

## **The Society for Co-operative Studies 1997/98**

### **Report by the Secretary**

Professor Tom Carbery, Professor Tony Eccles, Dr Robert Marshall, Lord Young of Dartington, Dr Alex Wilson, Graham Melmoth, Lord Thomas of Macclesfield and Alan Sneddon continued to serve as Presidents.

The Chair has been occupied this year by Peter Davis with Rowland Dale and Jim Craigen as Vice-Chairs. John Butler has been Secretary, Frank Dent, Treasurer and Membership Secretary and Johnston Birchall, Journal Editor. Len Burch serves on the Committee as immediate past chair, additional elected committee members are James Bell, Rita Rhodes, Peter Clarke and Martin Stears. Alan Wilkins and Roger Spear have served as co-opted members.

### **Committee Meetings**

The Committee met in September, November, February and June and will have a further meeting before the Annual Meeting in September. At the four meetings, members' attendance has been as follows -

Len Burch	4
Peter Davis	2
Rowland Dale	3
John Butler	3
Johnston Birchall	2
Frank Dent	4
James Bell	4
Rita Rhodes	4
Jim Craigen	3
Martin Stears	2
Peter Clarke	2
Alan Wilkins	3
Sue Haines	1 (deputising for Alan Wilkins)
Roger Spear	4
Gillian Lonergan	4

(Gillian Lonergan attends meetings in her capacity as Deputy Editor of the Journal).

## Membership

Paid up members for the year ended March 31 1998 with 1997 figures in brackets are set out below.

Region	Individuals	Organisations	Academic Sponsorships	Journal Subscriptions*	Totals
North	68 (65)	15 (21)	31 (31)	2 (0)	116 (117)
South	81 (79)	15 (18)	41 (37)	0 (0)	137 (134)
Midlands	33 (26)	8 (6)	15 (14)	0 (0)	56 (46)
Overseas*	0 (12)	0 (14)	0 (0)	24 (0)	24 (26)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>182 (182)</b>	<b>38 (59)</b>	<b>87 (82)</b>	<b>26 (0)</b>	<b>333 (323)</b>

\*during the year membership was discontinued for those living overseas in favour of a more straightforward subscription arrangement to the Journal.

The total number of Journals distributed is 860 (1997 - 907) per issue. There has been a pleasing increase in the number of members in most areas.

## Journal Editor

Johnston Birchall continues to undertake his responsibilities with imagination and hard work. Our key publication continues to be eagerly awaited both within the UK and abroad. Our thanks to Johnston for his efforts on behalf of the Society are recorded and our appreciation is also extended to Gillian Lonergan the Deputy Editor who has greatly assisted the Editor over the past 12 months and also her work as Newsletter Editor.

## The Journal

The Journal has been published three times during the year. The special features have been as follows -

No 91 (January 1998): The Co-op and a Labour Government; The Survival of the Mutual and Co-operative Sectors: forewarned is forearmed; Governments and Co-operatives in Canada; Credit Unions and the New Mutualism; Education for Co-operators; Proceedings of the UK Society for Co-operative Studies Annual Conference, September 1997; Reasserting the Co-operative Advantage; How can the Co-operative Sector Contribute to the

Development of a Stakeholder Economy?; Report of Conference and Annual General Meeting.

No 92 (May 1998): Building Societies in the UK: A Politician's Perspective; Labour Law and Co-operatives? Co-operative Law and Labour!; Retail Planning and Co-operatives in Scotland; Sustainability and Maturity of Community Based Housing Organisations; Human Privatisation: Worker Co-operative Initiatives in the Public Sector; Local Development and Co-operatives: None, Only One, More than One in the Same Village.

No 93 (September 1998): Why Societies Fail; I'd Like to shop at the Co-op but they Never Have What I Want; The Lanica Affair - A Perspective from the CWS; The Lanica Affair: An Attempted Takeover of a Consumer Co-operative Society; Women in Co-operatives: The Policy of the International Co-operative Alliance; The Need for NOVARS (NON-voting Value Added Sharing Renewable Shares); Annual Report: The Society for Co-operative Studies 1997-98.

## **Financial Position**

The Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet are appended to this report together with the Auditor's Report.

The financial position of the Society remains strong. Although there was an excess of expenditure over income it was less than the previous year. Much of this was due to increased Committee expenses as the Committee has had a full complement and attendance has been good. Your Committee is looking at ways of reducing these costs.

It is proposed to recommend to the 1998 Annual General Meeting that membership subscriptions be increased slightly. Also *Journal* subscription rates have been increased significantly for overseas subscribers and the full economic benefits of this will not materialise until 1998-99.

## **Co-opted Members**

At the meeting of the Executive Committee held immediately at

the conclusion of the 1997 AGM it was agreed to co-opt Alan Wilkins and Roger Spear to serve on the committee for the coming year. Their involvement has helped to further develop closer links with the Co-operative College and the Co-operative Research Unit of the Open University.

### **United Kingdom Co-operative Council**

The Society continues to strongly support the work of the United Kingdom Co-operative Council. The two organisations exchange minutes and will be liaising closely during the next 12 months to ensure that there is no duplication of effort in respect of the two organisations' research projects on the broad theme of mutuality.

### **Plunkett Foundation**

The Society has a reciprocal membership arrangement with the Plunkett Foundation. During the year under review Johnston Birchall has served on the "World of Co-operative Enterprise" Editorial Advisory Board on behalf of the SCS and Rita Rhodes attended their Annual General Meeting held in London in May.

### **Research Project - Reasserting the Co-operative Advantage**

In May 1998 the Society launched its long awaited Research Project "Reasserting the Co-operative Advantage". This followed detailed work undertaken by our Research Committee and draft proposals submitted to the Society's general membership at the 1997 Annual Conference. Three research partners have been identified - the Co-operative College; Co-operative Research Unit, Open University; and Leicester University Management Centre - each with co-ordinated responsibilities for implementation, analysis of results, and the dissemination of the research programme's results. The benefits of improving the Co-operative advantage will clearly be seen by managers, directors, members and consumers alike. The objects of the Research Project will be -

- 1 To identify where the co-operative advantage lies in the context of the contemporary business environment.

- 2 To investigate management and organisational development practices as they are presently emerging in response to the reassertion of co-operative purposes, values and principles. The intention is to identify potential and actual convergence and divergence between co-operatives and (a) contemporary management practices and (b) their business environment.
- 3 To investigate contemporary and historical records of co-operative business activity to identify areas of best practice, successful innovation and barriers to change.
- 4 To identify the key business and organisational issues for the Co-operative Movement associated with:
  - (a) The Movement's adopted ICA Statement on Co-operative Identity.
  - (b) The change in the social, economic, technological and competitive environment.
- 5 To identify the criteria by which co-operative success may be evaluated.
- 6 To develop models of co-operative strategic management and organisational development that can best respond to the challenges identified by the project.

All retail societies, individual members of the Society and a number of the Movement's professional advisers were asked to contribute towards the cost of the project which will involve an expenditure in the region of £24,000. It is pleasing to report that the response has been very encouraging and it is hoped that the full amount required will be achieved before the end of summer 1998, thus allowing the project to commence. Our thanks are extended to all those who have contributed so generously.

The Executive Committee of the Society has resolved that to finance the above proposals, and other important areas of research, a Research Fund of £50,000 should be established. Although the Society for Co-operative Studies has only limited funds it was felt appropriate that the Society should contribute £3,000 to the Research Fund.

## **Other Research Activities**

- (a) **History of Indian Co-operative Movement**  
Encouragement and information is being given to the Indian Society of Studies in Co-operation to assist with their research project.
- (b) **History of Co-operatives under British Colonial Administration**  
The Society is supporting the above research project being undertaken by Rita Rhodes.
- (c) **Bursary for Cataloguing Co-operative College Archive**  
The Society, with matching funding from the Co-operative College, is to provide a Bursary to a student for cataloguing the Co-operative College Archive for two weeks in August 1998.

Further details on the research activities identified above will be provided at the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 27 September 1998.

## **Internet Developments/Research Register**

The Society's internet site is now included in the ICA web site. The ICA site includes the SCS Research Register which has become a joint undertaking with the ICA with our Chairman, Peter Davis, chairing the project.

## **Fringe Meeting**

A highly successful Fringe Meeting was held at the Lincoln Co-operative Congress. In a radical break with tradition the Congress President, Alan Middleton opened the meeting with a short but hard hitting presentation on "Why Societies Fail." Following Alan's contribution James Bell a member of our Executive Committee spoke on "I'd like to shop at the Co-op, but they never have what I want". Both presentations were enthusiastically received by 120 delegates, making it the best attended of the four fringe meetings held at the Lincoln Congress.

The thanks of the Society have been forwarded to United Norwest Co-operatives who provided generous financial support for the meeting.

### **Annual General Meeting of Society**

Members are notified that the AGM of the Society will be held at the Co-operative College, Loughborough on Sunday 27 September at 11.15 am.

### **A Year of Challenge**

1997/98 has been a year of challenge for the Society. The committee continues to work well as a team and our special thanks are extended to Peter Davis our Chairman. We believe that we are meeting the objects of the Society to advance the education of the public concerning all aspects of the Co-operative Movement and Co-operative forms of structure.

# The Society for Co-operative Studies

## Accounts

### 1. Income & Expenditure Account for Year to 31 March 1998

Income	Note	1998 £	1997 £
Subscriptions	1	5032	5321
Academic Sponsorships		736	656
Sale of Journals		1000	628
Interest Received	3	1255	687
Grants and Donations		152	0
		<u>8174</u>	<u>7292</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Journal	4	6758	6474
Annual Conference	2	127	229
Congress Fringe Meeting		244	200
Regional Activity		0	0
National Executive Meetings		1552	984
Secretarial		29	30
Advertising & publicity		45	277
Newsletter		144	0
Other	1	1	33
		<u>8900</u>	<u>8227</u>
Excess of expenditure over income		<u>-726</u>	<u>-935</u>
		<u><u>      </u></u>	<u><u>      </u></u>

## 2. Balance Sheet as at 31 March 1998

		1998		1997	
	Note	£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Co-op Bank Deposit Account		12617		5520	
Other Investments	5	4000		10000	
			16617		15520
 <b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Co-op Bank Current Account		3706		4249	
Debtors	6	425		1589	
		4131		5838	
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	7	1930		1814	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>			2201		4024
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			18818		19544
<b>NET ASSETS</b>			18818		19544
 <b>FINANCED BY:</b>					
Accumulated fund			19544		20479
Addition to accumulated fund from 1997/8 revenue account			-726		-935
			18818		19544
			18818		19544

### 3. Auditor's Report

I have audited the Financial Statements set out above and in my opinion these are in accord with the books of account. In my opinion the income and expenditure account and the balance sheet give a fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 1998.

22 June 1998

Peter Roscoe

#### Notes to the Accounts

	1998		1997	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Note 1</b> Members' subscriptions				
Individuals		2348	2149	
Organisations		<u>2684</u>	3172	
		<u>5032</u>		<u>5321</u>
<b>Note 2</b> Annual Conference				
Income	2485		3579	
less				
Expenditure				
accommodation etc	2612			3808
		<u>-127</u>		<u>-229</u>
<b>Note 3</b> Interest received				
Co-op Bank Deposit Account		7		12
Other Investments		<u>1248</u>		<u>675</u>
		<u>1255</u>		<u>687</u>

**Note 4** Journal

Printing	5099	4812
Distribution	1186	1084
Editorial & secretarial expenses	474	578
	<u>6758</u>	<u>6474</u>

**Note 5** Investments comprise the following

Co-operative Retail Services Ltd	4000	4000
United Norwest Co-operatives Ltd	0	6000
	<u>4000</u>	<u>10000</u>

**Note 6** Debtors are made up as follows

Individual Subscriptions	0	5
Organisation Subscriptions	75	304
Academic Subscriptions	0	656
Journal Sales	210	624
Conference	140	0
	<u>425</u>	<u>1589</u>

No provision is required against these debts as they have all been agreed.

**Note 7** Liabilities are made up as follows

Subscription received in advance	34	214
Journal - Secretarial	0	0
Journal - Printing	1750	1600
Newsletter - Printing	50	0
Other	0	0
Journal subs received in advance	96	0
	<u>1930</u>	<u>1814</u>