

Export man will return to the USA

After four years on Teesside, four house moves and a "dynamic" time as TCP's Supply Chain Director, David Reid is finally going home to the USA. Bridge caught up with him as he reflected on his time here and gave his thoughts on the future of TCP.

In early 2005 David Reid came to Corus TCP on a two-week working visit as a consultant on export logistics. Now, nearly five years later, he is still here!

But that's about to change. David and his wife, Ann, are going back to the States to start a new chapter in their lives and to be re-united with their five children and their grandchildren.

Says David: "It's been a lot of fun. I've enjoyed my time here but now we're looking forward to going back to our home base in Pennsylvania. We've bought a piece of land near the Susquehanna river and we're building a new house there next year."

But David won't be spending all his time on the house project. He is taking up consultancy work again and will be a partner in Metal Strategies Inc at West Chester in Pennsylvania.

Export expertise

David, who has around 25 years' experience of slab export operations, was operating as a consultant when he was first invited Teesside to share his expertise as the consortium deal was being brokered. He came back on a contract and accepted the post of Supply Chain Director at TCP in December 2005.

Explains David: "I was on an 18-month contract with the job of getting the export operation up and running as this was my area of expertise. My contract has been extended twice since then and it will finish in September."

David's 'extendable' contract with Corus means that he and Ann have never put down roots for long in a house on Teesside. They have lived in rented accommodation at Great Ayton, Yarm, Ormestry Bank and now at Saltburn.

Says David:



"My wife calls it 'advanced camping' because it's a step up from moving around with a tent."

Ann Reid who, like David, has dual USA and British citizenship, has made the most of her time in the North East. She earned a chef's qualification at college in Middlesbrough and is now completing a masters degree in creative writing at Newcastle University and is writing a novel.

Dynamic times

David has his own story to tell when he looks back on his time at TCP. He says: "It's certainly been a dynamic time with plenty of variety and changes. The consortium was formed and then we had Tata coming in and then the planned sale of the business followed by the change in the consortium situation."

Asked what sticks most in his mind about his time here, David says: "The salient thing is change. I've been here as an agent of change - it's been about approaching people and introducing ideas."

"The refreshing part is that it's been very productive working with people at Corus and at the port. I've introduced things and seen them catch on."

"Teesport has gone from the equivalent of a lowly ranked fourth division team and entered the premier league because of its improved productivity and performance."

"The changes we have made to our material handling system in the mill also stand out for me. We've moved from Kress carriers to an all-rail operation and that's been significant in terms of efficiency."

He adds: "I feel that a lot of what I set out to do has been done. Some other things didn't get done but that's normal in life and I'll leave these in the hands of the people that succeed me. It's been a pleasure working with everybody here and I'm glad to have been a part of it."

"We have to believe"

But although David is leaving TCP, he says he will be keeping a keen eye on the business. He also has a lot of faith in the future of TCP.

He says: "I think it's got a great future and it deserves to have its place as a world class producer - it just has to believe in itself."

"We've come from some dark days around 8 May and we're going through a great endurance test. My hero is Sir Ernest Shackleton. When his expedition was stuck in the ice in the Antarctic he told his men: 'We are going home'. And they did."

"The people at TCP have to believe. They have to want it and do it. In difficult times it's tough to be an optimist but if you move on and keep pushing, it will happen."

Boss pays tribute to David

Managing Director of TCP, Jon Bolton, has paid tribute to David Reid's contribution to the business.

He said: "David has made such an important contribution since joining us in 2005 and has been instrumental in promoting our reputation as a world class slab producer."

"We are extremely grateful for his enthusiastic support and "can do" outlook in helping to drive the business

forward and, of course, particularly for his endeavours in helping us to secure orders over what has been an extremely difficult period in recent months.

"On behalf of everyone at TCP, we wish David and Ann a very healthy, happy and successful future."

With effect from 1 October, Supply Chain Manager, Stuart Walton, will be seconded into the role of Supply Chain Director on a temporary basis.