



# 2002 PRESIDENT



## IAN SADLER • IRON & STEEL SOCIETY

Sadler has served as chairman of the Mechanical Working and Steel Processing Division of the Iron & Steel Society from 1994-95 and served on the board of directors from 1997-99.

He has been married to Linda for 29 years, and they have three children, Catherine, Aimee and Jonathan. Sadler became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1997.

**I&SM:** Early in your career, you were one of the youngest foundry managers in the world. What was that like?

**SADLER:** It was exciting. Early in the 1970s, the forecasts and prospects of steel were very bullish. British Rollmakers was already exporting rolls all over the world. We were on the forefront of technology. The high chromium iron rolls were just being developed to replace the rolls formerly used in the early stands of the finishing train. We were making those rolls then by the static manufacturing method. It was very expensive. Centrifugal casting as a process was developed as an alternative means of producing this type of roll. We saw product and process being developed simultaneously.

**I&SM:** Was the timing right to be in such an instrumental position?

**SADLER:** I worked with a good team of people. We had the ideas; we had the people, and we gained the resources and money through capital investments. The economics seemed to be right at that time. You must have all of those things. You can be at the right place at the right time, but if the economics are wrong, watch out. The early '70s were really very prosperous. At that time, everything was going well for the global steel industry and we didn't see any clouds on the horizon until the mid-1970s with OPEC and the price of oil. That caught a lot of people unaware, both in Europe and the United States.

**I&SM:** How did you become a member

of ISS?

**SADLER:** Some of my colleagues at National Roll were members of the Society. I probably attended one or two ISS conferences before I became a member. I joined in 1985, predominately to be part of the roll technology section of the mechanical working division. I wish that in the early days of my career there was an equivalent of the Iron & Steel Society in the U.K. offering conferences. The ISS conferences are a wonderful place to meet people and obtain new ideas and have friendly rivalry with competitors. It really helps to find out what is going on behind the scenes in a rapidly changing global industry such as ours.

**I&SM:** Did joining the ISS benefit your employer?

**SADLER:** Certainly. When I first started attending some of the other conferences, I was amazed at how much I learned. The first electric furnace conference I attended was eye-opening, and I took back many good ideas to my employer.

Companies benefit from having employees develop professionally. ISS members can use contacts that they have made and take advantage of networking to help solve problems much more easily.

At one conference, we gave a paper on a particular type of roll. The interaction with the customers provided an opportunity to talk about the success and the problems of implementing the new grade of roll. These were the type of things that were always discussed when people came together at the conferences. My colleagues and I met people there and those friendships would carry on throughout our careers. We encountered a variety of opinions – there's always a lot of controversy over what type of roll performs best under what circumstances. At the Mechanical Working Conference, I began to have an appreciation for how flat products and the physical product metallurgy were all impacted by decisions made in the rolling mill and vice versa.

Ian Sadler was born and educated in England and studied natural sciences at Cambridge University, graduating with a first-class honors degree in 1972. He entered the iron and steel industry in 1972 and was appointed foundry manager of British Rollmakers Corp. one year later, making him one of the youngest foundry managers in the world. Sadler received a master's degree from Cambridge in 1976 and held technical and managerial positions with British Rollmakers. He was involved in the development of the high chromium roll, followed by the introduction of the centrifugal casting process for the manufacture of rolling mill rolls.

In 1981, Sadler moved to the United States and joined U. S. Steel Group. In 1984, he became vice president of metallurgical services at National Roll (now part of the Akers Group).

In this career, Sadler has held the positions of vice president of Blaw Knox Rolls, chief operating officer of Johnstown Corp. and president of Shenango Industries Inc. He joined Atchison Castings Corp. in 2001 as president of the Pennsylvania Foundry Group (PFG), a group of foundries serving the pump, valve, defense and general engineering markets. PFG is a subsidiary of Atchison.



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You could change the product physical metallurgy and make a big difference to the rolling parameters.

**I&SM:** How has the iron and steel industry changed since you first began your career in the early 1970s?

**SADLER:** We saw the demise of the open hearth furnaces in the '70s, followed by the introduction of continuous casting. In the '80s, continuous casting dominated the industry and we began a new phase, which did away with roughing stands, going straight to finishing stands. The ability to cast a 30 to 45 mm slab, as opposed to a 200 to 250 mm slab, brought about tremendous changes, all essentially leading to cheaper steel.

The 1990s saw a massive investment in steel plants overall, adding galvanizing lines and cold rolling facilities. Later, we began to see the impact of the problems in the Far East and increased imports into North America. This was the beginning of a realization that there was too much capacity worldwide. Even though technology had improved tremendously, old plants were not being taken out of existence.

**I&SM:** What do you see in the future for the industry?

**SADLER:** First of all, steel is material that still dwarfs any other metals, including aluminum and copper. Consumption continues to be at a relatively healthy level. However, we have worldwide overcapacity, especially in North America, with trade issues that have an impact and make matters quite complex. Steel is still the material of choice for many applications. The industry has a great track record in terms of bringing costs down and increasing productivity and improving quality. At one time, there were only a few grades of steel. Now we have an enormous variety of different steels to suit almost any application. There's a relentless drive to improve productivity and quality, yet lower costs. There's no getting away from that. I also think the whole idea that used

to exist of working at the mill in the steel town where you grew up and staying until retirement is a thing of the past. We'll never see that again. Don't expect to be with the same employer your whole career or for them to take care of you cradle to grave.

The global industry will never go back to being the way that it was. The forces of globalization will continue with multinational steel companies taking an ever-increasing market share. However, there will be niches that they are unable or unwilling to serve. The pace of change is accelerating, and we have to get used to that. The best way to be prepared is to anticipate that change. It's the willingness to adapt and change that makes the difference between success and failure.

**I&SM:** How do you think the ISS can assist the global iron and steel industry?

**SADLER:** A society such as ours helps generate new ideas. The ISS is made up of people, technology and ideas that come together to support the industry. We have to recognize the need to change and that's never easy or comfortable. The global steel industry as a whole is changing dramatically. For the ISS to succeed, it has to change as well. It is better to be proactive than reactive.

I think the Society really does offer fertile ground for professional growth. I'm a great believer in lifelong development, which is good advice to young people. Working with the Society and staying current, learning the trends, taking short courses and attending the seminars are all ways to help members remain on the cutting edge.

**I&SM:** What do you think of the ISS membership with a mixture of steelmakers, suppliers, consultants, academia and students?

**SADLER:** I've got tremendous faith in the membership. Our diversity is a great strength. I would not like to see ISS be an exclusive society that is one group. We are a society that exists solely for the benefit of our members

and the interaction of those groups provide a powerful driving force to exploit the potential of both technology and individuals.

One of the things I hope for is that our members learn how decisions are made. We are member-driven and our information technology enables us to communicate in a more efficient and meaningful way. When tough decisions are made, members should understand why they are made because it's their society.

**I&SM:** How can you get that message across to the members?

**SADLER:** I believe the board of directors and the executive committee has met more frequently than ever before, and now members receive the information from those meetings. The articles in *I&SM* magazine and the use of electronic communication help get messages out there. We have the ability to remind people about upcoming events, to send timely information and distribute surveys – we never had this ability before and all indications show that members find it beneficial to know what is going on. I'm pleased with the decisions made to invest in technology for our members.

**I&SM:** What would you say to encourage potential members to join the ISS?

**SADLER:** It's a great buy. We provide tangible value to the membership with our Web site, *I&SM* and industry contacts. It's well worth the small investment of an annual membership fee.

The Society has a philosophy to assist young people in their commitment to the iron and steel industry, so we offer a discounted and affordable membership when they are starting out and beginning their career. A new member under 30 years old can join for \$45, which includes a yearly subscription to *I&SM* and the opportunity to attend professional programs and network with industry professionals.



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**I&SM:** Your term as ISS president will come to an end at the ISSTech 2003 Conference. What do you hope is different by then?

**SADLER:** The strength of ISS rests with our members, volunteerism and participation in the local sections. The combined conference will reflect unprecedented cooperation between the various divisions, which will be very good to see. I hope the ISS local sections become more important for the exchange of ideas. One of my goals is to focus more on the local sections and encourage their use of technology through utilization of the Web site and *I&SM* as communication vehicles. The local sections should share resources – ISS headquarters being one of those resources. *I&SM*