

## St Augustine's Centre, Halifax

### English for Life in the UK

#### Season 3 - Episode 10 - Co-operatives in the UK

June 2022

#### Mark

Hello and welcome to the podcast "**English for Life in the UK**". This podcast is produced by a group of volunteers at the St Augustine's Centre, in Halifax, Yorkshire, a charity where we support, in particular, refugees and asylum seekers. This podcast is intended for those people who want to improve their English by listening to natural conversations between native English speakers. We have tried to cover a range of subjects and, in this season, we have been interviewing a number of people with interesting jobs and experiences.

Today's episode is brought to you by Elsa, who has interviewed two people involved in co-ops - that is, co-operatives. This appeared in a previous episode and we said we would do more about it and so that's what we're doing today. And Elsa is interviewing two people involved in co-operatives which deal with whole foods. Whole foods are foods that have been processed or refined as little as possible and are free from additives or other artificial substances.

As usual, we will produce a transcript for this episode which will be available on our website in a few days' time. In this, you will find some additional footnotes to help you with some of the more technical language. So - over to Elsa.

#### *Music*

**(2 Minutes: 00 Seconds)**

#### Elsa

In this podcast, we are exploring the **Co-operative Movement in the UK**, which is part of a vast world-wide movement of around 3 million co-operatives, normally known as **co-ops**, with about 1.2 billion members.

Cooperative UK, a network that supports the thousands of co-ops, here in the UK, describes a co-op as a business or organisation that is owned and controlled by its members, to meet their shared needs. The members can be its customers, employees or workers, a local community, or suppliers, all of whom have a say in how the co-op is run. Co-ops normally offer education and training to everyone involved, so they can develop and promote the benefits of co-operation. A co-op supports the communities it works with.

Co-ops have a long history, and the modern day co-op in the UK<sup>1</sup> was founded in Rochdale, Lancashire, one of the neighbouring counties of Calderdale, in 1844, by a group known as the Rochdale Pioneers, or to give them their official name, "The Rochdale Society of Equitable

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<sup>1</sup> Elsa is referring here to The Co-operative Group, about which she gives further information, and it has provided a model for later co-ops, which may, however, vary their operational and trading arrangements by agreement between their particular members.

Pioneers". The aim of the Rochdale Pioneers was to provide an affordable alternative to the poor quality and adulterated food and provisions that were available to most ordinary people at that time, using any surplus or profit to benefit the community.

In legal terms, food adulteration is the act of intentionally reducing the quality of food offered for sale, either by the addition or substitution of inferior substances, or [by] the removal of some valuable ingredient. Today, there are strict rules in place for the supply of food in the UK, but back in 1844, this was a huge step forward towards the provision of healthy food for ordinary people.

The industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries dramatically changed the lives of many people whose livelihood<sup>2</sup> had been based on agriculture and who, by 1844, were living and working in towns and cities, usually in very poor conditions.

By 1860 there were already more than 200 co-ops in the northwest of England. Today, there are more than 7000 co-ops in the UK, with over 14 million members.

The largest co-op, known as The Co-operative Group, is one of the world's largest consumer co-operatives, owned by millions of members. They are the UK's fifth biggest food retailer<sup>3</sup>, with more than 2,500 local, convenience and medium-sized stores or shops.

In this podcast you will be hearing from two different types of consumer [worker] co-ops, based in Calderdale in West Yorkshire in the North of England.

*(Music) (5:35)*

**Elsa**

Well, today, I'm visiting Suma Wholefoods at their warehouse in Elland which is a small town in Calderdale. And I'm talking with Beau Bulman. So, hello Beau.

**Beau**

Hello, Elsa - pleased to meet you.

**Elsa**

So this podcast is exploring the co-operative movement in the UK, particularly, consumer co-ops. It would be good if you could start by telling our audience about yourself and about your co-op.

**Beau**

Sure. So ... erm ... Suma Wholefoods is a workers' co-op that was founded in 1977. So for the UK listeners: we are as old as Punk Rock. And yeah - I think it was ... was it the Queen's Silver Jubilee that year?

**Elsa**

I don't know - it could well be.

**Beau**

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<sup>2</sup> livelihood - the ability to earn a living wage and support a family

<sup>3</sup> retailer - another word for a shop or an online supplier

I think something like that. There was a jubilee of some sort, I think, that year, or thereabouts, so, that's kind of how old we are. We're one of the oldest co-ops in the UK. We were started by six people, basically delivering sacks of lentils, porridge oats, whole foods, in a van, around the Leeds area.

### **Elsa**

Goodness - how that's changed! Because when I look outside now, I can see a huge fleet of vehicles and warehouses.

### **Beau**

Absolutely. We've got a good fleet. I can't remember exactly how many wagons<sup>4</sup> we've got - but we've got a ... quite a few wagons, including some bio-gas wagons, which is a new thing for us.

### **Elsa**

As one would expect from Suma.

### **Beau**

Yes - so we're trying to lead the way, with things like that. Obviously, with recent fuel increases: running the fleet is very expensive, so - that's causing us some problems. Yeah. We've got a fantastic fleet of drivers - that's a big part of what we do: distribution - a bit like those original six people. But, of course, we have to buy the stock in, we have to sell the stuff, so we have to liaise with the customers, take orders - all that sort of thing. And we have to pick<sup>5</sup> the customers' orders in our warehouse, which is a huge part of what we do. That's the kind of bit I'm responsible for - I recruit and review our workers in the warehouse, basically, and support them.

We've got - I think - over 300 people working with us, certainly. The number fluctuates a bit as these things do - but yeah - over 300 people working with us - over 200 of which are members. And the members own the co-op, so we're not owned by **one fat cat**, one rich boss, puffing cigars and **quaffing champagne** at the expense of the workers, who are all on minimum wage. We all get paid exactly the same at Suma.

(8:18)

### **Elsa**

That absolutely fascinates me - and it absolutely works for everyone, does it?

### **Beau**

Yeah - so there's no argument about "who's getting paid more?" Or "how come I'm not getting paid as much as them?" Or anything like that, because there's no difference. So whether you've been here for five minutes or five years - or in some cases, quite a lot longer - you're going to be getting paid the exact same hourly rate.

### **Elsa**

Every job is valued equally then.

### **Beau**

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<sup>4</sup> wagons - an informal way of referring to lorries or trucks, large freight vehicles

<sup>5</sup> pick - to select the individual items in the order and bring them together in a box, or one load.

Exactly right. So - whether you're driving the wagons, picking the orders in the warehouse, whether you're in our management accounts team, our personnel team, our sales team - no matter what you're doing, you're getting paid the same hourly rate.

Some people may be working maybe three days a week and some may be working five days a week, so they obviously get less or more pay - but for an hour's work - everyone is paid the same, which I think is fantastic. I'm very, very proud of that.

### **Elsa**

So, tell me how you ended up here, in Suma.

### **Beau**

How did I come to Suma? So - I've been involved in some other co-ops - much smaller, much less well known co-ops than Suma. I did my shopping at one of them - which was "Single Step Wholefoods" - it's a whole food shop in Lancaster, where I used to live. And I applied for a job at Single Step Wholefoods, but didn't get it, sadly. But, I think, at the time they mentioned to me that Suma were one of their suppliers and - because Suma and Single Step had both been in the game<sup>6</sup> a long time - they're one of our major customers, as a small whole food shop, so we deliver to them - and so, I thought to myself - "well, why not?" And I applied to Suma and I think it took me three goes, and I got in, in the end. I really tried. It was quite tough process because actually a lot of people want to work here, so it is quite competitive, because it's such a good job.

And because it's not just a job - it's co--ownership of the co-op - instead of having no boss: in a way, we are all bosses. There isn't anyone cracking the whip or as I say quaffing champagne, with the big fancy car, or whatever, we share the profits of our good work. So a lot of people want in on that<sup>7</sup>. So a lot of people apply - so it's really hard for me to get in .... I got in! Kind of my first proper job really - I've been a gardener, I've been a stay-at-home dad, bringing up my daughter for quite a while - I've done lots of other, kind of small, bitty<sup>8</sup> jobs. I've done a couple of degrees. I've been involved in environmental activism, as well. But yeah - Suma was my first kind of proper job. And I haven't wanted to leave. I can't envisage leaving actually. Because it's such a wonderful place to work. It's so unique - there's not a lot of places like it, I'd say.

(11:02)

### **Elsa**

No - I can appreciate that. So, what sorts of products do you sell?

### **Beau**

Well I've given you a couple of things to try - what's that? Some vegan<sup>9</sup> crisps and some dairy-free, vegan "eggs" as well - that we haven't sold from Easter, I think, there. That's a very small sample - that's probably the 'naughtier' end of our products: slightly healthier side, but the big part of what we sell is whole foods and it's big quantities. So we sell a lot of sacks - 25 kilo sacks - the big ones. We sell lots of tins - and things like oils, vinegars, cooking materials really. A lot of what we call

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<sup>6</sup> had been in the game = were working in this sector of retailing, had been established ...

<sup>7</sup> want in on that - want to be part of it; can see the advantages of the arrangements;

<sup>8</sup> small bitty jobs - casual, or non-career jobs - perhaps short-term or part-time jobs

<sup>9</sup> vegan - plant-based food avoiding all animal derived foods including milk, eggs and honey.

whole foods - that is just the thing, no additives, nothing else. They'll be sacks of black beans, or we sell speckled lentils, for example, or that kind of thing.

We do bag down stuff - so in much smaller quantities - so what a shop would buy: like six - a box with six, sort of, smaller bags in it. So lots of different quantities, a lot of different sizes, depending on the customer. Primarily though: whole foods, so organic produce<sup>10</sup>, vegan or vegetarian<sup>11</sup> produce. We are a vegetarian wholesaler - absolutely everything we sell is vegetarian and a large amount is also vegan, which is great and we sell a lot of like gluten-free products, things like that - healthy, health foods.

(12:40)

**Elsa**

You sell a lot of "Fair Trade"<sup>12</sup> products as well.

**Beau**

Absolutely - lots of fair trade stuff, lots of organic stuff - so we tick a lot of boxes - and in our catalogue, each product ... it lists which of those boxes it ticks: so it might be fair trade, organic, vegan, you know - you can see in our catalogue which it is, so obviously that is really useful for our customers.

**Elsa**

So do you sell across the whole of the UK? Or just in Yorkshire?

**Beau**

Oh no! Absolutely. Suma was set up in Yorkshire in 1977 and at the time it was definitely regional. It was those few people with a small van, going round the local area. From that, 40 plus years later, we are international, in fact, though Brexit hasn't helped matters much, I'm sad to say, in the international market.

We're definitely national - we sell all around the UK, including the north of Scotland and both parts of Ireland. Yeah. Definitely [we] do sell all about the place. As I say, export[ing] has been slightly hampered by our ...by Brexit, unfortunately.

**Elsa**

Yeah [yes] - that's a sad development for anyone involved in food exporting.

**Beau**

Yes - it is really, really is, very hard for getting food in and out, actually. So, even bringing stuff in has been more difficult for us, which obviously can drive prices up. Can mean that some of our stuff is not available, or not as available, so that is causing a bit of fun for us at the moment.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> organic produce - farming systems which avoid using artificially-made fertilisers, pesticides and livestock feed additives

<sup>11</sup> vegetarian - choosing not to eat meat or fish and possibly other animal products, for moral, religious or health reasons

<sup>12</sup> Fair Trade - observing local ethical standards of pay and conditions to ensure everyone in the production chain is treated fairly

<sup>13</sup> a bit of fun for us - this is used ironically, it is the opposite that is intended.

**Elsa**

At this time, as we're recording this - the world's experiencing many challenges, in the supply of food - there's climate change, now the war in Ukraine, food prices are increasing dramatically - especially for people on a low income. How is that impacting on your business?

**Beau**

Erm ... I mean, it does obviously affect sales - people are buying less, currently. That isn't unique to Suma - they're buying less, everywhere. I imagine you're buying less - I certainly am, sadly. I'm having to get less stuff because I'm paying more for what I am getting.

**Elsa**

And we have to think about what we're spending. There's so much increasing in price.

**Beau**

It's difficult to us, as a consumer. And, of course, bear in mind, Suma's customers are retailers, rather than the end consumer - as a consumer, you're going to be thinking about is something ethical? Is it ethically sourced? Is it going to be fair trade? Or Organic? Is it healthy? But you're also going to be thinking well, is it cheap? Because, actually, budgets are tight, at the moment. What's frustrating now, of course, is that some very large corporations are still making a lot of money.

So, like the energy companies are still posting<sup>14</sup> big profits whilst the working people and the people who are a bit more harder up, are struggling ... I do think that's a shame. Sorry - I have wandered slightly off topic.

**Elsa**

No - it picks up what I'm going to say now. It's a sad reflection of the inequality of our society in the UK: that in 2022, food poverty is becoming a growing problem for many, many people. How are you addressing this as a organisation that prides itself on its social and ethical outlook?

**Beau**

I'd say there's two parts to that. So, one is actually that ... although it might not seem like it - because whole foods - pulses, big bags of rice and stuff - it might not be that cheap when you're buying them - if you are savvy, you can get quite a lot of meals out of those things.

(16:23)

**Elsa**

You say "savvy" - for our non-English speaking audience can you explain what 'savvy'<sup>15</sup> would mean, in the context of buying food?

**Beau**

Absolutely - I guess sort of - if you are .... how would I describe it? ... Maybe if you are organised, you plan in advance, if you are someone that likes to find a good deal - or to be .... if you plan out

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<sup>14</sup>posting = reporting, confirming their performance, over the past year or trading period

<sup>15</sup> savvy - an abbreviation of the French "*savoir faire*" - previously used in English, but more usually now, perhaps, would be replaced by "know-how"

what you are going to eat, and how you are going to do it. Yeah, basically it's about ... If you are buying in bulk, if you've got the luxury - and I do totally understand, that people on lower incomes sometimes won't have the luxury to buy in bulk, but if you are able to get big quantities of some things, then obviously you can make those things go quite a long way. So, for example, with erm ... if you get a big bag of lentils - and just with some onions and just a few spices, a bit of rice - you can make a lovely daal - really healthy, no sort of additives, not loads of fat, or anything like that - totally vegan - and good for you, good for the planet and even good for your pocket,<sup>16</sup> actually.

But I totally understand that that presupposes you know how to cook it, and that you've got the money in the first place, to buy in bulk. But I mean - talking from my own experience here as a student and I was on benefits<sup>17</sup>, unfortunately, for quite a while, before I came to Suma. I was struggling to find work. I was pretty poor, pretty hard up. I used to go to that whole food shop - Single Step, that I talked about before, one of our great customers - and I used to buy just bags of lentils. In fact - it was loose lentils - you go to a hopper<sup>18</sup>, you fill up your bag and take your lentils home and - I'm not going to lie - I did get a bit fed up of eating daal five nights in a row and stuff like that, but - it got me through some of those times when I had a lot less money.

But the other thing that I was going to say about that is: that we try our best to make sure nothing goes in the bin here. So if something is short-dated - if something is coming to the end of its life - we actually can't sell it anymore, we will try our best to ensure that gets donated to people who need it more.

### **Elsa**

So - perhaps explain to people who perhaps don't understand what we call "shelf life". Dates on packaging - most packaged food does have a date on it.

### **Beau**

Absolutely - a lot of our products being dried whole foods: things like your lentils and your rice - stuff like that - they probably have ... it's a long time before they're going to go off - they're going to go bad, or not be edible - but obviously, fresher stuff - say, some of our chilled products - obviously, they do spoil quite quickly and certain ambient products - something like eggs maybe - after three weeks you probably couldn't eat an egg - so, before it gets to that point - before it gets to the point where it actually goes bad - we will get that product to, maybe, a food bank, or some of the other organisations. I can tell you a little bit about if you are interested - but we really try our best basically, to get our food to somebody who is going to use it, for nothing - we give it away, basically. We don't want to see anything to go in the bin.

(19:45)

### **Elsa**

This podcast is being created by St Augustine's Refugee Centre in Halifax.  
St Augustine's Centre - I think you do provide food for our kitchen.

### **Beau**

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<sup>16</sup> good for your pocket - economical, good value for money

<sup>17</sup> benefits - government social security payments for people out of work or unable to sustain a family on small wages.

<sup>18</sup> hopper - large container from which smaller quantities are easily dispensed

Ah - brilliant! I wasn't aware of that myself, actually - you're not on the list - but I'm really glad to hear that - I've got quite a list of places we do give to. There's a hospice - we donate food to them. We donate to our local food bank, as well, in Elland, as well, but also one in the Holme Valley. We give to a place called "Focus for Hope". We give quite a lot to something called "Surplus to Purpose" - they used to be called the "Real Junk Food Project" - they're now called "Surplus to Purpose" and again, like food banks, they redistribute the food to the people who need it most and the families that are struggling.

### **Elsa**

There are some great organisations in this area.

### **Beau**

There's loads - you know - I don't want to put a downer<sup>19</sup> on things - it is such a shame that there is a need for so many of these organisations. In the twenty-first century, in a developed economy, in a very wealthy country, I think it's absolutely obscene actually, that there are so many people that are forced to rely on food banks. I think it is a real shame - Suma is doing what ever we can. In a wealthy economy, like you touched on, before - it's devastating - you've got multi-millionaires - you've got enormous companies posting brilliant profits to the shareholders - some people are rich and doing really well and other people have got nothing and having to go to food banks. Well, I'm really glad we've been able to support those food banks, but I'm also sad that they exist in the first place, frankly.

### **Elsa**

I think a lot of people feel like that but it's great that you're doing it.

### **Beau**

Well - it's what we can [do] - you know - we should all do what we can whether as Companies or as individuals, I think. I also think that it's important that we don't just support people from England - we should support people from other parts of the world as well - one of the places that we donate to is PAFRAS - Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

I'm really really proud that we're able to give to people who have come from other parts of the world - often from countries where things are really hard. They've maybe fled to England - I'm proud first of all that they're able to find a place, and a home in England, and I'm proud, secondly, that Suma is able to do a tiny bit to give to those people.

### **Elsa**

Well, St Augustine's - that is exactly the work that we do...- I think Calderdale and the people of Calderdale make a fantastic contribution to making people feel welcome and at home. And ... on that note, I'd like to thank you for spending the time now for talking about this very unusual organisation.

### **Beau**

Well - it's different but it's good different - not having those shareholders - it means if we do well, we do well together.

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<sup>19</sup> downer - make the tone of the conversation sad, by concentrating on negative aspects of the economic situation



**Elsa**

You'd get a bonus, for example?

**Beau**

If things go really well, we could get a bonus, hence we could get a share out of the profit - but equally - if things aren't going so well - we come together. We club together - it's in all of our interests then - we pull together, we turn things around and that community spirit, that team spirit, I think that's what co-operatives were originally founded on, actually - the Rochdale Pioneers - back in the 1800's - founded the whole movement on those same principles of solidarity, of comradeship, of people looking out for each other, of workers working together, to better their own positions - not to make *fat cats* richer, not to make shareholders wealthier, but just to make a good wage for themselves and that's what we're still doing, 150 years later - or more - and I'm really proud of that, and I'm proud of Suma and that's what we're doing.

**Elsa**

Thank you so much, Beau.

**(Music) (23:55)**

**Elsa**

Earlier we met with Suma Wholefoods, who explained about their co-operative and how they operate - and now, I'm delighted to be talking to Chris Greaves who is a member of a much smaller co-operative in the market town of Hebden Bridge, in Calderdale. So hello, Chris. So tell me - tell us about your co-op.

**Chris**

I work with Valley Organics which is a workers' co-operative, in the middle of Hebden Bridge. We're a retail outlet - we sell whole foods, fresh fruit and veg, and we pack our own veg boxes<sup>20</sup> and distribute them around the valley. We employ around twenty people, mostly - across the operation, really - some in the shop, some packing veg boxes, some driving - so it's behind the scenes, as well.

**Elsa**

That's great. Suma explained that in their co-op, everybody has the same wage. Is that how it works with you, as well?

**Chris**

Yeah - we're all on the same wage - we aspire to pay the real living wage<sup>21</sup>, but unfortunately, we're currently struggling to pay the actual minimum wage<sup>22</sup>, but hopefully, if we can continue doing well, we'll be able to increase the pay for everyone.

**Elsa**

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<sup>20</sup> veg boxes - customers can order a delivery of fresh vegetables for a standard price; the veg will be those which are in season and may vary, depending on what is available.

<sup>21</sup> a standard of pay suggested as appropriate for modern living, according to the Living Wage Foundation - see [www.reallivingwage.org.uk](http://www.reallivingwage.org.uk).

<sup>22</sup> a standard of pay declared the legal minimum companies can pay, stated as a rate per hour.

That sounds good. This is a difficult time - food prices are increasing, fuel prices are increasing, on everything you do.

**Chris**

We are seeing prices go up every week - we see about 10, 5% or 10% of our products - they go up 10 - 15%: big leaps. We don't normally see that. It's normally small steps but they're taking big steps, in the prices, soon it will be across the range.

**Elsa**

And how are you .... how is that impacting on your customers? Are they using less or are they buying cheaper?

**Chris**

So far - it's been OK - but we do think people will start ramping back<sup>23</sup>, as the crisis deepens and prices continue to go up. We do worry about that. We support a lot of local vegetable growers, as well; we give a price preference to local growers, so that we can stock their fruit and veg in our shop and they're very much on the bread line, because they're working below minimum wage, to provide local veg.

**Elsa**

Can you just explain to our listeners what the minimum wage is please?

**Chris**

Minimum wage is £9.50 an hour, for an adult.

**Elsa**

And that's set by the government?

**Chris**

By the government - yes. And then there's a thing called the "real living wage" which is set by .... I don't know - an association or a group - and they currently say that should be £9.90 per hour, which is what we'd love to pay.

**Elsa**

So when you stock a product in your shop, what criteria do you use to decide that it's right for your co-op?

**Chris**

We are looking for products that are, ideally, organic, ethical and local. Obviously, we can't always meet all those criteria - so where possible we get local veg or other products. Where possible, we get organic. We never compromise on ethical. If it's not organic or local, it definitely has to be as ethical as it can be.

**Elsa**

How do you define ethical?

**Chris**

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<sup>23</sup> 'ramping back' is not commonly used but here means reducing, cutting back significantly.

Well - that's a very difficult question! We've had many arguments about that in the co-op. For example, three years ago, before I joined, the co-op actually got rid of all meat, except for some wild-caught fish and obviously, it's the choice of the people in the co-op, at the time. We're a collective and we make decisions collectively, and we decide on that, collectively.

**Elsa**

And how do people join your co-op?

(27:57)

**Chris**

Get a job with us - you get a job with us and you work more than ... if you end up working more than 16 hours a week, you can become a member.

**Elsa**

What does this mean for you, personally? - working with such an interesting organisation?

**Chris**

Well - I've always wanted to work for an ethical organisation and, so for me it's absolutely fantastic - I think co-ops are, hopefully, going to take over the world, one day.

**Elsa**

That's a thing I would like to see happen. We're getting there but slowly, I think - but ..

**Chris**

I hope so. I think .... the good thing about co-ops is that they empower people. At the end of the day - it's the people, the people, the people that really matter. Hopefully, we'll get to a point where we can overcome all the vested interests<sup>24</sup> in the world that make life difficult for people.

**Elsa**

Hebden Bridge has always had a tradition of co-operation, and co-operatives, even in its textile mills, as well as retail co-ops, that people are familiar with. We're standing here, by the river in Hebden Bridge. Our listeners can hopefully hear the lovely River Calder, flowing through and it's a great place to work and to live, isn't it?

**Chris**

Oh, it's gorgeous - it's got a wonderful heritage and it's got a very live [lively] culture. Basically - it's people wanting to be free and creative, I would say.

**Elsa**

It's always a good place to be, isn't it?

**Chris**

Oh it is.

**Elsa**

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<sup>24</sup> vested interests - powerful economic and political forces working, out of sight, for their own advantage.

Well - this has been great and given us an insight into a different side of the co-operative movement and I appreciate you spending time in what, I'm sure, is a very busy morning for you, as you start your working day.

**Chris**

Thank you very much - I've enjoyed it too.

**(Music) (30:04)**

**Mark**

**Language Support**

This is the part of the podcast where I choose some words or phrases from the episode and talk about them.

A short one, this week - I'm just going to choose one particular sentence which Beau used, when Elsa was interviewing him about Suma Wholefoods and he was contrasting their co-operative organisation, where everybody has a share in owning the company, and also all get paid the same amount.

And he said 'we're not owned by one **fat cat**, puffing cigars and quaffing champagne'. Later in the episode he again referred back to "**fat cats**".

So this idea actually was first used in America, in the 1920's, to describe those very rich and privileged people who were making a lot of money out of a company, whilst their workers were being paid small amounts, very small amounts, of money. So Beau was making the contrast between the co-operative principle and values where people are treated equally, and the idea of "**fat cats**".

And, literally, it comes from the idea of a cat that has become grossly overweight, by eating far too much - by indulging themselves and '**to quaff champagne**' simply means 'drinking champagne', but it gives the idea of drinking it to excess, and doing it for the sake of the image of drinking champagne. We'll find an image for you in the transcript, of a cartoon that was quite commonly used about the idea of a 'fat cat'.

OK - I hope that was helpful - just a short one today. That's it for this episode.

We are in the summer period - some of us are taking holidays at the moment so there is a bit more of a gap between episodes, but we will be back again, fairly soon. Meanwhile, if you want to find more about our work and also to get hold of the transcript for this and all our other episodes, then do go to our website -

[www.staugustinescentrehalifax.org.uk](http://www.staugustinescentrehalifax.org.uk)

And in that address the "saint" is abbreviated to "st".

Thanks very much for listening - take care of yourselves.

**Music (33:22)**

Ends