

CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC HISTORY

RESEARCH SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

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Australian
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University

Friends of the ANU Centre for Economic History,

Welcome to this issue of the CEH newsletter. It includes a report on the 2023 APEBH conference and the programme for an upcoming CEH workshop. Also included are some other news items and features. Once again, thanks for your interest in the CEH.

Tim Hatton, CEH Director

Adam Smith Tercentenary: Public Lecture

On 23rd March 2023 William Coleman delivered an ANU Goldsmith Public Lecture entitled “Adam Smith’s Case Against the British Empire”. This is part of a global series of lectures by leading authorities organised by the University of Glasgow to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the birth of the acclaimed Scottish “founding father of economics”.

William opened his lecture by noting that Smith’s analysis of the empire in the *Wealth of Nations* was written against the background of the American revolution. Using a simple economic framework, William argued that Smith’s analysis of empire mercantilism was flawed, suggesting instead that, while it was bad for the empire as a whole, it nevertheless benefited Great Britain. Smith’s notion of the ‘natural system of liberty’ led him to overlook that there would be gainers and losers. But Smith’s more powerful critique was that the defence cost of maintaining the empire far exceeded the gains to Great Britain from imperial trade.



William Coleman, Goldsmith lecturer and former ANU economist

Smith’s criticism of the empire influenced other thinkers such as Edmund Burke and inspired an anti-imperialist intellectual tradition. Ironically, in the nineteenth century Smith’s arguments were used to support a case for imperial federation—a political union between colonies and metropole without mercantilist trade restrictions. However, the movement towards the ‘imperialism of free trade’ took place not because of these arguments but because, after the industrial revolution, protectionism was no longer in Britain’s economic interest. Nevertheless, Smith’s influence outlived the empire by influencing the structures of political authority and, above all, the culture that defined the economic outlook that many countries inherited.

A recording of William’s lecture can be found on the ANU Goldsmith Lectures website here: <https://rse.anu.edu.au/seminars-events/goldsmith-lectures> . Together with other lectures marking Adam Smith’s tercentenary it also appears on the “Smith Around the World” website here: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/explore/adamsmith300/world/smitharoundtheworldlectureseries/>

Australia before Federation Workshop: 23rd June Programme

The CEH will hold a workshop on “Australia before Federation” at the ANU on 23rd June 2023. It will bring together experts on the Australian economy in the late nineteenth century. This will be an in-person event. You are very welcome to join us for this exciting programme of presentations; please contact: tim.hatton@anu.edu.au .

PROGRAMME

8.45 – 9.00am: Welcome

9.00 - 10.30am: Session 1

Sumner La Croix (Hawai'i): "The Transition to Responsible Government and Universal White Male Suffrage in the Australian Colonies during the 1850s."

John Wilson (South Australia): "Wage Differentials and Amenities for Tasmania."

10.30 – 11am: Tea/coffee

11.00 – 12.30pm: Session 2

Frank Liu (Western Australia): "Gold Fever? Investor Experience & Share Ownership during the Australian Gold Mining Booms, 1857-1886."

Monica Keneley (Deakin): "Business Strategies Under Conditions of Uncertainty: The Progress of British Insurers in Colonial Australia."

12.30 – 1.30pm: Light lunch

Lunchtime Book Launch: *Many Possible Worlds: An Interdisciplinary History of the World Economy Since 1800*, by Cameron Gordon (ANU). Launched by Martine Mariotti (ANU).

1.30 – 3.00pm: Session 3

Simon Ville (Wollongong): "Australian Innovative Activity and Offshore Technology since 1854."

Florian Ploeckl (Adelaide): "(Statistical) Similarities and Differences between Postal Services in Australia"

3.00-3.30pm Tea/coffee

3.30 – 5.00pm: Session 4

David Gilchrist (Western Australia): "Colonial Socialism and the Western Australian Difference."

Tim Hatton (Essex/ANU): "The Political Economy of Assisted Immigration: Australia 1860-1913."

5.00pm: Close

Asia Pacific Economic and Business History 2023: Conference Report

The 2023 edition of the APEBH conference was held at the University of Technology Sydney in the quirky Dr Chau Chak Wing Building designed by celebrated architect Frank Gehry and considered a contemporary architectural icon. Organiser Claire Wright assisted, by Florian Ploeckl, put on a fine programme consisting of 34 papers presented over the two days. The theme of the conference was Gender in History and this theme was well represented in many of the papers. One theme was the origins and development of gender norms, inequality and discrimination both in Australia and overseas. The latter was represented in papers by Cheong Yean Wong (Monash) on missionaries, churches and women's rights in colonial Korea, ChunChee Kok (Monash) on ethnic segregation and politics in Malaysia and Ohmar Khine (Chulalongkorn) on gender inequality in Myanmar.

Another issue was the role of women in historical political economy with Pauline Grosjean (UNSW) identifying key critical junctures that durably changed women's economic roles and Alice Calder (UNSW) examining the emergence of the demand for suffrage in the US Civil War. Andrew Parnell (Monash) explained Bruce Smith's progressive ideas in Federation-era Australia while Alex Millmow (Federation U) explored the remarkable careers of six pioneering women in Australian economics in the interwar and early postwar years. Another important theme was economic spheres in which women's involvement has been neglected or hidden. For example, Frank Liu (UWA) unearthed a significant minority of women shareholders in nineteenth century Victoria.

The Butlin Lecture, presented by Grietje Verhof (University of Johannesburg), touched on many of the gender related issues discussed in the conference papers. Her presentation focused on the ways in which pioneering women business historians have characterised and understood the roles of women in business. They raised awareness of the presence of women in a wide range of industries and saw women as shrewd entrepreneurs thereby enriching the understanding of business development as a whole. She went on to insist that the paradigm of 'separate spheres', which has become a key organising concept in women's history, must be abandoned. Instead it must be recognised that women in business operated in spheres that were not separate from those of men. In this light she argued for a more nuanced view, highlighting the complexity of the use of women's human capital in a wide range of different levels, layers and competencies in the business world.



Butlin Lecturer Grietje Verhof

APEBH 2023: Conference Report contd.



The venue: UTS Business School

Papers on Australian topics included impacts on the aboriginal population, with Hamish Maxwell Stewart (UNE) on the pre-contact aboriginal population of Tasmania and Mark Finnane (Griffith) on Queensland frontier deaths in 1859-97, both stressing the wide range of estimates. Xavier Reader explored the links between investments in land in the Swan River Colony and former Caribbean slave holders while Sumner La Croix (Hawai'i) showed how strategic choices of land purchases in the founding settlement of Adelaide yielded spectacular returns by mid-century. Chip van Dyke (Newcastle) explained the remarkable history of 'botanical imperialism', which involved a range of largely failed attempts to establish non-native crops such as coffee, silk, indigo, and cochineal in Australia.

In keeping with the international outlook of the society, topics beyond Australia were well represented. Several papers focused on finance and business development in China including Florian Ploeckl (Adelaide) on banking networks in republican China, Xiaomin Liu (Fudan) on chambers of commerce in Manchuria 1892-1930, and Mark Hup (Peking) on the silver crisis in the Great Depression. Presentations on Australian business and finance included Jarun Li (Sydney) on the Victorian crisis of 1893 and Matthew Bailey (Macquarie) on manufacturing in NSW.

At the business meeting, Lionel Frost, the society's president, thanked the organisers and announced the E. O. G. Shann award for distinguished service to Martin Shanahan (see next page) and the Coghlan prize for best paper in the *Australian Economic History Review* to Nan Li and Baomin Dong. Editor Kris Inwood noted the change in the journal's name to the *Asia Pacific Economic History Review*. It was also agreed that the next conference would be in Hawai'i in February 2024, hosted by Sumner La Croix. –TH



Hands up! Presenters Alex Millmow, Alice Calder, Mark Huf, Jiarun Li and Xiomin Liu

Featured Economic Historian: Martin Shanahan

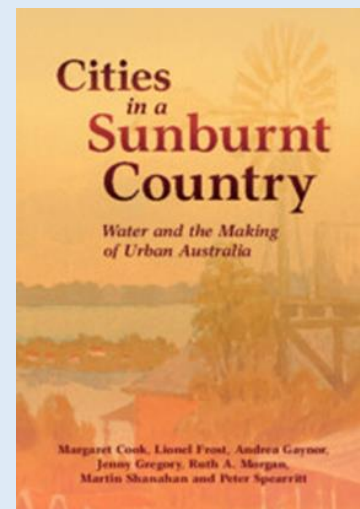


Martin Shanahan

It is a pleasure to report that Martin Shanahan, long-time supporter of the CEH and participant in many of our events, has received E. O. G. Shann award for distinguished service to economic history in Australia and New Zealand. We congratulate him warmly on this prestigious award.

Martin received his PhD from Flinders University for which he was awarded the Butlin Prize in economic history in Australia and New Zealand and was also a finalist at the International Economic History Congress in 1994. He subsequently joined the University of South Australia where he is Professor of Economic and Business History and has served as Dean of Research in the Business School.

Martin's research spans much of Australia's economic history. His early research focused trends in wealth distribution and inequality in South Australia and comparative analysis of wealth distributions in Australia Canada, the UK and US. He moved on to study the history and politics of cartels, including the Industry Preservation Act (1911) the cartel register of the 1960s and the emergence of trade practices legislation. In recent years he has focused on water use and environmental issues in Australian history. His recent book, *Cities in a Sunburnt Country*, a collaboration with six coauthors, is published by Cambridge University Press.



He has also published extensively on university-student learning of economics, students' research conceptions and threshold concepts and has developed new teaching-related software. He was awarded an Australian Learning and Teaching Council Award for Teaching Excellence in 2009.

Martin has made an immense contribution to the cause of economic history in Australia. He was president of the Economic History Society of Australia and New Zealand in 2011-17, having previously served on its executive committee. He has also represented Australia on the executive of the International Economic History Association. He co-edited the *Australian Economic History Review* for a decade 2003-13, and is on the editorial boards of three international journals.

Save the Date: Aus Clio, Friday November 3rd 2023

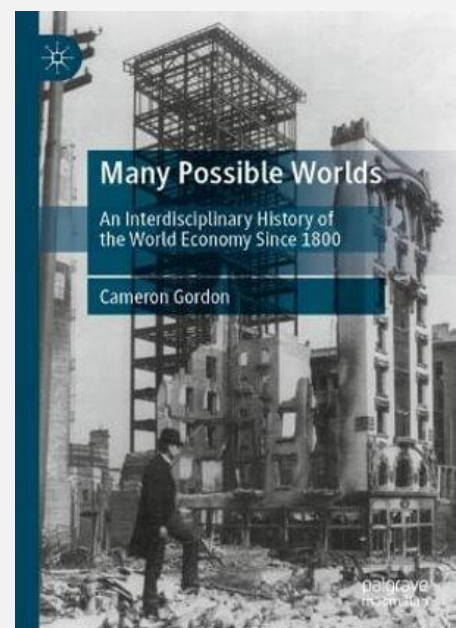
The 10th Australian Cliometrics Workshop will be held at the University of Adelaide on Friday November 3rd 2023. A call for papers will be released soon. Any questions: please contact Florian Ploeckl (florian.ploeckl@adelaide.edu.au).

New Book: Many Possible Worlds, by Cameron Gordon

Cameron Gordon's new book, *Many Possible Worlds: An Interdisciplinary History of the World Economy Since 1800*, published by Springer Verlag, will be out in May. It provides a crosscutting interdisciplinary account of how the disintegrated, global subsistence economy circa 1800 has been transformed into a global complex delivering unprecedented levels of material production and consumption.

Applying major findings from economics, history/historiography, and sociology (as well as from anthropology, psychology, politics, and environmental studies), the analysis tracks the ways in which changes in 'society' (including social structures, values, and forces) have changed 'individuals' (including conceptions of race, gender, and identity) and vice versa. These changes have simultaneously homogenised and diversified societies and individuals in distinct but sometimes contradictory ways, opening up many possible worlds from an individual and group perspective. Yet, the scale and pace of change has also led to increasing existential challenges.

The narrative consists of 30 chapters organized into 10 subsets of 3: one chapter on a relevant core idea; one chapter focused on historical narrative and titled after a representative year; and one chapter on a relevant associated crosscutting theme. Major regional and topical discussions are provided, with special attention paid to business and organisational change and developing world scholarship. Small discussion 'boxes' focusing on illustrative cases and details are presented throughout the book. The last chapter contains over-arching conclusions.



Report: ANU Archives Lecture 2023

Professor Diane Kirkby (University of Technology, Sydney and La Trobe University) delivered the 22nd annual ANU Archives Lecture on 21st March, with the title 'Here to Stay: Militancy and Longevity in Australia's Maritime Labour History'.

The Maritime Union of Australia celebrates 150 years of unbroken organization and Diane explained the early history of militancy arising from the nature of the work in confined spaces away from land-based regulation but with connections to the wider world, which nourished radical political ideas. Unionism among seafarers became a leading force among organized labour and she described conflicts with a series of governments. The Bruce Page government of the 1920s used immigration law to oppose the union and later Menzies supported the Shipowners Federation by using the Transport Workers Act in dispute with seaman's unions. From the major maritime strike in the pre-federation decade of the 1890s, to the 1998 'strike that changed Australia', the waterfront has been the flashpoint for nationally significant confrontations.

Seaman's unions opposed coloured labour and insisted that the wages on all ships be paid at the Australian Standard. While there was an element of racism, the main motive was the defence of labour standards which included both wages and safety standards. On the international level, Australian maritime unions became a formidable force against flags of convenience and were a leading influence in the International Transport Workers' Federation. By the end of the 20th century maritime labour maintained solidarity in the face of challenges of structural change in shipping technology and anti-union legislation.

Diane highlighted that maritime unions had been a force for democracy and progressive policies. They had refused to load ships with cargo bound for fascist governments, they actively opposed apartheid and they supported aboriginal land rights; they also opposed the Vietnam war. And despite the historical masculinity of maritime occupations they had come to embrace diversity in maritime employment and leadership. --TH

AAHANZBS Annual Conference, 30 Nov – 1 Dec 2023

Call for Papers

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

The Business and Labour History Group (BLHG), The University of Sydney of Business School, Australia, will be hosting the 14th Annual Conference of AAHANZBS on the 30th November and 1st December 2023. The conference will be presented in person and not Zoom.

You are invited to submit papers addressing the conference theme, including papers relating to accounting history, business history, economic history, labour history, management history, marketing history, tourism history, transport history and other areas of interest relating to historical research in business schools. We also invite papers/panel suggestions around teaching and pedagogy relating to business and labour history. We welcome papers from researchers outside business schools who have an interest in these fields of study.

The Inaugural Ray Markey Plenary speaker will be Professor Bradon Ellem, University of Sydney. For further details about our speaker see: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/business/about/our-people/academic-staff/bradon-ellem.html>

Please submit a 1000 word abstract for refereeing by Friday 7 July 2023 to Greg Patmore at greg.patmore@sydney.edu.au . Abstracts and papers should follow the *Labour History* style guide - <https://www.labourhistory.org.au/journal/style-guide/>. All authors of the abstracts will be notified of acceptance by 25th August 2023.

Registration: The registration charge for two days, which includes morning tea, afternoon tea and lunch, will be AU \$190 (Full) and AU \$150 (Concessional). There is an additional charge if you wish to attend the conference dinner. All postgraduate research students who have their abstracts accepted will have free registration (does not include conference dinner). Full registration details will follow at <http://sydney.edu.au/business/research/blhg>

APEBH Conference 2024: Call for Papers

The next edition of the Asia-Pacific Economic and Business History Conference will be held at the University of Hawaii-Manoa on 17th-18th February 2024. The organisers welcome proposals for contributions on any topic in economic, social, and business history, including proposals for complete sessions on particular themes.

A particular interest is in contributions to the conference theme, Institutions and Organizations in Economic History. We welcome papers that investigate the sources of institutional change, use theory to provide a context for a detailed narrative of how and why institutional change occurred in a particular historical context, or empirically analyze the impacts of institutional change, particularly changes in property rights, election rules, establishment of parliaments, or authoritarian rule. Papers investigating institutional change within the context of colonial economies and politics in the Asia-Pacific region are encouraged.

Researchers across a broad range of disciplines are warmly welcomed. Early career researchers and graduate students are particularly encouraged to attend. Registration fees for conference attendance and events will be waived for graduate students with the support of the Economic History Society of Australia and New Zealand. Competitive travel support to Hawai'i will be available to a limited number of junior scholars and graduate students.

All abstracts (175–250 words) and proposals for sessions should be emailed to Sumner La Croix lacroix@hawaii.edu by 30th September 2023. If you require special consideration (such as refereeing or early confirmation for visa application), please note so with your submission. If you are a graduate student and are applying for travel support, please send your paper abstract and cv and arrange for your faculty advisor to send use a letter of recommendation by 15th September 2023.

Questions regarding the conference or travel support? Email Sumner La Croix at lacroix@hawaii.edu or Florian Ploeckl at florian.ploeckl@adelaide.edu.au.

We encourage participants to submit their work to the *Asia-Pacific Economic History Review* (previously the *Australian Economic History Review*). For information on the journal, go to: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/2832157x>



Fancy a dip?