

Editorial

It is now four years since the International Co-operative Alliance ratified a new set of co-operative values and principles, prefaced by a 'statement of co-operative identity', a basic test of what is a genuine co-operative. In October of this year, Professor Ian MacPherson will speak to the annual conference of the UK Society for Co-operative Studies about progress made in implementing the principles. In order to focus the Society's members' minds on the subject, we begin this issue with a short article by the Director-General of the ICA, Bruce Thordarson, in which he describes the impact the Statement of Co-operative Identity is having on new co-operative laws around the world.

We have always been keen on articles analysing the 'cutting edge' of co-operative business practice, but find it difficult to persuade those who are doing the cutting to find the time to write about it; Malcolm Corbett provides a shrewd analysis of the potential of the internet for co-operatives, both as a way of doing business and as an area for the development of innovative new types of co-operative. Two years ago we were publishing about the future of mutuality, concentrating on the trend towards demutualisation that has been gathering pace in several countries mainly in the financial services sector. Since then, the debate in the UK has become more upbeat, with discussion about the possible rise of a 'new mutualism' in tune both with the times and the new Labour government's agenda. Peter Hunt, as secretary of the British Co-operative Party, is in an excellent position to analyse this, and at the end of his article we list the recent pamphlets produced by the Party; in the next issue we hope to make these the focus of a review article.

We have two refereed articles. Svein Ole Borgen reports on a research project identifying different principles on which members can choose to allocate the economic results of agricultural co-operative trading. His methodology might well be applied to agricultural co-ops in different countries, and the theoretical framework he provides might also be used to analyse distribution decisions in other types of co-operative; readers are encouraged to use our 'Responses to published articles' section to start a discussion. Selina Todd continues our exploration of the history of co-operative education in Britain, with an article

about a little-known part of the interwar co-operative youth movement. The article raises some interesting questions about the attitude of older co-operators to youth work, and it might lead to a new theme for the *Journal* - co-operative development and member relations work among young people.