

PRIME MINISTER

You may be interested to see these local press cuttings covering your visit to North Wales. They give a fair and positive account of your concerns about the Courtaulds closures, and your meeting, in particular, with the three employees from Wrexham.

Mark Addison

(Mark Addison)

9 May 1985

Sympathy for shocked textile workers

THATCHER: MY PLEDGE OVER JOBS

by Daily Post Reporter

THE Prime Minister yesterday promised to do everything possible to attract new jobs to North Wales' unemployment black-spots.

Mrs Thatcher made her pledge to a deputation of textile workers during a visit to Deeside.

More than a thousand people are to lose their jobs with the closure of Courtaulds two mills at Greenfield and Wrexham.

The Premier interrupted her tour of the £17.5 million Optical Fibres plant to meet about three of a dozen doomed Courtauld's employees who had been protesting outside the main gate.

She told them that the Government could not intervene directly in the company's closure plans—which she described as a "tremendous blow"—but promised to write to Courtaulds' chairman Sir Christopher Hogg on their behalf.

TGWU convenor at the Wrexham Acetate works, Ann McCall said they had

Comment—Page 2
Action plan—Page 3

received a sympathetic hearing.

"Mrs Thatcher said that she would get in touch with the chairman and try and help all she can. As far as we are concerned, the more pressure the better to try and get the closure decision reversed or to persuade the company to re-invest in the factory. But with Courtaulds' record, I am not optimistic," said Mrs McCall.

Mrs McCall was hurried in through tight security with TGWU chairman Mr Cliff Prendergast and shop steward, Maria Usher.

At a Press conference later Mrs Thatcher said that Government agencies would do everything within her power to bring new jobs into the area.

There was also a hint of criticism of the Courtaulds management for failing to diversify into new products because of the slump in yarn products.

Although not naming the company, she said that management at one-product factories did have a duty to their workforce to seek out and develop new products.

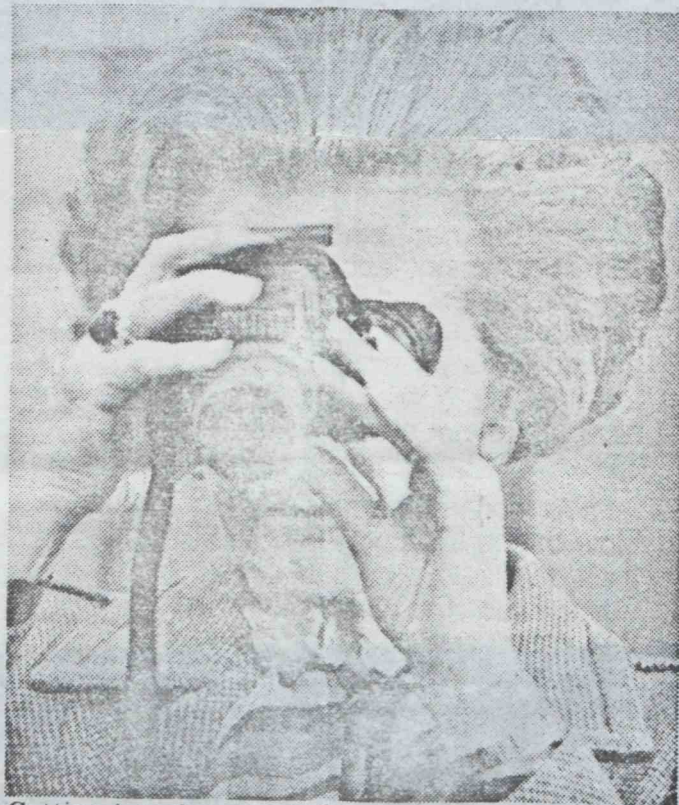
"Where you have a factory dependent upon one product, then I think management does have a duty to develop different products. Products do change. We do need new ones. It ought to be part of the work of successful management," said Mrs Thatcher.

Markets were constantly changing and firms had to adapt, she added.

"I have discussed these closures with the chairman of Courtaulds last Tuesday night and now I will be writing to him again but I cannot give any assurance that Courtaulds will stay open," she said.

Mrs Thatcher said her talks with council leaders had been one of the most constructive that she had had, and she hoped the outcome of those discussions would bring new jobs to the area.

She pledged that following the Courtaulds' announcement the Government was reviewing its priorities in the area and would look at its derelict land programme, advance factory programme and its grants to help provide small units, for which there was a great demand.



Getting into focus at Pilkingtons



The Courtaulds' deputation which met Mrs Thatcher

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SPELLING IT OUT

DAILY POST 27/4/85

MANAGEMENT of factories producing only one product had a duty to their workforces to develop new lines.

That is not a declaration from a militant trade union leader. Nor is it a part of a political speech from a Left wing member of the Labour Party.

It is, in fact, a clear statement from the Prime Minister herself during her tour of Clwyd yesterday—a tour which had the shadow of the loss of 1,100 jobs at two Courtaulds plants hanging over it.

True to style, Mrs Thatcher refused to give any hope that she would try to influence Courtaulds'—and others'—industrial strategy she said British industry had to take a fresh look at markets now being captured by imported goods.

Anxious

Mrs Thatcher, who visited some successful factories during her itinerary, took time to meet a deputation from Courtaulds' Wrexham plant and later said: "We are very anxious to do everything we can to help these people.

"We realise the tremendous blow this is to individuals and their families and the small businesses who supply them. We must do more to keep hope alive in these people's hearts."

The important thing, she said, was whether new markets could be captured. The key, however, was that the country had to "rely on there being this fundamental wish to build businesses.

Entrepreneurs, including Courtaulds, take note.



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by Steve Le
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END OF THE WEEK

IT'S outrageous — this week Van Gogh's Land-
scape with the Rising Sun...

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Hope for action plan but not jobs

by David Jones

MRS THATCHER yesterday said she could give no guarantee that the jobs of 1,100 textile workers at two threatened plants in Clwyd could be saved.

But she did give fresh hope that the Government will look sympathetically at efforts to bring in new industries to ease the county's worsening jobs crisis.

Civic leaders spent over an hour locked in discussions with Mrs Thatcher immediately after her plane touched down at Hawarden Airport yesterday morning.

A 20-page action plan drawn up in response to the textile job losses was presented to her by Clwyd Chief Executive Mr Mervyn Phillips and Council Chairman Councillor Jim Espley.

As he left the joint meeting which involved representatives from Clwyd, Delyn and Wrexham Maelor councils, Mr Phillips said the Prime Minister understood very clearly the strong sense of disappointment and anguish felt by the community at the latest job losses.

He said that while Mrs Thatcher was unable to give any assurance that the closure decision could be reversed, she would be meeting company chairman Sir

Christopher Hogg again to discuss the implications of the jobs blow.

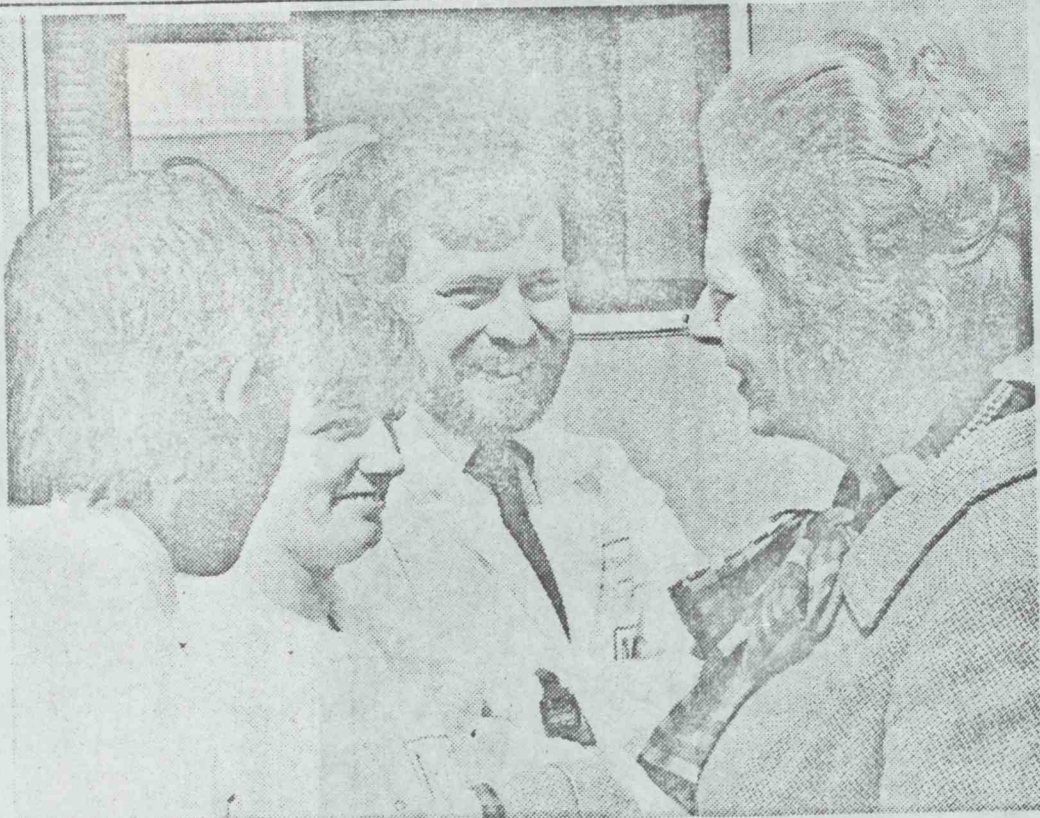
Mrs Thatcher was particularly anxious that the Welsh Office should re-examine every possible way of helping North East Wales step out of the shadow cast by the impending Courtaulds closure at Wrexham and Greenfield.

Mr Phillips added that the joint delegation had pressed for an acceleration of new road building and other schemes to give fresh impetus to Clwyd's industrial estates and help attract much-needed high technology industries.

The Courtaulds bombshell had undone many months of hard work in winning employment.

Wrexham Maelor's chief executive Mr Sydney Tongue stressed in the meeting with Mrs Thatcher that if the Courtaulds plant did close then the site should pass to the borough authority for redevelopment. He said he was confident that fresh job opportunities could quickly be provided.

Delyn's chief executive Mr John Packer, said his authority's top priority was to fight for the retention of the Greenfield plant. He said that while 595 jobs hung in the balance, if the factory closed,



Mrs Thatcher chats with some of the workers at Warwick



In discussion at Optical Fibres

Maggie's faith restored

AS A former research chemist, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher took a particular interest in developments at the Warwick International chemical factory in Mostyn.

As she unveiled a plaque to mark the start of work on the new £750,000 high technology laboratory, she said: "When one gets bad news you really need something to restore your faith in the future. I am seeing the new factories being created which will bring the new jobs, where management is keeping up to date and ahead of the latest developments and everyone feels there is a potential in the future. This is such a factory and I would like to see many many more in this area."

Dr John Middleton, managing director of Warwick International, said the new laboratory block, part of a £6 million investment over the next two years, was the company's "commitment to the future."

Warwick's 27-acre site along the Dee Estuary produces the detergent additive, T.A.E.D., which allows housewives to wash at lower temperatures.

All stop for school

DELIGHTED pupils at a Welsh village school had an unexpected visitor yesterday when the Prime Minister dropped in for a chat.

Mrs Thatcher was on her way back from lunch when she ordered her limousine to

stop at Llanfair DC near Ruthin after seeing the children waving.

She spent several minutes chatting to them and exchanging a friendly "hello" with passers-by in the quiet rural village.

'Leaders' praised



Lady of glass at Pilkington

PILKINGTON PE at St Asaph was praised by the Prime Minister yesterday for the way it was leading the world in new optical technology.

Mrs Thatcher spent 90 minutes touring the factory during which the company announced confirmation from GEC Avionics of a contract worth over £5 million.

The order is for Head Up Display optics for operational nighttime and daytime use in jet fighters in the United States.

Managing director Mr John Arbuthnott, said: "Mrs Thatcher was very pleased to see British industry not just keeping up but at the forefront of new technology."

The factory, which employs 700 in the design and manufacture of electro-optical systems for the aerospace and military market, has restricted areas which reporters and cameramen covering yesterday's visit were not allowed to see.

During her tour, Mrs Thatcher walked around the main assembly shop stopping frequently to speak to the skilled workers

● About 30 C.N.D. supporters, some from Colwyn Peace Group, demonstrated as the Prime Minister headed for a reception at the Kimmel Manor Hotel, Abergele.

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Tuesday 30th April, 10.30 am
Ceramics and Glass

Wednesday 1st May, 10.30 am
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Thursday 2nd May, 10.30 am
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