

The Society for Co-operative Studies 1999/2000

Report by the Secretary

Officers

Professor Tom Carbery, Professor Tony Eccles, Dr Robert Marshall, Graham Melmoth, Lord Thomas of Macclesfield and Lord Young of Dartington continued to serve as Presidents. It was with deep regret that we learned during the year of Alan Sneddon's untimely death. His support for the Society while General Manager of the Co-operative Insurance Society had been invaluable and we had been honoured to have him as one of our Presidents.

Officers directly elected by last year's Annual General Meeting were James Bell as Chair, Rita Rhodes and Edgar Parnell as Vice Chairs, Brian Rose as Secretary, Frank Dent as Treasurer and Membership Secretary, and Johnston Birchall as Journal Editor. Other members elected to the Executive Committee were Len Burch, John Launder, and Gillian Lonergan. Rowland Dale joined them as immediate past Chair and John Buller, Roger Spear, and Alan Wilkins were co-opted by the Executive.

At its first meeting after the AGM, the Executive appointed Len Burch as Minutes Secretary, Alan Wilkins and John Butler as Conference Arrangements Organisers, John Butler as Congress Fringe Meeting Organiser, James Bell as Research Organiser, Gillian Lonergan as Journal Deputy Editor, and Peter Davis as Journal Review Editor.

Executive meetings

Four meetings of the Executive Committee have been held during the year (in October, November, February and June). Another will be held immediately before the AGM. Attendance at the four meetings held was as follows:

James Bell	4
Johnston Birchall	2
John Butler	3
Len Burch	3
Rowland Dale	4
Frank Dent	2
John Launder	0
Gillian Lonergan	3

Edgar Parnell	3
Rita Rhodes	4
Brian Rose	4
Roger Spear	2
Alan Wilkins	2

Additionally, the Executive were delighted to welcome at one of its Manchester meetings Dr Alex Wilson, a Society President, who had been one of our founder-members and our first Chair.

Membership

Paid up members for the year ended 31 March 2000 with the previous year's figures in brackets are as follows:

Region	Individuals		Organisations		Academic Sponsorships		Journal Subs		Totals	Total No Journals		
North	68	(74)	14	(14)	29	(33)	0	(0)	111	(121)	171	(188)
South	71	(76)	17	(19)	43	(44)	1	(1)	132	(140)	222	(232)
Midlands	24	(34)	9	(9)	18	(18)	2	(1)	53	(62)	110	(119)
Overseas	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	42	(27)	42	(27)	41	(27)
TOTAL	163	(184)	40	(42)	90	(95)	45	(29)	338	(350)	544	(566)

It will be apparent that there has been a decline in individual membership of the Society. On the organisational membership side, rationalisation within the retail movement has inevitably led to a smaller number of members. This trend is one that will continue. However, it does not necessarily lead to the distribution of fewer Journals. As organisations merge, they contract to one membership and take advantage of bulk order rates. We can, therefore, offset any financial losses in membership subscriptions by increasing our charges for bulk supplies. In this regard, we have a very high reliance on the newly merged CWS/CRS. We have no members overseas now but rely instead on Journal subscriptions, which give us more income per copy and are easier to market.

Journal Editor

Johnston Birchall has continued to undertake his responsibilities with great skill and hard work to the extent that the Journal is eagerly awaited both within the UK and overseas. It is with considerable regret, therefore, that we have had to accept his resignation as from the August issue of the Journal. When he took on the job, he made it clear that it would be for a five year term

which seemed long enough in prospect. His resolve to stick to his original intention has been strengthened by the move to a new post at the University of Stirling which would make it even more difficult for him to continue. Our recognition of his motives, however, makes it no less easy to accept his going. We shall have the opportunity at the AGM to express our appreciation for the work he has done for the Journal. The one comfort we can take is that his place will be taken by James Bell, a lecturer at the University of Surrey and regional committee member of the CWS, a personification of one the original aims of the Society, namely to bring together academics and co-op practitioners. Our appreciation is also due to Gillian Lonergan, the Deputy Editor, who has not only assisted the Editor in producing the Journal but also acted as Editor of the Newsletter.

The Journal

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

No 97 (December 1999): Gender Issues in Co-operatives; Women's Work, Men's Work: to Live a Better Life Beyond Gender; Modern Mutualism and the Historic Friendly Societies: The Future of Consumer Co-operatives in Post-Industrial Societies; Germany's Alien Mutuals - Some Stylised Facts on the Merger Wave of East German Co-operative Banks; Book Reviews: Proceedings of the US Society for Co-operative Studies Annual Conference, September 1999.

No 98 (April 2000): Combining Worker and Consumer Ownership: the Experience of Weaver Street Market; The People's Republic of Yaker: a Case Study of Tenant Management in Scotland; Institutional Limitations for Providing Co-operative Welfare in Sweden and Finland; Innovative Approaches to Co-operation in Health Care and Social Services; The Role of Co-operatives in the Transfomnation to Market Relations and in Solving Social Problems of the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

No 99 (August 2000): Reasserting the Co-operative Advantage: Report Commissioned by the Society for Co-operative Studies: Overview; Membership Strategy for Co-operative Advantage; A Survey of Sixteen British Consumer Co-operative Societies; Co-operative Values, Principles and Future - a values basis to building a successful co-operative business; The Society for Co-operative Studies 1999/2000.

A new development is that the Executive were approached halfway through the year by the Plunkett Foundation, who were looking at

alternative ways of publishing the material that currently appeared in their *World of Co-operative Enterprise*. Discussions were held between the officers of both organisations and, in consequence, as from next April the Journal will become the *Journal of Co-operative Studies incorporating the World of Co-operative Enterprise*. The Journal will continue to be published three times a year under the control of an Editor appointed solely by the Society. A more detailed report will be provided at the AGM.

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 satisfactory. Our income has been healthily above our expenditure although we still have a shortfall of about £1,500 on our Research Appeal. No provision for this has been made as the liability has not yet fully materialised.

Income from Journal subscriptions and sales has been nearly £500 higher than the previous year which is encouraging. Journal production costs have been well controlled, as have meeting expenses. The Annual Conference broke even.

Interest received has been good, thanks to the high balances being held and generous rates from the CWS. This will decline next year as we meet our remaining liabilities for the Research Project. Additionally, the CWS has given notice that it will no longer accept deposits so the Treasurer has been seeking a new mutually-owned home for our funds.

Peter Roscoe, our auditor for some considerable time, has indicated that he can no longer carry on. We acknowledge with considerable gratitude the thorough and helpful manner in which he has carried out his duties over the years.

Research Project - Reasserting the Co-operative Advantage

This has been a major piece of research work sponsored and specified by the Society. It was financed by a Research Fund created by the generosity of Co-operative societies and individual members, and carried out by three organisations in partnership, namely, the Co-operative College, Co-operative Union; the Co-operative Research Unit, Open University; and the Unit for Membership Based Organisations at the Management Centre, Leicester University. At the time of writing, draft reports have been seen by the Executive Committee and the final report will provide the content

of the August issue of the Journal and the theme of the Annual Conference in October.

Other research

Rita Rhodes, with some support from the Society has continued her research on Empire & Co-operation and has kept the Executive informed of her progress.

Annual Conference 1999

Following the disappointing attendance at the 1998 Conference it was heartening to see attendance recover to over seventy. The conference theme of Co-operation into the New Millennium proved to be an attractive one, reinforced by the main speakers, Graham Melmoth, Chief Executive of the CWS and a Society President, and Professor Ian MacPherson, Dean of Humanities at the University of Victoria in Canada and draughtsman of the 1995 ICA Statement on the Co-operative Identity. The speakers were supplemented by additional Saturday evening activities and Sunday morning workshops, leading to a very favourable reaction.

Fringe meeting

Despite competition from an unprecedented number of fringe meetings at this year's Manchester Co-operative Congress, the Society's was very successful. Keynote speaker was Alan Gill, Chief Executive of the Leeds Society, speaking on 'a Chief Executive's view of the Co-operative advantage'. So overwhelmed was he by the honour that he authorised the Leeds Society to pay for the refreshments.

Conclusion

Two major issues have dominated the work of the Executive this past year. the successful completion of the Re-asserting the Co-operative Advantage research project and the future of the Journal. Both have been dealt with successfully and we look forward to further development in the coming year.

The Society for Co-operative Studies

1. Income & Expenditure Account for Year to 31 March 2000

Income	Note	2000 £	1999 £
Membership Subscriptions	1	4,275	4,329
Journal Subscriptions		1,330	945
Academic Sponsorships		1,365	1,415
Sale of Journals		1,351	1,146
Interest Received	3	2,129	1,059
Grants and Donations		339	75
Annual Conference	2	3	338
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		10,791	9,307
Expenditure			
Journal	4	5,891	6,236
Congress Fringe Meeting		13	72
Regional Activity		0	0
National Executive Meetings		713	1,157
Secretarial		319	300
Advertising & Publicity		0	0
Newsletter		122	80
Other		10	3,309
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		7,067	11,155
Total excess of income over expenditure (deficit 1999)		<hr/>	<hr/>
		3,724	-1,848
General accumulated fund brought forward		16,970	18,818
General accumulated fund carried forward		<hr/>	<hr/>
		20,694	16,970
Ring fenced activity			
Accumulated research fund brought forward		19,523	0
Added contributions from fund		1,539	23,501
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		21,061	23,501
Less disbursements from fund		10,032	3,978
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Research fund carried forward		11,029	19,523
Total funds		<hr/>	<hr/>
		31,724	36,793
		<hr/>	<hr/>

2. Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2000

	Note	2000 £	1999 £	£
FIXED ASSETS				
CWS Deposit Account		34,742	32,847	
Other Investments	5	0	4,000	
		<u>34,742</u>	<u>36,847</u>	
CURRENT ASSETS				
Co-op Bank Current Account		2,052	1,515	
Debtors	6	395	245	
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>2,447</u>	<u>1,760</u>	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	7	<u>5,491</u>	<u>2,114</u>	
NET CURRENT LIABILITIES		-3,044	-353	
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>31,698</u>	<u>36,493</u>	
NET ASSETS		<u>31,698</u>	<u>36,493</u>	
FINANCED BY:				
General accumulated fund		20,694	16,970	
Research fund		11,029	19,523	
		<u>31,724</u>	<u>36,493</u>	

2. 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 2000.

Peter Roscoe
26 April 2000

Notes to the Accounts

	2000	1999
	£	£
Note 1 Members' subscriptions		
individuals	2,075	2,119
organisations	2,200	2,210
	<u>4,275</u>	<u>4,329</u>
Note 2 Annual Conference		
Income	3,418	2,512
less		
Expenditure		
accommodation,		
speakers etc	3,415	2,175
	<u>3</u>	<u>338</u>
Note 3 Interest received		
CWS (Co-op Bank)		
deposit account	1,896	569
Other investments	233	491
	<u>2,129</u>	<u>1,059</u>
Note 4 Journal		
Printing	4,630	4,752
Distribution	943	848
Editorial & secretarial		
expenses	318	636
	<u>5,891</u>	<u>6,236</u>
Note 5 Investments comprise the following		
CRS Ltd	0	4,000
	<u>0</u>	<u>4,000</u>
Note 6 Debtors are made up as follows		
Individual Subscriptions	0	0
Organisation Subscriptions	0	0
Academic Subscriptions	0	105
Journal Sales	105	0
Journal Subscriptions	0	140
Conference	290	0
	<u>395</u>	<u>245</u>

There is one debt of £40 which is questionable although no formal provision has been made.

Note 7 Liabilities are made up as follows

Subscriptions received in advance	2,749	85
Acad. Subs received in advance	735	0
Journal Sales received in advance	884	0
Journal -Secretarial	0	0
Journal - Printing	0	1,665
Journal - Distribution	640	0
Committee Travel	50	59
Secretarial Expenses	10	0
Newsletter - Printing	0	33
other	0	0
Journal subs received in advance	424	272
Conference	0	0
	5,491	2,114