



One damn ask after another

How should we study the history of fundraising?

v1.1

🕒 History

Ian MacQuillin

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bluefrog
FUNDRAISING

ROGARE
THE FUNDRAISING THINK TANK

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Rogare (Latin for 'to ask') is the independent think tank for the global fundraising profession. We are the engine that translates academic ideas into professional practice, and we aim to bring about a paradigm shift in the way fundraisers use theory and evidence to solve their professional challenges.

Ian MacQuillin MClO(FDip) is the director of the international fundraising think tank Rogare, which he founded in 2014. He's recognised as a leading thinker on fundraising ethics, having developed a new theory of fundraising ethics that seeks to balance fundraisers' duties to both their donors and beneficiaries. Ian also edits the *Critical Fundraising* blog, writes a monthly column for *Third Sector* magazine and regularly contributes to the specialist charity media around the world.

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Foreword



Mark Phillips
Bluefrog Fundraising

This paper is an invitation. It's an invitation to engage with the history of our profession. To sit down with the generations of fundraisers who went before us. To discover their ideas, their techniques, their successes and their failures.

It's an invitation to break free from the constraints of current practice and to take a perspective from a different time, from different societies and from different places.

It's an invitation to develop as individuals and as a movement of people working as a force for good.

And above all, it is an invitation to learn.

I love the history of our profession. I first had its seed planted by Tony Elischer when he asked me to present a retrospective of fundraising for the 30th anniversary of the IFC back in 2010.

"What's good and what's bad?" he asked. "Tell us what we've learned and what we've forgotten."

I started looking for books on our history. Not much was available though I did eventually turn up some interesting finds from second-hand bookstores. Then I turned to newspaper archives and had my eyes opened.

I read articles about fundraising going as far back in time as the archives allowed me to travel. I read about legacy fundraising in the 18th century. I learned about the recruitment of monthly donors

by face-to-face street fundraisers in the 19th century and I saw how the commercialisation of advertising in the 20th century had impacted on fundraising and caused us to lose our way.

I discovered patterns of innovation where public excitement was replaced by public disquiet as great ideas became over adopted and ended up irritating the people who once found them so attractive and motivating.

I saw scandals unfold and be resolved. Great idea after great idea leapt from the printed page. It wasn't long before I was able to reapply them, successfully, in the fundraising market of the 21st century. It's true to say that my career path was changed when Tony asked me to dig into years gone by.

That is why I am so happy to support this new Rogare initiative and invite you to help shape our future by engaging with our past. It is an invitation for ideas - your ideas. What areas of our history should we look at and how? What should be our goals? What outputs would be most useful? How would you like to be involved? What can you share with us?

I hope what you'll read in the following pages will inspire you to join with us and help direct the direction and nature of this project to build a resource that will act as a gift for today's fundraisers and those that follow us.

Please join us. 🍷

1 Where is the history of fundraising?

Fundraising is always under attack from the media. Most fundraisers in the UK (and many further afield) will remember the kicking that fundraising as a profession – and many named, individual fundraisers – received at the hands of the media in the immediate aftermath of the Olive Cooke affair in 2015.

But do British fundraisers also recall the media hammering that Scottish fundraising took in 2003? One newspaper columnist (a football pundit – Jim Traynor), called on Scots to stop giving to charity. And stop giving they did (MacQuillin 2004a).

And do you recall how fundraisers responded to charity donations going over a cliff edge in Scotland by establishing the Giving Scotland campaign – perhaps the first and, if it was the first, then very probably the only, mass advertising campaign aimed at reversing a decline in giving, at which it was incredibly successful? (MacQuillin 2004b; Duncan 2014).

Last year in an online fundraising group, British fundraiser David Pearce asked for examples of campaigns that had successfully turned around a negative media narrative. I recommended Giving Scotland. But David hadn't heard of it, despite his entering the fundraising profession in 2006, just two years after Giving Scotland's success (a success that earned its lead instigator – Fiona Duncan – the 2004 IoF fundraiser of the year award) and being someone who takes a keen and active interest in media and public perception of fundraising.

There's no criticism of David Pearce intended at all. I'm simply pointing out that for someone as engaged as David is in how charities combat negative media perceptions not to be aware of such a successful campaign shows that something is amiss with how this profession records and archives its history.

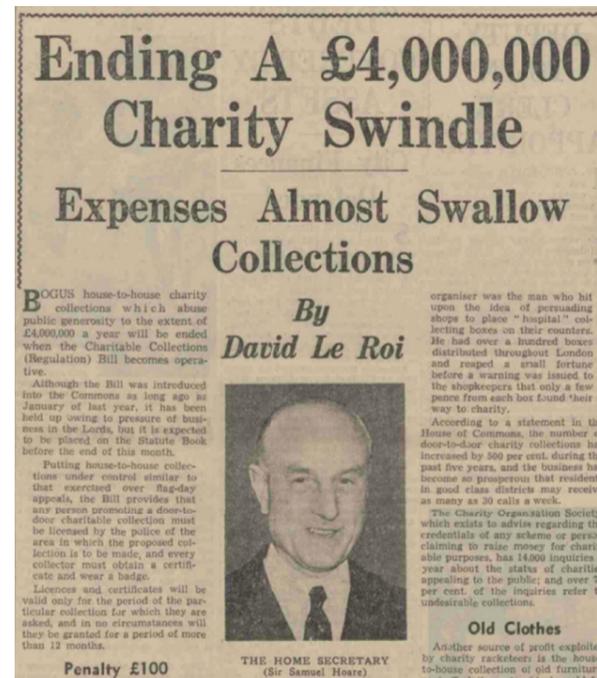
And this is relatively recent history. We might think that public and media dislike of fundraising methods, particularly so-called 'chuggers' has only arisen in response to these methods, with the first modern street fundraisers appearing in Vienna in 1995 (Upsall and Sonne 2009). However, some historical research¹ shows that these attitudes go back a century or more. In 1927, the *Manchester Guardian* ran a story under the headline 'A ban on street collections?', which contained the following passage:

"There can be no logical defence of the practice... of relying upon the average man's fear of seeming mean to extract from him a contribution to a cause about which he may care nothing and which he might be ill able to support."

These are very modern sensibilities as they relate to 'chuggers'. But this was written about volunteer cash collectors – tin rattlers – who are now often regarded as exhibiting the highest ideals of Corinthian altruism compared to paid, professional street fundraisers.²

1 I'm indebted to Mark Phillips of Bluefrog for providing me with all the press examples in this section. Mark actively researches historical examples of fundraising as reported by the media, publishing what he finds on the Queer Ideas blog – <https://queerideas.co.uk/category/categories/history-of-fundraising>

2 If we look for it we are almost certain to find similar historical attitudes in other countries, at least in English-speaking countries. When Community Chests were launched in Canada in the 1930s, the organisers promised that their fundraising would be less irritating than the 'taggers' who solicited donations on the street and in shop foyers. According to the historian of the Community Chests, who refers to the taggers as an "infestation", retailers thought that "having shoppers run a gauntlet of taggers was bad for business" (Tillotson 2008, p4). Substitute the word 'chuggers' for 'taggers' and we have a very modern story.



Similarly, the *Liverpool Post* reported in 1916:

"The organisers of flag days are determined to kill the fund that lays the golden egg... Last week we had a flag day on behalf of the Star and Garter Home... two or three days later there was a flag day on behalf of a home for waifs and strays. Today ladies were selling flags for the provision of YMCA Huts... three street collections within the space of a week tends to destroy a movement which had been splendidly supported by the public."

And can be seen from the 1939 cutting from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (above), there was press disquiet about a house-to-house collection scandal that is not a million miles away from the situation that gave rise to Jim Traynor's editorial that set in motion the crash in Scottish giving in 2003/04.

The dates of these two media stories – 1916 and 1939 – are not coincidental. Nineteen-sixteen is the year that the British government enacted legislation to require street cash collections to obtain a police permit;³ while 1939 saw similar legislation requiring a local authority permit for doorstep collections.⁴

3 This legislation – The Police, Factories, etc (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1916, amended to require a local authority permit – is still in place. However, it doesn't cover the Direct Debits solicited by modern, paid street fundraisers, who can operate without such a licence.

4 The House to House Collections Act 1939, also still in force.

Media disquiet about house-to-house collections in 1939 was very similar to the stories that led to the crash in Scottish giving in 2003, which led to the formation of the Giving Scotland Campaign.



There would seem to be a link between media coverage and new legislative/regulatory activity, though which is driving which? The interplay between the media and legislation/regulation of fundraising – most recently experienced in the UK following the so-called 'fundraising crisis' of 2015 (see s3) – is explored in MacQuillin, Sargeant and Day (2019, pp57-58).

Many of the challenges we face now as a profession we have faced – and overcome – before. But if we don't know about them, we can't learn from them. And it's not only a matter of knowing about historical initiatives such as Giving Scotland; there is also understanding the contexts (cultural, social, economic and political) that gave rise to them and influenced their success, or failure:

- Why has fundraising been such a perennial target for the media, going back decades?
- How have charities and fundraisers tried to defend themselves in the media in that time? What factors have led to their successes and failures in doing so?
- Why have so many initiatives that were established in a fanfare to respond to media attacks fallen by the wayside – Giving Scotland for example announced that it would stay active after the advertising campaign concluded to defend fundraising

against media attacks; it didn't (Professional Fundraising 2004). But it's not the only one to have gone this way. The ImpACT Coalition (in the UK) is defunct, while we hear very little from the Understanding Charities Group (UK) or the Charity Defense Council (USA).

Investigating, analysing and understanding these historical questions will give us a far better understanding of the modern versions of these challenges we now face.

Yet the history of fundraising is nowhere to be found. Some people may think that there is a lot of history of fundraising already written and available. But it is important to distinguish between the history of philanthropy and charitable giving (of which there is a lot - a good historical overview being Robbins 2006; while, HistPhil⁵ website is dedicated to the subject); and the history of asking for that money.

And while many historical analyses of philanthropy do of course consider fundraising,⁶ fundraising isn't just a component part of philanthropy - it's a subject/activity/discipline in its own right, with issues and challenges that need to be analysed in their own context, and not just in the context of philanthropy: the history of giving is not the same as the history of asking. We therefore need our own focus on the history of fundraising.⁷

But we don't have it, not as a coherent narrative or field of study. For a start, there just one book detailing the history of fundraising and the fundraising profession. This is Scott M. Cutlip's *Fund Raising in the United States: Its Role In America's Philanthropy*, published in 1965, updated in 1990, and currently out of print, with second-hand copies selling for \$140 on Amazon.⁸ But even the reissue

can't do justice to the "exponential growth" of professional fundraising in the intervening 25 years (Cutlip 1990, p.ix, quoted in Kelly 1998, p136); and even the original edition focused on fundraising consultants at the expense of salaried staff fundraisers (Kelly 1998, p136).⁹

In place of a definitive history of fundraising, all we have are a few book chapters, some blogs and a handful of academic papers, many of which only give us a superficial overview of the history of fundraising (because that is the reason they have been written), from which we need to piece together and infer the history of fundraising.

But in doing so, we're hampered by the fact that there really isn't much historical analysis of fundraising that will allow us to learn from what has happened previously, not just to draw inspiration from and copy previous generations of fundraisers. (The entries in bold in the references, further reading and resources sections on pp20-21 provide an start in identifying and collecting the literature that does exist, just one of which was written by a professional historian [Tillotson 2008].)

The history of marketing, by contrast, is an established field that has "grown substantially" since the mid-1980s (Tadajewski and Jones 2016, p1). So the history of fundraising is something that Rogare can look at.

This short paper serves as both a very quick introduction (but by no means a full treatment) to the history (and historiography) of fundraising, as well as doing double duty as the project brief for a Rogare project I hope we can get off the ground - and we already have 12 people who have registered an interest in participating. 📍

5 <https://histphil.org> - accessed 6 January 2021.

6 Rhodri Davies writes regularly about the history of philanthropy. One of his recently blogs gave the example of 'voting charities' in the 19th Century, in which the beneficiaries were chosen (voted on) by donors at what were often a "raucous and degrading" events. Davies draws parallels with modern day disintermediated crowdsourced giving (Davies 2020). But it also speaks to the ethics of donorcentrism, theories of donor choice, and donor dominance.

7 A recently-published 743-page tome on the history of philanthropy - *Philanthropy from Aristotle to Zuckerberg*, by Paul Valley - doesn't even have an index entry for 'fundraising'.

8 I don't have a copy of this book. If this were a paper about the history of fundraising that aimed to give a full review of the literature on this topic, then obviously it would be incomplete without including this book. However, this paper is just an introduction to the subject, including the paucity of literature dedicated to it, so it serves simply to acknowledge its existence. But if a reading of Cutlip's book obviates many of the ideas put forward in this paper, then all I can do is apologise and plead that I don't currently have \$140 spare.

9 A history of fundraising in the USA drawing on much of Cutlip's research and insights can be found in Kelly 1998, pp135-155.

2 Fundraising historiography

As the previous section argues, we need to understand the history of fundraising to help us better understand and tackle the modern challenges this profession faces.

In order to do that, we have to have some understanding of historiography and methods of historical analysis (which is why we are looking for fundraisers with an academic background in history to be part of this project).

Historiography is concerned with how history is studied and written (Arnold 2000, p5; Weber 2016, p5), and doing so throws up many questions (Arnold 2000, p5). The purpose of this project is as much to consider the historiography of fundraising, and the questions it throws up, and how different ways to think about the actual history of fundraising can give us different insights, as it is to fill in the factual gaps in the historical record of fundraising.

There are different ways to think about history and to conduct historical analysis and these have changed over time. This section explores two approaches: the so-called 'Great Men' of history, and social and cultural history. This section looks at how these two historiographical lenses have been applied to the history of fundraising.

2.1 The 'Great Men' of fundraising

We have the 'Great Men' view of history - the idea that historical events were caused by the actions of a few 'great' players, people such as Alexander the Great or Winston Churchill: "Events occurred because remarkable people made them happen." (Arnold 2000, p49). A lot of fundraising history takes the 'Great Man'/remarkable people approach,¹⁰ particularly book chapters providing an introductory overview. For example, the chapter on the history of fundraising in Adrian Sargeant and Elaine Jay's UK textbook is primarily a chronological narrative of the development of fundraising as driven by leading players such as the Victorian philanthropists (such as Carnegie, Rockefeller and Rowntree) and the early 20th Century American fundraiser Charles Sumner Ward, who is "credited with revolutionising the practice of fundraising in the USA and UK" and is "regarded by many as the father of modern fundraising" (Sargeant and Jay 2014, p10). Other book chapters influenced by the Great Men/chronological narrative view of history include Harrah-Cornforth and Boros (1991), Lindahl (2010), and Mullin (1995).

Along with chronicling the activities of a few influential players, these introductory overviews also present a narrative chronology of the key facts and developments, such as the first modern direct mail campaign. Fundraising history is presented as, according to either Arnold Toynbee or Henry Ford:¹¹ "One damn thing after another."

Beth Breeze of the University of Kent argues that these accounts present an "origin myth" that fundraising as an organisational function dates only to the start of the 20th Century, partly because of the lack of tangible evidence of organised fundraising prior to this (Breeze 2017, pp53-54), while such approaches also focus on the process of fundraising rather than its purpose (ibid, b31).

There is no implied criticism of these chapters, or the authors, here, since many of this writing was not intended to be - and therefore was not written as - historical analysis: their purpose is only to provide

¹⁰ And they are pretty much all men.

¹¹ Or maybe someone else - ironic that no-one knows for sure the source of this historical quote about the nature of history.

an introductory historical overview of the fundraising profession/function. Yet this approach leaves so much out. The Great Men/remarkable people view of history could reduce the Giving Scotland episode to the action of Jim Traynor in instigating the crisis and Fiona Duncan in resolving it. But this leaves out questions such as:

- Why did Jim Traynor write what he did using the language he did - "you could be funding some sleazy corrupt scumbag's holiday cottage in the Maldives"? (MacQuillin 2004a).
- Is it relevant that he was a football commentator? Does this tell us something about the audience he was writing for and why they responded to his call to arms the way they did?
- Why did the focus of the Giving Scotland campaign - nostalgia: one of its key messages was 'when did you last give to charity' with images of 1970s photographs and a soundtrack on the TV ads provided by 70s Scottish glam rockers The Sweet (MacQuillin 2004b; Duncan 2014) - work so well? Fiona Duncan's own case study on the SOFII website presents only the facts of what the campaign did and achieved, but no analysis of why it was successful?
- Why did Duncan lead this initiative? Why not someone else?
- Why did Giving Scotland run out of steam as soon as the immediate crisis was over? This is something that would appear to happen regularly to initiatives such as this. Finding out what leads to the ultimate failure of these initiatives to endure is an important question to answer before anyone considers future initiatives on the same lines.
- What is Giving Scotland's legacy and what influence has it had on regulation and practice?¹² 

¹² The influence of Giving Scotland on the development of fundraising regulation and legislation in England/Wales and Scotland is undocumented, known only to a few people involved in behind-the-scenes lobbying, and is probably wider and longer lasting than most fundraisers realise (personal communication - 12 January 2021 - from Andrew Watt, former deputy chief executive of the Institute of Charity Fundraising Managers/Institute of Fundraising from 1998-2005).

2.2 The social and cultural history of fundraising

To answer questions such as those asked at the end of the previous section, we can take a different approach to historical analysis, looking at history from a social or cultural perspective.

Social history examines historical events in terms of social and economic factors and relationships that affected ordinary (rather than 'great' or 'remarkable') people, and explores how these related to changes in society. An example of such an approach is the postulated cause of the English Civil War being as much the rise of a new English 'middling class' as it was the disputes between parliament and the Crown over ultimate political authority and sovereignty (Arnold 2000, p84).

Cultural history - informed by the discipline of anthropology - looks at much more than the things that are assumed to make up society's culture, such as art, theatre, music and the like. Rather, cultural history considers "patterns of thought, understanding, modes of language, rituals of life and ways of thinking". It takes the social historical idea that economic circumstances affect the way people think and behave, and argues instead that the "ways in which people think affect their relationship to society and economics" (ibid, p87, emphasis in original).

The questions about historical public and media attitudes towards fundraising clearly lend themselves to social and cultural historical analysis: why do people think the way they do about fundraising and how has that shaped their relationship to and with charities? And have they always thought this way?

The evidence from the Manchester Guardian in 1927 and the Liverpool Post in 1916 suggest these attitudes have a long tradition. If the attitudes are the same now as they were a century ago, then why have they remained static while so much else about charity and fundraising has changed and society has moved on?

Similarly, a social and/or cultural historical analysis of fundraising might look at the development of the profession not just as a chronology of events and a narrative of the role of key players in those events (the approach taken in the first half - pp18-27 - of Harrah-Conforth and Boros 1991), but instead ask and seek to answer a whole series of different questions:

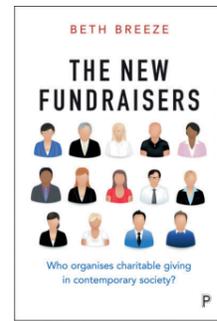
- Who became fundraisers and why did they do so?
- How was the profession perceived/in what kind of esteem was it held?
- How did fundraisers acquire their professional knowledge?
- What was the experience of fundraisers to being criticised by the press? How did they respond?
- How did the 'great men' of fundraising act and behave? What was the experience of a staffer at Sumner Ward's fundraising agency in the 1920s?
- How ethical was fundraisers' behaviour in the past and what factors shaped and drove their behaviour.

It's received wisdom in fundraising that fundraising is a profession that most people 'fall into by accident'. This was the case in 1990 (Harrah-Conforth and Boros 1991, p28), and it is still the case 30 years later (MacQuillin 2020a); while another historical route into the profession was that people inherited a fundraising firm (Harrah-Conforth and Boros 1991, p28) - a route presumably open only the sons (and maybe the daughters) of fundraising's 'great men'.

Why fundraising has been an accidental profession for so long and why so many people want to retain its 'accidental' status (MacQuillin 2020a) is a question that is clearly amenable to cultural historical analysis: analysing the 'accidental profession' through the "patterns of thought, understanding, modes of language, rituals of life and ways of thinking" of the people who enter (or do not enter, for whatever reason) the profession. So do we have any accounts of fundraising history writing using a social or cultural lens?

Beth Breeze's 2017 book *The New Fundraisers* looks at the history of fundraising from a social and economic perspective. The first chapter in the book is titled 'A history of fundraising in the UK', but this is more than just a chronology of events and fundraising innovations and initiatives. For example, after just one paragraph introducing the chapter, we encounter the first section heading 'Fundraisers have much lower profiles than philanthropists', which immediately raises a problem for historians of fundraising: "Askers leave far fewer traces than philanthropists." (Breeze 2017, p25.)

Breeze then goes on to explore fundraising's origin



myth (see previous section) and six of the 'great men' - Charles Sumner Ward, Lyman Pierce and Jonathan Price Jones in the USA, and in the UK, Leslie Kirkley, Harold Sumption and Guy Stringer - who contributed to it (ibid, pp27-31), but challenges the perceived wisdom that they are the inventors of modern fundraising (ibid, pp30-31):

"All six of the 'Great Men' of US and UK fundraising... clearly deserve credit for their innovative and successful efforts... But to describe them as the 'inventors' of fundraising in their respective countries raises some awkward and unanswerable questions. How can this account be squared with the existence of systematic, organised fundraising campaigns before their time? And how did fundraising develop in any country other than the US and the UK? Is there a male triumvirate waiting to be named in every region that now has a thriving fundraising industry?"

In challenging the origin myth that fundraising was invented by great men in the early 20th Century,¹³ Breeze looks at the outcomes and impacts of fundraising throughout history, not just for evidence of its organised process; as mentioned in the preceding section, Breeze says many of the standard short histories of fundraising are concerned only with process and not purpose (ibid, p31).

By drawing on works on the history of philanthropy, Breeze presents evidence from classical times through to 19th Century that shows that "fundraising was an accepted and understood practice" (ibid, p33).

For the final third (pp45-54) of her book chapter

¹³ Another myth of fundraising history that warrants challenging is the claim made in the connection to the 1990 edition of Scott M. Cutlip's Fund Raising in the United States that "popular philanthropy, financed by organized, high-pressure fund raising, is uniquely American" - see s4.1.7.

looking at the history of fundraising in the UK, Breeze moves fully into a social (and cultural) history mode, with section headings such as:

- What social conditions facilitate fundraising?
- The spread of wealth and fundraising
- Continuity and change in fundraising over time
- Fundraising as a social problem.

In answering the question: What broader social conditions enabled the development of the systematic organisation of generosity? - Breeze suggests three potential answers that point to the 18th Century as having been a "particularly conducive context for fundraising". These are (ibid, p45):

1. New ideas and thinking that emerged from the Enlightenment about how to improve society (quite clearly an approach of cultural history, which considers "patterns of thought, understanding, modes of language, rituals of life and ways of thinking" [Arnold 2000, p87]).
2. The emergence of a public sphere that created spaces for collective social action, giving rise to many new charities, leading to the birth of "collective [and] associational philanthropy" (Breeze 2017, p46)
3. The rapid spread of wealth across society, which enabled more people to participate in philanthropy, including the rise of the new 'middling class' (ibid, p47) - which, it has been argued, as we have already seen, was also a cause of the English Civil War.

Breeze presents the case study of Thomas Coram (1688-1751), whom she describes as the UK's "first identifiable fundraiser" (ibid, p50), more than a century-and-a-half earlier than the accepted inventors of modern fundraising, and who anticipated some of modern fundraising's techniques (ibid, p49). Coram



In her social history of fundraising in the Britain, Beth Breeze (far left) identifies Thomas Coram - who raised more than £1million at today's values to establish the Foundling Hospital - as the UK's first fundraiser - beating the claims of others to be the founding father of British fundraising by 180 years and more.

- who raised £10,000 (£1.18million at today's values) to establish the Foundling Hospital (sometimes using what today might be described as 'undue pressure' and thus be contrary to the Fundraising Regulator's code of practice) - was clearly a remarkable man, and Breeze cites testimony to this effect.

But through a social history approach, Breeze examines and describes the social conditions and context that enabled Coram to demonstrate his remarkable fundraising credentials: Coram was a product of his time; not a 'great man' who transcended it.

Later in the chapter, Breeze raises the question of the "social problem" of fundraising (ibid, pp52-53) - acknowledging that public and media attitudes to fundraising of the type typified in the reports in the *Manchester Guardian* and *Liverpool Echo* in s1, and that led to the 2004 crash in Scottish Giving and the 2015 fundraising crisis is a social/societal problem had historical roots.

Although only the first chapter of Breeze's book is explicitly about the history of fundraising, and the purpose of the book is to empirically theorise the professional identity of modern fundraisers (ibid, back cover), the whole of *The New Fundraisers* can also be read as a work of social history, for example in its analysis of the 'art vs science' debate in fundraising (ibid, pp 91-135).

There are other attempts to examine history through alternative lenses. For example, in a 2016 blog

6 *"Why fundraising has been an accidental profession for so long and why so many people want to retain its 'accidental' status is a question that is clearly amenable to cultural historical analysis: analysing the 'accidental' though the "patterns of thought, understanding, modes of language, rituals of life and ways of thinking" of the people who enter (or do not enter, for whatever reason) the profession.'*

on HistPhil, Rhodri Davies looked at the historical economic causes of fundraising malpractice, concluding that they were probably little different to the conditions that were in place prior to the fundraising crisis:

"The lesson to take is not that charities have always behaved badly when it comes to fundraising. Rather, it is that during periods when high demand for charity services is combined with vigorous competition for available funds (as was found in the Victorian era, and as we find in today's climate of austerity and reduced government spending), the pressure on charities to push the boundaries in terms of fundraising becomes acute and can spill over into malpractice. Charities should be aware of this cycle and try to prepare themselves for tougher times so that they do not end up transgressing in the pursuit of funding and thus risk damaging public trust."

Another similar approach to nonprofit history is taken by David C. Hammack - a history professor at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio. Hammack's field of study is the nonprofit section, and in one paper (Hammack 2006) he analyses the historic economic drivers to giving in the USA. However, unlike Beth Breeze, Hammack doesn't then extend his analysis to consider how this impacts, affects or facilitates fundraising. In fact, fundraising is mentioned in passing just twice in his paper (p453 and p463). It's a further illustration of how fundraising requires its own field of historical study and should not be treated as a subset of or adjunct to the history of philanthropy. 6

3

I read the news today: Fundraising, The Beatles, history and the media

Even if you are not a fan of The Beatles, the group are such cultural icons that you must have an inkling of their history. You're probably familiar with tropes such as John Lennon was leader, the angry genius, into avant garde musical and political ideas; while Paul McCartney was a far lesser songwriter who wrote trite, commercial music and was a bossy PR manipulator whose control freakery ultimately split the group.

This was the received history of the group through much of the 1970s and 1980s, and into the early 1990s. Much of that history is wrong; and the reasons why it is wrong - why the historiography has been so poor - are lessons for how fundraising needs to tackle its recent history, while signposting some of the pitfalls awaiting us that we should strive to avoid.

Beatles historiography has been analysed by American historian Erin Weber, of Newman University in Wichita, Kansas (Weber 2016). Weber points out that many of the earliest attempts to chronicle the Beatles' story after the band split in 1970 were done by journalists (ibid, p205). These journalists often had an agenda, choosing to promote and champion either the Lennon or McCartney side of the split (usually John's side - which may be one reason why you think Paul wrote tacky commercial rubbish).

They were too close to the subject and made little attempt at objectivity, choosing historical facts that fit their preferred narrative and discounting those that did not, in a display of "deliberate authorial bias". The authors were also too close in time to the subject to be able to attempt such objectivity, even if they wished to - there was not sufficient "historical distance" between them and the object of their study (ibid, p115, p117), meaning that the 'facts' contained in many such histories were little more than speculation, hearsay and opinion (ibid, p166).

Neither did they analyse, verify or document their sources (ibid, p195, p205)

A key theme of the immediate post-split narrative was to anoint Lennon as the group's sole musical genius, even though most authors had no qualification to do so (they were not musicologists). Musicology-trained authors consider John and Paul to both be musical geniuses (ibid, p199).

George Martin, the Beatles' producer, described much of what was written about the band by journalists in the 70s and 80s as "misinformed rubbish" (ibid, p14, p160).

Another group of chroniclers of the story of The Beatles were members of the group's inner circle (studio engineers, publicists etc.), who also lacked the historical distance to attempt objectivity, were too close to their subject, and exhibited favouritism (ibid, p199). But they also had a further incentive to avoid strenuous objectivity, which was to protect their own position in the story and maintain their place in the inner circle.

So why and how is any of this relevant to the history of fundraising? It's because all the conditions and factors that led to such poor historiography in chronicling the world's greatest ever pop group,¹⁴ which in turn led to such bad history of the group, are present in our attempt to chronicle the recent history of fundraising.

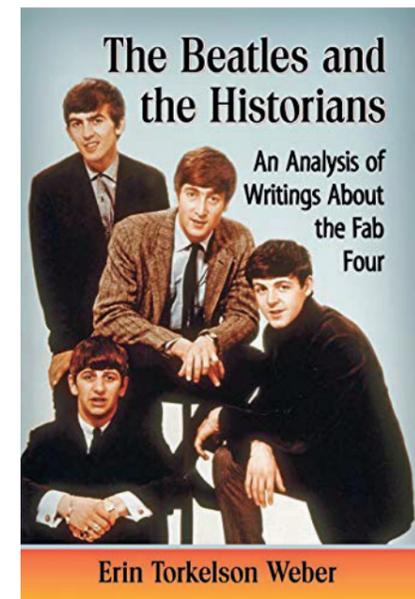
To a first approximation, everything that has been written about professional fundraising in the mainstream media in the UK, USA, and Australia (not quite so much in Canada) since the turn of the 21st Century is "misinformed rubbish", written by journalists pursuing their own agendas, who are not qualified - they know/understand very little about fundraising - to make objective judgements

about their area of interest. They are as much a part of the 'social problem of fundraising' as they are standing outside of it and reporting on it; arguably the media are prime movers in the social problem of fundraising, as evidenced by the 2004 crash in Scottish giving caused by Jim Traynor's newspaper column, and their role in driving the regulatory response to the fundraising crisis (MacQuillin et al 2019, pp57-58).

Most of us in fundraising are familiar with what happened following the suicide of 92-year-Olive Cooke, which set in motion the fundraising crisis in the UK in 2015 (Salmon 2016; Hind 2017). We know that neither the coroner nor her family blamed her death on the amount of fundraising direct marketing she received (BBC 2019). The mainstream news media however regularly and widely reported that the excessive fundraising Mrs Cooke received was the cause of her death, so much that this is the standard narrative that the news media still promotes (ibid).

Virtually all the 'history' of the fundraising crisis has so far been written by the media. Much, if not most, of it is misinformed rubbish. There is very little by the fundraising profession that has attempted to chronicle the crisis, let alone analyse its causes. A detailed account is provided by Hind (2017); while MacQuillin et al (2019, pp55-63) analyse the media and regulatory response to Mrs Cooke's death in the context of regulatory theory and practice. The best accounts written by practitioners (e.g. Salmon 2016; Burnett 2021) aim to set out what happened and try to make sense of it.

But there has been no analysis of the causes of the crisis. The profession-led initiative in response to the crisis - the Commission on the Donor Experience - assumed what the cause was and proceeded to make recommendations based on this assumption, without



'All the conditions and factors that led to such poor historiography in chronicling the story of The Beatles, which in turn led to such bad history of the group, are present in our attempt to chronicle the recent history of fundraising.'

14 Indisputable historical fact.

actually doing the analysis (MacQuillin 2017). What we have never had is something that contextualises the fundraising crisis as an ongoing part of the “social problem of fundraising”; that saw it as part and parcel of the same ‘problem’ that encompasses Jim Traynor and Giving Scotland, the sentiments expressed in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* in 1939, *Manchester Guardian* in 1927 and *Liverpool Echo* in 1916, and back into the 19th Century (Davies 2016) and almost certainly – if we look for it – back to Thomas Coram and beyond, perhaps even to the Puritans (Pallotta 2009, pp32-34).

Yet where do we look for it? With so little chronicling of fundraising’s history done by members of the fundraising profession, we are left to piece together this history from the reports of journalists: because there is no history of fundraising upon which we can draw (notwithstanding Cutlip’s 1965/1990 account of fundraising in the USA), we have no choice but to trawl for cuttings from the likes of the *Manchester Guardian* and *Liverpool Echo*.

But how can we be sure these articles are not also misinformed rubbish? The journalists who wrote those articles were part of the social problem of fundraising then as current journalists are today.

As Erin Weber says (ibid, p213):

“For students of modern history, the story of The Beatles highlights the pivotal role the not always impartial press plays in shaping popular perception and influencing historical narratives.”

It is therefore imperative, and incumbent on us, that we start to write our own history of fundraising, and that this is more than a chronological narrative of what the profession’s ‘great men’ have done. If we don’t do this, then we risk handing over the writing of our profession’s history to people who will almost certainly write misinformed rubbish about it. Imagine someone researching the fundraising crisis in, say,

2035, 20 years after it occurred. If the researcher is good at their job, they might come across the report I co-authored with Adrian Sargeant and Harriet Day for the European Center on Not-for-profit Law (MacQuillin et al 2019) or BBC Radio 4’s *The Corrections* programme, which revisits stories the media have got wrong (BBC 2019). But it seems likely that their main sources will be contemporaneous media articles – i.e. misinformed rubbish.

Yet if we are to write our own history, we encounter the same challenges of historiography that befell the Beatles’ insiders when they wrote and published their memoirs: we are too close to the subject; there is not enough historical distance between us and many of the stories we want to tell; and many of us have our own roles and places in these stories we wish to promote and preserve.

And furthermore, most of us are not academically-trained, professional historians (and I can’t see many of these being attracted to study fundraising history). So we are going to face challenges in matters such as choosing which lens of historiography (e.g. social history or cultural history) to use and more practical matters in doing historiography, such as discriminating between and verifying different sources by doing source analysis.

As Weber (2016, p213) further warns, Beatles historiography...

“...provides crucial insight into how modern narratives are shaped and discarded and how emotion and personal opinion influence primary and secondary sources...It explores how the world’s most famous men and women deliberately pursue efforts to ensure and direct their legacy and their historiography. It shows how essential historical distance, proper methodology and objectivity are to producing accurate accounts of events.”

Nevertheless, these are challenges that we should try to rise to. Fundraising’s history needs to be told. But it first needs to be analysed, because it is far, far more than a list of campaigns run by the profession’s ‘great men’. ●

4

The Rogare project – what can we do and how can we do it?

There is a good case for studying fundraising history. Doing so will help us better understand the current challenges we face by putting these in a historical context – such as the media’s role in the ‘social problem’ of fundraising – and so help us devise better solutions to these challenges in the future.

And there is a good case for studying it properly and rigorously, aspiring to the standards of historiography that a trained historian would follow. But doing it properly is a potentially massive undertaking. And sometimes we might just want to do fundraising history just for the sheer fun of it.

There are a great many gaps in the remarkable people/chronological narrative, so we could piece these together, not least of which might be to fill in the roles of the remarkable/great women of fundraising who, perhaps unsurprisingly, are absent from the story so far. Filling the fundraising chronology with more facts will give us a fuller picture, put our profession on an even stronger foundation, and give us more opportunities to ask different historical questions that might not have been previously asked.

There is a spectrum of things we can look at as part of our study of fundraising history, and there is spectrum of techniques and ways of working that we can bring to bear on that. But whatever we do as part of a Rogare project, we want it to be fun and we want it to be ‘do-able’.

And so we are not proposing that we write a full history of fundraising. Instead, we’re looking at setting up something more like a fundraising history study group, or a fundraising history society – a group of people (practitioners, academics and others) with a shared interest in fundraising history who can meet (virtually or in person when possible) to share thoughts and ideas.

It would be up to the group’s members to decide on the historical issues/questions they want to pursue – i.e. their own research agenda (there’s an initial list of possible research questions in s4.1), how they’re going to do that, and how they’ll make their ideas available to the wider profession (some possible outputs are listed on p17).

4.1 Possible research questions

4.1.1 The 'social problem' of fundraising

This is the example used throughout this paper to illustrate a cultural history and social history approach to the study of fundraising's history. Its study would consider a narrative of public attitudes towards fundraising that stretches back decades, if not centuries, seeking the root causes of such a narrative in social conditions and cultural attitudes. For example, Dan Pallotta has argued that current attitudes to professional charities have their roots in 17th Century Puritan attitudes to charity (Pallotta 2009, pp33-34).

4.1.2 An accidental profession

Many fundraisers will tell you that they 'fell into fundraising by accident' (MacQuillin 202a, pp16-17). In fact this accounts for about 44 per cent of fundraisers in the UK (Breeze 2017, p70), while in the USA, it was estimated that at the start of the 1990s, about 50 per cent of male fundraisers over-60 had become fundraisers 'accidentally', so this process of unintentional entry to the fundraising roles has probably been going on since the 1950s (Harrah-Conforth and Boros 1991, p27-28). As mentioned previously in this paper, why fundraising has not been a professional choice for so many people is a question that lends itself to social and cultural analysis, the upshot of doing which may give us more insight into attitudes towards professional fundraising, thus going some way to explain why some people start fundraising careers while some are lost to the profession. But exploring this question historically might also help to contextualise why many current practitioners see the accidental nature of fundraising - compared to making a choice to enter via a professional qualifying pathway - to be a good thing (MacQuillin 2020a, pp66-71).

4.1.3 The role of women in the development of the profession/organisation of fundraising

Many of the histories of fundraising have taken the 'great man' approach, which is advisedly named, since most of the people identified in these histories as the inventors of modern fundraising are indeed men. But what has been the role of women in building the profession? And what has been the experience of women in the fundraising profession? What was it like to be a woman working at the fundraising company run by one of fundraising's founding fathers. This history of women in fundraising is largely absent, though there are examples, such as Elizabeth Dale's paper on how the fundraising profession has undergone a process of 'feminisation', whereby men gravitate (or elevate themselves) to the senior, better paid and more desirable roles, while relegating women to junior and entry level jobs (Dale 2017). Beverly Gordon's *Bazaars and Fair Ladies: The History of the American Fundraising Fair* would no doubt be a contribution to this topic.

4.1.4 Decolonisation of fundraising

A recent development has been to approach fundraising and philanthropy through the lens of critical theory and decolonisation. This has spawned the community-centric fundraising (CCF) movement, which sets itself firmly against the standard donor-centred fundraising narrative (Le 2017, 2017/20). If the CCF movement is correct, then it is not unreasonable to expect this approach to look not just at historical fundraising relationships with donors, but also how the fundraising has developed as a predominantly white profession - what social, cultural and economic conditions held back the 'great men'/remarkable people of colour during fundraising's formative years? What alternative histories of the evolution of the fundraising profession need to be told?

4.1.5 Histories of particular types of fundraising

Each type of fundraising has its own history, which will be more than one damn thing after another. Direct marketing and major donor fundraising will have their own cultural and social histories. So will street face-to-face fundraising (F2F). 'Chugging' is often a bellwether for public attitudes about fundraising - and so would be integral in analysing fundraising as a social problem - and has historical antecedents, as this paper has already illustrated. But street F2F may also have its own origin myth and even though street fundraising in its modern form originated in the 1990s, accounts of its invention by Greenpeace in Austria - written by people involved - give slightly different versions of events: did Greenpeace get 13,000 new donors in 1995 (Upsall and Sonne 2009) or 15,000 (Bucchaus 2010)? But a bigger difference is implied by one account that suggests the invention of F2F was opportunistic and serendipitous (Bucchaus 2010) and the other that states that it was the result of meticulous strategy and planning (Upsall and Sonne 2009). From the perspective of applied historiography, how should we go about discriminating between these two accounts of the origin of F2F?

4.1.6 The history of the donor-centred narrative and the failure of donor-centred praxis

Lots of fundraisers talk the talk of donor-centred fundraising but far fewer, it seems, walk the walk and actually practise it (MacQuillin 2020b). So what has gone wrong? Why has the dominant philosophy of how fundraisers ought to treat donors and steward relationships with them not become the dominant practice; why do so many fundraisers still fail to implement donor-centred/relationship fundraising practices?

4.2 Possible outputs

- A statement or manifesto about the study of history of fundraising
- A series of research questions that establish the research agenda for the study of fundraising history
- Researching and producing an ongoing timeline/chronology of fundraising's history by filling in more historical facts
- Widening the net of fundraising's great/remarkable people
- Start a resource/library of articles and books that cover fundraising's history and signpost people to them (the entries highlighted in bold and the references, further reading and resources sections on pp20-21 are a start at this)
- Start a regular discussion group
- A series of blogs by group members on historical matters that interest them
- More formal/in-depth papers on research questions
- A more formal paper on historiography in fundraising
- A webinar or symposium on fundraising history.

4.1.7 National fundraising histories

The written histories of fundraising have a decidedly Anglo-Saxon flavour. There isn't much of it, but what there is – or perhaps that should rather be, what we know of – is written in English about the history of fundraising in the USA and UK. When anglophone fundraising history does look at fundraising in other countries – for example, looking at the sale of 'indulgences' by the Catholic church in the middle ages – it's often as a precursor to the main business of the development of the organised profession in the UK and USA (e.g. Lindahl 2010; Sargeant and Jay 2014).

There are, quite clearly, histories to be told of fundraising in other countries, particularly those with established professional organisations, such as Japan. The question is whether those histories have already been recorded and documented and how those stories are told – recall Beth Breeze's snarky comment about whether every country had a triumvirate of great male founding fathers awaiting discovery – and how we can access them if they are available.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is not much published material in English on the history of fundraising in non-anglophone countries. There's an exhibit on the SOFII website called 'a brief history of fundraising in France' and it certainly is brief – just 193 words long. The SOFII exhibit mentions none of French fundraising's great men/remarkable people, though some are sure to exist. But what of the social and cultural conditions that facilitated the historical development of fundraising in France (like those Beth Breeze identified for Great Britain – see s2.2)? What impact, for example, might the French Revolution have had on how people ask for donations? Might it have empowered them to ask or inhibited them from doing so?

One contribution to the historical analysis of fundraising outside the UK and USA compared more than 300 national fundraising campaigns in the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the USA between 1950 and 2011 (Van Leeuwen and Wiepking 2011). The analysis focuses on the results of the fundraising – such as characteristics of donors, amounts given and causes they give to, etc.; and success or failure of campaigns is attributed to a) how donors perceive beneficiaries, b) characteristics of donors, and c) "structural characteristics of giving regimes", such as the country's fiscal regime and degree of media interest. The paper also points out that "public

distrust of charitable giving is nothing new" (ibid, p235). Another paper considers how national fundraising campaigns have changed in Spain (Rey-García, Álvarez-González and Valls-Riera 2012), identifying the key influences of both the church and the state, particularly on charity lotteries, the "most idiosyncratic national campaign instrument in Spain", going back as far as 1763 (ibid, p307). But so far, along with Tillotson's (2008) history of community chests in Canada, little more than that has emerged form a preliminary sweep of the literature.

A further possible topic of historical research emerging from national fundraising histories is what they tell us about the development of fundraising practice generally, and whether such an understanding would cause us to revise the Anglo-American origin myth of organised fundraising. As already noted, the foreword to the 1990 edition of Scott M. Cutlip's *History of Fund Raising in the United States*, states that: "Popular philanthropy, financed by organized, high-pressure fund raising, is uniquely American." It adds: "There is also increasing interest overseas, as American approaches to fund raising become an example for other nations." Fundraisers in other parts of the world might dispute such assertions.

The claim in Cutlip's book is that American fundraising practices are an example to the rest of the world. So there is a further historical research question about how appropriate the adoption of US fundraising practices has been in some other countries, how they have affected the development of fundraising in those countries (for better or worse?), and even whether American fundraising has been actively imposed on unwilling national fundraising organisations. In 2001, leading Italian fundraiser Beatrice Lentati said of the Association of Fundraising Professionals' attempt to establish an Italian chapter (Mason 2001, p22):

"We thought it would be difficult to take the US model and put it directly into Italy. The feeling at the beginning was that they were being imperialist. As far as we could see they wanted to use their bylaws and structures and a code of ethics that weren't appropriate. In the end we convinced them that we should be doing something very Italian, and we now have a completely Italian association without any AFP involvement." ●

Afterword



Rhyannon Boyd
Project leader

I have always been interested in learning about ordinary people and what was happening behind the headlines and versions of history we were taught in school. While I was studying economic and social history at university, I became very interested in the study of poverty and inequality and that fuelled my passion for working for a charity. I was particularly interested with how and why the Victorian narrative of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor still permeates and endures in certain sections of the media and politics today.

Those attitudes also influenced the founding of some of the well-known charities we still know today. Engaging with the history of our profession gives us a window to our past and some understanding of how we got to where we are now and our potential for the future.

When we study the historiography of fundraising, we must proactively seek out and critically analyse sources and interpretations to give us context, voices and stories of those not traditionally heard through the 'Great Man' approach or a simple chronology of events. How we study the history of fundraising enables us to examine and critically question the cultural, political, social and economic influences across time that have formed the narratives around how our profession has developed and what we believe to be true.

There are two quotes that I think illustrate the importance of studying history.

The first is by The Jamaican political activist Marcus Garvey, who said that "a people without the

knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots".

The second comes from the American historian Aberjhani: "The study of history empowers nations and individuals with an ability to avoid errors of the past and lay foundations for victories in the future."

I very much invite you to contribute your thoughts and ideas to this project, which I am delighted to lead. I very much hope that by shining a light on the historical analysis of fundraising that fundraisers now and in the future can better understand the errors of the past and shape future success. ●

Project team (so far - May 2021)

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Rhyannon Boyd | Bath NHS Foundation Trust (UK) |
| Ruby Beaumont | Fight for Sight (UK) |
| Giovanna Bonora | VIDAS (Italy) |
| Emma Doran | Ask Direct (Ireland) |
| Mike Johnston | HJC New Media (Canada) |
| Marina Jones | Royal Opera House (UK) |
| Harpreet Kondel | Animals Asia (UK) |
| Jayne Lacny | Freelance fundraiser (UK) |
| Howard Lake | UK Fundraising (UK) |
| Sarah Lyons | Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia (Canada) |
| Sarah MacQuillin | DFN Project Search (UK) |
| Mark Phillips | Bluefrog/Rogare (UK) |
| Ruth Smyth | Boldlight/Rogare (UK) |
| Daryl Upsall | Daryl Upsall International (Spain) |

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References highlighted in bold indicate a book, paper or blog that is predominantly focused on general fundraising history/historiography (rather than a specific event or topic, such as the fundraising crisis or the origin of F2F). See also the Further Reading section for references on fundraising history that are not cited in this paper.

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Fundraising history resources

Indiana University. Guide to the collection of oral history interviews at Indiana University Bloomington. http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/findingaids/view?doc.view=entire_text&docId=ohrc087

Queer Ideas blog (Mark Phillips) – Archive of posts about the history of fundraising. <https://queerideas.co.uk/category/categories/history-of-fundraising>

Get in touch

Ian MacQuillin - Director
ianmacquillin@rogare.net
+44 (0)7977 422273

www.rogare.net
Twitter: @RogareFTT

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FUNDRAISING

Bluefrog

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<https://bluefroglondon.com>

Stephen Thomas

Stephen Thomas

Full-service fundraising agency (Canada)
<https://stephenthomas.ca>

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