

Malthouse Engineering Co. Ltd

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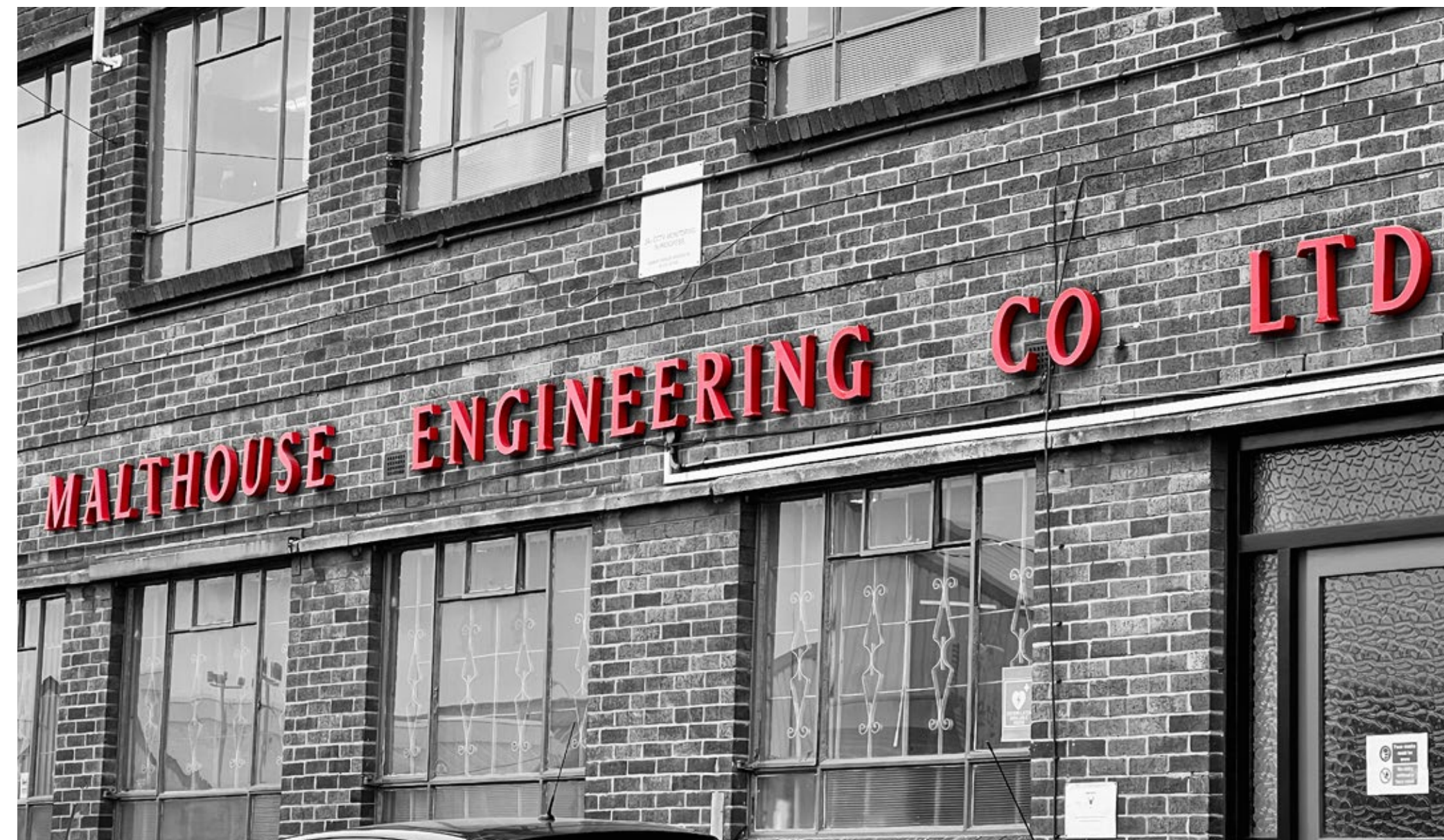
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MALTHOUSE ENGINEERING . CO LTD

# PROUD OF THE PAST

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS



## PROUD OF THE PAST

The proud origins and early history of Malthouse Engineering are documented thoroughly in the company's fiftieth anniversary booklet (1947 to 1997) and supplemented with further details and photographs in the sixtieth anniversary online document (1947 to 2007).

Let's pick up the Malthouse story in 2007. In Leona Lewis and Rhianna were the best selling recording artists in the UK; Manchester United were Premier League Champions; Christiano

Ronaldo was crowned both Player of the Year and Young Player of the Year; and Roy Taylor was now over 24 years into his reign as only the company's second Managing Director – three years longer at this stage than Alex Ferguson has been at United!

As we move through the first decade of the current millennium, it is in this period of the company's history that we must consider a sobering narrative that typifies Malthouse's resilience in negotiating the ups and downs, of both high demand and more



difficult times. The story revolves around a huge order for the manufacture of three profiles for the automotive trade, known fondly as “the butterfly”, “the alligator” and the less poetic “torque-plate”. For over a decade, from the mid-nineties until the late noughties, a regular order for a high volume of these three profiles came from the American-owned company Meritor, based first in Wrexham, North Wales, then later in Cwmbran, South Wales. This reliable order was great for business – until 2009, that is, when the bulk of Meritor’s supply to Spain completely dried up, causing one of their directors to exclaim in his distinctive American drawl, “Spain no longer exists!” There was some hope that the order could be replaced by demand for similar profiles from Italy, but this hope was very short-lived. This loss of £1.6m of orders was bad news for a big company like Meritor, but much worse news for a smaller company like Malthouse. In fact, so much worse that it could have taken the company down. The reason that it didn’t was that the decision had been made many years earlier that each of the three components would be manufactured by

three different companies or divisions of the group – Lynrose, Malthouse and Keiton respectively – precisely to avoid one company being too dependent on this single order. This meant that, though the impact on the group was great, it was borne across three companies and was not therefore a fatal blow. Since then Malthouse has never allowed itself to be so dependent on a single order. Today, a diverse and varied database of customers is a key aspect of the company’s resilience.

Around this period, Malthouse – along with many other companies – also felt the impact of the financial crisis of 2008 and accompanying global recession. These were difficult times but the company’s broad customer base, its reputation and good relationships with clients helped it to stay afloat and come through those turbulent waters.

Another landmark in Malthouse’s more recent history came some 16 years ago with the retirement of four of its five shareholders and the emergence of Roy Taylor, the one remaining shareholder, as the company’s owner and director. Again, this was





a potentially problematic period for Malthouse with frequent debate at board meetings about how the strong desire of four of the shareholders to sell-up and retire could be reconciled with Roy's equally strong desire to continue to use his skills and passion to lead Malthouse into the future. Various solutions were explored by Paul Bennett, Corporate Solicitor at Cradley Heath based George Green LLP, but to no avail. There was a complete impasse until a lateral thinker by the characterful name of Ross Cocker was enlisted as an independent advisor to liaise with all interested parties. His creative solution was accepted by all parties as a fair one that ensured that each of the four shareholders received their due portion and Roy was able to fund the share buy-back that allowed him to remain at the helm.

The 16 years, or so, since then has been a story of progressive development and well-managed change. It has also been a story of balancing the desire to expand and thrive, with the need to consolidate and survive. The transition from five sites to one has made the company more efficient and manageable. This period has not been without its painful decisions, but the process of change has been necessary for the long-term stability and success of Malthouse Engineering.



One of the biggest challenges of the past ten years was the less widely recognised recession of 2016, when the price of steel fell to less than half of its previous price. Popular grades of steel, such as S275, that had been around £600 per tonne in 2012 had fallen to £300 in the first quarter of 2016 – less than half its previous value. Even more alarmingly, scrap value fell from £325 per tonne to a low of £85. This meant that revenue from scrap fell from £993,000 in 2011 to just £360,000 in 2015 – barely one-third of the previous figure.

The drop in these values affected Malthouse significantly, as the large stocks of steel in the yard quickly dropped in value and the prices that customers were prepared to pay fell rapidly. Malthouse was able to weather the storm by reducing steel stocks to generate cash, but once again these were difficult times but the company's broad customer base, its reputation and good relationships with clients helped it to stay a float and come through those turbulent waters. The ability to survive and then to thrive was perhaps down to a combination of drawing on the resilience and reputation



of a long-established business and of bringing on board some new blood to maintain momentum and take the company forward. Early in 2020, of course, we were hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and operations at Malthouse closed down completely for three weeks, before restarting gradually later in April. For operations at Keiton Engineering, in Wednesbury, it was a different story. Sadly, the impact of the pandemic was the final blow that made Keiton's demise inevitable. David Farley and Rob Field retired after many years of loyal service, some colleagues – including Ash and Sczimon joined the team at Hainge Road, and others, sadly were offered redundancy.

Our site at Worcester had also not escaped, and following the sale of the premises by St Modwyn Properties to Worcester County Council we found ourselves without a lease. Difficult as it was we decided to move the operation to head office in Tividale.

In the past two years the combined impact of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic have had some predictable and unpredictable effects. As expected, the final arrival of Brexit increased the cost of buying steel, added some complication to the supply chain, and affected the availability of European workers – from Poland, in particular – with strong skill-sets and a desire to progress. It's possible that the long-term impact of Brexit has been masked and delayed by the unusual social and economic circumstances of the global pandemic.

The impact of the pandemic, however, has been completely unexpected, and has had some unusual effects at Malthouse. First, the company had to take the “unprecedented” step of closing down production so that all colleagues could stay safe as the country, and much of the world, went into the first period of “lockdown”. Many of the staff team speak well of the way in which Malthouse navigated their way through the pandemic by balancing the need to protect people and also prevent the business from going under. Offices and factory were shut down for a period of just three weeks, after which a smaller team re-started production on a reduced scale for a number of months, until sales and production could get back into full-swing by the summer.

Financially, the impact of the pandemic has been utterly unforeseen. January 2021 was a good month, likewise February, and March too... and so, rather surprisingly, it went on. As the months rolled out it became clear that 2021 was the best year of business in the company's illustrious history. Roy Taylor describes the past year as “phenomenal”. John Evans, in the cutting shed, speaking of the pace of production in 2021 says “this year's been mental”. Who would have predicted that?

As we move through 2022, the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on steel supplies is being felt around the world. Nevertheless, as we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of Malthouse Engineering, the company looks to be in good health and fighting-fit for the next quarter-century, whatever it may bring.

## GOOD HEALTH & FIGHTING FIT





MALTHOUSE ENGINEERING . CO LTD

# FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

## THE UK'S LARGEST INDEPENDENT STEEL PROFILER

### FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

Going forward, the company aims to thrive and grow by focusing on what it does best – cutting and grinding steel. Malthouse Engineering is keen not only to maintain its position as the country's largest independent steel profiler, but also to extend its reputation for reliability and quality. Malthouse is already providing components for the production of green energy and has the potential to expand production in this area and others, as demand increases.

Malthouse continues to seek to expand its portfolio by buying business and bringing them into the group where this is best for both parties. There are new developments on site, at Hainge Road, too. The buildings that once housed William Freesons had become unfit for purpose, so in this seventy-fifth anniversary year, Malthouse have taken ownership of them and at time of writing are about to embark on a major rebuilding programme to bring these into new use fit for the 21st and for the company's next twenty-five years and beyond.

As we consider the future, it's important to note that for the past ten years, or so, the Malthouse story has been one of progressive development and well-managed change. Whilst steel profiling is clearly a traditional industry that remains very much the same in essence, under Roy's and now also Paul's leadership, Malthouse has tried to keep itself at the top of its game by always thinking about how things could be done better. 'Better' by combining greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness, with better production methods and end-products, and increasingly with better outcomes for the environment.

The company has for a number of years operated a suggestions scheme encouraging any employee or group of employees to recommend improvements that will improve the job they do. Probably the most significant change to come through this process has been Malthouse's innovative 'scraper-conveyor' that was devised, designed and developed at Malthouse. It was later patented and also installed in the cutting sheds at Keiton and Lynrose.





For the uninitiated, the ‘scraper-conveyor’ is, as its name suggests, a conveyor that scrapes the waste metal that gathers on the floor beneath the large area of the cutting bed – this includes off-cuts, centres and molten steel that falls, cools and solidifies during the flame-cutting process. When the mechanism is in operation the scrap is swept to the end of the cutting bed where it can be gathered easily and removed to the scrap-bin. The great advantage of this mechanism is that the waste doesn’t build up beneath the cutting bed and there is no need for the awkward, filthy and time-consuming process of the cutters having to repeatedly stop production in order to retrieve the waste material manually.

In the past, and still today in many steel profiling workshops, the scrap would gather for days beneath the cutting bed until the large amount of waste needed

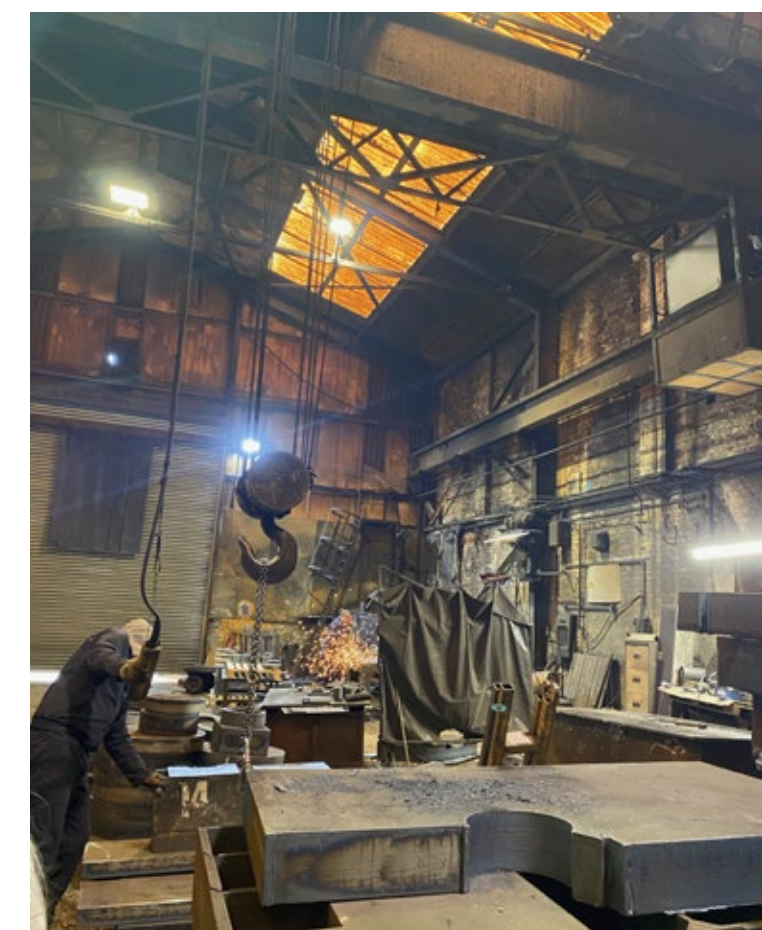
to be cleared. Now, at Malthouse the scraper-conveyor runs effectively and efficiently underneath each of the beds in the cutting shed and can be operated whenever the cutter decides it’s time to switch it on and clear the decks. This simple innovation gathers waste material more effectively, it saves time, and therefore money, and it keeps the working environment safer and tidier which benefits for the workrate and well-being of employees.

Other recent environmental initiatives have included the installation of rainwater harvesting. Initially, four one-thousand litre containers were installed behind the back wall of the cutting shed. These were reused IBCs from oil deliveries. The number of containers was soon increased to eight, then to twelve, and so on until as many as thirty-two of these large cubes congregated at the rear of the site. This arrangement had become a little cumbersome and took up a lot of space. In addition, these white translucent containers allowed light to penetrate causing the build-up of algae which was problematic to remove. In recent months, therefore, two black cylinders – manufactured for the purpose of keeping light out – have been installed to provide 20,000 litres of water storage in a much neater and more space-efficient manner that eliminates the build-up of algae. The other initiative that has enabled rainwater to be used in production has been the use of U-V light to kill bacteria and disinfect the water. This again was an employee’s suggestion to make the water pure and safe for use in production. As a result of these developments, Malthouse now uses no mains water in its production process. As well as reducing costs, there are clear (no pun intended) ecological benefits.

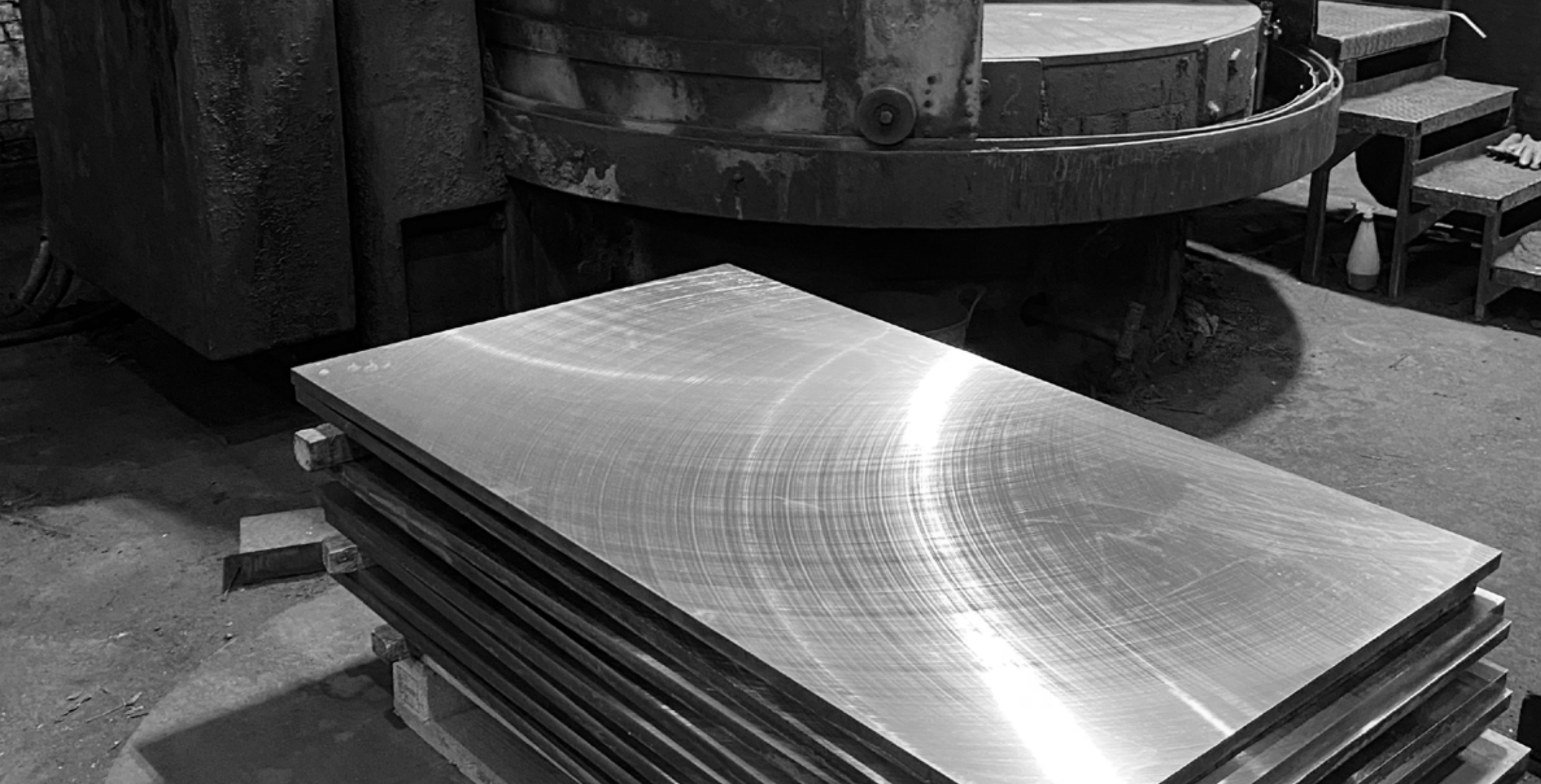
An earlier scheme, which continues to have real ecological benefits, is the planting of around fifty native deciduous trees at the rear and side perimeter of the premises. When the yard was extended in 1997, the land was lowered and levelled. This left an earth bank at the rear and side edges. The planting of trees has, in practical terms, helped to retain the ground. In environmental terms, today these mature trees provide habitats for birds and wildlife and some much-needed biodiversity in a largely barren industrial location. Amongst other birdlife, kestrels have been spotted in these trees.

Part of Malthouse’s focus on the future is a commitment to preserve the planet’s resources wherever possible. The company continues to explore initiatives that will benefit the environment, and in doing so make spent material a saleable resource rather than waste that costs to dispose of. Future environmental initiatives include obvious possibilities like the use of photovoltaic cells to utilise solar energy, and more specialist possibilities for the re-use of waste products from the grinding process. This waste includes the stubs of the grinding stones consisting of aluminium oxide in a phenolic resin, and the grit residue filtered from the water used in the grinding process. A number of options are being explored for recycling these waste-products, and Roy has approached specialists at Loughborough University to explore some potential solutions.

In terms of personnel, the past five years, in particular, are likely to prove crucial in the ongoing history of Malthouse Engineering. Several key appointments have been made that have strengthened the leadership and management team, and in doing so place the company in a great position to face the challenges of the next twenty-five years. As Roy has taken a step back from the day-to-day management of the business, Paul has made it his priority to build and develop a team of young, capable leaders and managers to take the company into its next phase.







## WITH A SPARK OF OPTIMISM

If you ask Paul Taylor what his priorities are for the future, he will tell you quickly – with a spark of optimism in his eye – that it's progress and change. His passion is for the business to go forward with new processes and new systems fit for the modern world. In recent years, both Roy and Paul have made it their aim to bring some new blood into the company to shape it and strengthen Malthouse Engineering for the next phase of its future as it sets course for the next big landmark, its centenary. Since Paul's arrival in 2014 a number of other key management appointments have been made. Paul speaks positively of bringing "young blood into the

business" and he is very aware of the fact that change and adaptation will continue to be an important part of the company's future. Along with new staff, there will be new processes and new systems necessary to continue to compete in the world of the future.

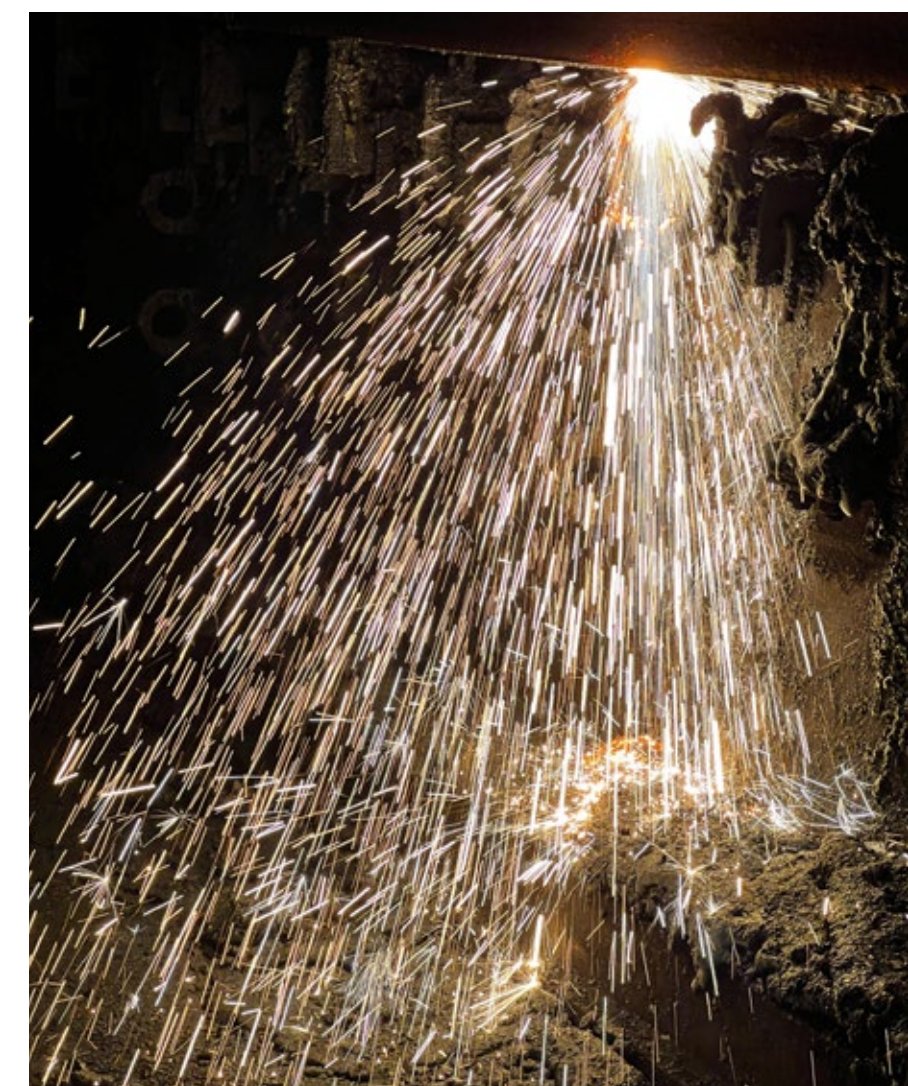
Roy speaks well of Paul's impact on their company's current success and future potential. He highlights Paul's ability to buy steel wisely and efficiently based on his knowledge of sales, and his awareness of the importance of cash-flow as two key factors. He also sees a change in culture that Paul has overseen, with a new

positivity, enthusiasm and willingness to work together characterising the workplace, both in the offices and on the factory floor.

Mere survival is not the aim at Malthouse after 75 years. To aim only to survive is likely to end in failure. The aim must be to thrive. Paul describes his primary aim as 'to drive the business to the next level' which will come with attention to detail, meeting customers' demands effectively and efficiently, with a continued focus on the core business of steel profiling: cutting, grinding and finishing steel profiles to the highest standards ready for the next stage of the manufacturing process.

Malthouse is looking healthy and fit for the future. The price of steel is bouyant. The last full year's accounts tell a positive, pleasing and promising story... the best year in the company's recent history. Yet, there's no room for complacency. The next few years may well see the global economic aftermath of the pandemic, the potential longer-term impact of Brexit, and the economic fall-out of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

However, a large and diverse customer-base representing over forty sectors – including the automotive industry, agriculture, engineering, construction, nuclear, wind and wave power – is one of the reasons for the company's resilience. This is reflected in the fact that Malthouse has in the region of three-hundred customers, with the top twenty representing only around 15% of the income. This breadth of customer base must remain a factor which continues to protect the company from variation in the price of steel and other resources, and from the volatility and vageries of the market for years and decades to come.



The other major factor in Malthouse's favour is the quality of its people. You don't have to spend long at Malthouse Engineering before you realise that the success and strength of a company is not only based on the quality of its processes, its product and its profitability... but crucially on the quality of its people and their ability to pull together.

With this in mind, we must celebrate some of the top quality people that Malthouse is proud and privileged to have on board.

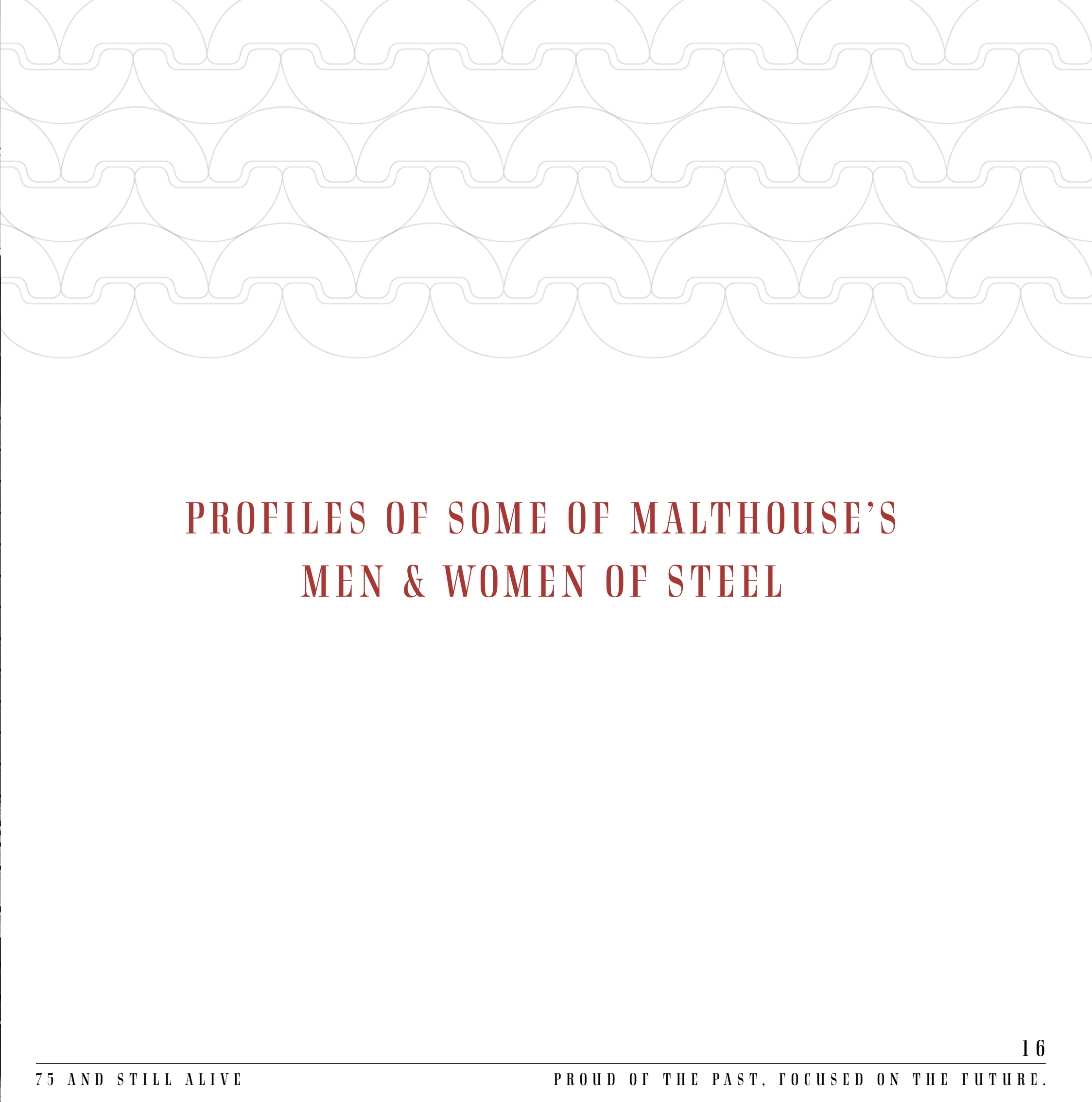




MALTHOUSE ENGINEERING . CO LTD

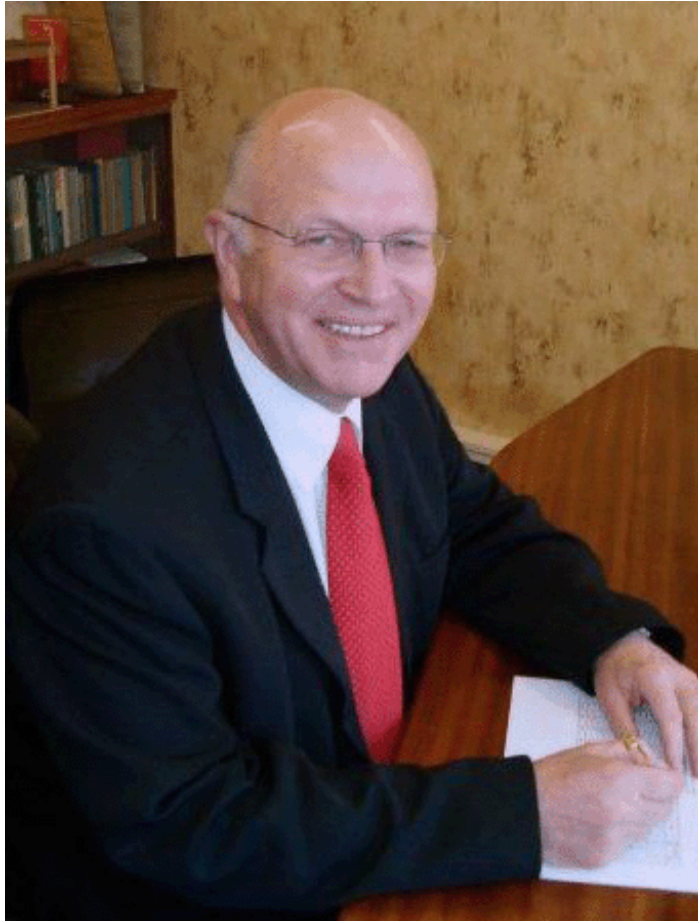
# PEOPLE TO BE PROUD OF

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS



# PROFILES OF SOME OF MALTHOUSE'S MEN & WOMEN OF STEEL





# ROY TAYLOR

## OWNER & MANAGING DIRECTOR

Roy Taylor arrived at Malthouse, in 1983, to take over from Bert Hands as Managing Director, he brought with him a lot of experience right across the various aspects of the business. It wouldn't be overstating it to suggest that the appointment of Roy Taylor was ultimately an act that ensured the long term survival and success of the company, and is one of the main reasons why Malthouse Engineering is still trading some 40 years later.

When we consider the background of Roy's early career, we can perhaps understand the story of his success. Most of his early jobs in industry were in training. Not directly in profits but in people. Though it is, of course, by training and developing our people that we are most likely to increase our profits – not just in the short term, but more permanently in the medium and longer term. It is clear from Roy's story that, whilst he has a strong head for business, he has always valued people very much.

Roy was born in March, 1944. In his early years, his poor eye-sight held him back and he'd not passed the 11-plus exam that would have meant that he'd have gone to Grammar School. His secondary school education was at Dudley's Park School. After those initial setbacks, he became increasingly successful and ambitious in school – especially in Maths, but in other areas too including the Dramatic Arts. In 1959, when he left school, he enrolled on a one-year, pre-apprenticeship course at Dudley Technical College, which then led to him beginning an Engineering Apprenticeship with British Steel in 1960. He achieved his City & Guilds qualifications, followed by the completion of his Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Mechanical Engineering.

During his seven years at British Steel, Roy had spent two of those years teaching and mentoring apprentices in the Training School. His aptitude for training others, and his enjoyment of this role, led to him becoming a Training Instructor with Horseley Bridge and Thomas Piggott, in Dudley Port, Tipton. He was soon promoted to Training Officer which also included liaising with apprentices in three remote locations. Six or so years (1967-73) at Horseley Bridge gave Roy a strong grounding right across the work of thriving steel engineering company, from the Drawing Office, to the Machine Shop and Fabrication.

In the following ten years, Roy became increasingly experienced as a Training manager. First, from 1973, this was at the Guinness Plastic Group – yes, a division of the brewers of the black stuff. This period included two years of valuable Management and Sales training and the gaining of a Diploma of Management Studies (DMS) from the University of Wolverhampton – Roy's strong connection with the University continues to this day.

From 1975, Roy continued to develop his expertise as a Training Manager at Ibstock Building Products, where he gained plenty of experience identifying training needs, then planning, implementing and developing training programmes. As at Guinness, his role also involved liaising with Training Boards to ensure compliance and maximise grants – this broader experience of the world of manufacturing industry was to prove valuable later. At Ibstock, Roy also moved into a Project Engineer role which extended his experience further into fabrication, sales and management.

In 1983, after six years at Ibstock, Roy seized the opportunity to make the move to Malthouse Engineering where, now approaching 40 years of age, he was appointed as Managing Director. Within three years, came an opportunity for a management buy out of Malthouse from the Frederick Cooper Group. The other four shareholders, primarily due to the stage in life they had reached, were not at all sure that they wanted to be part of the buyout going forward, so they agreed to a share buyback.

Roy is clearly a Managing Director who works on the basis that companies should, wherever possible, thrive – not just survive. Following the management buy-out in 1986, as had always been his intention, Roy began to expand the company to make it profitable. The next few years saw the Malthouse Group buying up several businesses: Keiton (Wednesbury), Freeston (just next door, with the purpose of developing the yard behind), then Minories and Malthouse (Sheffield), and Empyrium, Lynrose and Dennic (Worcester), followed by Northern and Premier (Wakefield) and Midland Steel Profiles (MSP).

Roy is also a man who sees the bigger picture – regionally, nationally and globally. Not only did Roy expand the business quite dramatically, he was also keen to have an influence in the steel industry at a regional and national level. In the late eighties, Roy was very conscious that there was no existing trade association for steel profilers. So, being the decisive and determined chap that he is, he went about setting up one. In 1988, using NASS (National Association of Steel Stockholders) as the secretariat, Roy brought together twenty new members to form an initial product group to promote and support the work of steel profiling businesses – Roy was its Chairperson for the first eight years. The group met quarterly and arranged several overseas trip to learn about steel production and profiling, and to establish contacts in Germany, USA, Japan and Czechoslovakia.

As Chair of the Profilers group, Roy was automatically on the NASS committee, where he gained a lot of respect and a reputation for getting the job done. In 2002, he was made Vice-President of NASS for the statutory period of two years.



Then, in 2004 he became President – again for the statutory two year period. One of his best memories of this period was inviting Digby Jones (then Director-General of the CBI) as the after-dinner speaker at the 2005 NASS Conference. This raised the prestige and profile of the event, and also enabled delegates to raise over £3000 for the British Heart Foundation. Roy continues to be on the NASS Committee as a past-President.

Roy is also active at a regional level. In October 2012, Malthouse were founder members of MADE in the Midlands, the newly instigated network organisation for local manufacturing businesses. Today, the organisation has over 400 members and is still supporting a wide variety of local companies. Roy is still involved in this network and earlier this year gave an online presentation about green issues at a virtual breakfast meeting.

Another given with Roy is that he will always value relevant education and training. In an industry that has a reputation for being mucky and old-fashioned, it is vital that new recruits are of the right caliber to make a success of themselves, and to add something to the success of the business. One of the key ways in which Roy has made this happen is through his connections with local Universities – in particular, through links made and sustained over the past twelve years or so with Birmingham City University (BCU) and University of Wolverhampton (UoW). It was in 2010, that Roy set up the first of several Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) to support and recruit graduates at Malthouse.

These partnerships with Post-graduate education continue to bear fruit at Malthouse. In 2012, Roy was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Wolverhampton in recognition of his work in this area. Roy also continues to sit on the advisory board of the Business School at UoW.

On a personal level, Roy is a great lover of gardening and travel – he and his wife have enjoyed foreign trips and river cruises in various parts of Europe. He also enjoys entertainment and the arts and is often keen to bring this enjoyment into bookings for works events. His own dramatic exploits see him standing in for Santa with some of his engagements in the Stourbridge and Sedgley areas on an annual basis. It is very obvious that Roy approaches everything in life – work, rest and play – with a great deal of passion and energy.

When you ask Roy what continues to motivate him, he'll be honest and say “ego” – his own personal drive and desire to succeed. But he will also say it's his desire to see everyone else succeed too: to make a good fist of doing their best at Malthouse; and to be happy, make a contribution and continue to grow. He's glad that his nephew, Paul – who now runs things on a day-to-day basis – thinks the same way – wanting to bring people on, see them succeed as people, and feel part of the team.

These days, approaching his eightieth year, Roy is working part time in a more executive role – but he is still going strong and still doesn't really believe in retirement!







# ALAN NORTHALL

## GRINDING SHOP FOREMAN

It was 2nd January 1978: Paul and Linda McCartney’s Wings were in the middle of a record-breaking 9-week stay at Number 1 with ‘Mull of Kintyre’; the ‘three degrees’ of Brendan Batson, Laurie Cunningham and Cyrille Regis were turning on the style at West Brom; the first ‘Star Wars’ movie had just landed in the UK; and Alan Northall arrived at Malthouse Engineering, the steel profiling company in Hainge Road, Tividale.

Alan went on to become a crucial part of operations for well over half of the life of this company. In April of this year, 2022, he finally retired after more than 44 years of faithful and first-class service.

Alan had been working in the very different trade of upholstery, but work was unreliable and unstable. He was a married man with a new house and two young children, so he needed something more secure with regular full-time

hours. He lived very locally and was known to Ken Webb, so when an opportunity as a trainer profile-cutter came along he grabbed it with both hands, literally and metaphorically.

Alan worked as a trainee cutter for just twelve months, before moving next door to become a grinder in what was then a small department with just three machines. However, in the early eighties and on into the nineties production took off and Alan’s wish for more work and longer hours was granted, with knobs on! They were, in his words “mega-busy”, and in fact, for many years – from 1981 to 1993 as Alan recalls – he found himself working seven days a week to maintain production and get orders finished. Even with the introduction of a night-shift in the mid-eighties the pace of production didn’t let up and Alan’s skills were still in high demand. Alan even recalls Roy arranging for a taxi to pick his family up from the airport after a holiday so that he could get back to work as soon as possible.

These years were also difficult with periods of recession and tightening of belts. However, it was also during these years, that he whole factory grew and a lot of new machinery was installed. Alan recalls the exciting purchase of a large ‘reciprocating grinder’ from Macready’s in 1981 – for the uninitiated, that’s one that goes backwards and forwards not round and round! The grinding department also, over the years, bought up machines from other companies and repaired and refurbished equipment that isn’t really manufactured any more. The stalwarts of Alan’s department, in equipment terms, continue to be the impressive set of almost irreplaceable Lumsden grinders. These are an impressive collection of circular grinding machines

that come in a range of seven different diameters from the ‘smallest’ at 36 inches, to a whopping 120-inch-diameter beast – that’s 10 feet, or just over 3 metres for the youngsters.

It was in 1992 that Alan became working foreman of the grinding department, a role he has made his own ever since. However, in 1993, soon after taking on this responsibility, came the break up of his marriage. Alan realised that he must adjust his working hours, to allow him to see his boys off to school in the mornings and be back soon after they returned home. These circumstances were not, he feared, compatible with the demands of working at Malthouse. However, so keen was Roy – by now the managing director – to retain Alan’s skills and experience that he made it possible for him to start at 8:30am and finish at 4:00pm – with no overtime. Alan recalls how accommodating and supportive Roy was on both a professional and personal level.

Alan has enjoyed the foreman’s role, for these past 30 years, especially the opportunity to make use of his experience in taking on new staff and bringing them on in the job. He speaks of some being almost afraid of the job initially, and needing to “coax them along” until they are capable and confident enough to work independently.

If you ask anyone at Malthouse, who knows anything about the quality of Alan’s work, they’ll tell you the same thing. As a skilled grinder, Alan is second to none. And, in fact, when asked what it is about his work he takes pride in he identifies the quality of finish he is able to achieve: “1½ to 2 thousandths of an inch” he says, better than precision finishing that you’d normally pay much more for. He hesitates before divulging this, such is the modesty of the man.

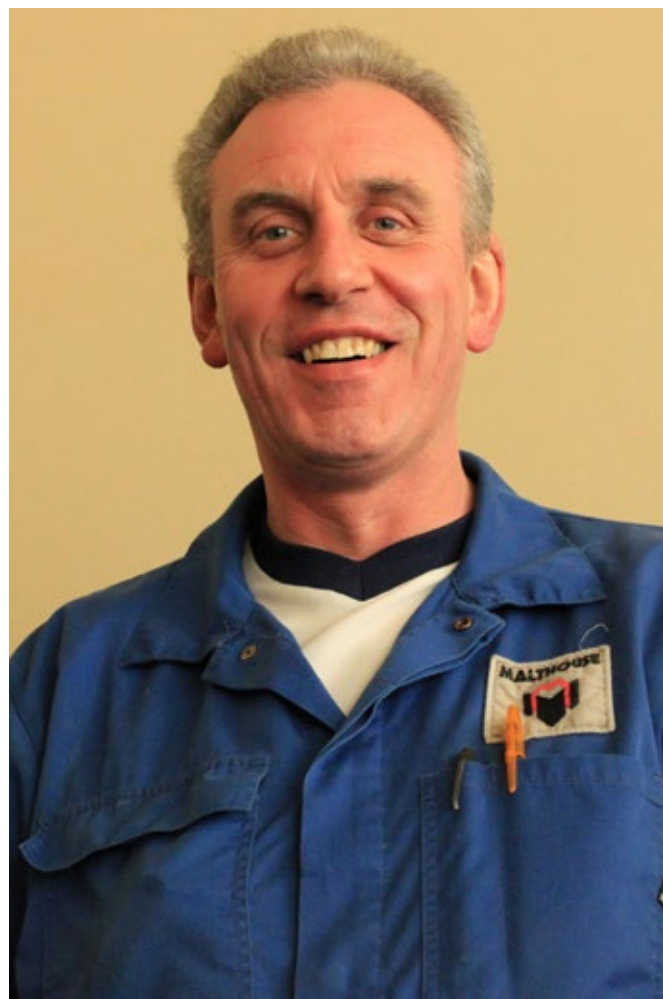
As someone who has been around for so long, and has seen so much of the comings and goings at Malthouse, it’s interesting to hear Alan’s take on what makes Malthouse Engineering what it is today. He speaks of practical business factors, like having a vast and varied order book to carry you through the tough times, having capacity to fulfil orders efficiently, and paying people right for the hard work they do. And he also speaks of having “good people” and “good influences” in the office and on the factory floor. “It’s all about the people, isn’t it?” he says. In his diffident way he’s making a statement, not asking a question.

Alan speaks well of the people at Malthouse. The old-guard like himself, and Tom Evans, his counterpart in the cutting shed, and Roy Taylor who would still have Alan staying on if he could! Yet, Alan also speaks very highly of the new breed: Shane and John in the factory, and Matt the factory manager; and the new recruits in the office. He describes Paul Taylor as “first class” and “really tuned in to modernising the company”.

And if it is, as Alan suggests, “all about the people” then we must acknowledge Mr Alan Northall himself, as one of those people who has kept Malthouse Engineering going through thick and thin (and we don’t just mean the the steel plate) and has truly helped make this operation what it is today.

Alan, we salute you, and wish you a well-deserved and very happy retirement.





## TOM EVANS

### CUTTING DEPARTMENT FOREMAN

Tom Evans came to Hainge Road in April 1992, with the aquisition of Empyrium and the move from Newtown in Birmingham. He had been the flame-cutting foreman and moved across to take up the same role on a larger scale. Although, the cutting process is still essentially the same, Tom reflects on how much the environment of the factory has changed; it's "100% better now" he suggests.

He is pleased and proud to have played his part in bringing about changes that have improved the quality of both the work and the working environment. He lists a number of such improvements: like having a bigger, better and safer stockyard; the introduction of efficient computer-operated cutting machines; the installation of the home-grown scraper beneath every cutting machine to keep the floor area cleaner and less cluttered; simple changes like better gangways marked out clearly and kept clear; and, most recently, better toilets and washroom facilities.

Yet, the biggest factor for Tom is – once again – the people. He feels privileged

to have, over the years, worked with "a lot of good people". And it's obvious that he's not just talking with some rose-tinted nostalgia for the past. "The new people are just as good," he says. He speaks paricularly highly of Paul, Matt and Ashley and of the respect they have from the lads on the shop floor. This comes, he suggests, from being a good team, from good communication – being kept informed – and from promises being kept, whether it's to do with wages, facilities or whatever. These guys have "kept the company gooin'," Tom suggests – moved things on and set things up well for the future.

Someone that Tom, reserves particular praise for is his co-foreman, John Evans – no relation, he adds. As Tom has suffered some health issues in recent times, John has been totally supportive – always positive, hard-working and reliable. Tom has seen his younger counterpart work his way up from the bottom, taking on every opportunity for self-improvement and development. "Trust is important," Tom says, and it's clear from his tone that it matters a lot to have someone working alongside him that he knows he can rely on.

Refering to his health problems, Tom is appreciative of the way the company have treated him – and Roy and Paul in particular. "They couldn't have treated me better," he says. It was heart-warming to spend time with Tom, and an absolute privilege to hear his story and listen to him speak so well of his colleagues, new and old. This loyal and quietly spoken man is just the kind of chap that Malthouse's success and survival all these years has been built on.

## NEIL 'NELLY' FULLWELL



### TRANSPORT MANAGER & MAN OF MANY TALENTS

Back in 1982, Neil Fulwell was an amateur Rugby player for the "Birmingham Welsh", a team playing out of Bickenhill, Birmingham. While working at the bar in the clubhouse he was approached by a fan, who we now know to be Tudor Hargest, a Director at Empyrium Profiles. Tudor asked Neil if he fancied "a couple of weeks' work" at his factory.

A couple of weeks became a couple of years, and more. Eventually ten years later, after starting what he thought was a couple of weeks of casual work, he found himself upping sticks and moving from his hometown of Chelmsley Wood to Tividale, following the purchase of Empyrium Profiles by Malthouse Engineering. Neil continued with his hard graft as a labourer/loader, working alongside his Malthouse colleagues until 2017, when he accepted a more senior role.

Neil now runs the group's transport operation, ensuring the prompt and smooth delivery of profiles to many hundreds of customers throughout the UK. A joy to behold, his adorable assistant, Jane Saunders, keeps him in check. Neil claims that his hearing has declined over the years, since working with Jane... but quickly adds, because he knows what's good for him, it's a cost he is grateful for!





## PAUL SMITH

### DAUGHTSMAN & DRAWING OFFICE MANAGER

## TIM SCRIVENS

### DAUGHTSMAN & IT MANAGER

The first thing that Paul Smith and Tim Scriven said, when I arrived to interview them, was to offer an apology for their bad jokes and poor standard of their humour. I was prepared for the worst, but it turned out to be better than they had forecast. Perhaps, Paul and Tim are the Aynuck and Ayli of Malthouse – but there’s nothing poor standard about their work and their loyalty to the cause.

The light-hearted atmosphere of the Drawing Office belies the seriousness with which Paul and Tim take their work. Both men, as long-standing (or long-sitting to be more exact) employees speak positively of the acknowledgement there is of their experience and expertise, as well as the backing and support they enjoy in being trusted to get to get on with their jobs.

Paul Smith, like Tom Evans, arrived at Hainge Road in 1992, with the purchase of Empyrium. He recalls being driven over in Roy’s ‘jag’ and told that they would be introducing new technology into his work as a draughtsman. Until then, everything had been drawn out manually on a huge boards – with some jobs taking several sheets of A1 paper, which were pinned up on a whole wall to view them. Paul speaks with some respect for Roy’s positive and forward-thinking attitude, and of the way in which the promised changes have happened to transform his job as a draughtsman with the gradual transition from cumbersome drawing-boards to Pro-cut, the complete CAD system in use today.

Tim Scrivens arrived five years later, in 1997, from Tyldsley, with the aquisition of MSP (Midland Steel Profiling) where he had been Works Manager. So Tim brought with him a background of knowing the whole process of steel profiling from start to finish. He speaks positively of the knowledge that many employees have of each other’s roles in the company and sees this as a strength, enabling people to work well together. As a draughtsman, and IT Manager, he sees himself playing a crucial role which connects work of the office with the work of the factory. Even during my short time with Tim and Paul, this was borne out by several queries and requests via phone calls and people popping into the office from both sides of ‘the wall’.

Both Paul and Tim, both speak of a degree of trust that exists in he workplace – and it is very clear that they both enjoy coming to work. Much of this comes down to an atmosphere mutual trust. The trust they enjoy in being allowed to get on with doing their jobs, and likewise their trust and respect for those leading the company. They speak of Roy Taylor as someone whose “glass is always half-full” and whose door is always open – especially if there are personal issues that need to be discussed. They particularly commented on Roy’s desire to keep staff on if at all possible and hating to let people go when times have been tough. Likewise, they describe Paul Taylor as “professional” – with an eye for detail and quality with orders – and “proactive” – getting things done and following through on his promises. From simple things, like the decoration and refurbishing of spaces that haven’t seen a lick of paint in living memory, to a bigger vision for the future.

And what of the future? It seems that these two rather experienced and astute funny-men, in their little office tucked away at the far end of the bottom corridor, might be ideally placed to act as a barometer for the company’s prospects. Let’s hope so, because they suggest that the outlook is good. Both have seen the company come through times of recession and negotiate the proverbial rollercoaster of the past twenty-five to thirty years. They identify the past ten years as being tough at times, but think it’s no accident that Malthouse have survived when others have gone under.

Both men are optimistic about Malthouse’s future based on better sales, increased efficiency in the use of steel, and the combination of experienced collegaues and some excellent more recent recruits who will take the company into the future. Paul sums up Malthouse’s secret as being “competitive but not complacent.” Tim’s professional and considered conclusion is, “We must be doin’ summat roight!” And who are we to disagree with such profound wisdom?!



# JOHN EVANS

## CUTTING SHOP CO~FOREMAN

As a young man of just 18, John was keen to find a job – almost any job would do. He was keen to work and earn an honest wage, and (fortunately) wasn’t afraid of getting his hands dirty. He decided that he would walk the length of Hainge Road knocking on doors and asking if there was work available. At Malthouse, he received a “yes” and the rest, as they say, is history.

After that initial knock on the door, back in 1999, John was taken on to start the next day and do “progress chasing” – essentially a “gopher”, doing a lot of lifting and shifting of heavy items. His role was to move items through the factory so that jobs could be progressed and completed efficiently. Whilst he knew this humble role was necessary to the production process, he was keen to learn new skills and make his own kind of progress through the factory.

Soon, at his own request, he was learning the skills of a crane-driver, and in due course, he took on responsibility for craning steel into and out of the thick cutting bay. Then, on occasions when work was a bit quiet he asked the foreman, Tom, if he could learn the skills of a cutter. Sometime later, seeing John’s commitment and potential, the company made him Yard Foreman and more recently he has become Co-Foreman of the cutting shed, working well alongside Tom to oversee an increasingly busy department.

Having joined Malthouse at the turn of the millennium as a very young chap, perhaps John’s story is one that can tell us much about the ethos and environment of the company in the past twenty-odd years. John describes Malthouse as “a great company to work for” that rewards you for your hard work and “sees what you’re trying to do”. It seems very fitting that John’s story of his own progression from progress chaser to Foreman typifies a workplace that values and rewards hard work and willingness to learn.

John sums up the no-nonsense, down-to-earth appeal of places like Malthouse in what turns out to be his own rather poetic rhyming couplet:



“IT’S A DIRTY OLD SHIT ‘OLE ...  
BUT FOR ME,  
COMPANIES LIKE THIS ARE  
THE BEST PLACE TO BE”.

~ JOHN EVANS





# ANDY ROBINSON

## SALES EXECUTIVE

Andy Robinson is a fully paid-up company man. He has worked for the Malthouse group of companies in various roles over the years. In 2006, Andy took on the role of General Manager at Lynrose in Worcester. Housed in its beautiful Victorian premises at Shrub Hill, Lynrose was a lovely place to work. It was a relatively small operation and Andy covered the office work – sales, deliveries and various other administrative roles. The work at Lynrose was quite specific but it was thriving and busy. Andy speaks fondly of his five very positive years at Lynrose.

However, in 2011, an opportunity to manage sales at Malthouse arose and Andy was offered the post. Although he felt some sadness about leaving the lovely surroundings of Worcester, Malthouse was much closer to home and managing a Sales team was what he had originally become skilled at. For several years,

Andy successfully managed sales of the Malthouse Division of the Malthouse group.

Being honest, Andy found the early years quite difficult. The atmosphere in the sales office wasn't always pleasant. The ethos was one of competition within the Sales team, not collaboration. There was a degree of tension and rivalry in the air that made Andy quite uncomfortable.

However, Andy speaks quite candidly of a “massive change in ethos and environment” with the arrival of Paul Taylor. “Paul changed the dynamic,” he says. Whereas, in the past people were somewhat entrenched in their ways and could often be difficult, now people are happy to collaborate and want to help and learn from each other. “It’s refreshing to see new people being trained,” Andy says with a rather refreshed-looking glint in his eyes.

Andy has suffered some health issues in the past few years, after suffering from leukemia and coming through treatment. Consequently, he has stepped down from his management role and is more than happy to utilise his vast experience as a member of the team. He’s genuinely happy to see Jack Coward come in and take on the role with such success. Andy speaks postively of feeling fortunate to work with good people who are good at their jobs and are good friends too. Fundamentally, Andy’s happy to be alive, to have a job he enjoys, and is grateful to those who came in during the Covid-19 pandemic, when he was too clinically vulnerable to do so.

Unsurprisingly, Andy is upbeat about the company’s prospects for the future. He sees no reason why the Malthouse group can’t continue to be successful for the foreseeable. In particular, he cites as evidence a genuine trust in younger people to carry the company forward. It was refreshing to hear an old grey-beard (sorry, Andy!) speaking with such admiration for the qualities of much younger colleagues, and of faith in them to carry the Malthouse mantle into the future.



# ASHLEY ASTON

## QUALITY ASSURANCE, HEALTH & SAFETY AND HR MANAGER

In March 2020, at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Ash was working for Keiton Engineering in Wednesbury and whilst on furlough became concerned about the possibility of redundancy and the closure of the company. His fears for the company were well-founded and sadly Keiton’s days were numbered. However, Ashley speaks of the relief he felt when he was spared redundancy as he and some of his colleagues were taken on at Malthouse. He also speaks of the difficulty of knowing that others of his workmates were not so fortunate. Yet, it was clear that the closure of Keiton had become an inevitability accelerated by the sudden impact of the pandemic.

Arriving at Hainge Road during the pandemic was not the easiest of beginnings. Reflecting back on this period, especially with his responsibility for Health and Safety, Ash is very aware that this was a time for pulling together through difficult days when many were concerned about their own health, safety and well-being.

Ash knows that he is fortunate to have a good, secure job that he enjoys with a company that is now stronger having consolidated its assets and staffing. The lasting impact of the pandemic seems to have been to leave Malthouse Engineering in a strong position with good plans for the future. He is excited and proud to work for a company where there is no “power thing” – where people are treated equally and fairly as individuals, not numbers.



# TIM BROOKS

## SALES MANAGER ~ EMPYRIUM



“ONE BIG  
FAMILY”

Tim Brooks was originally employed as a sales estimator for the Malthouse sales team. In 2013 he changed alliances heading up the team as Sales Manager with the sister company Empyrium Profiles. Still, today, Tim handles sales for the same division, and still deals with many loyal customers in South Wales. Like Andy, Tim tells a story of a move in recent years under Paul’s leadership towards a more harmonious atmosphere in the sales office. He sums up his own belief in a more supportive working environment in phrases like “one big family” and “we all need each other”. It’s very clear from Tim’s comments that he feels no sense of Empyrium being in competition for sales with MSP or Malthouse. Quite the opposite, he sees clearly the interdependence of the companies within the group.

Tim also speaks of some tough times financially in the past decade or so, which has caused the group to pull together and consolidate its resources. He also reports improving sales and increased profitability over the past few years. Tim highlights Paul’s ability to buy steel wisely, greater efficiency in production and a more bouyant economy as some of the reasons for improved fortunes. On a personal level, Tim is well aware of his role in maintaining a broad customer-base, and good customer relations – not only to bring in new custom, but also to maintain good personal contacts with existing and regular customers.

Again, as one of the old-guard, Tim is complimentary about the “next generation” and sees a good future ahead.







# PAUL TAYLOR

## Director and General Manager

Paul Taylor joined the sales team at Keiton Engineering in November of 2011, moving to Hainge Road a couple of years later, in January 2014, to head up sales for Midland Steel Profiles. It was in fact, Rob Field, Paul's boss at Keiton that selflessly recommended him to Roy for the move to Hainge Road. A year after this, Paul moved across to lead group sales – a role he fulfilled and developed until 2018. Over the past three or four years, as Roy has adopted a more executive role, Paul has taken on the role of General Manager and has overseen the day-to-day running of the company.

Paul's success can be put down a whole host of factors, none more than good honest hard graft, a long working day and focus on the detail. The day starts early with a walk and a chat with the staff, a meeting with Production, Sales and Finance before getting down to business. Other priorities include the fine

art of purchasing steel at the best price, making cost-savings wherever possible, placing value of the quality and well-being of the staff team. It's all about focusing on consistency and avoiding complacency.

Paul speaks with enthusiasm of being constantly mindful of the aim to succeed, progress and prosper as a company. He also speaks of the importance of building trust and keeping promises made to employees. He places a high value on loyalty, good relationships and on seeing a happy team across the site, in the factory and the office. Many employees, in the office and on the factory floor, speak highly of Paul's ability to balance his drive for profitability and progress with his respect for their welfare and job satisfaction.

Paul's increasing influence, as Director and General Manager, has been a major factor in the recent development of Malthouse Engineering. With Roy's continued support and oversight, this has been a natural process of transition and development that has brought the company to its 75th anniversary in good health.

There is no doubt at all, that Paul has a vision for the future of Malthouse Engineering. At this crucial stage of the company's history, as it moves into its fourth quarter-century, Paul's balance of respect for the expertise of experienced colleagues, with his championing of new and younger recruits – the "futures-men" as he loves to call them – is reaping its rewards. Colleagues right across the company, office and factory, youthful and mature, express an optimism and belief that Malthouse has a good future ahead.

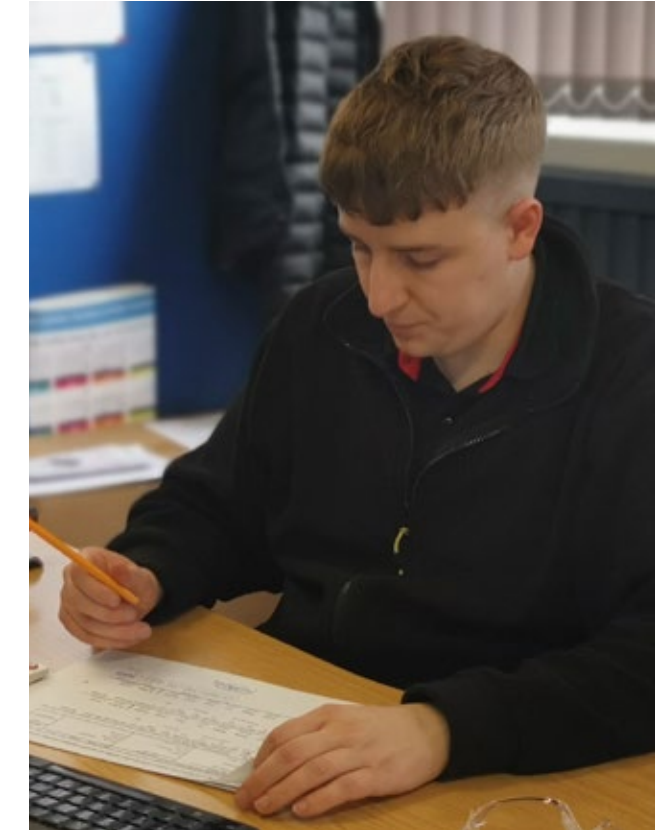
# MATT HAZLEHURST

## FACTORY WORKS MANAGER

In June of 2016, the first of the recent crop of new recruits joined the management team. Matt Hazlehurst joined the Malthouse group after completing his degree in Business Management at the University of Worcester. His first role was heading up the Sales Department at Lynrose. After a short period, Matt got more involved not only in Sales but also in production at Lynrose in Worcester. With the closure of Lynrose the natural progression towards production was inevitable and Matt began the task of taking more and more production responsibility on until he was given the role of Factory Works Manager from January 2022. This challenging but rewarding role of Factory Works Manager – a job that sees him overseeing the smooth and efficient running of the factory, liaising between the office and the shop floor and overseeing the process from ordering and sales through each stage of production to dispatch.

In reflecting on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, Matt recalls those initial fears about what would happen, how the company would be affected, even whether it could survive. However, he also recalls how the skeleton crew of management had to learn quite quickly and adapt to the situation. After an initial closure of just two weeks, it became necessary to identify staff who were vulnerable and those most uncomfortable about being in the workplace, and then to resume operations with around 70% of the staff on-site for all or part of the week. He recalls how staff "banded together" through these "tough but rewarding" times.

Matt speaks positively of the way he's been nurtured through the learning process in this role. He is very upbeat about the strong team ethos, and the reward of being part of the process of making components that play their part in a whole variety of sectors and applications – that sense of contributing to something else. Matt's local and family heritage makes him happy to be working in this "dirty" job and, although it sounds like a contradiction to say it, he is proud to be working in a humble industry in the heart of the Black Country.



## “THE HEART OF THE BLACK COUNTRY”



## JANE SAUNDERS

### PRODUCTION, TRANSPORT & MARKETING ADMINISTRATOR



At last, a woman! Jane Saunders is one of only a few women working in the largely male domain of Malthouse Engineering. She's not slightly phased by this, and thoroughly enjoys the camaraderie of the Malthouse team. Jane arrived in January 2017, and worked in Sales for eighteen months before moving downstairs to work opposite Neil 'Nelly' Fullwell in his role as Transport Manager.

Jane describes one of her key roles as "nagging Nelly". In effect, this means that she does lots of administration related to transport and deliveries: booking lorries; ordering packing materials; contacting customers; liaising with Matt as Works Manager... and so on. And just in case she gets bored, she does some work on marketing too!

A key role Jane plays she describes as being the "buffer zone" which means that she spends a lot of time keeping

customers up to date on delivery times, negotiating where necessary, adding a note of realism in some cases, and trying to let customers know early enough if there is going to be any delay to their order. With upwards of one thousand customers across the group, this is a demanding role which requires a relatively "even keel" Jane suggests – and regular dose of good humouredness, too.

Yet it's the variety that Jane enjoys. No two days are the same; some days run smoothly, others are hectic. The other thing that makes the job enjoyable, for Jane, is – yes, you've guessed it – it's the people and the teamwork. Jane describes the team she's part of as "flexible and diverse... good people who will go the extra mile. People want to be here and want to make a contribution," Jane suggests. This description is as true, it seems, of Jane as it is of anyone else.



## JACK COWARD

### GROUP SALES MANAGER

In January of 2018, Jack Coward arrived at Malthouse, also after completing a Business degree at University of Worcester. Initially, he joined the company on a KEEN (Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Network) project. This ten-month business improvement programme was organised in conjunction with Birmingham City University and funded by the European Union Regional Development Fund. For Jack this was an ideal transition from university to work, building his confidence and making the transition to the sales team a natural process.

Jack was attracted to working in a relatively small company with a family atmosphere, rather than for a large impersonal multi-national. Jack speaks of "finding his fit" at Malthouse. Still today, it is the team ethos and sense of playing a significant role in the company that he finds most rewarding. Since taking on management of the sales team he has enjoyed the process of making decisions that are not necessarily black and white – that process of discussion, of drawing on others' experience and expertise and, as manager, having to make the final call.

In summing up how the Covid-19 pandemic affected him and others at Malthouse, Jack speaks highly of how the situation was managed – of how those who were most vulnerable were protected, and of the outstanding commitment of the team on site. Despite initial fears about the possible impact of the pandemic and even of redundancy, Jack speaks of the company going from strength to strength. Like others, Jack expresses pride in working at Malthouse with its good morale and a strong sense of building for the future – and even of a fresh impetus in the company's outlook as it comes out of the pandemic stronger than it went in.



# MUHAMMAD SHAKEEL

## KTP PLACEMENT



Muhammad Shakeel has a BA (Hons) in Business Management with Marketing, and an MSc in Marketing, and is currently on a two-year KTP placement at Malthouse. This Knowledge Transfer Partnership is a three-way collaboration between the company, Birmingham City University and Innovate UK, with the explicit aim of bringing academic knowledge and methodology into the workplace to foster innovation and progressive change for the benefit of business.

Muhammad is, therefore, an important part of the Malthouse story, despite only having been here for a few months when I spoke with him, because he represents something significant that's going on at Malthouse that is likely to give the company a viable future. It has been Roy's passion for over a decade now to use the KTP programme to keep the company alert to fresh ideas and fresh input.

Muhammad has a workplan agreed by all three partners, along with regular meetings with Roy and/or Paul and his supervisor from the University. He is working on a series of lines of enquiry, including diagnostic analysis of performance, analysis of the customer database, and possibilities for digital

marketing. He is hoping to generate academic papers from his work, and of course contribute to the future development of Malthouse Engineering as the company aims to be competitive and in good condition for the future. A future that Muhammad might well become part of if there is a mutual desire for him to join the Malthouse team when his KTP is completed.

The use of the KTP scheme, and the similar KEEN programme, have certainly been instrumental in Malthouse recruiting some promising young employees in the past decade or so. At the very least, it is hoped that Muhammad's findings and recommendations will be instrumental in helping the company enter its fourth quarter-century fighting-fit and future-proof.



# GRAHAM JONES

## COMPANY ACCOUNTANT

One of Malthouse's most recent recruits, Graham Jones, joined as Company Accountant in September of 2021. He had previously worked for a steel company in Wolverhampton. A few years ago he thought he would try a different route and took on a role with a recruitment group. However, he only worked there for just two years, because he quickly realized that his heart was in working for a traditional steel company. He was, therefore, very pleased to secure a job with Malthouse Engineering.

Graham speaks highly of the team he has joined, and of being made to feel very welcome by them. For him the traditional environment of a Black Country steel profiling company is a perfect fit. He values the emphasis on honest hard work, self-discipline and respect for one's workmates he has found at Malthouse. He is very proud to work for a company that represents something of the past, which is doing well in the present, and has a part to play in the future. He feels that he and his colleagues are doing their bit to

pass on their baton of Black Country manufacturing to the next generation. It seems very fitting to close this celebration of Malthouse Engineering, and the people who make it tick, with Graham's eloquent summing up:

“The very essence of the Black Country is encapsulated in places like this; people work hard and tell it like it is. There are no airs and graces, no side, and no front. There is pride here, but not arrogance”.





MALTHOUSE ENGINEERING . CO LTD

# THE NEXT CHAPTER

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

## POSTSCRIPT: THE NEXT CHAPTER BEGINS

As this 75th Anniversary commemorative book is being finalised ready for publication, plans are being made to celebrate with an event to be held at the Black Country Living Museum. How fitting that this living and breathing example of Black Country industrial heritage and progress should be recognized in this way.

Yet it's even more fitting that – even as these arrangements for celebrating the company's 75th anniversary are being made – the next chapter of Malthouse's story is already being written. Plans to extend and develop the site in Hainge Road are afoot, clearly signalling an intention to expand and thrive in the years and decades to come.

In mid-2022 the purchase of No.5 Hainge Road was completed. The acquisition of these adjacent and adjoining premises is something that Roy has had in his sights for some time. Back in 1990, Malthouse bought the company next door at No.5, William Freeston Limited – a business which had relocated to Hainge Road at a similar time as Malthouse over sixty years ago. However, whilst the business was purchased the premises were not and they remained in the ownership of the Freeston family.



# THE ARTIST’S IMPRESSION

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Malthouse, therefore, leased the building from 1990 onwards. However, the fabric of the building was poorly maintained and it gradually became unfit for purpose. Because of this Malthouse moved their staff out of this building into their own premises at No.3 in 2021. Ever since then, the building has remained empty and unused, and has consequently deteriorated. For a number of years, Roy has made it known that he would like to purchase the premises in order to make improvements. Finally, in May of this year, a combination of patience and persistence paid off. Malthouse was given the go ahead to purchase the building and land from the Freeston family.

Very soon, this takeover will become a makeover. An artist’s impression, as you can see, gives a good idea of how the site will be transformed with a brand new building and development of the space around it. In addition, the existing Malthouse site will undergo a major facelift, as also shown in the artist’s impression.

Demolition of the tired old Freeston’s building is imminent, and plans for an impressive new structure are underway. This will comprise a purpose-built, single-span building to house a sizable new factory, along with a conference room and a suite of offices spread over two floors. This new development will be a state-of-the-art facility that is fit for purpose and fit for the future. The grand opening of the new premises is expected to come in late 2023, just one year after the current 75th anniversary celebrations. This will offer another valuable opportunity to reflect on the past and re-imagine the future of Malthouse Engineering.



POEM

OLD MR MALTHOUSE

*In honour of all at Malthouse Engineering on the occasion of its 75th anniversary.*

Old Mr Malthouse has a twinkle in his eye  
as he tips his corrugated cap to the bright blue sky.  
“Morning,” he calls, “it’s so good to be alive.”  
You’d never guess for a minute that he’s seventy-five.

He cuts a stylish gait as he struts around the yard;  
while his voice is soft, his resolve is iron-hard.  
He’s rough round the edges and a little bit smelly,  
but his nerves are steel and there’s fire in his belly.

Up close, there’s signs of his seventy-five years;  
there’s smoke in his nostrils and swarf in his ears,  
filings under nails and grease on his hands.  
He’s seen some years, but still he stands

tall as a crane, carries like a fork-lift truck,  
shines in the heat and thrives on the muck.  
He loves it when he gets to the grinding stage;  
his work is so precise regardless of his age.

There’s plenty more mileage in the old grinder yet;  
he’s still immensely proud of the finish he can get.  
He can work in fractions of millimeters,  
and he loves his big, old Lumsdens and reciprocators.

Yet Mr Malthouse knows that it’s the people that matter;  
when you value the people the outcomes are better.  
He loves them best with no front and no side.  
He’s got no time for arrogance, but plenty for pride.

Pride in honest work and a job well done.  
Pride in the struggle and the victories won.  
He’s virtually unknown, but don’t get me wrong:  
he’s a Black Country legend: unassuming; unsung.

So, respect to Mr Malthouse at seventy-five.  
Don’t think for a minute he’s just happy to survive.  
He’s looking to the ton; he’s looking to thrive;  
looking strong and steely-eyed to the next twenty-five.



# A NOTE FROM THE WRITER

Martin Yates

I couldn't complete this writing commission without saying what an absolute pleasure and privilege it has been to meet and talk with everyone at Malthouse – from Roy and Paul right across the whole team in the office and on the factory floor. Every person I've spoken with has been positive, and even passionate, about what they do in a quiet and unassuming way. I can honestly say that a job I had thought at the outset might be rather mundane has been made meaningful and inspiring by the people profiled in this document, and many others who don't feature by name. I hope my work as a writer does justice to the honest hard work of everyone involved in this wonderful example of Black Country industry. The poem is my own tribute to the personality and pride of this place and its people.

## THANK YOU

Roy would like to say thank you to everyone who contributed to the book. Thank you to staff members who took part in interviews and photographs. Thank you to the author Martin, who took the time to research and interview us here at Malthouse, and Claire for helping make the book come to life with the design and layout. Last but not least our customers, who help keep Malthouse alive.

## PHOTO CREDITS:

Katie Durkin, David Osbaldestin, Claire Shinton.