	80	72	70	77	70
Average number of employees	36	38	38	35	35	32	26	26
Employee costs	1,314	1,321	1,256	1,154	1,120	920	704	656
Average cost per employee	36	35	33	33	32	29	27	25
Turnover	3,318	3,383	3,564	3,767	3,447	3,434	3,332	2,745
Turnover per fte employee	99	92	91	108	98	107	128	106
Surplus/(deficit) before tax	73	(19)	14	114	183	186	26	(388)
Surplus/(deficit) as a % of turnover	2.20	(0.56)	0.40	3.03	5.30	5.41	0.79	(14.14)
Net current assets (NCA)/(liabilities)	20	(71)	(136)	(275)	(112)	(214)	(183)	(222)
Net assets (NA)	839	782	802	746	308	77	802	776
Total expenditure	3,261	3,403	3,558	3,653	3,267	3,252	3,306	3,136
NCA/expenditure days	2	(8)	(14)	(27)	(13)	(24)	(20)	(26)
NA/expenditure days	94	84	82	75	34	9	89	90
Current assets	718	656	720	674	826	689	683	882
Current liabilities	(698)	(727)	(856)	(949)	(938)	(903)	(866)	(1,104)
Current ratio	1.03	0.90	0.84	0.71	0.88	0.76	0.79	0.80
Total assets	2,183	2,195	2,411	2,422	1,974	1,762	2,497	2,752

Principal Functions of MRS

No of Staff
(Full-time equivalent)

Membership & Marketing Services

6

- Subscriptions administration. • Membership development and promotion. • Applications and admissions.
- Members' enquiries. • Library and information service. • Fellowships. • Membership communications (*MRS News*, Website, Members' Register, *Annual Review*, AGM). • Networking groups. • Awards. • *International Journal of Market Research*. • MRS intellectual property. • Events. • Management of integrated database.
- Co-ordination of MRS promotional materials.

Standards & Policy

5

- Professional Standards Committee. • *MRS Code of Conduct* and related guidelines. • Codeline advisory service.
- Liaison with regulatory authorities. • Compliance with legislation and regulation. • Enforcement of discipline.
- Liaison with MRQSA and IQCS. • Field standards schemes. • Media relations. • Public affairs and representation. • Qualifications. • Vocational Development Schemes.

Conferences, Training & Seminars

5.5

- Annual Conference. • One-day conferences and seminars. • Exhibitions. • Training (including in-house and online).

Publishing & Information Services

10

- Editorial, design, production, sales, circulation and distribution of *Research*, *Research* supplements, www.research-live.com, *The Research Buyer's Guide* and www.rbg.org.uk. • Production, sales and distribution services for other MRS publications. • Sponsorship.

Finance & Administration

5

- Finance and accounting services. • Statutory compliance on financial reporting and taxation. • Business planning and project evaluation. • IT planning and support. • Office services.

Director General's Office

2

- Council. • Executive Committee. • Industry liaison. • Company Secretary. • Personnel administration.

Total

33.5

- The following summary of key financial information is extracted from the audited accounts for the year 2003-04, with comparative information from previous years.
- A copy of the statutory Report and Accounts which will be submitted to Companies House is available on request from the Director General, and will be sent automatically to those members attending the AGM.

Summary Income and Expenditure Account: Eight-Year Trend (£'000)

Income	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99	1997-98	1996-97
Membership Subscriptions	649	639	652	634	592	588	633	577
Publications & Information Services	1,539	1,517	1,682	1,741	1,582	1,477	1,448	1,035
Training & Qualifications	573	662	680	697	688	747	662	540
Conferences & Seminars	370	410	373	474	358	369	345	352
Other Services	187	155	177	221	227	253	244	241
Total	3,318	3,383	3,564	3,767	3,447	3,434	3,332	2,745

Expenditure	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99	1997-98	1996-97
Cost of activities	1,276	1,390	1,529	1,693	1,453	1,606	1,495	1,620
Employment	1,449	1,493	1,470	1,439	1,339	1,177	1,014	818
Other administration	472	468	464	454	399	393	699	604
Net financing charges & taxation	64	52	95	67	76	76	98	94
Total	3,261	3,403	3,558	3,653	3,267	3,252	3,306	3,136

	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99	1997-98	1996-97
Net surplus/(deficit)	57	(20)	6	114	180	182	26	(391)
Adjustment on property value	–	–	50	325	50	(907)	–	–
Contribution to reserves	57	(20)	56	439	230	(725)	26	(391)

Summary Balance Sheet: Eight-Year Trend (£'000)

	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99	1997-98	1996-97
Tangible assets	1,466	1,539	1,691	1,748	1,148	1,073	1,814	1,870
Net current assets/(liabilities)	20	(71)	(136)	(275)	(112)	(214)	(183)	(222)
Long term liabilities	(647)	(686)	(753)	(727)	(728)	(782)	(829)	(872)
Reserves	839	782	802	746	308	77	802	776

- The Society's leasehold property was stated until March 1998 at historical cost. Thereafter, it has been stated at market value in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS11).
- The Society still has a medium-term financial objective of strengthening its reserves, with particular emphasis on cash generated surpluses to improve liquidity. However, in the short-term, a weak economic backdrop has meant a primary focus on protecting services rather than achieving adequate surpluses. In normal economic conditions, the Society will revert to its objective of achieving surpluses of around 5% of total income to be committed to reserves.

Highlights of the year 2003-04

- Continued gradual growth in membership.
- A 2% surplus generated and liquidity improved despite a decline in overall turnover.
- Council undertook a far-reaching Constitutional review.
- Associate Members became eligible for election to Council.
- Re-write of the MRS *Code of Conduct* initiated and new guidelines supporting the *Code* introduced.
- Review of disciplinary procedure completed.
- The Professional Standards Committee implemented a communications campaign to inform members about, and increase their involvement in, its work.
- Electronic version produced of *Occupational Groupings: A Job Dictionary*.
- New organisations signed up to deliver the Accredited Interviewer Training Scheme including the first academic centre.
- High quality coverage for MRS initiatives and industry-related issues secured in a wide range of media.
- Relationships maintained and developed with key UK & EC legislators and regulators.
- Further development of the MRS website, which generated a 20% increase in traffic to achieve an average of 28,500 visits per month.
- Launch of a young members network and closer collaboration with external networking groups and associations.
- Introduction of a new MRS/City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate in Market & Social Research.
- First centre outside the UK accredited to deliver the MRS Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research Practice.
- A 16% increase in qualifications candidates and Professional Development Scheme registrants.
- Launch of second online training programme linked to the MRS/City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate.
- Preparation of a new series of textbooks to be published by Kogan Page in association with MRS.
- Sixteen organisations bought MRS in-company training services during the second year of operation.
- Annual Conference and Awards Dinner consolidated their positions as leading industry events.
- Launch of one-day conference series linked to the Annual Conference.
- MRS Annual Exhibition incorporated into Centaur's *Insight 2003*.
- Increased circulation of *Research*, *The Research Buyer's Guide* and *International Journal of Market Research*.
- Continued development of the Research-Live and *RBG* websites with respectively 500 and 300 new subscribers registering, and 50,000 and 35,000 page views requested, each month.

The Market Research Society: (Limited by Guarantee) Company Number 518685

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Bankers: Barclays Bank PLC, 50 Pall Mall, PO Box 15165, London SW1A 1QF

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