Sheffield Co-operative Party published the Sheffield Co-operative every month from May 1832 to July 1939. There were 170 editions in all, with a circulation of 30,000. This edition, the 171st, has been published to celebrate the centenary of the Co-operative Party 1917 - 2017.

100 YEARS OF CO-OPERATION

A WARM WELCOME TO THE SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATOR

The first edition of the Sheffield Co-oper- ator carried this message;

"All good wishes to the "Sheffield Co-operative" for a useful and prosperous career in carrying the message of co-operation to the electors of Sheffield. The voters of this country have listened long enough to the rant of the capitalist priesthood preaching through press and Parliament the false doctrine of self-interest and competitive methods which are hampering the world. It is time for co-operation to speak in the home and the houses. May it have a strong voice in the "Sheffield Co-operative." 

- A. Honora Enfield. (National Secretary, Women’s Co-operative Guild).

Though written almost 100 years ago, Honora Enfield’s words are just as relevant today as they were then.

BEST WISHES: A MESSAGE TO THE CO-OPERATOR

Co-operation has not endured. Political resistance by private interests campaigning through the Conservative Party have proved too great. But this should not signal defeat for co-operative ownership. The Co-operative Party has been able to hold all its existing MPs on increased majorities, increase co-operative voices to parliament, make the Co-operative Party the third largest party in Westminster with 38 MPs.

Among those elected were Shadow International Development Minister Kate Osamor, who held Edgmont with 73.5% of the vote, and Jon Ashworth, the Shadow Health Minister who held Leicester South with 73.5%. The Party was able to welcome back David Drew, who returned to Parliament as the Member for Stroud, having previously held the seat from 1997-2010. New MPs included Ged Killen (Rutherglen and Hamilton West) and Paul Sweeney (Glasgow North East), who together form a firm base for progressive revival in Scotland. Joining them are Anneliese Dodds (Oxford East), Alex Norris (Nottingham North), Luke Pollard (Plymouth Sutton and Devonport), Jo Platt (Leigh), Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton Kemptown), and Alex Sobel (Leeds North West)

All of the successful candidates should be applauded for their tireless efforts throughout the election campaign, and should be further encouraged to spread co-operative values at Westminster.

NOT WAITING FOR WHITEHALL

It is important to remember however, that Labour did not win a majority, and the Conservatives are still in government, albeit propped up by the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland, with a slim majority. That is why the Co-operative Party have decided that it is no longer appropriate to “Wait For Whitehall” to make the necessary reforms to local government. At its June conference in Birmingham, the Party launched its “6 Steps to Building Community Wealth,” a policy document which outlines the ways that local authorities can adopt to co-operative approaches to working. This includes adopting Co-operative Political Leadership at Council level, creating new Co-operative Development Groups and Anchor Institutions, and using progressive procurement.

At the recent Labour Party Conference, Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell promised that if Labour were to win an election, they would oversee a huge expansion of the co-operative sector. The Co-operator encourages all of its readers to read this document, and for Sheffield Council to consider ways in which it can adopt some of its sensible and level headed proposals.

IN RECORD NUMBERS

Following a strong 2017 General Election campaign, a record number of MPs from the Co-operative Party have been elected to Parliament. Not only did the party retain all of its existing MPs on increased majorities, it was able to add nine further co-operative voices to parliament, making the Co-operative Party the third largest party in Westminster with 38 MPs.

The voters of this country have listened long enough to the rant of the capitalist priesthood preaching through press and Parliament the false doctrine of self-interest and competitive methods which are hampering the world. It is time for co-operation to speak in the home and the houses. May it have a strong voice in the "Sheffield Co-operative."
A JOINED UP HERITAGE STRATEGY FOR SHEFFIELD

I was trying to visualise in my mind what it must have been like at the start of the Co-operative Movement. As I imagined it, I knew that in 1917 times were hard. The war was obviously not going to end quickly and the Great Depression followed by illegal conscientious objection the year before had caused unemployment in many areas. Women were pushing for the vote. Very volatile times and many must have thought not the most appropriate time to make changes to the political system, but from the poor’s point of view there was no stability. I am old enough to remember the signs of poverty in the 1950s. My parents had the marks of TB and my teaching experience includes more than a few cases of leprosy. And in the late 60s as a nurse I saw the dirt in myself and others. It brought up the Workhouse to when hospitals were the last resort and the wards were filled with the elderly. In the 1980s as a nurse I saw the last days of people in hospital. It brought up the Workhouse to when hospitals were the last resort and the wards were filled with the elderly.

The “hipster” generation with co-working spaces, shared ownership, and community spaces are well aware of the technicalities of setting up co-operative enterprises, even if they don’t always call them that. That is because the system of co-operative enterprises is a good idea and it still is. It is not only in developing countries that we need more co-ops, it is in this city. The Co-op Party and the cooperative movement is as relevant to creating a fairer society today as it was 100 years ago, and for major conditions prevalent in the city and for many of the challenges of life for those out of poverty seem more familiar. Even if they do find a job, the low wages and the high cost of travel mean their situation changes very little. Yet city planners continue to focus on work being in the centre and housing on the outskirts.

Within Sheffield there is a shortage of skills in the building and catering trades. Working in areas of high deprivation in Sheffield, or to create their own enterprise, is as relevant to creating a co-operative movement as creating a fairer society today as it was 100 years ago. Yet city planners continue to focus on work being in the centre and housing on the outskirts.

Sheffield’s venues were marketed and how we as heritage groups could improve on that. It became obvious that we had several problems in Sheffield. Heritage organisations had been relying on Lottery funding in the main, but funding was often refused due to lack of infrastructure and strategic thinking. Even if funding was achieved the amount was often too small to make a long lasting impact and help create the infrastructure that would make it self sustainable.

We have in Sheffield a wide range of heritage buildings owned by the Council such as libraries and buildings within local parks. For many reasons they are in a poor state, but the Council hasn’t enough available finance to repair and refurbish them. Many of these buildings are in areas of high deprivation. Research we made to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic England amongst others has found that historic buildings are important to local communities and give them a strong sense of community identity. Greatly reducing the financial liability for the Council could be a major asset to the community.

What if we combined several threads together? Joined up Heritage is working to develop a strategic plan for heritage across the city and raise funding for training groups in the skills needed for running their local groups. Heritage Lottery funding to provide apprenticeship schemes in building renovation and retrofitting (making a building greener). Arts funding to help create local festivals. Using the heritage to boost neighbouring morale and encourage tourism at Manor Lodge has. Refitting buildings with professional kitchens that can be used both for private enterprise and social enterprise, together?

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THE CO-OP PARTY HAS STRONG ROOTS IN SHEFFIELD

“Co-operation is a theory of society and therefore a legitimate basis for a political party.”

This quote was made at the Swansea Congress of the Co-operative Movement in 1917, by Mr W T Allen, Chair of the meeting, where the Co-operative Party was created. The Co-operative Party is the political wing of the British Co-operative Movement. It believes in the Co-operative Values and Principles and how they can be used for the benefit of all.

The opening of the Rochdale Pioneers Shop in 1844 was a political statement. They wanted to provide pain and unadulterated produce, at honest weights and measures, for their members. Pioneers and other co-operative enterprises throughout the world have continued to grow and expand.

Sheffield can lay claim to one of the greatest Co-operative Party Politicians. Alexander of Hillsborough, KG, CH, PC (1 May 1885 – 11 January 1965) was a British statesman. A GP, he was elected for Hillsborough in November 1922, one of only four Co-op MPs. He was minister in 1922, 1924 and 1929. He would continue to represent Sheffield, with one break, until 1950. He was three times First Lord of the Admiralty, including during the Second World War. He was Minister of Defence under Clement Attlee. His work is being carried on today by the Co-op MPs and on Sheffield Co-op Party councillors around the country.

To find out more about what we do today visit www.party.coop we can put you in touch with your local party.

A V ALEXANDER

So in 1917 members from the whole of the movement agreed, “that, in view of persistent attacks and misrepresentations made by the opponents of the Co-operative Movement in Parliament and general administrative bodies this Congress is of the opinion that the time has arrived when co-operatives should secure direct representation in Parliament and on all local administrative bodies.”

The Co-operative Party was born.

The Excess Profits tax was introduced – a “bill to tax the members’ dividend.”
This year marks the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in Britain. In Sheffield, the occasion was commemorated in a series of events in the last week of February, to coincide with LGBT History Month. Hosting academics and writers, film showings, and activity sessions, the weekend culminated with a Full Moon ‘Tea Dance’ held in a location on the Out About! LGBT choir.

One of the highlights of the weekend was Sally Goldsmith’s lecture – support ed by the Friends of Edward Carpenter – an evocative, engaging, and eminently enjoyable evening. The Victorian writer and political activist Edward Carpenter and locally born ra nger George Hokin. Carpenter is known to the LGBT community as an early advocate for sexual equality: his writings on “homogenic” love and his role in the Sheffield Co-operative Party entered a “simpliﬁcation of life” which challenged the industrial triumphalism of the 1870s and 1880s. A vegetarian, he was an advocate for many of the social crusades of the day, from land nationalisation to female su ﬂage, and was an active member of the Sheffield Co-oper ative Society and the Independent Labour Party.

A POLITICAL RADICAL

Appalled by the grinding poverty and sickness of Sheffield residents in 1887, he and other members of the Socialist Society took over the old debrors’ jail on Scotland Street, opening the downstairs floor as the “Commonwealth Cafe”, which then gave access to the lecture room and hosted lectures by notable radicals, such as Annie Besant, and the anarchist Peter Kropotkin.

Though never directly involved with the Sheffield Co-operative Party, Carpenter had been inspired by the experimental co-operative agricultural associations he encountered on his trips to Europe. He later lectured on the idea of an economic transformation, fuelled by co-operative principles, unions and societies that could generate social forms of wealth. On the liberation wing of the socialist movement, he disliked state inter vention, believed that change could only grow out of existing roots, and “voluntary collective,” and like Kropotkin believed that small-holdings encouraged economic attention to detail and all-round skills.

Such was Carpenter’s repute inside and outside the Labour movement that on the eve of his seventieth birthday – and again on his eighty-ﬁth – he received a letter of congratulations signed by over 200 notable ﬁgures, including Ramsey MacDonald, Rahuldranath Tagore, and Bernard Shaw, expressing the “feelings of admiration and gratitude” with which they regarded his body of work. Carpenter often corresponded with Malcolm Donald, who opened up to him about the stresses of national leadership.

FREEDOM OF THE CITY

In June 1928, the year before his death at the age of 84, Labour councillors moved to award Carpenter the Freedom of the City of Sheffield, along with the Labour MP Cecil Wilson MP, Alderman J G Graves, and Alderman Henry Stephenson.

It was there that he wrote his most famous book, including Tendrils of Democ racy, a narrative poem inspired by Walt Whitman. His plays were twice invited to the United States to visit Whitman, and later published an account of the days they spent together.

Making a career as a market gardener, selling his produce at Chestefield, Carpenter consciously attempted a “simpliﬁcation of life” which challenged the industrial triumphalism of the 1870s and 1880s. A vegetarian, he was an advocate for many of the social crusades of the day, from land nationalisation to female suffrage, and was an active member of the Sheffield Co-operative Society and the Independent Labour Party.

EDWARD CARPENTER

So often a formality, the application was rejected after councillors from the Citizen’s Party – a Conservative/Liberal co alition – refused to vote on the matter. Though all the Labour councillors voted in favour, a decision was made that the vote had not been quorate. The Citizens’ Party refused to co-operate on their reason for refusing to vote.

WELCOME

Continued from Page 1

Co-operative-owned and managed historic building with ample car parking, creating the right working environment

High profit units to rent for new and established businesses

A complete range of different sized units to suit all types of business needs, including a comprehensive range of support services

- Shopfitting and telephone answering
- Voicemail
- Conference facilities and meeting rooms
- Broadband internet access
- On-site ICT support
- Excellent car parking
- Website hosting
- Wide range of optional services

Labour and Co-operative candidates.

The purpose of the Co-operative Party is not to win votes or seats, but to organise the people. The co-operative style of common ownership is very different from the nationalisation of the 1945 Labour Government or Municipal Socialism. It is rooted in collective self-help and social enterprise and governed by the members through their agreed constitution. All co-operatives are guided by the same values and principles which apply throughout the world.

Co-operative awareness, education, activity and culture form the foundation stones for building an alternative to capitalism. If you think that the commitment to this aim is worthwhile, join a co-operative and join the Co-operative Party.

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NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

Aizlewood’s Mill

Nursery Street

Sheffield S3 8GG

Tel: 0114 282 3132

www.principle5.coop

Aizlewood Business Centre, Aizlewood’s Mill, Nursery Street, Sheffield, S3 8GG

Tel: 0114 282 3132

Email: reception@aizlewoodmill.com

Website: www.aizlewoodmill.com

0114 282 3132
There is increasing evidence across a
category of disciplines that people are
calling for the city to be more respon-
sive. Over recent years, policy and
politicians have neglected this truth.

Take the example of pubs. By using
some of the advantages of co-op-
operatives and/or co-operation de-
veloped by this support, we can consider
the opportunities for innovation,
profit, and is not currently a member of
the Co-operative Council Charter. However,
if the council officers to imple-
ment a thorough training and change
management programme would have
to be implemented. The importance of
councillors and officers working to the
same policy cannot be overestimated.

There is a spectrum of co-operation. It
is not that every business or service pro-
vider should be a co-operative or mutual.
But it is worth considering the advan-
tage of co-operation if they work more
collaboratively.

One of the benefits of co-operation is an
engaged workforce. We know that the UK
has a very high degree of workers 30%+
that are not engaged in their workplace
and that this comes at a cost. The esti-
mate of minimum annual economic cost of
this failure for the UK is around £36 billion.

Co-operatives give more opportunity
for their employees, their customers and
their stakeholders to engage in the run-
ning of the business because they control
the capital of the business, and they have
an equal say in how it is used.

Other advantages of cooperatives in-
clude:

- Allowing communities and groups to
take responsibility for their own needs.
- Communities can make a success of ser-
tices threatened with closure. Football
supporters can own their own clubs and
communities can re-open pubs that are
closed if they work together as co-opera-
tives. Advantages are created by allowing
groups with a common interest or aspi-
ration to work together.

- Trusted values and principles. Every
Re-operative benefits from our com-
mitment to international Co-operative
Values and Principles, the blueprint for
success in community governance that
exists for over 150 years. A commitment
to ethics, community and government
means that co-operatives are trusted
to provide sensitive services to vulnerable
people.

- Creating value for business and mem-
bers. Co-operatives create value for their
members. When cooperation is the pri-
ority, it enables the provision of the
most suitable services for members and allows
the advantages of co-operation to shine
through.

Co-operatives and/or co-operation de-
veloped by this support, we can consider
the opportunities to deliver traditional council
services through co-operatives or mutu-
ally.

We need to find out how to deliver new and
collaborative services. This requires more
both on what is needed and how to deliver
collaborative services. This requires more
outreach and communities to see the benefits
of the more consumer-focused approach.

There is a need to find out what other people
think about the work of the council and to find
out what they think it should do.

How can we do this?

We need to look at the opportunities for
innovation and how they can be used to
benefit local people.

How will it work?

We need to find out what other people
think about the work of the council and to find
out what they think it should do.

How can we do this?

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How will it work?
The Co-operative Bank, established in 1872, is among Britain's oldest banks. This year it could be completely sold to the private sector. How did this happen?

Under the ownership of the co-operative movement, The Co-operative Bank weathered the recent economic crisis while the UK's big banks only survived with massive government intervention. Then it came a disastrous merger with Britannia Building Society resulting in a £2.5bn write-off, a result still evident in the cost of the acquisition. In 2013 it was in meltdown, and a majority of the bank was bought out by hedge funds. Many customers lost trust in their bank.

Making matters worse, protests erupted in 2013 when it began closing the accounts of Cuban, Palestinian and Nicaraguan-linked solidarity groups, citing regulations on money laundering and 'high risk countries'. But supporters lay a pattern behind the closures; anti-socialist influences from US financiers. Small volunteer-run groups were denied services. Some were given short notice to rearrange their banking (effectively stolen money). This was resulting in lost revenue, time and trust. Organisations affected included several New Economics Foundation's Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC) the bank's Chief Executive, Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, is chairman of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations, called in a 'disciplinary' move to treat charities.

The move had followed the hiring of David Nall as finance officer at HSBC. He had resigned following revelations that HSBC had laundered money from nations linked to terrorism. He arrived in post with a 'risk-averse' approach. In a letter to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, Executive, Nall Broker admitted their accounts were closed because of 'transactions from trade sanctions by the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). Raising to US extraterritorial legislation is arguably illegal under British and EU trade protection laws. No telling. Unsurprisingly, the All Parliamentary Group on Cuba appealed to the UK government, but the accounts remained closed.

Assessments to ensure account-holders' rights to a bank are being met. An independent report commissioned later by Amnesty International described how the bank failed to meet its own Ethical Policy commitments (not least development and supporting reduction of poverty in developing countries), concluding that the process followed was 'chaotic', with 'risk appetite' and 'global regulations' cited as key factors in the decision-making. Pro-test group Save Our Bank believes that there was no political intent behind the closures, and that the bank is still worth fighting for, thanks to the remaining tiny Co-operative Group, and its ethical commitments. CEO Nall Broker has promised to retain previous ethical commitments. There have been strong calls to re-think the whole process, and not dilute it, in recent years.

Following a survey that showed major customers wanted for them a more co-operative approach, it also cut investment in irresponsible gambling, payday loans, and companies that don't pay tax responsibilities. But it is notable that there are now more ethical providers around. 'Corporate' accounts are now offered by Triodos Bank and some credit unions. Move Your Money gave The Co-operative Bank an ethical score of just 51 out of 100, critical for the future, and many credit unions. Move Your Money gave The Co-operative Bank an ethical score of just 51 out of 100, critical for the future, and many credit unions.

The internet is so much part of life that many people are 'digital natives' in a world that didn't exist for the previous generation. It influences their thinking, learning, earning, spending, and communicating.

Fantastic technologies expected since the early days of sci-fi are now arriving; holograms, videoconferencing, talking computers, robotic surgery and much more. But the early optimistic visions of the internet bringing a democratic utopia were shattered – from the first computer virus, through the 'Millennium Bug' years. Then came the mixed blessings of social media and mobile apps, and the shock of revelations from Edward Snowden and others about US/UK spy technologies inserted deeply into the internet from its inception. The disturbing reality of mass surveillance has arrived, and Microsoft, Goog- le's 'Evil East' and their disciples are now so massively powerful that it's hard not to use their services, but there are alternatives. The free/libre open source software (FOSS) movement continues to grow. It does so in a different way from

FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS, THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK HAS SERVED THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT. BUT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

argue that non-co-ops can legitimately use the c-word, providing they satisfy certain criteria. These include requirements to 'ex- ist in order to to discredit the co-operative business model' nor 'mislead others as to whether the organisation promot co-operative activities, 'operate in line with co-operative values, and not discredit the co-operative business model' nor 'mislead others as to whether the organisation organisation itself is in fact a co-operative'. However, giving the name 'co-op' to a certain kind of group-working, started in the 19th century. For near-two centuries, in good times and bad. The Co-operative Bank's majority sharehold although, are trading on heritage; dropping the good-sounding name holders however, are trading on heritage; dropping the good-sounding name would have lost them customers. But to keep it, they must also support the move- ment. Hence they are doing so; Booker announced a £1m fund for Co-opera- tives UK to support co-op development in the UK over three years. This is a significant amount, and it would be cynical to

software, and Linux operating systems as an alternative to Windows.

Everyone would like perfect software and Unix/Linux systems are not the cheapest or best, but they are reliable, and by spying on them, but perhaps we need a re-think. High tech inventions cannot solve all the problems, and collaborating together often can. For example, co-operatively produced software called Looming as a re-think. High tech inventions cannot solve all the problems, and collaborating together often can. For example, co-operatively produced software called Looming can be password protected and effectively together, and it's gaining ground. Perhaps the future of tech- around since 2012, and grew out of the decision-making processes of the Occup- y movement in America. A co-operative economic group offers secure space to have discus- sions away from the craziness of social media and popular populism. and the laws for online voting, it's simple to use, and it simply works. What's more it's open source software, and has been coop- eratively owned cooperative social enterprise in New Zealand.

Closer to home, Co-operative Tech- nologists (coops.tech) is a new networks of computing co-operatives. This came together in late 2016 at Wort- ley Hall, the workers'ustria home and incourage co-op. Creating a fairer world includes the tech sector and around the globe. Some co- operatives make 'better workplaces, better suppliers and better digital products. More than that, the grassroots movements, the small and medium-size enterprises and co-operatives extracting profit or direct- ing operations. It's a great example of co-operation between groups of people, it welcome new members and customer enquiries. Hopefully there will be many more co-operatives produced software, and in computing and the internet over future, the future of tech- nology is open source and co-operative.

- JONATHAN COOK
The Labour Government in the 1970s set up the National Co-operative Development Agency with the purpose of promoting the interests of the co-operative sector with government, local government and others. SCDG was born out of the national movement.

The SCDG Mission Statement declared that the purpose of the organisation was to promote the development of co-operatives and other enterprises which, through the exercise of the cooperative principles, increase their control over their working lives. It aimed to promote knowledge of cooperative principles in worker co-operatives, employee led businesses and social and community enterprises.

Sheffield City Council played a major part in the establishment of the Sheffield Co-operative Development Group in late 1980. This was a time of growing unemployment in the city. The strong labour and co-operative movement in the city was resolved to find ways of saving jobs and creating employment opportunities through co-operatives. The SCDG was founded as a Co-operative Development Agency by:

- Sheffield City Council
- The Co-operative Party
- Sheffield Trades Council
- The Co-operative Bank
- The two city co-operative societies (now amalgamated into the Co-operative)

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The year 2012 was the United Nations International Year of the Co-operative, and in celebration the Manchester based political cartoonist and activist Polyp released *The Co-operative Revolution*, a four-chapter volume which charts the history of the co-operative movement from its founding in Rochdale to the present day.

Though Polyp begins with the story of the Rochdale Pioneers, the *Co-operative Revolution* tells a much broader celebration of co-operatives and co-operation. The story of the industrial workers who overcame much obstruction to start their own shop is told sympathetically and highlights just how radical their undertaking was. The rest of the volume focuses on contemporary co-operatives from around the world – from Co-op City in New York, home to 60,000 residents and its own police force, to FC Barcelona, one of the most successful football clubs in the world that is owned by 180,000 members, and even the co-operative relationships between organisms in nature. The latter section is particularly persuasive – altruism is apparent in nature, yet so much of our contemporary politics focuses on individualism. Discussing this point in a 2013 interview, Polyp explained:

“Once of the issues we try to tackle in the book is how profoundly mis-told and underestimated co-operation within nature is. In the second edition of *The Selfish Gene* Dawkins himself talks about how the concept of genetic ‘selfishness’ has been distorted and mis-interpreted. His book openly acknowledges that co-operation is a common, ubiquitous and successful evolutionary strategy, and simply seeks to explain how that’s possible, given that nature is amoral. It doesn’t anywhere say selfish behaviour is therefore fixed or inevitable in people – quite the opposite...And of course the historical section narrates the story of the human co-operative movement itself, also underestimated for its influence and ubiquitousness.”

The last of the four sections returns to Rochdale, at some point in the future, as the employees of Rochdale Aerotech, a parachute co-operative who have been contracted by NASA to provide parachutes for a manned mission to Mars gather at the Weavers’ Arms – where the original Rochdale Co-op meetings were held – to watch the landing.

*The Co-operative Revolution* is not a wholly cohesive project, yet it provides an engaging argument for the co-operative movement and its benefits, and is increasingly relevant considering that more and more people are attempting to create more sustainable business models. It is highly recommended.

-CHRISTOPHER GLENCZ

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**BOOK REVIEWS**

Together we can build the co-operative movement in Sheffield and in celebration the Manchester based political cartoonist and activist Polyp released *The Co-operative Revolution*, a four-chapter volume which charts the history of the co-operative movement from its founding in Rochdale to the present day.

Though Polyp begins with the story of the Rochdale Pioneers, the *Co-operative Revolution* tells a much broader celebration of co-operatives and co-operation. The story of the industrial workers who overcame much obstruction to start their own shop is told sympathetically and highlights just how radical their undertaking was. The rest of the volume focuses on contemporary co-operatives from around the world – from Co-op City in New York, home to 60,000 residents and its own police force, to FC Barcelona, one of the most successful football clubs in the world that is owned by 180,000 members, and even the co-operative relationships between organisms in nature. The latter section is particularly persuasive – altruism is apparent in nature, yet so much of our contemporary politics focuses on individualism. Discussing this point in a 2013 interview, Polyp explained:

“Once of the issues we try to tackle in the book is how profoundly mis-told and underestimated co-operation within nature is. In the second edition of *The Selfish Gene* Dawkins himself talks about how the concept of genetic ‘selfishness’ has been distorted and mis-interpreted. His book openly acknowledges that co-operation is a common, ubiquitous and successful evolutionary strategy, and simply seeks to explain how that’s possible, given that nature is amoral. It doesn’t anywhere say selfish behaviour is therefore fixed or inevitable in people – quite the opposite...And of course the historical section narrates the story of the human co-operative movement itself, also underestimated for its influence and ubiquitousness.”

The last of the four sections returns to Rochdale, at some point in the future, as the employees of Rochdale Aerotech, a parachute co-operative who have been contracted by NASA to provide parachutes for a manned mission to Mars gather at the Weavers’ Arms – where the original Rochdale Co-op meetings were held – to watch the landing.

*The Co-operative Revolution* is not a wholly cohesive project, yet it provides an engaging argument for the co-operative movement and its benefits, and is increasingly relevant considering that more and more people are attempting to create more sustainable business models. It is highly recommended.

-CHRISTOPHER GLENCZ

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