

# Editorial

The last issue of the Journal focused on the future of the UK Co-operative College at Stanford Hall, and in this issue we publish three articles which were squeezed out of that issue through lack of space. Mervyn Wilson provides an honest and thought-provoking study of the future of Co-operative education from the perspective of the UK consumer co-operative sector. John Corina links the Loughborough-based Co-operative College with much earlier ventures in Co-operative education, via a letter from a Loughborough Co-operative Society written in 1832. It may be the oldest-known official letter written by a Co-operative society anywhere in the world, and so we are delighted to have the chance to reproduce it. Peter Davis is currently developing an international distance-learning centre for co-operative management at Leicester University, and he has been persuaded to extend his article on co-operative management culture; it is published here in the new 'longer refereed article' section.

Co-operative housing is in difficulties in many parts of the developed world; falling state support for social housing and competition from other tenures make it harder to provide residents with a genuinely co-operative alternative. This is a theme we shall be exploring over the next few issues, and Allan Heskin and Neal Richman begin the series with the inspiring story of a new state-wide mutual housing association they have set up in California. In the next issue we hope to get the UK's leading co-operative housing expert, David Rodgers, to tell a similar story of a new co-operative housing finance society, and then we will be looking at Canadian and Scandinavian models to help provide other possible solutions.

This is the time of year when the Co-operative Union publishes some early statistics on the performance of the consumer co-operative sector in the UK, and as usual we provide some commentary from both inside the Movement and from academic commentators. Next year we may delay these commentaries until the September issue by which time much fuller statistics are available (I would like to hear whether our readers prefer the timeliness of the May commentary, or the greater depth we would get from delaying until September). Two presidents of our Society - Lord Jacques and Keith Brading - have died recently,

and Bob Marshall and Ian Peddie pay tribute to them and put on record our appreciation of their unique contribution to the Co-operative Movement.

In this issue we begin a series on that vital underpinning for co-operative development - co-operative law with an article by Ian Snaith. Ian is a leading authority on both UK and European Co-operative Law. We will follow up in later issues with a general article by Hans-H. Munkner, and contributions from other countries where co-operative laws are being redrafted; we have much to learn from each other. With the current fascination for 'stakeholder capitalism' in the British political scene, the article by George Tseo is particularly timely. On behalf of the Society for Co-operative Studies, I recently attended a conference on 'Stakeholder Capitalism', at which one participant repeatedly asked what was the significance of the Mondragon co-ops for stakeholding. He never received a proper reply, but Tseo begins to provide one, describing how employee ownership schemes have taken off in many parts of the world and then asking the all-important question for co-operators of how these compare with worker co-operative ownership, and in particular with the 'jewel in the crown' of worker ownership, Mondragon. We will be continuing with this theme of what we might call 'stakeholder co-operation' as part of our contribution to the broader debate on stakeholder capitalism.

Finally, we intend to review all the important books on Co-operation and related subjects as they come out. John Corina makes an excellent beginning with a review of a monumental work on producer co-ops.