

Principle FIVE

P5

Yorkshire Co-operative Resource Centre

January 2025



**International Year
of Cooperatives**

Cooperatives Build a Better World

Co-op News reports that The Co-operative Heritage Trust has been awarded £131,653.00 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to fully catalogue and open up the Co-op College's archival collection. You can read this article

HERE



The night the lights were lit:

180 years of UK co-operation

David J. Thompson on the birthplace of the co-op in 1844

Writing in Co-op News.

On 21 December in 1844, the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society opened a small store in England with five items and little fanfare. Thus humbly began the modern co-operative movement. Let's step back into that time to get a sense of how co-operative history was made....

You can read the full article

[HERE](#)

That's how it started, and by the 1930s co-operation was changing the world. Honora Enfield was writing in 1927 about how social ownership might transform Society.

The final chapter of her book 'The Future of Co-operation' has been reproduced in full by Principle 5 and published as a pamphlet.

“By 1927, there was a growing political confidence, that commerce, industry and services not only could, but eventually would, be brought into social ownership. Such was the poverty and misery which capitalism had brought to most of the population, progress towards common ownership in some form seemed inevitable. There was a political optimism in those days. Enfield discusses the way forward.

Municipal and State ownership as well as Co-operation are considered. What is clear is that Co-operation is nothing if it is not political.”

(from the Preface of 'The Future of Co-operation')

You can read the whole pamphlet

[HERE](#)

A research group has begun at the Resource Centre by two Principle 5 Members. It's purpose is to try to understand how such a successful Movement in the 1930s could gradually fail in the 60s onwards. And what it can offer into the future. Any Principle 5 member would be welcome to join us in this project. If you would like to keep up to date with our progress, please contact:

membership@principle5.coop

Chris Olewicz has written an interesting paper for the **[UK Society for Co-operative Studies](#)** in which he brings together the history of the Co-op Movement from its origins with Robert Owen to the developing **[Worker Co-ops](#)**

Questions about how we lost co-operative development in Britain must be asked, and how this kind of support can be brought back.

You can read the paper by Dr Christopher Olewicz:

[HERE](#)

The substance of the Co-operative Movement was at ground level.

Co-operative Auxiluries

Women's Co-operative Guild – Co-operative
Women's Guild

National Guild of Co-operators

British Federation of Young Co-operators

UK Society for Co-operative Studies

The Co-operative Party

Co-operatives UK

Co-operative Press

The Co-operative College

Woodcraft Folk

Men's Co-operative Guild

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National Co-operative Archive

co-operative groups associated with retail societies
such as rambling, drama, choirs, educational
councils etc.

red – no longer active

black – active

Equipment of the Workers.

In 1918 Arnold Freeman he became founding Warden of the Sheffield Educational Settlement in Shipton Street, Upperthorpe, Sheffield, at first under the YMCA and later under a Council that included notable local figures. It was part of the university [Settlement movement](#), which "sought to bring education, improvement and hope to the lives of the poor and socially disadvantaged in the decades before the development of the Welfare State following the Second World War. The early decades of the Sheffield Settlement coincided with the serious hardship of the post-First World War era, typified by the Depression and mass unemployment."

Equipment of the Workers was a survey led by Arnold Freeman in 1918 on behalf of the Settlement. Its purpose was to ascertain the adequacy of the adult manual workers for the discharge of their responsibilities as head of households, producers and citizens. It covered a disadvantaged area of Sheffield 'the Crofts'. The results of the survey were published in 1919 and can be downloaded [HERE](#)

Arnold Freeman left 127 boxes of his papers to the Sheffield University Library. A group of Principle 5 members have started to look at these documents. Some of the questions that might be asked are:

- 1) What exactly were the conclusions to each part of the inquiry? What did they find out?
- 2) Were there any other similar studies undertaken?

- 3) In what ways have the conclusions reached in Equipment of the Workers been addressed?
- 4) Which have not been addressed.
- 5) Which were addressed at some point but there has now been slippage?
- 6) Did anyone read Equipment of the Workers?
- 7) What did it lead to?
- 8) Why weren't 'Education of the Workers' and 'Environment of the Workers' completed?
- 9) Is it relevant and useful in today's world, and how can it be used in the best possible way?

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If anyone would like to join this research group whether you would like to partake remotely by email or meet up in person. Contact: membership@principle5.coop

Members are always welcome to visit the resource centre. We look forward to seeing you.

Contact

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