

In my first editorial in this journal, published in Vol. 22, No. 2, I observed that: “Research should [...] be organised and written so as to appeal and have meaning to the widest possible audience”.

In the first article, co-authored by Andrew Cardow (an Associate Editor for this journal) and Bill Wilson, is evidence that significant stories can be told in a highly readable fashion. Their account of the history of New Zealand’s savings and postal banks between the 1840s and 1907 speaks not only to these institutions but to the whole national experience. Cardow and Wilson take up their story in the 1840s, when the newly formed colony faced difficulties on many fronts: a chronic lack of infrastructure, a penurious government and ongoing frontier wars with the indigenous Maori – one of the proudest and most formidable people on the planet. In legislating for the formation of savings banks, so Cardow and Wilson demonstrate, the New Zealand Government sought to use a British-born financial model for fundamental different goals to that intended by its original instigators. In Britain and Australia, savings banks were designed for the working poor, it being believed that the encouragement of thrift and modest savings would cure many social evils. In New Zealand, although this aim was foremost in official protestations, in truth, the government wished to harvest these modest savings for public spending. Unfortunately for the government, the New Zealand savings banks managed to circumvent this government stratagem. As in Australia, much of the deposited money went into real estate speculation, which proved more lucrative than government bonds. In consequence, New Zealand Government turned to another British financial invention: a post office savings bank. For the government, which was the sole proprietor of the new institution, the post office savings bank proved superior to the savings banks. As proprietor, the government could direct the post office savings bank to buy government debt. The post office savings bank also proved more popular with the public, attracted by the nationwide network of post offices, each of which acted as a branch of the new bank. In consequence, deposits in the post office savings bank soon surpassed the combined total of New Zealand’s savings banks. Significantly, in speaking to this important story, Cardow and Wilson focus not so much on what happened, but why it happened; an approach usually destined to provide more insightful conclusions than the alternative (i.e. focusing on what happened, rather than why it happened).

In our second article, Garry Carnegie, Head of the School of Accounting at Australia’s RMIT University, continues the Antipodean finance theme in an exploration of three interrelated issues: the banking failures that occurred in Australia in 1891-1893, the role of auditors and accountants in these failures and the ongoing campaign by a cohort of accountants and auditors for occupational “professionalization”. For Carnegie, the key issues at stake in this story are the ways in which accountants and auditors in late nineteenth-century Victoria – which was in the midst of what remains the biggest speculative real estate bubble in Australian history – chose between two contrasting strategies for occupational “professionalisation”. On the one side stood the path of “exclusivity”, in which only those belonging to a professional body would be able to practice. This was a model pursued with vigour in Britain, where the Society of

Accountants and Auditors (SAA) extended its influence after 1885. In Australia, however, accountants and auditors showed little interest in the SAA's attempts to spread its influence to the southern hemisphere. Instead, the profession in Melbourne (then Australia's largest city) followed what Carnegie calls a local "market control" strategy, in which the professional door was held open to the widest number; a strategy advocated by the body that became the preeminent professional body in Victoria, the Incorporated Institute of Accountants, Victoria (IIAV). Having outlined the strategic choices before Victoria's accountants, Carnegie then traces the professional record in auditing the accountants of 14 Victorian banks that failed when the real estate boom was succeeded by the inevitable bust. For most readers, I suspect, this will be the most interesting part of the story, the litany of professional and financial failure resonating in modern experiences. Then, as now, the professional record of auditors was typically a sorry one. As Carnegie highlights, occupational "professionalization" under the auspices of the IIAV did little to bolster the quality of audits carried out during this period of profound crisis.

The third article in this edition – a collective work by Jane Gibson, Jack Deem, Jacqueline Einstein and John Humphreys on the life and work of pioneer management theorist, Frank Gilbreth – provides further proof that management history can be an enjoyable read as well as intellectually enlightening. Certainly, I found this work, which draws on the archives of the Gilbreth Library at Perdue University as well as extensive secondary sources, highly engaging. The editorial "chore" of reading a new submission was soon transformed into a pleasant past-time as, cup of tea in hand, I followed Gilbreth's childhood, early career, his marriage and collaboration with Lillian Gilbreth and his often tumultuous working relationship with Frederick Taylor. In many ways, Frank Gilbreth's story is one of American practicality and hands-on know-how in which the concept of "one best method" emerges from Gilbreth's working relationship with a veteran bricklayer, Tom Bowler, in his first paid job. By it is also a story grounded in a great sympathy for the ordinary worker. Although the history of "scientific management" often reveals a troubled relationship with organised labour, Gilbreth remained true to the goals of collective advancement he shared as a youthful member of the American Federation of Labour. As the authors observe in their conclusion, "the contributions of Frank Gilbreth to management thought are often lost in or overshadowed by those of Lillian Gilbreth", who lived "some 47 years after Frank died". This important study goes some way towards redressing such oversight.

In the penultimate article, that by Eric Liquori, Josh Bendickson, Jeff Muldoon and Phillip Davison on the historical development of Agency theory, we turn to an economic and organisational relationship that has a troubled history: that between owners and managers. As the authors indicate in their introduction, the problem of an agency within a firm was highlighted by Adam Smith as far back as 1776, when he observed that "managers [...] cannot be expected" to "watch over" a proprietor's money "with the same anxious vigilance" as that of a business partner. In exploring the development of Agency theory, the authors trace the different perspectives provided by Max Weber, Herbert Simon, Adolf Berle and Gardiner Means and the "Chicago School" of economics. As editor, I found the authors' capacity to tease out historical nuances, and then to discuss them in a meaningful way in the paper's final section, lifted this study above that of just another "literature review" – a type of scholarship that this journal is increasingly reluctant to publish.

The final study in this edition is by Nimruji Prasad Jammulamadaka, the incoming Co-Chair of the Critical Management Studies Division of the Academy of Management, who has written a powerful and gripping study, entitled “Bombay Textile Mills: Exploring CSR Roots in Colonial India”. This study is a very much revised version of the paper that won the Halloran Award for the Best Management History Division Paper in Business Ethics at the Academy of Management’s Annual Meeting in Vancouver. Essentially, this study is an account of how working practices at Bombay’s colonial textile mills resulted from a complex set of neighbourhood social relationships that involved ties of kinship, ethnicity, caste and religion. These relationships, it is demonstrated, severely prescribed the power of both mill-owners and managers, as well as the “jobbers” who provided the mills with the bulk of their locally recruited labour. This resulted in work practices characterised by staggered starts, flexible hours for women and high levels of absenteeism, as workers took time off for social, family and religious reasons. Where owners, managers or jobbers tried to interfere with such relationships, industrial action resulted. Nimruji describes this outcome as an example of “countervailing” social power which, in the end, provided an implicit and explicit threat to British imperial interests; a threat that increased in overt demonstration as India’s nascent union movement corralled local protests into challenges against British rule. To counter this threat, Nimruji argues, the British undertook a number of steps to contain the problem. This involved the passage of Factory Acts to “regulate” mill employment, the imposition of tariffs to protect Lancashire’s mills from Indian competition and industrial relations legislation that restricted strike action. The result for Bombay’s mill workers was worse – rather than better – workplace arrangements. Nimruji’s story, despite its powerful narrative, is highly nuanced and thus requires careful reading, as what appears to us as opposites – cooperative neighbourhood practices and industrial conflict – are revealed to be part of a mutually reinforcing set of social negotiations and collective arrangements. As such, it speaks powerfully to our understanding of management practices and industrial relations, as well as CSR.

A note on submission and style

As noted at the start of this editorial, this journal wishes to publish papers that are “organised and written so as to appeal and have meaning to the widest possible audience”. Sadly, only a minority of papers submitted to *JMH* are written in a polished, fluid and well-organised fashion, completed in full compliance with the journal’s style guide. Sadly, I note that this situation is not fundamentally different to the situation that I find in other journals with which I am associated. Nor is it fundamentally different to the situation that I observed as Program Chair of the Management History Division of the Academy of Management in 2014-2015, when I oversaw the submissions to the Academy’s Annual Meeting in Vancouver.

From my observations, there seems to be an overly common belief that the work of a scholar is complete when the research findings are finalised and a suitable conceptual framework established. From this point onwards, so many seem to believe, the final part of the research task – the actual writing – can be undertaken in a single sitting, often pressed up against either an external or self-imposed deadline. The results of this undertaking – replete with material clearly cut and pasted from elsewhere, paragraphs that do not flow from one to another, spelling which uses English wording in American venues and American wording in English ones (such as *JMH*) and which often has

material scattered over pages without the slightest attempt at proper formatting – are then submitted without revision.

The expectation with such behaviour, which would do disservice to many undergraduates, is that the editor will overlook the many stylistic failings in view of the paper's (believed) intellectual brilliance. This is a big expectation. Sometimes it is rewarded. But more often it is not. Moreover, even when the expectation is rewarded, it nevertheless does damage to the career/s of the submitter/s, as the author/s are listed in the editor's memory as "pain to deal with" rather than "pleasure to deal with".

Recently, over drinks, a distinguished management scholar who has on occasion published in this journal advised me that the biggest problem that management history has was that it was boring. That it was difficult to read. That, in comparison with labour history and social history, management history was a dour and poorer cousin. If the discipline is to advance, this perception needs to be overturned.

In consequence, I urge those submitting to the journal not to rush the process, nor to give second place to the writing over research. Writing is hard work for everyone. I often tell my undergraduates that writing is the hardest job I have ever done. That, even after more than 30 years in the profession, I can almost get down on my knees and vomit when faced with a blank page of a new article. When a draft is finished, I polish it endlessly before submission. I also give copies and ask feedback from those who, I know, will tell me "what I need to know rather than what I would like to hear". The distinguished economist, Kenneth Galbraith – when advised that his economic studies were so much more readable than most – declared this was only so because people were typically reading the seventh rendition of his work. In most cases, Galbraith went on to note, his work only became readable on the sixth draft. It was, however, this constant recrafting of style – as much as his conceptual insights – that was the making of Galbraith's scholarly reputation.

As human beings, we communicate mainly through words. If research careers are to advance, if management history is to advance, if *JMH* is to advance, then it needs to do so on the basis of well-crafted rather than poorly crafted words.

Future directions: 2017 and beyond

In my first editorial, in Vol. 22, No. 2, I also flagged that: "Management history finds itself facing deep methodological and conceptual divides". These divides, it was noted, reflected not just passing fashions. Rather, they go to the heart of the Western intellectual endeavour, reflecting divisions that have been self-evident since the dawn of the European enlightenment. One stream of thought – represented by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Frederick Nietzsche, Michael Foucault and, in post-modernist history, Hayden White – has given primacy to the human spirit over the material world. Summing up this world view, Rousseau (1762/1973, p. 1) famously observed in the opening sentences of the *Social Contract* that: "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they". Seen from this perspective, the material world, the world of economics, is the prime cause of oppression. To escape from the chains of this material world, emphasis must be given to the realm of ideas, action, fluidity and the constantly changing events of the world (Foucault, 1972, pp. 8-9). Instability, rather than stability, is the key to understanding human advancement.

Counterposed to this world view is another: that human advancement rests on material advancement. That only a plentiful material world offers humanity the possibility of increased happiness and freedom (albeit, also with an increased capacity for destruction). Rooted in a variety of theoretical perspectives – classical economics, Marxism, Max Weber with his emphasis on the rational rules of bureaucratic procedure, Alfred D. Chandler with his analysis of how the “visible hand” has displaced market forces in the allocation of resources and the French *Annales* school with its emphasis on the “structural” stability of societies – this world view gives primacy to deep and powerful underlying forces in society. Seen from this perspective, the events that typically capture public attention – economic and political crises, strikes, protests and the fall of governments – are less important than the factors that give enduring material substance to a society. It is these latter factors – managerial competence, entrepreneurial spirit, political and social institutions, public administration and infrastructure – that provide the substantive bedrock that endures.

In the course of 2017 and 2018, *JMH* will dedicate two special issues to this fundamental debate. The first special issue, to be overseen by Kevin Tennent from the University of York will be entitled “Chronologies, Periods and Events in Management and Business History”. This special issue will be concerned with the theme of change points in history, where historians consider one period to end, and another to begin, often configured around political events such as wars or revolutions. These change points are often overlooked in management and business histories, which do not always relate directly to political history often appropriate these chunks of time in which institutional stability may be observed. Further, histories are often presented as periods running between two particular crises or change points which act as bookends. But yet this approach surely discourages us from actually focusing upon the change points themselves, which could be a revealing use of history for scholars interested in fields where adversity is important, such as change management, strategic management and entrepreneurship. Such particular points may include, but are not limited to, the First and Second World Wars, the end of the Cold War or be less high-profile, such as the changing British business environment created by the end of empire in the 1960s, which saw the devaluation of the pound, the introduction of corporation tax and rapid socio-cultural change within the UK associated with the growth of mass consumerisation. Papers studying such change points, placed within theoretical and/or historiographical context, will be considered.

The second special issue, tentatively entitled “Continuities and Long Movements in Management and Business History”, will be coordinated by Katja Rost from the University of Zurich. Fuller details will be provided in the next issue.

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