

Fifty Years of *Business History*.

When in December 1958 Liverpool University Press published the first edition of *Business History*, while they would no doubt have hoped to sustain such a specialist journal, it seems unlikely that they would have anticipated the kind of expansion that has been witnessed. With F.E. Hyde as editor, S.B. Saul and J.R. Harris as assistant editors, and Sheila Marriner as secretary, *Business History* was very much the product of the Department of Economic and Social History at the University of Liverpool. It was only published twice yearly, with at times just four research articles and a limited number of book reviews. In contrast, we now have a highly cosmopolitan editorial board, produce six editions per year to cope with the enormous demand for space, alongside a copious collection of book reviews covering a wide literature, with excellent backing from Taylor and Francis as the publisher. The founders would, indeed, be extremely proud of the publication that they established fifty years ago.

This is not the place for a full history of the journal, because the new editorial team will be writing 'A history of *Business History*' for both a series of conferences and a full article to feature in a later edition during the course of 2008. Nevertheless, it is important to announce that a fresh editorial team will be taking the journal forward from its highly successful position. As we shall see in the first article, after eighteen years as executive editor Charles Harvey stood down at the end of 2007. He is being replaced by Professor Steven Toms, who will work alongside Professor John F. Wilson as executive editors. Professor Toms is currently Head of the Management School at York University, where he has developed a thriving venture that has expanded impressively. Crucially, apart from his widely-acknowledged work on the Lancashire cotton industry, Professor Toms brings his recognised ability in accounting and finance and corporate governance to the team, adding expertise that will be highly valued.

Another important change to the team is the replacement of Dr. Teresa da Silva Lopes as book reviews editor by Dr. Andrew Popp (University of Liverpool). We would like to place on record our sincere thanks to Dr. Lopes for her sterling work as book reviews editor, sustaining a tradition that has ensured academics read the journal for reasons other than monitoring the latest trends in business history research. We are confident that Dr. Popp will bring the same energy and imagination to an extremely important role.

Over the course of 2008, the new team will be announcing further changes to the way in which the journal is managed and edited. Although the executive editors will to a large extent abide by the guidelines laid down in last year's editorial,¹ we will be offering our own views on the future development of the journal as part of our review of the history we intend to write. Of greatest administrative significance, however, is the move to a new system of submitting articles to the journal, in that as of January 2008 *Business History* will adopt the Manuscript Central system that is wholly electronic. We regard this as an essential step in the right direction for a journal that is dealing with an increasing volume of articles, providing both editors and authors with much greater assurance that their material is being processed. As it is vital to improve

¹ Charles Harvey and John Wilson, 'Redefining *Business History*: an editorial statement', *Business History*, Vol.49, No.1, Jan. 2007, pp.1-7.

our turn-around times on articles, this new system will serve an invaluable purpose. Our readers are strongly encouraged to find out more about this on the *Business History* web site, because all future submissions will be handled through this system.

One can only wonder at the views F.E. Hyde, S.B. Saul, J.R. Harris and Sheila Marriner would have expressed about the state of *Business History* in its fiftieth year. Surely, they would have been extremely proud of establishing a journal that is regarded as the leader in its field. The new editorial team is also confident that we can sustain this reputation, committing our considerable energies to a legacy we would all like to enhance. Furthermore, as Taylor & Francis is keen to publicise the journal's fiftieth anniversary, we shall be attending all the main conferences in 2008 with a view to stimulating debate about the best way forward. We all look forward to the next fifty years with great optimism and commitment.

John F. Wilson.