

Some outstanding events in Co-operative history

Highlights of a century of democratic progress

WHILST the first link in the continuous chain of co-operative trading activity was forged in Rochdale, the revolt of the people against their appalling conditions and the gradual development of the co-operative idea had been in progress long before the opening of the Toad Lane Store in 1844.

The following chronological list, therefore, includes some of the earlier events which undoubtedly inspired the activities of the Rochdale Pioneers.

- 1760. A flour mill built by shipwrights of H.M. Dockyard at Woolwich and operated co-operatively was destroyed by fire (March 18th). Six local bakers published a declaration that they were not responsible. Co-operative shipwright bakers at Chatham set a guard on their mill.
- 1769. Co-operative self-supply being carried on by a friendly society of weavers at Fenwick, Ayrshire.
- 1793. First Friendly Societies' Act.
- 1795. Hull Anti-Mill Society formed by "poor inhabitants" to "preserve themselves from the invasions of covetous and merciless men."
- 1812. Lennoxtown Society founded with the pre-Rochdale idea of dividend "to be rated by the consumpt."
- 1816. Dockyard workers organise the Sheerness Economical Society for obtaining "a supply of wheaten bread and flour and butchers' meat."
- 1827. Meltham Mills Society commenced.
- 1828. Dr. King of Brighton first published *The Co-operator*. Ceased publication 1830.
- 1831. First Truck Act. Owenite Congresses at Manchester and Birmingham project wholesale trading. North-West of England United Co-operative Company, capitalised by retail societies, opened in Liverpool.
- 1844. (October 24th). Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Co-operative Society registered. (December 21st). Rochdale Pioneers opened Toad Lane Store with a capital of £28, and began to do business at the rate of £4 to £7 a week. Other similar groups followed and became a continuously expanding movement.
- 1850. Christian Socialists organised society for the Promotion of Working Men's Associations. E. Vansittart Neale founded the Central Co-operative Agency.
- 1851. Co-operative conference at Bury, Lancashire, recommend and plan wholesale trading.
- 1852. First Industrial and Provident Societies' Act passed through efforts of Christian Socialists.
- 1856. Rochdale Society, under mandate from conference (1855), organises a wholesale department.
- 1860. *The Co-operator* (Henry Pitman's) commenced publication. (August 12th). Tea party and discussions on wholesale trading at Lowbands Farm, Jumbo, near Rochdale.
- 1862. New I. and P. Societies Act enables organisation of a wholesale society.
- 1863. (April 3rd). Conference at Ancoats, Manchester, resolves on formation of North of England Wholesale Agency and Depot Society. (August 11th). North of England Society registered.
- 1864. (March 14th). North of England Society opens for business at 3, Cooper Street, Manchester.
- 1867. Amendment to I. and P. Act annuls limitation of societies' investments. (June 8th). Glasgow conference to found a Scottish C.W.S. (August 29th). Co-operative Insurance Company registered.
- 1868. Scottish C.W.S. commences business at 15, Madeira Court, Glasgow.
- 1869. First Co-operative Congress (present series) called by William Pare, meets in London.
- 1871. (September 2nd). *Co-operative News* commenced publication.
- 1872. C.W.S. Deposit and Loan Department opened (origin of C.W.S. Bank).
- 1873. C.W.S. enters into production. Biscuits and sweets (Crumpsall); boots and shoes (Leicester). Central Co-operative Board established (forerunner of Co-operative Union).
- 1874. English and Scottish Wholesale Societies begin joint trading arrangements.
- 1876. C.W.S. opens depot in New York. Co-operators become shipowners. C.W.S. purchases *S.S. Plover*.
- 1880. C.W.S. Annual first issued.
- 1882. Scottish C.W.S. joins with English C.W.S. in tea trade.
- 1883. First direct shipment of tea from China for British co-operators. Women's League for the spread of co-operation formed. Became Women's Co-operative Guild 1884.
- 1884. C.W.S. coming of age. *Co-operator No. 1* (first lifeboat presented by co-operators to R.N.L.I.) launched at Cullercoats.
- 1889. First co-operative creamery society registered in Ireland. C.W.S. takes shares.
- 1894. Manchester Ship Canal opened. C.W.S. ship (*S.S. Pioneer*) first vessel to reach Manchester from overseas.
- 1895. First International Congress of co-operators held in London, from which grew the International Co-operative Alliance.

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WHEATSHEAF, June, 1944

SOME OUTSTANDING CO-OPERATIVE EVENTS (Continued from page 10)
 1896. *Wheatsheaf* first published.
 1902. First tea estate (Ceylon).
 1912. C.I.S. transatlantic service.
 1913. C.W.S. Jubilee (September).
 1914. C.W.S. order food parcels strikers' fund.
 1914. War. Co-operative food ship sail.
 1914. War. Co-operative restrain food rationing of food.
 1916. *Producer* first published.
 1918. First Co-operative A. E. Waters.
 1919. First shipmer goods to U.S.
 1923. E. and S. established.
 1924. International created.
 1929. *Reynolds' Milk* purchased by Movement.
 1932. National Co-operative Authority created.
 1936. C.W.S. sales price levels (one million pounds).
 1943. C.W.S. sales.

SOME OUTSTANDING EVENTS IN
CO-OPERATIVE HISTORY

(Continued from page 11)

1896. *Wheatsheaf* first published.
1902. First tea estates purchased (Ceylon).
1912. C.I.S. transferred to E. and S. Wholesale Societies.
1913. C.W.S. Jubilee. (September). T.U.C. gives C.W.S. order for 30,000 food parcels for Dublin strikers' families. First food ship sails.
1914. War. Co-operative societies restrain food and money panic. Institute voluntary rationing of food supplies.
1916. *Producer* first issued.
1918. First Co-operative M.P. (Mr. A. E. Waterson) elected.
1919. First shipment of C.W.S. goods to U.S.S.R.
1923. E. and S. Joint C.W.S. established.
1924. International C.W.S. created.
1929. *Reynolds Illustrated News* purchased by Co-operative Movement.
1932. National Co-operative Authority created.
1936. C.W.S. sales (at normal price levels) first exceed one million pounds.
1943. C.W.S. sales, £166,834,649.

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