

# The Society for Co-operative Studies 1998/99

## 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 Rowland Dale with James Bell and Rita Rhodes as Vice-Chairs. John Butler has been Secretary, Frank Dent, Treasurer and Membership Secretary and Johnston Birchall, Journal Editor. Peter Davis served on the Committee as immediate past chair, additional elected committee members are Len Burch, Gillian Lonergan and John Launder. Alan Wilkins and Roger Spear have served as co-opted members. Len Burch has acted as Minutes Secretary.

### Committee Meetings

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

Rowland Dale	4
James Bell	2
Rita Rhodes	4
John Butler	4
Frank Dent	2
Johnston Birchall	3
Peter Davis	1 (resigned from Committee in February 1999)
Len Burch	4
Gillian Lonergan	4
John Launder	3
Alan Wilkins	4
Roger Spear	2
Tony Eccles	1

## Membership

Paid up members are for the year ended 31 March 1999 with 1998 figures in brackets are set out below -

Region	Individuals	Organisations	Academic Sponsorship	Journal Subscriptions	Totals	Total No. Journals*
North	74 (68)	14 (15)	33 (31)	0 (2)	121 (116)	188
South	76 (81)	19 (15)	44 (41)	1 (0)	140 (137)	232
Midlands	34 (33)	9 (8)	18 (15)	1 (0)	62 (56)	119
Overseas	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	27 (24)	27 (24)	27
TOTALS	184 (182)	42 (38)	95 (87)	29 (26)	350 (333)	566

\*In addition a number of complimentary copies are sent to the press, contributors to the *Journal*, organisations with exchange agreements etc.

It is pleasing to note that there has been a small increase in membership and *Journal* subscriptions.

## Journal Editor

Johnston Birchall continues to undertake his responsibilities with great skill and a lot of hard work. Our key publication continues to be eagerly awaited both within the UK and overseas co-operative movements. 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 94 (January 1999): Seeking a More Humane Way of Working: The Workers' Co-operative Movement in Japan; Margaret Llewelyn Davies: A Study in Female Leadership; Obstacles to Co-operative Working: Lessons from Construction;

Proceedings of the UK Society for Co-operative Studies Annual Conference, September 1998; Profits with Principles: Developing Co-operation for Sustainable Stakeholding; Responses to Published Articles.

No 95 (May 1999): Ja-Zenchu: Japan Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives Sowing the Seeds of the Future; Why did Consumer Co-operative Societies in Britain use Tokens?; Informal Learning Processes in a Worker Co-operative; Renewing the Membership Basis for Raising Investment and Patronage in Consumer Co-operatives; The Contribution of Consumer Co-operatives to British Adult Education; Responses to Published Articles.

No 96 (September 1999): Co-operative Legislation and the Co-operative Identity Statement; E-Commerce: its potential for co-operatives; Promoting the Co-operative Agenda - New Mutualism and the 'Third Way'; Equality among Equals: on distributive justice in agricultural producer co-operatives; Pleasure, Politics and Co-operative Youth: the Interwar Co-operative Comrades' Circles; Responses to Published Articles; Book Review; The Society for Co-operative Studies 1998-99.

## **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. The excess of expenditure over income has increased on last year but this is more than accounted for by a special £3,000 contribution to the Research Fund. The cost of committee meetings has been well contained.

During the year we set up a ring-fenced Research Fund and the income, expenditure and balances of this fund are separately identified in the accounts. The balance of this fund is fully committed to the current research project.

There was a surplus on the Conference which more than offset the loss in the previous year.

The costs of producing the *Journal* have been well controlled, thanks in large measure to the generous support from the

Co-operative Union Information Department. We are also grateful to the CWS for their assistance in distributing the *Journal*.

### **Co-opted Members**

At the meeting of the Executive Committee held immediately at the conclusion of the 1998 AGM it was agreed again 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 and they are also key partners in our vital research project.

### **Co-operative Union Ltd**

The enormous contribution made by the Co-operative Union in terms of assisting the Society in producing the *Journal* and allowing key officials to serve on the Executive Committee and the giving of professional advice when required has been greatly appreciated. We do not yet know how changes at the Co-operative Union will affect us but the situation is being kept under review.

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

The Society continues to support the work of the United Kingdom Co-operative Council. The two organisations exchange minutes and liaise closely on matters of mutual interest.

### **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 August.

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

Work has commenced with the Society's research project. The objectives of the project are -

- (i) To identify where the co-operative advantage lies in the context of the contemporary business environment.
- (ii) To investigate management and organisational development practices as they are presently emerging in response to the reassertion of co-operative purpose, 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.
- (iii) To investigate contemporary and historical records of co-operative business activity to identify areas of best practice, successful innovation and barriers to change.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) To identify the criteria by which co-operative success may be evaluated.
- (vi) To develop models of co-operative strategic management and organisational development that can best respond to the challenges identified by the project.

The three research partners - Co-operative College, Co-operative Union Ltd; Co-operative Research Unit, Open University; Leicester University Management Centre are working hard to complete the research by the end of the year and the Committee are confident that the results will be beneficial to the Co-operative Movement.

The raising in excess of £20,000 from Co-operative societies, professional advisers associated with the Co-operative Movement and individual members indicates the wide level of support for

the research project and a report of the provisional findings will be given at the Annual Conference of the Society in October 1999.

### **Other Research Activities**

(a) Empire and Co-operation

The Society is supporting the above research project being undertaken by Rita Rhodes.

(b) 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.

(c) Bursary for Cataloguing Co-operative College Archive

The Society, with matching funding from the Co-operative College, provided a Bursary to Richard Bickle a student from the University of East Anglia to catalogue the Co-operative College Archive. An appreciative letter has been received from Geraldine Mousley, the College Librarian.

(d) History of the SCS

The Executive Committee is giving early consideration to the need to undertake appropriate research on the History of the SCS.

Further details on the research activities identified above will be provided at the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 10 October 1999.

### **Annual Conference Survey**

Following the disappointing attendance at last year's Annual Conference the Executive Committee undertook a detailed survey of members in respect of their views on the Conference format and arrangements. Strong support was articulated for the holding of a weekend conference at the Co-operative College. The Executive Committee noted with pleasure that nearly 60% of members responded to the survey questionnaire and the views

expressed would help in the forward planning of future conferences.

### **Ian MacPherson Visit to UK**

In response to the Annual Conference Survey it was resolved that the 1999 Conference theme should be "Co-operation into the New Millennium." The Committee were delighted that Professor Ian MacPherson, Dean of Humanities, University of Victoria, Canada and the architect of the 1995 ICA Statement on the Co-operative Identity, agreed to be one of the keynote speakers at the Conference. During his stay in the UK, Professor MacPherson will be visiting and addressing a number of meetings in Nottingham, Leicester, Lincoln, Oxford, Manchester, New Lanark and Edinburgh. The Society are very grateful for the sponsorship given by The Co-operative Bank plc and the Co-operative Insurance Society that has enabled this important visit to take place.

### **Internet Developments/Research Register**

Len Burch has been charged with keeping the Society's website up to date and Peter Davis despite his resignation from the Committee in February 1999, continues as compiler of the Society's Research Register in collaboration with the ICA Research and Communications Committees.

### **Fringe Meeting**

A highly successful Fringe Meeting was held at the Brighton Co-operative Congress. Peter Hunt, Secretary of the Co-operative Party, spoke on "New Mutualism - The Third Way". A very well attended meeting appreciated an excellent address that generated many questions and comments.

The thanks of the Society have been forwarded to Co-operative Retail Services who provided generous financial support for the fringe meeting.

## **Secretary of the Society**

The Executive Committee continues to give consideration to the appointment of a new Secretary for the Society and hope to be able to report on a suitable candidate at the AGM.

## **Annual General Meeting of Society**

Members have been notified that the AGM of the Society will be held at the Co-operative College, Loughborough on Sunday 10 October 1999 at 11.45 am.

## **A Demanding Year**

1998/99 has been a demanding year for the Society. The committee continues to work well as a team and our special thanks are extended to Rowland Dale 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 1998-99 Accounts

## 1. Income & Expenditure Account for year to 31 March 1999

Income	Note	1999 £	1998 £
Membership subscriptions	1	4329	5032
Journal subscriptions		945	0
Annual conference	2	338	0
Academic sponsorships		1415	736
Sale of journals		1146	1000
Interest received	3	1059	1255
Grants and donations		75	152
		9307	8174
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Journal	4	6236	6758
Annual Conference	2	0	127
Congress Fringe Meeting		72	244
Regional activity		0	0
National Executive meetings		1157	1552
Secretarial		300	29
Advertising & publicity		0	45
Newsletter		80	144
Contribution to Research Fund		3000	0
Grant to Co-op College for cataloguing archives		294	0
Other		15	1
		11154	8900
Excess of expenditure over income		-1848	-726
Accumulated Fund brought forward		18818	19544
Accumulated Fund carried forward		16970	18818
<b>Ring-fenced activity:</b>			
Research fund income			
Corporate bodies and individuals		20501	
Society for Co-operative Studies		3000	
		23501	
Less Research Fund disbursements		3978	
Research Fund at 31 March 1999		19523	
Total funds		36493	18818

## 2. Balance Sheet as at 31 March 1999

	Note	1999 £	1998 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Co-op Bank Deposit Account		0	12617
CWS Deposit Account		32847	0
Other investments	5	4000	4000
		36847	16617
 <b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Co-op Bank Current Account		1515	3706
Debtors	6	245	425
		1760	4131
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		1760	4131
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	7	2114	1930
 <b>NET CURRENT; LIABILITIES 99; ASSETS 98</b>		-353	2201
 <b>NET ASSETS</b> (Total assets less current liabilities)		36494	18818
 <b>FINANCED BY:</b>			
General Accumulated Fund		16970	18818
Research Fund		19523	0
		36493	18818

### 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 true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 1999.

27 June 1999

Peter Roscoe

#### Notes to the Accounts

	1999		1998	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Note 1</b> Members' subscriptions				
Individuals	2119		2348	
Organisations	2210		2684	
		<u>4329</u>		<u>5032</u>
<b>Note 2</b> Annual Conference				
Income	2512		2485	
less				
Expenditure				
accommodation,				
speakers, etc.	2175		2612	
		<u>338</u>		<u>-127</u>
<b>Note 3</b> Interest received				
Deposit accounts		569		7
other investments		491		1248
		<u>1059</u>		<u>1255</u>
<b>Note 4</b> Journal				
printing		4752		5099
distribution		848		1186
editorial & secretarial				
expenses		636		474
		<u>6236</u>		<u>6758</u>

<b>Note 5</b> Investments comprise the following		
CRS Ltd	4000	4000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	4000	4000
	<hr/>	<hr/>

<b>Note 6</b> Debtors are made up as follows		
Individual subscriptions	0	0
Organisation subscriptions	0	75
Academic subscriptions	105	0
Journal subscriptions	140	210
Conference	0	140
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	245	425
	<hr/>	<hr/>

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

<b>Note 7</b> Liabilities are made up as follows		
Subscriptions received in advance	85	34
Journal - Printing	1665	1750
Committee Travel	59	0
Newsletter - Printing	33	50
Journal subs received in advance	272	96
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2114	1930
	<hr/>	<hr/>