



# REVIEW

September/October 1982

Monthly Newsletter



## THE COMPANY AND THE ECONOMIC RECESSION

At the end of the first quarter of the financial year 1982-83 (the end of June), the Company's accounts showed a slight improvement. The major factors in the Company's favour were lower increases than expected in local authority rates and electricity charges, and falling interest rates. However, income from trade and industrial consumption continues to fall below our already pessimistic forecasts and there is little hope of improvement in the foreseeable future. Coupled with this, domestic consumption reached an all-time peak in the quarter, increasing the Company's costs of treatment and pumping without a corresponding increase in income.

If the economists are to be believed, the recession will continue and the decline in traditional water-consuming industries in the Midlands will worsen. National unemployment has reached a record figure and one person in seven is now unemployed—in parts of the West Midlands the number is one in five.

Therefore, no real easing in the Company's financial position can be expected. At the same time, expenditure on

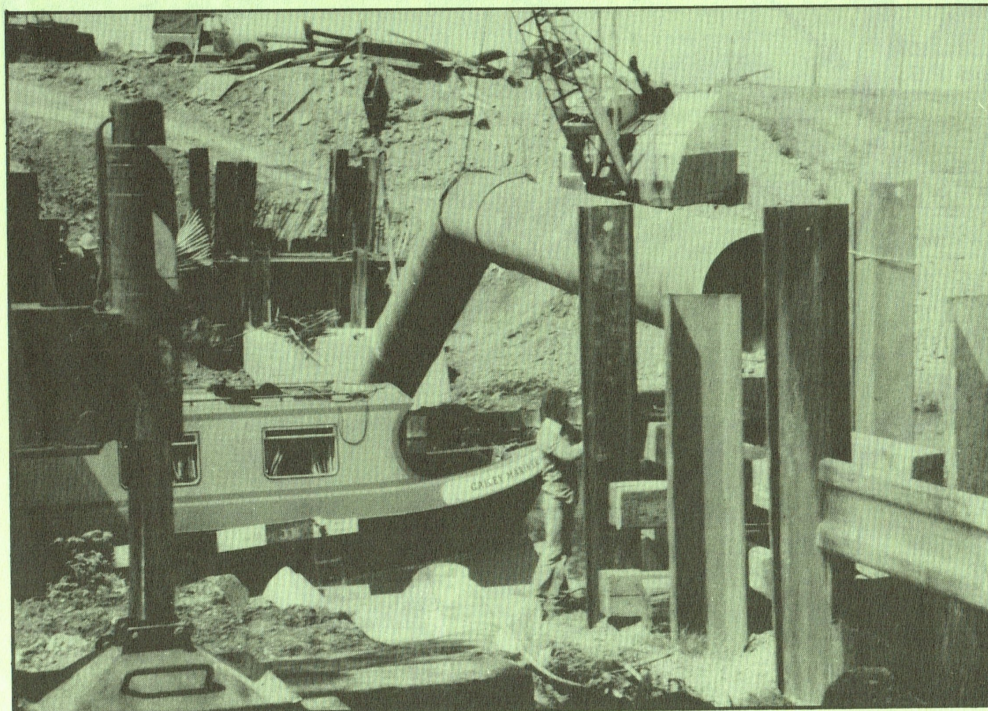
the renewal of deteriorating assets (particularly underground mains) must be increased if the Company's future is to be secure.

On the brighter side, there has been a notable increase in the number of houses built, perhaps indicating that the construction industry is reviving, and present indications are that interest rates will stabilise at lower levels than in the recent past.

Overall, there can be no cessation to the search for economies, increased efficiency and improved productivity, if the Company is to maintain an adequate water service without imposing disproportionately high water charges upon a depressed industry and anxious householders.

Our continuing vigorous efforts to hold down our charges refute any complaints that we take advantage of our monopoly position and, beyond that, they afford an opportunity for each of us, albeit in a minor capacity, to contribute to the re-building of the national economy.

W. A. MARKHAM—*Managing Director*



**DIRECTORS  
VISIT TO  
WORKS  
Thursday  
29th July  
1982**

● See overleaf...

◀ A barge passes along the canal uninterrupted by the construction of the 1,000mm pipe bridge.

# DIRECTORS' VISIT TO WORKS

Thursday 29th July 1982

The very interesting and informative programme included a visit to the following areas...

## ● TIPTON AREA OFFICE AND CONEYGRE BOOSTER STATION

Mr P. A. H. Griffith, after welcoming Mr E. J. Thompson the Chairman of the Company and the visiting party, gave a description of the activities undertaken by the area unit and illustrated the length of mains within his area by comparing them to constructing a main from the Midlands to Lisbon.

He then led the party on a tour of the offices and described the work undertaken at each place. The party also visited Coneygre Booster Station which was built on the same site in 1862, subsequently being electrified in 1937.

## ● SHAVERS END RESERVOIRS AND BOOSTER STATION

At this site, the party went inside the old number one Reservoir, where Mr Sims described the work of investigation being carried out under the present Contract arising from the major cracks which have recently been discovered in the Reservoir structure. The Contract, approved at the April Board Meeting, was to carry out investigations into the soil structure of the earth embankments around the Reservoir. This work is likely to take a matter of ten weeks during which 32 boreholes will be drilled into the banks and instruments placed in them to register movement and water levels. With this information, the Company will be able to determine why movement has taken place and what course of action should be taken.

While on the site, the Booster Station was visited, and the Chairman made a special point of speaking to Mr A. E. W. Morcom about his care of the grounds. Mr Morcom at that time was still living in the Company house, though he has recently retired from the Company's employment.

## ● 1,000mm DIAMETER MAIN

Mr T. Tapper described the purpose and the planning of its route, together with the progress to date. He explained in particular the difficulties overcome in crossing the railway line by a thrust bore and crossing the Deepfield Canal by a self-supporting pipe bridge. Board approval had been given for the construction of this £1½ million main in September 1981 to reinforce the supply from the River Severn Scheme to the Walsall and other northern areas.

The visitors were able to inspect pipes above ground and to see pipe laying in progress in Shaw Road.

## ● ASHWOOD PUMPING STATION

At Ashwood Pumping Station, the party were very interested to see work in progress on refurbishment of one of the well pumps, together with a general tour of the site.

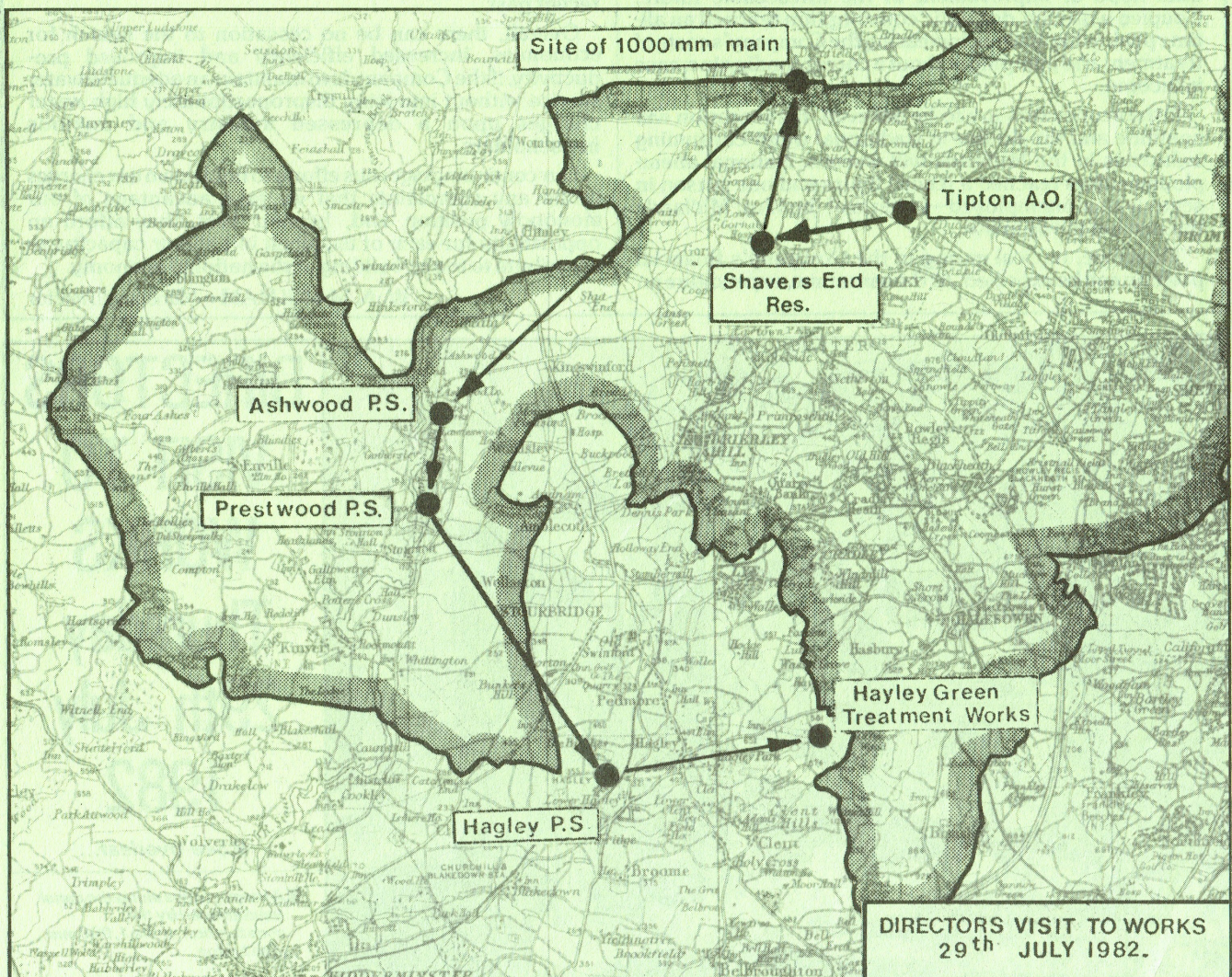
## ● PRESTWOOD PUMPING STATION

The party then visited Prestwood Pumping Station, which is widely known throughout the Company as one of our most picturesque sites.

## ● HAGLEY AND HAYLEY GREEN

After lunch, at the Bell Hotel, the group moved to Hagley Pumping Station, and then to Hayley Green Treatment Works, where Mr H. G. Sims described the original design for the works and showed the members the extent to which the original plan had been completed. Mention was made that the Company might, in the future, wish to streamline the tanks and treatment process on the site to suit its present requirements.

This was a most informative and useful visit to the various sites, and demonstrated some of the Schemes which have recently been approved, and in the case of Hayley Green, set the scene for proposals yet to come.



## APPROVED PACKAGES

### ● COMPUTER AND DATA PROCESSING

Now that the old 2040 Series *Honeywell* Computer has been replaced by a 64/DPS4 model, the opportunity is being taken to increase the amount of data and management information which can be processed through the Computer. As highlighted in the Coopers and Lybrand report on the Computer Department, the Company's best interests can be served by buying in packages of software for various routines necessary to put these systems into effect at the earliest possible opportunity.

In July, the Board approved packages, and the hardware

associated with them, which amounted in total to over £100,000 relating to the Water Rates, Payroll and Personnel functions, Vehicle/Fleet Management and Water Quality Systems. It is envisaged that the expenditure of over £100,000 will be rapidly recovered by the increase in efficiency which could be achieved with the introduction of these new systems.

Further systems are likely to be required in the future, as the work of the Systems Development Panel, which was set up to determine the need for and the priorities of Computer System improvements progresses.

## JOINT PARTICIPATION

### ● REMOTE READING OF DOMESTIC METERS

Board approval was given in principle in May 1982 to participation in a scheme of remote domestic metering, and that after further investigations, a detailed proposal would be presented to the Board.

The Company would be joining with the Midlands Electricity Board in conducting a trial at 100 houses in the Kingswinford Area, in the benefits which can be obtained of remote reading of electric, gas and water meters. The Water Research Centre has arranged for three Water Industries to join with their respective Electricity Boards in similar trials, the Company being one of them.

The benefits include the calculation and display on the premises of meter readings and their charges, the detection

of failure or alarm conditions at the site, e.g.: the loss of water supply, and also could include the remote control of valves or switches to provide the routine and emergency management of energy or water demand.

It is expected that consumers would be prepared to take advantage of the more attractive tariffs and check their consumption. This could also be reflected in reduction of peak demands. Should this occur then deferment of expensive capital projects may well be forthcoming with subsequent benefit of all consumers.

The Company would particularly expect to gain useful information on the management of peak demand, the benefits of reduction of leakages on premises related to the provision of water, mains, services and reservoirs, and other effects of metering which result from such a Scheme.

## ON THE MOVE

### ● NORTHERN AREA OFFICE

#### **Proposals for the formation of an Administrative Centre at Lichfield.**

At the April Board Meeting, approval was given to proposals designed to improve efficiency of the running and the management of the Company's Northern Area.

At present, the former separate areas of Cannock and Burton-on-Trent, are managed by one Area Manager and his Deputy, but the split between the two sites causes considerable administration difficulties, which it is intended to overcome in the long term by the construction of a completely new Office for the combined area; in the intermediate period, however, accommodation is being made available in the former Laboratory Office at Sandfields Treatment Works. This will enable the grouping of 22 people who undertake administrative duties for the present two sites at this one place. Work has

started on the modifications which are necessary to the existing building, and these will be completed in time for Staff to move in this Autumn.

### ● WATER TREATMENT SECTION

Also on the move are Water Treatment Section. They are due to move to new accommodation at Fradley Pumping Station as soon as the modifications to the old Softening Plant can be completed.

Water Treatment Section are at present based at Sandfields Treatment Works, but lack of some of the facilities which are to be provided at Fradley for efficient storage of chlorine cylinders, workshop and general maintenance facilities, together with office accommodation.

Board approval was given in the month of April for this work to be undertaken and it is expected to be complete in the near future.

# Dates of Interest...

## WALSALL SOCIAL CLUB...

- **Saturday 9th October 1982**  
Day Trip to Blackpool.
- **Saturday 13th November 1982:**  
Sports Day and Disco, combined Social Club event at Rushall Manor Comprehensive School.  
Please note anyone interested in either of the above events contact P. Lynes on Walsall 38283, extension 288.

## LONDON—DAY TRIP

- **Friday 29th October 1982**  
London—Shopping Day Trip. Cost: £3.50.  
Anyone interested in this day out please contact C. Turner, at Green Lane, extension 218.

## BIRMINGHAM SOCIAL CLUB...

- **Saturday 6th November 1982**  
Bonfire and Fireworks Display Barbeque and Disco, at Central Office, Walsall.  
Full details to be published shortly.
- **Friday 10th December 1982**  
District Employees Christmas Dance and Buffet. To be held at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall.  
Full details in a later issue.

## ● CONGRATULATIONS

To Mike and Pat Fletcher on the birth of their baby daughter, Jennifer Marie, born on 5th August and weighing in at 7lb 12oz.

To Charles and Sue Shakespeare on the birth of their baby daughter, Hannah Jayne, born on 14th August and weighing in at 8lb 2oz.

## ● WELCOME

To Miss M. Swift, Miss D. North, Miss S. Hursfield, Miss A. Dar, Mrs B. Trueman, Mr S. Moffat, Mr M. Rawsthorne—all of Revenue and Mr S. R. Cole—Water Quality.

## ● GOODBYE

To: Miss S. Whitehouse—Secretary to Mr J. R. Harris—who is going to Vienna to work.

## ● And to those who accepted Voluntary Severance

W. Tonks—Garage H/O (nine years service).  
W. Thompson—Blithfield (20 years service).  
A. Maddocks—Transport (36 years service).  
S. Westley—Walsall (33 years service). W. E. Glasse—Walsall (35 years service).

## ● And to those who have retired

J. Reynolds—Burton (33 years service).

We wish all the above personnel the very best for the future.

## PRESENTATIONS

### ● 25 YEARS GOLD WATCH PRESENTATIONS

**Tuesday 14th September 1982...**

- Mr N. Day—Operations Department, Walsall Area Office.  
Mr D. J. Harrison—Operations Department, Supply Records Section, Central Office.  
Mr B. C. Loach—Operations Department, Cannock Area Office.  
Mr A. G. Meddings—Operations Department, Tipton Area Office.  
Mr N. G. Rodwell—Operations Department, Tipton Area Office.

### ● LONG SERVICE AWARDS ON RETIREMENT

**Tuesday 14th September 1982...**

- 44 years service...Mr F. Williams—Water Quality Control, received a Video Recorder.  
45 years service...Mr H. F. Crowe—Water Quality Control, received a Portable Television.  
46 years service...Mr C. E. Robinson—Area Superintendent, Burton, received an Original Oil Painting.

### ● The following personnel received their Apprenticeship Deeds...

- Mr N. M. Harrison—Technical Services Department, Central Workshops (Electrician).  
Mr A. W. Humphries—Operations Department (Area Maintenance Operative).