

Dr Geoffrey Lofthouse

Qualifications	BSc Metallurgy, First Class honours PhD in Metallurgy for a study and thesis on fatigue crack initiation in zone refined pure iron
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Consultancy work undertaken at CWA

Geoffrey has advised on various investigations into the corrosion damage to steel cargos during sea transportation. These cover corrosion by seawater ingress into cargo holds, and corrosion by contamination by the spilling of over stowed corrosive cargos. These investigations involved hot and cold rolled steel coils, and hot rolled steel sections. He has also acted as Expert Witness at Arbitration Court relating to the causation of steel surface quality issues on hot rolled steel coils for use in the automotive industry.

Career History

1980 – 2008 **British Steel Skinningrove Special Sections Mills**
Track Shoe Plant Manager and Technical Manager

Skinningrove's major market sector is the production of hot rolled track shoe sections, which are supplied, to earthmoving equipment manufacturers (such as Caterpillar, Berco, JCB, etc.) who convert the long bar into finished track shoes by cutting, punching and a final quench and temper heat treatment. In the late 1970's one USA customer requested that British Steel undertake the conversion process for them. As such it was necessary to design a new process line, including the heat treatment, capable of processing around 20kt pa. In his role in the Teesside Met Lab he was asked to participate in the design and once the line was installed he was selected to be the Plant Manager.

The appointment to Skinningrove was a dual role of Track Shoe Plant Manager and Technical Manager for the rolling mills.

The Track Shoe Plant operated until the mid 1990's and was a very successful operation, not only supplying the original planned USA customer, but also supplying components to Caterpillar and other earthmoving companies. It closed when Caterpillar decided to install their own manufacturing facility, on the Skinningrove site.

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As Technical Manager he managed a team of initially 18 technical staff providing a quality control and quality assurance function to the 2 rolling mills and the track shoe plant.

This role involved the technical investigation of manufacturing issues (in collaboration with the Teesside Met Lab), the development of new products and the enhancement of existing products (in collaboration with customer's technical staff, the Teesside Met Lab, and the British Steel R & D labs at Teesside and Rotherham), and the investigation of customer complaints. The job also involved the maintenance of a QA system

that complied with BS5750/ISO9000 and the Ship Class Societies requirements for sections (bulb flats) supplied to the shipbuilding industry. During his tenure, Skinningrove became the first rolling mill outside of the USA to become a Certified Supplier to Caterpillar worldwide, and this led to Skinningrove gaining a sole supplier contract for track shoe long bar to their facilities in Europe, the USA, Canada and Brazil.

During the final years at Skinningrove, he was asked to take on this role (in addition to Technical Manager, but the track shoe plant had closed). This involved the selling of typically 40 – 50Kt pa of bulb flats to Europe, USA, and the Far East. The customer knowledge he had already gained as Technical Manager made this additional responsibility an interesting opportunity. A record (and profitable) bulb flat tonnage was sold in one of the years I did this job.

I retired from the steel industry in late 2008 after almost 38 years service and experience.

1973 – 1980

British Steel Teesside Works Metallurgical Laboratory

Senior Metallurgist

After completing University, he immediately took up this position. The duties involved supervising a team of metallurgists and technicians who, with his active involvement, undertook regular metallurgical investigations, such as routine product assessment (of the products rolled on the local mills such as wire rod, sections, rails, hot rolled coil, special sections), investigation of the causation of defective material produced on the mills, investigation of metallurgical customer complaints on material rolled on the mills (including customer visits as required), product development activities in collaboration with the R & D function.

With the development of the North Sea exploration and production programme, enhanced steels were required for section products used in the manufacture of rig topsides. This became a focus of his activity in the later years at Teesside and involved negotiation meetings with all of the major oil companies working in the North Sea.

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This was an exciting time and one which resulted in a successful business for British Steel at that time, supplying tens of thousands of tonnes of enhanced notch tough sections.

Skills

He has many years' experience in the metallurgical aspects of rolling mills in the steel industry, particularly on section and special section mills.

Both as Technical Manager, and for a few years Sales Manager, he has a lot of experience in dealing with and negotiating with customers in many parts of the world – Skinningrove exported about 75% of its production with the USA being its single largest market.

In addition to his detailed metallurgical knowledge (world expert level in some aspects), he has a good understanding of the Roll Design process in section mills, a working knowledge of commercial processes including shipping, a good understanding of structural/mechanical engineering relating to the use of steel sections in equipment.