

Acknowledgements

The origins of this book project have deep roots. Both sets of my grandparents who lived and worked in rural Ireland were members of the local co-op creamery. Family stories and memories frequently coalesced around the site of the co-op and therefore this project was gestating for a long time. In particular I remember the strong attachment that my grandfather John Durkin had to the co-op and the stories he told me as a child awoke my interest in history. Growing up in Manchester meant that I was aware of the co-operative movement from the consumer's side of the equation as well as that city's role in shaping the modern co-operative movement. A desire to link my Irish upbringing to my Mancunian surroundings led to my initial interest and eventual fascination with co-operative ideas and institutions, and the ways in which they connected people.

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