

<b>Working Together: recording and preserving the heritage of the workers' co-operative movement</b>
<b>Ref no:</b>
<b>Name:</b> Roger Sawtell <b>Worker Co-ops involved in:</b> Trylon (Northampton), Daily Bread Northampton, ICOM, National CDA
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Summary:

**[00:00:00]** Roger Sawtell talks about the early years of his career working at Spear & Jackson, Sheffield. **[00:07:30]** RS talks about his work at Trylon, Wollaston. **[13:00]** Discusses involvement in ICOF (Industrial Common Ownership Finance) and setting up ICOM (Industrial Common Ownership Movement). **[16:00]** Talks about involvement in setting up National Co-operative Development Agency (CDA). **[18:42]** Discusses Michael Jones Jewellers, Northampton. **[22:12]** Talks about the setting up of Daily Bread Co-operative, Northampton. **[29:04]** Discusses retirement and the papers to be deposited at the National Co-operative Archive. **[34.05]** Talks in more detail about ICOM and ICOF. **[40:57]** Talks about the distinction between common-ownership and workers co-operatives. **[43:54]** Discusses Suma. **[47:17]** Talks about the structure and working of Daily Bread. **[56:53]** Talks about the Christian focus of Daily Bread. **[01:04:12]** Talks about Daily Bread and mental health rehabilitation. **[01:10:01]** Discusses in more detail the setting up of the National CDA. **[01:18:06]** Talks about links between Daily Bread Northampton, and Daily Bread Cambridge, and Unicorn. **[01:23:40]** Talks about the worker co-op movement in the present day and its development in the future.

**Transcript:**

I wrote some notes on here. [rustling papers] My, co-op history, is like that [shows notes].  
*Oh ok great. So, more for the purpose of the recording if I could just get you to, briefly go through your co-op history, and then, we'll go back over it.*

Yes, yes, do you want me to start any further back than 1968 or not?

*If there's anything you want to say before then, yeah go for it.*

Well, may be relevant. I'll tell you my lifestory, I won't take too long though [laughing]. And you interrupt whenever you like, say 'this is not what we're on about' [laughing]. I was born and brought up in Sheffield, and my father worked in the steel industry, all his life, and I followed him, I did an engineering training, and then, worked in Sheffield, for a medium sized steel company, Spear & Jackson, a company with a long, long, history, very prestigious, medium sized company, and, I was young and ambitious and climbing the management tree, and became a director, and then my boss, who I'd worked with for years, the chairman died, and my boss who was managing director, became chairman, and they offered me the job of managing director, which is the job I'd been aiming at for 10 years, or so. But, by that time, I'd changed my views about industry a bit, mostly because, I was on the work side and I was on the engineering side and production and so on, meaning that I spent a lot of time, on the shop floor and I knew a lot of the people working there, which my board room colleagues, broadly speaking didn't you know they were sales, or accounts or so on. But I was a shop floor person, and I'd realised by then that, there was enormous talent, that, skilled working men, who were the backbone of this company, and had been for years, intelligent men, but who left school at 15 or whatever because they had no option, and, we took, no notice of them, when we were making decisions about this and that. The directors, and not only the directors but the senior managers, we sort of took the, we assumed, that we were the decision takers, and we needn't bother about anybody else, and I realised after a time that was a totally false situation, and that these, people had a lot to, offer because they knew the job backwards and, and so, as Works Director I started various, participation schemes of bringing people into, is this, is this relevant?

[03:38]

*Yeah, no definitely*

We're getting there [laughing]

*[Laughing] It is relevant*

Participation as it was called and shared decision making and, we started a share-ownership scheme and so on. But I thought this wasn't going far enough so when they offered me the job, I said 'as you know', to my colleagues on the board, 'this is the job I would like to do, but I want to, change the, focus of this company altogether and make it far more participative'. And to cut a long story short they said, 'no' [laughing]. They said, 'this is the way it's been for, over 200 years!', because, Spear & Jackson started in 1760, and one of my jobs had been to, organise the, bi-centenary, celebration in 1960. And they said, 'no... we may think we're, paternalistic and so on but, our shareholders' who were mostly shareholders<sup>1</sup> of former directors, many of them, widows who were dependent on the shares for their income, they said, 'the shareholders wouldn't like it and, we can't take risks', they said, 'we know how you feel, because you've been saying this for years', but they said, 'the fact is, we're not going to, change direction.' So, again to cut a long story short I left in a huff [laughing], after 16 years, and I thought that if Spear & Jackson won't change, there must be, a different way, to organise work on a more participative, basis, and at that time, I knew, nothing about the, co-operative movement, like most people, I knew about the shops, but, nothing else, so, I was then asked by, a friend who ran an organisation called the Industrial Society, which was bringing together, management and unions to do, a survey of, companies, that were, working in unusual participative ways, because it was becoming talked about at that time, this is 19...60s, '67 and John Garnett who was the director of the Industrial Society said 'I know you're interested in this, would you, would you travel around the country and, write a report on, companies that are doing unusual things'. So, it's just what I wanted to do, see just what was happening out there, and so I did that, I spent about 6 months, touring round , this is all in the boxes that are now on their way to Manchester<sup>2</sup>[laughing], and, wrote a report, called,

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<sup>1</sup> Note by Roger Sawtell (RS) – relatives (not shareholders)

<sup>2</sup> Material donated by Roger Sawtell available at the National Co-operative Archive

‘Sharing our Industrial Future’<sup>3</sup> and listing, about 20 companies working in different ways, and one of those companies was Scott Bader, do you know the name Scott Bader at all?

[00:07:30]

*Yeah*

Wollaston, I hope you got some information from them because they are, quite key they, don't always like to call themselves a co-operative, but they are, of course, they're totally employee owned, and when I got to Scott Bader and Ernest Bader, who was the founder, who was then in his 80's, and he said, 'I've retired, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]<sup>4</sup> so he said 'I'm starting a new company, at the other end of the village, it's called Trylon', and he said, 'are you prepared to come and be, manager of Trylon and build it up, as a new employee owned company.' And I said, 'well that's just the sort of opportunity I'm looking for'. So, we moved, from Sheffield, to Northampton, in 1968, and I started work at Trylon, which was, at that time, a group of just 2 or 3 people, which Ernest Bader had got together, and I stayed there 6 years? Yep, 6 years, and we built it up, making, glass-fibre canoes. Scott Bader make polyester resin, which is the material used in glass-fibre, you know the resin and then the glass-fibre bond together, so they were one end of the village and we were able to buy their resin, and we made these canoes, and it became...a flourishing small business, because we found a market, in schools, that schools craft groups were interested in buying a mould from us then making their own canoes, hundred thousands of canoes were made in the 1970s and 1980s, by schools, and youth groups and so on, all over the country, and, that was the Trylon business, it's changed now, but that's, because they're no longer allowed to do that, the chemicals in that process, are, quite unpleasant, and eventually the school inspector said 'we can't do this', but that's another story, that's the development of Trylon long after I'd passed on, because I left after 6 years and I stayed as a, trustee, until 1996, yes, so that was 20 years more. And we put together a new constitution, I still haven't heard anything about the co-op movement because although I was closely in touch with Scott Bader, as I say, they never, even now, have really become, part of the co-operative movement. Ernest Bader was a very strong character, he had his own ideas about, what sort of constitution, they should have, and so, at Trylon, we developed, a new constitution but it was

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<sup>3</sup> Note by RS - Sharing Our Industrial Future, 64 pages Published by The Industrial Society 1968

<sup>4</sup> Redacted for personal data

a, relatively standard one, of, a company guaranteed by, company guarantee with ownership company, Tylon Community Ltd which owned the production company.

[11:37]

So, at that time I began to, find myself in touch with co-operative people, because we were on the same sort of wavelength. And, I realised that, what we'd been sweating away, legally at Tylon, was reinventing the wheel it'd all been done before 100 years before [laughing]. I went right back to the start of the co-op movement and the Christian Socialists in the 1850s and, and then the Co-operative Productive Federation, which was quite active round here in the shoe trade, there were, at one stage, a lot of shoe co-operatives in the, late 19<sup>th</sup> century early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and one and two still survived, so, that was my introduction to, the co-operative movement, and then, having, got Tylon going, I thought I mustn't stay too long so, I left after 6 years, and, co-ops, and employee ownership, was becoming popular then, this was in the 19, mid 1970s.

[13:00]

So, I spent the next, 6 years, self-employed working from home, as a, sort of, advisor/consultant, to, new companies and during that time we started ICOM<sup>5</sup>, and ICOF<sup>6</sup>. Both of which were, very much, I was heavily involved in both ICOM and ICOF, and there are half a dozen boxes on their way to Manchester, about ICOM and ICOF<sup>7</sup>, which got off the ground. And it was at that time, that I realised that, there was nothing new, about, worker co-ops, it had just fallen into disuse over the previous 50/60 years. But when I picked up the, registered rules, of the Co-operative Productive Federation based in Leicester, they were, complicated, and long winded, 100 pages, because, over the years, they'd been added to, when something occurred they'd added a new rule, but they never subtracted any, so the model rules had got very complex, and that was one reason, why they'd been so few, new registrations for, 50 years or more. So, I set about writing the model rules for ICOM, with help from other people, but it was mainly, my initiative. And, jumping years ahead, I think that was, that is the most useful contribution I have made over the years, if nothing else, I

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<sup>5</sup>Industrial Common Ownership Movement

<sup>6</sup>Industrial Common Ownership Finance

<sup>7</sup>Material available at the National Co-operative Archive

think, has had, a lot of impact but the model rules had a big impact, and in the 70's and 80's, over 1000 worker co-ops were registered, with the model rules, and the directories, which are all in the boxes, and you've got some already I know [laughing], and you'll probably know already that, there were, yes over 1000 registrations, and that was for various reasons partly because it was becoming, more, known, as an alternative way of organising work, due to sort of cultural changes and industrial changes, but also because, there was this simple, inexpensive, way to set up a co-op, so 100's did and, many of them wouldn't survive, but there's nothing unusual about that in small businesses, and, some did survive.

[16:00]

So, that was in the 70s, and then we were very active, politically at that time, the, secretary of ICOM, Manuela Sykes, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]<sup>8</sup> And she was very political. She wanted to be an M.P. and she was, she never was an M.P but she was an advisor and she was in and out of the House of Commons for years, and for example, we, pushed through a, small, Act of Parliament, the Industrial Common Ownership Act, in 1976, not a great success, took a lot of work, but it never, really, had much impact for various reasons, but all that kept me very busy, and then, oh yes what we did manage to do, was to persuade the government to set up a National CDA<sup>9</sup>, so the National CDA, which was started in 1978, I think it must've been a Labour government at that time... can't quite fit that in with the, because there are, lots of changes of government, but I think it must've been Labour, Conservative government would've never set it up because they spent years trying to close it down [laughing], under Mrs Thatcher, but we set it up, well I say we, it was, it was set up by, an Act of Parliament, in 1978, and I became, one of the first, board members, together with some sturdy co-operators from, Manchester, and, and

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<sup>8</sup> Redacted for personal data

<sup>9</sup>National Co-operative Development Agency

we published all sorts of things we, made, new versions of the model rules, and, did all sorts of things for a year or two. So, again, that kept me very busy.

[18:42] And then I thought, its time I got back, to the coalface. Shouldn't be doing this too long. So, in the late 70s...when we'd just put the model rules together, we needed something to, try them out, to see if they worked, with the registrar and so on, and, Susan, my wife and I were members of a, small, house group attached to our local church, and, most small church groups come and go, but this one, stayed in existence for years about 20 years, and, we, supported each other in what we were doing and, one of the other members of the group was Michael Jones, you'll have passed Michael Jones jeweller on your way from the station possibly, did you notice them?

*I didn't notice no*

By, did you come, past the church and the town centre?

*Up the high-street, yeah,*

Just opposite the church, on the corner, is Michael Jones Jeweller<sup>10</sup>, prestigious jewellers shop, and, during the 70s they became employee owned, and, one of my jobs was to help them, to register as a co-operative, and, they've been an active co-operative ever since, and, I went to see, William, the managing director a few weeks ago, when I had the email from you, and said 'had they got, records, which could be useful to your project', and he said, 'well, the person who knows is, Jane,' he said, 'and Jane is about to retire', so we sent for Jane and she said, 'well if you'd come a year ago I had a whole cupboard full', but she said, 'I've thrown them all away!' Michael Jones died last year, and she said, 'Michael wouldn't let me throw them away, but after he'd died, I had a clear out', so she said that, 'I haven't got much left.' So, but she did produce a few box files, and I went through them and marked, I should think 20 or 30 papers, which I thought were relevant, and, William the managing director said well, I'll have them photocopied, and sent them off to you. I haven't spoken to him for a month or so now have you heard at all from him?

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<sup>10</sup>Copies of papers available at the National Co-operative Archive



*I've not heard, but it might take a while to copy.*

I'll remind him. I think probably it was rather more photocopying than he expected.

*Probably, yeah [laughing]*

[laughing] But you should be getting some papers from Michael Jones Jeweller, and if you don't, don't hesitate to remind them, because they know all about it. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[22:12]

And Michael Jones and his wife Anne were members of this same church, house group, and so I said to my colleagues at the group, 'I've got these model rules, and I want to try them out, are you prepared to be, a, trial co-operative which may never become a business but at least, will enable me to test out the model rules, talk them through with the registrar, see if they cover the right, stuff, make them as simple as possible', and they said, 'yes', so we formed, Daily Bread Co-operative, from this house group, without any, plan to make it into an ongoing business, and, proved the model rules were alright with some revisions and we think we produced 3 different lots in the end, they're all in one of the boxes. And guidebooks to the model rules and so on, and then, in 19..in the late 70s I thought it was time I moved on, get back to doing some, more frontline involvement with worker co-ops, so, we decided that we would use the constitution that we now had to set up a new business, which we did, and that's Daily Bread Co-operative, which is about 2 miles from here<sup>11</sup> the other side of the town, and, is, a wholefood business. So I went to work there in 1980, and that was starting right from scratch, and we'd looked at various different, possible, things to do, one of the members thought we should be bicycle repairers, and there is a very good co-op, which you may know of called, Edinburgh Cycles? Which as far as I know is going well, does that name ring a bell?

*Yeah, they have lots of different shops now don't they in places that aren't just Edinburgh?*

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<sup>11</sup>Interview at Northampton Quaker Meeting House.

Note from RS – 1 mile not 2, Daily Bread Co-operative Ltd, Bedford Road, Northampton, NN4 7AD

I think so yeah. And they've built that out of selling and repairing bikes. And somebody else said, 'no! What we want to do, is set up a house clearing business, people who are moving out, or their parents have died, and they've got to clear out the house, we'll set up, and, have a few vans, and we'll be able to employ people, who may not be easily employed elsewhere and so on'. And, we didn't do that either. And then we said, 'well what about wholefood', it was just beginning to be talked about and, people were talking more about organic growing and wholefood, and I thought this, this looks better. So I, asked a number of people, most of whom said, 'no' said, 'you'll be in competition with the big supermarkets, and it's a cut throat trade, and you'll never make a go of it.' But being, obstinate, because my wife tells me I'm very obstinate, I said, 'I don't believe that', at least I accepted it, a cut-throat trade, and very competitive, but in such a huge business, you know, everybody is spending money on food of course, there must be room for, niche, companies, doing something a little bit different. And again, to cut a long story short, Daily Bread Co-operative have built on that over, nearly 40 years now, 38 years, we started, we opened the business in 1980, in the grounds of, a big psychiatric hospital, and we rented, a building from them. And, we were starting right from scratch, and it was hard work, because as I say, the, survival rate with new businesses whether they're co-ops or not, is, really quite low, I think its 2 out of 5, survive the first, 2 years. But Daily Bread has survived, and prospered, and it's now a group of about 25 people, in the same premises, and, they don't plan to grow any bigger, at least I don't think they do, because the building won't hold any more people, any more stock, but they have managed to remain as a, niche, business, able to compete with the major supermarkets, appealing to, people who are interested in, wholefood, organic food...gluten-free, all these sort of things which are now much more prevalent than they were 30/40 years ago. So, that kept me busy, until I stayed there full-time until, 1987, when I was 60. I'd always planned to retire at 60 and do a few other things, so I stayed on another few years part-time, and then as a trustee, so, I was involved with Daily Bread from 1976, when we, set up the model rules until 1997, just over 20 years, and, because they're just down the road from where we live of course I've kept in touch, and they're good friends, we're regular shoppers.

[29:04]

So, then I, retired, but stayed on, doing all sorts of, co-op development work, as I had been, 20 years earlier, up and down the country, yes, I see the one I mention here is Shared Interest,

which is a co-operative finance company in Newcastle, and I was involved there for more than 7 years, until 1997, when I would've been 70, and then I retired properly and did a few other things, and but all these papers in our roof space, we moved house, 10 years ago, and the flat where we live now has a, big roof space over the whole area of the flat so we had lots of space, and so I was able to fill it up, with all these things because I'm a hoarder of paperwork, including all the stuff about co-ops, which, I'd nearly put on one side and I hadn't sorted it out at all, so I've spent the last month going through these papers, and I certainly haven't sorted them out as you will soon discover. What I've tried to do is to put them approximately in, some date order, did I send you a copy of the...I think I did, did I send you a copy of that, which is the?<sup>12</sup>

*Yes, I think, did you? I think you did, yeah.*

Anyway keep that one. But I've sorted them into, different categories, like, the directories for example, which we talked about, and a whole file of talks and reports, that I've done, they're all in one box, and, in some ways, you may think that that's all you need, is that box [laughing]. But it is backed up by then, 4 boxes about Trylon, 6 boxes about co-operative development over 30 years, 4/5 boxes about local CDA's, 3 boxes about the National CDA, then, several boxes about Trylon,er about ICOM, and then ICOF, and then Daily Bread, and 2 that I've put on the end because I wasn't sure if they were sufficiently relevant, one is some papers from a, conference about employee ownership in Washington, in 1976, and also, Nigel Mason who's been involved with co-ops for years, he also went to America and did a report in 1991, so I've put them in a box, but you may say they're outside your scope, but not to worry, throw them away, there's nothing lost. And then, Scott Bader, Ernest Bader was the founder of Scott Bader and Godric Bader is his son, who was managing director, and, retired years ago because he's now 93 I think? He and I have been friends for 50 years, and I noticed when I started going through the boxes that there's quite a lot of correspondence, between Godric and myself, so I've put them in a box along with some Scott Bader stuff, but of course they must have all kinds of, archive material at their place.

*I think they've deposited a lot at Warwick Record Centre<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup>Box list of items donated to the National Co-operative Archive

<sup>13</sup>Warwick Modern Record Centre <http://mrc-catalogue.warwick.ac.uk/records/SBC>

Ah, I think it was you telling me, yes. But that's available to you presumably if you wanted to use it?

*Yeah, you can, all researchers can access it so.*

So, that may not be relevant.

*But I can maybe send it on to Warwick, or maybe talk to them about it so that it can all kind of go together.*

Yes.

*That's great – thank you.*

[34.05]

So, that's my story anyway.

*That's great – so I've got a few questions down here, I'm just going to have to look through them just to follow up things while you were talking...I think, I guess maybe if you could go into a bit more detail about the setting up of ICOM, what was the kind of...what was your reason, for wanting to set it up, yours and the other people that were involved in it.*

Because, in the 1970s, employee ownership, common ownership, worker co-ops, call it what you will, was, becoming a little bit more known, but was still very much on the fringe and, we felt, we needed to support each other, so we needed an organisation of some sort, and, Scott Bader, really, were, at the base of that, because, for no other reason than they had the money [laughing] and they, they already had, set up an organisation called DEMINTRY<sup>14</sup>, and there are some papers about DEMINTRY in the 60s, and they wanted to grow DEMINTRY, and include the, new co-operatives within that, but that wasn't acceptable because, Ernest Bader, strong-minded man, said, 'we're not only a commonwealth and a

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<sup>14</sup>Association for the Democratic Integration of Industry. Additional papers at Warwick Modern Record Centre

common-ownership company, but we must be vegetarians, and, we must be pacifists', and a few other things as well, and this didn't necessarily appeal to other people at all, they said, 'no, we're interested because we're interested in, ways of working together, and, maybe some of us are pacifists and, some of us may be vegetarians.' So, we thought well, we'll start a new organisation, which won't have all Ernest's...concerns about it, so we started ICOM, on that basis, and, that grew quite quickly, and ICOM became, quite a strong sort of, lobbying organisation partly, answering your question it was to support each other, but also, was very political, and, we wanted, somebody who would speak for common-ownership, politically, and so, Manuela Sykes, was the right person, and, certainly did that. The problem was that, like Ernest Bader, Manuela, never accepted, the co-operative movement even existed, she wanted to, called it common-ownership, and with the wisdom of hind-sight, we should've, at that time, become part of what is now Co-ops UK, at that time it was the Co-operative Union<sup>15</sup>, we should've become part of that, but we didn't, because of, Manuela, and others, not only Manuela...and then from, from that, we realised that we needed, loan capital, to start people, and so we set up ICOF as a revolving loan fund, and again Scott Bader put in the first, contribution, to ICOF, which has now, grown and matured in all sorts of ways, and they must have, plenty of records, have you been in touch with ICOF at all? They're now based in Bristol.

*I haven't actually no but, that's a thing that I need to.*

Well, if you wanted to, they're in Bristol, and they're trading now under the name, Co-operative and Community Finance Limited.

*I think I might've been in touch? I get very confused with all the different, many of the names sound the same.*

Yes they do, I'm just trying to remember the name- [REDACTED] [REDACTED]<sup>16</sup> anyway you'll be able to find them under Co-operative, and Community Finance, but they are in fact, ICOF under another name.

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<sup>15</sup> ICOM and the Co-operative Union merged in 2001 to become Co-operatives UK. The Co-operative Union historically was associated with consumer co-operatives.

<sup>16</sup> Redacted personal data

[39:22]

And the, purpose of that was to, to provide loan capital to, new co-ops, and, Daily Bread and others, were able to, get loans from ICOF to get off the ground. But it was, it was all very tentative in those days, and there were some quite wild people involved, in one sense...they were idealists, we were all idealists in one sense or another, but in other ways they were very impractical. And I remember, meetings where, we had, one, lovely man, who was, very active in, the animal welfare and, anti-vivisection business, and he used to turn up with his dog, to meetings, which was, at a wholefood co-op was a bit difficult having a dog wandering about. And there were a number of, strange characters like that, who were not part of the sort of business world at all, but had got interested because it was an alternative way of working and then there were other people like me who'd been working in, conventional industry, and, were, wanting to do something different. Does that answer your question?

[40:57]

*Yeah it does. I'm interested as well, you were saying that Manuela Sykes, and a few others, didn't want to be, necessarily associated, or call themselves worker co-operatives, but preferred common-ownership, why was that, why did they kind of want that distinction? If you can answer that?*

I think it was...the kind of people I mentioned, who were into animal welfare and so on, they were happy with, the phrase worker co-op, but the, the, people coming from industry, not including me, but others felt no, that's too way out all together, worker co-ops at that time, and maybe still had this sort of cloth-cap image, and they were saying, 'no, we've got to be...much more, to do with contemporary culture, and we're going to be forming businesses which don't have a cloth-cap image', like Phone Co-op, for example, and others, so that doesn't fit. But it would be mainly Manuela Sykes, because this was, her phrase, 'common-ownership', and it was part of the Labour Party, Clause 4 of the Labour Party, do you know about all this?

*I've kind of touched on it, but not, yeah*

Clause 4 of the Labour Party Constitution said that, 'we will, set up, common-ownership in industry', so the phrase was known in political circles and we picked it up from there, but, in my view, we lost, 10/20 years, trying to do our own thing calling in common-ownership, where we should've been working with the existing co-op structure, which was, very much focused then, as it still is up to a point, on the retail co-ops, but we could've had a much bigger input, in to that, if we'd gone along with, the phrase, worker co-op, and become part of the Co-operative Union in 1970. Eventually, ICOM, fused into Co-ops UK, but that wasn't until, 2001. So, ICOM has now disappeared, and rightly so, and Co-ops UK as you will know, are, active in all sorts of co-ops not just the retail sector but, housing and worker co-ops and so on.

[43:54]

*And you kind of touched on this a bit before but, in terms of the co-ops you were involved in, how did it relate to the wider, I guess kind of political, or community activities at the time?*

We had all sorts of links in the early days, both political as I was telling you...and also, on the sort of wholefood network, some of which were co-ops, like Suma for example, which were quite small at that time. Let me tell you a Suma story. Stop me if you're fed up with the stories, it's all in the boxes. Suma, did you know Suma?

*I went there last week, yeah, for the first time.*

Oh did you, oh right. They were at that time in Halifax, they've now..

*Just outside Elland?*

Elland, that's right yeah. They started in another mill in Halifax, and they were growing at the same time as we were developing, Daily Bread Co-operative, in the 1980s, and they turned up with a van, we were buying stuff from them and, because they're wholesalers as you know, and Daily Bread is, mostly retail, so we were buying quite a lot of stuff from them, they were delivering their van every week. And then one day they turned up with a huge..artic, they'd bought a big articulated lorry, which was their first one, and, and they delivered in this which was a struggle, because the premises, Daily Bread premises were at

that time difficult to get into, and they backed this thing in, I noticed that the driver was a young woman, I said, 'that's interesting', you don't often find, and certainly not then in the 1980s, don't often find women driving these big, heavy vehicles, and she said, 'well in our co-op we believe in rotating the jobs, and she said I'm a member and, I can drive this thing just as well as the rest of them, so I'm part of the driving team.' And, 'well that's fine', and then she drove out with this huge lorry, and what she never knew was that as she drove out the back of the lorry knocked down our gate post [laughing] and I don't think she ever realised because it was so far behind her, she sort of nudged the gate post which then fell down and off she went back to Halifax [laughing], so we had to put a new gate, a wider gate. Well that was Suma, who've grown, really quite large as you know, and, wonderful co-op. I'm out of touch with them then but there's Bob...Cannell? still?

*He's on the steering group actually for this project, so yeah he's been quite key in getting the project up and running.*

Oh really, good. Yes, good. <sup>17</sup>

[47:17]

*And you talked about the structure of Suma actually, did you have a similar structure at Daily Bread, or was it different, so you didn't have job rotation?*

Yes, very much so, yes, because, we did, because for a small business, still a small business, it was important, particularly in the early days, that, everybody could do everything, and it was vital really that, we were able to rotate jobs, whether its things like manning the till in the shop, or whether it was things like unloading lorries, when you're a small group, and there was only 3 full time workers to start with, we all had to do everything. And so, we had agreed on a really flat pyramid pay structure, which they still do, remarkable really, I'm proud of them because now they've 25 people and its, although it's still in some ways very informal, they've had to be a lot more professional than we were, then, but we had a flat pay structure, so, there was no, no problem in people saying, 'well that's not my job', you know, 'I'm not paid to do that', we paid ourselves to do everything, so we all unloaded lorries, we all, for

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<sup>17</sup> Redacted personal data



years, to be a member of Daily Bread co-operative you had to be on the till rota, they don't do that now because, it wouldn't be practical with 25 people, but as a small group it was, so...we did that, and that was very important...As the elected manager, I had, a lot of freedom to take decisions quickly because we had to, and we were buying in bulk and repacking which is the heart of Daily Bread, buying in bulk from stuff coming in very often from abroad, and , the, importer would ring up and say, 'Roger we've got a tonne of dates just arrived,' he would say, 'no we've got 10 tonnes of dates, do you want a tonne on a pallet?' And it was no use my saying well I have to take that to our weekly meeting next Friday, he'd say well 'stuff that, I've got to sell these in the next day or two', so my colleagues, were happy to, give me as manager, authority to make those sort of decisions on the spot on the phone, we had to do. But on the other hand, decisions involving people, whether we took on a new person, whether we...had to, exercise a bit of restraint on, other people, all those sort of, all those, people decisions, they were all taken by the weekly meeting, collectively, rather than me as the manager. And, as far as I know, that's roughly how they still work in, in some ways, very democratic in that, virtually all decisions of that kind are taken at a weekly meeting, but still giving the management group, authority to, take those commercial decisions without reference to the weekly meeting.

*Are you ok, do you want a break or anything, or are you ok to carry on going?*

No I'm fine, how about you?

[51:40]

*No I'm fine, yeah, but I haven't been doing all the talking so [laughing] So yeah, kind of linked to that, so were member relations good within the co-op?*

Yes, yes they were, oh I recollected as a...for me, a very happy working time, I've always enjoyed my work but, Daily Bread was the, culmination for me of, years of thinking about how to organise work and, and it, it was a good, cheerful working group, I hope, I think it still is, but even with 25 people it's different than half a dozen and, we had our problems, that, we had to, use some discipline procedures, but never, we never had to go beyond, the weekly meeting. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

for me it was very special because I felt, that, that those, 6 years I spent as manager there, were the sort of culmination of, all my previous experience and commercial experience of, what makes a business go, and I was working alongside in ICOM with a whole lot of much more idealistic people, who didn't have that sort of business background, and I felt well this is what I have to offer, and, as I say I felt that, my peculiar career, had really been working up to getting this new business of the ground in a different sort of way, whether my colleagues agreed with that I don't know but, I felt that [laughing].

[56:53]

*And, could you tell me a bit more about the, Christian focus of Daily Bread?*

Mm, yeah. Very important. I'd been an active Christian since college days, and right from starting work in Sheffield, I felt there was this dichotomy that, on the one hand, people like me were going to church on Sunday, and, studying the, life and teaching of Jesus and so on, and yet on Monday there we were back in the heart of the steel industry, and there didn't

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<sup>19</sup> Redacted – personal data

seem any contact between the two! And I felt well if the Christian faith is important to me, surely it must have some, relationship with what I do from Monday to Saturday. So, I became active in, the Sheffield Industrial Mission, which was a very, special, unusual, mission of the church to industry, steel industry, working with small groups in the steel industry and I got very involved in that, over a number of years, and, the person who, started that and ran it for years Ted Wickham, became a vicar, a bishop in Manchester, Bishop of, Salford<sup>20</sup> I think. And he married us and, he was a close friend, so, and at that time, we were meeting to discuss just what, the Christian faith had to offer in terms of industrial work, in terms of justice, equality...enabling people to lead a full life, and that, made sense to me in terms of what I was saying about these skilled people, who were not living a full life because they could've, made a much bigger contribution in terms of, sharing decision making, as well as doing their skilled saw making jobs. And all that was very much part of the industrial mission, in Sheffield, and so, when we started Trylon, Ernest Bader, was a Quaker, and his son Godric has been a Quaker for 93 years [laughing], he was born into the Society of Friends as they say. And so there was a strong Quaker influence then, and so the working group at Trylon, never, put in so many words that we were all Christians or Quakers but we did talk about the spiritual nature of man, and we, spent time and effort on, thinking about the, spiritual nature of our lives as well as the working nature and we talked about this, and occasionally we would have...services, or meetings to pray, or carol services and so on at Trylon, and that was a group of, a very mixed group of people who were, some Quakers, some Christians, some unbelievers, Humanists and so on. When we got, when we were starting Daily Bread, it was different because as I was saying to you earlier, that, really sprung from this specifically Christian group, so, we said then, this is going to be hard work getting this business off the ground, we knew, Michael Jones knew perfectly well and so did I, of the, problems in starting a new business, and, and so we said 'well lets agree that what we have in common, is the Christian faith, so we don't have to argue about that, we're all on the same track there, and lets build that in to, what we're doing at Daily Bread.' So, right from the start, we said to be a member of Daily Bread Co-operative, we ask that you should be, willing to lead daily prayers, and that was 37 years ago, and as far as I know that's still the case, they meet every morning for about, quarter of an hour, twenty minutes, and, one of the debates there now, not surprisingly is, whether they should allow people who aren't, believing Christians to become members, and I don't know which way it will go, on the one hand there are some, of the older

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<sup>20</sup> Bishop of Middleton

members particularly, who say ‘no, this was a group of Christians working together, and that was our ethos, and that was important, don’t let’s depart from that’. And others who were saying, including me I think, ‘this started as a specifically Christian group, but, there’s no need for it to be still a, specifically Christian group now it can be much wider.’ And quoting of course, the, history of, education, and, hospitals, both of which were started by Christian groups and other Christian groups, monasteries, churches and so on that were in to education long before the, National Education Acts in the 1880s and so on, and the same with hospitals you know, hospital care such as it was, was, very much part of the church, for years before ever it became, a national concern, and, so there’s the other group saying ‘well ok, this was a Christian group getting it off the ground for 20/30 years, but now let’s open it up a bit to, to more people.’ So, as far as I know that’s, now, an active debate at Daily Bread I’m not quite sure how it’s going [laughing].

[01:04:12]

*And, could you also, because, when I was kind of reading about Daily Bread, I saw that you did a lot of work helping with rehabilitation from mental illness, could you speak a little more about that?*

Yes, that happened because, Michael Jones and his wife Anne, who were both members of this house group, they were concerned with mental illness long before Daily Bread started, and he was chairman of the local MIND Group, which is a mental health charity. And, he said things like, ‘part of our Christian faith is to be concerned with, people with disabilities, whether they’re poor in money or poor in, their capability, and if we set up a business which has social objectives as well as financial objectives, let’s take on board, mental illness’, which has been the Cinderella of the health service for years and has all sorts of...concerns that people don’t like talking about mental illness, it’s getting better now, and that was particularly relevant in Northampton, because there are two, large psychiatric hospitals in the town, there’s one National Health Hospital at one side of the town, and then St Andrews Hospital, which is a private hospital, but taking almost all National Health patients on the other side of the town, and it so happened, almost by chance, or by providence or whatever, that the building we found for Daily Bread, was in fact the old laundry, of St Andrews Hospital, the private hospital, and so we had an immediate link then, and the hospital said, ‘we’re happy for you to rent this building at a very low rent to start with, give you a chance to get going,

but in return, are you able and willing to take on one or two people, who've been in hospital, but need some sort of help to get back to their normal employment', and we said 'that's just what we'd like to do', so, Daily Bread have been doing that for, 37 years, it didn't work out as we expected, we thought that, we'd have people working with us maybe for a month or two, and then they'd go back to whatever they were doing before but, that didn't happen, people came from hospital, and I can think of two in particular, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
and they both came to work at Daily Bread, along with other people, from, manual jobs and so on, but they in particular said, 'well we can never go back to, what we were doing before',

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]-And still at Daily Bread, there are now 3 or 4 people, who have been quite ill, and some will merely stay for maybe 6 months, and then, will be able to go back to whatever they were doing before, and, others, [REDACTED] may say well, 'we don't want to go back, we'd like to be members.' So that was the link, and there's a link here, that, as I say Ernest Bader, and his son Godric, lifelong Quakers, ,my wife became a Quaker about 25 years ago, this is their patch<sup>21</sup>, and the group of people downstairs, are the local branch of MIND, who use this place as a day centre, every day of the week, so, there is the link between Quakers and mental illness there doing their bit to, help out on that which is as I say mainly, Michael Jones initiative, but now passed on to lots of other people. So, yes, that's the link. Does that answer your question?

[01:10:01]

*It does yeah, I just have to have a look back through my questions to see if I've missed anything, whilst we we're going through [shuffles paper]. Oh I just wanted to check, so, when*

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<sup>21</sup>Interview at Northampton Quaker Meeting House

*you said you went to the government to talk about setting up the National CDA, was that through your work in ICOM, or was that as individuals?*

No that was very much through ICOM, yes. Because we had this strong parliamentary lobby, going, and, yes, the link particularly was because Manuela Sykes, was, Parliamentary Advisor<sup>22</sup> in some way to a labour MP, David Watkins who was, MP for Consett in Durham, and David Watkins became interested in employee ownership, because, Consett, was a big steelworks in Durham, and closed down, like all the big steelworks and so, they were faced with huge redundancy in his constituency, and he felt that, common ownership, co-operatives, were one of the ways to deal with redundancy, so he was interested, and, the parliamentary system is that, at every sitting of, Parliament they draw lots, for introducing private members bills, do you know all this? Private members, MPs, all sorts of MPs have bees in their bonnets about one thing or another, and they want to bring in their own legislation which of course with 650 MP's is impractical, so what they do, they have a ballot, and, if you come nearly top of the ballot you have some chance of getting a private members bill through the House of Commons, but only the top few, are given the time and space to do that and so David Watkins, drew one of the top places, years before, and brought in, the, Smoke Abatement Act<sup>23</sup>, which was very important in Sheffield, smoky old Sheffield and all the steel works spewing out smoke, and our, old, catalogues, Spear and Jackson, showed these huge chimneys, spewing black smoke, and they were proud of it, 'this means production', you know, 'we are making tools for the world, and here it is, here is the proffer that, Sheffield is working for the world', but of course it means that it was a very smoky, smoky town, and, the person who helped Susan at home, in Sheffield, where, when we first got married, and had to wash the curtains, every month, because they got filthy, and she went to, on a trip to London, she'd never been to London before, and she said I went to see the House of Commons, er she went to see Buckingham Palace, and she said, 'I didn't think the curtains were very clean' [laughing], so Sheffield was, a smoky place, and the Smoke Abatement Act, which must've been in the 70s maybe, the 60s? Made a huge difference to Sheffield which is now a relatively clean town. Anyway, David Watkins amazingly, won another place in the ballot, 10 years later, and said 'I've got number 2 slot, would you like to bring in a, act to encourage common ownership?' And of course we jumped at that and said, 'yes, we do.' And, it was my

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<sup>22</sup> Note from RS - informal 'advisor' not a formal 'Parliamentary Advisor

<sup>23</sup> Note from RS - I have checked this with David Watkins autobiography and find that the first Private Members Bill which he introduced was to do with to do with employers liability and not about smoke abatement.

job to, draft the, the bill, and I knew nothing about parliamentary process, and I spent days, trying to, draft this bill which was, partly to define what we meant by common ownership, but also to put some money behind it, to give to ICOF, to encourage, loan finance. And it was a long process, but David Watkins was determined to push it through, which he did, I don't think a single sentence that I had written survived [laughing] because the parliamentary legal people got hold of it, as they had to, and put it into parliamentary language, and, it was in my opinion rather a waste of time in a way, it never had much effect, and, we started, a scheme for, co-operatives, common-ownerships, to register, as common-ownerships under the Industrial Common Ownership Act, and Scott Bader became the first and they were quite proud of it and they said, 'we are the first registration under the Industrial Common Ownership Act', it's all in the boxes. But very few people followed, it really didn't have much of an, effect, but we did get a bit of money for ICOF which was important. So that was the background to it.

[01:16:22]

*And did then, that link in to the, decision to try and set up a CDA, a National CDA?*

Yes, yes it did. Because having got that far, and, I think even when we got it on the statute book, which in one case was, something that we felt this was a real achievement to get this, Act of Parliament, I think we realised, or I did and I think others that, it really wasn't going to have much effect, it was a very short, just 2 pages, the Common Ownership Act, there are copies in the boxes, it was just 2 pages. I think we felt that we needed something much more practical, and that, having got a good parliamentary hearing, that we could, influence, parliament to set up a CDA, whereas the main influence for that, would've come from the Co-op MP's I guess at the time, but we were with them, but there must've been, yes there were some, strong group of, Labour Co-op MPs, and also a number of, people in the House of Lords, who were strong co-operators and they would've been behind the, Act of Parliament which set up the, National CDA, 1978.

[01:18:06]

*And I was just interested, again going back to Daily Bread because, there's been a sister, worker co-op set up, Cambridge Daily Bread, did that come directly out of Northampton was it from members?*

Yes it did, yes, we always said that, Daily Bread should be a relatively small organisation, I used to bore my colleagues by saying, 'we've got to be able to sit round one table...once it grows above a certain number of people you can't sit round one table', and it so happened that the building, same building as now, was the old laundry of the hospital, and years before they had build a new laundry, and therefore the old laundry, had been derelict which is why they were prepared to let it us, to renovate it and use it, and one of the things left behind in the laundry was, a long ironing table, nearly as long as this room about 20 feet where they would iron the sheets from the hospital, these big sheets from, they're 3 times the size of an ordinary domestic ironing board, huge table, so we could all sit round this big table which we did for years, it's gone now...now I've lost track now what was I saying, what was your question?

*Erm talking about Cambridge Daily Bread and how that was set up.*

Oh yes, so, when we, when we became, when the co-op really got going, we were seen to be successful. We had lots of visitors and, they kept saying well, 'I live in Newcastle, can you start a branch in Newcastle?' or 'I come from Truro, we've got lots of people down here interested in wholefood', and we said, 'no', we said, 'we don't want to have subsidiaries, that's not part of the co-operative ethic, that the co-op members who are all working here, we can't see how that would work if we had other, co-ops, which were part of Daily Bread, Northampton', but, we said, 'we want to encourage other people to start their own business, and we will help by, lending money, having people on, training, being advisors about what they were doing.' And, so we did that for years, and the person who followed me as the manager of Daily Bread, Andy Hibbert, he was manager for about 5 years, and then his wife, was a scientist and was working on cancer research, and she got a job in Cambridge, part of her research project, and so Andy said, 'we're moving to Cambridge', he said, 'I have in mind that we could start a new business in Cambridge.' So, the members said the same to him, they said, 'well, we're not prepared for you to start a subsidiary business, but we will give you every encouragement to start a new independent co-op.' And he said, 'ok', because he'd been part of, he knew that already, but he said, 'as a concession, are you prepared to let me use the name?' And we said, 'yes, you've been at Daily Bread Northampton for 5 years or whatever as manager so, yes we're happy for you to be Daily Bread Co-operative in brackets Cambridge.' And we didn't at that time give anybody else permission to do that, so, of the



various co-ops that were set up with a bit of help, from Daily Bread, none of the others have become Daily Bread Co-operative, but we've had all sorts of different names like: well Unicorn, and are you in touch with Unicorn?

*Yeah, I've been to Unicorn we've got some of their records*

Have you? Oh wonderful, I'm totally out of touch with them, but, I was there on the opening day, 19...95/96? And, that was set up by 2 people, well a group of people, 2 of whom, had been closely involved with Daily Bread, Northampton, Adam York, who's now moved on, and, Griff Dines, who's also moved on, but that was the start of Unicorn, which has grown enormously of course, yeah. But I get the impression from what I read that they're still, very much a co-operative co-op, and feel strongly about, democratic decision making and so on I think.

*Yeah they, well from what I've seen visiting them, they definitely still are*

You live in Manchester?

*Yeah, yeah, so it was quite easy to get down to Chorlton.*

So you're a customer?

[01:23:40]

*Occasionally, I live quite far from there so definitely not an everyday one, but yeah I've gone down to visit a few time which is good. And kind of linked to that, how do you kind of see the worker co-op movement as it is today, developing, and in to the future as well?*

Yes [shuffling papers], I turned up this the other day, which is something I wrote, to give a talk to an organisation called the Leadership Trust, 8 years ago in 1910<sup>24</sup>, and they asked me the same question, and said, 'what does the co-op, movement need to do, to expand?' And, I'll give you this because I don't think it's in the boxes. [pause] And I said well it's partly about, leadership, that the, worker co-op movement will only grow and flourish, if there are, competent, "servant leaders"<sup>24</sup> was the phrase we used to use, well you've got to be both a

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<sup>24</sup>2010

servant and a leader, you're the servant of the people you are leading, the members of the co-op, but you're also the leader in that your job is to, propose, decisions that will involve everybody, your job is to lead the group, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]<sup>25</sup>And then I've said here, 'I've learned that as a generalisation, women are more natural co-operators than men, they are accustomed to multi-tasking and working in non-hierarchical small groups, whereas men tend to want to dominate the group, I hasten to add that this is a generalisation and there are plenty of examples of effective co-operative men,' but I stick with that, that, worker co-ops will grow and flourish, if, there are lots of women involved, and some of the best worker co-ops have been, very much, started and influenced by women and some have been all women co-ops, there have been some amazing groups over the years of, women organising things like, childcare, and there was a famous co-op in Norfolk, what was it called? Can't remember the name of the place, where they took over, what appeared to be a failing business making clothes, in a small town in Norfolk, didn't survive forever but they were a strong minded group of women.

*Was it Fakenham?*

Fakenham that's right. The Fakenham ladies yeah, yeah, they were wonderful, wonderful. And for some years they made a go of it.

*I think their records are at Warwick<sup>26</sup> as well, the records of that business.*

Yes, yes they'd be in the directories of course. The Fakenham women, whether anybody wrote a history of that I don't know, they should've done.

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<sup>25</sup> Redacted personal data

<sup>26</sup> Warwick Modern Record Centre

*I think there might be, it's definitely when you Google it, you get a lot, coming up on it, it's quite prominent, so yeah I think it's been well documented.*

And there was another group called Little Women. Based in Newcastle, Margaret Elliot, again, wonderful co-op at the time, and that spread, to be a whole group of co-ops and, in the North-East of the country. So, I'll put that forward as another, key to, the future of worker co-ops. And I learned that for, a mutual/co-operative sector of the economy to flourish and grow, which is what you're asking me I think, some consistent government support is required for publicity and affirmation. Co-ops did well when, there was government support, like at the time of David Watkins and the, National CDA, but, as soon as there was no, national support of, the Conservative government for example, then it was much harder work, and I think that's important in the next generation, even Conservative governments now might, agree to give some support to co-ops, but of course the Labour government should, and, although, they've always been a little bit, iffy about it, I noticed that Jeremy Corbyn is on record, in fact the Co-op manifesto, the Labour party manifesto includes, a undertaking to, double the size of the co-op sector or something, something like that so there is government support and I think that's, that's important, if that failed, then it would be much harder work for the worker co-op sector to, expand and grow, and the National CDA, which you will realise if you, read it up, you may of already done so, started off as being, an organisation to, help co-operatives of all kinds but of particularly worker co-ops to, flourish, in fact, when we started in 1978, the retail people Arthur Sugden who was at that time was the, general manager, managing director or whatever of the, CWS<sup>27</sup> in Manchester, showed me his, painting in the office he had an original, what's his name? Escapes me, Manchester painter.

*Is it Lowry?*

Lowry, yes, of course, yeah. He had a Lowry, in his board room, kept in a locked cupboard, it may be still there or they might've sold it for a fortune.



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<sup>27</sup>Co-operative Wholesale Society

[REDACTED]<sup>28</sup> Well at the top of the old Co-op building, the Co-op tower, the original one, the board room was on the top floor and, Arthur Sugden, showed me very secretively, he said, 'not many people know this', and he went to a wall [laughing] where there was a small safe, which I think was behind a picture or something, and he opened the safe and there was a little picture, about that size, which was an original Lowry, he said, 'we've got this.' And I hope they've still got it, but they might've sold it when times were hard.

*Maybe look into that, someone at the archive might know, Sophie or Gillian might, I'll ask them.*

Yeah, so, why was I telling you that?

*So yeah, you answered my question there*

Oh you were asking about the National CDA, yeah well people like Arthur Sugden and others coming from the retail movement, said, 'you know the retail co-ops, have got their own organisation', but they said, 'what the National CDA should be doing is to, encourage worker co-ops, housing co-ops, and so on.' So people like me were given, a lot of support and I did a lot of writing about the model rules, and booklets about how to set up a co-op and so on, with the backing of the CDA then, there was a change of government, and I think it must've been the Thatcher years, where, they, yes the act said that the CDA has to be, reviewed after so many years, to decide whether there should be a further government grant, and that went through just, but only, with a very changed board of directors, and the first lot, including me, were virtually sacked in 1981, we'd done our 3 year stint, and some of them, not me I don't think because by that time I was involved in Daily Bread, but some of my colleagues would've wanted to, carry on, but I think, I seem to recollect they sacked the whole board, and appointed a new board, which were not interested in worker co-ops, they were more interested in employee shareholding and so on, and so for, nearly 10 years, the National CDA, did a lot of work with employee shareholding, which people like me, felt was, not

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<sup>28</sup> Redacted

really the heart of the matter, and, constantly quoting, Fritz Schumacher does the name Schumacher mean anything these days? No?

*All I can think of is the racing driver*

[Laughing] Fritz Schumacher was a, an economist, and, he wrote a book called 'Small is Beautiful'. And both the book which became a bestseller in the 1970s and 80s, and his ideas, have now sort of passed into the mainstream, people talk about small is beautiful as a phrase which he had generated and, he's a remarkable man and I got to know him quite well, and he was totally into, common ownership, co-operatives, sustainability, getting rid of, carbon, coal and so on, all of which was, right against the culture in the 1970s, but he was a prophet of what would happen, and, amongst other things he came to lecture at Scott Bader I remember which is where I first met him, and he said, amongst other things, he said, 'until you have changed ownership, you have changed nothing', [laughing] and so that's one of the phrases that over the years I've quoted at other people, but until you've changed ownership you're just fiddling about, so, the key is to change the ownership, to, worker ownership, worker co-op, whatever, and then things, are really on a different basis, and things like employee shareholding, which I had espoused all those years ago at Spear & Jackson, really had no effect on the, on the management of the company, they were a tiny proportion and, employee ownership, there is as you know probably, there's quite a strong, organisation as the Employee Ownership Association, and, at worst they stand for, a minority holding, and people like me saying, 'you're just playing with it that means nothing, until the employees have a majority holding then nothing much really happens.' And they would say, 'no, we must start with a minority holding, and maybe build it up.' And some do that, but there are others who, are never going to change to majority holding, and are going to stay with, a minority, employee shares, and that's what happened at Spear & Jackson, I started this scheme and, a good many of people put a few pounds into it, bought a few shares, but it never, had any effect on, on the management of the company, and my colleagues didn't want it to have [laughing], they were happy to have a few people who were shareholders, and there's, stop me if you're fed up with these stories.

[01:39:20]

*No*

Big steel company next door to us, also started an employee shareholding scheme, and they had some very strong shop stewards, and the shop stewards then would buy a few shares and come to the AGM, and, stand up and make a fuss, and say, 'what about the workers' [laughing] and, the, directors didn't like that, and so the first time when it happened the managing director, who I knew at the time, he said to the chief shop steward, who was, both a friend and a colleague as well as, an opposition he said, 'look here Jack, these shares of yours they don't mean anything, I'll give you twice the share value to buy them out from you.' And Jack who was no fool said, 'ok there we are, I'll sell them to you', but to his astonishment next year Jack was there again, he said I used it to buy a lot more shares and I'm here again [laughing], but that was a tiny indication that shareholding, employee shareholding of that kind was, was just playing with it [laughing] anyway.

[01:40:42]

*Well those are all the questions that I'd like to ask actually, unless there's anything else that you feel we haven't covered that you want to, go in to or say anything about.*

I don't think so, no not at all.

*We've covered a lot yeah. Thank you very much.*