

NEWRY & MOURNE  
CO-OPERATIVE LTD.  
CELEBRATE

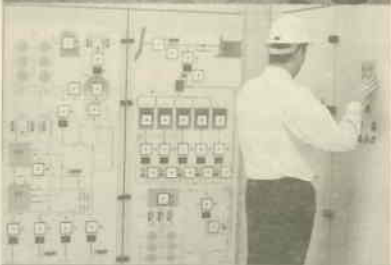
**25**  
years

promoting  
**jobs**  
& creating  
prosperity

**25**  
years

*A Brief History of*

**Newry & Mourne  
Co-operative Ltd**



# The current Board of the Co-operative is:

Mr Conor Patterson	Mr John MacMahon	Ms Sheila McGuigan	Mr Peter McEvoy
Mr Joe Magill	Mr Kevin Starrs	Mr Peter Fitzsimmons	Mr Michael Hughes
Mr Jim McCart	Mr Gordon Coulter	Mr Ronan Dennedy	Mrs Kathleen Magee
Mr Kevin Magill			

# Past Board members:

We also wish to acknowledge the support of the 62 past Board members who have given freely of their time and commitment over these past 25 years for the good of all Newry and Mourne's people:-

Mr Arthur Coulter	Mr Hugh Curran	Mr Jimmy Dinsmore
Mr Frank Dolaghan	Mr George Duffy	Mr Patrick Duffy
Mr Frank Durkin	Ms Margaret Andrews	Mr Liam Baxter
Mr Fergus Bell	Mr Laurence Bradley	Mr Sean Carr
Mr Terry Carr	Mr John Comer	Mr Peter Connolly
Mr Eamonn Fitzpatrick	Mr Jim Gunn	Mr Harry Harvey
Mr & Mrs Rory & Helen Shearer	Mr Patrick Kearns	Mr Sean Kenny
Mr Owen Magill	Fr. Nevin Moran	Mr Jack Moore
Mr Brian Murphy	Mr Raymond Mullan	Mr Gerry Murray
Mr Brendan McAllister	Ms Mary McAteer	Mr Alan McAteer
Mr Peter McCarron	Fr. M. McConville	Mr Tony McCormick
Mr Raymond McCourt	Mr Jim McCreight	Mr Eddie McElroy
Mr Gerry McGivern	Mr Tom McKay	Mr Gerry McMahan
Mr David McMillan	Mr Fergal O'Brian	Mr Brian O'Callaghan
Mr John O'Donnell	Mr Liam O'Reilly	Mr Roy Prescott
Mr Noel Rice	Mr Brian Rowntree	Mr Arthur Ruddy
Mr Pat Sheppard	Mr Peter Tumilty	Mr Raymond Turley
Mr Jim Walsh	Mr Liam Blair	Ms Bonnie Anley
Mr Eugene Farrell (Deceased)	Mr Pdraig Fearon (Deceased)	Mr Kenny Graham (Deceased)
Ms Helen Hill	Mr W.V. Hogg (Deceased)	Mr Edward Mackle (Deceased)
Mr Tommy McGrath (Deceased)		

Past and present Directors of Newry & Mourne Co-operative recently came together to reflect on 25 years of service to the people of Newry & Mourne by the first organisation of its kind in Ireland.



Inspired by the Credit Union movement the Co-operative society was founded by a visionary group of concerned citizens in Newry at the end of 1972 as a response to an unemployment rate of 40% which at that time was the highest in Europe. With almost 1 in 2 of the adult population out of work and political violence at its peak, morale in the area was at a low ebb. The aim of these first Directors was to mobilise the community to take positive action to create employment and to put co-ordinated pressure on the Government of the day to invest in the area.

*Above: Past and present board members with the staff of Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency*

# Newry & Mourne Co-operative Ltd

## 25 Years Servicing the Community

When the Reckitt and Coleman factory closed in Newry in 1974 with the loss of almost 400 jobs, the Co-operative society organised a campaign to raise funds to buy the site to convert it into workspace. 600 people from across Newry and Mourne invested in the objective of Work In Newry (WIN), raising between them £60,000. These investors included mothers and grandfathers living in the region's housing estates, the Dominican community in Newry and small and large businesses from across Newry & Mourne. WIN was to become the first managed workspace project in the world.

That tradition of innovation has continued, always underpinned with a clear and simple objective, to work on behalf of the people of Newry and Mourne to generate employment and create prosperity.

The Co-operative, led by Frank Dolaghan, with contributions from mass and church goers, established an Enterprise Fund to help people struggling to start new businesses and in 1983 set up the first Enterprise Agency in Northern Ireland. Frank Dolaghan was replaced as Chief Executive by Margaret Andrews in 1988 who in turn was succeeded by Conor Patterson in 1995. Under their tutelage the Co-operative Enterprise Agency division has developed into one of the most dynamic and innovative local development organisations in Ireland and Britain.



Above: Frank Dolaghan & Right: Margaret Andrews



The Co-operative's ACE Programme provided work for 1,200 people over 13 years, a work force which carried out many important community service projects during the 1980's and early 1990's. Other community training organisations grew directly out of, or were inspired by, the Co-op - notably Southern Group Enterprises and Southern ITEC.

What has defined the Co-op has been its ability to adapt to changing economic conditions. Its Enterprise Agency division is now the principal delivery agent for the District Council's economic strategy, co-ordinating a major regeneration programme for the region. Central to its development strategy for Newry and Mourne is the promotion of increased cross border trade and co-operation.

*"Breaking down barriers to trade with the Republic is a prerequisite for the creation of more jobs and prosperity in this region"*

Co-operative Chief Executive, Conor Patterson.

*"In the early days jobs were the priority, any job! The seventies was a period of real hardship in this area. 25 years on, the Co-operative is working to attract high calibre employment to Newry and Mourne, jobs which can fulfil the ambitions of the highly educated young people which our schools, some of the best in Europe, produce".*

Chairman John MacMahon reflecting on how the vision of the Co-operative has matured over a quarter of a century.



Above: "Doing Business in Ireland" - A major trading event attracting companies from all over Ireland. (Newry, March 1997)

# The Co-operative - "Through the Years"



## Impact



*Above: Enterprise House, WIN Business Park*

The Co-operative now provides workspace in Newry and Warrenpoint for some 70 individual businesses which together employ nearly 250 people.

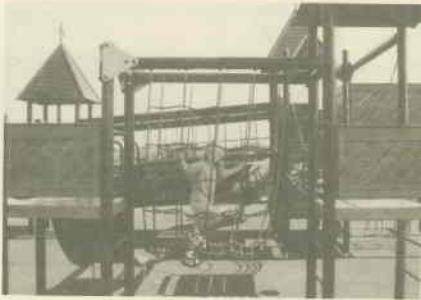
The Newry & Mourne region now has more small businesses per head of population than any other part of Northern Ireland. In the last 14 years the Enterprise Agency has helped to establish almost 1,000 new businesses in Newry and Mourne and provided employment directly for almost 2,000 long term unemployed people through the ACE Programme.

In the last year alone the Co-operative's Enterprise Agency division with LEDU support helped to establish 57 new small businesses in Newry and Mourne.

Since 1984 the Agency also provided in-depth counselling to more than 4,000 people on the opportunities and pitfalls which face those who want to start their own businesses.

80% of the businesses which the Agency helped to establish have survived beyond the difficult first two years of trading, some to become significant employers in their own right. Many of those businesses have also been helped by the Agency's Enterprise Fund which was set up by donations from the people of Newry & Mourne. Since 1987 282 loans have been made totalling £419,550. It is not an exaggeration to say that many of those businesses helped by the Co-operative's Enterprise Agency division could not have set up and survived without the Agency's free advice and financial assistance.

More recently the Co-operative, under its Chief Executive Conor Patterson and Chairman John MacMahon, has with Newry & Mourne District Council guided the implementation of the Peace & Reconciliation Programme in Newry & Mourne through the District Partnership.



The Enterprise Agency also administers the PESCA Programme for fishing communities in Northern Ireland and the Community Business Programme for commercial community groups in the Southern Region.

In the last year the Agency has established a network of expatriates, the Newry & Mourne Ambassadors Club, believing strongly that those from the region who now live overseas remain part of our extended community.

*Above: The Barcroft Playarea (Barcroft Community Association) - One of the projects which received funding under the Newry & Mourne Peace & Reconciliation Programme*

The Co-operative has a vision for Newry & Mourne in the next century - a politically stable region enjoying full employment, with a strong sense of citizenship binding communities together.

The Co-operative will continue to strive as a not-for-profit organisation to achieve an improved quality of life for all in Newry & Mourne. Its services are available through its Enterprise Agency mostly free of charge. Those services include the expertise of its professional team of Business Development Executives, its Business Information Point (hard copy and electronic library) and advice on finding workspace.

## Influencing Policy Makers



*During 1997 the Co-op hosted visits to Newry by Senator Mitch McConnell (US Appropriations Committee), five senior US Congressmen, Irish Foreign Minister David Andrews and Secretary of State Mo Mowlam M.P.*

# How the Co-operative developed - *Highlights:*

- May 1972 Credit Union helps organise a self-help conference
- Dec 1972 Newry & Mourne Co-operative Society registered with Peter Connolly as President.
- 1974
- Glanree Furniture Ltd set up at Greenbank Industrial Estate
  - Reckitt & Colman (the jam factory) closes.
  - Fund-raising launched to buy the Reckitt and Colman site for the people of Newry & Mourne.

- 1975 Work In Newry (WIN) - campaign to raise funds continues:-
- *"The whole community put its hand in its pocket"*  
(Newry Reporter, August 1975)
  - The purchase of what is now the WIN site secured at a cost of £100,000.



*Right: The old WIN site*

- 1976 Frank Dolaghan appointed as General Manager of the WIN Industrial Estate. Buildings are sub-divided and rented out as subsidised factory units.
- 1978 Play-way Furniture Ltd established.
- 1979 Mournecraft launched - the first YTP workshop in Northern Ireland, providing craft training and work experience for young people.
- 1980 Mournecraft workshops opened in Crossmaglen and Rostrevor.
- 1981 Newry craft workshop and Mourne Gifts and Crafts established.  
The Co-operative's ACE Programme launched, managed by Brendan Browne.  
Business Development Centre established under ACE, to provide typing, telex, copying and fax facilities at low cost for local small businesses.  
Admag, with a circulation to 30,000 homes and businesses in Newry & Mourne, established  
LEND-A-HAND established under Laurence Bradley and Gemma Brolly (later transferred to Confederation of Community Groups).



*Above: Gemma Brolly pictured at Mourne Gifts and Crafts*

- 1982 Co-operative opens offices and restaurant at 71 Hill Street ("71").
- 1983 Frank Dolaghan secures Government support to establish the first Enterprise Agency in Northern Ireland.
- 1984 Launch of Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency

- 1985 · Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency and Newry & Mourne Co-operative open offices at Downshire Place.  
 · Newry & Mourne Enterprise Fund launched (£10,000 raised through donations).



*Right: Cardinal O'Faich pictured at the opening of Mournecraft in Crossmaglen*

- 1986 · Establishment of Community Industries as the umbrella for all of the Co-operative's ACE Programmes. Activities included: furniture repairs, home insulation, sewing services, horticulture, environmental improvement schemes across the District.
- 1987 · Mournecraft becomes a separate organisation: "Southern Group Enterprises".  
 · ACE employment reaches a peak of 220 employees per year.
- 1988 · Enterprise Centre opened at the Harbour, Warrenpoint.
- 1989 · Frank Dolaghan left the Co-operative to set up his own business. Succeeded by Margaret Andrews.  
 · Rathfriland Enterprise Centre opened.  
 · Enterprise Agency receives quality accreditation - BS 5750  
 · Community Business Programme launched
- 1990 · Crossmaglen Enterprise Centre opened
- 1992 · Newly refurbished WIN Business Park re-opens (at a cost of £1.5m).
- 1995 · Community Industries closed due to ACE cutbacks.  
 · Conor Patterson takes over as Chief Executive.
- 1996 · Regional Development Centre housing small units for fast growth businesses opens.  
 · Enterprise Agency appointed to administer the Peace and Reconciliation Programme, with the District Council.  
 · Enterprise Agency appointed as the principal delivery agent for the District Council economic development measures.  
 · Enterprise Agency appointed to administer PESCA Programme.

- 1997 · Enterprise Agency helps to set up 57 new businesses.  
 · Conor Patterson appointed Chairman of Newry & Mourne Economic Forum.
- 1998 · Further expansion at WIN gets underway.



*Right: Further Expansion at WIN*



***Newry & Mourne Co-operative Ltd would like to thank the following companies for their sponsorship:***

Alex McCartan Building Contractors, Warrenpoint

Bank of Ireland, Newry

Coulter Group, Killeel

Crilco Confections Ltd, Newry

Eugene Doran Building Contractors, Newry

Fitzpatrick & Kearney Chartered Accountants, Newry

John MacMahon & Co Chartered Accountants, Camlough

Newcel Soft Tissue Converters, Newry

Newry Credit Union

Newry & Mourne District Council

Peter McEvoy Financial Services, Newry

Rafferty Promotions

SCA Packaging, Warrenpoint

Warsteiner Premier Lager, Newry

*Twenty five years promoting jobs and creating prosperity*