

## Editorial

I will be very surprised if the papers in this edition do not provoke debate and discussion about the specific identity and purpose of co-operatives. But that is the aim of an academic journal that sees its mission closely allied to practice.

Peter Somerville's paper on the nature of co-operative identity will certainly challenge traditional assumptions within the co-operative movement, particularly as Somerville looks to community organisations that do not identify as co-operatives, to provide lessons for the co-operative movement itself.

Mark Kaswan's interesting and novel approach to happiness, politics and co-operative identity takes a very different approach. To seek out the nature of co-operation, he explores the philosophy of the utilitarian William Thompson (1775-1833). He argues that Thomson implied that the co-operative form was the most likely to achieve happiness within the human society.

Terhi Uski, Iiro Jussila and Juha-Matti Saksa's paper exploring the strategic importance of formal and informal networks on the co-operative organisation again

takes a very different perspective but which again relates to the nature and purpose of co-operatives. Co-operatives are per se a particular form of a social network.

In this issue, I am delighted to have received contributions from Stephen Yeo, Johnston Birchall and Richard Simmons. These thought provoking pieces arising out of the UK co-operative context add weight and interest to an otherwise academic journal. The Birchall and Simmon's paper on *The Role and Potential of Co-operatives in the Poverty Reduction Process: A research agenda* raises a whole range of issues in regard to the positioning and purpose of co-operatives in society.

The next edition of the Journal will be the first not to be produced in the UK. It will be the first Canadian edition of the Journal of Co-operatives Studies. This will be followed in 2008 by an Australian and New Zealand edition.

### **Paul A Jones**

School of Applied Social and Community Studies

Liverpool John Moores University

April 2007