

# Report by the Chairman and Secretary

1994 was always going to be a memorable year for Co-operators - that was for sure, but how best should it be marked by the Society for Co-operative Studies? In another arena, the difference between celebration and commemoration has indeed been clearly acknowledged. However, whilst we wanted both to celebrate and commemorate, we felt the need to balance, and the need to consider and to contemplate. To that end we wanted to review the progression or regression of Co-operative activity, particularly post-war, and further to speculate, with sympathy but with independence, as to the future.

## **Celebrating and Commemorating**

The Committee agreed to expose two extraordinary (extraordinary as opposed to extra) Journals. One would be devoted to the economic and social fortunes of the movement since the publication of G.D.H. Cole's major work in 1944, and would include a reasoned view of the future. The second, given the Society's own inexorable link with Co-operative education in general, and with the movement's College in particular, would look with care at the development of the College since 1945, its achievements and problems, its impact upon the movement certainly, but also upon wider society, and with enthusiasm, its impact upon those who had studied there.

## **Post-War and in Prospect: the Movement -**

Members will be well aware that the first very substantial Journal has been published, and its scholarly and objective line has been much applauded. It centres upon a feature essay by Professor Leigh Sparks of Stirling University, for whose work we express thanks. Only one thought darkens our mind: that the publicity accorded it could have been wider, and whether its calm reception indicates acceptance of its implications or a continuing unwillingness to face up to them.

However, outsiders have commented, and we believe, that only the Society for Co-operative Studies was capable of carrying through this important job.

### *- And the College*

One problem with history, so far at any rate, is that it never ends. The Journal about the College has deliberately been planned, though, to take

account, as far as practicable, of the most recent core decisions about the College and to include the recent Congress debate and its ramifications.

We are confident that this Journal, to be published in the early part of 1995, will form an equally strong second prong to this Society fork. It will centre around feature pieces from two College Principals - Dr. Robert Marshall and Dr. Robert Houlton, and the scalpels will most surely be employed with care and incisiveness.

The Journal and the Annual Conference are our own twin peaks, and I wish to look at them in turn.

### **The Journal**

There have been 3½ issues since the last A.G.M. The important fraction represents the Occasional Journal in December 1993, which included Reports of the 1993 Conference and AGM, notes on the anniversary of the Friendly Societies Act 1793 and on the Renewal of Credit Unions - and warmest congratulations from the Society to Will Watkins on his 100th birthday.

The Special Features of the other issues were:-

*Journal 79* The first of the two 'extraordinary' issues and, as already mentioned, its theme was Consumer Co-operation in the UK 1945-93: Reviews - and Prospects. The extended essay by Professor Sparks was followed by eleven 'Perspectives' - contributions on particular aspects of the economic and social development of the consumer movement.

*Journal 80* Responses to *Journal 79*; Co-operative Trade 1993 - Reflections and Projections; Governance of Co-operative Societies; Executive Tools in Modern Food Retailing; SCWG and the People's Story Museum; and Reports from the Co-operative Sectors.

*Journal 81* Further Responses to *Journal 79*; Code of Best Practice in Governance of Societies - Report to Congress 1994; Conditions for Co-operation - a Synergetic Approach.

#### *- Onwards and Upwards*

The motto of my home town of Leicester is "Semper Eadem" - always the same: and some of us used to say that was the trouble with the place. Equally one does not change a winning team, and certainly if something is working well why amend it?

It is in that context we have understood that "always the same" meant Marshall and Carbery. Their disposition to retire caused tremors of apprehension because of the importance the Journal is given by Committee and members alike. However, given the Society's agreement, the "auld firm" will be going on for another year, but we hope will be working alongside an editor designate. This should ensure continuity, and we stress our intention to maintain quality.

### **Annual Conference**

The 1993 Annual Conference attracted a full house to Stanford Hall in September, with the future role of the Co-operative Union as the theme. Our conferences not only receive continued support, but, if anything, enjoy increased interest. To reflect this, we published a very full report of the Conference and the AGM in the Journal so that those present could remind themselves of it, and those not able to be there did not miss out completely. Because of that I will not cover the ground again, except for one personal note.

During the proceedings, through the presentation of a bench and a magnolia, we paid tribute to a doyenne of the Society, and many other Co-operative organisations, Nancy Scott. After I was made redundant by the Co-operative Union Ltd., it was Nancy and some others who drew me back into this Society, and I am grateful to her, and miss her.

The Society remains appreciative of participants at its conference who perform professionally and are remunerated as amateurs.

### **Charitable Status?**

The 1993 AGM endorsed the Committee's view that the possibility of charitable status should be pursued. That the committee has indeed been doing, with professional assistance. It is proving to be a furrow that is slow to plough, but the work goes on, and we will report further to the coming annual meeting.

That meeting may wish to address itself to the question of how officers and committees are addressed in debate, whilst the Society looks always to refreshing itself with new active members.

### **Membership**

As to the membership overall figures remain buoyant, partly because of successful initiatives through major societies: some now buy copies of the Journal in quantity for their members which means its influence is certainly growing.

Frank, as Membership Secretary has completed the following table which shows the membership on 31 March 1994, with comparative figures for immediately preceding years.

### Year Ended 31 March 1994

Region	Individuals					Organisations					Academic Sponsorships			TOTALS			
	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1994	1993	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990
Metro & South	76	73	76	72	66	15	17	18	21	23	26	26	117	116	94	93	89
Midland	31	29	23	18	21	8	9	8	10	10	10	15	49	53	31	28	31
North West	37	32	39	33	28	8	8	9	8	9	7	7	52	47	48	41	37
Yorkshire & Humbs	9	10	10	6	5	4	44	4	2	1	11	12	24	26	14	8	6
Northern	3	3	1	3	3	3	2	3	1	1	0	2	6	7	4	4	4
South West	6	6	5	5	3	2	2	4	4	4	6	11	14	19	9	9	7
Scotland	15	15	16	12	14	4	3	3	4	4	8	9	27	27	19	16	18
Overseas	4	4	7	7	9	6	7	5	5	6	0	0	10	11	11	12	15
TOTAL	181	172	176	156	149	50	52	54	55	58	68	82	299	306	230	211	207

Total number of each Journal distributed in year ended March 1994: to members 701; to academic institutions 68; to others 45; Total 814.

### Finance

The full financial details are given in the Accounts which follow this Report. Our financial situation has, recently been most healthy and in part, led us to be able to publish the 'extraordinary' Journals. This, and containing the fees for the annual conference have led directly to a modest deficit, but one for which we had, genuinely budgeted, and which we foresaw at last year's meeting. We view it sanguinely: we are a studying Society not a financial institution.

### Committee

The committee so far has met in September (twice), November, February and May i.e. five times, with the following attendances:

Garth Pratt	4	Frank Dent	5
Peter Clarke	2	Charlie Fairbank	2
Len Burch	4	Lily Howe	5
John Butler	5	Robert Marshall	4
Tom Carbery	1	Frank Toft	5

### **Fringe Meeting at Congress**

One innovation last year had been that of a 'fringe meeting' at Congress. Such was its success that we vowed to have another. This year at Rochdale, at the "Flying Horse", in the Town Hall Square, a comfortable venue, over 90 people turned up to discuss "*Does Market Share Matter*" with Alan Middleton & Leigh Sparks as the main participants, and good (free) refreshments a necessary feature. This was a much appreciated event, and again helped to raise the understanding of the Society's work.

### **Regional Organisation**

The Society has always sought to support regional organisations, where members might conveniently meet between annual gatherings. We are indebted to colleagues in the Metropolitan and South who have consistently maintained a high quality programme there, and efforts will continue to replicate this in the North West.

Any other regional initiatives would be welcome, and supported nationally.

### **Thanks**

I want finally, but firmly and clearly, to offer my thanks and earnest appreciation to my fellow members of the Committee, and particularly to the treasurer and membership secretary - Frank Dent, the former treasurer - Alan Rhodes, the vice-chairs, the joint editors, (again) and Peter Roscoe of the Co-operative Union who agreed to become our auditor. They have made this last year an interesting and comfortable one.

July 1994

Garth Pratt, Chairman and Secretary

# Accounts

## 1. Income and Expenditure Account for year to 31 March 1994

	Note	1994	1993
<b>Income</b>			
Subscriptions	1	4507	3899
Academic Sponsorships		488	657
Sale of Journals		291	213
Annual Conference	2	-	609
Interest Received	3	1483	1680
Grants and Donations		13	212
		<u>6782</u>	<u>7270</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Journal	4	8077	3735
Annual Conference	2	58	-
Congress Fringe Meeting		139	-
Regional Activity		157	195
National Officers' Travel		318	325
Secretarial		-	127
Provision for Possible Tax	5	370	2250
Excess of Income over Expenditure (Expenditure over Income)		(2337)	638
		<u>6782</u>	<u>7270</u>

### Notes to the Accounts

	1994	1993
	£	£
Note 1 Members' Subscriptions		
Individual	1855	1725
Organisations	2652	2174
	<u>4507</u>	<u>3899</u>

Note 2	Annual Conference		
	Income	3698	2760
	Less		
	Expenditure		
	Accommodation	3482	
	Refunds	274	
		3756	2151
		<u>(58)</u>	<u>609</u>

Note 3	Interest Received		
	Co-op Bank Deposit a/c	37	51
	Other Investments	1446	1629
		<u>1483</u>	<u>1680</u>

Note 4	Journal		
	Printing	5544	2268
	Distribution	893	722
	Editorial & Secretarial		
	Expenses	1640	745
		<u>8077</u>	<u>3735</u>

Journal No 79 (January 1994) was a special journal to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Rochdale Pioneers. This was larger, carried higher research and editorial input and, consequently, was more expensive to produce and distribute than a normal journal.

Note 5 The Society is pursuing the possibility of applying for Charitable status. A solicitor acting on our behalf is in negotiation with the Charity Commission. If the application is unsuccessful there will be a tax liability and a provision is made as a precaution.

Note 6 In the accounts for the year ending March 1993 the sum of £2,948 is shown as a creditor for subscriptions received in advance. The equivalent sum for the year ending March 1994 was only £132. As these are both dealt with as creditors the subscription income is a true record of the subscriptions received in respect of that year.

## 2. Balance Sheet at 31 March 1994

	31.03.94	31.03.93
	£	£
Use of Funds		
Bank and Cash		
Co-op Bank Current Account	2604	3917
Co-op Bank Deposit Account	5044	4709
Secretary's Cash Float	30	30
Investments	14000	15537
	<u>21678</u>	<u>24193</u>
Less - Creditors		
Subscriptions Received in Advance	132	2948 (see Note 6)
Academic Sponsorships Received in Advance	0	304
Journal - Printing	2776	0
- Distribution	400	0
1992 Conference Expenses	-	76
1993 Conference Receipts	-	488
	(3308)	(3816)
Less - Provision for possible Tax	(2620)	(2250)
Plus - Debtor	<u>40</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>15790</u>	<u>18127</u>
Financed by -		
Fund Brought Forward	18127	17489
Excess of Income over Expenditure	-	638
Excess of Expenditure over Income	<u>(2337)</u>	<u>        </u>
	<u>15790</u>	<u>18127</u>

## 3. Auditor's Report

In my opinion the Financial Statements give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 1994. There has been a change in accounting policy which means that in future expenditures will be accurately matched to the period they relate to. However, for the year under review the deficit of £2 337 computed in the revenue account has been overstated by £700. This item relates to the printing of the January 1993 Journal.

July 1994

Peter Roscoe