

Editorial

In the last issue we began the theme of stakeholder co-operation, with a long and quite theoretical article by the Australian writer Shann Turnbull. In this issue, we are pleased to publish one of the foremost practitioners of the art of stakeholding - Terry Thomas, Managing Director of the UK Co-operative Bank. The Society for Co-operative Studies is making stakeholding its theme for the 1997 Conference, and we are hoping to underpin this with some more high quality articles in the next two issues.

The future of the UK Co-operative Union is being reviewed at present, and it seems like an opportune time to begin to explore the theme of co-operative federations. Bob Burlton, Chief Executive of one of Britain's most successful regional consumer co-operatives, gives us an insider's view of the Review, while a Norwegian researcher, Tom Johnstad, provides a scholarly background article on the idea of federation. We are fortunate that this coincides with an article on international co-operative organisations by Gabriele Ullrich, of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva, because she also provides insights into the relative merits of federations and looser network structures. These two articles do not make easy reading, but it is hoped that readers will take the time to read them slowly and carefully, and absorb their quite sophisticated conclusions.

Most of our readers are keenly interested in the role of women in co-ops. Some of us are also passionate about co-operative history. Rusty Neal puts the two together in an article on the Canadian experience of co-operative women's guilds. Having opened up the topic of women and co-operation, we hope to commission more articles soon. Finally, some readers may be wondering why there are no articles in this issue analysing the annual performance of the UK consumer co-operative sector. We have decided to switch this to our September issue, so as to give our authors the benefit of the full statistical analysis which comes out later in the year. It should be worth the wait.