Fakenham Enterprises

Other

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FAKENHAM ENTERPRISES

by

Martin Lockett

Co-operatives Research Monograph No.1

Co-operatives Research Unit
The Open University
FAKENHAM ENTERPRISES

BY

MARTIN LOCKETT

CO-OPERATIVES RESEARCH
MONOGRAPH NO. 1
JUNE 1978

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Fakenham Enterprises Limited was created in 1972 by a group of women shoe workers made redundant following a takeover of their former employers. The co-operative survived until 1977. This monograph is a history and analysis of the co-operative and an action-research project intended to establish an economically viable co-operative at Fakenham. From the experience of Fakenham Enterprises conclusions can be drawn about the problems of co-operatives set up to save jobs and possible solutions to these problems.

This monograph is based on action-research undertaken at Fakenham Enterprises Limited during 1975 and 1976, together with material from the Modern Records Centre at Warwick University Library. The project was funded by the Department of Employment Work Research Unit's "Job Satisfaction Research Programme" and was based at the Systems Group, Technology Faculty, Open University. This monograph would have been impossible without the help and advice of many people, in particular Rob Paton, Alan Thomas, John Beishon, Judy Wacjman, Dave Elliott, Jean Godfrey, Maureen Lucas, David Ralley, Diana Glass and her colleagues from the National Film School, the staff of the Warwick Modern Records Centre, and, of course, all the women at Fakenham Enterprises.

For various reasons, the names of some of those involved with Fakenham Enterprises, including all the women who worked there at different stages of its history have been disguised. It should be clear where this has been done and has in no way affected the monograph as a whole.
BACKGROUND TO THE FACTORY

Post-war industrial growth in East Anglia has been comparatively rapid. For example, during 1964 to 1968, industrial floorspace in the region grew by 14% compared with an average over the same period of 5.7% for England and Wales as a whole. This growth occurred in the small towns of the region, as well as larger ones. In the small towns, of which Fakenham was one, this industrial growth came from five main sources:

1. Food processing based on local agriculture;
2. "Satellite" factories of established firms in the larger towns;
3. Growth of firms already in the small towns through expansion in other small towns;
4. Expansion in situ of existing firms in small towns;
5. Creation of new firms by local entrepreneurs.

Many of these firms have taken advantage of relatively low wages in the rural areas and small towns of East Anglia and of the relatively large pool of potential female labour. The availability of female labour is indicated by an analysis of the economic activity rates of women in the area, as shown in Table 1.
Table 1: Economic Activity Rates
(Women over 15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Activity Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural districts (Norfolk)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This shows that women have been less likely to have jobs in the rural areas of Norfolk than in East Anglia or Britain as a whole, but that there has been a trend towards women having a job over the period concerned. According to Lemon, the jobs created in small towns in industry have tended to be relatively unskilled, with more women being employed than average for such firms. Economic reasons (lower wages of women) and availability of female labour would seem to be the factors behind these developments.

One firm, in the second of the five categories outlined overleaf, was Sexton, Son and Everard Ltd., a large Norwich shoe manufacturer. In the early 1960's, the firm was finding it increasingly difficult to recruit labour in Norwich itself. In 1964 they established a "satellite" factory in Fakenham, a small town twenty-five miles north-west of Norwich, with a population of around 4,000. According to Mr. Eric Sexton, son of the firm's founder, "We went there in the first place because there was surplus labour there". Another branch factory had been established in Beccles, another small town, in 1958.
This analysis of the reasons for the establishment of a "satellite" factory in Fakenham, is confirmed by a survey undertaken by Lemon in 1968-1969. "Labour availability or cost" was given as the reason for selecting the locations of Fakenham and Beccles. The management hoped the production at Fakenham would be expanded though the premises they had were not sufficient. They claimed no difficulty in recruiting workers - the Fakenham factory stated that they regarded the wages paid as around the national average for the jobs. Administration, equipment servicing and telephone/post costs were regarded as high, whereas rent and rates were low.

There were problems due to lack of traditional shoe industry skills. Lemon states, "...... for instance, the manager of a Beccles 'satellite' shoe factory pointed out that in a traditional shoe area such as Leicester, or even Norwich, most new recruits would know something of the industry from relatives employed in it". On the other hand, management was able, in places like Fakenham and Beccles, which had a relative shortage of opportunities (given established occupational structures) for women workers, to enforce stricter labour discipline. Lemon adds, "labour is, however, scarcer in the traditional shoe areas; and in Norwich it was necessary to employ women at the hours they found convenient, whereas the Beccles factory in question achieved full production all day". Firms in the small towns could and did, it is implied, force women to work inconvenient hours, a factor which has been significant in the history of Fakenham Enterprises. Also small town labour was known for its loyalty to firms, even to the extent of 'working for a pittance' to enable a firm to survive. This, and the rarity of industrial disputes, relates to the now fading pattern of dominance of small town labour markets by one or two larger employers.
The Fakenham factory was solely a production unit with around fifty workers in 1972. All except one were women. Day-to-day supervision was in the hands of Alice, the forewoman. Eric Sexton comments, "Being the type of woman she was, she was the obvious leader". She describes her work:

"The only thing I had to do was just pick up a telephone and ring Sextons at Norwich and next day two or three people would come over and do time and motion study things and cost analysis and things like that. And the only thing that I had to do was ensure that the production came out at the end of the line....".

The employees remember Sextons as a comparatively good employer, with relatively high wages for the area. A piecework system was used. The absence of any level of management above supervisor level within the factory meant that the workforce was able to organise itself to a small degree, provided that production did not fall. One commented, "...... we were happy. We were working hard and the bosses were on us all the time, but we sort of covered for each other. We helped each other out......". And according to Alice, "I couldn't sit down and get on a machine and do a machinist's work, but I could fall in for somebody who didn't have to do a machining job. And if somebody needed a day off, for some reason or other, I never told them (the Sexton's management)". She says she did the work and the firm "were never any the wiser".

Thus, the workers in the Fakenham factory had a small degree of autonomy in terms of day-to-day production. On the other hand it had neither an independent management nor an
independent production capability. We have already discussed the former. As regards this aspect, management services and functions such as marketing, costing, work study and financial control were totally outside the Fakenham factory. It had no independent production capability because it produced only part of the finished product. Fakenham needed to be able to make the sole and complete the whole shoe to be independent.
COLLAPSE OF Sextons

Until 1969 Sextons was entirely a family firm. At its peak it had employed 1,750 people but the workforce was declining. In August 1969 the firm became part of the John James Group and there was substantial outside investment in the firm. In February 1971 it left the John James Group and further investment was made. The Eastern Daily Press reported at the time that the total of recent capital investment was £610,000.11

However as Table 2 shows the British shoe industry was in a state of decline in the early 1970's. Sextons did not escape this trend, and in early 1972 rumours were circulating in the Norwich factory about the company's financial health. Early in February the firm's "Works council", representing all sections of the workforce, was told that there was a difficult period ahead, but that the company would get through it.12

Shortly after this the company's Beccles factory was closed down, the workforce made redundant and the managerial and technical staff transferred to the Norwich factory. At that time Sextons employed a total of about 750, including 700 shop floor workers (400 women, 300 men).
Table 2: Manufacturers' Sales of Footwear with Leather Uppers 1963 - 1975.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sales (million pairs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>121.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>128.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>129.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>121.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>109.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>113.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>107.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>82.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A fortnight later, on 29th February, 1972 Sextons called in a Receiver. The company issued the following statement:

"Due to the general low level of economic activity, and the specific adverse trading conditions in the women's fashion shoe market, Sexton, Son & Everard Ltd, have been unable to call upon working capital previously available for seasonal financing".

"Consequently the board of the company has regretfully been forced to invite the debenture holder (Dawney, Day & Co., merchant bankers) to appoint a Receiver".
The reaction of the two unions within Sextons was swift, in particular that of ASTMS (Association of Scientific Technical and Managerial Staffs) which represented supervisors and managerial staff. The other union, NUFLAT (National Union of Footwear, Leather and Allied Trades), was not known for its militancy. Roger Spiller, ASTMS Divisional Officer, had had a one and a half hour talk with management that morning. "We have been told", he said, "that whatever happens a half to two-thirds of the staff must go immediately... This is a tragedy at a time when the firm is just beginning to become profitable after a period of poor trading, and we are determined to show that the employees are capable of running the factory profitably".

ASTMS and NUFLAT representatives met that afternoon, and there was a meeting of the fifty-strong ASTMS branch in the evening. The unions "took whatever steps we felt were possible at the time in order to try to preserve jobs. We were trying to preserve both the plant as a whole and as many jobs as possible", according to Roger Spiller.

One tactic considered at the time was a work-in or factory occupation. Roger Spiller said on the 29th:

"In the meantime we shall see that nothing moves out of the factory. We have been faced with this sort of problem before within the union, particularly at Fisher-Bendix, and that has stayed open. We would certainly consider a work-in in Sextons in the same way as we did in Fisher-Bendix".
Press reports at the time indicated that the idea of a work-in had considerable support amongst the workforce, who quoted the example of the UCS (Upper Clyde Shipbuilders) occupation. This was confirmed when a mass meeting of workers in Norwich voted overwhelmingly to give an action committee power to:

1. Occupy the Norwich factory;

2. Refuse to allow machinery to be moved out of the factory;

3. Refuse to allow leather, boots or shoes out of the factory;

4. Take orders from their elected representatives;

5. Refuse redundancy notices;

6. Operate a twenty-four hour picket of the factory.

The next day the four-member action committee attempted to see the Receiver (Mr. Michael Ross) to ask that no decisions be taken until he had met all the parties concerned and that there should be no redundancies. Support for keeping the factory open had come from the Norwich City Council and a process of lobbying M.P's and local businessmen began. This lobbying was intended to raise finance for the company on the basis of its potential profitability. Roger Spiller comments on this in retrospect:
"I don't think anybody at the time thought we were going to obtain a great deal necessarily from these people. But it was something we had to do. We had to try every avenue". 

Meanwhile the Fakenham factory was working normally. Alice was quoted as saying that the women supported the action committee and "would follow any action". They were "confident that whatever the outcome of the problem everyone involved would give special consideration to the plight of the staff at Fakenham where alternative jobs were scarce". The local paper added, "Before the visit of the union representative (from the action committee) yesterday, employees felt Fakenham had been forgotten. But they now realised considerable effort had been made on their behalf", said Alice. 

One potential buyer of Sextons, a Mr. Jack Taubman, had appeared. Described by the Press as "Mr X" and "a wealthy property developer and manufacturer", he began serious negotiations with the Receiver. Whilst these negotiations were continuing, Sextons had sent out redundancy notices to all staff despite attempts to hinder this by ASTMS members. These redundancy notices were returned by the unions for both the Norwich and Fakenham factories.

It is not clear how seriously the takeover of the whole of Sextons and conversion into some form of co-operative was taken. The idea was certainly in the air, but as early as the 4th March one local paper stated that it had gained the impression that the "enormity of the problem" - a need for around £800,000 to keep Sextons going - made an attempt at a workers' takeover unlikely. When it was announced on 8th March that Sextons had been bought by Mr. Taubman, the news was generally welcomed.
The initial figure for jobs in the new set-up was given as 500\(^2\) and it was stated that the product would still be shoes. Despite the reduction in jobs and the rationalisation of production, the workforce accepted the deal. Part of the rationalisation was the closure by Sextons of the Beccles and Fakenham factories. But, says Roger Spiller, "... it was assumed by ourselves and more particularly the people at Fakenham that they were going to be taken over by another shoe manufacturer in Norwich, and he was going to use the facilities".\(^{25}\)

On 9th March Alice visited Norwich. The future of the Fakenham factory was still in the balance. She commented, "As far as we know we are still under notice, we haven't had any reprieve".\(^{26}\) Interest was being shown in the factory by Jos. Southall and Co. but the deal fell through. On 16th March it was announced that thirty of the Fakenham workers would lose their jobs the next day and the rest at the end of the month. The news was met by a demonstration outside the factory. There was bitter criticism of ASTMS and NUFLAT for 'selling Fakenham out' when, it was claimed, it was the only profitable factory in Sextons. A notice on the factory read:\(^{27}\)

FORGOTTEN FACTORY

SOLD OUT BY

(ASTMS) UNIONS (NUFLAT)

AND THE RECEIVER
THE FAKENHAM OCCUPATION

The next day the ASTMS Divisional Officer visited the Fakenham factory. The workers were discussing what could be done to save their jobs. Alice claims that Roger Spiller "...... came in at half-past twelve and argued with us non-stop, there was nothing, but nothing, they could do. We had to just shut the doors and get out and that was it". 28

Some of the Fakenham workers were determined to act if they could. They wanted to save their jobs and felt they had been badly treated, not being consulted about their future. Some of the workers decided to occupy the factory. An article describes the day:

"It all began about three o'clock on March 17, 1972," recalls Alice. "As we were getting our last pay-checks, some of us decided that we absolutely had to stay. We had to do something to keep our brains alive and our skills alive." So, that evening, nine of the women responded to the closing of the factory by deciding not to leave. "Long before the decision to close, their boss had entrusted the machinists with the factory building's only key. "When he realised what was happening", Susan gleefully recalls, "he kept trying to persuade Mary to go for a drink to see if he could get the key from her. But Martha had it all the time ...... hidden in her girdle". When the man realised that neither persuasion nor verbal threats would work, he left, and the barricades went up. The work-in had begun."
The idea had come from the initial campaign against redundancy at the Norwich factory, but the decision to occupy surprised most people, including the workforce. That evening Alice went to the B.B.C Studios with Roger Spiller: "I said .... I hope to keep a job for the people of Fakenham I hope to keep a job. And that was the operative word of the moment.....".

Five women spent that Friday night in the factory, a converted Congregational Church near the centre of Fakenham. Some of their husbands removed the machinery from an annexe a couple of hundred yards away. The doors of the factory were barricaded and the letterbox sealed to prevent writs being served. The implications of what they were doing did not hit the women immediately. Mary recalls, "I don’t think it hit me till the Monday" and Alice "I don’t think it really hit me for about three days afterwards what we were really doing"

The occupation continued over the week-end with some of the women and one of their husbands staying overnight. On the Monday two officials from NUFLAT - Mr. Taylor and Mr. Elsegood - visited Fakenham. The women refused to let them in, but the officials later talked with NUFLAT members in the "Red Lion", around the corner from the factory. Taylor, it was reported, explained that the women might be trespassing. He "... could understand the girls' point of view but could see no real point in their action". Meanwhile Alice issued a statement on behalf of the Fakenham women. "We are fighting for the right to work ......", she said, and asked for the unions involved to make the occupation official and to pay strike pay to their members.
Inside the occupation the women had started making handbags, watchstraps and other goods from the leather scraps in the factory. "One of the women involved remembers this experience: "Remember when we finished that very first bag... We were all whooping and laughing, we were that excited. After doing nothing but shoe tops, specification work, this felt so .... so creative, if you know what I mean. That evening we were rushing around like maniacs, just admiring each other's handbags". This work was both creative and a means of raising money for the women occupying the factory. Sympathisers sent leather to the women, the first coming on the Tuesday from an unknown supporter in Norwich. Later the money raised by selling the goods was used to buy more leather, some of which was sold to the women at a low rate by the new Sextons management.

Another way of raising finance was through benefit events, collections and donations. The first of these was a concert and raffle in Fakenham on the Tuesday evening, which raised £25. As well as support there were threats to the occupation. Early that week an Electricity Board official was sent to disconnect the power, but turned away after being persuaded by the occupiers. The telephone was disconnected despite attempts to prevent this through the union in the Post Office.

Appeals were made for support, including a telegram to the Queen on 23rd March. Support was needed as Sexton's new management made it clear that it would not keep open either the Fakenham or the Beccles factory. The 'rationalisation' at Sextons main factory was to be more severe than the initial statements indicated; the initial new workforce was to be 423, rather than 500.
The initial pressure on the occupation eased about a week after it began. No further attempts were to be made to cut off the electricity, and the telephone was reconnected after it was agreed that bills would be paid. Support was coming in from outside - both moral and financial. A Women's Liberation Conference in Manchester on 25th March wrote to support the occupation, together with a £65 donation collected at the Conference.

On this and other support from the women's movement, Alice said "...... while the Fakenham women shoe workers did not necessarily agree with all the images projected by Women's Liberation and had not made a specific request for backing, they were glad of support for the specific fight they were putting up".36

Production of leather goods from scraps and donations continued and the women had a stall in Fakenham market on Thursday 30th March.37 There was a core of ten or a dozen women left in the occupation. Others had found jobs elsewhere in Fakenham - by the 28th March nine had found jobs in a new Liptons supermarket in the town centre and twelve in a local food processing plant run by Brooke-Bond-Oxo.38

Two days after Alice sent a telegram to Edward Heath, then Prime Minister, came a negative reply from the Department of Employment in reply to their telegram to the Queen on 23rd March. A Mr Thomas stated: 
"You will appreciate that the Government has no powers to tell a firm whether or where it should carry out its activities. These are decisions which managements have to take in the light of all the commercial and other factors involved, and primarily of the basic necessity to make their operations successful. Such success is obviously in the long term interests of the majority of their employees.

"The consequences of firms' decisions are inevitably sometimes very painful for individuals and the Government fully recognise the difficulties and hardships which arise for those adversely affected. You may perhaps know that the Minister for Trade at the Department of Trade and Industry saw a deputation from Norwich on 6th March when the problems arising from Sextons possible closure there were discussed. He expressed his concern for the difficulties faced by individuals caught up in this situation but, after considering all the points raised, had to confirm that there was no possibility of Government intervention. This is also the position so far as the Fakenham branch is concerned.

"As things improve generally, and with tax concessions announced in the Budget, there should be a better chance of another undertaking showing an interest in the premises in Fakenham if the owners wish to let or dispose of them."
"In the meantime, as you will know, the role of this Department in such circumstances lies in giving every possible assistance to the work people involved to enable them to obtain other suitable employment as quickly as possible".

The hope of Government assistance faded. Meanwhile, the women increased their pressure on their union, NUFLAT. Eight women from Fakenham went to a NUFLAT meeting in Norwich on 5th March, and were backed by twenty-strong demonstration of support outside the NUFLAT offices. After a two-hour discussion it was agreed that Mr. Wood would take a letter from the Fakenham women to the NUFLAT National Executive. The next day, however, there were two setbacks for the occupation. The first was a letter from the NUFLAT National Executive instructing the women not to approach other union branches for support, and the second the suspension of payment of unemployment benefits to the women occupying the factory.

The factory was now offering a forty-eight hour service on jerkins and skirts, which were priced at £3 to £8, at only a small amount above costs. £200 had already been banked and the new Sextons management had reportedly sold £400 worth of suede to the women for £25. Ideas of setting up in business with their own firm were gaining ground, with "Leather Lines" one contender for the name. One businessman from Brentwood wrote to them on 5th April, after seeing an article in the Daily Telegraph, suggesting a company owned and controlled by the workforce. On 7th April, it was reported that he was prepared to visit Fakenham to discuss possible investment in a new firm, and that a Cardiff businessman was interested in investing money if a co-operative was set up.
Roger Spiller, the ASTMS Divisional Officer, stated a few days later: "We are thinking of setting up a co-operative here and it would appear that the management would be prepared to offer terms for renting of the building and machinery, and that would be acceptable to the girls."

"However, there are administrative difficulties that would have to be overcome, but we are certainly looking at it." 43

Collections for the women continued, including ones at the Norwich shoe factories and another which raised £7 from bingo players in Dereham. 44 The women's confidence that the occupation was secure was shown by their 'Open Day' on Monday 10th April. One of the visitors was a representative from Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, which later sent a £250 donation. Local people were attracted as well as others from further afield, to the 'Open Day'.

The dispute over unemployment benefit continued. It had been restored around 7th April but was stopped again around the 11th. 45 On Friday 14th April, eight women demonstrated at the Local Employment Office against the refusal of their claim for benefit. 46 This dispute was to continue for some time. A local M.P., Ralph Howell, took up their case, but it seems that the women did not have a further decision in their favour.

Contacts were made with other trade unionists, for example through a lobby of Norwich shoe workers in mid-April. Mary and Janet met trade unionists in Leeds a few days later, and more meetings were planned for May in Northampton and Peterborough. 47 Meanwhile, preparations for forming a co-operative were proceeding.
REACTIONS TO THE OCCUPATION

The Fakenham women's occupation of their factory was a militant tactic at the time. What surprised many people was that the occupiers were women workers and that it had happened in an area that typically saw little open industrial conflict.

Reactions of the women's families was usually enthusiastic, or at least not hostile. Their support at the early stages in helping move equipment and assisting with night-watch duties illustrates this. Some, as one article comments, were "less than wholly enthusiastic". Alice commented, "One or two of the husbands were anti-occupation. They thought we were just a bunch of women and that we would never accomplish anything. We had a hard job convincing them but they believe in what we are doing now". As regards her own husband, she said, "About an hour after we'd decided to stay, I thought My God! What's Tom going to say? But he came down that night and helped board up the windows".

At a later stage Mary said, "Our families are 100% behind us. Our teenage daughters help design the handbags and suede clothes and sell them to their friends. They keep us supplied with food and when I get home I have a meal cooked for me by my husband. But it's the other working men. As one said to me to-day, "We don't like it very much because you're trying to get one over on the men". Men expect women to back them up and women do.

Pressure from husbands seems to have been a factor amongst women who did not support the work-in. One article states:
"Many of the women who left did so because their husbands thought the whole idea was crazy; others couldn't afford to work without pay; still others were frightened by the revolutionary nature of the act." 

The reaction amongst people with no direct concern through family or other links seems to have been generally indifferent or hostile. "Some of the villagers, especially women, saw the work-in as some kind of Communist threat," said an article in International Management. Interestingly, the three women who were leading figures in the occupation had voted Conservative at the previous election. 

Another article states:

"Even on the streets in town, things weren't easy for the nine women. "One of my best friends, a person I'd known for twenty-eight years," Alice recalls, saw me coming down the street and quickly ran away. Some Fakenham women told us we ought to go home and look after our husbands and kids. But most people simply tried to avoid us."

The occupation of property owned by a company to pursue an industrial dispute, combined with pessimism about the prospects of success, gave rise to reactions such as that from a husband of a future worker at Fakenham Enterprises who was not involved in the occupation:
"As far as the sit-in went I didn't think it was quite the thing. First of all I thought those people are sitting in a factory but it doesn't belong to them. And I did ponder in my mind about what right they had to occupy premises that were the property of other people. And if there was no work for people to do, to me it seemed very useless to occupy a factory practically for only one purpose and that purpose was to keep the workforce in the factory hoping future work would come, so they could carry on". 53

There was much more support for the women from outside Fakenham itself. The occupation received 177 letters of support which have been broken down into categories in Table 3.

Table 3: Origins of letters of support sent to Fakenham occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Number of letters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Socialists (I.S.) Branches and Members</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Womens Movement</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Union Branches and similar bodies</td>
<td>27 (including Fine Tubes, U.C.S. and Fisher Bendix).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Groups other than I.S.</td>
<td>14 (including Labour Liberal and Communist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades Councils</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Unions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>177</strong></td>
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Hence support from organisations and movements came primarily from the International Socialists (a revolutionary group with a membership of a few thousand or so), the Women’s Movement and trade unionists. The three strands of support held differing perceptions of the importance of the Fakenham occupation.

I.S. saw the occupation as a step towards a socialist revolution and a further confirmation of the way union bureaucracies ‘sold out’ their members. This is illustrated by a letter from an I.S. member in Durham to the occupation:

"Comrades,

The Socialist revolution must be close, when forty-five workers engage in a direct confrontation with the Employing Class, without official Union support or aid from the main factory. Not only is it a great example to the remainder of the working class, but women in general."

I.S. organised support for the Fakenham women on a national scale through its members and contacts. The Norwich Branch sent out an appeal for funds for Fakenham and Ian Gibson, then an I.S. member and a member of the ASMS National Executive, was involved with the Fakenham women in an advisory capacity. The Norwich I.S. branch also published a pamphlet on Fakenham and Sextons.

The Women’s Movement also gave support on a national scale. Groups and women involved in it tended to emphasise the fact that it was a struggle of women workers and pointed out the potential significance of such militant industrial action by women. In contrast to most I.S. support, the support for
Fakenham from the Women's Movement continued on from the period of the occupation to the period when Fakenham Enterprises had been established.

The support from Trades Councils and Union Branches was more one of expressing solidarity with another group of workers. Of course there were different reasons for support from revolutionary, feminist and other perspectives for the women at Fakenham by individuals and groups, so the above analysis of support must only be seen as a general outline. The fact remains that the support from organisations and movements, combined with the orders (totalling over two hundred) for goods from the occupation, were essential to its success - both financially and in terms of moral support.
FORMATION OF FAKENHAM ENTERPRISES.

It appeared increasingly unlikely that the old Sextons' factory would be taken over by another firm to preserve the jobs of the women. If they were to be able to keep their jobs, they would need to set up their own enterprise. Formation of a co-operative fitted in well with the ideas and practice of the occupation. For example, the post was laid out on a table each day for everyone to read and each cheque received shown to all the women, according to Janet. 56

Setting-up a co-operative enterprise was not a quick business. Early estimates indicated that £11,000 would be needed to buy the old Sextons' equipment, 57 although at least one company, the Anglo-American Sewing Machine Company Ltd., offered to loan machines with an option to purchase at a later date. 58 There was also the question of the product that should be made given the decline in leather shoe production in the U.K.

On 15th May 1972, there was a meeting at Fakenham to discuss the setting-up of a common ownership company. Representatives of the Fakenham women, concerned union officials including Ian Gibson, and representatives of the Scott Bader Commonwealth, a large and successful common ownership, were there. Scott Bader had become involved following the intervention of Derek Page, a former Labour M.P. for Kings Lynn in Norfolk. Former Labour M.P. for Bedford, Brian Parkyn, was a member of the Scott Bader Board and he was to become very much involved with Fakenham. This meeting set up an Advisory Council to establish a co-operative firm. It was estimated that the capital required, including working capital, was of the order of £20,000. The legal structure suggested for Fakenham was the complex two-tier system which Scott Bader had evolved. 59
Two days later, John Anagnostelis of Scott Bader, wrote to Clive Jenkins of ASTMS and Tom Moore of NUFLAT, stating that in the meeting "some first steps were discussed towards legalising the work-in as a worker-owned, worker-run "concern" and asked the unions if they would help financially. On 20th May Tom Moore, NUFLAT General Secretary, wrote to Mary, who had written on the 11th for "financial and moral support" for the occupation. After "long and careful consideration" the NUFLAT General Executive Council "came to the decision that the Union cannot officially condone the 'sit-in' " but would pay out-of-work benefit to NUFLAT members of slightly over £1 a week. 60 Prospects for help from NUFLAT looked slim although Arthur Elsegood, a local official of the union, was on the Advisory Council.

Elssegood later stated, with respect to that letter, "...... I acted here at officer level. I was aware of what my head office view were, but as I said, we tried to offer the same service and advice as we always had done". 61

Negotiations about establishing a co-operative continued and on 30th May it was reported that it would take three to four weeks to set up. The Eastern Daily Press summed up some of the tensions within the group, "Friction, strained friendships, loss of earnings and unemployment money". Alice commented, "My husband is beginning to feel after eleven weeks that I m more or less a part-time wife. He's not grumbling, but he's hoping for an early solution so that we can get back to being a normal family". 62 On 10th June, it was hoped that the co-operative would be formed the next week after a meeting between Fakenham's legal representatives and "all of the interested parties". 64
There was, however, a growing gulf between ASTMS and Scott Bader. Roger Spiller of ASTMS gives his view of the situation that developed:

"During that time there was tremendous interest and assistance provided by a large number of people from outside. As far as we were concerned, we had meetings with the people there. Indeed our general secretary offered not just the financial assistance we'd been giving all along, and dispute pay and so on, but also to set up a company, to provide the cash to finance all the legal expenditure involved in setting up an independent company. And it was at this time that we were first brought into contact with Scott Bader. Now although one can have a view on co-operatives and so on, it seemed to us that Scott Bader Commonwealth wasn't really the sort of organisation that was going to spread the ideas that we believed in. It was a pseudo-co-operative enterprise, so pseudo that in the main factory now in fact the supervisors decided to join ASTMS in Wellingborough. And this proved quite conclusively, I think, that people don't recognise Scott Bader or similar organisations as being true co-operatives. Our advice was that if a company was to be set up to operate in Fakenham it should be done on an independent basis and that there would need to be capital raised in order to finance it. The women decided that they wanted to go in with Scott Bader and that Scott Bader was offering assistance and they wanted to take that assistance. Well, they have a perfect right of course to do that. They did that and the thing has gone on from that point."
According to Alice the small amount that ASTMS was prepared to put up prompted the women to accept Scott Bader's offer. She says:

"...... Clive Jenkins said initially that he'd put up the money to set us up as a company, but it stopped at that. He'd put up to £150 to pay the legal fees to set up the company, but after that that was it. And it was left to us. Well £250 to set up a company, where do you go from there? No materials, no contacts, no anything else. Derek Page put us in touch with Scott Bader who put up £2,500 and we put it to a vote in Fakenham. and it was a literally unanimous decision that we accept Scott Bader's offer".71

As a result, ASTMS decided not to give any financial backing. A later letter from Roger Spiller to Alice states:

"...... when you agreed to the existing set-up being implemented, it was made quite clear that ASTMS was not prepared to give any financial backing; this was, of course, because of the methods used and the attitudes expressed by Scott Bader".72

A later dispute over a £129 electricity bill incurred during the occupation illustrates the gulf that developed. Roger Spiller's letter to Alice stated that he would have thought that Scott Bader:
"would have been only too pleased to pay any outstanding bills in order to clarify your own position or even Mr Sexton might show interest".73

On 22nd June, it was publicly announced that a co-operative firm called "Fakenham Enterprises" was to be set up. Scott Bader had agreed in principle to commit £2,500 for the first year's operation of the co-operative and to reconsider the case after a year. Following the announcement, Alice told the local paper about the other women:

"They have been wonderful in the way they have stuck it out with me, despite the difficult circumstances and they deserve the success they have to come".66

The actual formation of the co-operative took almost a month. This was marked by a growing distrust between Fakenham and ASTMS. Clive Jenkins wrote to Nancy on 7th July to say that he was "very surprised" about her implications that ASTMS was doing nothing.67

On 17th July, the new firm, Fakenham Enterprises Ltd., started up as a limited company without a formal common ownership constitution. It had financial backing from Scott Bader, who had allocated their £2,500 as an unsecured loan at 6% interest for an unlimited period, as well as smaller amounts from other sources, including Eric Sexton. £1,000 of the Scott Bader loan arrived immediately and the rest followed in September. In view of the earlier estimates of capital requires, it appears to have been under-capitalised although machinery was obtained relatively cheaply. Only the nine women who had stayed throughout the occupation were to be shareholders.
The directors were Alice, Ann and Janet. After two days spent moving equipment into their new premises over Carley's Garage — formerly the Sextons' factory annexe — they began work. Pay was to be the union weekly minimum rate of £15.63, and they would work forty hours. The products were to be the sort of leather goods they had been producing during the occupation, as well as contracts for shoe uppers. 68

The Fakenham women had jobs again but now they were working for themselves after eighteen weeks of the occupation. Meanwhile, the workers who had accepted the takeover of Sextons were faced with further 'rationalisation'. Thirty-two workers were made redundant on 27th July, leaving only 366 at the Norwich factory. 69

Another aspect of the 'rationalisation' was the promotion of outwork, which is well-known for its low pay and use in the clothing and similar industries. Closing work, rather than being done in the factory, was "put out and done at home by former employees with young families". 70
A fortnight later there was a prospect of a large contract for Marks & Spencer. The organisation was still in a state of flux, as illustrated in a report by Colin Johnson to ICOM:

"Through the solidarity developed by their sit-in, the group works very well together and some of the group approaches to problem-solving they have evolved are surprisingly sophisticated. As yet no clear ideas on the exact form of company organisation they wish to adopt has emerged, obviously at the moment everything is discussed and consensus decisions reached, but if large contract work is forthcoming in the next few months this may not be practical and some help will be required in evolving a satisfactory system under the conditions that will then prevail....."

"Elementary business systems are being set up and the new skills associated with 'running your own business' are being learned".

Finance was tight, but the bank manager was sympathetic. Colin Johnson added in a letter:

"I am fairly optimistic, moral (sic) is high and there are lots of hopeful things around that just need grasping firmly. I think three or four weeks should see such a transformation".
By August they were looking for six or seven more skilled machinists to join the original nine women. They had a shoe contract with a Norwich firm and Marks and Spencer, as well as another contract. The women claimed to be paying better wages for women than two of the larger factories in Fakenham - in food processing and clothing. The factory was also more open to local people than others - some of the older women in Fakenham who had been at Sextons would work for free for a couple of hours in the evening and younger ones would come in with babies during the day.

There were, however, problems in recruiting labour, including those who used to work at Sextons. Alice explained:

"I asked several of them if they were interested in coming back. They didn't exactly like having to work standing in inches of water, cleaning carrots, but they remembered Sextons and the redundancies were firmly fixed in their minds. Women here work because they desperately need the money - their husbands earn so little. No one in all consciousness could blame them for not wanting to take a wild leap in the dark ....".

One attraction for some was the payment system - flat hourly rates without differentials - combined with the common ownership idea. Alice comments:

"In the early stages I think maybe some of the best machinists resented it a bit, because they could do perhaps three times as much as the younger girls. But then they realised that they had a responsibility to these inexperienced girls, the same way that the inexperienced girls had a responsibility to try. At Sextons the
machinists made £18 to £25 a week on incentive bonus, but that's a cut-throat situation where everyone is grabbing to get a little bit more than the rest. 'We've rejected that!' 79

As well as the shoe contracts, Fakenham Enterprises was approached by various people with possible contracts for other types of work. Much of this was on products for which they did not have specialised machinery - as theirs was for shoes - or skills. On the other hand, the shoe industry was in decline, and it was foolish to rely solely on shoe contracts. Also in some cases, the prices offered to Fakenham were equivalent to those offered to outworkers, which made them totally uneconomic when overheads for the factory had to be paid.

By September, there appeared to be enough contract work for Scott Bader to loan the remaining £1,500 of the £2,500 initially promised. Discussions on a common ownership constitution were in progress.

On some of the contracts they did take there were quality problems: for example, on a shoe closing contract for Lambeth Howarth in Autumn 1972, and on car door pockets in early 1973, which was claimed to be sub-standard work. 80

Another problem was the small size of Fakenham Enterprises. Many potential contracts were too large to handle easily. For example, a Mr. Hall of Norwich approached them in October 1972 with a view to doing 2,000 to 3,000 bags per week plus possibly the same number of skirts and suits. Even with all materials supplied only half the potential work could have been produced in Fakenham Enterprises' premises. 81

The same was true of shoe contracts. Alice said,
"We didn't like to have to go back to shoes. But we had to have some kind of contract work to bring in the bread and butter and provide continuity in production. We took what we thought were reasonable contracts but we ended up getting a whole avalanche of shoes which we couldn't hope to complete in time. It wasn't economic for the companies to send them down in quantities we could cope with". 82

The company was therefore faced with severe problems of continuity of work, combined with difficulty in recruiting skilled labour due to potential job insecurity. Longer hours of work were one partial solution. In December 1972, it was reported that some of the fourteen women then at Fakenham Enterprises were working during their lunch hours to do work on contracts for briefcases and other work including suede and leather clothes. 83 There were also major problems of management skills. The potential variety of work required accurate costings in unfamiliar areas, not just shoes, when none were previously carried out within the factory. There were also problems of accounting, financial control and marketing, for instance. During the occupation these functions were less necessary and complex and there was plenty of time for group discussion. This was continued in the newly-established co-operative which had a weekly meeting of all the workers to discuss the company's operations. These meetings, it seems, often continued for much longer than planned, as grievances were aired. "...... People talked and they shouted at each other and they had a group therapy sort of thing where everything came out in the open", says Alice. Others disagree that they were as open as she suggests. Mary argues, "But it didn't, ...... I was bitchy, so was everyone bitchy. What came out ...... was not the whole truth. People were not being honest". 84
When the contracts steadied and there were less production problems, the meetings became fortnightly instead of weekly.

Also, there was another reason for cutting down. "It is desperately important", said Alice in July 1973, "that we use every minute now to make the enterprise pay and justify what we did in the early stages".

Job rotation was practised, with women learning to do different jobs. This was liked, according to Mary. One woman, who used to be just a machinist, also did the book-keeping work. Most jobs were not divided up unless the product was difficult.

On the management side, Scott Bader gave part-time help.

There were difficulties, however. Scott Bader was in the chemical industry - producing resins - and was a high technology, capital intensive firm, with four hundred or so employees, and had been converted into a common ownership from above by its founder, Ernest Bader. Fakenham Enterprises was in a very different market area and product type, and was low technology, labour intensive, had under a twentieth of Scott Bader's workforce and was created by the women 'from below'. The management techniques, knowledge and backgrounds required were very different; there was a more positive commitment to co-operative working on the part of the Fakenham women compared with the Scott Bader workforce; and Fakenham had an all-woman workforce, whereas most managers are men and totally unused to being responsible to such a workforce in a co-operative.

An article describes the situation:
"Because none of the women had had any management experience, a common ownership and management expert spent three months at Fakenham helping them set up the business, and charged them only £2 a day for his services...

"As the months go by, the machinists-turned-managers increasingly learn to rely on their own judgment for day-to-day decisions. Yet, in a crisis, they can still fall back on the lawyer and Scott Bader representatives for advice.

"They've developed remarkable confidence in a short period of time," says Scott Bader's Mike Campbell. "They're so much more realistic than the management I've seen at other common ownership firms and, considering their newness and lack of capital, they're doing exceedingly well. They're thinking like managers now; they're thinking quite casually about decisions that seemed incredible to them six months ago".

The results of such interventions, according to Alice, were:

"Fiascos. All the way along the line, from the first man Scott Bader gave us, who had been working with Rowans in Glasgow, went to Scott Bader and then came to us. He didn't have ...... literally I suppose he didn't have the time because he was involved in his own book distribution project. He managed to give us two and a half days in a week which really wasn't any good at all. And he didn't understand ...... because we were getting a lot of letters and requests for something like a suede skirt for someone in Bournemouth to a waistcoat from
someone in Glasgow. And we were having a lot of isolated orders, but nothing concrete, no contract as much and nothing that was ongoing. They were all isolated and literally they were costing us money to manufacture and get the things off. They were costing us more than we were actually bringing in.

"..... the other man who came down from Scott Bader was a chemist by profession. He didn't have the vaguest idea what it was all about. He'd come down and have a look at some figures and on the basis of the figures he'd say, well, yes, this is what your recovery rate is, you've got to get in so much money per month, but at that it finished. He had no idea of telling us where to go to look for it". 87

It is not clear to what extent these criticisms were justified in terms of the expectations of Scott Bader regarding their assistance with management for Fakenham Enterprises. Scott Bader were still financing Fakenham, having followed their initial £2,500 with £1,000 in December 1972 for working capital, salaries and rent, and £645 in February 1973 for new machinery. 88 A bank guarantee of £900 was also given. On 1st May 1973, they took on a new part-time manager, Mr. P a furniture manufacturer from Kings Lynn, a town about twenty miles west of Fakenham. According to one report, his major tasks were to widen the product range and to improve costings and marketing. 89 This appointment was followed by a further £2,500 loan from Scott Bader on 10th May, 1973. This loan was conditional upon Scott Bader control of Fakenham over a "trustee period" with two Scott Bader representatives on the Fakenham board. The need for the development and/or hiring
of management skills was clear in Fakenham Enterprises. The previous managers were not locally based, and they did not make sufficient impact on the procedures followed within the firm. It was later stated by R. Miles of Scott Bader, that:

"It is not possible to itemise Fakenham's losses during 1973, as there are no records ... Work which involved the purchase of and cutting of materials ... may also have been out of control. In addition there was a great deal of wasted time and a general lack of cost consciousness, aggravated by poor organisation and management". 90

The staple product at that time was 'Envopaks' - plastic document cases - which had been taken on following an approach by the company, in November 1972, after an article in the Daily Express. In December 1972, Scott Bader were informed that £300 a week income was guaranteed. Problems remained, as outlined by R. Miles:

"With regard to Envopak, I feel that Fakenham have been competing with a cottage industry (where overheads are non-existent) and it seems to have been required to complete the tail-end of batch lots".

This meant that the work was needed fast, so the maximum number of operators were put on the work. Then:

"... as soon as they get near to achieving an economical standard they are switched to a different product and have to start all over again. I appreciate that during
1973, they may have had little other work to do so that Envopak work when it arrived was eagerly received.92

After Mr. P's appointment, the women filled in time sheets for three weeks, and he calculated the profitability of the different Envopak lines.93 Only one of them was profitable and that one only marginally so. Increased production would increase losses on the other lines at the existing level of productivity. As a result Fakenham was losing around £90 a week when its sales were only around £200 a week.94 Sales often did not cover wages, let alone overheads. The result was a very bad cash position - Fakenham Enterprises had an overdraft of £659, with £712 owed to them, and £1,338 due to be paid - a net deficit of £1,276.95

Mr. P argued that they should try to get a better price from Envopak. If this failed, they should try to adjust the product mix to give smaller quantities of the worst lines. Meanwhile four new products were being developed - suede clothes, leather handbags, bin chairs for the disabled and leather belts. Some of these were already being made: girls' skirts, jackets and belts as well as seat slings for modern furniture.96

The presentation of this information and costings at Fakenham Enterprises' first A.G.M. on 27th June gave a better background for business decisions. Previous managers seem not to have done this, and other sources of potential help found the area of costings difficult. Arthur Elsegood of the Norwich office of NUFLAT says:
"We did try and assist Alice with some of her costings, which we found most difficult to get into. I mean, we're not really involved in costings as such ...".97

At the A.G.M. on 27th June, four women were accepted as new co-owners, having worked at Fakenham Enterprises for a qualifying period of a year.98 Scott Bader took a majority shareholding as agreed in March, when they agreed to a further £2,500 loan. It was later stated by Scott Bader's Michael Campbell that:

"Our reason for taking the share in the first place was to protect the women from losing control (and common ownership status) to an outside interest which appeared to be a real threat at the time".

Also there was a moral obligation to cover Fakenham Enterprises' debts whilst not being able to control the firm. "We have never at Scott Bader been too happy about this", said Campbell. It was not, however, a Scott Bader 'take-over, as the shares were to be held in trust, but it often gave the appearance of being one.99

Two Scott Bader representatives, Michael Campbell and Brian Parkyn, joined the board, as did Douglas Pike of Envopak, and two representatives of the workforce, Alice and Elaine, Michael Ward was appointed company secretary, having previously been contacted by Derek Page, a former Norfolk M.P., and in his own words, "charmed down from the tree by Alice".100 Mr. P presented his financial report on the losses made and future prospects. One local paper described this as a report of great progress with new skills and lines.101 The representatives of Scott Bader
saw a very pressing need for the company to become profitable before common ownership ideals could be implemented. This was shown in a letter written later by Brian Parkyn, who stated that Scott Bader wanted to ensure the success of Fakenham Enterprises, however,

"... as I told the ladies at the A.G.M. this will only be achieved if everyone applies themselves to achieving profitability quite single-mindedly without confusing this with the ideal of common ownership. As soon as the concern is able to pay its way without financial assistance from us we naturally earnestly hope it can become a common ownership concern but no-one should be under any illusions concerning the immediate priorities".102

The women, however, seemed to see common ownership and democratic decision-making as something that had, to a significant degree, been achieved. Mr. P, on the other hand, wanted to go in a direction different from both that of the women and Scott Bader, who emphasised profitability as a prerequisite for common ownership. Mr. P stated a month later:

"What I've tried to do is create a situation where they've wanted to have a board of directors to run the business for them, and they've come round to this now. As shareholders they have the right to appoint the board, but there is no reason why anyone except the two women they've just elected onto the board, Alice and Elaine, together with two Scott Bader representatives, should know completely the facts of the company. The co-owners are only employees and shareholders - not
the management. Co-ownership is non-political because the shareholders invest their work and not cash.

"But I'm not important in this, I'm just here to say the ship should go this way. Row you buggers, I hope I can do some good. If I can't they can get rid of me". 103

These conflicts were to come to a head but a year after Fakenham Enterprises was formed the situation was fairly clear, if unusual. Scott Bader had the major say in policy decisions through their board membership and the potential financial sanction of not continuing to finance Fakenham's losses. This they tried to use to make Fakenham Enterprises profitable and hence to make it, hopefully, into a genuine 'Common Ownership', where the workforce ultimately controlled policy. They saw their roles as transitional.

Mr. P was responsible to the board for day-to-day management. But, being part time, he was unable to do all the managerial work that arose but was able to deal with management problems that none of the women could tackle effectively at that stage. He saw his role as transitional as well, but in a direction opposite to Scott Bader's.

The women, led by Alice, were therefore able to control their immediate work situation and dealt themselves with many day-to-day problems. In their fortnightly meetings, discussion was wide ranging, "from who makes the tea to the kind of work they might take in", according to one report. 104 There had, however, been no real training for them to be able to tackle these problems arising from a lack of
management skills, hence there was a pressing need for some-one like Mr. P despite the clear difference in views. Alice emphasised this in a statement made just before the A.G.M.:

"The last year has taught us that it's not always as easy to manage as it seems to be. Although I, for example, can manage girls, in the past there was always a financial director and a whole sales organisation that I just took for granted."
WITHDRAWAL OF SCOTT BADER

In July, three more machinists joined the company and work began seriously on two new products: high quality children's wear in pigskin made under contract for stores like Harrods, and a prototype "bin" chair for handicapped children designed by Penny Thrift of Hornsey College of Art's Design and Disability Centre. This promised at the time to be their own first product able to be manufactured in large quantities. Neither of these were ultimately successful and it was later claimed that Fakenham Enterprises list about £1,800 on the children's clothes through what Alice called "mismanagement and a lot of other things". It appears that M. P was personally an agent for these clothes thereby profiting through being a middleman as well as being paid as manager of Fakenham Enterprises.

Scott Bader continued to put in finance with a further £1,300 to wipe out accumulated liabilities on 17th August. The management situation obviously led to tensions. At a board meeting on 29th August:

"Mr. Parkyn outlined the general policy and the need to produce products which were more profitable than before, then broaden the
base of work. Some of the Envopak work was clearly not profit-making and (he) advised careful looking into the work, costing, etc."

Also:

"He explained the function of a Board of Directors and the function of a Manager". 10

Alice felt Mr. P was too busy with day-to-day administration and not enough with the longer term. As a result, it was decided that Alice would be responsible for day-to-day administration and control with Elaine as deputy. Mr. P then reported and it was decided that Alice would time jobs, Mr. P produce costings and to have a generally stricter approach to loss-making work. Mr. P was to continue as manager, subject to a month’s notice. 111

By mid-October the base of work had been broadened somewhat with some new shoe contracts, including one for Fell footwear. On the other hand, the losses were not decreasing and the firm had a £2,000 overdraft with another £870 excess of creditors over debtors. 112 Mr. P advocated, as one might have expected, management techniques opposed to the ideas of egalitarianism and self-control by the women. He argued:

"Before profitability will be achieved, a radical rethinking throughout the concern regarding accurate recording of times has to be carried out under the supervision of a responsible person to account for every minute of every worker’s day. Only in this way will we get a true analysis of our working operation."
Coupled with this, there should be either an incentive or a payment by results for the work achieved. It is my opinion, though this may not be shared by the directors, that the speed of output in certain parts of the factory has slowed down very considerably and that there are machinists who are not earning their wages. Time sheets alone will prove this and it will then be up to the operatives concerned to increase their productivity or be either dismissed or take a lower wage. Such an approach underlined a crucial problem area whilst advocating policies of supervision and control from above, rather than self-motivation of the women involved. The problem was that Fakenham Enterprises was doing labour intensive work and, with the exception of shoes, had few special skills which could command a higher market price than semi-skilled labour. This meant that they were often competing with, or offered rates equivalent to areas of industry that were characterised by low pay, high work pace, unorganised labour and possibly outworkers. Hence profitability could only be gained by high work rates coupled with comparatively low pay.

However the expectations of the women were of being able to control their work conditions to a greater degree than in a normal firm. According to International Management

"Most of the women ... appreciate the freedom that comes from running your own business".

"There's no boss to look over your shoulder", says a machinist in her early twenties, "You're free to do as you like".
The freedom had also been extended to working hours with childcare as a priority. It stated:

"Fakenham Enterprises is trying to persuade the two largest employers in the town to help create a play school to take care of this children during school holidays."

They were, therefore, concerned with other issues apart from purely economic - which conflicted with Mr. P's reported view that "All they want is job security."

For, said International Management:

"The company's present viability (which as we have seen was questionable - ML) is to a great extent dependent on the willingness of its worker-owners to accept substandard wages". 115

A week after the above report Mr. P suggested that despite bleak figures there had been an underlying improvement. Time sheets were now "properly in order" and this had led to an awareness of lost time. Meanwhile there was a "will to make the company succeed; the old prejudices of sticking to one job have gone". The overall position was made apparently worse by machine breakdowns, lack of continuity in orders and materials and the use of skilled machinists to train others". 116

On production methods the help of George, a contact of Mr. P from Heacham in Norfolk, had been obtained. His opinion was that progress was being made at Fakenham until the break with Mr. P, after which he became less involved for some time.
Losses continued and Scott Bader sent R. Miles to Fakenham during November and December to assess the profitability of the Envopak and other work. This was a condition of the further £2000 injected into Fakenham Enterprises on 15th November, following £500 on 2nd November to repay a loan made by an individual at the time Fakenham Enterprises was formed.

Meanwhile, there was growing concern amongst the women at Fakenham about Mr. P not spending enough time there. On 14th November Alice had asked Brian Parkyn for a full-time manager by phone, and for Mr. P's re-appointment to be for one month only. Brian Parkyn re-appointed Mr. P:

"... at a fee to be agreed, with absolute authority to do whatever you deem to be necessary to enable Fakenham Enterprises to be a profitable concern as quickly as possible. With your many other commitments we are not specifying a minimum time you should devote to Fakenham or be present at Fakenham but we do feel that over the next few crucial weeks it will be necessary for you to visit Fakenham considerably more often than you have been able to in the past few months.

"We agree with you that we should work as quickly as possible towards a situation where there is a full-time General Manager in Fakenham and we would therefore hope that you might be able to train one of the girls in this direction so that she can gradually take on more responsibility so that in time it would only be necessary for you to keep a watching brief over the concern".
He said they were looking for a general manager within Scott Bader, but added:

"... it is my strong personal conviction that if a General Manager can be 'thrown up from one of the ladies at present in Fakenham, this would be a better and happier solution for all concerned".120

This re-appointment of Mr. P was made without a board meeting due to the "urgency to confirm this situation and the distances which separate us", said Parkyn in a letter to Alice.121 He implicitly rejected the idea that the women in Fakenham Enterprises should, at that stage, be able to control policy. In his letter to Alice, he assured her that he and Michael Campbell,

"... and indeed all of Scott Bader are intent on doing our level best to try to ensure that you become an economically viable organisation as quickly as possible with some security of employment and income for your co-workers. If I have seemed a little hard at times, it is because I share with you completely your aspirations and ideas. Nevertheless, as I point out in my letter to (Mr. P) we must all look upon Fakenham Enterprises Limited for the time being as an ordinary business venture until such time as you are able to be really independent and organise yourselves in your own way". 
The Fakenham women reacted strongly. On 16th November, they met and passed two motions. The first stated: "We have no confidence in Brian Parkyn or (Mr. P)" and was proposed by Mary. The second, proposed by Alice, was:

"... that we accept Mr. P as manager for one month. We call for a meeting of the Community Council of Scott Bader Commonwealth Limited, in order that the replacement of Mr. P be expedited by a full-time manager from Scott Bader or ICOM. We furthermore request that any training scheme at Fakenham Enterprises be postponed until the appointment of a full-time manager has been ratified by the Board of Fakenham Enterprises Limited".

Brian Parkyn and Michael Campbell visited Fakenham the next Thursday, 22nd November. It was decided that Mr. P would not be re-appointed, that Alice would:

"... appoint one of the girls to act as manager so that your position as Chairman of the company can be seen to be quite separate and distinctive".

An accurate assessment of profits and losses was a high priority. There were, however, problems of both self-confidence and skills involved.

For, according to Alice, when no-one wanted to take over from her at the A.G.M:
"People under-rate themselves, it's difficult to get across that they are capable of doing such jobs".125

The question of Mr. P was, however, more complex than at first appears. Claims were made that he was not competent in certain respects and that he was pursuing interests at variance with those of the Fakenham women. Alice claims,

"When (...) says 'cooking the books, it was a lot more than that. There was a big intrigue on foot to completely take over Fakenham Enterprises, get rid of Alice and one or two others there. This was a literal fact. And unhappily there were one or two of the girls involved in it too, which rather set me on my heels. But it didn't come to anything because I saw it coming, explained to people what was going on. And then they saw it and only then we had a vote of confidence, sent it off to Scott Bader and got rid of him".126

Mr. P left and Fakenham Enterprises was left without a manager, although there were regular visits by Scott Bader managers. A variety of contracts were being produced. One under discussion was for Pell Footwear, which again was for shoes. This eventually displaced the Envopak work as the staple product. By February 1974, there was talk of expansion. A Board Meeting on 11th February concluded that:

"The main (difficulty) at the moment (is) not shortage of work, but the need to streamline the production and to recruit more labour".
Fakenham Enterprises "needed a stronger labour force to expand". Mr. Pelligrini of Pell had advertised for labour in the local papers; provided a generator to cope with power difficulties during the three-day week; and seconded a production controller "to sort out some of the production problems". Also a "full-time manager is going to be appointed by Pell for Fakenham Enterprises Ltd. He will stay for about six months, or so long till the production of Pell's work runs smoothly and output is satisfactory". The manager would only be responsible for Pell work.¹²⁷

No decision was taken about a full-time manager for Fakenham Enterprises itself. Given the situation, Scott Bader prepared to withdraw and to give Fakenham enough money to clear existing debts and the bank overdraft, totalling £4,000. This was finalised at a Board Meeting on 28th March. Payment of the £4,000 had been made in four instalments, leaving Fakenham Enterprises with a total liability for loans, including interest, of £15,754 on 1st April 1974.¹²⁸ Repayment was to be discussed "at a later date".

The Board heard that £500 profit had been made in the first quarter of 1974, despite the impact of the three-day week. The work for Pell was going well - well enough for Pell not to send a manager "as production was satisfactory and no manager was really needed". The ideal of Fakenham's own lines persisted for "... in the long term view Fakenham Enterprises would like to produce their own brand of goods, but only once a substantial amount of working capital had accrued".
On the management side, Scott Bader were thanked for the "financial assistance, help and advice ... received since July 1972".

The resignations of Brian Parkyn and Michael Campbell were accepted. A new Board was elected - Alice and Elaine were to be on it for three years - and Michael Ward and David Spreckley were to be invited to join. Mr. Pelligrini was "not to be invited". David Spreckley, a founder of Landsmans Co-ownership Limited "was to be appointed advisor to Fakenham Enterprises on terms and conditions to be agreed".129

The shares held by Scott Bader were also returned. Scott Bader were clear that this was the end of their involvement with Fakenham Enterprises.

"We have told Alice", wrote Michael Campbell to Company Secretary Michael Ward, "that this £4,000 is the final loan Fakenham can expect from Scott Bader. The total lent to date is about £15,000. How much of this we can expect back is problematical but hopefully as Fakenham becomes profitable some repayments will be made".130

Despite the changes towards profitability management problems had persisted, as one item on the Board Meeting agenda indicates. This read,

"Although the Board is pleased to note the improved position over the past quarter, they are concerned with the inadequate book-keeping procedures and financial control since the start of the company. If careful attention is given to this, we have every confidence that the company can now become financially strong and independent".131
RISE AND DECLINE

Scott Bader's apparent confidence was at first confirmed, though the continued dependence on contract work did not change the underlying structural weakness of the firm. In May 1971, the position was good enough for wage or fringe benefit increases to be considered, totalling perhaps 5% to 7½%. Wages were "still fractionally below union (minimum - ML) rates". David Spreckley suggested paid holiday and sickness benefit. On the latter he stated:

"... no-one in Fakenham Enterprises is the main breadwinner and therefore making up full pay is not so important as it is for men". 132

The work for Pell continued as a major product, and it paid well enough for Fakenham to continue and expand without external finance. On the other hand, Pell sought to extend their control over Fakenham, a process culminating in a take-over bid. The Fakenham women responded with a letter to Ernest and Godric Bader, David Spreckley and Manuela Sykes (then Organising Secretary of ICOM) expressing their "fears and apprehension with regard to our continued existence as a Common Ownership company". Having been told "in the nicest possible way" that no manager meant no further capital injection, it was "... a terrifying prospect that having worked so hard for so long, having given up our weekends and evenings to meet delivery dates without pay, even taking severe wage cuts, it should all be for nothing more than to take the retrograde step of becoming again a satellite of a shoe company". 133
The women's commitment to Fakenham Enterprises meant that takeover bids were resisted strongly because of the implication of losing control of the firm. This bid was fought off and work continued on various shoe contracts. The workforce grew to around thirty and wages were 59p an hour.

Early in 1975 however, shoe contracts were becoming more difficult to obtain. One of the two major contracts was being phased out, and this was the one that paid best. Fakenham Enterprises had not developed its own products and so was as dependent as ever on contracts. Alice wrote to Tony Benn, then Industry Minister, stating that:

"... after a spell of doing quite well financially, the bottom seems to have dropped out of the shoe market and there are mass redundancies in Norwich... (We) are faced with the prospect of being left with only one main customer, i.e. Shingler and Thetford, which are part of the B.S.C. (British Shoe Corporation). They have made advances to us about our being taken over by them... It will be such a crying shame if after three years we are forced to go back to square one and become just a subsidiary of the Clore empire".

She was confident Fakenham Enterprises could break into the clothes market if there was "just enough money to help us to conduct a feasibility study and a market study", and to produce a range of samples. She suggested £5,000 to £10,000 would be enough.134
The Department of Industry replied that Section 8 of the 1972 Industry Act was the only one that might be applied. "That section stipulates that the support to the enterprise must be in the national interest, be of benefit to the economy and that finance from other sources is not available". Fakenham Enterprises was not of sufficient importance to the economy so grants could not be justified.\textsuperscript{135}

Scott Bader refused to help, confining themselves to calculating a possible price for Fakenham Enterprises to Shingler and Thetford. The letter had meanwhile ended their contract although later there was a two week extension.\textsuperscript{136} Alice calculated £1,000 was needed to tide Fakenham over but it was unclear what they could do to secure the jobs. The take-over bid was resisted with a unanimous vote against it – leading to a split with business adviser David Spreckley and the survival of Fakenham Enterprises rather than its absorption into a large shoe company. Wages were cut to £10 per week to enable the company to survive.

Support was obtained from the Co-operative Party Conference on 30th March, which voted to support Fakenham Enterprises and to press local Co-operative Societies to place orders. At least half a dozen did make enquiries but Fakenham was often unable to give firm enough information on possible products, prices, etc. to take advantage of the goodwill available. There were also enquiries from two students' unions, a trade union and five retail outlets, as well as from nine potential distribution or marketing agents.\textsuperscript{138}

The situation meant according to one article, that:

"To survive it is now essential that they begin to manufacture their own Fakenham designs and completed lines in leather"
clothes. To do this they urgently need a woman who wants to join the Co-operative to teach production, management and costing skills.\textsuperscript{139}

One woman, Jackie, who had joined Fakenham as a general coordinator and stayed until the summer, was attempting to find work and interest retailers in potential Fakenham products. To do this it was necessary to raise capital and a trust fund (The Fakenham Enterprises Development Trust Fund) was later set up. Plans were made for a brochure showing Fakenham's product range. Support, in the form of orders and money came from the women's movement, co-ordinated to some degree by a support group in Cambridge. One leaflet said:

"Fakenham Women's Leather Co-operative needs orders urgently NOW to keep going for the next two weeks or so while they fight take-over and re-organise to survive as a working womens co-operative. They can't say how much orders will be to the penny but they can make:

- Shoulder bags: £3 - £4
- Belt purses: £1 - £2
- Waistcoats: £4 - £5
- Bomber jackets: £8 - £10 \textsuperscript{140}

Help was also obtained from ICOM, who organised a working week-end of members of other co-operatives to help re-organise the Fakenham factory as well as continued contact and help on other issues."
MOVE TOWARDS DRESSES

They continued to look for contracts as these were most likely to provide work in the short term to keep the company and workforce intact. They had little success during the summer of 1975. However a Mr. R of a Thetford clothing firm was advertising in Fakenham for outworkers to machine dresses. Alice approached him and he said he preferred one production unit. So negotiations were opened and a proposal made to the workforce of Fakenham Enterprises after a meeting on Thursday 18th September 1975 between Mr. R, Alice and Manuela Sykes, Organising Secretary of ICOM. This was accepted and the contract signed on 2nd October, a week after work had actually started.

Mr. R had agreed to install twelve machines in the Fakenham factory and to supply all the materials needed. He also agreed to guarantee revenue to Fakenham Enterprises of £460 a week for the first month and that the contract would last at least six months from 24th September. The price was initially fixed at £1 per dress, but negotiable for new dress styles, though this price was not enough to make the company pay according to some outside advisors from Loughborough University. Fakenham Enterprises agreed to provide twelve machinists, to be trained and supervised by Mr. R and "in order to sustain (production) capacity" they would not be switched to other work provided Mr. R ensured a supply of dresses.

All this was part of a fairly standard commercial agreement. But this one also implied a commitment on behalf of Mr. R to the development of Fakenham Enterprises. The agreement read:
"1. Mr. R agreed that he would become an ordinary employee of Fakenham Enterprises on the same basis and accepting the same wages as every other member of the firm and that he would contribute his special skills and knowledge in production output, costing, buying and selling and that he would aid, advise and impart these skills to Alice, the Managing Director.

"2. Mr. R further agreed that he would fully accept the commitment and decision of Fakenham Enterprises to develop and sell their own designs and manufactured garments and that he would not seek to change this commitment and that he would do all in his power to assist this process to a satisfactory and successful outcome by means of Clause 1 above ...

"7. Mr. R further agreed that he would take a share in the equity of Fakenham Enterprises Limited but that when the adoption of a full Common Ownership constitution had been properly registered by law, he would become eligible as a working member of Fakenham Enterprises to one vote and if so specified by the said Common Ownership constitution to one share in equal status with the other working members of Fakenham Enterprises Ltd".

There was clearly an expectation that Mr. R would be concerned with the development of Fakenham Enterprises. It was equally unclear how this could be put into practice in a situation where he supplied most of the work for the co-operative through a firm which he owned and controlled.
Production restarted at a fairly high level and there was talk of recruiting a further four machinists to work on the dresses. Work continued on the 'other side' of Fakenham Enterprises those doing smaller contracts and developing possible products.
GRADUAL LOSS OF CONTROL

The Open University's Action Research Project on co-operatives began on 1st October 1975, and Fakenham Enterprises was one of the firms involved. Regular visits were made to Fakenham between October 1975 and June 1976, an involvement on a much greater scale than the three months time scale initially agreed. There were two objectives for the project:

1. To analyse the way Fakenham Enterprises operated as a worker-owned enterprise and the effects of such a structure on the satisfaction, attitudes and participation of those involved.

2. To analyse the reasons for Fakenham's lack of development and, on the basis of this analysis, to put forward proposals to help the enterprise develop.

The following sections of this report are therefore based on research undertaken in the factory.

In early October 1975 the workforce was around sixteen, half the number at the height of the shoe contracts earlier in the year. Production within the factory was effectively divided into two 'sides'. One group of twelve, all of whom had joined the company after it had been set up, were machining Mr. R's dresses.

Figure 1 shows the factory layout: from this it can be seen that they occupied one area within the main factory. Each woman machined a whole dress, rather than the work being divided up amongst themselves. They would take a bundle of perhaps six or ten sets of pieces of material, already cut and overlocked, for the dresses from the shelving by the office; machine them in whatever order
they preferred, e.g. each dress in turn or all similar parts together for all the dresses in the bundle; and return them to another pile on the shelves. Work tickets were attached to each bundle, giving the number of dresses, the style, etc. After the initial period of guaranteed revenue - which was less than the agreed figure of £460, as the number of machinists working was on average less than twelve - Mr. R paid a fixed amount per dress. The women, like those on the other 'side', were paid a flat hourly rate of 60p apart from two girls who had recently left school who were paid 45p.

The women were supervised, trained and helped by a woman employed directly by Mr. R. Mr. R himself visited the factory every couple of days to deliver and collect work, negotiate if necessary with Alice and to supervise the women doing his work and help with problems.

The other production 'side' was in another side room away from the main factory (see Figure 1). Three women worked there - Mary, a cutter, Martha, a finisher and passer, and Jean, a machinist. All three had been at Fakenham Enterprises since it began and formed a very cohesive group. They preferred to be in the side room, arguing that there was no long-term security in the contract and that those women on it were working so hard that "they have a different look on their faces". They also objected to having a "nig-nog watching over you", a reference to Mr. R's skin colour.

They did work on small contracts, as well as on samples and one-off orders. They worked unsupervised in the side room, though Alice came in at fairly regular intervals. They saw themselves as a group and were somewhat antagonistic both to the machinists on Mr. R's contract and to Alice, with whom Mary had frequent disagreements and arguments. This was
Figure 1: Factory Layout (October, 1975)
reinforced by their claims that if they had perhaps £600 for working capital they would be able to produce profitably. Mary at that time also did the wages book each week.

Alice was based in the office which was chaotically run. There were no proper paperwork or financial control systems. She spent part of her time making contacts and attempting to get new business; part in general administration; part in supervisory-type activity; and part doing general cleaning or 'passing' work in the factory. She was unable, or unwilling, to do machining - as were Mary and Martha. This lack of flexibility meant that it was quite possible for imbalances to arise where a person with a more specialised task did not have enough work to occupy their time. The firm relied on outsiders for book-keeping.

The women fixed their own hours, usually working thirty or forty per week. Those on thirty hours tended to have small children and worked between 9 a.m. and 1.30 p.m., with half an hour for lunch. Absenteeism and turnover were apparently high. Absence was usually seen as justified, e.g. illness in the family, and understood. These attitudes were strongly related to the fact that within the families child care was the wife's responsibility, hence she, rather than the husband, took the children to school and stayed at home when they were ill. Children were often in the factory, especially at school half-terms, and at least one woman took her machine home during holidays. There was, therefore, a good degree of control over immediate conditions exerted by the women, a factor which is discussed further below.
Mr. R's contract continued, supplying one side with work. The non-dress side was often doing small contracts, mainly for a local entrepreneur Mr. S. His work was mainly low quality plastic purses and bags. In the middle of October, the equipment from the side room was moved into the main factory, apparently at Mr. S's instigation. The women in the side room (Mary, Martha and Jean) were hostile to the move, but were resigned to it. They said they had "nothing in common" with those upstairs, and felt they were being moved so that "they can keep an eye on us".

Alice was unhappy about the influence Mr. S was trying to exert over the internal organisation of the factory. He had been "telling her" how to organise it and ordering the women around. Also he referred to me as if I knew about the factory and the women themselves did not. Alice argued that he was just an ordinary customer who had goods made up and that she would organise work, not him.

Mr. R also had a substantial degree of influence over the internal organisation of the factory which, as we shall see, was gradually extended. Partly this arose through the fact that he supplied the work and thus had economic power, and partly through his, and his supervisor's technical and other skills in production and organisation.

The payment system and production organisation were discussed at this time, both formally in occasional tea-break meetings and informally. The two were linked as the organisation of production, in particular to what degree the production of a whole dress was divided, determines to some extent the range of possible payment systems that could be perceived as 'fair'.
Alice proposed that the payment system be changed from a flat rate of 60p for each hour worked to one where there was a basic rate of 55p and an attendance bonus of £1.50 each week for those who actually worked thirty or more hours. Her object was to try to motivate women to work more hours and to reduce absenteeism. This was revealed to be fairly high if one compared the total of nominal hours to be worked with the actual figures. Alice's proposal was not adopted.

At the same meeting on 15th October, the question of dividing up production so that a team made the dress was discussed. Some of the women had experimented with this themselves earlier in the week but had rejected it. Their grounds were that some of the women did not have enough work to do - in other words, it was difficult to balance production. It was felt that it was a bad idea to split up the job if some people were not able to work all the time due to lack of balancing of a line. This was felt to be a particular problem if a piecework or similar payment system was adopted (as some of the women advocated): for example, if bonuses were paid for production above a specified norm.

However, the financial state of the firm was perilous. The continued existence of Fakenham Enterprises and its ability to pay wages to the workforce was a result of its delay in paying other bills, including the money deducted from wages for PAYE and employer's National Insurance contributions. Unless the firm could be made profitable such a business strategy could not succeed in the long term as creditors could be expected to put the firm into compulsory liquidation. It had been partly due to the reputation of Fakenham Enterprises, and perhaps also the creditors' lack of confidence in receiving much if the firm was liquidated, that they had not forced Fakenham to close.
The firm was, in fact, forced to rely on each week's receipts to pay wages and other bills. No real cash flow forecasting or budgeting was done, which meant that a significant amount of Alice's time was spent in attempting to overcome the recurrent financial crises.

This economic situation, which existed alongside low wages for the type of work being done, led to much discussion of the payment system. The problem was that, given that the production of each machinist could be measured fairly accurately when production was not divided up into different tasks, it was also possible to see who was earning enough to cover their own wages. Whether this situation was seen as fair depended on the views of the women involved on the nature of the firm as a co-operative. As indicated above, unequal production rates and equal pay had been seen as fair by the women. However none of the women on the dress side had been involved in the occupation which had helped to create such ideas on how the firm ought to be run. Most of the women had come from previous jobs where differentials were accepted, so it can be argued that their commitment to co-operative ideals was likely to be lower than that of those involved in the occupation.

At the end of October, the work for Mr. S was all profitable. His partner was in the factory much of the time, doing cutting work, and five women were now on this side. This included the three who had been in a side room, who were now working with one of the two younger women (on 45p per hour) and another who had been working for Mr. S before - doing office and painting work for his tourist caravan business. She had left after a violent argument with him and said he was "terrible" to work for, a "slave driver", "shady" and had a love life "more fit for the News of the World than sociologists". It was, she said, ironic that he was now
supplying Fakenham Enterprises with work after she had stopped being directly employed by him. Mr. S. had apparently heard of Fakenham Enterprises after his partner’s wife had started work in the factory.

Mr. S’s firm went into liquidation at the beginning of November, leaving Fakenham Enterprises with a bad debt. This increased the economic pressure on the firm as it also meant the end of a profitable contract. In mid-November, the workforce voted to introduce a ‘bonus’ system, whereby anyone whose production exceeded a given level was paid a fixed amount extra per dress. This was calculated on the basis of the piecerates at Mr. R’s main factory – hence the system was essentially piecework with a guaranteed minimum of 60p an hour. All present at the meeting had voted for this scheme except Alice who had abstained. She was unhappy, as she saw money becoming the major motivating force, a trend which she disliked; increasing divisions amongst the women; and that the firm would not get enough money to survive.

This last point becomes clearer if one looks at the impact of the change in the wages bill. In the first full week of the scheme the average hourly rate for the women working on the dresses increased from £0.59 to £0.69, a 17% increase. This, however, was very unevenly distributed between the women as Table 3 shows.

Given the perilous financial state of the firm, such a policy would have needed to be able to increase production substantially for the company not to lose money as a result. The result of the change in the first week after it was made was to increase the proportion of the firm’s revenue that was gross wages to 85%. With the employer’s contribution this meant that there was virtually no
contribution towards overheads made by the dress side. As the other side had lost its apparently profitable contract with Mr. S (and got a bad debt), the bad financial position of Fakenham Enterprises had taken a turn for the worse. On the other hand, it should be noted that even with the effective wage increase, due to the piecework system, the wages paid at Fakenham Enterprises were still low, even for the area.

Table 3 - Piecework Earnings of Machinists in the first two weeks of payment scheme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Machinist</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>0.60 *</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>0.60 *</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>0.60 *</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Guaranteed minimum, actual earnings not known.

NOTE: A new style was introduced in week 2, lowering productivity.
Mr. R refused to negotiate on dress prices for changes of more than a few per cent, which ruled out increased dress prices as a solution for the financial situation. A second week (week 2) of the piecework system showed that individual differences in productivity were very high (see Table 3, second column page 68), and that some of the workforce were producing only a fifth of the amount of others.

The result of the system of guaranteed wages when styles changed was to put an additional burden on the finances as good weeks could not be used to subsidise bad ones. This pressure led, a few weeks later, to the withdrawal of the guaranteed wage and to a 'pure' piecework system. This was justified by the women involved, who themselves voted for it, as a question of individuals "getting what they earned" rather than the issue being seen in co-operative terms of the less good being helped by the better machinists. This went against the view of the remaining founders of the co-operative - Alice, Mary, Jean and Martha.

Alice said after the original decision to institute the piecework system that she almost felt like walking out. She would have preferred a collective payment system. Her general view was strongly opposed to differentials. She later said:

"I don't think there ought to be any sort of a differential anywhere".

"I think you create a dividing line and they (differentials) put people at each other's throats a lot. They're iniquitous ... I get very disappointed, disillusioned, I suppose, when people start talking differentials, because it
seems in four years we've come forward a lot -
but we're gradually reverting. But then it
may be (is) because of the special circumstances".

She preferred fixed hourly rates with the surplus being
ploughed back for development of the firm. Two years before,
she said, such a decision would never have been taken.

On the other hand, she had to accept the vote. She also
saw the situation leading to a breakdown of co-operation
between the women. She quoted an example: one woman had no
cotton and another two reels yet she did not pass one over.
Alice said this would never have happened in the 'old days'.
However the less good machinists were given encouragement
and help.

There were suggestions of dividing up the work so that each
machinist did only one part of the whole dress. Alice
suggested this to enable the weakest machinist to contribute
more towards production - and hence increase her earnings.
The consensus, however, was against this. The argument
seemed to be that because of the complexity of the operations
and somewhat unpredictable flow of work (with different styles
etc) the flexibility engendered by doing the whole dress was
needed. On an individual piecework system, the slower and
less trained machinists were bound to have far lower earnings,
especially when styles changed frequently so that they could
not build up speed on a particular set of operations. These
contradictions between the need for flexibility, the inequality
of piecework, and the need for high production to keep the
firm going were never really resolved.
Negotiations began with Mr. R over the amount he was giving to Fakenham. I prepared costings and made attempts to show the importance of costing - and how to do it simply - to Alice. Information sheets on the firm's finances were prepared for all members of the firm. Costing work was also done on leather jackets, a potential product. Mr. R argued that the development of Fakenham's own products took up a disproportionate amount of the overhead costs and that he should pay less than his share measured in terms of hours worked. An agreement was reached in early 1976 that Mr. R should pay a fixed amount £42.50 towards overheads, plus £6.70 for heating, and that he should pay Fakenham Enterprises a further amount to cover gross wages and employer's national insurance contribution. This arrangement covered around half the overhead costs (including indirect labour, i.e. Alice).

Fakenham Enterprises was in a position where it could not afford to turn Mr. R away, because they would have to close, and were not able to get enough money from him to ensure the short-term financial survival of the company. Mr. R's cheques bounced occasionally, adding to the problem. Mr. R was able to use this situation to increase his control and thereby reduce that of Fakenham Enterprises. In particular, those not working on the dresses lose their influence. Mr. R was held in fairly high regard by the women on the dress side as he guaranteed comparatively regular work and payment. As there was no other potential source of work that seemed to be available, their jobs were dependent on the continuation of his contract. The co-operative ideals of the others were not as strongly held by the women doing the dresses, though they did value the control they had over their work and conditions. The result, especially when the other were not doing immediately productive work, was a growing gulf between the dress side and the others, with the former growing closer to Mr. R.
An incident just before Christmas 1975 illustrates the situation that was developing. It is described by Cathy, one of the non-dress side, but not one of the founders of Fakenham Enterprises.

"Well, the thing is, they're not so co-operative as they used to be. Well, there was a situation just before Christmas, that time there was no money on our side, but there was on the other side. They'd earned some money. And Alice asked them - actually I don't think she should have asked because we use to only just ... the money was just divided. But she asked them, what are you going to do, are you going to take your money? And they said yes. So they took it, so there was no money on our side at all. But the reason they did that - Alice employed another girl and she was there a month and in that month she did very little work, but she got a lot more money than any of us did, you see, because she was there the forty hours. And the money they thought that she paid that girl would have paid the other wages. Because they said to me later, we've nothing against you Cathy, but we think there was enough money to pay you people. And they thought that some of us shouldn't have been there because there wasn't enough work. So they weren't going to part with their wages to pay people that hadn't done any work. So there was some money left in some fund and Alice divided it and I got £2.90. Four of us got £2.90 for the week's wages. So that's a week I've got owing to me."
"But the other girls haven't done all that well either. Some of them were only taking home £11.00 for a week because they hadn't been very good on dresses. As I say, it's a difficult situation, because some of those girls have commitments. And if they plan to save so much a week, and they've something to pay in the week, well, you can understand that they go there to earn their money, don't they?"

This incident led to much bitterness on the part of the three founders of Fakenham Enterprises, who were left with virtually no pay as a result. Mary said later:

"This is why I get so angry at thinking what we went through that people can take advantage. And they are taking advantage ... and this is no mistake".145

They saw the firm moving away from the ideas that had come out of the occupation. Mary said, of the dress side:

"It's against all we stood for ... we started with a principle in mind... And I still feel the same, that it's a co-operative ... To me that means one for all and all for one in equal parts. As far as I can see, it's not. That's why I want nothing to do with it. It's against everything I believe in, everything that I think we fought for ... They are working for themselves and Mr. R".146
Alice took a somewhat less pessimistic view. For although "it doesn't mean anything to anybody unless you've been through it (the occupation)"; hence "I don't think there is that sense of commitment among the latest recruits", she argued "there must be (commitment) in a sense, because they're sticking it".148

One of the women on the dress side, who had been at Fakenham Enterprises for over two years, reinforces this point, but she argued it applied only to some of the women. She said:

"Lots of the girls, you know, they're not bothered about Fakenham Enterprises. To them it's just a job. But to me ... I wouldn't like to see Fakenham Enterprises fall through. It's more than a job to me now. But, to well, the majority, I would say it's just a job, now. I think a lot of the spirit's been killed with working ... you can only take so much, really".149

Most of the women accepted that their motivation to make extra efforts had been decreased by the number of crises and the failure to resolve the basic economic problems of the firm. At a reunion to mark the fourth anniversary of the occupation, one of the founders who had left, asked why they didn't make bags and sell them in the market. Mary replied that they would need money for materials. But, argued the other founder, we used scraps. The key to the situation was motivation. Alice said:

"I suppose you could say some of that spirit has evaporated to a certain extent. And it's not peoples' fault it's economics".150
To a suggestion from a founder that if you had enough heart you'd go down there and sell them, Mary replied:

"It's not like that at all Margaret. The point is this, you can go so far and you can get pushed so far ... And when you get pushed so far you've got to say enough.

The result of the decision not to pay the women not on the dresses was effectively to force them to be laid off. Though this was originally temporary, there was never enough work to employ the full team again, despite attempts to get contracts, for example, hats in March 1976. This situation led to Fakenham Enterprises being taken to an industrial tribunal for redundancy payments by Mary and others.

The gap between the two sides of production, therefore, grew and was made greater by the decision not to pay the non-dress people. It was made final when the three founders on the non-dress side were laid off and effectively made redundant. They were offered work on dresses but refused, on the sort of grounds outlined above.

This left Alice, the ten or so dress machinists and Cathy. Alice was effectively in a managerial capacity. Cathy was a skilled machinist who made up samples of leather goods and made up one-off orders. Though she had been working with the others on the non-dress side, she was not a 'member' of the group of the three founders - Mary, Jean and Martha.

This is illustrated by a statement made the previous autumn: going into the side room where those three were working was "like going into a deep freeze". Work for Cathy was irregular and she did not always get paid.
She had felt a tension between the two sides. She sensed the change in attitudes on the dress side. Now,

"They quite accept that if somebody does the extra, well they're paid extra. But before, when we used to do shoes, a lot of these girls were very very fast, faster than I was. But we all got paid the same. We all just worked and worked and worked and that was it. And no-one ever said how much they'd done in a day. Well, they did say just for the record, and that was all. And they were paid by the hour and everyone seemed quite happy then".152

Cathy had been away due to illness. She says:

"... and when I came back I just sort of got on the other side (i.e. not dresses) and that was it. So now I'm quite sort of isolated.

"But it seems a pity to think that Jean and Mary are out. But I think ... the firm has progressed in a different manner. And now the work is different and it's unsuitable for them. That's part of the trouble ... But you see these jobs, those dresses are specialised. And I don't think she can contend with that".153

In place of the tension between the women on the two sides, tension increased between the dress side and Alice. Despite an enforced three-week Christmas break due to a fire at Mr. R's Thetford factory and subsequent problems with flow of work and
bouncing cheques, Mr. R had a fair degree of respect from the women doing his contract. One of the women says of Mr. R:

"I have faith in him... I think he's genuine and if he could pay us more he would. I don't know I've just got that feeling!"

To most of the women he was "genuine" and enjoyed a degree of confidence because he was providing fairly secure work. Alice was a middle person between them and Mr. R yet she was seen to contribute little to the dress contract.

Several of the women felt she and Martha ought to be doing machining work, but were not prepared to state this publicly. Their feelings were that they ought to contribute productive work if they were to be paid by that contract. As feelings were not stated publicly, the tensions that resulted could not easily be resolved.

These tensions became particularly clear after Mr. R started paying a fixed amount towards overheads as well as wages and employer's contribution. Though the agreement was that he should pay all this to Fakenham Enterprises, he soon started paying the women on the dress side direct. Alice sensed this loss of control - both hers in a managerial position and the firm's as it was no longer their official employer. However, it appeared as if the women had more loyalty to Mr. R, for Alice's efforts to find out production levels and earnings were met with resistance. Mr. R's control had been extended. He refused to tell Alice the production figures, as did the women involved.
Cathy, the machinist not on dresses, said:

"Well, you see, it's a complete unit on its own, isn't it? I suppose you can't go up and ask some girl how much she earns in a week. At one time we all earned the same. We knew more or less from the amount of hours we worked we all had more or less the same wage. But now they vary on that side".155

And on Mr. R, she said that Fakenham Enterprises would have closed without his contract:

"He saved the situation, though in a way we've helped him. We've given him this extra labour that he needed, I suppose at a cheap rate as well. Because he has sort of a free hand in the factory, doesn't he?".156

Around March or April 1976, there was not enough money to pay Alice and little work for Cathy. Fakenham Enterprises no longer had its own workforce, and as Mary stated:

"It's there in name, and name only".157

As outlined above, one of the objectives of the Open University's involvement was to analyse the reasons for Fakenham Enterprises' lack of development and to put forward proposals to help establish a viable enterprise. Over the first three months of the project there were attempts to establish costing and other systems that could be understood by the women in the factory. This 'incremental' approach to the problems was not effective, and was replaced by an attempt to create a new co-operative with funds from the Job Creation Programme (JCP) of the Department of Employment's Manpower Services Commission (MSC)
in January 1976. This application was for the creation of a new co-operative with just over twenty workers producing its own products rather than only doing contract work. The JCP funds would have paid wages for a year, as well as several thousand pounds towards other costs. It would have involved a substantial training element.

Before looking at the JCP application, the problems facing Fakenham Enterprises will be summarised. These have been divided into 'economic', 'management skills' and 'motivation, social cohesion and social relations'. 
THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Except for short periods, Fakenham Enterprises was not a profitable concern. The origin of the co-operative was a significant factor in this. As outlined above (pp 5-6) Sextons' Fakenham factory was solely a production unit, producing only part of the product, and many of the management services required for production were based outside the factory. The shoe industry, as shown in Table 2, was in decline—production in 1972, having fallen 30% from its 1965 level. Foreign imports and non-leather shoes were taking an increasing share of the market, and it can be argued that the British shoe industry required a substantial degree of 'rationalisation' and investment in order to survive. The Fakenham factory therefore was unable to compete immediately as it could neither produce nor market complete shoes. At the same time, it faced difficulties in obtaining contract work in a declining market. Firms would also tend to stop sub-contracting rather than making their own employees redundant unless, perhaps, the sub-contractors could offer lower costs. These arguments illustrate the general problems facing Fakenham. On the other hand, they could expect the possibility of work due to the seasonal fluctuations in the shoe industry. For example from 1973 to 1976 shoe production in the first quarter of the year was on average 18% higher than in the fourth quarter of the previous year\textsuperscript{158}—indicating a significant seasonal variation.

This view is borne out by union officials. Arthur Elsegood of NUFLAT in Norwich stated that the basic problem of the shoe industry was that it was not a "full time industry" for "...we are pruned every year to short-time working."\textsuperscript{159}
Hence, when Fakenham attempted to get contracts for shoe uppers, seasonal and other variations could be expected to be significant factors in determining whether they were successful in obtaining them. As shoe contracts were negotiated every few months, the level of work could vary substantially over the year. Firms also tended to 'bring in' work previously done by sub-contractors like Fakenham when production was decreased. Whilst this increased the job security of the larger firms' employees, it meant that a small decrease in production of shoes in Britain could lead to a large reduction in the amount of work available to Fakenham Enterprises. Hence crises of lack of work could arise from relatively small variations in shoe production in Britain as a whole. Even seasonal fluctuations could be expected to create - and did create - major crises at Fakenham. For example, the crisis at Fakenham in April 1975, when hardly any work was available, corresponded with only a one-fifth drop in shoe production in Britain between the first and second quarters of that year.

As a result, reliance on shoe upper contract work was a policy which necessarily involved substantial fluctuations in available work. This therefore endangers job security and continuity as well as reducing both workers' earnings over the year and the viability of the firm due to under-capacity working. It also implied, if the firm was to become viable economically, a need for a high degree of flexibility of the number of the labour force. This contradicts the co-operative principles of a comparatively stable working community. It also implies severe problems if the economic viability of the co-operative can only be maintained by redundancies and policies analogous to 'hire and fire' ones pursued by some conventional enterprises. This pressure not to make members redundant is a significant factor in
some economists' analyses of co-operatives. Such views indicate potential problems which are accentuated in enterprises with a market position like Fakenham Enterprises.

Shoe contracts, therefore, could not guarantee jobs and generated almost inevitable crises. Fakenham Enterprises also obtained other contract work, e.g. Envopaks, dresses and leather clothes. As well as some of the factors noted above with respect to shoe contracts, there were other problems with non-shoe work. Fakenham Enterprises did not have a reasonable level of specialised skills and machinery to deal with non-shoe work. This meant that either they would be limited to 'bottom of the market' work or would have to make a significant investment in training and machinery. The former alternative often implied effectively competing with outworkers. The firm proposing a contract would be considering Fakenham as an alternative to putting work out to individuals. It would be worth their while to do so if Fakenham Enterprises would do the work at a price which, though higher than that given to individual outworkers, would save a larger amount through reducing the costs and problems associated with transport of work to and from outworkers and the difficulties of recruitment and maintaining a steady level of production. Given that the contract at Fakenham could be stopped at relatively short notice without incurring any of the usual costs of redundancy, contracts were an attractive proposition for people like Envopak and Mr. R. On the other hand the lack of production and management skills at Fakenham Enterprises meant that some training and supervision might be required as in the case of Mr. R's dresses. Though this was an additional cost it could mean that slightly more complex work could be undertaken by Fakenham Enterprises as opposed to outworkers.
If Fakenham Enterprises was to escape from doing work at the bottom of the market, there were other problems. The incentive to escape was strong as lower quality contracts paid worse and implied a high pace of work to earn reasonable wages. The co-operative had created expectations of greater control of one's immediate working conditions, and the contracts which Fakenham could obtain meant such control was only possible given relatively low wages. So, if Fakenham Enterprises could gain skills for new products, it would be possible to satisfy these expectations to a greater degree. On the other hand, it would have required a substantial amount of capital to train the women and buy the equipment to give Fakenham Enterprises the capacity to do more skilled and better quality contract work. Even after such an investment they would have been subject to accentuated market fluctuations. But they would have been able to do a wider range of work at potentially better prices. They would also have been able to avoid being dependent on people like Mr. R, who was himself doing contract work, part of which was passed on to Fakenham Enterprises.

One other alternative was the development of products by Fakenham Enterprises. This would avoid some of the problems by contract work – for example, although Fakenham would be subject to market variations, these would not be magnified as with contract work. But the development of products required other things. These can be summarised as:

1. PRODUCTS designed and able to be produced by the firm.

2. EQUIPMENT needed to make the products.
3. PRODUCTION SKILLS needed for all the stages of manufacture within the factory.

4. MANAGEMENT SKILLS in particular marketing, costing, buying, production control, and organisation.

5. WORKING CAPITAL for materials, wages, etc., to cover outgoings before revenue comes in.

Clearly the requirements for making one's own product are much greater than for contract work. However one might expect that a gradual transition might be made from contract work to one's own product. This is correct in the sense that contract work could have been phased out as orders for other products increased. On the other hand, it does not take account of the 'vicious circles' in which Fakenham Enterprises had found itself.

The economic vicious circle in which it is argued that Fakenham Enterprises was placed, is given in Figure 3:

Table 3: The Economic Vicious Circle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low revenue + profitability; low skills level</th>
<th>Lack of capital for product development and training.</th>
</tr>
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**RESULTS:**
- Stagnation and insecurity;
- Recurrent financial crises

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acceptance of low skill labour-intensive contracts</th>
<th>Need for work with low capital and skill requirements</th>
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| Firm stays under-capitalised; little training undertaken. |
To overcome these problems, a substantial input of capital combined with outside assistance, e.g. in training, was needed.

The desired development is shown in Figure 4:

**Figure 4 : The Development Strategy**

It will be argued below that capital was not the only requirement for the development of Fakenham Enterprises. But capital was a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for Fakenham Enterprises to escape from the vicious circle of Figure 3. However, its chances of obtaining a substantial amount of capital from normal financial sources were low. Factors in this were:
1. The firm’s poor economic record and its substantial losses in previous years;

2. The firm’s lack of management skills and financial control;

3. Possible discrimination against an all-woman enterprise;

4. Lack of security and collateral for any loans from financial institutions;

5. Lack of capital that could be put in by members;

6. Shortage of risk capital within the common ownership movement, and Fakenham’s previous loans from Scott Bader.

The amount of capital required would depend on the nature of the product and its market, as well as the number expected to be kept employed by that work. The ideal product would in these circumstances not require either a high materials cost or very expensive equipment. But many of the skills within the co-operative were in leather, which is an expensive material, hence requiring substantial working capital.

These severe problems of capital for new products were crucial even when the Job Creation Programme finance of £50,000 was allocated (see below). Although £50,000 would have been adequate to buy equipment, undertake training and provide some working capital if given as a lump sum, the JCP finance was tied to paying wages and national insurance plus an allowance of 10% of the total wages towards administration costs. The reasons for this, within the context of the JCP, were clear - the JCP was originally intended to create short-term labour intensive employment
rather than to finance the creation of more permanent jobs.
The cases of Fakenham and other 'job creation co-operatives'
were therefore not part of the original intention of the
JCP, though they did make sense as part of the job creation
strategy. Hence capital for equipment, as well as working
capital, had to be either generated by the revenue from the
job creation co-operative or obtained elsewhere.

The implication of this situation was that although £50,000
was allocated through JCP, it could not be used as the other
capital requirements for the setting-up of the new
co-operative could not be found.
THE PROBLEM OF MANAGEMENT SKILLS

As well as the economic problems of Fakenham Enterprises, there were many others. Lack of management skills was one of these. Sextons' Fakenham factory was solely a production unit without an independent management or production capability. Thus, within the factory, control was limited to day-to-day production decisions.

When the co-operative was established, many more areas of policy and decision-making were opened up. There was a need for a system of financial control and accounting; for costing and budgeting; for marketing or obtaining contracts; and so on. When the research began in October 1975, it was clear that these problems had not been overcome in the first three years of the co-operative. In fact, they had been a recurrent problem over this period.

The strategy pursued by Scott Bader and also later on was to try to get an outsider to do much of the managerial work in the short term and to try to develop both the competence and confidence amongst the Fakenham women for them to be able to take over. The qualities required by such a person were unusual in conventional management terms: she or he would have to be capable of managing a small firm yet be prepared to work in a co-operative with low pay and the knowledge that the job was not likely to give longer term employment. Also, she or he would have to be capable of relating to the group of women who had set up Fakenham Enterprises and being able to be both responsive to their views and to the need to reorganise to become a viable concern.

It seems apparent that whatever the managerial competence of the managers or advisers appointed during the Scott Bader period of assistance they did not succeed in either making the firm profitable in the longer term or in the passing on of management skills to the workforce. Part of this was related to the temporary nature of such advisers, and managers and their
concern with other business interests. This meant that they came from different backgrounds, as well as nearly all being men did not have the same experience as the women who set up Fakenham Enterprises and were not used in general either to the specific market and production possibilities of the firm or to being responsible to an all-woman workforce. One of the original aims of the action-research project was to attempt some passing on of managerial skills. This was done with some degree of success. Obstacles to learning included self-confidence, for example in filling in official forms lack of previous experience and the previous reliance on outsiders. Alice had been doing most of the office and dat-to-day managerial work but was not using any proper paperwork, book-keeping, or costing system. Some of the work was done by others - for example, Mary did the weekly wages at one stage and the book-keeping was done by a part-time outside woman. Except where this work was done by outsiders, there seems to have been a tendency for it to revert to being Alice's responsibility. The exact reasons for this are unclear though it may be partly due to the fact that the others who did some of the office work had in general been founders of the co-operative and when they left non-founders did not feel sufficiently motivated to take over. The problems that existed, and the obstacles to learning, were illustrated by Alice. Of outsiders with management skills, she said:

"I don't want to give them total control of the place because we have ideas of our own that we want implemented, haven't we? We don't have a lot of technical skills, well not administrative skills ..... Even when Martin showed me how to do P.45's, the wage deduction cards. I didn't even dream I could do them,"163

Cathy added,
"But I think that's what we all want to be able to do, that if we've to nip into the office and do something, we can do it and we know what's going on. We want to be conversant". 164

Though this incremental and low level approach to the teaching of management skills did give results, it was a slow process. Trust and confidence had to be established in a situation where experts and advisers had come and gone without making any effective long term impact. There was also the need to learn the background to a complex situation. Another problem was the remote location of the firm, a factor which had contributed to the failure of previous attempts to help.

A far greater problem was the recurrent financial crises of the co-operative. For example, if a system was established for administering the wages, a financial crisis of cash flow could mean that only part could be paid out. This meant recalculation of everyone's wages and the bringing forward of wages owed to the workforce. This, in turn, required a more complex system which would take longer to learn. At the same time as this would have to be learned the motivation to do so would decrease as it was questionable whether the firm would survive. It seems these crises were a significant factor in the breakdown of office systems previously established. Another factor was Alice's reluctance to spend time completing paperwork and using an organised system.

The pressures, combined with the particular crisis in late 1975 after the fire at Mr. R's Thetford factory, meant that the incremental approach adopted was increasingly inappropriate in a situation where work flows were erratic and the existence of the co-operative in danger. If the problems of the co-operative were to be resolved a large injection of capital combined with the management skills necessary to administer such funds effectively was needed. This implied that effectively
a new firm would have to be built up using the experience of Fakenham Enterprises. There was a strong case for such a firm to be legally independent so that it did not have to take over the debts and inadequate records of Fakenham Enterprises.

Such a strategy was embodied in the JCP application (see below). However it only fulfilled necessary, rather than sufficient conditions, for the success of such a venture. This assertion is linked to problems of motivation, the social cohesion and social relation in the firm, the subject of the next section.
The above analysis leads us to the conclusion that Fakenham Enterprises Ltd. could not avoid financial and production crises, which were related to its market position, products and the production and management skills of its members. These problems, it is argued, could only be tackled effectively by rethinking the policies of the co-operative and an injection of capital and managerial skills. In this respect, Fakenham Enterprises had progressed little in four years, for it was unable to give members any security of employment. On the other hand, many factors affecting motivation, social cohesion and relations had altered significantly over four years.

The occupation in 1972 had created a cohesive group of around a dozen women who were highly motivated. The experience of the occupation and of the setting-up of Fakenham Enterprises had given a shared outlook on many issues and a commitment to co-operative working. The occupation had given opportunities for the practice of co-operative working as the economic pressures to pay wages were absent - though, of course, this was a decision made by the women. Though this generated strong commitment to the idea of a co-operative, the experience could not necessarily generate effective ways of working when they were under the economic pressures of paying wages. The occupation could not resolve for the longer term potential day-to-day conflicts between managerial authority and competence versus democratic control and procedures.

Within the group, some members took more leading roles than others. Alice in particular did much of the talking to the press and other bodies. The remarks she made about the other women having been "wonderful in the way they have stuck it out with me" (added emphasis) when the formation of the co-operative was announced in 1972 indicates a persistence of a
view of relationships that was not purely democratic.

As more of the founders left, there was a feeling amongst some of those remaining that it was becoming "Alice's firm" and that she desired this state of affairs. One said that Alice liked taking the credit for achievements, but the women as a whole took the blame for failures. The state of affairs was sometimes described as "working for Alice". She was said to consolidate this position and reduce the influence of the other founders.

Alice herself stated a view very different from this. She said:

"My personal ambition (is) to walk out of it one day and say, here it is, get on with it. It's yours, you know, get on with it, do what you like with it. Because there's a hell of a lot of things I'd like to do, for myself personally outside of Fakenham Enterprises...... If the worst come to the worst and it folds up, well, it's been a good four years and I wouldn't have it changed. I wouldn't have given it up for anything, not the experiences that I've gone through...." 166

Her stated intention was not to make it her firm but to leave and see it running without her. In practice, she did most of the managerial work herself. Given the fact that she did not do machining, she would not have had a full job unless she was responsible for most of the office and management work. There was, therefore, a contradiction in her position - that she ultimately wanted the firm to run without her but that her established position in the firm could be severely challenged
if she made moves in the direction of this ultimate aim. She could therefore accept ideas of sharing office work and getting a variety of members accustomed to different aspects of it but, in fact, not put these ideas into practice when opportunities arose.

There was some dissatisfaction amongst the women on the dress side. They wanted to know more information about the state of the firm which Alice was unwilling to make known at a stage where the situation was uncertain. As a result, her position gave her more influence over decisions through a greater knowledge of the situation - though the lack of financial and other records made this knowledge incomplete.

Despite these implicit criticisms of Alice, it is true to say that she was able to hold the firm together socially over the various crises during its existence. Without her, it is likely that the firm would have collapsed much earlier. At the same time as contributing to its survival, she did not have all the qualities required either of an administrator (e.g. efficient at doing paperwork and record-keeping) or a manager concerned with the development of the firm (e.g. ability to forecast and budget, and to design and assess alternative strategies). She was therefore both a necessary factor in keeping Fakenham Enterprises going and in some ways a brake on its potential development.

This situation might perhaps have been partially resolved given adequate supervision by, say, a group of other co-operative members who insisted on the adequate fulfilment of certain tasks. However, there was no such group between Alice and the whole workforce and no action to create one. Dissatisfaction remained whilst Alice's value was appreciated.

Thus there were potentially severe problems relating to the development of the firm as a result of Alice's position. Another major problem area was that of motivation and
commitment amongst the workforce.

As we have noted above, the experience of the occupation led the women involved to have strong views on the type of organisation they wanted to have. This had resulted in the rejection of takeover bids which would have secured their jobs to some degree, but lost the co-operative nature of the firm. It also led them to reject some of the managers and other people with managerial skills, e.g. Mr. P, because they felt that their actions were not developing the co-operative. In this, they faced a conflict between the desire for control over the firm and increased security - at least in the short term. This conflict was, until Mr. R, consistently resolved by preserving the co-operative at the potential expense of economic and job security. This strong commitment to the co-operative idea was not limited solely to the founders, as others who had been there for some time accepted their general ideas.

On the other hand, the founders were gradually leaving for various reasons. Three had left to have children, one had left due to back trouble, one to emigrate with her husband, and one moved to another factory due to economic pressure. The group of three who had been in the side room were laid off and Alice's job was gradually disappearing as Mr. R extended his control. Thus, the experience and views of the founders were gradually less strongly represented in the firm. Although several of the newcomers were committed to the firm as a co-operative, this was by no means true of all the newcomers. One said, for example, that she was likely to stay because the work pace was not forced and the work was "relaxing" and "undemanding". Others had joined because Fakenham Enterprises was one of the few, if not the only firm, that allowed its workforce to work the hours they wanted and to do things like allowing children in the factory during half-term. These were clearly a result of Fakenham Enterprises being a co-operative and the women's ability to control their own work conditions. But they tended to weaken rather than strengthen its competitive position in
economic terms for two reasons. First, the overhead costs for
the factory were relatively higher the less hours were worked
and second, the trade-off between conditions and wages was
such that wages would be lower than in comparable firms, and
if faced with economic pressures from their family, say there
would be a greater likelihood of more skilled and faster workers
leaving.

This concern with specific needs of women is illustrated by
Alice, who says:

"What do we specifically to cater for
women? Well the fact that (...) and
people like her with young children take
them in the morning, dump the kids at
school, pack up at school closing time,
go out and pick the children up. If
there's something to be done that requires
them to come back, they can bring the
children back with them and we look after
them, or somebody looks after them so they
don't get their fingers in the machines and
things like that.

"And also the fact that people have taken
machines into their homes. If they
couldn't get into the factory they can take
the machines into their homes and do the
work which they would have done in the
factory in their homes.

"I don't think men would be that
inclined to do it. I haven't known
of anywhere else, at least not around
here anyway, where it's possible to do
this sort of thing, where women cater
specifically for women with women's
problems". 168
The needs of the women, as a result of the structure in the family, mean that any firm taking account of them will be attractive as an employer. One of the women who came to Fakenham wanted a part-time job after her younger child went to school. She describes her day:

"I get up about 7:30 in the morning and get the children organised and breakfast. And I always make beds and wash up before I go to work. I usually leave the house about half past eight or twenty to none, and arrive at work about ten to nine after I've dropped Amanda off at school. And then it's on the machine and on with work. And then we break at twelve thirty for lunch until one and then work again until half past three and then I fetch Amanda from school, come home. And it all depends what I've got for a meal as to whether I start preparing that first or perhaps dust and hoover round or do some ironing, so some washing, you know; it varies from day to day as to what I've got to do. We have a meal, wash up, perhaps do one or two jobs in the evening, sit down and watch TV or play records, you know, something like that. And go to bed, at well, various times, you know, anything from ten o'clock onwards."

Though she was committed to the co-operative, the constraints of the family placed severe constraints on any great involvement in the co-operative. She says:

"If I've got some grudge I usually tell Alice, tell her what I think. If she asks me what I think I tell her. But also I think a lot of it is, like me I'm part-time, I've got a young family
and I don't really want to get very involved, because I haven't got the time to get involved. Because when I first went there I knew they'd had a sit-in, but I knew nothing of co-operatives and when they had their first meeting I sat there wondering what it was all about. You know, I didn't understand.... obviously since I've been there you learn.... but it wasn't explained to me when I went what it was all about. And you must agree it seems strange when you just go there to work and then your machine's off, you're having a meeting and they all start - because there's lots left. But when I first went there was quite a few of the old ones from sit-in days and they used to shout and argue.

"I think it's more pleasant working in the smaller group, but it's not profitable, is it? There's not enough of us to make money to cover the overheads. You've got to have a larger group in a place like that to make it pay." 

Also at first her husband "didn't really approve of me going out to work". He also "got very annoyed" when she worked but was not paid owing to the financial state of Fakenham Enterprises.

Such attitudes were not shared by all the women who had joined since the firm was founded. Some had an essentially instrumental attitude to the working in the co-operative. They went there because of the hours but did not necessarily connect this with the fact of the firm being a co-operative. They therefore saw no reason to resist Mr. R's gradual increase in control unless he threatened the aspects of the firm that they wanted. Arguments on co-operative principles would therefore not appeal to them, whereas they did to the founders who remained. The tension
between Alice and the women on the dresses should be seen in this context.

The implication for the JCP scheme (see below) was that they were not particularly interested as they had relatively secure (but low paid) jobs with Mr. R's work. There was general support for it but this was mainly passive - the main women involved were Alice and Cathy, who were not machining dresses. As the others on the non-dress side were not often in the factory after late 1975 as they had been laid off, the base within the co-operative was rather weak and restricted. This contributed to the problems of distance and feelings of not being able to control the situation when the negotiations about the JCP scheme were taking place in London during 1976.

These problems of motivation and commitment illustrate a general area of concern within co-operatives - how can the original commitment of founders be passed on, and transformed, as the founders leave and the firm expands. If one believes that participation and co-operatives are beneficial then how can the process of participation continue and be extended if there is no longer a common basis of experience?
JOB CREATION APPLICATION

The analysis of Fakenham Enterprises' lack of development put forward in the previous three sections (pp 89 - 99) was the basis for proposals of a Job Creation Programme application. This formed a second phase of the action-research, the first having been the attempt to increase the managerial skills of co-operative members (see pp 89 - 90 above). Before looking at the JCP application some of the previous efforts to ensure the development of Fakenham Enterprises will be described briefly.

Various potential products had previously been produced by Fakenham Enterprises, for example, the bin chair. None of these were exploited due to the lack of marketing and other production and management skills. Also, after Scott Bader stopped financing the firm, there was no readily available source of working capital.

A Trust Fund (The Fakenham Enterprises Development Trust Fund) was established as a means of raising capital for developing Fakenham's own products. The money raised from this fund was only to be used for such work, and not to cover other debts of the firm. Several hundred pounds were raised, part of this being used for materials for samples. The Trustees of the Fund were Alice and Cathy from Fakenham, Manuela Sykes of ICOM, and Bruce, a lawyer and ICOM member. Manuela Sykes had good contacts within the Labour Party and proposed leading figures in the Party as Trustees. Alice was somewhat distrustful of such "Government people" but neither she nor the other women had many alternative ideas. The original four trustees remained.

The basic strategy that had emerged was of trying to manufacture leather clothing. Fakenham Enterprises would make samples; a 'brochure' would be produced with help from a printing common-ownership firm; and there would be a show in London to display the products. Difficulties like the amount of working
capital required and lack of detailed knowledge of the market were not adequately considered and little realistic assessment of the Fakenham women's ability to produce for the fashion market was made. On the other hand Fakenham Enterprises did have a large potential of goodwill, e.g. from some Co-operative Societies and trade unions. Some resources had been made available by bodies like the London Co-operative Society's Political Committee.

As part of the development strategy pursued in 1975, a designer called Misty was taken on. She had lived in Brazil but had a U.S. passport. She was supposed to be preparing designs for Fakenham Enterprises to make as their own products. She had become involved with Fakenham through a friend and said she had been working "virtually full-time" on Fakenham work in the summer and autumn of 1975. A work permit had been obtained for her through Manuela Sykes' contacts in the Labour Party. But her work had little practical relevance to the concerns of the Fakenham women. Misty felt Fakenham ought to be producing for the luxury end of the market, but had little contact with the factory, except for occasional visits. This work was not co-ordinated into any strategy for the development of the company and remained of very little use, despite the amount of work that Misty claimed to have done.

Another contact on the design side was George, from Heacham, about twenty miles away. He had spent a long time in the leather trade, and was a skilled cutter-designer, as well as having production management and training experience. He had helped Fakenham Enterprises at the time when Mr. P was manager and later became involved again, supplying patterns free of charge and helping with the production of samples. He advocated the making of medium quality leather clothes and felt that with adequate training it was quite possible to produce them at Fakenham Enterprises.

In January 1976 it was decided to investigate the possibility of Job Creation Programme (JCP) funds following the success
of a JCP application from Unit 58 Print Services Ltd., a common-ownership firm in Washington New Town and ICOM member. Whereas the Unit 58 application had been to train additional workers, the Fakenham application to JCP was to be for the setting up of a new and legally separate co-operative to develop new products. Meanwhile it was intended that Fakenham Enterprises would continue to do contract work in parallel.

From January to March 1976, I prepared an application for JCP finance for discussion within the co-operative. A first draft was sent out to interested parties in mid-February and discussions held at meetings of the work-force in February and March. By this time, as we saw above, the non-dress side had been effectively disbanded which meant that the women discussing the proposals were not those who had been, or were likely to be, involved with development work unless they became unemployed and were then taken on by the JCP scheme. Votes were taken to have differentials (but not piecework) within the scheme. This included the employment of at least one outside person on the management and administration side. An application for £38,129 was ready in March 1976.

Twenty-one jobs would be created in the new co-operative, whose founder members included workers at Fakenham Enterprises, Manuela Sykes of ICOM and George. This figure of twenty-one jobs included nine machinists, four cutters, two instructors (one for cutting and one for machining), an office worker, sales representative and two administrators. The application proposed a training scheme in production (or office) skills and in "business awareness and knowledge". The Open University project's resources would have been available for the second aspect of training, if required, and it was hoped that the scheme would give valuable research information on the establishment of small co-operatives and their training requirements. This information would then have been of use to other new co-operatives.
Manuela Sykes sent the application direct to Michael Foot, then Secretary of State for Employment. She saw the Fakenham application as part of a wider effort to obtain MSC funds for co-operatives, and asked Michael Foot to endorse the application. He passed on the application to the MSC, arguing that it would undermine the MSC's purpose if he did their job for them. He had, however, been advised that the application was likely to fall outside the JCP criterion that projects should be "work that would not otherwise be done". The application was put in the hands of the JCP.

The regional JCP official contacted the Department of Employment's Work Research Unit about the scheme. Coincidentally Professor John Beishon, the director of the action-research project, had recently started a year's study leave in the Unit to study co-operatives and the JCP official met him there. The scheme was discussed at a meeting on the 27 April and the JCP official requested further information: in particular job descriptions for the proposed employees, confirmation of local support and a structure for the supervision of any JCP funds provided. He suggested a committee of local and other figures to ensure local backing, provide advice and be a check on the spending of public funds. The structure devised in response to these concerns of JCP is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Proposed Management and Financial Structure for JCP Project.

![Diagram](image-url)
The proposed "Steering Committee" would have had three functions:

1. To be responsible for ensuring that all MSC finance was spent appropriately;

2. To be responsible for liaison between the MSC and the new co-operative;

3. Individually and collectively to be resource for the project, giving advice to project employees on the development of the new co-operative.

The proposed members included representatives of the new co-operative, the North Norfolk District Council, the Fakenham Chamber of Trade and the action-research project; Bruce (one of the Development Fund Trustees); a trade unionist from the Norfolk Manpower Committee; and Sir Arthur South a local political figure who was also involved in the fashion business. Manuela Sykes was not on the proposed list as it was felt that, as a founder member of the co-operative, she would be able to sit on it, if elected, as a representative of the employees of the new co-operative. She objected strongly to this exclusion and to the Committee as a whole, arguing that it was not legally possible to have a 'supervisory' or external body with control over an autonomous common-ownership company. This objection was legally dubious as the "Steering Committee" would not have had legal authority to intervene in the running of the new co-operative. In practice, however, it could have had a substantial influence as it ultimately controlled the JCP funds. It seems that Manuela Sykes' objections were based more on her perception that the scheme contradicted common-ownership principles than on substantive legal grounds.

The MSC felt that it was undesirable to give public money under the JCP to people for direct use by themselves. Other JCP projects approved at that time had an independent and officially recognised sponsor to act as intermediary between the JCP and those employed. The case of a new co-operative raised
particular legal and other problems not envisaged by the MSC when it established the JCP, but it wished to keep to its existing principles.

Meanwhile activity continued on several fronts. Support for the application was obtained from the NUFLAT in Norwich, the North Norfolk District Council, Fakenham Chamber of Trade and Commerce, the Norfolk Manpower Committee, Christopher Broacklebank Fowler (the local MP) and other local figures in Fakenham. Sir Arthur South and George argued that there was a potential market for leather clothes. Manuela Sykes continued her lobbying for the application and the more general principle of JCP support for co-operatives, meeting Albert Booth - who had replaced Michael Foot as Secretary of State for Employment - on 20 April. Subsequent meetings were held with John Golding, a junior minister, and Dewi Rees, the JCP director. After his meeting with Manuela Sykes, Rees decided to investigate the Fakenham application personally and ordered that no decision should be made before he had made a visit. The JCP London and South East Area 'Action Committee' had meanwhile been considering the application and at a meeting on June 16th approved it, subject to any conditions imposed by Dewi Rees.

On the same day, Rees visited Fakenham to meet the people most directly involved with the application including Alice, John Beishon and Manuela Sykes. It was clear that the proposed co-operative faced many problems. First, it was some time since the women who wanted to be involved had been working in the factory - those remaining were all employed by Mr. R. Those involved did not have the necessary management skills needed to set up a new small enterprise, so these skills would have needed to be bought in - and it was uncertain whether suitably skilled people would be willing to work in a new co-operative and could be successfully integrated into it. The production skills and equipment for making leather goods were lacking, as was adequate finance and market research. Finally, there was the overall question of the potential conflict between the objective of creating jobs and the social
objectives of a co-operative.

There was little doubt that the proposal would have been rejected if normal commercial criteria were used. However £2 million had been allocated to "workshop" projects which could plough-back revenue rather than offsetting it against JCP grants. The Fakenham application was in this category and was seen as a potential experiment in more permanent job creation by the MSC. £50,000 was allocated to the Fakenham project, but final approval - and payment of any grant - was made subject to various conditions. A detailed revised application had to be submitted by the end of August 1976, which would have to prove that the scheme was commercially viable. A further condition agreed was that employees would contribute a minimum of £5 a week as a loan to the new co-operative. This would be refundable when they left the co-operative.

Work on the drafting of the new application was begun at the Open University at the end of June. In early July, part of a revised draft was sent out. Manuela Sykes objected strongly to any proposed "Advisory" or "Steering Committee" for the project as well as to the Open University's role which she alleged to include full control of the training programme. Given the misgivings of the women at Fakenham over the proposed committee and Manuela Sykes' opposition, it was agreed that the drafting of the application should be handed over to Manuela Sykes together with the list of contracts made by the Open University project, which included those with the Industrial Training Research Unit (ITRU) of London University which is based in Cambridge.

Two members of ITRU met Alice, Manuela Sykes and a representative of the Footwear, Leather and Fur Skins Industrial Training Board on 12 August and subsequently drafted a training programme. This argued that a high degree of organisational flexibility was needed, and advocated "guided discovery learning" rather than the application of scientific management techniques.
About £2000 was needed to finance this training programme, which it was hoped would be provided by the Training Services Agency. Meanwhile, the disagreements over the role of the steering committee continued as negotiations continued with Dewi Rees and the JCP. The Fakenham women had little control over these negotiations, primarily conducted by Manuela Syles which were of great importance for their future. The revised application for a total of £50,699 was made in early August. This application was followed by discussions between Rees and Manuela Sykes, who continued to oppose the idea of an "Advisory Board" to oversee the MSC finance.

The application was revised again in mid-August, increasing the amount sought to £62,924. The whole workforce was to be taken on at the start of the project and included 24 people:

11 machinists and trainees + 1 instructor
3 cutters + 1
4 finishers
1 trainee assistant manager and quality controller
1 accountant/secretary (£3500 pa)
1 marketing manager (£3500 pa)
1 general manager (£4500 pa)

Projected sales revenue in the first year was £71,800 and was projected after 12 months. However around the 4th month there was a £11,000 deficit for which finance had to be found. The proposed products were in the "middle range of the market" for leather clothes, as well as other simpler goods such as belts to be produced during training and to offset seasonal variations in the clothing market. The high quality goods originally proposed by Manuela Sykes were now only a "goal for the future". Rather than an "Advisory Committee", it was proposed that the MSC should nominate three members of the Co-operative's 'committee of management' - an arrangement which appeared to contradict common ownership principles at least as much as an "Advisory Committee".
These views were rejected by Rees who wrote to Alice, Manuela Sykes and John Beishon on 6 September with outline suggestions for what he now called a "Supervisory Board". This was not to be involved in the day to day running of the co-operative but would have "direct responsibility for advising the management of the Co-operative on all aspects of policy and finance. It should be directly concerned with short, medium and long term activities and should be in a position to advise the Executive staff accordingly". John Beishon was to be the MSC representative on the Board. Manuela Sykes continued to disagree with these proposals. By this time, TUC and CBI approval for the scheme had been obtained - the latter given that it would be closely scrutinised and have no effect on other employers in the area.

Manuela Sykes eventually agreed to the "Advisory Board" and to sit on it. In fact, her opposition to the idea was probably a significant factor in the MSC's extension of its originally proposed role. Now its 'outline terms of reference' were:

"The Board will not be involved in the
day-to-day running of the Co-operative.
Its role will be to keep under review all
aspects of the Co-operative's short, medium
and long-term policy and finance, and to
advise the Co-operative accordingly ...."

John Beishon was to convene the Board and the three managerial posts in the Co-operative advertised in the press and through PER. A public announcement of the grant was made in September and was well received by the local press, for example the Eastern Daily Press.

The major remaining obstacle - which was to prove fatal - was for Manuela Sykes, in consultation with Alice and others, to provide the MSC with documentary evidence that they could raise sufficient finance to cover the costs not paid by any JCP grant. Unless this evidence was provided and permission given by Dewi Rees no JCP funds were to be released.

37. ?EDP 30/3/72 (30/7/2/22).

38. ?EDP 28/3/72 (30/7/2/22).


40. ?EEEN 6/4/72 (30/7/2/25). Collections from NUFLAT members, despite the letter from the Executive, were later claimed by Janet to be £88, ref. Guardian 15/6/72.

41. Guardian 7/4/72 (30/7/2/26).

42. ?EDP 7/4/72 (30/7/2/26).

43. ?EDP 10/4/72 (30/7/2/29).

44. ?EDP 10/4/72 (30/7/2/29).

45. ?EEEN 7/4/72 (30/7/2/28) and ?EDP 11/4/72 (30/7/2/29).

46. EDP 15/4/72 (30/7/2/28).

47. ?EDP 18/4/72 and 20/4/72 (30/7/2/29).

48. Observer 7/5/72 (30/7/2/30).

49. EDP 30/5/72 (30/7/2/31).

50. Quoted in "We want to work" by Kathleen McCreery Tass Journal, Aug 1972 (30/7/2/37).


52. Observer 7/5/72.

54. Source: Analysis of (30/3/1/1 - 177).

55. Letter from IS member (30/3/1/104).

56. Guardian 15/6/72 (30/7/2/32).

57. Observer 7/5/72.

58. 30/3/1/10.

59. The possibilities of legal structures for worker-owned and controlled firms under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts were at that time not well known. Subsequent work by ICOM (the Industrial Common Ownership Movement) and others means that few prospective co-operative enterprises would consider using as complex and expensive a legal structure as Scott Bader. One common ownership firm, Michael Jones in Northampton, is at present changing over from a Scott Bader framework to one under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts. For a description of the Scott Bader and other legal frameworks see Roger Sawtell How to change to common ownership (ICOM, April 1975). This takes a slightly pessimistic view of the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts.

60. 30/2/2/8.

61. Tape 30/4.

62. EDP 30/5/72 (30/7/2/31).

63. TEDP 10/6/72 (30/7/2/32).

64. Tape 31/6-7.

65. EDP 23/6/72 (30/7/2/33).

66. D + FT 23/6/72 (30/7/2/33).
67. 30/3/3/17.

68. EDP 17 + 18/7/72 (30/7/2/34).

69. EDP 27/7/72 (30/7/2/17).

70. EDP 18/7/2/17.

71. Tape 37/10.

72. Roger Spiller to Alice 15/12/72 (30/3/3/49).

73. ibid.

74. Report to ICOM 30/7/72 (30/3/3/20).

75. Letter to Manuela Sykes 30/7/72 (30/3/3/21).

76. EDP 4/8/72 (30/7/2/38).

77. TASS Journal Aug 72 (30/7/2/37).

78. "Work in work on" Guardian 18/7/73 (30/3/5/23).

79. ibid.


81. EDP 28/10/72 (30/7/2/39).

82. Guardian 18/7/73 (30/3/5/23).

83. EDP 1/12/72 (30/7/2/39).

84. Tape 35/6.

85. Guardian 18/7/73 (30/3/5/23).
86. Libertarian Struggle Feb 1973 (30/7/2/1).

87. Tape 37/8 - 9.

88. Ref: 30/3/4/13; also "Revolution in an English shoe factory" in Democratising the Workplace (AFSC, Cambridge, Mass, n.d.).

89. The Times 23/6/73 (30/7/2/41).

90. R. Miles of Scott Bader to F.H. Arthur of Envopak 11/1/74 (30/4/6/11).

91. (30/3/3/47).

92. (30/4/6/11).

93. ibid.

94. Financial Report (25/6/73) by Mr. P (30/2/1/1&2).

95. ibid.

96. Times 23/6/73 (30/7/2/41).

97. Tape 30/2.

98. Times 23/6/73 (30/7/2/41).


100. Tape 6/1.

101. EDP 29/6/73 (30/7/2/42).

102. Brian Parkyn to Mr. P (30/4/6/1&2).

103. Guardian 18/7/73 (30/3/5/23).

104. ibid
105. Times 23/6/73 (30/7/2/41).


108. Invoices (30/2/1/10 - 43).


110. Board Minutes 29/8/73 (30/1/1/1).

111. ibid

112. Mr P Managers' Report 17/10/73 (30/2/1/3&4).

113. ibid


115. ibid


117. 30/3/4/13; also Brian Parkyn letter to Alice 27/11/73 (30/3/4/7).

118. Referred to in letter from Brian Parkyn to Alice 14/11/73 (30/3/4/5).

119. Brian Parkyn to Mr P 14/11/73 (30/3/4/6).

120. ibid

121. Brian Parkyn to Alice 14/11/73 (30/3/4/5).
122. ibid

123. Minutes of meeting 16/11/73 (30/1/1/2).


126. Tape 14/9

127. Board minutes 11/2/74 (30/1/1/3).

128. (30/3/4/13).

129. Board minutes 28/3/74 (30/1/1/5).


131. Agenda for Board 28/3/74 (30/1/1/4) No record is given in the minutes of any discussion.

132. Memo to Directors 14/5/74 (30/1/1/6 and 30/3/4/16).

133. 30/3/4/1.

134. Alice letter to Tony Benn (n.d.)

135. Department of Industry (Chemicals and Textiles Division 2) to Alice 20/3/75.


137. Guardian 13/5/75

138. Analysis of correspondence of March, April and May 1975 in Fakenham Enterprises Ltd. Files.
A 'cutter' cuts the leather and other materials needed for the product. It is a skilled job as leather skins have different elasticities in different directions, as well as some differences in colour, in particular between skins, so it is not easy to match these. A skilled cutter is also able to modify the patterns from which the product is made to give larger or smaller dimensions.

A 'finisher' does the work necessary to finish off the product after it has been machined by the 'machinist' - which is, again, a skilled job, because of the difficulty with leather as a material. A 'finisher' would therefore do things like attaching buckles and fasteners. A 'passer' inspects the products, doing any work necessary to make them saleable, e.g. cutting loose threads.

This form of division of labour is widespread in the leather and textile industries. Cutters may also be designers of products - a 'cutter-designer'.
148. Tape 3/12
149. Tape 10/2
150. Tape 34/7 - 9
151. Tape 36/4
152. Tape 28/5 - 7
153. Tape 28/9 - 10
154. Tape 10/10
155. Tape 28/5
156. Tape 28/1
157. Tape 36/6
159. Tape 20/1 & 2
161. See P 42 above.
162. See pp 5 - 6 above.
163. Tape 15/2

164. ibid

165. See p 29 above.

166. Tape 38/7

167. See the woman quoted on p 74.


169. Tape 9/1.


171. Lynn News & Advertiser 8/10/76

172. EEN 6/11/76

173. Guardian 2/8/77

174. See Martin Lockett "The Viability of Different Co-operative Organisations" in "Small Enterprise and the Inner City" (Blackfriars Settlement, 1976).

175. e.g. Serge Mallet "The New Working Class" (Spokesman, 1975).

176. Structural change in such industries may, however, be faster leading to the possibility of such situations in future. The Lucas Aerospace Shop Stewards' Combine Committee "Corporate Plan" campaign foresees such possibilities.