

Department of
Economic History

Alumni Newsletter

Lent Term 2021-22

**Welcome, from our Head of
Department, Professor Patrick
Wallis**



Greetings from Sardinia Street where we are now half-way through Lent Term, and Spring is just around the corner. There's a definite feeling of optimism in the air and, although some restrictions such as mask wearing and testing, will be in place for a while to come, it does feel like Covid is in retreat, and we are hoping we'll be able to have a face-to-face reception for our students in the department in March (to make up for the cancelled Christmas Party)

We are now back to in-person teaching and, while still not as buzzy as 'normal', there are more students around and it feels like a campus should do. After two years lecturing into a camera to an audience of black zoom windows, seeing the faces of students while you teach them is an enormous pleasure.

Since our last contact, Sam Betteridge, Ziang Liu, Hanzhi Deng, and Simon Hinrichsen have all successfully completed their PhDs. We wish them every success in their future careers.

The Department continues to collaborate with the wider LSE community. Recently, Matthew Purcell, recipient of the inaugural Alumni and Friends of Economic History PhD Scholarship, was featured as part of the [Shaping the World Campaign](#). While Leigh Gardner's work, which challenges conventional thought on Africa's economic development, was highlighted as part of the [Research for the World](#) initiative.

The last few months have seen a series of international economic developments that have put an even greater premium on understanding the economic past. The reappearance of inflation across most of the world's economies is leading to a revival of interest in how earlier periods of wage and price pressure were resolved. It is a context in which our new [MSc in Financial History](#) has obvious relevance.

In this edition of the newsletter, we bring you up-to-date on what has been happening with us - we said goodbye to Loraine Long (the PhD Administrator) who retired after more than 10 years with the Department,

and hello to almost a classful of new babies (see news). Our student competitions were as popular as ever, and you can find out more and meet the winners [here](#).

Over Michaelmas Term and the first half of Lent Term, we've had some great events. You can find out how to watch the recordings and sign-up for upcoming events ([here](#)). Please do put the [Epstein Lecture](#) in your diary - 10th March at 6pm. Registration opens on 17th February.

Our profile this edition is of Theo Barker, who taught British Labour History in the Department until his retirement in 1983. Colin Lewis, Emeritus Professor of Economic History, recalls Theo's time in the Department and looks at his legacy in Red Lion Square.

Please do stay in touch - we'd love to know what you've been up to.

News from around the Department

Hello:

We've had a bumper crop of future Economic Historians arrive as Jason Lennard, Anne Ruderman, and Jordan Claridge all welcomed daughters to their families recently. We look forward to meeting them all in-person soon and, especially, to teaching them in the future!

Goodbye:

Sadly, to Loraine Long, PhD Administrator, who retired at the end of Michaelmas Term after more than a decade in the Department. Having successfully supported several PhD cohorts during this time she, and her wonderful cakes, will be much missed.

To Alex 'Spike' Gibbs, LSE Fellow, who has been appointed to a

permanent position in Mannheim. We wish him well and look forward to seeing the outcome of his research into the relationship between local political power and economic resources in the late medieval village.

Congratulations:

To Jane Humphries, Centennial Professor of the Department, who has been appointed President Elect of the Economic History Society, the main U.S. academic grouping in economic history. She will take over from Ann Carlos later this year.

To Mary S. Morgan, Albert O. Hirschman Professor of History and Philosophy of Economics, who has been appointed President Elect of the Royal Economics Society, taking over from Nick Crafts in May 2022.

To Neil Cummins, Associate Professor, who was awarded the Economic History Association's prestigious Arthur H. Cole prize, for the most outstanding article published in the previous year's volume of the *Journal of Economic History*.

The article, 'The Hidden Wealth of English Dynasties, 1892-2016' has generated a lot of interest and you can read Neil's blog summary [here](#). The full article is available through Wiley Online [here](#) or, if you do not have access to the JEH, you can read the Working Paper version [here](#).

Department Blog:

If you haven't already done so, why not sign up to our blog: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/economichistory/>

Our latest article *Industrialization, health and human welfare*, by Daniel Gallardo Albarrán, currently a Visiting Fellow in Department, looks at the paradox of how rising material living

standards were not necessarily followed by improvements in other important aspects of life, such as workers' health or working time.

Student Competitions

The Photo Competition:

During Welcome Week, when students are taking part in various activities, they are further tasked to submit a photo on a theme chosen by a member of faculty.

This year's theme was the History of Economics in London, and the winner was Maximilian Rudloff (MSc Economic History), for his atmospheric image of homelessness in London. You can view the winning image, learn more about the competition, and see the work of previous winners [here](#):

The Investment Competition:

One of the ideas we are keenest on in the department is that economic history can help you think better about economies today. The investment competition is an attempt to help our current students prove this. In a change to the previous format, this year five teams battled it out over a weekend to build an investment plan using their economic history skills combined with their economic and financial abilities to persuade a panel of hardened city professionals to part with their money.



The winner was Group 5 (pictured left to right: Yushang (Kevin) Zhang,

Josephine Precetti, and Maximilian Rudloff) with their recommendation to buy gold. In second place was Group 2 with their presentation on Nigerian FinTech and, in third place, was Group one with a proposal on Chargepoint.

We were grateful to have alumni acting as judges for the competition and helping the participants understand how to engage with people working in finance. This year's judges were Christian Dinesen, a director and founder of the independent management consultancy Dinesen Associates Ltd; Steve Mobbs, a founder partner of Oxford Asset Management; and Simon MacAdam, the senior global economist at Capital Economics. If you would be interested in helping out next year, let us know.

You can find out more about the Investment Competition, and read the winning proposals [here](#).

Department Events

Although more events are moving back to in-person, some will be hybrid or fully online. Please check our [Seminars](#) page for more information.

Public Lecture:

On 19th January, we were joined by Jan Lucassen, honorary fellow at the Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, who talked about his latest book *The Story of Work*. It was a lively discussion covering more than 700,000 years, looking at the way humanity organises work in the household, the tribe, the city and the state.

It was good to see so many of you there but, if you missed it, you can watch via our Facebook page: [LSE Economic History Department | Facebook](#)

Epstein Lecture:

Our annual Epstein Lecture will this year be delivered by Philipp Ager, Professor of Applied Microeconomics at the University of Mannheim. Philipp's interests have a particular focus on American Economic History of the 19th and 20th Centuries and his talk, *The Effects of Immigration Restrictions on the Economy*, will look at the socio-economic consequences of the end of open immigration to the United States in the 1920s.

The event is online on Thursday 10th March at 6pm. Booking opens on 17th February. See the [event page](#) for full details.

Keep in touch:

Our LinkedIn Group (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12551482/>) now has more than 200 members and is intended to help alumni and current students stay in touch. We are regularly publishing Departmental information, and we'd love to hear your suggestions about what else to include.

We have a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LSEEconomicHistoryDepartment> where, as well as similar postings to our LinkedIn page, you can find videos of events you may have missed.

You can also Tweet us at:
@LSEEcHist

Theo Barker and Red Lion Square

Our profile this issue is of Theo Barker, a colourful character who some of our more seasoned alumni might remember, as he visited the School regularly until the very early 2000s. Here, Colin Lewis remembers the life (and parties) of Theo, his wife Joy and their little flat in Red Lion Square, before highlighting how his work was used by the Friends of Red Lion Square to create a small history trail for visitors.

T.C. ('Theo') Barker cut an impressive figure – in all senses. A larger-than-life personality, a substantial physical presence, an energetic scholar – notably a promoter of business history in the UK and overseas, and a bluff Lancastrian – with firm opinions, who was also a *bon vivant* with an appreciation of fine wine and a fine argument.

Having studied in Oxford and Manchester, and briefly taught in Aberdeen, his first major appointment was at the School - where he lectured in Economic History from 1953 until 1964, when he left to take up the inaugural Chair in Economic and Social History at the University of Kent at Canterbury, as the newly created institution was then known. He returned to the School to head the Department as Convenor in 1976.

Theo saw himself primarily as an economic and a social historian, a view of the discipline shaped by his early research on nineteenth-century St Helens, where he had been born, and later as a business historian when the focus of his research shifted to a study of the glass industry based there - particularly the dynamic firm, Pilkington Brothers. He also developed interests in, and promoted,

transport and urban history. The inventor of 'float' glass, Pilkington evolved from a family business into a multinational enterprise during the course of Theo's research, and 'Pilks' (or the Bank of Pilks) was instrumental in sustaining his business history initiatives, including financing the creation of the Business History Unit at the School.

Indeed, Theo became something of an academic entrepreneur. He chaired the Transport History Trust, was president of the Canals and Railways Historical Society and served the Economic History Society in various capacities, as the British National Committee of Historians. His ideas and passions for new ventures lead to the British Academy forging links with sister organisations in eastern Europe and the Far East, connexions that provided Theo with opportunities to travel and experience different cultures and cuisines. His presidency of the International Congress of Historical Science (1990-1995) brought great pleasure, while reflecting the esteem in which he was held.

While Economic History had been favoured by students – Theo earned the accolade of best teacher in the School while a lecturer, and had considerable popular outreach, in part because of Theo's broadcasts, he sensed that by the 1960s, the tide was turning towards new-fangled subjects like sociology and development. The discipline needed to adapt. Hence his initial promotion of urban history and subsequently business history. These were fruitful directions for teaching and research. Yet as Theo was arguing the case for business history, quantitative methods (cliometric history) were gaining traction in the USA. He had little truck with the 'epidemic of econometric history' that

was spreading to the UK, expressing his views robustly.

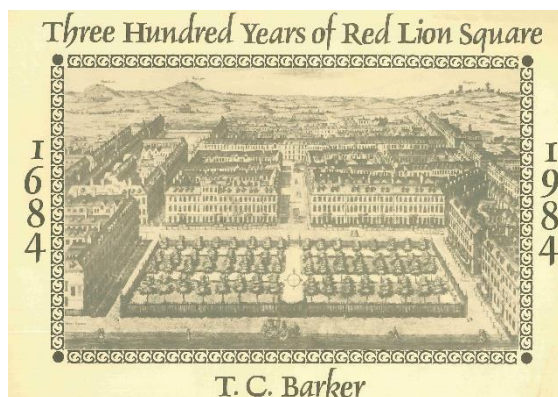
When Theo returned to the Department, it was still School policy that academics live within 30 miles of the Aldwych. As he and wife Judith (Joy), an opera singer specialising in Wagnerian roles, were unwilling to abandon their large house and substantial garden in Kent – their pride and joy, it was fortuitous that the flat in Red Lion Square came on to the market. It became a base for their famous parties and after-seminar gatherings. This was another area in which Theo was prepared to be unfashionable and challenge accepted conventions.

At a time when German wine in the UK was synonymous with cheap, sweet Liebfraumilch and brands like Blue Nun and Black Tower, Theo was a connoisseur of what the Rhineland provided. Each Summer, part of the long vacation would be devoted to leisurely road trips to the Mosel, Franconia or the Rheingau. On return, the capacious boot would be loaded with cases purchased at small vineyards. The following Michaelmas Term, there would be wine-tastings in Red Lion Square, at which colleagues – some of whom sniffily protested that they imbibed only chateau-provenance products – were prevailed upon to sample the latest discoveries and regaled with tales of Theo's negotiations at customs in Dover, and of deals achieved with gullible (or charmed) officials to 'smuggle' to London some of the best wine that Germany had to offer.

Theo retired in 1983 and sadly passed away in 2001 ([Guardian Obit](#)), followed two years later by Joy ([Obit](#)), but this was not the end of Theo's association with the Square.

In 2017, Jim Walsh, CEO of Conway Hall and Chair of the Friends of Red Lion Square, led a successful bid for Community Investment Funds from Camden Council. The ambitious plans included a new pollinator friendly planting scheme to encourage bees and other kinds of insects to visit; refurbishment of the paths, benches and bins; a café; and new signage to create a trail for visitors to follow.

In Jim's mind, this trail would track the development of the square from when it was first laid out in 1684 right up to the present day and, when he expressed this interest to Julian Fulbrooke, the then Mayor of Camden, Julian gave him a copy of a little book in his possession: *Three Hundred Years of Red Lion Square, 1684-1984* by Theo Barker. This book had been published by Theo in 1987, and under Jim's expert eye, formed the basis of the four boards that now sit at each entrance to the square.



Theo's book was easy enough to split across the first three boards covering [1660-1760](#); [1760-1860](#); and [1860-1960](#) but, although the book claims to end in 1984, in reality, nothing of note is included after the 1960s. So it was left to Jim to update the story for the fourth board [1960-](#)

[present day](#) which details riots, famous residents and the commissioning of a statue of Nobel laureate Bertrand Russell, one of the early teachers at LSE.¹

Thanks to Jim's hard work, and the influence of Theo Barker, the boards were unveiled in 2019 – they are well worth a visit.

Red Lion Square is a tranquil oasis in Bloomsbury, easily accessible from Holborn tube station.

If you would like more information on the work of the Friends of Red Lion Square, please visit their website: [Red Lion Square – Friends of Red Lion Square Gardens](#)

If you would like a pdf copy of Theo's book, please email Tracy Keefe (t.j.keefe@lse.ac.uk)

If you would like to receive copies of our newsletter direct to your inbox, just sign-up to the Alumni Network [here](#).

¹ In 1896 he gave a series of lectures on German social democracy. He was also a member of the Coefficients dining club of

social reformers set up in 1902 by Sidney and Beatrice Webb.