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CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Prime Minister's meeting with Terry Lewis MP.

PRIME MINISTER

August 1986

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
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File NFJ

Meeting record.

SUBJECT cc MASTER

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

23 September 1986

From the Private Secretary

Terry Lewis, M.P., met the Prime Minister this afternoon to discuss the closure of Walkden Workshops. David Hunt was also present.

Mr Lewis had two concerns. The first was the closure itself which he claimed had been implemented too quickly and would have an adverse effect on the economy of the area. Secondly he was unhappy that skilled men at Walkden were being offered voluntary redundancies when he, and the NUM, felt that their skills could be redeployed in the Lancashire area at various coal-faces, with redundancies being offered to those he said the NUM described as the "sick, lame or lazy".

The Prime Minister explained that the smaller number of more efficient pits now being worked required less workshops and two were therefore being closed. She fully appreciated the concerns of the workforce during a period of uncertainty, but understood that the reasons for the closure had been discussed with and accepted by the men. She understood that of the 250 men involved 78 had been offered jobs elsewhere (this figure did not come from your briefing) and that they were generally quite content with the transfer allowances on offer. A substantial number had accepted voluntary redundancy and about 100 were using part of their redundancy money to set up small businesses.

Mr Lewis seemed generally content with the reasons for the closure and accepted that it was proceeding. But he queried the figures and claimed that only 15 people were setting up in business by themselves. Mr Hunt explained that this was not right. The 15 people to which Mr Lewis referred were all involved in just one business, but there were many others and 100 was about right. He also explained that all the workforce had received individual counselling and did understand and accept the rationalisation.

CB

The meeting was generally relaxed. Mr Lewis did, however, say that he would be watching the figures of staff taking the various routes very carefully and I should be grateful if you could let me know if there are any significant changes.

P.A. Bearpark

Mrs Judith Harris,
Department of Energy.

MR BEARPARK

Could you include the attached papers for the Prime Minister to see with the briefing you provide for her meeting with Mr Terry Lewis MP tomorrow?

S.

STEPHEN SHERBOURNE
22.9.86

PRIME MINISTER

Terry Lewis, M.P. is to see you tomorrow to discuss the closure of Walkden Workshops. David Hunt will also be present.

Mr. Lewis's letter requesting the meeting is at Flag A; a note from Stephen Sherbourne at Flag B reports the views of the Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate which are in essence that Mr. Lewis has over-reacted in that there will be no compulsory redundancies and most of the ones affected are quite content.

The Department's brief is at Flag C. It bears out the view that the closure is sensible and that there will be no compulsory redundancies.

You may wish to take the line that

- a matter for British Coal and Unions
- closure taking place after careful review
- no compulsory redundancies
- workforce understand position, taking advantage of new opportunities

PAB

P.A. BEARPARK
22 September 1986

BM2AVF

CC B/UP

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PARLIAMENTARY UNDER
SECRETARY OF STATE

Mrs Caroline Ryder
Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

22 September 1986

Dear Mrs Ryder

As requested in your letter of 3 September to Judith Bennington, I attach briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting tomorrow afternoon with Terry Lewis MP on the closure of Walkden Workshops. Mr Hunt will attend the meeting, which I understand has been re-scheduled to 4.15 pm.

Yours sincerely

Judith Harris

MRS JUDITH HARRIS
Private Secretary

Reference C 202/213/11

PS/PUSS (MR HUNT)

cc PS/Secretary of State
Mr Manley
Mr Buckley
Ms Beaton or
Mr Munn

WALKDEN WORKSHOPS: PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH TERRY LEWIS MP

PUSSOM H364/86 of 4 September asked for briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting tomorrow afternoon with Terry Lewis MP on the closure of Walkden Workshops. Mr Hunt is also to attend the meeting.

2. I attach a line to take and background note for both the Prime Minister and Mr Hunt, together with background papers comprising:

i. reorganisation of national workshops facilities

ii. copies of correspondence between Mr Lewis and the Chairman

iii. letter from Director if Industrial Relations to Mr Heathfield, NUM General Secretary, setting out the reasons for closure

iv. copy of special workshops edition of Coal News.

J E Pringle

J E PRINGLE
Coal 2c
Room 1283
Extn 3203

22 September 1986

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH TERRY LEWIS MP
CLOSURE OF WALKDEN WORKSHOPS

Line to take

1 The future of individual units is a matter for the management of British Coal in consultation with the appropriate mining unions.

2 The reasons for the closure of Walkden have been fully accepted by the workforce, and the closure programme is well in hand.

3 The reorganisation of the national workshops reflects the reduction in the number of operational coalfaces, their location, improved equipment design and efficiency, and present levels of coal demand.

4 There will be no compulsory redundancies; transfers with full benefits to a long life workshop in Yorkshire or the Midlands or voluntary redundancy on generous RMPS terms, are available. Retraining will be provided where necessary.

Background

After a recent comprehensive review of workshops capacity and workload, British Coal have decided to close two of the thirteen national workshops. The review took into account:

i The substantial reduction in the number of producing pits and operational coalfaces

ii the increasing use of improved heavy duty equipment (with a consequential reduction in maintenance requirements)

iii the decrease in oil prices leading to reduced coal demand (and a need for the industry to ensure that it remain competitive)

iv the location of the various workshops, and their operating efficiency.

CCB/MP

Prime Minister.

These are the latest figures.

2. As a result, two workshops, Walkden in Greater Manchester and Ansley, Warwickshire, are to close. There will be total annual savings to British Coal on overheads of £3.5m (Walkden £1.7m).

3. Work at Walkden will cease on 15 November though some salvage work will continue. The workforce (254 employees) will have the option of transferring with full relocation benefits to a long-life workshops in Yorkshire or the Midlands, or of taking voluntary redundancy on RMPS terms (which can provide a maximum lump sum of £33,000 for a 49 year old with 33 years service). There will be no compulsory redundancies. Retraining is also available where necessary.

4. At 22 September the workforce position was as follows:

212 have opted for voluntary redundancy

212 = <

113 have already left the industry

99 will leave on dates to be decided (some will be retained beyond 15 November to carry out salvage work)

42 have opted for transfer

29 to Swadlincote workshops, Burton-on-Trent

8 to Trentham workshops, Stoke-on-Trent

3 to Duckmanton workshops, Chesterfield

2 to local collieries.

5. The Board's job creation subsidiary, British Coal Enterprise Ltd, is already active in the area. Some of those taking voluntary redundancy have decided to form their own company to continue to undertake some of the work that the National Workshops will no longer do. Three individuals from Walkden have approached the company with business propositions, and their applications are in the early stages of consideration. The company is also looking at job creation opportunities in concert with local authorities.

6. Up to the end of August the company had assisted in the creation of 1,164 jobs opportunities in British Coal's Western Area.

Coal Division
Department of Energy
22 September 1986

2 As a result, two workshops, Walkden in Greater Manchester and Ansley, Warwickshire, are to close. There will be total annual savings to British Coal on overheads of £3.5m (Walkden £1.7m).

3 Work at Walkden will cease on 15 November, though some salvage work will continue. The workforce (256 employees) will have the option of transferring with full relocation benefits to a long-life workshops in Yorkshire or the Midlands, or of taking voluntary redundancy on RMPS terms (which can provide a maximum lump sum of £33,000 for a 49 year old with 33 years service). There will be no compulsory redundancies. Retraining is also available where necessary.

4 At 4 September the workforce position was as follows:

184 had accepted voluntary redundancy

40 had accepted transfer to other workshops

18 had not yet been interviewed due to absence

10 had transfers to local collieries

4 were undecided.

5 The Board's job creation subsidiary, British Coal Enterprise Ltd, is already active in the area. Some of those taking voluntary redundancy have decided to form their own company to continue to undertake some of the work that the National Workshops will no longer do. Three individuals from Walkden have approached the company with business propositions, and their applications are in the early stages of consideration. The company is also looking at job creation opportunities in concert with local authorities.

6. Up to the end of August the company had assisted in the creation of 1,164 jobs opportunities in British Coal's Western Area.

Coal Division
Department of Energy
22 September 1986

BRITISH COAL

Technical Directorate

Reorganisation of Workshop Facilities

Further to the reorganisation of Workshops carried out during 1985, the Board have recently carried out a comprehensive revenue of its workshops capacity in the light of the present size of the industry following the substantial reduction in the number of collieries and coalfaces, and the accelerating trend in the use of Heavy Duty Equipment.

Additionally the current low price of oil has presented management with the challenge to reduce costs and ensure that its products remains competitive.

Investigations have shown that the thirteen National Workshops are not making the most effective use of their equipment and floor space, and that the existing workloads can be accommodated on to fewer sites with a consequential reduction in overhead costs.

In this light the Board have critically examined all of its Workshop facilities including access and geographical location, condition of buildings, site and physical assets, fixed overheads, practicality of shift working and proximity and service from Central Stores.

When considering these factors, compared to other Workshops, Walkden has a low workshops capability.

The Board propose to cease operations on the Walkden Workshops site with an annual saving of £1.7 million in overheads. All employees will be offered the choice of a transfer with full benefits to a long life Workshops of their choice in Yorkshire or the Midlands.

Voluntary redundancy on the terms currently available.

The workloads undertaken at Walkden will be redistributed between the remaining National Workshops.

Mindful that the existing RMPS redundancy terms will cease in March 1987, we intend to counsel employees immediately when they will be given information and every assistance to enable them to make their choice.

We envisage that the closure will be completed in three months.

R J Bishop

RJB/DB/320,3[90]
30 June 1986

1A

From: TERRY LEWIS, M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

18 August 1986

Sir Ian MacGregor
Chairman
British Coal
Hobart House
Grosvenor Place
LONDON
SW1X 7AE

Dear Chairman

BRITISH COAL, WALKDEN WORKSHOPS, MANCHESTER

You will be aware that the proposed closure of this facility has been announced by British Coal.

In the first instance, I regret that I had to learn of this from the local Press, when I would have thought that so serious a matter would have merited some indication to me as the local MP from British Coal. A letter to me on the day the closure decision was communicated to the workforce, was the least I expected.

Notwithstanding, I also believe that there are grounds for some discussion even at this late stage. I cannot believe in present circumstances, that there is a proven case for the closure of this facility. Given the affect of it on the local economy [British Coal Workshops, Walkden, being a major employer], it would be remiss of me not to seek to persuade you to recind this decision.

I would also like to remind you that throughout the recent coal dispute the majority of the workforce at Walkden kept operations going, and the Yard stayed open. I hope you will agree that such loyalty ought not to be rewarded by making those same people redundant.

I would be grateful if you would agree to a meeting on this important matter, either here in Manchester or in London; I look forward to hearing from you, in due course.

Yours sincerely

Terry Lewis

TERRY LEWIS, MP
Worsley

15th September, 1986

Our Ref: MP 86/176

Mr. Terry Lewis, MP
House of Commons,
London, SW1A OAA.

Thank you for your recent letter address to my predecessor. I apologise for the misunderstanding which resulted in you not being notified of the Board's decision to close this Workshops. The decision was communicated erroneously to your Parliamentary colleague, Mr. L. Cunliffe, by letter dated 13th August, the day of the announcement.

As you will nc doubt appreciate, British Coal is faced with the challenging task of maintaining its place in an extremely competitive energy market, whilst at the same time, achieving financial viability. A central plank in our policy to meet this challenge is the elimination of high cost capacity that can make no contribution to the future well-being of the industry, and to maximise the production of low-cost coal from highly productive and efficient units. This has inevitably, led to a significant reduction in the number of operating coal faces - at continuing collieries as well as because of colliery closures. This, together with the progressive introduction of more reliable "heavy-duty" equipment, which requires less maintenance, means that our need for Workshops capacity is reduced.

We have therefore undertaken a critical examination of our National Workshops facilities looking at workloads, access, geographical location, condition of buildings, site and physical assets and fixed overheads. In these respects the Workshops at Walkden has a low workshops capability when compared with many other workshops.

Against this background our decision to close Walkden Workshops is part of a programme intended to achieve workshop-product specialisation which will contribute to overcoming the industry's difficulties and assist British coal in maintaining a viable repair activity at the 11 continuing workshops.

The closure has been accepted by the employees at Walkden and the closure programme is now well in hand.

Of the total workforce of 257, 184 have so far accepted voluntary redundancy, and I understand that some of these have, with the aid of British Coal Enterprise, decided to form their own company to continue to undertake some of the work which the National Workshops no longer intend to do. A further 40 men have so far decided to transfer to other National Workshops.

It is planned that production will cease at Walkden on November 15, 1986 by which time the majority of the manpower will have left or have been transferred. There will, however, be a small number of men on the site after this date to salvage plant and equipment.

I do appreciate your comments about the men at Walkden who worked during 1984/85, and also your concern about the possible effects of closure locally. I can assure you that we will be making every effort to ensure that those men at Walkden who wish to remain in employment with British Coal may do so by providing them with the opportunity of transferring to other jobs in the industry. Those who do not wish to do so will, of course, be able to take advantage of the generous redundancy benefits available under the Government's Redundant Mineworkers' Payments Scheme.

c.c: Mr. J. Bishop, Head of Workshops, Bretby
Mr. J. Pringle, Department of Energy (Coal Division) ✓

Our Ref: RW/DB

August 11, 1986

Mr P Heathfield

Dear Mr

As you are aware the Board carried out a comprehensive review of the Workshops Organisation during the Spring of 1985 which resulted in the creation of 13 National Workshops, the details of the reorganisation were set out in Mr Spanton's letter to you of 4 June 1985.

Since that time there have been a significant number of changes nationally.

In addition to colliery closures there has been a significant reduction in the number of operational coalfaces at continuing collieries. At the same time there has been a substantial increase in the number of heavy duty faces. These trends result in what we foresee as a further reduction in workloads available for Workshops.

Against this background and the latest adjustment in coal prices and the need to reduce costs and increase efficiency, the Board has further reviewed its requirements for National Workshops capacity taking into account space, equipment and manpower resources. They have concluded that the workloads currently undertaken at the 13 National Workshops will be concentrated on 11 sites.

We therefore propose to cease operations at Walkden and Ansley Workshops as quickly as is practical. Workshop management have invited the local and Area officials to a meeting at each Workshop on Wednesday 13 August when the full details of our intentions will be made known to them.

There will be no compulsory redundancies at either Workshops and the Board wish to transfer personnel from Walkden and Ansley to the remaining Workshops. Those wishing to leave the industry will be offerred voluntary redundancy on the terms currently available.

It is envisaged that these closures together with a reorganisation of workloads across National Workshops will progress towards workshop - product specialisation on a national scale realising the benefits of volume production and reduced overheads. With these actions we aim to provide a viable future for the remaining 11 Workshops.

The reorganisation of workloads will not result in any appreciable change in the total numbers of employees at National Workshops, the cost benefits will be with the economies of scale, and by eliminating £3.5 million from fixed overheads.

A summary of the workloads allocated to each National Workshops is appended to this letter.

In addition to local discussions with the Trade Unions, it is our intention to inform all of the employees at Walkden and Ansley of the Board's intention in a personal letter and in addition details of the Board's overall plans for National Workshops will be published in a special edition of Coal News.

Yours sincerely

K Hunt
Head of Industrial Relations

Ashington	Powered roof support assemblies/rams/legs/valves/ fabrication (N East and overflow from Duckmanton). Underground locomotives; Schwartz transporters; shuttle cars; transformers; JC miners; Dosco 'in seam' miners.
Tursdale	Fans, motors.
Allerton Bywater	Road-heading machines, gate end boxes, control units (current sources).
Shafton	Power loaders (N East; N Yorks; S Yorks).
Fence	Coal and stone loaders, cables, electronics.
Duckmanton	Powered roof support assembly (except N East; S Wales).
Moorgreen	Powered roof support rams and legs; AFC units; power pack pumps; Dosco cat engines.
Bestwood	Power loaders (Notts; Derby; S Wales) Powered roof support valves.
Swadlincote	Gate end boxes; control units; cables; fluid couplings, hydraulics.
Trentham	Power loaders (Western; S Midlands; Kent) Belt conveyor gearboxes.
Tredegar/Tredomen	Haulages; powered roof supports (S Wales) Assemble and trim power loaders. Prototypes.

The Board intends to use other sources of supply for a small amount (Approx 3%) of its current workload, mainly fabrication, diesel engines and joinery work.

COAL NEWS Workshops

Newspaper of the mining industry Special Edition August 1986

ACTION PLAN FOR WORKSHOPS NETWORK

ACTION aimed at providing a viable future for 11 national workshops — located strategically throughout the British coalfields — has been outlined to the mining trade unions.

The scheme involves:

- The closure of two of the existing 13 workshops at Walkden, near Manchester and Ansley, near Nuneaton, and
- A reorganisation of workloads across the workshops network, leading to workshop-product specialisation on a national scale, realising the benefits of volume production and reduced overheads.

The reorganisation of workloads will not result in any appreciable change in the total number of employees at national workshops. The cost benefits will be with the economies of scale and by eliminating £3.5 million from fixed overheads.

Says Head of Workshops John Bishop: "By outlining our plans for the workshops, I hope it will eliminate further speculation regarding closures and redundancy. We must continually review our operations in the light of changing circumstances, but workshop management consider that implementation of these proposals will afford improved stability for national workshops.

"It is proposed to cease operations at Walkden and Ansley workshops as quickly as is practical. There will be no compulsory redundancies, and transfers are available to continuing workshops. Retraining will be provided where necessary."

British Coal's national workshops organisation is responsible for the planned repair and overhaul of the principal items of mining machinery used by collieries. In fulfilling this function, workshops have to provide a service in an effective, timely and efficient manner, thereby minimising costs in the industry. Currently, the workshops organisation has a turnover of about £150 million a year.

The 11 workshops which will service the industry are Ashington, Tursdale, Allerton Bywater, Fence, Shafton, Duckmanton, Bestwood, Moorgreen, Swadlincote, Trentham and Tredegar/Tredomen.

The workshops action plan had been devised against the background of the current economical challenges facing the coal industry, which include

- ☐ A significant reduction in the number of operational coalfaces at continuing pits;
- ☐ The substantial increase in the number of heavy-duty faces and the impact of reduced overhauls resulting from improved equipment design;
- ☐ The oil price slump and its likely effect on coal demand

The workshops reorganisation has taken account of location, space, equipment and manpower resources in planning the new-look workshops service.

Says British Coal Technical Director Ken Moses: "I sincerely hope all the men now working with us will want to stay in the organisation and that we can put the pain of restructuring our operations behind us . . . in fact, I am looking forward to us recruiting our first new-style workshops apprentices from amongst the boys leaving school this year."

QUOTE

'THE active co-operation of everyone in the workshops organisation has enabled us to come through a difficult period of reorganisation with a clear vision of what is required of us in the years ahead.

Now that the workshops organisation has been tailored to meet the needs of an efficient coal industry, we can plan our operations with confidence. We have successfully adapted to change in the past — and for some workshops, there is again the task of tackling workloads which may be different in character.

But the way ahead for everyone is clear — and it's up to us all to make the most of the opportunites we now have.'

– JOHN BISHOP, Head of Workshops

QUOTE

'EVERY man employed in our workshops organisation has a vital role to play in helping create meaningful long-term employment for all in the coal industry.

The objective has to be to overhaul and maintain mining machinery to high standards of quality, and at costs which are less than the original equipment manufacturers'.

I am pleased to say that in the past few months, many of our shops have been doing just that.

The future clearly lies in the hands of everyone who works at the workshops.

I look forward to giving every assistance to workshops personnel in their efforts to make all our operations successful for years to come.'

– KEN MOSES, Board Member and Technical Director

INSIDE: National network at a glance • Back page: New training scheme

NATIONAL WORKSHOPS NETWORK

Ashington, Northumberland

SAYS workshop manager John Roulston

"We at Ashington will be concentrating our efforts on the mining machinery overhauls that have formed the basis of our workloads for the past 12 months.

We will continue to undertake the national requirement for underground locomotives, both diesel and battery driven. The continuing repairs to continuous miners has been extended to include the new generation machines which are now being used at collieries. We will continue to overhaul British Coal's requirements for the Dosco In-Seam Miner and Joy shuttle cars and expand our capacity to overhaul transformers to include the requirements for South Wales, which will then mean that we have another national workload.

We will continue to strive to improve the quality of our products and to reduce turnaround times and play our full part in the continuing operations of British Coal."

Tursdale, near Durham

SAYS workshop manager George Maddison

"Since 1985 we at Tursdale Workshop have been making progress towards product specialisation. We already overhaul all of the Board's requirements for auxiliary and booster fans and are providing a much improved service by reducing costs and turnaround times. The Board's future plans, which include centralising all of the repairs of electric motors — including rewinds — here, reflect the advances already made at this workshop.

With a new computer production control system now being installed to improve the planning and work flow, we are set to become the Board's major workshop for electrical repairs."

Fence, near Sheffield

SAYS workshop manager Brian Hall:

"Fence Workshop is to become the national centre for the repair of coal and stone loaders, a workload which has been undertaken at Fence for some time. Building upon the skills and experience to date will enable us to give a comprehensive service to the Board's Areas.

Together with cables and electronic repairs — a field in which Fence has been one of the forerunners — coal and stone loader repairs will mean a marginal increase in the manpower levels and ensure that we play our part in the British Coal national workshops organisation."

Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent

SAYS workshop manager Neville Langley

"Trentham Workshop will continue to do the job that we do best, namely the repair of heavy-duty power loaders for Western and South Midlands Areas. With the emphasis now on improved reliability, it is of the utmost importance that Trentham continually strive to build upon the quality standards already achieved.

The national workload for belt conveyor gearboxes and the continued development of special coalface trim items for South Midlands and Western Areas all add up to a challenging future for us at Trentham."

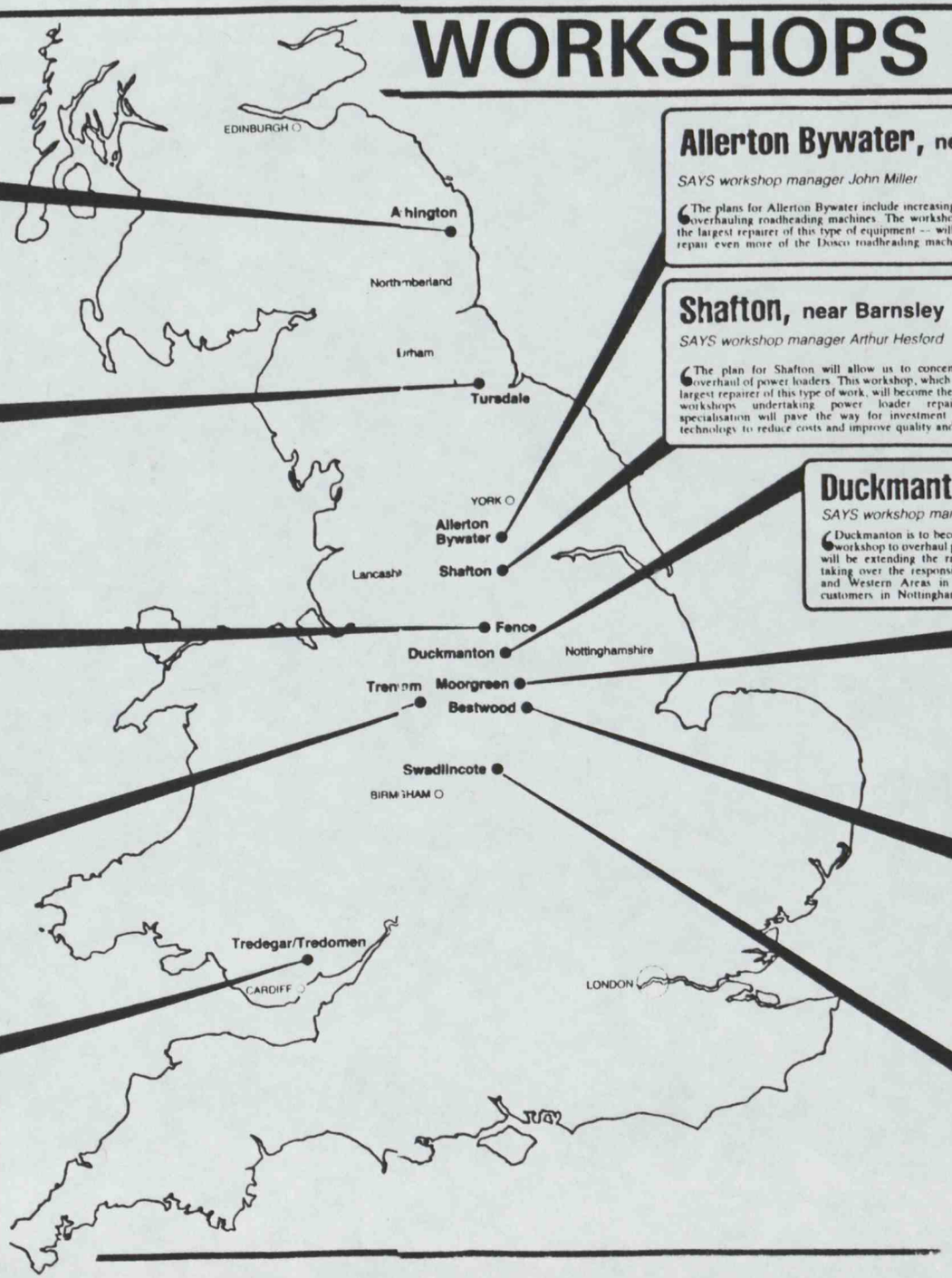
Tredegar/Tredomen, South Wales

SAYS workshop manager Barry Griffiths

"In June plans were brought forward to relocate workshops from Tredegar to Tredomen, with corresponding savings in overheads.

The planned workloads for the new Tredomen Workshop are powered roof supports for South Wales Area, assembly and trim of power loaders for South Wales Area, and the national requirement for portable haulages. In addition it is intended to set up facilities to develop repair standards and procedures for the new generation of machinery to be used in mining, which is an entirely new venture. This work was formerly done by the mining machinery manufacturers.

Unions w[illegible] the opportunity to present counter proposals at meetings in [illegible] when the Board agreed thoroughly to evaluate them and, if necessary, to seek further information. The Board's reaction will be given at further meetings in three to four weeks' time."



Allerton Bywater, near Castleford

SAYS workshop manager John Miller

"The plans for Allerton Bywater include increasing capacity for overhauling roadheading machines. The workshop — already the largest repairer of this type of equipment — will be set up to repair even more of the Dosco roadheading machines. Having overhauled over 100 machines in 1985/86 we have the experience and skills necessary to undertake this important challenge.

By concentrating all our efforts on roadheading machines and gate end box repairs with a planned increase in manpower, Allerton Bywater look all set to break our own production records."

Shafton, near Barnsley

SAYS workshop manager Arthur Hesford

"The plan for Shafton will allow us to concentrate on the overhaul of power loaders. This workshop, which is already the largest repairer of this type of work, will become the larger of two workshops undertaking power loader repairs. Product specialisation will pave the way for investment in the latest technology to reduce costs and improve quality and reliability of our products. Following the 1985 reorganisation we proved that we are able to cope with changing workloads, many of our people having undergone a significant training programme to reach the levels of output being currently achieved.

With a computerised production system being installed and certification to BS 5750 quality assurance imminent, the signs are that Shafton will become one of the cornerstones of British Coal's workshop organisation."

Duckmanton, Chesterfield

SAYS workshop manager Bill Hayes:

"Duckmanton is to become the main British Coal workshop to overhaul powered roof supports. We will be extending the range of our customers by taking over the responsibility for South Midlands and Western Areas in addition to our existing customers in Nottinghamshire, North Derbyshire and Yorkshire. The long-term plans envisage that we will become more and more self sufficient, not having to rely upon other workshops for the supply of sub-assemblies.

To enable us to fulfill this vital role, investment in the latest technology and equipment will ensure that we remain competitive and that the quality of our products are at the highest possible levels."

Moorgreen, Newthorpe, Notts

SAYS workshop manager Brian Bancroft:

"Plans for Moorgreen Workshop involve a shift in emphasis towards a much greater involvement with AFC equipment. With the exception of electric motors, Moorgreen will become the national repair centre for all AFC equipment, products which will fit neatly into the range of skills that we have available.

Power pack pumps will be a new workload for us and will form our second largest workload. Together with the repair of powered roof support legs and rams for Duckmanton, and the national requirements for Dosco Caterpillar engines, we at Moorgreen have a continuing workload well into the foreseeable future."

Bestwood, Nottingham

SAYS workshop manager David Revill:

"We at Bestwood Workshop will carry on doing the things that we have shown we can do well. Power loader repairs will form the mainstay of our workload, and with the inclusion of the power loader repairs for South Wales we will need to increase our output.

Powered roof support valves for Duckmanton Workshop are also to be increased with Bestwood being the only repair centre in the country for the latest types of Dowty Dow valves.

Following some increases in manpower, we look set to continue with our positive role in the national workshops organisation."

Swadlincote, Burton-on-Trent

SAYS workshop manager Alan Scragg:

"Newly established in our premises at Hearthcote Road — formerly part of the Swadlincote Test Site — Swadlincote Workshop is ideally placed to undertake new workloads.

With no shortage of space and excellent working conditions we will be able to take full advantage of these modern premises and equipment when undertaking our expanded workloads which include gate end boxes, control units, cables, fluid couplings and hydraulic repairs. With manpower due to rise Swadlincote is set to become one of British Coal's premier workshops."

FIRST MULTI-SKILL TRAINEES SIGN ON

*** MINING'S new four-year engineering craft apprenticeship scheme will operate like this:**

***Year 1* will be in accordance with the EITB skill and training specification — basic engineering training. Specified training will be supplemented with basic training allied to the appropriate disciplines to give maturity, a fuller understanding of the working environment and preparation for subsequent craft training. The first year of training will be wholly "off-the-job" at a college of further education.**

***Year 2* is designed to provide the mechanical fitting skills in accordance with EITB segment H501 Common Core Skills (fitting); key segment H502 hydraulic/pneumatic systems. Following satisfactory completion of the skills segments, apprentices will gain practical experience working with workshops craftsmen.**

***Year 3* is designed to provide the welding skills and will be in accordance with EITB segments D501, Common Core Skills; key segment D505, welding techniques using manual metal-arc; and associated key segments D507, welding techniques using MAGS and D537, welding inspection.**

***Year 4* is aimed at providing the electrical skills and will be in accordance with EITB segments G501, Common Core Skills; key segment G543, dismantling and inspection, electrical rotating plant; G558, panel/chassis assembly and wiring; and G560, quality control.**

Following satisfactory completion of the skills segments, apprentices will gain practical experience working with craftsmen. During this period, particular attention will be given to the flame-proof and intrinsically safe requirements as laid down in the appropriate standards applying to the mining industry.

Apprentices' new scheme

THE first batch of school-leavers to be trained as multi-purpose craftsmen of the future for British Coal's workshops organisation are to be recruited later this month.

Embracing fitting, welding and electrical skills, the 57 new recruits will become "Engineering Craft apprentices" under a scheme which caters for four-year indentured training in a range of skills, utilising the Engineering Industry Training Scheme (EITB).

The apprenticeship will normally last for four years, provided the apprentice attains the required assessed standards of the EITB module segments. Those failing to reach the desired standards will have their apprenticeship extended by periods necessary to reach these, up to a maximum of 12 months.

At the end of the apprenticeship, where it is necessary to supplement skills according to individual or workshop needs, a period of specialised training will be arranged.

During their apprenticeship the new recruits will attend a local technical college for complementary studies, taking into account apprenticeship academic requirements. These studies will normally include City and Guilds of London Institute courses, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering craft studies.

The scheme replaces the engineering craft apprenticeship scheme introduced in 1967 as applied to workshops fitters, electricians, turner machinists, blacksmiths, welders and platers.

Meeting needs

Aimed at meeting the current and future needs of the workshops organisation for engineering craftsmen — including the provision for potential supervisory engineering staff — the new scheme will apply to all national workshops.

Intake will be governed by the workshops' estimate of the number of engineering craftsmen and supervisory staff needed over the years ahead. Each apprentice will be paid the rate for age — as agreed between British Coal and the appropriate union concerned — which applies to the activity in which he is employed.

Courses

Indentures will be completed for each apprentice, and a certificate of apprenticeship will be issued on satisfactory completion.

After satisfactorily completing the craft apprenticeship craftsmen may be selected to study further at technical college, following the technicians' course in either mechanical or electrical engineering, to the Ordinary National Certificate level.

Families so happy they made move to a new life

NO regrets whatsoever . . . that's the verdict of two workshops men who moved their families lock, stock and barrel to other regions when their own shops faced closure.

Ex-merchant seaman Ian Stockdale shipped his wife Kathleen and two young sons down to Nottingham to work at the Bestwood Workshop when the coastal Whitburn site in the North East closed last year.

And fitter Philip Bithell chose to move from Lancashire to the South Midlands rather than accept redundancy when Wigan's Kirkless Workshop closed.

Made welcome

Ian, 38, now a chargehand on the final assembly line in the coal face machine shop at Nottingham's Bestwood Workshop, says: "I had a few reservations at first about moving — but not anymore. My two boys — Stephen, 15 and Simon, 13 — are doing very well at school and we've all been made very welcome."

Ian had worked at Whitburn for 11 years. He is now buying his own three-bedroomed detached house at Hucknall and cycles the three miles to work each day.

"I'm a keen cyclist and riding to work is helping me get in shape for competitive riding again," he adds.

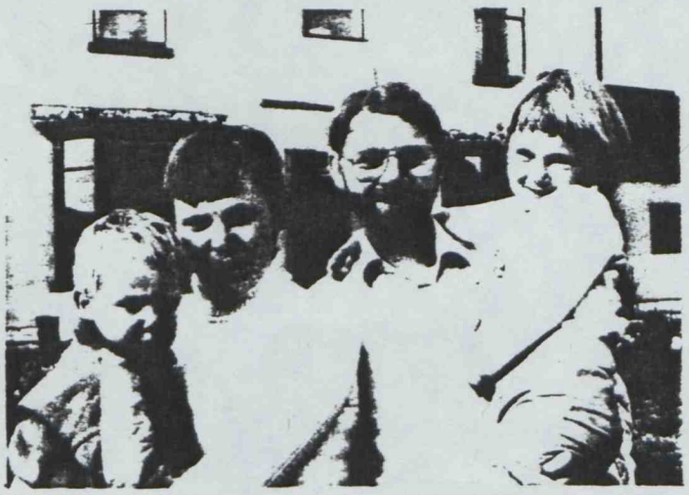
Philip had worked for 12 years at Kirkless Workshop when he was faced with the choice of voluntary redundancy, or a transfer to another workshop.

Well treated

He visited several workshops before deciding to start a new career at the Swadlincote Workshop near Burton-on-Trent. Switching jobs in September, he lived in lodgings and travelled home at weekends to see his wife Charlotte and two young children Hannah and Luke before moving into their new home at Woodville, a few miles from the workshop, in February.

Both men say they and their families were well treated by the Board during their transfer.

ABOVE: Ian Stockdale checks over the locking plate of an AB shearer's ram bracket in Bestwood Workshop's coalface machine section. Chargehand Ian has settled in at the Nottingham centre after moving his family down from Whitburn.



LEFT: Philip and Charlotte Bithel moved into their new home at Woodville with children Luke and Hannah after Philip transferred from Wigan's Kirkless Workshop to Swadlincote, Burton-on-Trent.

Plan puts men in picture

SUCCESSFUL "team briefing" techniques are to be employed at five of the national workshop locations in a bid to improve employee communications.

"This is a genuine attempt to keep employees fully aware of factors affecting our industry and is in no way intended to replace the normal consultative machinery — it's purpose is to supplement what we already have," says workshops personnel manager Robin Wilson.

The five workshops at which team briefing techniques are to be introduced are Ashington, Tursdale, Allerton Bywater, Bestwood and Moorgreen. Under the plan, managers will hold monthly briefing sessions with supervisors, who in turn brief the men on matters affecting operations.

"It's all designed to keep our people better informed of what's going on in the industry, in the workshops and at their place of work," says Mr Wilson. "The technique has worked successfully in several coalfields and other industries, and now we hope the same technique can benefit the workshops organisation and its employees."

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KL

cc David Hunt
PP

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

16 September 1986

I hope it will not cause you too much inconvenience if we change the time of your meeting with the Prime Minister on Tuesday 23 September from 1600 to 1615. If I do not hear from you, I shall assume that this will not cause you any difficulty.

CAROLINE RYDER

Terry Lewis, Esq., M.P.

AL

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

3 September 1986

Further to our telephone conversation today, I confirm that David Hunt will attend the meeting with Terry Lewis, MP, and the Prime Minister on Tuesday 23 September at 1600 hours at No. 10.

I attach Mr. Lewis' letter and will be grateful to receive your brief by close of play on Monday 22 September.

(Mrs Caroline Ryder)

Miss J.A. Bennington,
Department of Energy.

VR

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

3 September 1986

I am now writing to confirm your appointment with the Prime Minister to discuss British Coal's proposal to close the Walkden Workshops in your constituency.

The meeting will take place at 10 Downing Street at 1600 hours on Tuesday 23 September and David Hunt, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Energy, will be present.

(Mrs Caroline Ryder)

Terry Lewis, Esq., M.P.

GA

From : TERRY LEWIS, M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

23 August 1986

Ms Carolyn Ryder
Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

No prev. pss.

Carolie

When you have checked with David Hunt's office would you deal with this trip!

MHA 27/8

Dear Ms Ryder

The Prime Minister has kindly agreed to meet me at a mutually convenient time to allow me to discuss British Coal's proposal to close the Walkden Workshops in my constituency.

I have been asked by Tim Flesher to contact you regarding the arrangements.

I note that you will be returning to the office on Tuesday 26th, which is the day I leave for a holiday in the USA. In view of that fact, I would be most grateful if you could arrange for me to meet the Prime Minister anytime in the week beginning 22 September, with the exception of Thursday 25th. Failing that, it would have to be following the Conservative Party Conference in October.

I trust we will be able to agree on a mutually convenient meeting date, and look forward to hearing from you, in due course.

Yours sincerely

Terry Lewis

TERRY LEWIS, MP
Worsley

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 August 1986

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 18 August requesting a meeting to discuss the implications for your constituency of the proposed closure of Walkden Workshops. The Prime Minister would be happy to meet you at a mutually convenient moment. She would however stress that decisions of this kind are matters for the management of British Coal in which she cannot intervene. In this context she notes that you are seeking a meeting with the Chairman of British Coal.

Perhaps you would like to get in touch with Caroline Ryder here who will be in the office from 26 August onwards to arrange a time.

Tim Flesher

Terry Lewis, Esq., M.P.

MRS RYDER

Attached is self-explanatory correspondence between myself and Terry Lewis, M.P. When Mr Lewis 'phones you perhaps you could arrange a brief from Energy; and possibly arrange for David Hunt to be present.

Tim Flesher

19 August 1986

CCB/UP
1

cMA

From : TERRY LEWIS, M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

18 August 1986

R19/4

The Rt Hon Mrs M Thatcher, MP
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

Prime Minister

Agree to see Mr Lewis when Parliament returns?

But this must not hold up any N.C.B. proposals - it is a matter for them

N 19/8

Dear Prime Minister

You will recall that sometime ago, you agreed to personally receive representations from Members with major redundancies in their constituencies.

I am now in such a position with the announcement that British Coal is to close the Walkden Workshops with the loss of 258 jobs. If the current British Coal proposals cannot be averted, as I believe they can, this will be a major redundancy so far as my Worsley constituency is concerned, and because this follows other closures in my area, I am anxious to make out a case for saving the Workshops.

I have written to the Chairman of British Coal requesting a meeting at which I would want to press the case for maintaining this Workshop facility on its present site.

I cannot emphasise too strongly the effect this proposed closure will have on the local economy in my constituency, and would therefore wish to press you to receive the representations to which I have already referred.

Yours sincerely

Terry Lewis

TERRY LEWIS, MP
Worsley

Grey Scale #13

C Y M

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