



Teesside suffering profound loss of identity



Peter Nelson, 56, recently signed on for the first time. A machinist at an engineering firm in Redcar, he was one of thousands who lost their jobs after the collapse of the town's steel industry.

Clutching a list of vacancies outside the fourth jobs fair arranged to help those made redundant back into work, Nelson explains that he has applied for 100 jobs since losing his job three months ago. Struggling to contain his emotions, he says, "I am very scared at the moment. My house will probably go up for sale."

It's more than six months since Redcar's blast furnace went cold, drawing the curtain on a century of steelmaking in the town. The experience of the town since will make grim reading for the thousands of steelworkers in

Port Talbot whose jobs are on the line.

Despite a spirited local campaign to save the Redcar plant when owners SSI UK went into liquidation, and pleas to the government to step in and secure its short-term viability until a buyer could be found, at least 3,000 workers from the plant and the supply chain suddenly lost their jobs.

As the head of the taskforce established to deal with the fallout put it, "steel runs through the veins" of people on Teesside, and the loss of identity is profound. And the seismic economic shock caused in the area, where similarly well-paid jobs are in short supply and the buoyancy of local businesses often relied on the steelworks, is only just beginning to be fully understood.

The Redcar constituency experienced the

second highest increase in unemployment in England last year up 16.2%. Figures from the SSI taskforce say 1,384 workers have so far moved off benefits into full-time work or training but no data yet exists on the split between the two. Nearly 700 are still claiming benefits, not including those who may have signed off and made a new claim since. Over 400 have made no claim at all.

"We already had one of the highest unemployment rates in the country," said Anna Turley, Labour MP for Redcar. "It's not London, Manchester or Leeds or somewhere you can just absorb these jobs. This is a foundation industry, and the major employer in the region, and you can't just recreate and replace those jobs overnight, or suddenly expect people to become entrepreneurs."

Former steelworkers have been turning up at foodbanks. The SSI fund, set up from £50m of government money to administer training and support services, has made grants of more than £300,000 to help the most cash-strapped keep up to date with rent or mortgage payments, and even pay for food and heating.

Tata Steel hires StanChart for UK unit sale



Tata Steel said it has reached out to 190 potential financial and industrial investors for selling its UK assets, while appointing Standard Chartered Bank as an additional advisor to scout for buyers in Asia and the Far East. It said, "In order to provide further support to run and manage a global sale process, Tata Steel Europe has appointed Standard Chartered bank as an additional adviser to the process to ensure the coverage



and reach of the universe of potential buyers, especially to Asia and the Far East. They will work alongside KPMG LLP, whose appointment was announced on April 11, the statement added.

"The advisers to Tata Steel Europe have begun initial exploration of interest in Tata Steel's UK operations reaching out to 190 potential financial and industrial investors worldwide," it said.

Reconstruction of a pusher furnace for slabs at VÍTKOVICE STEEL

Recently, SMS group received the final acceptance certificate from VÍTKOVICE STEEL, Czech Republic, for the complete reconstruction of an old pusher-type reheating furnace. The furnace feeds a plate mill at a maximum hourly rate of 90 tons of slabs at reference conditions, reheated from ambient temperature to 1,250 °C. The results of the comprehensive modernization are minimized skid marks, increased quality, an efficient control system and reduced fuel consumption.

"We are proud of having completed another brown-field job of such significant magnitude," states Simone Zussino, head of the reheating furnaces and heat treatment department at SMS Meer S.p.a "This demonstrates once more SMS group's commitment to renewing outdated plants in Europe and the great benefits this provides for us, the end users and the environment."

This section is a compilation from various company press releases, business dailies & trade publications.