

THE  
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CO-OPERATIVE  
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# Society Notes

*"... within a Co-operative system, the strong helped the weak, each man developed his own talents and used them to help himself and discharge his social obligations. Self-help and mutual aid were basic Co-operative principles;"*

These words from Jack Bailey (The British Co-operative Movement) may not sparkle with novelty or open a new revelation but they exercise his usual precision and like many other words from him they are securely lodged in my memory and readily activated. When the committee of the S.C.S. at its June meeting turned to the inexorable question of future subscriptions, the discussion and decision seemed to match his prescription.

## **What Talent?**

The main talent which the Society has to develop is the Journal whose purpose, perceptible within its modest form and through all its diversity of content and realised in spite of its shortcomings, is to examine independently and in some depth the character and operation, both social and economic, of the consumer Co-operative movement in the U.K. That includes certainly its relation to the wide range of Co-operative organisations nationally and internationally, and the exploration of the possibilities of "co-operation between Co-operatives".

## **What Self-Help?**

The Society is a company of subscribers and it is timely to acknowledge that the subscription from members (and, let it be said, from others) has included completely free services from all the author and editors who sustain the Journal. Look to the Index of Authors and Subjects published in August 1988 of the first 60 issues or, more immediately, to the present Journal, for a measure of the generosity of these services.

The subscriptions, in a strictly financial sense, from members have been increased from time to time and now stand at £5 for individuals and £20 for

organisations annually. The proposals of the committee to the Society's A.G.M. on 15 September are for the rates from 1991-2 to be:

Individuals:	Unwaged – £5	Organisations – £25
	Waged – £7	

The increase is a response to increased costs, present and prospective and to the obligation assumed by the Society to become as self-supporting as possible. It is watchful also of the danger of provoking the withdrawal of members and indeed will be accompanied by efforts to increase their number. And it is considerate of supporters who are particularly disadvantaged.

### **What Mutual Aid?**

In the past the "strong helped the weak" generously and we renew our warmest thanks especially to the Federations and the fourteen largest retail societies from whom we receive grants at present.

For the future, the committee is recommending a new measure: an appeal to members to become Sponsors of the Society at a rate for individuals of £5 and for organisations of £50 in addition to the basic subscription; or, outside that option, to add to the basic rate what voluntary subscription they can. The committee cannot, of course, be certain how far the proposals will move the income of the Society towards covering its expenditure. At least, if carried, they should be tested with all care and commitment.

### **In the Meantime . . .**

The Journal continues in Number 69 its efforts to match the rôle set for it above. We shall gather at the A.G.M. at the Co-operative College on Saturday 15 September at 12.00 pm, round the Report of the Chairman and the Accounts for 1989-90; and before that at the Annual Conference from 2.00 pm Friday 14th to 11.45 am Saturday 15 September. The Conference will examine, first, the challenge to consumer Co-operatives of the Single Market in the E.E.C. from 1992 – and their responses; and secondly, the prospects for "co-operation between Co-operatives" after the demise of the Co-operative Development Agency in September 1990. For reservations, apply to Mr. A. Rhodes, Treasurer – Society for Co-operative Studies, c/o Co-operative Retail Services Ltd., 29 Dantzic Street, Manchester M4 4BA.

Journal 60 will, of course, report both the AGM and Conference and it is hoped to deal further with the *Search for Co-operative Values, the Prospects for Co-operation in Eastern and Central Europe and Aspects of Co-operative Education*.

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R.L.M.