

The How Well Do 'Facts' Travel? Working Papers Series

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•01/05 Transferring Technical Knowledge and Innovating in Europe, c.1200-c.1800

Stephan Epstein's paper charts the spread of technological information across a pre-modern and largely illiterate Europe, examining how knowledge was stored, how new and established knowledge was transmitted, and how written, diagrammatic, and tacit knowledge was used to solve technical problems.

•02/05 A Dreadful Heritage: Interpreting Epidemic Disease at Eyam, 1666-2000

Patrick Wallis looks at the shifting accounts of the actions of the residents of Eyam, Derbyshire, during the plague years of the seventeenth century. His historical research reveals that "facts" about their behaviour have been variously invented, altered, or removed depending on who was telling the story, and why.

•03/05 Experimental Farming and Ricardo's Political Arithmetic of Distribution

Mary Morgan charts how the evolution of David Ricardo's economic theory of distribution was informed by his empirical knowledge of farming practice – how did "facts" about experimental agriculture affect the development of the theory of political economy?

•05/05 Moral Facts and Scientific Fiction: 19th Century Theological Reactions to Darwinism in Germany

Bernhard Kleeberg's paper examines the reception of Darwin's theory of descent with modification by nineteenth-century German thinkers. How did the existing natural-philosophical and theological frameworks adjust themselves to these new "facts," and what emerged from their acceptance or resistance?

•04/05 Interdisciplinarity "In The Making": Modelling Infectious Diseases

Erika Mattila looks at how models are used as a medium for exchanging information between specialist communities in an interdisciplinary project on infectious diseases. Mirroring the subject matter of her researchers, she looks at the mechanisms of transmission: How do "facts" produced by one set of specialists travel between these communities?

•06/05 Market Disciplines in Victorian Britain

Paul Johnson records how the Victorians held their successful market economy to be a natural, self-regulating system. The notion that the economy was actually a legal and ideological construct met with much resistance, and does to this day. This paper shows how the ideological environment into which facts arrive can be the most important criterion upon which their acceptance or rejection depends.

•07/06 Wormy Logic: Model Organisms As Case-Based Reasoning

Rachel Ankeny looks at how specially-bred laboratory animals become models for the scientists who experiment with them, vehicles for the transmission of knowledge. Occupying a space between the natural and the artificial, how are these so-called model organisms used to generate facts and support claims about more universal biological functioning?

•08/06 How The Mind Worked: Some Obstacles and Developments in The Popularisation of Psychology

Jon Adams looks at how the popularisation of psychology has developed alongside the discipline it describes. By comparing popularisations from sixty years' remove, he shows how the popularisation relies on very different types of facts as evidence to persuade and to educate its audience.

•09/06 Mapping Poverty in Agar Town: Economic Conditions Prior to the Development of St. Pancras Station in 1866 **Steven Swenson** investigates the demography of a Victorian slum, and discovers that its residents were not so wretched as contemporary accounts might have implied. Where the Victorians preferred a narrative account of poverty, the modern economic historian invests more trust in the quantitative data neglected at the time.

•10/06 "A Thing Ridiculous"? Chemical Medicines and the Prolongation of Human Life in Seventeenth-Century England **David Haycock's** paper reveals how radical life-extension was investigated as a serious medical question in seventeenth-century England. Comparing Biblical sources, stories from the New World, and folk-anecdotes, this paper looks at how "facts" about human longevity were received and employed by scholars and doctors as a more "respectable" empirical chemistry emerged from under the shade of alchemy.

•11/06 Institutional Facts and Standardisation: The Case of Measurements in the London Coal Trade **Aashish Velkar** demonstrates that as "institutional facts" measurement standards do not only ensure transparency in transactions, but he is also able to show, through a detailed examination of the London coal trade in the 1830s, that measurement standards were embedded in an institutional "package" of artefacts, regulations and customs. He shows that if the new institutional fact was to travel with the cargo, the institutional structure itself had to change.

•12/06 Confronting the Stigma of Perfection: Genetic Demography, Diversity and the Quest for a Democratic Eugenics in the Post-war United States **Edmund Ramsden** follows the consequences of the stigmatisation of eugenics: when does a stigmatised name become simply too troublesome, and how might a bad name affect the reception of "facts" from those disciplines collected under it? Can negative effects really be side-stepped through a simple act of re-branding? This paper provides a history of the on-going efforts to manage the bad-name of eugenics.

•13/06 Measuring Instruments in Economics and the Velocity of Money

Mary Morgan's second paper in the series takes as a starting point the claim that numbers travel well in economics, but asks: under what conditions do numerical measurements attain their exalted position? Looking at attempts to measure the velocity of money, she finds that how well numerical facts travel is contingent on how reliable the numbers are, and this in turn on economic and bureaucratic systems from which they emerge.

•14/06 The Roofs of Wren and Jones: A Seventeenth-Century Migration of Technical Knowledge from Italy to England **Simona Valeriani** shows how the architectural styles imported from Continental Europe in the seventeenth century also introduced novel building techniques. This paper shows how the influence of Italian craftsmen and architects was received and adapted by Wren and Jones, and how facts about roof construction travelled into England through technical solutions to the problems the new architecture presented.

•15/06 Rodney Hilton, Marxism, and the Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism

Stephan Epstein's second paper in the series looks at the interaction of the work of historian Rodney Hilton and economist Maurice Dobb, and shows how Dobb's revised understanding of the role of markets in socialist economies subsequently filtered through to Hilton's reassessment of markets under feudalism. Identifying flaws in Dobb's work, the paper then traces how these assumptions were carried through to the work of Hilton.

