

Festival of politics 2009

Scotland: A Co-operative Past and a Co-operative Future

Scotland has a long history of co-operatives – dating back to the Fenwick Weavers or the work of Robert Owen – and still has a vibrant co-operative sector, ranging from large retailers to rural workers' co-operatives. This event explores the Scottish co-operative movement's history and examines the modern-day prospects for co-operatives, including their potential for offering an alternative economic model in the face of the credit crunch. Chaired by **James Kelly MSP**. Participants include **Lorna Davidson**, New Lanark Trust, **Jim O'Neil**, Fenwick Weavers Co-operative, **Robin Stewart**, The Co-operative Group.

In association with the Cross Party Group on Co-operatives



James Kelly MSP, and the speakers at the event

This was a well attended meeting which was held during the Festival of Politics in the Scottish Parliament in August 2009. The event was chaired by James Kelly MSP, who is one of the co-conveners of the Cross-Party Group on Co-operatives in the Scottish Parliament. James set the scene with an overview of the work of co-ops in modern Scotland and brief look at the history of the movement in Scotland.



JIM O'NEILL

Jim O'Neill spoke about the Fenwick Weavers' Co-operative which set up a consumer co-operative in 1769. He spoke about the reconstitution of the society in 2008 and the work that was going on to preserve and enhance this aspect of co-operative history. He also linked the ideals of the original Fenwick society with policy priorities for today such as credit unions and fair-trade.

Lorna Davidson from the New Lanark Trust spoke about the work of Robert Owen and about New Lanark. She also highlighted the aspects of Owen's career which still have relevance today. She also spoke about the work of the trust and the work which had gone on to restore and preserve New Lanark.



LORNA DAVIDSON



ROBIN STEWART

Robin Stewart a member of the board of the Co-operative Group then spoke about present-day co-operative movement. He spoke about the work of the Co-operative Group but also ranged over the whole of the co-operative movement.

There was a fairly lengthy and very interesting question and answer session to conclude the event.