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NRA 21505



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The Records of Earls Barton and
Ecton Co-operative Society

Accession 1978/44

Earls Barton Provident and Co-operative Society was founded in 1859 and followed on from the opening of the Co-op. in Rochdale, Lancashire during the 1850's, which was said to be the first in the country, although the two societies were, of course, independent. The society bought goods and sold them to members only, who had shares in the concern. Each had a share book in which income accrued from the capital invested and on which dividends were paid, originally quarterly and then half yearly - in February and July, before the annual holidays. People used to rely upon the dividend payments to meet rate demands, etc. Any profit made was divided between the shareholders. Any person living in Earls Barton was a paid up member of the Earls Barton Co-op. if he or she purchased a £1 share. Members would come up on dividend day, when a warrant had been issued and draw out the interest. If one did not turn up, the money was credited to one's account. This system was stopped in about 1973. (Newport Pagnell still pays a quarterly dividend.)

The Earls Barton Co-op. is run by a board of directors, each elected by the members of the society and this consists of a president and six other persons. Today the general public has become price conscious and will no longer shop at "their" shop only, whereas in the early days of the movement, people would walk two miles or more to buy a box of matches, if they had shares in the concern. As a logical progression to this the business has expanded its line of goods and the larger Co-ops. will buy out the smaller societies when they meet difficult times. There are people within the movements who still feel that bigger means better. Another direct change has been brought about by the different method of shopping and that is the introduction of dividend stamps in place of the quarterly or half yearly dividend paid direct into one's account. A full book of stamps represents 50p and can either be spent or transferred into a share book. At the end of every half year, each completed book has a further 10p added to it. Stamp books are exchangeable at any Co-op. operating the stamp dividend system. Charities can also apply for donations and the total addition to the charity box is divided between the various registered organisations which might apply.

Today, much advertising is done on television, which is organised by the C.W.S. (Co-operative Wholesale Society), although a group of societies in East Anglia advertise jointly. The C.W.S. is owned by the retail societies (each having a vote to elect the board of directors to the C.W.S.) and acts as a supplier of goods to all other Co-ops. This organisation owns various fruit farms

Earls Barton and Ecton Co-op. Soc.

(cont.)

and nurseries, etc., the largest being at Plymouth in Devon. There is also an active Co-operative Union.

With the expansion of the Earls Barton business, the society did extensive alterations and they hold four pictures which show the shop in 1859; 1865; 1897 (picture of new shop front with top floor - a hall, now removed); 1961 (no top storey as in 1897 picture) and 1966 (as now). They also have a large and ornate key in a presentation box, which was used to open the new premises. There is an inscription, dated 4th. August 1897, which reads: "Earls Barton Co-operative Society".

In 1936 the society took over the Ecton Co-op., which is an old established firm going back to 1863 (minute book at Delapre Abbey - see back list). The shop had been Ecton School and contained within the minute book is a hand-written indenture between the Reverend Charles Tizard Davies (Rector of Ecton) and the Ecton Industrial and Provident Society Ltd., for the rent of the buildings and land for a term of one year from Lady Day 1899, of what had been the Church of England Ecton Parochial School; it is dated 25th. September 1899. Earls Barton Co-op. also owns Mears Ashby shop and post office. Mr. Shurville, the present manager of Earls Barton, is also the sub-postmaster of Mears Ashby. It also owned a farm and Raunds Co-op. still does own its own farm.

Ecton Co-op. (a listed building) and Earls Barton Co-op. are today a flourishing concern, which will, without doubt, serve the community in the same efficient and friendly way in which it has served the area for the past one hundred and nineteen years.

February, 1978.

Earls Barton and Ecton Industrial
Co-operative Society Records

SECTION A

1-15 Minute Books (Earls Barton Co-op)

All aspects connected with the running of the Co-op are discussed, bills are paid and resolutions passed to purchase goods, hire staff, contract out work for building and debate tenders. Share dividends are noted and the names of those who wish to buy or sell shares in the concern. Each book contains Special Committee Meetings.

- 1 First minute book of the Earls Barton Co-op, showing names of the original committee for the year 1859/60
- (i) Thomas Smart 22nd August 1859-
 - (ii) William Clark 28th November 1865
 - (iii) Ekin Miller
 - (iv) John Miller
 - (v) Thomas Copson

Trustees 1859/60

- (i) Samuel Smith
- (ii) Joshua Sheffield
- (iii) William Flowers

Treasurer: Jonathan Johnson
Secretary: William Saddington
Auditors : Joshua Chambers
Samuel Underwood

- 2 21st January 1873-20th January 1880
- 3 24th January 1876-4th July 1893
- 4 4th July 1893-29th March 1898
- 5 5th April 1898-12th January 1900
- 6 1st January 1901-30th September 1903
- 7 13th October 1903-23rd August 1905
(shows list of employees and their wages on front cover)
- 8 29th August 1905-26th July 1909
(with ready reckoner on front cover - prices per lb from ¼d-13d)

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Earls Barton and Ecton Industrial
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SECTION A (cont.)

- 9 27th July 1909-12th September 1911
- 10 19th September 1911-26th January 1914
- 11 27th January 1914-9th June 1916
- 12 13th June 1916-15th March 1922
- 13 21st May 1922-24th April 1929
(contains list of Earls Barton Provident and Co-operative Society Ltd. rules which include the paragraph: "No person shall be eligible to serve on the committee unless they have spent at least £30 with the society during the twelve months previous to the election.")
- 14 1st January 1928-29th January 1935
(shows order of business during committee meetings and members of the committee 1928, 1931 and 1932)
- 15 5th February 1935-16th May 1944
(includes printed matter on Compulsory Training of Militia Men under the Military Training Act, 18th July 1939, also final balance sheet for period ended 28th March 1936 for the Ecton Branch)
- 16 Minute book of Ecton Industrial & Provident Co-operative Society Ltd. running from
14th July 1863-25th January 1932 (at front)
5th June 1923-28th July 1930 (at back)
Also: written indenture at back of book made on 25th September 1899 between Rev. Charles Tizard Davies, Rector of Ecton and the Ecton Industrial and Provident Society regarding the rent of the old School House, Ecton.
- 17 Minute Book relating to the purchase of property and Buildings
30th October 1894-12th January 1898
(included with this book was a plan of amended elevations and sections of farm premises at Clay Road for the Earls Barton Co-op Society - see section B6)
- 18 Book belonging to the Earls Barton Co-op, showing index of names at front and pages of printed agreements with persons names and dates filled in for the letting of land
25th October 1880-20th October 1885

Earls Barton and Ecton Industrial
Co-op. Soc. (cont.)

SECTION A (cont.)

- 19 Farm Minute Book
Discussing every aspect of the running of the farm including the agricultural side and the price fetched by the sale of the beasts.
22nd February 1928-2nd December 1929
- 20 Share Book (Earls Barton)
Six columns showing number, name, place of residence, trade or occupation, number of shares held and total amount.
Also the minutes of a General Meeting on 17th July 1866 at beginning of book.
1865-1880
- 21 Share Ledger (Earls Barton) Brought forward 1930-1968
Showing number of member, name, address and showing columns for date, cash (cr.), interest and dividend (cr.), cash withdrawn, total present claim.
Members numbers 1-399
- 22 As above Brought forward 1930-1965
Members numbers 400-800
- 23 As above Brought forward 1930-1965
Members numbers 801-1200
- 24 As above Brought forward 1930-1965
Members numbers 1201-1792
- 25 Loan Capital Ledger (Earls Barton)
Shows page for each individual with his name, address, number, minute book folio, interest paid.
Columns for date, deposit, interest on capital, withdrawn and present claim. Stamped by the C.W.S. Auditors.
8th February 1932-1949
- 26 Ledger (cash) (Earls Barton)
Indexed and showing pages for cash (credit and debit); stock account; cash account; balance sheets; business account; assets and liabilities; bank account; members share certificate account; trading account and profit and loss account.
At front of book are typed balance sheets for:
19th January 1880 (Finedon Industrial Co-op. Society)
28th June 1887 (Brafield-on-the-Green Co-op. Society)
1st January - 30th June 1875 (Earls Barton Co-op. Society)
30th December-30th June 1876 (Earls Barton Co-op. Society)
1875

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Earls Barton and Ecton Industrial

Co-op. Soc. (cont.)

SECTION A (cont.)

- 27 Impersonal Ledger 1910-1933
Shows sections including: balance sheets; rent account; funds and effects (balance sheet); land buildings and fixed stock account; profit and loss account; investment account; coal club account; liabilities account; mortgage advances account and auditors reports.
Towards the back: cash account; expenses account; bank account; educational account; farm account; liabilities and reserves account; details of donations; details of benevolent grants and disposable balance account.
- 28 As above 1934-1952
- 29 As above 1952-January 1956

SECTION B 1-8 (in Envelope)

- 1 Members Share Book belonging to: 3rd May 1916-
Walter Partridge (No 365) 7th April 1969
High Street, Earls Barton
Shows columns for date, contributions, dividend and interest transferred, withdrawals, fines, present claim and initials.
- 2 Balance Sheets and Reports for Earls Barton Co-op. Society:
a) 31/12/1893-30/6/1894
b) 30/6/1897-31/12/1897
c) 31/12/1897-30/6/1898
d) 30/6/1902-31/12/1902
e) for half year ended 8/7/1961
f) for half year ended 6/1/1962
- 3 Rules for the Ecton Industrial & Provident Society Ltd.
- 4 Balance Sheets for half year ending:
a) 30/12/1930 no. of members 162
b) 30/6/1931 (3 copies) " " " 161
- 5 Copy of sales maintenance contract for the Ecton Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd. with typed note on list of scales and machines.

8th March 1933

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SECTION B (cont.)

- 6 Amended elevations and sections of farm premises at Clay Road for Earls Barton Co-op Society.
(see section A17) No date
- 7 Bundle of correspondence to Earls Barton Co-op. containing bills; bank transfers; receipt of deeds relating to dwelling house and premises in Wellingborough Road, Earls Barton and various letters.
- 8 a) Pencil notes of General Meeting 31st July 1900.
b) Notice as to Assistants Weekly half holidays. Shop Act 1912.
c) Photograph of Earls Barton Co-op before modernization. No date
d) Photograph of Earls Barton Co-op tea party. c.1947/8
e) Photograph of Earls Barton Co-op tea party. c.1947/8