

Editorial

This edition of the Journal includes material from the Society's annual conference held in October 2000. This conference took as its theme 'Re-asserting the Co-operative Advantage' and provided another public platform for presenting the research previously published in the last edition of this Journal. Members will recall that this major project is the first of its kind to be commissioned by the Society, made possible with very generous support from its friends in the movement. The findings are significant and some do not reflect well on those in positions of power. We are keen to ensure that the key issues are recognised and acted upon, rather than being seen as just another worthy academic exercise. The extracts featured here include the keynote speech from Nick Eyre, Secretary of the CWS, responding to the main research findings in the report.

In the refereed section of this journal we are pleased to include two very different papers. The first of these by Nuntiya Hutauwatr and Yap Kioe Sheng features the adoption of the SWOT strategic management technique by Thai rural people business organisations as an action research project. It provides a fascinating insight into participation and management decision making. The second paper, this time by Alan Burton examines the development of the UK labour movement's film service in the 1930s. Particular attention here is paid to the conflict between educational and commercial interests during the process.

For those that prefer a lighter read, we are pleased to publish two further speech transcripts. The first of these comes from Alan Gill, the chief executive of the Leeds Co-operative Society, who very kindly addressed the Society's fringe meeting at this year's co-operative congress in May. Alan provides a very stimulating discussion around the mutual status of his organisation. The second of these contributions comes from Johnston Birchall. Johnston gave this address to a Japanese audience on international co-operators' day. Appropriately, at the turn of the century, this includes a brief reflection on co-operative history before considering the role for co-operation in 'post-industrial' society.

Perhaps it is appropriate for me to include a few words of personal introduction in my first editorial, as I do not enjoy the status and profile of my illustrious predecessors. I worked in the food retail operations of the former Brighton Co-operative Society for several years before moving into teaching. My current post is as a Retail Management Lecturer at the University of Surrey. After six very interesting years, I have just resigned from being a member of divisional committee and regional board in the south-east with the

CWS; now the world's biggest consumer co-operative. I am of course, suitably honoured to be asked to edit this journal and will do everything I can to justify the confidence that fellow members of this society have shown in me.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my immediate predecessor. Johnston Birchall deserves our recognition for the substantial development of this journal during his five-year term of office. Amongst his achievements he can claim particular credit for introducing the refereed section. This has certainly raised the credibility of the journal within the academic community, in line with the Society's objectives. The content of the journal has also been widened, giving it a better representation across sectors and in the international arena. This is no mean feat. Johnston will be a tough act to follow. Fortunately, I shall be very pleased to be retaining his support in developing our international network.

James Bell
December 2000