

In Memoriam - Stefan Winnik

March 1952 - 12 December 2021



Stefan was born in Oldham (Lancashire, United Kingdom) in March 1952, the eldest of six brothers and sisters of refugee Ukrainian parents. Despite failing his 11+ he benefitted hugely from the new comprehensive school and went off to Leeds University with his beloved hifi speakers strapped to the top of a friend's car (that love of speakers never wavered).

He attended the Metallurgy Department from October 1970 to November 1976, obtained a BSc degree in Metallurgy in 1973, and spent a further three years doing research. He was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree for his thesis 'The Effect of Nitriding Variables on the Fatigue Life of En40B Steel' sponsored by the UK Ministry of Defence and supervised by Dr D.H. Jack. Leeds was also where he met Alison, his future wife, where they were both seduced by music and food; she took him to one night of the Ring Cycle, and he ran through the streets to bring her a homemade burger.

Stefan obtained his first employment with SKF (UK) in Luton as Development Metallurgist and left in 1978 to join GKN, Kirkstall Forge (Leeds), as Works Metallurgist, where he also continued his education by obtaining an MBA from Leeds Polytechnic

In 1981, Dr Winnik (yes, that's how he wanted us all to refer to him!) got a life changing job as Materials Engineer at Exxon Chemicals in Fawley - helped greatly by his rugby-playing prowess (people in the South haven't heard of Rugby League...).

Exxon provided many opportunities, including his first stint abroad in Houston, TX in 1989 as Polymers Engineering Materials Engineer with responsibility of supporting all Polymer Business Group manufacturing locations on a worldwide basis (USA, Europe, Japan, the Middle East and Australia). Louisa, his first daughter was born just before they all moved out there - much to Stefan's delight, who took an 8-hour flight home with an enormous toy dog sat on his lap.

After a few happy years, including the birth of his second daughter, Rosalie, they returned to the New Forest. In 1993, to join the Exxon Chemical Worldwide Engineering Group as Materials Engineer, with responsibility for supporting all the Business Groups in Europe, the Middle East and Japan. He continued to travel widely for work and enjoyed collecting air miles and phoning home to tell the family about the delicious food he'd eaten at exotic places. In 2008, he moved to Singapore where he enjoyed running and the family holidays in the region – though there must have been some work involved!

During his professional life he made significant contributions to corrosion mitigation and the understanding of Corrosion Under Insulation (CUI) with a notable publication by the European Federation of Corrosion. Stefan was always generous with his time and was very willing to anyone who asked.

Following retirement in 2012, he continued his professional activities offering consultancy and training activities. In addition, he fulfilled his ambition to walk the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, all 799kms plus, as well as finally taking his wife to some of those glamorous locations he'd described. While the years since then were limited by his illness, knowing his grandson Eli Stefan Winnik was an undiminished joy.

Stefan has been a great friend, colleague, and well-respected member of our EFC – WP13 community. Stefan will be truly missed by all who knew him and by a much broader community because his unique technical knowledge in various areas.