

SOCIETY NOTES



The news that the Co-operative Union is to offer the Stanford Hall estate for sale on the open market has reached us just as the Journal is about to go, irrevocably, to the printer. Among the discussions and advocacies surrounding this decision are options or aspirations that could still maintain a Co-operative identity for the Hall. However, for the moment, the least (and for me, perhaps, the most) that should be said is a mixture of sympathy and hope.

The first is extended to staff on all levels who have served and are serving the College and Department so devotedly and on whom fall painful consequences of the current situation; sympathy also to those among the authorities who have valiantly and constructively pressed the case for the College at Stanford Hall and to those who have felt in honest and sensitive judgement that they must make this present decision however reluctantly; and we should not overlook the disappointment and concern that will be felt by a goodly host of ex-students in many lands who look to Stanford Hall with gratitude and affection as a significant and permanent reference point in their lives.

The hope is that those in responsibility will unite, across differences, to define or redefine the specific tasks in education and training that the central agencies of the movement should undertake in the present and calculable conditions and how these services should be organised. That would be in line with the recommendation from the recent Review Committee for the "development and promulgation of a clear Mission Statement" for the College and with the statement now by the Central Executive of the Union that it is "determined that this work (of the College and Education Department) will be continued in the future".

Journal Ahead

Somewhere I read a prescription for planning an impressive garden - that the visitor when he completed his journey up one of its vistas should find, not that it was completely self-contained, but that it opened up another vista. I have had neither the garden nor the resources nor the skill to exercise that approach horticulturally. Editorially, however, the opportunity comes our way quite frequently - and here is one example.

In Journal 81, in his article on the theme *Consumer Co-operation 1945-93 - and in Future?*, Harry Moore, Chief Executive of CRS wrote:-

“Providing a democratic structure for a large, complex organisation, which a single national society would of necessity be, may be difficult but I believe it is by no means impossible, given the substantial advantages that would occur from having one organisational structure”.

So - we look forward to having for Journal 83 a main feature which analyses and assesses, from different points of view, the case for a single national society and the difficulties in establishing it, including that of finding a satisfactory democratic structure but also the other substantial impediments. And *The New Society* initiative from CWS and CRS makes this feature even more topical.

Off with the Old . . .

Items (how equivocal the usage has become, as I write) that would gravitate to these Notes are covered elsewhere, particularly in the report of the Society AGM. However, some changes, made or in prospect, still deserve their honourable mention here. First, to colleagues whose services on the committee of the Society have ended, warm appreciation. Secondly there are the new appointments to the committee of the Society - and these colleagues will have the confident good wishes of Society members. Finally there is the intention to nominate Dr. Birchall as Editor at the 1995 AGM. The same quality of wishes goes to him and the assurance that his predecessors will give all the help which they can and which he wishes.

November 94

R.L.M.

In Passing

Stanford Hall 1947

*You were not built to serve the hand that built.
Your shapely lawns and pleasant rooms were not
Envisaged in the humble builder's lot.
Nor were your lofty rooms with heavy gilt
Impressed, your staircases with precious wood
Made nobly grand for less than noble feet.
But fear not, Genius Loci! They that meet
Within your stately precincts have as good
A birthright as our vanished lords could hold.
Their's is a heritage of worthier strife
Than all the ballads of medieval life
And knightly chivalry have ever told.
Spirit! Your heraldry may boast a line of peers.
We boast the spirit of the Rochdale Pioneers*

J. Cook – College Students Magazine 1947