A SHORT HISTORY OF THE COMPANY
1816-1991
175 YEARS OF ENGINEERING SUCCESS

Our history begins with James Watt, one of the greatest engineers of the late 18th century. He was a man of fertile imagination and an inventor of a great many machines, of which one was a copying machine, which he developed during his years of partnership in Birmingham with Matthew Boulton. The two men with James Keir formed the Copying Machine Company.

One of the employees was George Hadon of Handsworth who became foreman of the machine shop.

In some early letters there are references to James Watt which indicate a mutual interest between the two families. That James Watt held George Hadon Senior in high regard is shown by the fact as he lay ill a few weeks before his death he wrote a codicil to his will:

To Geo. Hadon Senr. of the Copying Company's Warehouse, Soho £21.00.'

Two of George Hadon's children, George and James, were born in 1788 and 1790 respectively. When they were old enough, George Hadon had them apprenticed to the firm of Boulton and Watt. George Hadon Jr. trained on the steam engine side of the business while James appeared to have had a more general training. In 1816 the two brothers started their own company.
Note the building labelled Trowbridge Works is actually Boulton & Watt’s Soho House in Birmingham
Haden & Son

In 1855 James retired and the name of the partnership changed to George Haden and Son. A year afterwards George Haden died. He was much respected in the industry which he had helped to develop.

Under George Nelson Haden the business continued to prosper. Like his father he character seems today a little unusual. But one must make allowances for the time and habits of thought when he was writing his letters.

Haden were now obtaining contracts for large public buildings, such as the British Museum and St. Pancras Station and Hotel, which was completed in 1876. It was the hotel of which Sir George Gilbert Scott later wrote: "I have sometimes thought that it is too good for its purpose!"

George Nelson Haden died in 1878, the head of the largest and one of the oldest heating and ventilating firms in the country. He had considerably the work of his father and uncle, and guided the business for over forty years. He left it to his three sons Joseph Poyntor, William Nelson, and Charles Ingham.

IN PRINT

To illustrate the diversity of their work Haden issued, about the year 1905, a brochure entitled "A Catalogue of Specialities." It describes heating work in many fields, the finest of which was in hospitals and asylums, of which many were built at this time.

The Company was often responsible for the design and installation not only of heating and ventilation, but also water and fire services, the complete equipment of kitchens and laundries, and the generation and distribution of electricity to lighting and power systems.

The brochure also describes and illustrates their products, which included cast iron radiators and pipes, water circulating pumps, condensers, cylinders, cooking and laundry equipment and of course warm air ventilating stoves.

CONSULTANTS

William and Charles were consulted by government and municipal bodies on technical matters and designed the mechanical services for some of the largest buildings in the country. Each in his turn became President of the Institution of Heating and Ventilating Engineers, and carried on the tradition of business integrity established by the earlier generations.

The two brothers brought much original technical thinking to bear upon central heating practices. Charles fostered the development of combined heating and power installations which brought so much work to the Company between 1900 and 1910. They also devised large-scale heating schemes for the London of the future.

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QUALITY & QUALITY

The number and variety of buildings for which Haden had provided services by the mid 1920s was simply vast. By this time they had heated 1100 churches and 20 cathedrals.
400 government and municipal buildings, 500 offices and banks, 500 hotels, restaurants, clubs and institutes, 200 theatres, cinemas, art galleries and museums, 200 shops and stores, 200 factories, 300 hospitals, and nearly 1000 residences for the gentry.

**Haden Overseas**

Overseas contracting opportunities have been taken whenever conditions were favourable. The first venture seems to have followed a visit by Charles Haden to Turkey in 1898 which resulted in an order for engineering services in the Administration Building of the Deva Publica Ottomana, Constantinople. By 1914 a branch was opened in Johannesburg, South Africa, and a link forged with the Continent when an association in 1918 with Monsieur Migeot of Brussels to create the company of “Charapage Haden et Migeot”.

A series of installations overseas was carried out in the period 1925–29, the most important being in the Peninsula Hotel, Kowloon, Hong Kong, at that time the largest and most luxurious hotel in the Far East. It was followed by the Exchange Building, City of Victoria, and the Republic Bay Hotel in Hong Kong. 1934 saw the start of a contract for the headquarters of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, a fourteen-storey building which at the time was a landmark on the waterfront of Hong Kong. It was the first in the Far East to be air conditioned and was found still to be in fairly good running order at the end of the 1959–45 war.

**Expansion**

With the creation of many branch offices in Britain in the 1920s, the Company’s Head Office was transferred to London in 1933. In that year William Haden retired. His brother Charles became Chairman, and his son George Nelson Haden was appointed joint Managing Director with Francis Horton, who retired two years later. In 1938, at the age of thirty-eight, Nelson Haden became Chairman and a new era in the Company’s history began. Nelson Haden took control of a company well established by his predecessors, but it was essential to maintain its competitive position, and hence his relative youth and enthusiasm, combined with a wide knowledge of the industry, were invaluable. He chose his management team carefully and was equally careful in the selection and training of younger men to follow them. He was greatly concerned with the preservation of human relationships and this characteristic ran like a thread through his dealings with members of the staff, whatever their position. It extended to the conditions of employment for the staff and under his leadership, Haden were one of the first companies in the industry to introduce staff and operative pension and sickness benefit schemes.

**Development**

1958 saw the start of a new phase of expansion for Haden's with the promotion to Managing Director of Alan Duffinger. Sir Alan, knighted in 1977 for services to the industry, led the Company through a number of acquisitions, the most significant being that of Doughton Young in 1966 and Carter Engineering in 1973.
HADEN YOUNG

Thoughton & Young brought their own tradition of electrical, design and contracting skills and the principal Haden company providing building services then became known as Haden Young Ltd.

The former Carlow companies developed worldwide metal finishing installations and the group as a whole, in the period 1970 to 1983, widened its interest as a number of fields associated with either building services or metal finishing.

INTERNATIONAL

In this same period Haden expanded overseas, forming Haden International Ltd with extensive work in Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Nigeria and Trinidad. Building services and metal finishing companies were also established in Australia and the USA. Haden became a truly global company.

By the mid 1980s however, world market conditions were changing and for a variety of reasons Haden companies slowly withdrew from many "emerging" countries.

In 1975 Derek Hyam had become Managing Director under the Chairmanship of Sir Alan Pullinger until his retirement in 1979 when Peter Simonis was appointed.

In 1981 Derek Hyam himself retired and Philip Ling took his place as Managing Director of Haden plc, which had become the new Group name in 1981.

The period 1985/1986 was remarkable in its history. Trindlsy House made a take-over bid for the Haden Group which was defeated by Philip Ling who mounted a management buy-out for the purpose. Soon thereafter the traditional Haden building services activities were sold to BICC plc leaving behind those companies that had been principally engaged in metal finishing.

Haden Building Services Ltd was led into BICC by Derek Gillingham who remains Chief Executive. HBISL comprises principally Haden Young Ltd, Managing Director, Carl Whetstone and Haden Maintenance Ltd, Managing Director, Robert Sharp. The board is chaired by Ian Carroll who is a Managing Director of Balfour Beatty Ltd, a BICC subsidiary.

THE PRESENT

Today Haden retains its position as a leading company in the provision of all building services, a position that it has held for the whole of its 175 years history. This history, and the Haden culture, has continued to inspire the shared values that today still drive the company.

In BICC Haden have grown to a turnover of £250m with a strong line of engineering management succession. We face the future with confidence that we shall maintain our success in the tradition of the brothers George and James.