



THE WAY WE ARE

This summer's newsletter has a range of news updates on Research Network activities and events, along with a review of the AMSR's educational support schemes, by Phyllis Macfarlane.

The Network seems to be thriving at present with continued growing membership and very high attendance at our recent Spring and Summer lunchtime events. Reviews and photos of these are included, along with advance warning of our Autumn Lunch.

We have had two online NED Talks so far this year, and synopses of these are featured. John Griffiths' talk, with its musical theme, prompted two excellent music-based general interest articles by Neil McPhee and David McCallum.

Peter Mouncey also intrigues us with his story of using various research methods to trace his family heritage.

We are also very pleased to include our regular features:- Peter Bartram's amusing and nostalgic memories, Jane Bain's Nature Diary and Jane Gwilliam also shares her Bad Day At The Office experiences.

Please make contact yourselves if you have the motivation to send us interesting or amusing articles on any topic you choose via editor@research-network.org.uk



AUTUMN LUNCH: 22 OCTOBER AT UNION JACK CLUB

Our Autumn Lunch special event is on Tuesday 22nd October this year at The Union Jack Club, which is a unique venue only open to its

members and associates rather than the general public. It is a military membership club for enlisted veterans of the HM Armed Forces. We can use the venue thanks to the support of Major Peter White MC, who is a Union Jack Club member.

Accordingly, the dress code is at least 'smart casual'. It is located at Sandell Street, Waterloo, London SE1 8UJ.

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Attendees will have a three-course lunch with wine included, in the spacious Gascoigne dining room on the lower ground floor. On the day, we can also buy pre- and post-lunch drinks in the ground floor bar if we wish.

Further details will be sent out in due course by Gill Wareing, but please save the date.

The venue and its restaurant are very elegant and stylish, having been recently renovated.

THE WAY WE WERE

More recollections compiled by Peter Bartram

Having exhausted old Newsletter and Research Magazine sources in compiling previous columns, I trust it will not be seen as self-indulgent if I now offer some of my own recollections, hoping to show that the life in research can be very varied and interesting. Among these are some greater and lesser encounters with the famous:

- Back in 1968 when working in The Sunday Times research unit, I think our market research helped to save the fledgling career of **Jilly Cooper** at a time when it was under threat. **Harry Evans**, the esteemed editor, was under severe pressure from colleagues to get rid of this eccentric and talkative lady so they could concentrate on their more serious journalism. Hoping to find evidence to justify letting her go, he asked to see the results of the survey among readers which I had been organising every week.

However, this showed her column was one of the most widely read in the whole paper. Armed with this evidence, Harry could not justify sacking her, and this paved the way for her lifetime role of adding to the gaiety of the nation.

- When I married my late wife Mary (whom some readers may remember from NOP, RSGB and British Airways) in Hampstead in 1971, the priest told us that the couple getting married before us had offered to leave their flowers behind so they could decorate the church for our wedding too. Only later, I learned this was **Judi Dench** getting married to **Michael Williams**.

Much later, when we reached our 25th wedding anniversary, I cheekily ventured to send a note to them which said "Sorry to be 25 years late in saying this, but 'thank you for the flowers'. We are still going strong and we hope you are happy too." Early the next morning, Mary answered a knock on the front door to receive a magnificently large bouquet of flowers with a kind note from Judi and Michael.

Several years later, when both Mary and Michael had died, Judi suggested we meet for a pub lunch, which we did, exchanging stories of our respective families and lives. When she asked what I did for a living, I answered "Mostly market research" to which she uncomprehendingly responded "What's that?"

Later, when I asked if I could publish a little story about our encounter, she said 'No', as she didn't want her family to be exposed in any way. All I can say is that she lived with two dogs, four cats and two rats, which were kept in her grandson Sam's bedroom. When I queried the rats, she responded by saying "They are very nice rats". I'll say no more, so I can keep my promise to her.

- Invited by famous pollster **Louis Harris** to shake hands with **Henry Kissinger**, I did so in the toilets of the Madison Hotel in Washington when attending a seminar there.
- I met with a very grumpy Labour bigwig **Richard Crossman** when planning a survey of his New Statesman readers.
- When attending the opera in Verona, I found myself sitting next to **Peter Lilley**, then a Tory Minister for Employment, and queried why he could be there when back home there were 3 million unemployed. He plaintively replied that it was his only holiday, and only for three days.
- When working in Los Angeles setting up the first audience research organisation specialising in the film industry, I worked on a nationwide survey related to a remake of the Lassie movies. Starring **James Stewart**, **Mickey Rooney** and **Debbie Boone**, the young popstar daughter of Pat Boone, its purpose was to identify whether it should be positioned in advertising as a musical, a comedy, an adventure or whatever. I met them all at a private showing of the movie and they were all disappointed to find the research showed it was a 'Dog Movie':- and on familiarity and likeability, **Lassie** was better rated than any of them.
- Back in England with a job at the European Headquarters of American Express, based in Brighton, I found that in a challenging corporate environment, the top floor corridor where the senior management had their offices was called 'Death Row' because none of them lasted very long. Accompanying my colleague **Shirley Brent** on a trip to the Amex offices in Zurich, on arrival we stood in line for a taxi at the airport, and I noticed further along the queue, the film actress **Ursula Andress**, recently famous for appearing in the first Bond film, 'Dr No'. When I pointed this out, Shirley refused to believe it was her, so I said, "To prove it, I'll get her autograph," which I did by going up the queue to her. Ursula was very happy to sign my card with a big heart shape, alongside her name and mine. But when I brought the card back to Shirley, she still didn't believe it, and said "You just told that woman what to write in order to trick me!"

SPRING LUNCH AT EV

We had a very successful return to EV Restaurant in Isabella Street, near Southwark Underground Station on 24th April.

The Anatolian Turkish menu was superb, including a range of eight Meze dishes to share at each table, followed by a choice of main courses:- Lamb Musakka, Squid Kalamar Tava, Chicken Shish and vegetarian Hellimli Ispanak (all with authentic Turkish spelling!). Apricot and Burma dessert finished the lunch and the wines and staff's discrete hospitality were as excellent as always.

The extremely good value price for members of £45 (£50 for non-members) was enabled by generous sponsorship from ALLIGATOR Digital and EDGE Advisory, for which we are very grateful.

We had a superb attendance level of around 74 Network members and guests, so the atmosphere was buzzing, especially with the inclusion of some youthful and recent members.

Photos in addition to those shown below are on the Research Network [website](#).



RESEARCH NETWORK: ACTIVITY UPDATE

Network Membership

We are successfully attracting new members this year, and the overall membership retention is higher than our 75% target, so we are in a very positive position at present, especially thanks to our champions who are trying to promote the Network to potential new joiners. Overall, the number of paying Network members has increased from 178 in 2022 to 186 in 2023 and we already have 15 confirmed new members this year as well as a range of potentials who have expressed interest in joining.

Also, we welcome Paul Russell as our latest new champion. Otherwise, attendance as guests at the lunches is a good catalyst for deciding to become a member.

We are also continuing to contact other research organisations to seek collaboration by distributing our updated introduction to the Research Network and where appropriate, distributing our promotional leaflet which includes the future event schedule.

We had a stand at the MRS Conference on 12th March this year, manned by Adam Phillips and Jane Bain in the morning, followed by Jane A'Court and Jade On in the afternoon. This gave us 27 new contacts to follow up.

Oral History Project

We are very happy that Lucy Hobbs, Chair of AQR, is now a member of the Oral History Project sub-group.

A total of 47 interviews had been completed by the end of 2023, with audio files for Mike Kirkham and Sarah Taylor being the latest to be uploaded to the AMSR archive. Paddy Costigan is now editing a further two interviews with Lawrence Bailey and Peter Hayes, to be added to the AMSR archive in pairs. So, over 50 interviews are currently in progress or being planned.

Future interview planning includes fieldworkers, recruiters, data processing and other operations staff in the industry. Additional plans to balance the respondent profiles will give fair representation of female members of the research and insight industry, covering qualitative, ethnography and semiotic skills.



SUMMER PARTY

Our summer party at Doggett's, Blackfriars Bridge, SE1 9UD was a great success on Tuesday 2nd July. Although we have been there many times before, there have been some renovations to the venue and the buffet food was varied, well prepared and very generous. All very enjoyable.

At least 68 members and guests attended, including a number of very welcome young faces, so there was a vibrant atmosphere throughout the party. And another innovation was that the microphone and sound system worked perfectly for Adam Phillips' short welcoming speech.

Despite some rain shortly before the event began, the weather improved so we could enjoy the outside roof terrace and the lovely view of the Thames after around 1.30pm.

We are genuinely grateful to the Doggett's events team and friendly bar staff for making everything go so well on the day and for responding perfectly to Jane Bain's and Jane Gwilliam's excellent organisation.

We would also like to thank PERSPECTIVE Research Services for their generous sponsorship, which allowed us to keep the cost down to only £30 for members and £35 for non-members and guests.

As usual, more photos are on the Research Network [website](#).





NED TALK SYNOPSES

Since the last Newsletter in February 2024, there have been two NED Talks and synopses of both now follow. The first one, held on 14th February, was by Graham Woodham, in which he introduced us to this second home in France. The second talk was given on 20th March by John Griffiths, on his passion for electronic music. Synopses are provided here for those who were unable to attend or would like to relive one or both of the talks.

33 Years of a Parallel French Life, by Graham Woodham

My talk was about our long-term immersion in rural French culture which we initiated after a road trip in France which we enjoyed when our first son was aged 2 years. I have never been a risk taker, but we thought that buying a cheap but ancient modest farmhouse would be a great adventure and it has certainly turned out to be hugely enjoyable and rewarding.



We chose Charente-Maritime, a rural wine and cognac making area just north of Bordeaux and south of the beautiful coastal historical city of La Rochelle. It's an easy drive from Saint-Emilion, Saintes, Cognac and the wine areas of Blaye, Bourg and Cotes de Castillon.

During the talk, I wanted to describe some of the aspects of renovating a farmhouse built in 1870, but above all, to dispel any stereotyped image of French people. We have emphatically found that they like and welcome Brits, they like modern music, have a real sense of humour and go out of their way to help and socialise with 'outsiders'.

Our adventure has been so successful that even after all this time, since we bought the house in 1990, we love going there to enjoy the beautiful countryside and have fun with our local French and ex-pat friends. Our two sons feel the same, using our house with their friends and the older sibling spending parental leave there with his two small children.

We found the house over a long weekend visit with the help of a two-person estate agent/lawyer team found in the Sunday Times classified ads section. It cost £24,000 in Francs on a French mortgage and is an L-shaped farmhouse with a pigeon loft, well and separate barn. It overlooks the Gironde estuary, the Medoc and is surrounded by wine and cognac grape vines.

Renovation was slow, as and when we could afford it, depending on salaries and bonuses from our qualitative research careers. Over the years, we have maintained the original oak beams, replaced all the floor tiles and wall plastering, and built a wooden staircase to the first floor which was originally a hayloft. And of course, we have installed three bathrooms and a kitchen, and converted an adjoining ground floor barn area into a table tennis and darts playroom with 'dormitory' beds for young people to use when they stay with friends.

We soon met our village neighbours, Guy and Monique who assured us that we were very welcome, and they are still great friends today, along with their son, Vincent, who has now taken over the cognac business. We are also very friendly with their extended family, including their niece Camille who lived with us as an au pair after university and before taking up teaching in San Francisco and now in Paris with her husband and boisterous dog.

We found a French teacher living locally in Surrey who is still a close friend and has taught us French for over 30 years and now lives most of the time in the next village to us in France, helping to look after her oldest son's children as he is now a restaurateur after building his career in London and Paris.

We are always finding new places to visit when we stay there, as well as re-visiting our favourite beaches, historical Roman towns and citadels, initially built centuries ago to repel the English. And of course, the local wines and restaurants are great, particularly those serving duck recipes or fish and seafood caught each morning.

There are superb lighthouses to climb, 'carrelet' fishing cabins all along the estuary, cliff walks (once with an outdoor progressive rock festival over a weekend) and villages selling art, handmade soap, fragrances and stylish summer clothing.

But what about the social life out there? We were amazed at how sociable and welcoming our local French neighbours were and are to this day. Being an area with small local communes, each with a separate mayor and community hall premises, organised social events, craft and antique fairs are very frequent. We were also invited to street barbecues at the local tennis club, and to dinner-dances during summer evenings.

We once arrived at our house at the start of a holiday and our friend Guy came round and said there was a dinner-dance that Saturday. It was sold-out but he was the organiser so he would get us in.

The band started off with a parody of old fashioned French piano accordion music while people were arriving, but soon afterwards, they said "We're only joking with this music, so we'll now play proper songs". Then it was brilliant pop and rock music on and off for the rest of the evening between food courses until well after midnight.



In the early days, we were also invited to an outdoor lunch in a beautiful location overlooking vines and the Gironde estuary. 'Bring your own food', they said. So we went along with sandwiches from the local supermarket, only to be greeted by tables set up with smart tablecloths and the most elaborate range of pizzas, quiches, salads, wine, gateaux and desserts which they insisted we shared. Embarrassing...

Recently, we also went on a 'sunset walk' along a designated country route with about 70 locals, starting from the Mairie. At various points along the route, tractors, trailers and vans appeared, tables were set up and we had a multiple-course meal of quiches, hot beef bourguignon, cheese, dessert and coffee. The only instructions were to bring our own plastic knives, forks, wine glasses and to enjoy the two-hour walk as the sun set.

They also have community hot air ballooning festivals and sports days. At one of these, an event was kayaking around a lake and each 'competitor' had to take their T-shirt off and wave it in the air en-route without stopping. There was also a tennis court converted into a full size 'table football' pitch where people played football between rope barriers to replicate the smaller game.

Our young friend Vincent who has taken over the family wine and cognac business, used to give tractor and trailer tours around the vines for visitors, either in French or English, as he spent a year training in Australian wine production to improve his English. We were once on his English tour and he was explaining that the weather was often changeable coming in from the estuary. He was explaining the effect of dense mist and forgot the English word for 'brouillard'. He asked my wife and me, and we said it's 'fog' in English. "It can't be", he joked, "Isn't fog what you English people call the French?"

We also went to Camille's wedding (Vincent's cousin) which was brilliant. Held in her parents' huge garden, the dress code was that women had to wear lots of flowers, and men a hat, braces and ideally shorts. We had a professional barbecue on Day 1 and went back for a homemade barbecue (just as good) on Day 2. At one point, her father gave an announcement saying, "Because we have so many guests, we must reserve the toilets in the house for women only, and all the men can use the hedges at the bottom of the garden". Who said the French have no sense of humour and don't like proper modern music?

I could go on, but I'll be disciplined and stop here...

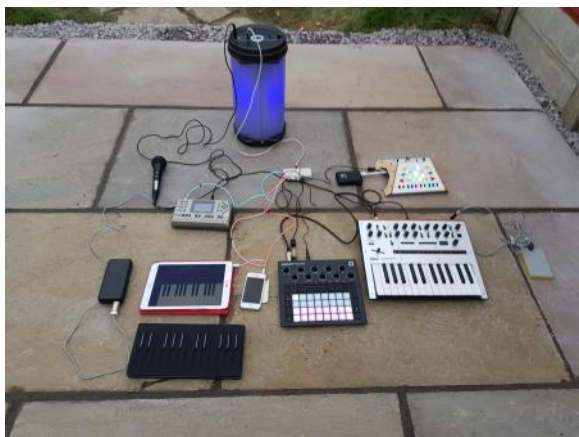
Electronic Music In and Out of the Box, by John Griffiths



The talk was an introduction, using examples I had made, to illustrate the range and power of electronic music. I have been interested in recording and aspiring to perform electronic music for many years. Even though my background as a musician is as a Paul Simon fingerpicking aficionado (that dates me), I want to suggest that electronic music is less of a sub-genre than a whole way of conceiving, presenting (and distributing) music, which says more about the humans making it and consuming it than wiring, software, bleeps and bongs. This makes it a suitable subject for researchers past and present to reflect on.

I began with an overview of the main elements of electronic music, analogue synthesis using hardwired circuits, digital synthesis and MIDI control which enables musician sounds and patterns to be stored and transferred on to computers. Then sampling which allows any sound imaginable, whether audible to the human ear or not, to be

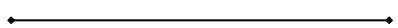
captured and manipulated. To illustrate this, I played a brief piece of music I had made from a recording during a visit to an MRI scanner, one of the most monstrous and expensive musical instruments never made! Moving on to digital audio – a medium which researchers have been using now for nearly a quarter of a century, and the DAW – the Digital Audio Workstation, which takes recording studios which filled whole rooms and reduced them to fit into any laptop. This means that sound cannot only be captured, but refined and modulated using software tools and even AI. I demonstrated this with a recording of a scratch choir I made last autumn in St Albans Abbey using a basic recorder. I used digital editing to remove coughing, chair scraping, re-tune wrong notes to correct ones and then using an AI programme to master the recording to match what a professionally produced classical recording would sound like.



No review of electronic music would be complete without mentioning the importance of smartphones now that the majority of the world's population owns one. Not only do they democratise and spread the consumption of music (when did you last buy a CD?) but every smartphone has the same functionality as the computer which absorbed all the groove boxes, effect pedals and mixing desks. Smartphones are changing the face of music. But there has been an equal and opposite reaction of musicians out of the box using small electronic kit wired together and turned into a menagerie of sounds, controlled using the musician's hands, feet and the whole body. Music requires bodies not just ears! So I shared a recording of a 5 dimensional ROLI keyboard on which a virtuoso was recreating a Jimi Hendrix guitar solo.

The challenge of electronic music is that there is an endless supply of musical instruments, numberless sounds. By contrast, making and performing a song on a guitar is easy, but hard to be original when there are open microphone nights everywhere with gentlemen of a similar vintage to myself playing the same cover versions as I would. So I have tended to set myself challenges, often for an online listening group that I belong to where everyone has a few weeks to produce several minutes of music to a brief, and that restricts the options enough to make something original, or at least to create something in a different way. So as examples, I played a cover I made of the Kinks song 'Sunny Afternoon' created entirely on the computer (I would normally play it on the guitar), but using AI to turn my vocals into collaborations with Billy Eilish (current Oscar winner of Best Song) and Frank Sinatra. Why do it? Because I can! And because it illustrates the nightmares being faced by copyright lawyers who used only to have to identify plagiarised tunes and bootlegs, but now have to protect the voices of their artists! I followed that up with 'Coles Corner' by Richard Hawes in which I played every single instrument on the Variax – an electric guitar which can change its timbre and tuning to emulate two dozen other guitars, but I also managed to play a saxophone solo, using the guitar as the performing instrument.

I finished by mentioning Echoes, a platform which allows you to place sound walks anywhere in the world. Using a free app where the sounds on your mobile are triggered when you walk into the sonic 'bubble' and which stop as soon as you walk out of it. I have made several of these, including walks curated by local historians around my local high street. Sound walks are a way of keeping the attention of your audience. Access via streaming to almost all recorded music in existence means that only the most successful artists have a hope of gaining and keeping the audience's attention. A listener who will follow your music around the park or down a local street for half an hour is a treasure to be nurtured! I concluded by making the point that the smartphone is making it possible for us to discover music all over the world, but is also allowing more musicians than ever to find a global audience for their music. The music business is always evolving and now gives unrivalled opportunities, not only to the usual suspects bankrolled by recording companies. I commend electronic music as an object of study. This is less about the age of the machine than new ways to be human!



A BAD DAY AT THE OFFICE

Jane Gwilliam

In this occasional series, members recall episodes at work that might, with hindsight, have gone better. Here, Jane Gwilliam describes one of her own 'bad days at the office'.

A Narrow Miss...

Some years ago, before the congestion charge and ULEZ, I had client, who shall remain nameless, based in central London when we were based in Wapping. I was working very late and was tired, but I had to fire off a fax to a supplier to finalise international recruitment in which I made a negative, though not especially derogatory, remark about the client: referring to her as a fussy or something of that ilk. But I fired it off to the client rather than the suppliers. Realising what I had done, I totally panicked – end of the client relationship? And I loved that particular piece of research which I thought now might never happen.



What to do? So, I dashed into the car and drove to the client's office, which was locked up, but the caretaker was in the foyer and let me in. Under no circumstances could I go to the client's office upstairs, although he did say the cleaners were there. I cried and begged and said I had two children to feed and couldn't afford to lose my job, but he was implacable. But he must have had a heart – he left me in the foyer and disappeared. So I got into the lift and went up to the client's office, where the door was wide open and I could see the cleaner along the corridor. I went in and saw the fax machine just near the reception desk and there on top of the incoming faxes, was my offending one. I grabbed it and before the cleaner could see me, I was back in the lift and down to the foyer where the caretaker reappeared and let me out.

Phew... And it turned out to be one of most enjoyable research projects I have ever done, intercepting American and British tourists alongside Italian and German colleagues intercepting their countrymen in Paris to see what they thought the city could offer and what might be missing. We also carried out discussion groups in Lille and Lyons. The findings showed that the provincial French were the most negative about Paris, incensed that the city had been 'destroyed' by building La Defense and that Parisians deliberately nipped into parking places ahead of anyone with an out of town number plate.

I didn't really have bad days at the office – I just loved what I did. But it was pretty bad when I tried to work one weekend at More London and the basement had flooded up to the gunnels, narrowly missing the computer backup by a few inches – it was subsequently moved to a safer location. It was quite a long time before I could park my car at the office. God alone knows how the clean-up was done.

There were a few other things like being held to ransom in a taxi in Moscow until I handed over all my dollars, or being constantly stopped by armed soldiers while working in Cote d'Ivoire, but those days were not strictly speaking in the office.



NATURE DIARY

Extracts from Jane Bain's Nature Diary: January–June 2024

The most striking thing for me this year is how few insects there seem to be. Flowers which are usually covered in bees attract just a few busy workers and butterflies are few and far between. Experts have been warning of declining insect numbers for some time, but this year I find the lack of pollinators rather alarming.

January: After an icy start, the month turns milder and sunny. The swans return to the reservoir and re-establish it as their territory, ferociously chasing off any other swans which have the temerity to land there.



Some of the stately black poplar trees by the river have succumbed to a fungal disease and their tall stumps make comfortable homes for a variety of wildlife. I enjoy watching a pair of jackdaws choosing which hole to use.

February: Margravine Cemetery is carpeted with crocuses which always provide an early source of pollen and nectar for insects. This year it is quite a shock to find so few bees foraging among the blooms.



Every year I find myself wondering how some trees manage to come into leaf at all. As soon as the new buds begin to appear squirrels perform aerial acrobatics to reach and nibble the tender shoots.

March: There is a hole in a tree near Chiswick Pier which I always keep a close eye on. This year a great tit is moving in. I watch it fly back and forth collecting bundles of moss from a nearby roof, then taking them back to the hole to line its cosy nest.



Visiting the Wetland Centre, I get a close-up view of a handsome reed bunting - not in a reed bed, but in a hedge outside one of the hides, where it is waiting to sneak an easy meal from one of the bird feeders.



April: Kestrels which have nested near the perimeter of the Wetland Centre use the reserve as a larder. The male watches from the tip of a dead tree until he spots his prey, then swoops down to catch and fly off with it.

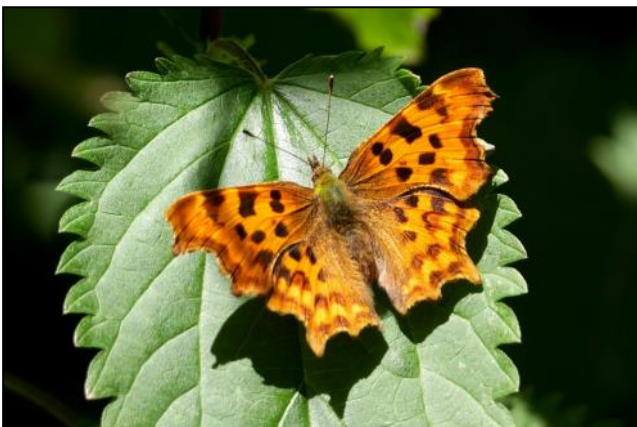


Walking past a local park I almost tread on a newly fledged baby robin, sitting in the middle of the pavement. It quickly hops onto the park railings and cheeps loudly, asking its nearby parent for food.

May: I get a tip-off that a dog walker has seen a tawny owl fly across a path in broad daylight. This may well mean that she is protecting newly emerged owlets. I go and search their usual haunts and find the mother, perched against a tree trunk, guarding her two youngsters which are clinging precariously in the next tree.



June: There are now many more baby birds about. A family of long tailed tits flits through the bushes. Their tiny fledglings are learning how to fend for themselves.



The swans at the reservoir failed to hatch any cygnets this year, but their abandoned nest has been put to good use. I often find ducks with their ducklings there and on other visits see a terrapin and even a fox, but its most frequent occupant is a young heron, which likes to groom its feathers and sunbathe on the mound of reeds.

The weather gets warmer and at last I see a few more insects on my walks. I am very pleased to come across this lovely comma butterfly, resting in a nettle patch.

AMSR SCHOOL REPORT—HOW ARE WE DOING?

Phyllis McFarlane

What have we done?

For the past couple of years our main focus has been on Modern British History A-Level in schools, mainly because for A-Level History, pupils have to write a 5000 word dissertation for which the Archive is clearly a very useful research resource. We did a very successful pilot:- we started to cooperate with the relevant Examination Boards, worked with our Schools Ambassadors to understand what Teachers really want, and then began producing curated material as 'Teaching Resources.'



What have we learned? That it's much more than History!

We found that not many schools study post-war British History (to a History Teacher, 'modern' means post-1750!). However, both Politics and Sociology are extremely relevant, as they are included at A and AS level by a high proportion of schools. There are also EPQ's (Extended Project Qualifications) – if we can trigger interesting ideas. In other words, we can help with more subjects than we thought... and perhaps at the same time, we can interest some pupils in a career in Research and Insights! In fact, we have learned that the Archive can help students more broadly: it's not just about the content for dissertations and essays, the Archive also helps students learn new skills – researching data sources – and these are so important for them going forward. Finding and evaluating different sources develops critical thinking skills, perspective and even insight! Studying recent history can help the understanding of current issues. Plus—it helps to make their subject more interesting. This encourages them look further for more evidence, so we can help create a virtuous circle.

However, we have also learned that teachers have very little time—they need easy-to-use teaching resources. We have to curate the contents for them, generate ideas and suggestions as to what we have, and how it can be used in interesting ways. Archives have historically been dusty repositories of boxes of papers – difficult to access and use. We want to be a new kind of 'disruptive' archive – we are already free, digital and easy to use – we can also be really friendly and helpful!

What can we do for AS and A-Level Politics?

A-Level History students have to study three general elections including:- the importance and relevance of opinion polls, media bias and persuasion. Well, we have data on Voting Intention all through the post-war period, and reports of recalls and assessments as to what actually happened – especially when the polls went wrong. Also, leader and party profiles, key issues ... it has been suggested that one of THE most useful things we could do for teachers is to produce a Review of the 2024 Election, as soon as possible. They like to study recent political events and text books cannot keep up. Opinium are going to help us with that. In addition, we can generate ideas for special exercises – for example, we have qualitative reports on political 'Brands': Thatcher and Kinnock in 1990—which students could replicate, with a little help. (My favourite sentence was that while Mrs Thatcher was seen as a Bat-Mobile or Tank, 'Neil Kinnock however, is more like a "Rover" or "Ford Orion" (average, not quite reliable)').

What can we do for AS and A-Level Sociology?

Crime & Deviance is an important section of the curriculum, and we have many reports on attitudes to crime and punishment over time: capital punishment, corporal punishment of children, abortion, drugs, dangerous dogs... They also need to study 'Theory and Methods' – basically how to do research. Well, if we can't help them with that, we should be really ashamed!

What can we do for EPQs? (Extended Project Qualifications)

EPQ's were introduced in 2006: 'the EPQ can be a fantastic way to improve your skills, prepare for higher education, and make yourself more appealing to top universities'. They are worth half an A-level, and are increasingly popular. The pupil chooses a topic and writes a 5000-word dissertation. We are working on a Teaching Resource of 'ideas' and examples as inspiration. For instance, any of the following would be possible using the Archive:

- The use of music in advertising
- The understanding of romance in the 1970's
- What would have happened if Jeremy Thorpe had accepted Heath's offer of coalition in 1974?

- The development of drinks for women: Babycham to Prosecco
- Politics and the Olympic Games
- The current focus is on Schools, but we are not neglecting Universities

We have identified schools as the likeliest source of high numbers of users, who might then go on to use the Archive at University. We continue to contact Universities individually. A very key current interest of Academics is 'everyday life'! Roads and Airports, Technology, Alcohol, The British Pub, Pets, for example. Wherever we have interesting 'collections' of work such as on Concorde or the Abolition of the GLC, we target a particular subset of academics.

What about Research Agencies?

Our plan for Agencies is to generate Case Studies of how markets develop over time to demonstrate how knowing their history means you can be more efficient by not repeating yourself, and go on to be genuinely innovative.

Our current ideas include the market for chocolate – we have excellent reports from the 70's and 80's, as well as more recently. Similarly, the development of convenience foods. Another is financial markets for women – women weren't allowed to take out mortgages in their own name in the early 70's – and it's still the case that women are neglected in the investment market. How can it take 50 years to develop a market? There is SO much to learn!

We would like to do more—but we need more (experienced) support!

I'm a great believer that you can't split the atom unless you're a nuclear scientist, and you can't interpret a market's history unless you know what was going on at the time in each relevant category. This applies to marketing theory and practice, and in the world generally. For example, I've been puzzling for at least 12 months over the story of Lucozade – one of the most famous brand transitions of all time. Usually, all the success is claimed by the advertising industry—but why did it take so long? (from the mid 70's when sales started falling to nearly the mid 80's when the sports drink took off). Was it the research? Was it marketing theory? Was it the Beecham management? Management wasn't great in the 70's, after all, but I'd personally put it down to management. But now, more recently, it's been pointed out to me that it was probably just too early. Those were the days when footballers still smoked and drank lots of beer, and when you trained for tennis simply by playing more tennis. Also, 'Sports Science' barely existed and joggers were regarded as extremely weird. We need people who can interpret this kind of bigger picture. If you have an urge to tackle an interesting market, do get in touch – it really is worthwhile and quite fascinating.

We also need more volunteers to help with indexing and cataloguing incoming material.

The Archive isn't 'easy to access' by chance; it's because our volunteers spend time indexing and cataloguing every item of content so that future users are able to make sense of the archive and find what they want.

Cataloguing involves recording the publication details of each document, while indexing is similar to coding, and involves classifying the content of each document in terms of the research methodology used, the topics under discussion, the business context of the research and the geographical area it covers. Cataloguers work from home and record the above information in an Excel spreadsheet. Another cataloguer checks their work and then it's all uploaded to the online archive. Volunteers use their own computer and need reliable internet access for uploading and downloading documents. Full training will be provided, plus Adobe Pro software if necessary. This would suit volunteers who are organised, like looking at detail and looking back over old research reports, many of which are fascinating. You need to be able to set aside a chunk of time to work on it rather than odd moments, as it's easy to lose track of where you were.

Contact us at admin@amsr.org.uk or email me directly if you'd like to discuss how you could be involved: phyllis.macfarlane@amsr.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you!



JUST LIKE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH, THE MUSIC INDUSTRY HAS ALWAYS BEEN SUBJECT TO TECHNOLOGY AND CHANGE

- but each relies heavily on the creative power of individuals

Neil McPhee

Qualitative Research & Music



The similarities between the life of Qualitative Researchers and Musicians are remarkably similar. Beginning with the Troubadours, Itinerant Musicians, Story Tellers, Jugglers, Poets and Minstrels of the Middle Ages and beyond, the Qualitative Researcher has typically spent his or her time travelling from place-to-place for short periods of time, engaging with their audiences and being recompensed (rather poorly, throughout all our histories!) by 'patrons' (we might term them clients).

Like these early performers, quallies depend on their techniques of human/personal engagement, interpersonal communication skills, along with the ability to read and respond to their audiences.

During my early teen years, in the 1960s, I often wanted to be a more successful and widely known performer with my guitar! But I was not blessed with sufficient talent to achieve this goal; only a few ever make it!

I was more fortunate during 40+ years of qualitative research, earning my living this way until my retirement. I often thought how similar my life might have been, had my music taken hold. Life as a quallie, spending my evenings working for 3-4 nights (or more) a week in different places, eating irregularly in late night eateries, sleeping in strange beds and intermittently addressing a range of audiences...just like the solo performers/groups/bands/orchestras did for the past 100 or so years, travelling the country in pursuit of their next gig.



Technology & Its Role In Both

One further similarity of course, is the significance of the contextual technology.

From the days of printed music scores, the growth of recording technology and 78's, 33's and 45's, through to radio, commercial radio, movie theatres, television and streaming services et al, the music world has changed hugely (which David McCallum and John Griffiths cover in this edition too), while we quallies have gone from reel-to-reel tape recorders and junior note-takers, to digital audio recording, some measure of voice transcription, and now (heaven help us) to AI, GPT etc.

But whatever technology has been present, both sectors have and will always rely on the core skills that have always underpinned both styles of human interface.

It is often written by musicologists that the earliest 'music' was oral, i.e. singing.

In other words, human beings and animals using their voices to express or create some emotional response in others. Musical instruments in the form of simple drums (hollowed out logs, earth drums with animal hide covering a hole in the ground, hollowed bones as flutes etc) developed, as did player expertise and instrument sophistication.

So too, our own industry's skills were learned and developed from various psychologies and understanding/theories of how human beings make decisions. Recording technology and other enhancements also played roles, but the essence of all these is still the skills of individual research practitioners, musicians, writers/composers, conductors and recording engineers, to understand their craft and context well enough to add value and to 'feel' the emotion inherent in human communications.

How do audiences feel now?

The additional aspect is that of the audience for both music and qualitative research:

- Music relies on its power to create and respond to emotions
- Qualitative research relies on its sensitivity to uncover and access emotions.

Can technology maintain these vital characteristics? Will audiences for both disciplines be able to find what they are looking for via technology driven material? Will creators be able to express, suitably and satisfyingly, that which they wish to do?

Anecdotally, I am told that viewing studio bookings may be increasing again after the COVID drama and the increasingly distant human interaction. I personally believe that 'good' qualitative research cannot reach the required sensitivity and depth via technology, and that using a skilled practitioner and a resurgent growth in viewing studio bookings may suggest some clients are themselves finding this to be true.

And a recent study by Scientific Reports suggests that song lyrics have become simpler and more repetitive over the last five decades and that people are using music more as background to other activities, rather than as a specific focus of attention.

Does this suggest that audiences, both research and musical, are beginning to find that less human involvement means less impact and depth?

It may do, though it is early days to tell. It also begs the question if 'horses for courses' may be an issue for technology in the future. I believe that technology will (if not already) be found to be an important addition to human creativity rather than its replacement.



Art of Creation & Performance

Nor will technology be able to provide the practitioner with the same satisfaction as a live execution and performance of their craft, assuming that performance is seen as a positive aspect of it.

Both disciplines include many practitioners who do not enjoy the 'limelight' of performance. Many musicians, actors and other performers have left the stage to focus on behind-the-scenes creation, writing and directing.

I have met many qualitative researchers who display real anxiety before qualitative interviews or presentations. Others relish the live stage. Some enjoy the intellectual challenge of analysis; others want the buzz and novelty/excitement of travel, with the constant meeting of new people and places.

Technology too may offer different people different support in their specific endeavours, and it may be that developing technology may allow some greater specialisation here.

In musical terms, those less interested in the playing side may find new tech allows them to focus on writing and recording; others may be able to leave this side to technology while focusing on their performing skills.

Researchers may still find suitable avenues for their interpersonal and communication skills (as with the Troubadours of old) while leaving some of the analysis and chart making to technology.

Conclusion

With both qualitative research and music disciplines, the secret is an understanding of what technology can do, and melding it successfully with those aspects which are inherently and primarily human skills and applications.

But above all, in both qualitative research and music, probably the most important aspect is the urge to create, communicate and to engage with other human beings. This urge will always be present in some people and no amount of labour-saving technology will replace this drive, or the depth and resonance which it allows. Indeed, this brief paper could, indeed should, have focused just on this sole aspect.

In their articles for this edition of the Newsletter, David McCallum and John Griffiths outline major technological developments in the music industry, but perhaps I can encourage you to become increasingly aware of how technology impacts/limits both the musical world and the research world, both of which have occupied my life for so long.



NOWADAYS, ANYONE CAN WRITE A HIT SONG

Has the Advent of Technology Removed the Need for the Formally Trained Musical Artist?

David McCallum

It is said that developments in technology changed the creation, recording and distribution of music, so the role of formally trained musicians in songwriting has severely diminished. That means musical training is useful but not central to being a songwriter/composer, and technology has opened opportunities for the trained and untrained alike.

Maybe it is 'demand' that defines successful music. Often, the more sophisticated forms requiring high levels of musical ability, have been elitist in some form, thus marginal rather than mainstream.

Recent 'technologies' include:

- Streaming and 'sharing' of content with Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube etc.
- Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) e.g. Logic X, Pro Tools, plus virtual musicians like Band-In-A-Box
- ...and latterly, artificial intelligence (AI) for creating songs.

In the 1500s and 1600s, 'good' music was for the nobility. Composers needed a wealthy sponsor's patronage: their compositions were often dictated by that sponsor's tastes. This continued with Vivaldi, Bach, Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven. The common people's 'folk' music had a simpler format (and often remained unwritten). As society became wealthier and attending performances increased, trained composers came to the fore. The great composers of the 1700's and 1800's were significant musicians, conducting or leading their orchestras.

When new forms emerged in the late 19th/ early 20th centuries, e.g. jazz and blues, there developed a dichotomy. Some musicians were formally trained, others not so. With few exceptions like Wes Montgomery or Chet Baker, if you couldn't read music, you couldn't play jazz.

After WW1, performers and composers were divided. The latter provided material for performers, who were singers and interpreters of music. Writers/teams like George & Ira Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Harold Arlen wrote for the likes of Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor and Bing Crosby. (An early use of mechanical technology was by Irving Berlin, who could only play on the black keys (i.e. in F#). His piano was rigged to shift/transpose the strings so he could play in other keys.)



With the advent of the singer/songwriter from the 60's, the musician/composer and performer became as one, whether solo, duo or in a group.

Musical training again divided, those with (Carol King, Elton John, Billy Joel) and those without (the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, David Bowie,) where they both wrote and performed. There was no prerequisite for musical training to deliver quality. Even Sir Paul McCartney admitted that George Martin had to explain that upping the tempo meant playing faster.

However, to create and distribute, a record company was needed. Recording anything acceptable for public consumption needed access to appropriate studio facilities and professionals. Songs requiring musical backing would need session musicians.

Napster's file sharing shocked the major record labels. Once Napster was curtailed, the major record companies hastily did a deal with Apple which they later regretted. Apple sells the record companies' product by download for a massive 30% commission.

In parallel with this trend in distribution, software appeared, allowing professional or aspiring musicians to create music wherever, avoiding costly studio time and session musicians. It gave access to those with no instrument skills and minimal knowledge of music. Now anyone can develop a harmony or chord sequence using a digital (MIDI) keyboard. By accessing thousands of instruments, an entire musical piece can be created without any playing from the composer at all.

With software like Band-In-A-Box, musicians with no instrumental ability had access to multiple genres (Jazz, Blues, Folk, Rock, etc.) for their tracks, needing just a basic understanding of musical theory, harmonic structure and tempo.

Record companies took equity in streaming services such as Spotify and Pandora to help restore the market power lost to Apple. Sony and Universal both have stakes in Spotify which enables them to enter preferential



arrangements. Most music is available to download (i.e. for ownership) or stream (for rent), dictating the artist's fee and the income for all the other components of the industry.



But we still ask... "Would the wealth of music released by technological advance be any good and who would buy it anyway?" We return to the question of whether 'successful' or 'popular' music is generated by artistic ability or by being readily available? Or both? Has technology:

- made it easier for the musician to first produce their music and then, with the advent of streaming etc. get it distributed to the potential audience...**OR**
- made it easier for corporations to control the distribution channels and via technology, produce 'cookie-cutter' music for the masses to consume?

Do the public get what the public want, or do they want what they get!?! (Paul Weller 1979).

Perhaps technology has consolidated power and 'dumbed down music'—so popular songs all sound like what we expect to hear. Max Martin (the most famous writer you've never heard of) and Dr Luke have produced numerous hits by major artists in the past decade. They include:- Katy Perry, Britney Spears, Taylor Swift, Miley Cyrus, Maroon 5, NSYNC, Justin Timberlake, Nick Minaj, Celine Dion, Bon Jovi, Justin Bieber and Pink. Max Martin, with his Melodic Map, even has a formula for chords, intro length, the role of lyrics and the balance of syllables.

In conclusion? Since the 19th century, there have been many instances where great music was created by those with no formal training, but whose innate feel for music has always been able to create melodies. Being a formally trained musician may be an advantage, but this is no longer a prerequisite.

New methods of music consumption has impacted the industry. Caught out by Apple and iTunes, record companies are recovering their investments in streaming and exerting control on the public by:

- influencing what sort of music gets streamed
- controlling some of the 'homogenisation' of music.

Maybe nothing has changed in the creation, patronage and distribution of music – just the technological 'ecosystem'. Tensions between creative artists and business imperatives remain unaffected. As the music ecosystem adapts, more people, artists and musicians, get a chance to participate – hence technology has pushed the democratisation of music further, ...no different from other societal and scientific changes since the Renaissance.



'A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES': A RESEARCHER'S PERSPECTIVE

Peter Mouncey

"It's the past that tells us who we are. Without it we lose our identity"

Stephen Hawking (quoted in 'The Salt Path', Raynor Winn)

Having recently explored the history of my 'two families'—my paternal and maternal families—I read with interest the article by Guy Consterdine in the recent February 2024 issue of the Newsletter describing the fascinating findings from researching his and his wife's family histories. Guy's article made me consider taking a different tack and provide a researcher's perspective by summarising my experience of the sources I used, some tips, and the lessons learned.

I lost my parents separately when I was quite young, and being brought up by my father's family, knowledge of my maternal family was slim. Being an only child and over 20 years younger than my paternal cousins, there are few living relatives to provide information. So, the **first lesson** I learnt was that I'd left this nearly too late to benefit from the knowledge held by earlier generations.



My aim was to try and bring my ancestors alive through facts and stories, which became a fifteen-thousand-word epic. The start was spurred by my wife giving me a six-month subscription to Ancestry.com for my birthday, which I used over the winter of 2022/23. My expectation was that the internet would provide some answers, but that field trips would also be necessary. However, the **second lesson** I learnt was the huge wealth of information now available through the keyboard! I made only one field trip, largely unhelpful. Think back 15-20 years ago and the fieldwork that would have been necessary to gather information.

Ancestry.com

Ancestry is a great tool for facts but incomplete, as registering births, christenings/baptisms, marriages and deaths was not necessarily a legal requirement before the mid-Victorian period. Similarly, electoral roll records are incomplete. Census records are there, but to protect the identity of the living, the 1911 census is the most recent currently available. Personal level data from the 1921 census, recently released, will become available in due course. However, a register of the population was taken on the eve of WW2 and that is available. Mouncey is a fairly unusual surname, generically traceable back to the Norman conquest, the 'c' being far rarer than 's', but records multiply over the years and it becomes increasingly difficult to accurately track the threads that connect you to the past. Care is necessary as Ancestry contains transcription errors, not surprising as handwritten originals can be very difficult to decipher. So, my **third lesson** is to try and triangulate uncertain facts through multiple entries or other sources, and find tiebreakers to help confirm you are on the right track. For example, the practice of perpetuating surnames as forenames. All my female paternal cousins were saddled with Mouncey as their second forename, and I found other examples that became vital tiebreakers in tracing branches of my family. I found details from shipping registers confirming my father's time working in Nigeria in the 1930s, and my mother's registration as a nurse. Copies of original records are available at extra cost. Choose carefully as some I requested were unhelpful. Only one relative, of minor interest, emigrated, so I decided not to incur the additional costs of tracing overseas material. Ancestry also includes court records for tracing any historical contact with the justice system.

Printed Word Databases

After Ancestry, the source I used most was the wonderful **British Newspaper Archive**. As I discovered on my field trip, searching Victorian era newspaper archives with a micro-fiche reader is extremely tedious. The BNA contains a huge, very accessible database of titles. Subscription rates are good value for money. Search fields are varied. If any ancestor might be newsworthy, try this as the source. The copious advertisements are also extremely valuable, plus details of marriages and obituaries and other public notices. Think creatively about the combinations of search criteria to use—I suggest testing different permutations. For example, having found a divorce petition on Ancestry lodged by the wife of a younger brother of my great grandfather only a few months after their marriage in 1866, divorce being a rare event in that era, searches on BNA revealed the shocking detail behind the petition in nationwide coverage of an associated trial of the husband.

The BNA also proved pivotal in unearthing coverage of two other major events reported nationally that touched my Victorian ancestors. Firstly, the major Luddite-like riots in the Manchester area in 1842 that destroyed the family sawmill business in Salford, just after considerable investment in new steam driven technology. This particular incident featured in reports of the riots across the country. A further serious arson attack occurred in 1867. My forebears were also fined for pollution – not for the noxious fumes produced by the sawmills, but because their factory chimneys were not tall enough! No concern about climate change in that era, but press reports suggested that this pollution, as well as the threat of new technologies, played a role in both attacks. The second event was a scandal involving contaminated beer in northwest England in 1900 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1900_English_beer_poisoning). More on this later.

The BNA provides the stories that breathe life into the facts. There is now also **Newspapers.com** available through Ancestry at extra cost, but with newspapers dying out, what trusted sources will there be for future genealogists to explore? Also online is the **(London) Gazette** archive, especially for commercial and military related information. Leicester University has an archive of **trade directories**, used to trace the history of my family run businesses over decades in the Victorian period. So, my **fourth lesson** is to fully utilise print archives, but don't expect to find photographs or other illustrations from the Victorian period.

Other Key Sources

Accessing records at the **National Archives** in Kew may require a personal visit, especially to access detailed military records. However, due to age, few of my direct ancestors took part in either of the world wars.

University archivists can be helpful. Edinburgh provided me with information about my paternal grandfather's time there in the early 1880s and his later career, including references to BMJ papers he co-authored. However, for another university, a visit would have been necessary, and knowledge I didn't already have was required to access records. Some religious archives are now partly digitised; in my search, the Methodists.

Finally, although the Scottish government has placed a huge amount of historic data online in one website, **ScotlandsPeople**, even this source failed to provide any vital information about the early life of my paternal grandmother or her family, in SW Scotland. Her early life remains a mystery, until suddenly popping up on the marriage certificate to my grandfather. She died when I was still a child.

Anecdotes As Evidence

My **fifth lesson** is to take anecdotes seriously. There were seven anecdotes associated with my family history, which I treated as hypotheses and searched for evidence to prove or disprove their authenticity. In four cases, concrete evidence existed to support the anecdote. One, which supposedly led to the family motto becoming 'Procrastination is the thief of the Mouncey family' could not be proved, the evidence pointing to a more mundane insolvency rather than a fire and no insurance cover. I speculate that conflating the events in 1842 and 1867 created a better story after the sawmill business folded in the mid 1870s! A further anecdote led to discovering that the evidence my grandfather contributed in a BMJ paper on the contaminated beer scandal contained a very personal connection to his family. I also confirmed the link my paternal grandfather claimed to Patterdale in the Lake District, its name perpetuated today in a preschool sited in the house built as his family home and medical practice, and in the name of current medical centres in the area. Finally, I confirmed through the BNA a story involving my near drowning as a young child, coincidentally in the same coastal town where I discovered my great, great grandparents are buried—retiring to the seaside is not a new convention!



A Work In Progress

Maternally, I got back to the 1660s; paternally to the 1750s. My **final lesson** is that a little knowledge is vitally important to even making a start, whether it be factual or anecdotal. For example, I knew a maternal connection with a Devon town through being a beneficiary of a will in the 1960s. This led to uncovering a story about my maternal grandfather's family published in 2018 in the local paper. Rightmove/Google Streetview provided photos of the previously unknown house, from the sale of which I had benefited. Otherwise, wills proved elusive, so I was unable to either follow the money (!) or trace others relevant to my back-story.

Unresolved are the 'whys' and 'hows' that underpin relationships. How did my father living in Lancashire meet my mother resident in Essex; how did a girl from SW Scotland meet an aspiring young medical student living in Salford?

I even found online a photo of my great, great paternal grandparents' grave in a Lancashire resort churchyard; a lucky find, as not many graves are recorded in this way at present. However, the Sunday Times reported last year that two entrepreneurs have embarked on creating a national database of graveyards (National Burial Grounds Survey).

Genealogy provides insight into social history. The riots, contaminated beer scandal and the divorce are three examples, and discovering why two brothers of my maternal grandfather died young of 'Baker's Lung'. My search illustrates the trend shown in the 19th century census of the mass migration from rural Britain to the rapidly growing cities to seek a better life, applying to both of my families – paternally from the Lake District to Salford and maternally from Devon to London. Paternally, this move did initially lead from 'rags to riches', but success was sadly short lived, with the Chinese proverb of 'rags to rags in three generations' being compressed into two. Finally, you look for possible affinities with your ancestors. I see parallels in my paternal grandfather's life and personality traits that possibly mirror some of mine, especially a belief in research and

evidence-based thinking, plus a community spirit, professionally (e.g. the BMJ papers) and locally (see the accompanying photo of the parish church windows dedicated to his memory), and also confirmed in press coverage of his career, but he died 17 years before I was born.

Peter Mouncey worked at the AA for nearly thirty years, followed by nineteen years as an independent consultant, a visiting Fellow at Cranfield University and Director of Research at the Institute of Direct Marketing. A past Chair of AURA, MRS and RDF, Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Market Research from 2004-2019, and he remains a long-term member of the MRS Market Research Standards Board. A Fellow of the MRS and IDM, he was awarded the MRS Gold Medal in 2019.



STEERING GROUP

The Research Network is directed by a Steering Group consisting at present of Adam Phillips (Chairman), Jane A'Court (Membership), Jane Bain (Website Editor and Events Co-organiser), Jane Gwilliam (Events Co-organiser), Linda Henshall (External Liaison), Nick Tanner (Website News Editor), Gill Wareing (Secretary-Treasurer), Frank Winter (Oral History and Data Protection) and Graham Woodham (*Newsletter* editor). Their names, addresses, phone and email details are in the Research Network Membership Directory. Please feel free to contact any member of the Steering Group on matters relevant to the areas they cover.