

Client: Sahaviriya Steel Industries
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LIFELINE: The Corus Teesside Cast Products plant at Redcar which is set to resume production and, inset, the late MP Ashok Kumar

STEELMAKING'S COMEBACK

AS a former steel worker of 30 years it was fantastic news to hear that a deal for the Thai company, Sahaviriya Steel Industries (SSI), to buy Corus' Teesside Cast Products had been signed (Echo, Aug 28).

This memorandum of understanding should now pave the way forward for steelmaking's return to Redcar and Teesside.

There have been many people who have helped to bring this about – too many to mention in this letter.

However, there is one person who worked tirelessly and would be overjoyed that steelmaking is returning to our area – the late, great Dr Ashok Kumar, who was Labour MP for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland.

Both of us were former employees in the local steel industry and Ashok, like me, always believed (even in the darkest days) that steelmaking would return.

I am sure he (plus many others) would like to say a big thank-you to the 700 steel staff who stayed on to keep the Teesside Cast Products kit ticking over in readiness for the big blast back to life of steelmaking sometime in the

first half of 2011. Well done, indeed.

**Councillor George R Dunning,
Leader, Redcar and Cleveland
Borough Council.**

NEWS that an agreement has been signed to buy the Corus Teesside Cast Products plant in Redcar is what the North-East region has been crying out for.

We have a vested interest in the wellbeing of the region and the work of a registered provider goes beyond the provision of housing, involving the delivery of many vital community-based services which include tackling financial exclusion, unemployment and worklessness. The mothballing of the plant has created a significant adverse effect to this aim.

Since January, Coast & Country has been working with partner organisations to help alleviate the impact of the plant's closure, but we can now look forward with renewed hope based on the knowledge that the Thai steel company, SSI, has signed a memorandum of understanding to buy the Redcar site from Corus.

**Iain Sim, Chief Executive,
Coast & Country, Redcar.**

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It was the image which touched a nation ... now Amber's dad is buzzing over Corus news

Workers have their say on the steel deal



For more on Corus visit: www.eveninggazette.co.uk/teesside-steel

By ANDREW PAIN

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"SAVE Dad's Job!"

The heartfelt plea written on a placard by young Amber Whitaker brought home the reality of the Corus situation in February this year.

The iconic image of Amber sat on the shoulders of her dad Andrew Whitaker outside the Redcar steel plant on the day of closure was picked up by the Gazette and a host of national newspapers to illustrate how families would be affected by job losses.

Now Andrew, 45, from Guisborough, who has been

re-deployed at the South Bank coke ovens, has told of his personal hopes that the proposed deal between SSI and Corus for Teesside Cast Products is delivered.

"I think it's great news for the area," said Andrew, who is married to Linda, 45. "I just hope it comes off."

Speaking of that black day in February and Amber's placard, he said: "She made it herself. She likes doing art and I came down on the morning and she was holding it - that touched me."

"When I put her on my shoulders outside the plant there was a flock of cameramen training in on us. I never gave it a thought on the day

but when I saw it in the papers it hit home."

"The day itself was an emotional one for everyone. It was like being at a funeral and most of the lads say that. I was upset myself. It was a horrible feeling, like someone had died."

"We thought someone was going to step in at the last minute to save us but it didn't happen. Now it has, I'm quite buzzing."

Amber, who is now 12 and a student at Laurence Jackson School, said simply: "I didn't want him to lose his job."

With the Thai company signing a memorandum of understanding, other employees are also hopeful

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steel-making still has a future on Teesside.

Corus employee and campaigner Craig Brooks says the deal will be a boost for the region if it comes off.

The senior chemist and member of the multi-union committee works chiefly at Teesside Cast Products.

The 49-year-old said: "I think it's fantastic for the area if it comes off.

"It will bring some wealth back into the area and be a real boost.

"What you get from such a big industry is the feeder fish who feed on it. The suppliers and contractors. It can only be good news for them.

"I can't think of another steel plant in the country that has closed and then started again. It's some achievement.

"We will look at it as a culmination of our Save Our Steel campaign. It will be worth all of the hard work - that was always our aim."

Russ Morgan, 47, a production co-ordinator at South Bank coke ovens, went on a number of marches to save steel-making on Teesside, joined by his wife Jo, 40.

He said: "We were fighting it to the finish and still are. We want steel-making to continue on Teesside.

"It's a memorandum of understanding, there is no guarantee of a sale but it is a very positive progression and good news for everyone."

Peter Hobson, 47, from Middlesbrough has worked in the steel industry for 31 years.

The married dad-of-four, who works in the Beam Mill, said: "It's fantastic news for the area. Hopefully the skills can be passed from the older generation onto a new generation of young people and provide new prospects for them."

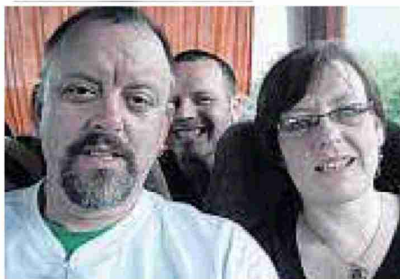
Alan Callcutt has worked in the steel industry for 40 years.

The Brotton father said: "It's good news but we will have to wait until the final word comes to see what happens."

When I put her on my shoulders outside the plant there was a flock of cameramen training in on us. I never gave it a thought on the day

but when I saw it in the papers it hit home - Andrew Whitaker, pictured with daughter Amber, right, and our previous coverage of the Corus situation

Main picture
by IAN
McINTYRE



GOOD NEWS: Russ Morgan and his wife Jo above, and Peter Hobson, right



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Workers on steel

CORUS workers are remaining cautiously optimistic that a deal between SSI and the steel-maker is delivered, after the Thai company signed a memorandum of understanding last week.

Among them is one Guisborough dad, whose daughter was immortalised in a picture on the day the Redcar steel plant was closed - pleading for her daddy's job to be saved.

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