

SOCIETY NOTES



A worthy note in this anniversary year is the Journal's illustration, a page or two on, of a Co-operative store witnessing, not 150 but 164 years of retail Co-operation!

Annual Conference and AGM

The theme of the annual SCS conference at the College on Saturday/Sunday, 10/11 September is engaging - *Commercial Success: Moral Dilemma?* The leading speakers are distinguished - Bob Burlton, CEO of Oxford, Swindon and Gloucester Society on *The Governance of Co-operative Societies*; David Skinner, Chief Executive of the CWS on *The Prospects for Co-operative Trading Renewal*; and Dr. R. Houlton, Principal of the College, on *A Code of Ethics for Managers*. The appeal of the conference is reinforced by that of the AGM of the Society which follows on the Sunday.

And - at the time of writing - there are still vacancies. Frank Dent, Membership Secretary, will be glad to meet enquiries.

Journals Ahead

Journal 82, planned for distribution in November/December, will give special attention to the ICA re-examination of Co-operative principles and preparation of a Charter for the next century. This work directed by Professor Ian MacPherson follows the report on Basic Co-operative Values by Sven Ake Book#, discussed by the 1992 Tokyo Congress and is leading to a submission to the ICA congress in Manchester in September 1995. Journal 82 will also, of course, report the Society conference and A.G.M.

1944 is the 75th anniversary of the resolution of the Walsall Co-operative Congress for the establishment of a College: it is also the year of the report to the Rochdale Congress on the future of the college; and 1995 is the 50th anniversary of the transfer of the College to Stanford Hall. It seems trebly appropriate that the post-war development of the College and its prospects now will be a main devotion of Journal 83 due out in the spring of 1995.

See Journals 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 75 and 76.

"Co-op: the people's business"

The book is written by Dr. Johnston Birchall; Manchester University Press; hardback 217pp. - £25.00 and paperback £14.99. It is, of course, the 150th anniversary publication - and matches the occasion very worthily.

In particular, it deserves high ratings on main tests any review must apply. Does it convey in its form, including typography, lay-out and quality of paper, an impression of a movement which has self-respect and, indeed firm pride, in its achievement? Yes - with a special commendation for the illustrations for which the research was done by Bernard Howcroft. Does it set its account of the consumer Co-operative movement within its proper context? Yes - that movement is related to other forms of Co-operative organisation, to retailing and to economic and social development in Britain and to the international Co-operative movement. Does it provide the historical details of consumer Co-operation in Britain and also the broad shape and pattern of its record? Yes - it presents both the trees and the wood. Does it give a useful index, an especially important guide in this kind of book to what and who are included - and excluded? Yes - the index is comprehensive and well-organised.

Does it even provide the opportunity, dear to many a reviewer, to suggest improvement? Yes, in its generosity it does. The anniversary may properly be an occasion not only for celebration of the past but also for informed and, if necessary, cautionary speculation about the future and this could usefully have been more developed - particularly since Dr. Birchall concludes his specific attention to British consumer Co-operation with the affirmation: "Yet there are now definite signs that a revitalised Movement is on the way . . .".

In this respect, we may be forgiven for noting that the Society's special Journal, *Consumer Co-operation in the UK 1945-93*, which examines both the record and the prospects is a useful supplement - £4 plus 50p for p. and p., from the Membership Secretary.

Founding Father -

Also for the 150th celebrations the Royal Society of Medicine is publishing in August 1994 a substantial piece by Professor John G. Corina on "*William King (1786-1865): Physician and Father of the Co-operative Movement*". It revises and updates the pioneer profiles undertaken by Mercer and Pollard. Professor Corina has a fair number of free off-prints available and will be glad to hear from any Society member who wants one. His address is: 1 White Cross Road, Haddesham, Bucks. HP17 8BA.

July 1994

R.L.M.