

Welcome

We welcome those engaged in historical research that entails use of the papers and correspondence of British and Irish economists over the period 1750 to 2000. This website has been designed to house a project to create and update an electronic version of a finding aid originally published in 1975 as *Economists' Papers 1750-1950; A Guide to Archive and other Manuscript Sources for the History of British and Irish Economic Thought*. The objectives of the site are to:

- accommodate a downloadable version of the original guide
- facilitate revision of the entries on the basis of more up-to-date information
- extend the guide's coverage to include economists who died after 1950
- enlist the support and gather information relevant to the project from archivists and other scholars
- enhance interest in the preservation of archive material that will be of value to future historians

Although the information assembled here will be of special use to historians of economic thought and practice, we anticipate that it will also be of interest to other kinds of historian, social, political, and intellectual; indeed, to all those concerned with the wider role of economic ideas in political debate and the formation of public opinion and policy.

The original guide to archive sources was compiled in the early 1970s by Paul Sturges, now Professor of Library Studies at Loughborough University. Paul Sturges was employed for three years on funds provided by the Social Sciences Research Council and the Royal Economic Society (RES). The results of the research were published for the RES by Macmillan in 1975.

We have retained the original introduction to the guide not merely because it explains the nature of the project, but as an historical document in its own right, reflecting the thinking of the period. Two small but highly encouraging conferences had been held in Sussex (1969) and in Nottingham (1970); and it was on the basis of the resulting mood of confidence regained that the project that led to the guide was launched, along with the *History of Economic Thought Newsletter*. The conferences have been held annually in Britain since then in an unbroken sequence, and the *Newsletter* continues to serve the needs of the HET community in Britain and elsewhere.

A great deal has happened since the guide was conceived, some of it confirming the optimism expressed in the introduction. In 1970 the first journal specifically devoted to publishing research in the field, *History of Political Economy (HOPE)*, was founded by the economics department at Duke University. It continues to flourish and Duke remains a centre of excellence as far as research in the history of economic thought is concerned: it is also the headquarters of one of the most significant collections of economists' papers in North America.

HOPE has been joined by other international journals, the *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* and the *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, the organs respectively of the *History of Economic Thought Society*, and the *European Society for the History of Economic Thought*. In addition, there are national societies with their own journals and newsletters in Australia, France, Italy, and Japan. See [useful links](#).

Perhaps the most obvious sign of intellectual health can be found in the number and quality of scholarly editions that have appeared since 1975. Editions of the works and correspondence of William Stanley Jevons, John Maynard Keynes, Robert Malthus, Alfred Marshall, John Stuart Mill, and Adam Smith are now complete. The Smith edition and an earlier RES enterprise, the *Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo*, are now available in digital form. Jeremy Bentham is gradually catching them up, and Francis Ysidro Edgeworth has had his most important and difficult work, *Mathematical Psychics*, properly edited by the late Peter Newman. Roy Harrod's interwar professional correspondence has been edited by Daniel Besomi and Donald Moggridge's edition of the professional correspondence of Dennis Robertson will be appearing in a year or two. In France and Switzerland, ambitious editions of the works of Jean-Baptiste Say and Léon Walras are in train.