



Friends of the ANU Centre for Economic History,

In this issue, we have reports on a few recent conferences as well as announcements for events later in the year, including the 2nd Australasian Cliometrics Workshop and the 14th ANU Archives Annual Lecture, delivered by David Merrett (Melbourne). The Centre also had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Edward Kosack (University of Colorado/Xavier University) and Dr. Kazuki Onji (Osaka University) for a few weeks recently, who are collaborating with a few of our Centre faculty. As always, thanks for your support of the Centre and economic history.

John Tang, CEH Director

### Featured Economic Historian: Edward Kosack



During the first week of June, Edward Kosack visited the ANU to present some of his research on economic history and migration. Ed recently graduated from the University of Colorado after completing a Ph.D. under the supervision of Ann Carlos and will be starting a new job at Xavier University in the fall. His research is on the overall impacts of the *Bracero* program – the largest temporary guest worker program in United States history. In his research, he shifts the focus from the host to sending country, and finds empirical evidence of positive impacts on development such as human capital and business acquisition. -ZW

### Final Call for Papers: 2nd AusClio Adelaide, 9 Nov 2015

The University of South Australia (UniSA) Business School, in conjunction with the University of Adelaide and the ANU Centre for Economic History, will be hosting the 2nd annual Australasian Cliometrics Workshop in Adelaide on Monday, 9 November 2015.

The format will be single session, with one hour allotted to each paper and most of the time devoted to discussion. All attendees are expected to have read the papers in advance. Professor John Turner (Queen's University Belfast) will give a keynote speech.

We are inviting submissions of full papers or long abstracts, with the deadline on 11 July 2015. There is no registration fee to attend, and some travel funding is available for presenters, with preference given to junior scholars. For more information or to submit, please email:

[AusClio@hotmail.com](mailto:AusClio@hotmail.com)



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## ***Notes from the field: Conference on Migration and Development***

In the field of development economics, migration has gained interest by academics as a policy tool to alleviate poverty. The positive effects are clear as individuals can multiply their income many times over just by switching locations, and the negative effects, such as brain drain and the impact on native wages, are (arguably) relatively small.

The premier venue for research in this area is the Annual Conference on Migration and Development, which was held at the World Bank in Washington, D.C. this year, from June 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>. While the conference was largely centered on current-day migration issues, this year's conference had a particular focus on the lessons learned from history. In fact, not only was there a dedicated session for economic history, but also Ran Abramitzky (Stanford University) presented his research on historical migration to the United States in a keynote address for the entire conference.



*A family of seven sons and one daughter at Ellis Island*

The title of Abramitzky's address was "Cultural Assimilation in United States during the Age of Mass Migration" which nicely summarized his previous research and also presented some new findings. Abramitzky's line of research, joint with Leah Boustan of UCLA and Katherine Eriksson of UC-Davis, tackles the big questions of migration (e.g., what was the return to migration? how did migrants differ from non-migrants?) using large-scale datasets collected from original census manuscripts. One particularly impressive part of the work is that Abramitzky and his co-authors are able to link migrants across different censuses in the United State to understand how migrants upgrade their occupations

## **Centre for Economic History Discussion Paper Series**

The CEH website hosts a discussion paper series on a variety of topics in economic history. Recent additions include the following (CEH affiliate in **bold**):

- 2015-06 "Dense Enough to be Brilliant: Patents, Urbanization, and Transportation in Nineteenth Century America" by Elisabeth Perlman
- 2015-07 "A World Record in the Improvement in Biological Standards of Living in Korea: Evidence from Age at Menarche" by Kitae Sohn
- 2015-08 "Growing Incomes, Growing People in Nineteenth Century Tasmania" by **Kris Inwood**, Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, and **Deb Oxley**
- 2015-09 "Stature and Sibship: Historical Evidence" by **Timothy Hatton**
- 2015-10 "A Nation without a Corporate Income Tax: Evidence from Nineteenth Century Japan" by Kazuki Onji and **John Tang**
- 2015-11 "East Asian Industrial Pioneers: Japan, Korea, and Taiwan" by Dwight Perkins and **John Tang**

Centre affiliates and visitors are encouraged to submit working papers to the series. All papers are available at: <https://www.rse.anu.edu.au/research/research/ceh-working-papers/>

## Conference on Migration and Development (cont.)

The majority of his talk centered on new research on the cultural assimilation of migrants in the United States from 1850 to 1940. Admittedly, measuring cultural assimilation is not an easy task as one could use many indicators of assimilation such as learning to speak English, marrying across ethnicities, or moving out of ethnic enclaves. However, Abramitzky and his co-authors measure cultural assimilation through a different metric: the naming of one's child. Abramitzky displayed this idea with a humorous anecdote from his own family: "Ran Abramitzky" is decidedly foreign name in the United States, as is the name of his wife and his first two children. However, the trend changed with the name of his third child – Tom. Given this changing of names, Abramitzky declared that he has finally culturally assimilated into the United States.

After creating a metric of the "foreign-ness" of one's name, Abramitzky looks at how these naming conventions trend over time. Interestingly, he shows that some countries had low rates of cultural assimilation (e.g., Italy) where they continually used foreign-sounding names, while others (e.g., Germany) adapted relatively quickly to United States naming conventions. He also showed evidence that children of the same household with more foreign-sounding names have a penalty in the labor market when they are adults, suggesting that there was discrimination against the foreign-born. After hearing this fact, one audience member who was Turkish-born but living in the United States, lamented how he "doomed" his children forever with their Turkish names. All in all, it was encouraging that economic history took a prominent role in the premier conference on migration. -ZW

## Jetlog: Third CEPR Economic History Symposium, Norges Bank Oslo



*All in the same boat--dinner was served on board Roald Amundsen's ship the Fram*

The Centre for Economic Policy Research (London) has long had an interest in economic history but only recently has a separate program been established under the leadership of Steve Broadberry (LSE) and Kevin O'Rourke (Oxford). The third symposium in its flagship series took place in Oslo close to midsummer 'where the days are longer and the nights are stronger than moonshine' (to quote America: Ventura Highway, 1972). It was hosted by the Central Bank of Norway and most of the papers focused on the long run development of banking, finance and trade.

The opening session featured Francesco Vercelli (Banca d'Italia) analysing a rich dataset on Italian banks spanning 125 years. Using a novel competition index he showed that banking became less competitive in the wake of regulation in the interwar period, a process that was reversed in the 1970s. Richard Grossman (Wesleyan) used another large dataset on banks, this time for the UK, to investigate whether or not having members of parliament or peers on the board made any difference to equity returns. They did not—a finding that led to multiple musings about why such appointments were made at all. Olivier Accominotti (LSE) provided an analysis of the greater exposure of banks in London than those in New York to Eastern Europe in the crisis of 1931. (cont)

*The CEH welcomes courtesy announcement from affiliates and interested parties for inclusion in our newsletter. Please send news to [CEH.RSE@anu.edu.au](mailto:CEH.RSE@anu.edu.au) (subject to editing).*



## Two New Research Fellowships: University of Melbourne

With generous support from the Hugh Williamson Foundation and the Joyce Thorpe Nicholson Bequest, two new research fellowships are available from the University of Melbourne in 2015.

The Hugh Williamson Foundation is supporting two fellowships for Victorian residents to carry out research using the University of Melbourne Archives collection. Each fellowship is for \$15,000, one will be awarded to a researcher in regional Victoria.

The Joyce Thorpe Nicholson bequest is supporting a research fellowship in the field of women's studies. Applicants are encouraged to use the rich resources of the University of Melbourne collections to support their research. The fellowship is valued at up to \$15,000.

More information about the fellowships, criteria, expected outcomes and closing dates is available on our [website](#). -SG



Chambers (Cambridge) rounded off a long but illuminating day with an analysis of US railroad finance, showing that railroads that were cross-listed in London obtained cheaper finance, but only if they were located in eastern states.

An evening's revelry at Oslo's remarkable maritime museum was followed the next morning by thoughts about debasement. Using a new measure of currency debasements between 1500 and 1800 Sevket Pamuk (Bogazici) found that these were associated with low fiscal capacity and lack of constraints on the executive power, especially in Eastern Europe. Pilar Nogues-Marco (Carlos III de Madrid) followed with an analysis of financial markets in Spain, finding that improvements between in roads and postal services between 1820 and 1840 led to greater integration. Stefano Ugolini (Toulouse) offered a solution to the puzzle that historically observed gold points seem to be narrower than those implied by estimated thresholds by focusing on the cross rates between European financial centres for 1844-70.

There followed a lighter interlude on height and weight. Tim Hatton (ANU/Essex) estimated that about a quarter of the increase in adult male heights in Britain from the 1880s to the 1930s could be attributed to falling family size. (cont.)

## Jetlog: CEPR Symposium (cont.)

The keynote lecture was given by John Wallis (Maryland). Following on from his path-breaking book with Douglass North and Barry Weingast, he argued that the core function of governments is to enhance and sustain social coordination through the articulation and enforcement of rules. He stressed that a key to progress was the development of 'impersonal rules' that treat everyone the same and he went on to explain how powerful elites could find it in their interest to accept such rules, which in turn provides the government with the power to coerce—the reverse of theories where coercion leads to compliance.

Mark Flandreau (Graduate Institute, Geneva) pondered the influence of evolutionary (specifically Darwinian) ideas on the theory of central banking, and particularly on Bagehot's thinking about the role of lender of last resort. Co-organiser of the symposium Øyvind Eitrheim (Norges Bank) focused on the role of events rather than ideas in shaping central bank policy, in particular the Christiania real estate crash of 1899 in Norway. Kris Mitchener (Santa Clara) used a new dataset of US banks in the 1930s to provide direct estimates of the effect of the "contagion of fear", famously noted by Friedman and Schwarz, on total bank failures. And David



## ***Whither business history? Memory, message and meaning***

### **14th Annual ANU Archives Lecture**

**Tuesday, 11 August 2015**

**5:30-6:30PM**

**Allan Barton Forum, ANU CBE Bldg 26C**

In this public lecture, Professor David Merrett intends to analyse changes in the demand for and supply of business history and dwell on the possible implications for the ANU's Noel Butlin Archive Centre. This promises to be a topical lecture, as demand for information about business is high. However, demand tends to focus on up to the minute information rather than the historical context and development of companies.

David will point out that many of Australia's biggest firms have changed the ways in which they operate in recent decades. For example, they broadened their geographic scope, have become engaged in R&D, and embraced new technologies and marketing techniques. Such accomplishments make them of prime interest to business school academics. But – arguably – such achievements need to be understood in the context of

time. David intends to explain how business academics could combine their technical skills with an interest in business history to analyse such changes in Australian companies.

David Merrett is an Associate of the ANU Centre for Economic History and an emeritus professor and professorial fellow in the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Melbourne. Following many years of teaching economic history, David retired in 2014 to spend more time doing research. He has published widely in twentieth century Australian economic and business history and is a past editor of the *Australian Economic History Review*.

The lecture is jointly sponsored by the ANU Archives, the Centre for Economic History, and the Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre. -PvdE



### ***Jetlog: CEPR Symposium (cont.)***

In his paper, Eric Schneider (Sussex) demonstrated an important fact: by contrast with all the evidence of improved health during childhood since the nineteenth century there has been almost no increase in birth weights. One possibility is that modest improvements in foetal health could have been masked by the decline in stillbirths.

Returning to financial matters, Thomas Steger (Leipzig) presented indexes of house prices for 14 countries for 1870 to 2012, calculating that real house prices trended upwards from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century largely due to the rising relative price of land. Using long run data for Italy, Paolo Piselli (Banca d'Italia) found that recessions were deeper when accompanied by credit contractions, prompting a discussion of causes and effects. Attention then turned to international trade, with Giovanni Federico (Pisa) presenting estimates of global trade from 1830 to the present. Overall exports of primary products, particularly those from South America, grew more slowly than the rest of trade. Finally, Kevin O'Rourke (Oxford) provided new estimates of commodity-level price elasticities for British imports in the early 1930s. These imply that tariff policies had larger effects than previously thought. -TH

## ***Courtesy Announcement:***

### **2016 APEBH Conference: *Wine, Wheat and Copper?* Resource booms and busts: agriculture, mining and the wider economy in historical and comparative perspective 11-13 February Adelaide, South Australia**



The 2016 Asia Pacific Economic and Business History Conference will be held at the University of Adelaide in Adelaide, South Australia, from 11-13 February 2016. Papers and proposals for sessions are invited for the 2016 APEBH conference. The organisers

welcome proposals for contributions on any topic in economic, social, business history, including proposals for complete sessions on particular themes. A particular interest is in contributions to the main conference theme on resource booms and busts.

With the end of the current mining resource boom on the horizon there are calls to develop Australia into Asia's foodbowl. However this varying importance of agriculture and mining, their booms and busts, is not only a contemporary phenomenon but has been one of the main aspects of Australia's economic and industrial development for the last two centuries. The long-term dominance of Australia's exports by these two sectors, in particular also characterizing Australia's economic interaction with the larger Pacific region, indicates their centrality for Australia's industrial development.

Researchers across a broad range of disciplines are warmly welcomed. Early career researchers are encouraged to participate. The conference organisers are also particularly interested in attracting papers that examine topics in the context of the Asia-Pacific region and papers that provide an international comparative perspective, in particular for settler-economies like Australia and New Zealand. Our theme could be approached from a number of perspectives, including those of the cliometrician, the economic historian, the economic theorist, the business historian, the applied economist, as well as the social historian. There is ample scope for new interpretations, new findings, as well as syntheses of existing work.

If you require any particular arrangements, for example refereeing of your paper, please let us know with your submission.

**All abstracts, proposals for sessions, or papers for refereeing should be emailed to [APEBH2016@outlook.com](mailto:APEBH2016@outlook.com) by 15 November 2015.**

The local organising committee consists of Florian Ploeckl, John Wilson and Raj Banerjee. For more information, please visit the conference website: <https://apebh2016.wordpress.com/call-for-papers/>

***Courtesy Announcement:*****2016 Annual Cliometric Society Conference  
May 20-21  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA**

The annual Cliometric Society Conference in 2016 will be held on the weekend of Friday 20 May through Saturday 21 May at the University of Pittsburgh and hosted by the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University, and the National Science Foundation.



The conference is designed to provide extensive discussion of new and innovative research in economic history. We consider applicants from all continents and papers addressing important topics in economic history for all countries. We particularly encourage interdisciplinary research and seek a diverse set of papers addressing local, country, regional, and global issues. Applications to present papers or to attend the conference are welcome from graduate students, junior faculty, and senior faculty in economic history as well as distinguished faculty in other fields who have research interests in economic history.

Typically, twelve papers are selected for presentation and discussion. These are sent out to all conference participants in advance. Each paper is a single session, in which authors have five minutes to make an opening statement and the rest of the hour session is devoted to discussion among all conference participants. All participants are required to have read all papers and to attend the entire conference, i.e., arrive on Thursday, May 19 and leave on Sunday, May 22. At least one author must be a member of the Cliometric Society. For membership information contact Professor Michael Haupert at [mhaupert@uwlax.edu](mailto:mhaupert@uwlax.edu). The conference pays most hotel and flight expenses for graduate students and heavily subsidizes hotel and flight expenses for faculty and researchers.

Proposals and requests to attend the conference will be accepted beginning **2 December 2015**. The deadline to submit a paper proposal or a request to attend the conference is **Friday, 22 January 2016**. Those wishing to present a paper should provide an abstract and a 3-5 page summary of the proposed paper. In choosing papers and participants, the host committee will assign priority to those who have not attended recently or who have never attended. Graduate students wishing to attend or submit a paper proposal must obtain a letter of recommendation from their dissertation advisor. Those whose papers are selected for presentation will be notified by Wednesday 17 February 2016 and are expected to provide a completed draft of the paper in the proper format for the conference volume no later than Friday 1 April 2015.

We **STRONGLY PREFER** that applicants submit their materials via the web at the following site: <http://eh.net/2016-cliometrics-conference-proposal-submission/>. Please send us an email at [clio2016@hawaii.edu](mailto:clio2016@hawaii.edu) if you cannot submit via the web and we will make available alternative submission routes. Questions? Email the conference administrators at [clio2016@hawaii.edu](mailto:clio2016@hawaii.edu).