

In this Issue

This *Briefing* is published twice a year by the Industrial Relations Research Unit (IRRU). It contains summaries of key findings from recent and current research projects and analysis of significant industrial relations developments. The reports aim to inform and contribute to the thinking of practitioners in industrial relations and human resource management. We are currently reviewing the format and content of *IRRU Briefing* and would be grateful if you would complete and return the short questionnaire accompanying this issue.

May 1st 2004 saw a further and historic step in the removal of Europe's cold-war divide with the accession to the European Union of eight post-communist, central eastern European countries. The first feature looks at the implications of the EU's eastern enlargement for industrial relations and for Europe's 'social model'. The second feature reports the findings of a pathbreaking study of women's collective organisation within trade unions. The third and fourth articles are edited versions of features originally prepared for the European Industrial Relations Observatory, as part of IRRU's contribution in its role as the Observatory's UK national centre. They deal with managing absence from work and offshoring of service sector jobs, respectively. This issue also carries reports of the 2004 Lowry lecture, given by Renate Hornung-Draus of the German Confederation of Employers, and on the newly established West Midlands Employment Relations Forum.

IRRU's research ranges much wider than the topics covered in this *Briefing*. Many of our recent papers can be found on IRRU's web site. Please go to <http://users.wbs.warwick.ac.uk/group/IRRU> For further information on our work, please contact the IRRU Research Secretary at the address on the final page.

Between 'old' and 'new'? Industrial Relations and EU Enlargement

Guglielmo Meardi

During the tense 'diplomatic' exchanges that preceded the war on Iraq, US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld drew a much-quoted distinction between the 'old' Europe of France and Germany and the 'new' represented by the post-communist countries due to enter the EU. In the polemical turmoil that followed, former French foreign minister Hubert Védrine defined Rumsfeld's 'new' Europe as Washington's 'Trojan donkeys'. Strikingly similar arguments can be heard in debates over labour markets and industrial relations. Some insist that western continental Europe is 'sclerotic', while the Central Eastern European (CEE) countries are the new 'economic tigers'. Others fear that these countries, by entering the EU, will turn out to be an American Trojan Horse that will undermine the so-called European social model. The impact of EU enlargement on industrial relations, therefore, is not solely an issue for the new CEE member states; it concerns industrial relations across western Europe too. It is with this perspective that current IRRU research is examining the impact of inward investment into CEE countries on employment practice. Here, the wider implications for industrial relations and the so-called 'European social model' arising from the EU's 2004 eastern enlargement are reviewed.

At the outset it is helpful to distinguish between the European social model, as a broad and influential construct subscribed to by the EU but largely produced by the individual countries of continental western Europe, and EU regulation in industrial relations in a narrow sense (directives, other regulations and the 'softer' processes of social dialogue and benchmarking). The European social model has been empirically identified as a combination of three features which distinguish it from those of Europe's main competitors (the US and Japan): extensive basic social security for all citizens; a high degree of interest organisation (trade unions and employers' associations) and co-ordinated, collective wage bargaining (through sector-based, multi-employer structures); and a relatively egalitarian wage and income distribution. All three features clearly affect how industrial relations works. The European social model is far from monolithic, with a range of national variants, and has been defined in various ways – 'co-ordinated', 'organised', 'social market' - all concepts indicating that social constraints on economic forces are stronger than under 'liberal' capitalism.

The EU's recent enlargement to include eight post-communist countries is likely to affect both EU industrial relations regulation and the European social model. Given the relatively limited regulatory competence of the EU in the field of industrial relations, the immediate effects of enlargement should not be that great. All the new member states have implemented in their own legislation the *acquis communautaire*, - that is existing EU directives - with only a couple of minor 'transitory periods' for some health and safety regulations. As regards the EU's social dialogue (the so-called 'soft *acquis*'), in most CEE countries employer and employee organisations look to be some way from being fully prepared to positively contribute, especially at the sector level. One immediate result, therefore, is that the 'social dialogue' agenda over the next few years might be rather limited.

Enlargement does seem likely to change the future directions of EU social policy. With the shift from 15 to 25 countries, EU decision-making will become more difficult, unless radical institutional reforms are introduced. Finding the large consensus necessary to pass new EU directives on social policy or industrial relations matters will prove more demanding than it already is. Moreover, socio-economic diversity amongst the member states has increased significantly. This will also jeopardise new initiatives, for cross-national differences in institutions and political preferences are the main obstacle to supranational regulations. Furthermore, in many of the applicant countries, political leaders have embraced neo-liberal ideas that are much closer to the Anglo-American version of capitalism, than to the west European continental model. After the enlargement the UK will no longer be the most deregulated, and Ireland will no longer have the more business friendly tax system in the EU. Examples of neo-liberal approaches amongst CEE member states include flat-rate or regressive taxation, fixed-term employment liberalisation, health care and pension systems privatisation and extensive working time flexibility. If the new member states base their competitiveness on flexibility and deregulation, they will probably construct a blocking minority against future EU regulatory initiatives in industrial relations. Resistance could also focus on existing measures on equal opportunities, an important area of EU social policy, given the different history of gender relations.

The underlying 'European social model' is also under some threat from the enlargement. Taking the model's three distinctive features mentioned above, it is apparent that most new entrants hardly subscribe. First, social security, although originally very comprehensive, is being largely marketised. Second, interest organisations are much weaker, with only embryonic employer associations and a union density rate about half that in western Europe. Moreover, wage setting is (with the exception of Slovenia) extremely decentralised, with almost no multi-employer bargaining and widespread pay individualisation. If the sector was previously the most important level of industrial relations in 12 out of 15 of member states,

from the May 1st 2004 this is the case in only one-half (13 out of 25). This may also have knock-on effects on existing member states, where multi-employer bargaining arrangements are under pressure from employers in particular. Third, inequality in the post-communist countries is notably more marked than in western Europe. At the company level, the pay fork between the highest and lowest paid occupations is typically twice as large as for their western counterparts.

One could be tempted to conclude that EU enlargement will bring to an end to what has been called the European mid-century social compromise – a specific way to manage the tensions of societies within capitalist economies, and of potential conflicts at work, through extensive redistribution and institutionalised guarantees for workers' voice. As a consequence, we might expect in future years a much more 'American' Europe, with only residual social security, weak and fragmented trade unions, and high levels of inequality. Indeed, the experience of some multinational companies in the new member states, which have managed to achieve the same productivity and quality levels as their western facilities without transferring the 'social side' of their production model, suggests that employers may stop seeing such a social compromise as their best strategy.

A closer look at recent developments, however, shows the situation as more open-ended than at first it appears. After a decade of passion for the free market, local populations in CEE countries appear to be growing increasingly sceptical, punishing at nearly every election the ruling party and choosing apparently more socially aware oppositions. Attitudes towards privatisation have changed radically. Trade unions have shown some signs of renewal, and there have been some (if limited) attempts at re-organising industrial relations. Examples are the law on works councils in the Czech Republic in 2001 and the reduction of working time in Poland the same year. And it is not only workers who demand more stability. Employers are finding that extreme flexibility, if profitable in the short term, reduces employee organisational commitment and makes companies more difficult to manage. EU enlargement may make this dynamic process more creative. For instance, the progressive inclusion of CEE workforces into European Works Councils has so far been a positive experience, providing some means for reducing the East-West gap. And inward investment by multinational companies increasingly corresponds to a complex re-specialisation and re-organisation of internationally integrated production operations than to simple relocation driven by low labour costs and lower labour standards (so-called 'social dumping').

At EU level, the enlargement may actually highlight the need to expand, instead of reduce, social policy interventions. And if the expected economic benefits for the core countries do - at least in part - materialise, this could also raise the necessary resources to fund such policies. Popular support for doing so may also emerge, as long as 'structural' policies supporting the poorest regions are combined with social policy initiatives which benefit both eastern and western citizens. The debate over the inclusion of social rights into the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and therefore the proposed constitution, shows that underpinning social cohesion through guaranteeing basic employment rights still remains, in the eyes of some, crucial to advancing the goal of economic integration.

[1,360 words]

Women's Equality in British Trade Unions

In her recent book, *Women's Equality in British Trade Unions**, **Jane Parker** focuses on women's groups in a trade union context. Such groups involve collective organising by women that responds to their concerns and needs for access to empowering positions within

trade unions. Examples include women's committees, women's conferences, women's networks, women's courses and training, women's caucuses, and women's workshops/meetings. As a gender-based structure, women's groups contrast with the formal, liberal democratic principles underpinning much traditional union organisation. Their importance is heightened by the feminisation of the labour force and of the membership of a growing number of trade unions, combined with women's on-going experience of inequity in various settings within and beyond the workplace. It also lies in the growing realisation on the part of unions of the need to be responsive to women's priorities as an integral part of their revitalisation strategies.

While existing work has provided some insights into why women collectively organise within a trade union setting, a rigorous review of the relevant literature in industrial relations, women's studies, political studies, sociology and social psychology reveals the absence of an *integrated* body of work on union women's groups. Furthermore, research that focuses on these groups in unions has tended to examine only one or two individual structures, or to provide fairly 'broad-brush' findings in relation to women's collective organising across unions. The book provides a more comprehensive empirical and conceptual contribution by addressing the following issues: the features which influence the overall 'configuration' of women's groups within a union; the aims these groups pursue, how in practice they address them and the conceptions of equality which inform both aims and practice; and the impact of women's groups on gender equality in different unions.

The book's main findings draw on a field study of various women's groups of differing kinds in two major British unions, the then Manufacturing, Science and Finance (MSF) Union (now part of Amicus) and the Union for Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW), involving interviews, observation of meetings and reviewing documents. The findings illuminate hitherto uncharted aspects of union operations, and specifically, how women's groups influence, and are influenced, by them. Four main conclusions emerge. First, particular features of the union setting have a key, if not exclusive, influence on arrangements. Second, different types of women's group emphasise different aims, yet there is some overlap in these aims and the equality ideas that inform them. Third, groups pursue a wider range of aims, via uncoordinated equality approaches, than is formally recognised by unions or by commentators. Their impact is more extensive than is often officially reported, relating to union democracy, agenda, interest representation, power, and social processes. This emphasises how the under-exposure of women's activism can serve to under-estimate its efforts and effects. Fourth, while women's groups pursue and achieve more for union women than was previously realised, their current operations still seem unlikely to achieve the fundamental union transformation needed to achieve what Cynthia Cockburn has termed 'long equality'. Equal power sharing by male and female unionists thus suggests the need to *centre* women's groups in union strategies that themselves question the basis of union organisation. Groups also need to pursue multi-dimensional approaches to gender equality. This would mean both unions and women's groups adopting more innovative measures than those currently pursued (e.g. via more extensive links with community and social movements). The findings of the study also have important implications for policy-makers in terms of how they frame their analysis of gender equality and monitor progress in unions and other public institutions.

Further reading: Jane Parker, *Women's Equality in British Trade Unions*, Edwin Mellen Press, 2003 and 'We're on a road to somewhere: the impacts of women's groups in British unions' *Industrial Relations Journal* (2003) Vol. 34, No. 2, pp164-84.

[630 words]

West Midlands Employment Relations Forum Launched

An initiative originating from IRRU together with Acas Midlands Region saw the launch of the West Midlands Employment Relations Forum in March 2004. With the aim of helping to foster good employment practice across the West Midlands, the Forum is supported by the West Midlands CBI, the West Midlands EEF and the Midlands TUC. Over its first year, it is being sponsored by leading employment law firm Pinsents.

The Forum is organised around three half-day events a year, and aims to:

- provide authoritative briefings and promote informed debate on key employment relations issues;
- enable exchanges of information and experience;
- facilitate benchmarking of best practice;
- encourage research and analysis of regional employment relations developments.

It is also seeking to raise the profile of employment relations within the West Midlands at a time of devolution of a range of policy responsibilities on economic, industrial and labour market issues.

The launch event, held on March 24th, attracted over 60 participants. Senior managers from a wide range of industry and services, together with representatives from employers' associations, trade unions, Acas, labour lawyers and academia, discussed two of the 'hot topics' on the current employment relations agenda – age discrimination and pensions. Keynote speakers David Yeandle from the EEF and Sarah Veale of the TUC outlined the challenges posed by new legislation making age discrimination unlawful. The measures, which will be introduced in 2006, mean that employers can no longer treat workers differently according to their age. They could also outlaw compulsory retirement ages, although this issue is as yet unresolved. The legislation is arriving at a time of rapid changes in employer pension provision which has seen the closure of large numbers of final salary schemes to new members, adjustments to benefits in existing schemes and the rise of money purchase pension arrangements. The speakers considered how the twin developments are likely to affect each other, and outlined the respective policy responses of the EEF and TUC to the issues arising. The session closed with an employment law update from one of Pinsents labour lawyers.

The Forum's second event in late June addressed the forthcoming employee information and consultation legislation and included a joint management-employee presentation of the innovative employee representation and consultation arrangements at BMW's Hams Hall plant. These arrangements will be examined in our next issue.

Further information on Forum activities, and on membership, is available from Georgina Sutton, Acas Midlands, Warwick House, 6 Highfield Road, Birmingham, B15 3ED or from IRRU's Research Secretary.

[420 words]

2004 Lowry Lecture: Changing Role of Employers' Organisations

Renate Hornung-Draus, European and International Affairs Director of the Confederation of German Employers - one of Europe's most influential employer bodies – surveyed the changing role of employers' organisations in delivering the 2004 Warwick-Acas Lowry lecture on March 15th. The lecture series was initiated two years ago in honour of Sir Pat

Lowry, a former chair of Acas, visiting professor at Warwick and member of the Business School's Advisory Board.

Ms Hornung-Draus opened by observing that it was “a pleasure to be invited to give the lecture, particularly as we in continental Europe regard Britain, and Warwick in particular, as a reference for industrial relations research”. She showed how the traditional role of employers' organisations is being challenged by growing globalisation of markets and the increasing cost pressures which result; the emergence of complex supply chains involving widespread outsourcing, in which conflicts of interest between employers are magnified; and the arrival of new 'stakeholders' such as NGOs in the context of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Considering the changing roles of employer organisations at national and European levels, she noted that, in some ways, the developments taking place at European level go in the opposite direction to those at national level. While employer organisations at national level have moved from a clearcut collective bargaining profile towards one that is more politicised, diffuse and complex, employer organisations at EU-level have moved from being almost entirely focused on political lobbying of the EU institutions to a more active profile as social partners.

CSR initiatives, argued Ms Hornung-Draus, open up a completely new role for employers' organisations. They can give guidance on the contents and interpretation of universally agreed core labour standards and on how these standards can be translated into meaningful benchmarks for company practice and codes of conduct. Employer organisations can also protect companies from unreasonable NGO demands and help to solve conflicts over socially responsible behaviour which have the potential to inflict serious damage on companies.

The full text of the lecture is published electronically as Warwick Papers in Industrial Relations No. 73 available from IRRU's website <http://users.wbs.warwick.ac.uk/group/irru> or from IRRU's Research Secretary.

[350 words]

Managing absence from work

Paul Edwards

Studies published in 2003 and early 2004 examine the extent of absence from work in the UK and managerial policies of monitoring and control. They suggest that absence levels remain steady and are rarely seen as a problem, but also that new factors such as stress may be changing absence patterns and that the dominant managerial policy of neglect may need to change.

Absence levels in the UK are measured in two main ways. The first comprises periodic surveys by bodies including the CBI and CIPD. These surveys ask managers to estimate absence rates and the associated costs. Key findings from the latest CIPD survey published in July 2003, were that:

- the mean absence rate for 2002 was reported as 3.9%, down from 4.4% in 2001 and roughly similar to the two previous years' surveys. The rate was higher in the public sector than the private (4.6% against 3.1%);
- 90% of respondents saw sickness absence as significant or very significant to their organisations; and
- about half of respondents 'benchmark' absence levels against similar organisations.

Previous surveys going back to the 1980s give broadly similar numbers, but because samples are constructed on different bases trends are difficult to assess with any accuracy. The second method uses questions to individual employees through the General Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey. Estimates from the latter put the average absence rate at only 2%, while figures from the former indicate little in the way of an overall trend since the 1970s. Higher rates in the public sector are confirmed. A recent Health and Safety Executive study has noted a growth in self-reported work-related illness, a particular rise in reports of stress, and a rapid growth in sickness absence among those with a work-related illness, which doubled in the period 1995-2002. The HSE notes that stress is the second largest category in self-reported reasons for illness.

The costs of absence are estimated in the CIPD survey at an average of GBP 567 per employee per year. However, rigorous measurement remains very rare. A survey in 2003 of predominantly small engineering firms concluded that 'much absence reporting is merely a paper exercise' (*IRS Employment Review* 794, February 2004). A case study investigation of 13 organisations found that in only two could managers place any financial cost on absence (DTI Employment Relations Research Series No. 25, 2004).

Checklists and advice on good practice typically emphasise: the importance of record keeping; the involvement of line managers in attendance control; a systematic interview on the return to work from absence; and maintaining contact with workers who are absent for more than a few days. The extent and depth of record keeping is seemingly limited. On the line manager role, the survey of engineering firms reported that half the personnel managers interviewed felt that line managers did not play an active role in relation to long-term absence. The danger with the return-to-work interview is that the activity will be merely perfunctory, and some research indicates that, with growing performance pressures, dealing with return-to-work forms is not a priority. On maintaining contact, the difficulty is that absentees are by definition not visible and that once they are absent for a time cover is arranged and there is no immediate pressure to maintain contact. Moreover, health problems are inherently personal and difficult.

Despite growing attention to labour costs and the fact that absence is a significant cost, detailed efforts to measure and control attendance remain remarkably rare. The recent studies suggest several reasons. First, accurate measurement is difficult and time-consuming. Second, cost pressures mean, ironically, that managers have less time to deal with monitoring and control than was the case in the past. Third, action can entail inquiry into workers' personal circumstances, an approach with which many managers seem to feel uncomfortable. Fourth, hard evidence on the effectiveness of control policies is lacking. Finally, a striking fact about the British labour market is the reduced labour force participation of older workers, especially men; potential attendance control issues have thus been removed.

It is also the case, however, that some firms make attendance control a central part of their labour relations policies: a policy of neglect is not the only one available. Attendance control appears to work, however, where it is part of a wider set of measures, and simple 'crack-downs' have been found to be counter-productive. It may become more important in the future with growing concerns about stress at work and the need to balance work and family demands. The evidence to date indicates, however, that British firms are not well-prepared.

Further reading: The original feature is available from the European Industrial Relations Observatory on-line: <http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2004/04/feature/uk0404103f.html>

[780 words]

Offshoring of service sector jobs prompts union concerns

Paul Marginson

A series of highly publicised decisions by several major companies to relocate - or move 'offshore'- jobs in activities such as call centres and back-office operations to low labour cost countries such as India and China has prompted widespread concern amongst trade unions and a consultation exercise by the UK government. Recent decisions by Norwich Union, Lloyds TSB bank and the National Rail Enquiries service to transfer call centre operations involving, respectively, 2,350, 1,000 and 600 UK jobs to India, are part of a growing trend amongst large UK businesses to move call centre and back-office operations to lower labour cost locations in south and east Asia. HSBC bank has announced that it intends to shed 4,000 jobs in the UK as it relocates such work to India, Malaysia and China over the coming two years. These four companies are amongst 28 large firms identified by the Communication Workers' Union which have moved offshore, or announced plans to move offshore, some 50,000 customer-facing and back-office service sector jobs.

Whilst relocation of manufacturing operations to industrialising regions in relatively low labour cost countries is a well established trend, offshoring in the service sector of the economy is a comparatively new phenomenon. Financial services have been prominent in its growth, but call-centre, data processing and other back-office operations across a wide range of service sectors are also involved. A 2003 CBI survey found that 29 per cent of companies have already sent work offshore, and that 59 per cent are likely to do so over the next two years. The TUC estimates that between 150,000 and 750,000 jobs in the UK might eventually be affected by offshoring, with the eventual outcome depending on the public policy response. Offshoring of call-centres has attracted particular attention, since they now employ almost half-a-million people across the UK, representing nearly 2 per cent of the workforce. Many call-centre operations are located in areas which had suffered industrial decline over the past quarter century as traditional industries shrank. The employment and incomes brought by the growth of call centres have been important to economic regeneration. Signs of these new generation jobs disappearing overseas has prompted widespread concern amongst public agencies and trade unions.

Launching a consultation exercise with a position document ('Services and Offshoring: the impact of increasing international competition in services') in autumn 2003, the Department of Trade and Industry noted that offshoring brings both benefits and challenges for the economy. As an innovative business process that can drive down costs and increase productivity, offshoring can lower the cost base of UK companies making them more competitive in world markets. The paper also observed that 'it would be wrong to assume that offshoring is all one way traffic', pointing to continued substantial inward investment flows into the UK which include an element of 'inward offshoring'. On the downside are the 'short-term, transitional job losses' resulting from offshoring, which can have a particular regional impact. In responding to these challenges, the consultation document argues that 'What we must not do is fall into the temptation of protectionism. Attempting to prevent offshoring by putting up trade barriers would be costly and, in the long-run, ineffective'. Possible responses include looking at measures to further improve competitiveness, along with addressing shorter-term adjustment costs in particular regions should this prove necessary.

Trade unions have responded to the threat of job loss posed by offshoring in several ways. The TUC, responding to the Government's consultation exercise, argued that 'Big-scale offshoring is not inevitable. Trade unions and employers working with public agencies can influence the pace and direction of change'. It went on to underline the significant practical barriers to offshoring which exist (and which are often overlooked), that technological

change can work in both directions (resulting in some activities eventually returning to the UK), and that considerations of service quality and workforce reliability were leading some employers to review offshoring decisions. Describing the response of UK trade unions as 'pragmatic and non-protectionist' it called on the Government to formulate a national strategy which embraced a range of measures. Some individual trade unions, including the CWU and the TGWU, have been calling for rather tougher measures against offshoring.

Other unions have concluded innovative agreements with employers addressing the impact of offshoring on UK employment. For example, finance-union Unifi recently concluded an agreement with Barclays bank for managing employment security in the context of relocation of some activities (and therefore jobs) offshore. The agreement included commitments to enhanced information at an earlier stage in offshoring decisions and early consultation with workers affected, as well as a series of measures aimed at avoiding compulsory redundancies. The same union concluded an agreement on 'the management of change arising from global resourcing' with HSBC bank in 2003, which set out a series of measures to mitigate the impact of the transfer of UK-based bank work to the group's global processing centres. Connect, which represents BT's managerial and professional grades, concluded a 2003 agreement committing the company to ensuring good treatment of workers by overseas suppliers as well as avoiding compulsory redundancy.

The evidence so far on the impact of offshoring on service sector jobs points to its contingent nature, with the incidence and future scope depending on the configuration of several factors. These include the nature of the activities involved, the balance of advantage in terms of cost and service quality, available technologies - which continue to change, the availability of suitably qualified workforces in countries such as India and China at relatively low labour cost (which can also change) and the policy responses of Government, employers and trade unions in Britain. Insofar as the 'worst-case' scenarios in terms of job loss seem unlikely to materialise, there are echoes of debates two decades ago around the 'new international division of labour' under which manufacturing in advanced industrialised countries was held to be at widespread risk from the emergence of low-wage, cheap production locations in developing countries. In the event, the main impact tended to be concentrated in a few sectors characterised by labour-intensive production methods. As for the policy response, the contrast with the US is striking. The American trade union movement and influential forces in Congress are calling for a range of protectionist measures in response to job loss arising from offshoring. In Britain, by contrast, the Government, employers and trade unions have all set their face against a protectionist course of action, in part reflecting the much more open nature of the UK's economy.

Further reading: The original feature is available from the European Industrial Relations Observatory on-line: <http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2004/05/feature/uk0405103f.html>

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About IRRU

IRRU embraces the research activities of the industrial relations community in Warwick University's Business School (WBS). There are currently twenty academic staff. Our work combines long-term fundamental research and short-term commissioned projects. In all cases, we maintain the independence and integrity of the work, which have been the hallmark of IRRU since its establishment in 1970. We aim thereby to improve the quality of data and analysis available to industrial relations policy-making by government, employers and trade unions. Current research projects include European integration and industrial relations;

inward investment's impact on employment practice in central eastern Europe; international trade union organisation within companies; stakeholder involvement in managing diversity; evolving practice in the employment of disabled people; womens' organisation in trade unions; employee consultation practice in the UK; and the organisational roots of productivity in medium-sized enterprises.

IRRU publishes textbooks on industrial relations and human resource management. The most recent are Paul Edwards, ed., *Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice* 2nd Edn (Oxford, Blackwell), published early in 2003, and Helen Newell and Harry Scarbrough, eds, *HRM: A Case Study Approach* (Basingstoke, Macmillan), published in 2002. The new edition of *Industrial Relations* completely revises the 1995 edition and again provides a comprehensive treatment of the subject which blends description and analysis. *HRM: A Case Study Approach* applies analytical perspectives to concrete cases, by drawing on IRRU research work.

IRRU is the UK National Centre for the European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO). EIRO collects, analyses and disseminates high-quality and up-to-date information on industrial relations developments in Europe. IRRU provides a range of inputs including regular *features* which analyse current developments in policy and practice, *in briefs* which report key UK developments and contributions to *comparative studies* which provide a cross-country perspective of a particular topic. EIRO's database, including IRRU's input, is publicly accessible on-line at: <http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int>

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information on our current research programme and projects, and on recent papers and publications, is available from IRRU's website: <http://users.wbs.warwick.ac.uk/group/IRRU>

Alternatively, please contact Val Jephcott, IRRU Research Secretary, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL; email irruvj@wbs.warwick.ac.uk; phone +44 (0)24 7652 4268