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COMMENT

Welcome to a New Year! Can it be any more challenging than the past? Everything changes and nothing changes. 2018 was a year of highs and lows, the year 'Brexit' became firmly embedded in the English language, and one suspects it will hold centre stage for the foreseeable future.



Brexit means many things to many people, but to those in the transport and logistics sectors, it has been complex, confusing and at times contradictory. Perhaps things will become clearer over the next couple of months. At the time of going to Press, we suspect not!

Nonetheless, life goes on, and while the political and business landscape continues to evolve, we all have to keep our heads on, our shoulders to the wheel and our focus, though foggy at times, on the future, come what may. We in the industry are a resilient lot!

So, what have we got in this edition, the first of 2019? We report on our first opportunity to get behind the wheel of what is regarded by some as 'the future.' We are talking here about natural gas-powered trucks, Iveco's latest Stralis NP 460 6x2 to be precise. Diesel is not dead, but it may have a serious rival. Electric, too, has entered the 'mix' in the form of the world's first all-electric light truck in series production, the FUSO eCanter, which was revealed recently to Irish customers.

In other news, vans feature prominently in this issue. We have been taking a closer look at the new Peugeot Partner, Citroen's Berlingo and Vauxhall's Combo – and they have a lot in common! Ford, of course, continues to power ahead regardless of what is happening in the world around them! We hear that the arrival of Ford's new Transit Courier and Transit Connect vans is set to propel the market-leading blue oval towards another record CV year.

Meanwhile, to all you truck drivers out there, congratulations seem due. According to a recent survey lorry- and delivery - drivers are considered to be the safest on the road! Not so good news for those who drive a BMW 1 Series, a Vauxhall Corsa or a Ford C-Max. The survey reports they are typically the worst! Make your own mind up.

Well, that's it for now. We hope 2019 proves to be a happy and prosperous year for one and all. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to keeping you up to date with what's happening across our industry 24/7 throughout 2019 by logging on to our website at www.exportandfreight.com

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GENERAL NEWS

- Lack of Fuelling Sites Parks Cleaner HGV Ambitions **Page 04**
- FORS introduces new training requirements **Page 07**
- Renault Trucks Marked 2018 with Innovation **Page 10**
- Translink on board with ICE's Invisible Superhero campaign **Page 25**
- New apprenticeship pathway launched **Page 30**
- Lorry Drivers Voted Safest On The Road **Page 36**

TEST DRIVES / TRUCK NEWS

- A First Feel Behind the Wheel of Iveco's New Stralis NP **Page 08**
- FUSO eCanter Makes Irish Impression **Page 12**
- Oldest DAF truck still in commercial use **Page 35**
- Volvo Trucks' Engine Improvements Offer Fuel Savings **Page 36**

REGULAR FEATURES

- Peter Morrow – Northern Ireland Manager FORS **Page 18**
- Seamus Leheny, FTA Membership Relations Manager **Page 26**
- Court Report **Page 28**
- Martin Reid, RHA Scotland & NI Director **Page 31**

SPECIAL FEATURES

- FTA Annual Dinner **Page 16**
- Tyres - Keeping you close to the road **Page 32**

SHIPPING NEWS

- New Crane Enters Service At Warrenpoint Port **Page 49**
- Irish Ferries Take Delivery of Cruise Ferry **Page 49**
- Stena Line's three Irish Sea E-Flexer ships in construction **Page 50**

VAN IRELAND

- All the very latest from the world of vans, including a look at what the Citroen Berlingo, Vauxhall Combo and Peugeot **Page 42**

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FTA Northern Ireland Takes Fight For Logistics To Number 10

No Deal is not an acceptable option for the logistics industry, was the message delivered by the Freight Transport Association during its recent audience with Theresa May at Number 10 Downing Street.

The meeting, at the request of Mrs May, gave Northern Ireland policy lead Seamus Leheny and three of the association's members the opportunity to give

FTA's support for the draft Brexit agreement to the Prime Minister personally, while intensifying its call to Parliament to avoid a disorderly departure from the EU and

consider the impact of a No Deal outcome on the island of Ireland.

Seamus Leheny, Northern Ireland Policy Manager at FTA, was among a select group of Northern

Ireland's business leaders to be invited; he was accompanied by three FTA members from the province – Woodside Logistics Group, Manfreight & Derry Refrigerated Transport – to ensure the views of the association's members were clearly heard and understood by government.

Seamus Leheny commented: "As the business group representing the interests of the logistics sector, I'm delighted FTA was chosen to consult with the Prime Minister; it's a testament to the success of our almost two-year battle to ensure the needs of the logistics industry are heard at the highest corridors of power.

"It is vital that, whatever deal is reached in Brussels and in Parliament, Brexit delivers a fair outcome to the very people responsible for keeping Britain trading. The logistics sector is the beating heart of the UK economy – delivering the goods and services businesses need to operate – and an orderly Brexit departure is essential to ensure the economy does not come grinding to a halt.

"The draft Brexit agreement is not perfect – there is much work to be done to ensure Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK gets the best deal possible – but it's a very positive step in the right direction. This meeting provided an opportunity for FTA to drill into the detail of the agreement and get answers to our most pressing questions from the Prime Minister herself, not least reassurances on the future security of cross-border trade in Ireland."



Seamus Leheny with Tim Woodside – Woodside Logistics Group, Chris Slowe – Manfreight and Patrick Derry – Derry Refrigerated Transport.

Lack of Fuelling Sites Parks Cleaner HGV Ambitions, says FTAI

FTAI Ireland (FTAI) is calling on the Minister of Communications, Climate Action & Environment to prioritise the opening of the country's Compressed Natural Gas refuelling sites, if the sector is to be able to achieve its emissions reduction targets by 2025.

In its CNG Now! Paper, published recently, FTAI's Alternative Technologies Working Group has challenged the Irish government to prioritise urgent support and infrastructure for the freight and logistics sector, so that new cleaner fuel technologies can be adopted nationwide and climate and air quality targets achieved.

"Without sufficient CNG refuelling sites across the country, the logistics sector is simply marking time, rather than achieving the switch to CNG and other alternative fuels which will reduce emissions levels and improve air quality," says Aidan Flynn, General Manager for FTAI.

"FTAI members have already invested in CNG-fuelled trucks on the understanding

that five fuelling sites would be operational from December 2017 (DTTAS National Policy Framework Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland) – yet there are still no public service stations operational due to regulatory bureaucracy. Without these sites, the campaign by the government to drive operators to the purchase of new CNG vehicles has been nothing more than a costly PR exercise, for which logistics businesses have taken a serious financial hit.

"FTAI's members have indicated that the delays in opening the Dublin Port CNG fuelling site are costing €2,000 per month per CNG truck – and with some members already owning at least four of these vehicles, this represents a huge financial outlay for businesses that have

no indication when they can start operation.

"In addition, the commitment made by government to set excise duty of €9.36 per megawatt hour must be extended to 2030 (as the UK has done) as the timeline on this has been running down even though we do not have refuelling sites open. Without this commitment to efficient CNG sites, Ireland's logistics industry is being hamstrung on achieving its emissions standards by a government which has failed to deliver its promises on carbon taxes."

The Causeway project, announced in 2016, was established to form a CNG refuelling network for CNG vehicles nationwide, which was expected to deliver 14 fast fill stations, yet as Mr Flynn continues, to date no stations have been opened: "It sounds preposterous that there is a campaign by the Irish Government to roll out new alternative technologies, yet when industry invests in the same, the infrastructure is not available to fuel the vehicles.

"According to the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017 -2030 it is expected that there will be 19 refuelling sites for CNG in operation by 2020; currently there is one built and none open. It is essential to build industry trust that new alternative fuels are sustainable and viable options for industry."



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NI Chamber & Danske Bank First Exporter Forum

John Armstrong, Managing Director of Armstrong Medical, shared the company's exceptional growth story with members of Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NI Chamber) recently.

The event, held in the company's warehouse and manufacturing facility in Coleraine, was the second event of its kind in 2018 as part of the NI Chamber's Danske Bank Export First Exporter Forum.

The initiative has been created to act as a platform for Northern Ireland's most successful exporters to share their inspirational journeys in order to encourage others to grow and strengthen export activity within their own business.

Established in 1984 to manufacture and sell respiratory disposables for the Irish market, the medical manufacturing giant has grown exponentially to become a worldwide manufacturer exporting to over 63 countries and employing over 130 people. The company is now a well-known, reputable worldwide supplier of high quality and innovative respiratory disposables for anaesthesia and critical care.



John Armstrong (Managing Director of Armstrong Medical); Sandra Scannell (Head of Business Services at NI Chamber) and Aaron Ennis (Head of North Business Centre at Danske Bank) pictured at the latest NI Chamber Danske Bank Export First event.

Close Brothers Asset Finance and Imperial Commercial strengthen ties

In one of the first deals of its kind in the UK, Close Brothers Asset Finance and Imperial Commercial have entered into a partnership that aims to make it easier and more affordable for firms to meet the challenging low emission targets that are set to be implemented by 2022.

The two companies have joined forces to provide a cost effective and competitive solution to the sometimes overwhelming cost of fleet upgrades.

Imperial Commercial has 40 dealerships across the UK and is part of Motus Group, who are the largest commercial dealer group in Europe.

John Fawcett, CEO for Close Brothers Asset Finance's Transport division, commented: "Close Brothers Asset Finance and Imperial have enjoyed a long and productive relationship going back many years, and this is just the next step in working together for the customers' benefit."

"Both businesses are well known for their customer-focused and

innovative approach, and with various low-emission legislation coming into force over the coming years, this partnership could not have come at a better time."

Matthew Lawrenson, Managing Director, Imperial Commercial, added: "We are delighted to support Close Brothers Asset Finance, who have been a long-standing trading partner of

Imperial Commercial, in their proactive approach to tackling the upcoming environmental legislative changes faced by UK operators.

"Our footprint, as the UK's largest Commercial Vehicle Dealer Group, supports the innovative solution Close Brothers Asset Finance are providing their customers."

City of London Zero Emission Plan is not Feasible, Says FTA

The initial proposals for the City of London Transport Strategy have been met with apprehension by the Freight Transport Association.

FTA raises concerns about its desire to introduce a Zero Emission Zone before suitable vehicles are commercially viable; it also criticises the government's poorly coordinated nationwide approach to air quality and traffic reduction schemes.

Headline initiatives for the strategy, which will set out a 25-year framework for the management of the Square Mile's streets, include the introduction of a Zero Emission Zone in the Square Mile by 2022; a speed

limit of 15 mph; road closures to prioritise pedestrians at peak times; time restrictions on deliveries; and the overall reduction of motor traffic by 25% by 2030 and 50% by 2044.

Denise Beedell, Policy Manager for Vans and Urban Transport at FTA, the only business group representing all of logistics, commented: "These proposals showcase the City of London's long-term and serious commitment to improving air quality and road safety, both of which are of the utmost importance to FTA and its

members. While we applaud many aspects of the proposals - such as priority parking access for commercial vehicles - there are several other areas that need reconsidering.

"The flagship initiative of the scheme is the introduction of a Zero Emission Zone covering the east of the City and the Barbican area by 2022. This is a premature move - zero emission vehicles are currently not commercially viable and greater investment is needed into their development. Firstly, initial purchasing costs of electric vehicles must be reduced for it to become an affordable and realistic option for businesses of all sizes. Secondly, there is insufficient charging infrastructure in place. While FTA notes the proposals include a potential charging hub, a nationwide infrastructure strategy is needed for its long-term feasibility.

"FTA will be campaigning on behalf of the logistics industry for amended proposals that reflect the needs of its members."

FORS introduces new training requirements

FORS, the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme, is underlining the importance of personal development and the role training plays in raising operational standards within the industry with the introduction of additional mandatory training requirements.

The new requirements, aimed at both managers and drivers, span across all three levels of accreditation – Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The emphasis on the training message follows the introduction of version 5 of the FORS Standard at the FORS Members' Conference in October, where 450 delegates gathered for the scheme's third annual forum, exhibition and networking event.

The new FORS Standard version 5 addresses the growing need for air quality improvements and sets out requirements to help operators mitigate threats of terrorism. Provision is also made for FORS to encompass a broader range of operations and vehicles, including powered two-wheelers, and new requirements for bus and coach operators. FORS's comprehensive portfolio of training courses, workshops, eLearning and practical

guidance is delivered through its FORS Professional training programme.

FORS director, John Hix said, "Our FORS Professional training programme is a vast reservoir of learning for managers and drivers – arguably the most complete portfolio of training available to transport professionals today. Managers and drivers are on the front line of operations," he said, "and they can make a real difference to the environmental impact of their operation, reducing its road risk too,

and, above all, promoting a safety mindset.

"Our new, mandatory training requirements ensure managers and drivers keep pace with current trends and new legislation; equipping operators with the essential tools to pursue ever-increasing levels of best practice."

The FORS Standard version 5 is now available to download on the FORS website here: <https://www.fors-online.org.uk/cms/new-standard/> and becomes effective from Monday 14 January 2019 for both new and existing operators.

GLS Ireland opens new depot in Cork

GLS Ireland has begun operations at a new depot in Cork. The move to a newly built site triples the capacity as the parcel service provider prepares for further growth.

The depot is strategically located in Blarney Business Park, 16 kilometres from the previous premises. That means it is centrally positioned within Ireland's second-strongest economic region and has access to all major roads. Consignments can therefore be quickly exported from Cork to the Dublin hub where GLS Ireland connects to the European network of the GLS Group.

This new depot in Cork is also advantageous in exporting and importing for a wider range of customers since GLS is moving closer to them.

The warehouse is 240 per cent bigger than the previous depot in Little Island. The new conveyor system contributes to a faster, more efficient process. Three times as many parcels can now be processed in the region. A first-class level of security is ensured by internal and external cameras and a high-security fence.

"The Cork depot strengthens our network for the long term", says Andreas Rickert, Managing Director of GLS Ireland. "We expect continually rising parcel numbers, and the increased capacity allows us to sustainably offer our customers a high quality level."



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GETTING A FIRST FEEL BEHIND THE WHEEL OF IVECO'S NEW STRALIS NP



We recently had our first opportunity to test drive on 'home' ground the new Iveco Stralis Natural Power (NP) 460hp 6x2, and what a revelation, reports Export & Freight's Garfield Harrison from the manufacturer's UK headquarters at Basildon in Essex.

The first 44-tonne truck on the market to operate on 100 per cent liquefied natural gas (LNG) – with no diesel or AdBlue required – the Stralis NP feels, handles and drives like a conventional diesel equivalent, as we discovered on our test route which took in a variety of roads.

We were told beforehand that the truck's performance would be a lot quieter than a diesel powered Stralis, and so it proved to be, even though it was fully laden; the phrase 'silent running' comes to mind.

Also put at our disposal on the day was a Stralis 4x2 460 tractor unit as were a Daily Blue Power Hi Matic CNG and an example of the Daily RDE ready ultra clean Euro 6 diesel, launched ahead of the 2020 deadline, but it was

the new 6x4 model that took the spotlight.

It has been designed to be the most sustainable heavy truck in production and engineered in both right-hand and left-hand drive variants to join Iveco's growing Natural Power line-up, which now stretches from 3.5 to 44-tonnes.

Iveco says the launch of the Stralis NP 460 6x2 marks a turning point, with Natural Gas now a mainstream UK volume tractor solution for operators.

"This is the culmination of Iveco's long-standing strategy for sustainable transport, which has led to where we are today ... with a vehicle that leads the way towards sustainable long-distance transport and the latest introduction in our full commercial offering of alternative

traction vehicles," says Stuart Webster, IVECO UK & Ireland Business Director, "an offering that covers every application, from passenger transport to long-distance haulage.

"All of these vehicles are already at work on the roads and city centres across the UK and Europe. We live in a changing world and concern for the environment and public health is driving a revolution in the automotive world. Although we are not predicting the death of diesel, the pressure on diesel is mounting, with more and more cities banning diesel cars from their centres and creating low and ultra-low emission zones."

He revealed that the Stralis NP 4x2 has been steadily winning orders from major supermarket and logistics fleets running at 40-tonnes this year, but, he said, 'the 6x2 model is by far the most





eagerly anticipated new truck we've launched for a decade. It's the one our dealers have been waiting to get their hands on; and we already have significant enquiries from prospect fleets."

During last October's Budget, the Chancellor announced that the government will maintain the difference between alternative and main road fuel duty rates until 2032 to support the de-carbonisation of the UK transport sector, subject to review in 2024. This clearly provides the perfect environment to support operators making the transition to natural gas.

The Stralis NP 460 6x2 runs exclusively on LNG from tanks mounted either side of the chassis, for a range of approximately 750km. Iveco says this makes it perfect for applications where vehicles operate on a 'same-day out and back' operation, with gas companies keen to support businesses in establishing on-site refuelling capabilities to complement the UK's growing network.

We are told Iveco engineers worked hard to ensure the new vehicle can accommodate the largest possible LNG tanks, whilst still maintaining 22.5" wheels across all three axles – one of many steps to ensure Stralis NP enjoys the widest possible customer acceptance.

Sitting at the heart of the new vehicle is the 12.9-litre Iveco Cursor 13 NP single-fuel engine, offering the perfect blend of power and performance for the majority of UK-based applications. The vehicle also features IVECO's latest generation 12-speed Hi-Tronix automated transmission which further improves on the EuroTronic's excellent driving comfort and performance, whilst adding new functions such as the GPS-based Hi-Cruise predictive cruise control and gear-shifting.

The Stralis NP maximises the environmental advantages of natural gas, regarded as the most eco-friendly fuel for internal

combustion engines. Its proven technology delivers a 99 per cent reduction of PM and 60 per cent in NOx compared to Euro VI limits, helping to significantly improve air quality. It also offers fleets the potential to reduce CO2 emissions by up to 95 per cent when running on liquefied bio-methane.

Also contributing to the Stralis NP's low total cost of ownership are Iveco's long service intervals: 90,000 km with this new vehicle, resulting in more time on the road. The absence of complex after-treatment systems, particulate filters and active regeneration further add to the low-maintenance advantages of the Stralis NP 460.

Significantly, the natural gas distribution network in the UK and Europe is also expanding

fast. Overall, the network today covers the main European freight routes with over 300 truck gas refuelling stations, and by the end of 2018 it is expected to reach over 400 stations. 2019 will close with more than 500.

And says Stuart: "A virtuous cycle has now started. More transporters are converting their fleets to natural gas, new refuelling stations are coming on stream at a faster pace, and this in turn is encouraging even more transporters to use natural gas, as they see it as a viable solution."

Climbing out of the cab after our test drive, reflecting on our experience behind the wheel, we are inclined to believe that.



RENAULT TRUCKS MARKED 2018 WITH CONSOLIDATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION



Carlos Rodrigues, Renault Trucks UK & Ireland

Despite a market down - 7.5% year-on-year, Renault Trucks has enjoyed a relatively solid year of success in all areas of its business, with a strong order book going forward into the New Year, as Export & Freight's Phil Eaglestone learned at the company's annual Press lunch at Covent Garden in London.

Predicting the year end market should be above the 40,000 units mark, Renault Trucks say it has been able to consolidate its position in the UK and Ireland markets despite the fact that the entire year has been uncertain for businesses, not least because of Brexit.

"However, 2018 has been a great year for the winner of Irish Truck of the Year, our Range T-High, following its launch in 2017," said Managing Director Carlos Rodrigues. "By the end of 2018 we will have sold over 250 RHD units across the UK & Ireland to our primary audience of owner operators and smaller fleets.

"A pleasant surprise has been a number of larger fleets taking T High alongside their standard Range T sales to aid driver retention and/or reward key drivers."

The past year saw the launch of

the Range D Low, introduced in partnership with Veolia to provide a low-entry, high safety solution for commercial refuse collections.

"Another example of fine Renault Trucks innovation was the introduction of our Anti-rollway park brake – winner of the 'Innovation Award' at the Motor Transport Awards," added Carlos.

In the LCV sector, Renault Trucks successfully launched three products during the year: 4x4 Master – Construction & Utilities, to complement its strong HGV construction offering; 6x2 Master – Dry Freight & Logistics, an innovative and logical alternative to 7.5t vehicles; and the ZE Master. It also launched VanTelligence, a bespoke telematics offering on Renault Trucks LCV products.

Meanwhile, in an industry which experiences various skill

shortages, Renault Trucks' group apprenticeship scheme continues to yield more young professionals year-on-year and currently there are over 120 apprentices working across the Renault Trucks network; 2018 saw its largest ever intake.

The gathering also heard that Renault Trucks had recently formed a new division 'Renault Trucks Europe,' which has significant growth ambitions and sees the UK & Ireland as key to these. "We are the 2nd biggest market in this division after Spain, and our ambition is to acquire 1st place over time."

New Year

Looking ahead, and although it has a healthy order book, Renault Trucks see a market that is unpredictable, but it is prepared for any eventuality in

what is a changing environment driven by Brexit, environmental concerns and other market forces.

"We will continue to innovate and we will continue to build partnerships with our customers, suppliers, dealers and colleagues.

"The quality of the products is second to none; the quality of service provided by our dealer network is now 'first class' and more customers will experience it. The shaping of the network will also continue into 2019 and beyond as we aim to secure service quality consistency across the whole of the UK & Ireland."

As a global brand, Renault Trucks will celebrate its 125th anniversary in 2019 and says it will respond to the challenges by innovation as it always has done.



DAF Prepared for 'An Interesting' Year Ahead

Despite all the uncertainties and challenges thrown up by 2018, DAF Trucks has enjoyed what Managing Director in the UK Robin Easton has described 'a very good year' for the manufacturer, while preparing for what he calls 'an interesting year ahead.'

He's told an end of year gathering of Press journalists, among them Export & Freight's Helen Beggs, that once all the figures have been compiled 2018 should see sales volume come in at between 41,000 and 42,000 units.

"This is a little down on the 2017 totals and will impact our overall market share just slightly, but the good news is that our incoming orders over the past year is our highest level since 2007," he commented.

"Despite Brexit concerns, operators are continuing to invest in new vehicles and are no doubt keen to prepare for the requirement to operate Euro 6 vehicles in the ultra-low emission zone and clean air zones across the country that will come into effect during 2019."

He said the manufacturer's strong sales performance in the UK over the year can be attributed in no small measure to the introduction and benefits of the new DAF range, with feedback from customers being very positive.

He went on to speak about DAF's celebration of the company's 90th year since its foundations were laid back in 1928. "From rather humble beginnings, DAF has grown to become a global commercial vehicle supplier, delivering transport solutions that meet our customers needs. It was fitting that that excellence was recognised in 2018 with the International Truck of the Year award for both the CF and XF, the first time that two vehicles have jointly won that accolade."

He added that 2018 was also a key milestone year for DAF in the UK as it moved into its new world class, state of the art office and training facilities on the Haddenham Business Park in Buckinghamshire. The £20 million investment in the new headquarters has been described as "a demonstration



Robin Easton

of the commitment to further strengthen DAF's leading position in the UK market."

Robin Easton also referred to 2018 as the year that the transport industry signalled its 'clear intent' to meet the demand for zero emission capable trucks, with hybrid and electric vehicles.

"It seems clear that there is a change of powertrain technology ahead, at least for urban vehicles, to cut nett CO2 emissions and improve air quality in the future," he said, adding that DAF showcased three 'innovation' vehicles at the IAA show in Hannover in September, two of which were fully electric and suited to multi drop delivery and 'round the clock' operations, the third being a hybrid for longer distance applications. "DAF is now in a field trial phase of development of these vehicle concepts."

As for the year ahead, Robin has predicted a market similar in size to 2018, provided there are no disastrous developments on the political front, with perhaps more of an emphasis on rigid, reflecting their use in clean air zones.

"We certainly have an interesting year ahead. There are a number of legislative hurdles to prepare for – January will see manufacturers publish Vecto values for main stream models as a first step towards measuring and managing CO2 emissions for commercial vehicles; April will see the UK's first ultra low emission zone in central London, which will expand to Greater London in 2020; June will see the mandatory fitment of new smart tachographs for all new registrations, while September will mark the fifth year since the introduction of Driver CPC and when many drivers will need to renew their CPC card."

Renault Trucks' Reconditioned Parts: Reliable, Cost-Effective And Sustainable

Renault Trucks' eXchange range brings reconditioned parts, approved to specifications that meet the most stringent reliability, safety and environmental standards.

These eco-friendly, economical parts come with a two-year warranty and are a viable option for maintaining optimum vehicle performance while controlling maintenance costs.

The 'standard replacement' procedure replaces worn or damaged vehicle parts with guaranteed original parts,

such as an engine or gearbox in as-new condition, at a cost that is up to 50% lower.

Economical, high-quality parts

Once reconditioned in a very stringent industrial process, parts deliver similar performances to new parts.

"With eXchange parts, Renault

Trucks can guarantee its customers that their vehicles' performances will be maintained, no matter how old the vehicle is, at a fair price, in proportion to the vehicle's value,"

explains Mete Büyükakinci, head of the Remanufacturing Project at Renault Trucks.

Engine and gearbox parts and

components, braking systems, clutches, electrical and electronic circuits, steering and suspensions, and cooling systems for all Renault Trucks vehicle ranges are also available in an eXchange version.

Like all new parts, all items in the Renault Trucks eXchange range come with an international two-year warranty.

IRISH CUSTOMERS GET FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO TEST DRIVE THE FUSO eCANTER



The world's first all-electric light truck in series production, the FUSO eCANTER, was revealed recently to Irish customers at Weston Airport on the outskirts of Dublin.

TEST REPORT: FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO TEST DRIVE THE FUSO eCANTER



Along with members of the press and invited operators and potential customers was the then Irish Minister for the Environment Denis Naughten who attended the event and took a test drive in the eCANTER.

It is now fully integrated in the conventional FUSO Canter's production line in Tramagal, Portugal where all eCanters for the European and the US market are produced.

The FUSO

eCANTER with its locally emission-free drive will not only relieve the city centres from exhaust and noise emissions but will also be an economically attractive alternative to the diesel engine.

Billy Riordan, CEO of Frank Keane Group, importers and distributors of FUSO trucks in Republic and Northern Ireland, commented: "As the first full electric truck for the Irish market, the eCANTER is a significant environmental and technological step towards Ireland's sustainable transport future and will be a great addition to the FUSO Canter range. We are looking forward to being able to support our customers in their progression towards reducing their environmental impact."

And added Gerard Rice, Managing Director of FUSO Ireland: "With the rapid rate of change in the regulatory environment in Europe, it is an essential product with FUSO at the forefront of e-mobility with a proven track record in hybrid and electric vehicle technology. The chassis cab payload on the 7.5t eCANTER is 4.3 tonnes which is class leading, especially as a zero emission vehicle with an electric range of 100km."

The vehicle's electric power train contains six high-voltage lithium-ion batteries with each 420 V and 13.8 kWh. Instead of a diesel an electric drive train with a strong permanent-magnet-engine delivers 129 kW (180 hp) via a single-gear transmission in the rear axle. 285 newton metre of

continuous output allow the 7.49-tons truck to accelerate almost like a passenger car and are available from the first second of driving.

The maximum speed of the eCANTER is limited to 80 kilometres per hour. The batteries with a total weight of approximately 600 kilograms allow a range of over 100 kilometres and so surpass in many cases the average daily distance covered in light distribution operations.

The eCANTER is not only an eco-friendly vehicle, it is also cost-efficient and economical for customers. In comparison with a conventional diesel truck, we are told it will offer savings up to €1,000 per 10,000 kilometres on operating costs.

FUSO have plans to electrify the full Canter range (3.5t to 8.55t) by 2021. The 3.5t will come as a 4.25t but with changes to the legislation, any alternative fuelled vehicle can be driven up to 4.25t on a B (car) license.

Also at the Dublin event was a FUSO 3.5t Canter fitted with a new French manufactured Box Body which is assembled in Ireland and which has a payload of around 750kg and 270 degree opening barn doors. This new body, which comes with a two year manufactures warranty, joins an impressive range of other factory manufactured bodies available for the Canter.

FUSO Ireland has a network of dealers in the Republic and Northern Ireland with a range of Canter 3.5T to 8.55T trucks, with cab and chassis coming with a 5 year / 150,000km warranty.



Construction begins at ground-breaking £9m cold storage facility

Construction has begun on a £9 million cold storage facility and transport depot, the first of its kind in Northern Ireland, at Carn Industrial Estate with support from First Trust Bank.



Richard Gillan, Managing Partner, Grant Thornton, Michelle Harbinson, Head of Business Acquisitions, First Trust Bank and Carn Coldstore owner Patrick Derry are pictured at the site of the ground-breaking £9 million cold storage facility at Carn Industrial Estate, Co Armagh.

Carn Coldstore is owned by Patrick Derry, Managing Director of Derry Refrigerated Transport. The 52,000 sq ft warehouse facility, due to open in Autumn next year, will be the tallest in Ireland standing at 17.5 metres high and will allow products to be stored from -25 to +5 degrees.

A new venture for the Kilmore businessman, Carn Coldstore is expected to create 50 new jobs by 2020. The cold storage and freezer facility will be equipped with state-of-the-art Co2 refrigeration equipment provided by Armagh company, Cross Refrigeration. The site will also feature rain water harvesting technology, helping create further energy efficiencies and reduce the business's carbon footprint.

Speaking about the investment, Carn Coldstore owner Patrick Derry said: "Carn Coldstore complements the services being delivered by Derry Refrigerated Transport, providing new and existing customers with convenient and reliable storage near at hand. It's a substantial investment, and one we are putting to good use with advanced equipment that can deliver real-long term savings to us and our customers."

"It's great to see construction moving swiftly at the site and we're working with talented local builders and developers including MDK Construction to get the business operational by autumn next year. First Trust Bank and Grant Thornton have also been a great help on the project, getting finance over the line quickly and offering advice and support."

Translink Signs £50m Contract For 21 New Train Carriages

A contract securing the supply of 21 new train carriages for Northern Ireland Railways was officially signed recently by Translink and Spanish rail manufacturer CAF.



L-R: Josu Esnaola, Group Commercial Director, CAF; Frank Hewitt, Chairman, Translink; Chris Conway, Translink Group Chief Executive; Permanent Secretary, Department for Infrastructure Katrina Godfrey and Antonio Campos; Western Europe Commercial Director, CAF.

Announcing this major contract, Chris Conway, Translink Group Chief Executive said it was essential to provide much needed capacity to cope with increasing customer demand.

"This is great news and another very exciting step in the development of Northern Ireland's rail network. Their introduction will also help deliver the ambitions of the draft Programme for Government to increase the use of public transport and active travel.

"Passenger numbers have grown by more than 130% in the last 12 years, reaching 15m last year, the highest in Northern Ireland Railways' 50-year history. This has followed the introduction of new rail fleet, infrastructure investment and service and timetable enhancements alongside a continued focus on improving the overall customer experience.

"These 21 new carriages will allow us to build on this success and increase capacity, with around 1400 additional seats, operating more six carriage trains on busy routes at key times of the day.

"With a three-year lead time we would expect to start to take delivery of the new carriages during 2021 with the last sets planned to go into passenger service in Autumn 2022 following testing and commissioning."

Freightabase Goes Mobile with New 'Quick Quote' App Launch

Award-nominated freight comparison tool, Freightabase, has launched the 'Quick Quote' functionality of its website as a standalone app.

Freightabase's online database of freight forwarding and logistics companies is coded up by the specialisms each company can offer. These can be filtered by location, trade lanes or even vertical market proficiency, to ensure its users are matched with the perfect expert for any job.

The 'Quick Quote' section of the website allows cargo owners and freight forwarders to obtain quotations with optimum speed, efficiency and accuracy.

The team behind the site wanted to give Freightabase's users even greater accessibility to obtain quotations from specialist carriers so have launched the quick quote function as an app, compatible with both iOS and Android.

Freightabase Managing Director, Craig Headford, said "We are in the process of building the ultimate freight buying platform that will revolutionise the industry. Imagine taking the best parts of social media, comparison sites, news, and marketing, combined: this is what we are creating."

The app and website are also completely free to users.

Freightabase has gone from strength to strength since its launch in September, with the start up's rapid success seeing it shortlisted as a finalist for the FTA's annual Logistics Awards.

A drum roll please for the new 19.5" INTRADRUM from SAF-Holland



IMS Limited, sole distributor for the SAF-Holland product range in UK and Ireland, has revealed that the much-anticipated 19.5" INTRADRUM is now available and shipping.

The UK/Ireland transport

industry is unique in allowing the operation of trailers with a maximum height of 4.9m; well over the 4m maximum permitted in mainland Europe. And it is this that fact that has prompted the continued rise of step frame trailer manufacture.

Being aware of the different needs of regional markets, SAF-Holland responded to calls from UK and Ireland customers for a 19.5" version of their tried, tested and highly-acclaimed SAF INTRADRUM, and has now added this to their expanding product line up.

The new S9-3718 utilises SAF's rugged yet lightweight INTRA suspension to meet the specific requirements demanded by step frame, double deck trailer applications. The system provides far greater operational stability with the associated benefits of significantly improved load security



and overall safety on the road. It is also available as INTRA MEGA. A further advantage of the new axle being that it overcomes any

tyre sourcing difficulties by virtue of it using the increasingly popular, typically hard-wearing 19.5" super singles e.g. 445/45/19.5.

Operators also have the peace of mind provided by SAF's class-leading guarantee of competence—6 years/unlimited mileage.





IMS Limited
Steering your fleet's profitability



The brand new SEM single bar mechanical steering system available exclusively from IMS Limited, is designed and engineered to exacting quality standards in the Netherlands and offers commercial transport professionals the following benefits:

- Greater vehicle utilisation • Improved semi-trailer manoeuvrability
- Less tyre wear • Reduced maintenance costs • Improved fuel economy
- Reduction in damage costs • Consistent steering behaviour • High reliability
- Low maintenance • Bespoke solutions easily accommodated

In the UK & Ireland, IMS offers the broadest range of trailer steering solutions including: SAF-Holland self-steering axles, SEM Mechanical steering systems, VSE Intelligent electro-hydraulic steering systems & VSE Reverse Assist.

For more information on the class-leading products distributed by IMS Limited, please contact:

Craig Lawton, Regional Sales Manager: t: 07951 467 309 e: craig.lawton@imslimited.com

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FTA'S NORTHERN IRELAND LOGISTICS LUNCH



Merchant Hotel, Belfast on Friday 9th November 2018

Recognising achievements, industry highlights and a special Industry Recognition Award. With entertainment, a drinks reception and special guest speaker Stephen Ferris.



Anthony van Damme (Port of Larne), Stephen Ferris & Jonathan Lamberton (NI Children's Hospice).



Stephen Ferris, Chris Arthur (Dennison Commercials) & Jonathan Lamberton (NI Children's Hospice).



Stephen Ferris & Ian Freeman (SEETEC).



Stephen Ferris, Aoibhean O'Hare (Motis) & Jonathan Lamberton (NI Children's Hospice).



Stephen Ferris & Paula Ludlow (Tranlink) Special recognition Award in successfully attracting more female drivers.



Glenn Baxter (Musgrave) Truck Excellence Award & Stephen Ferris.



Stephen Ferris, Chris Slowey (Manfreight) & Jonathan Lamberton (NI Children's Hospice).



Stephen Ferris, Gary Rocks (Patterson & Rocks Solicitors) & Jonathan Lamberton (NI Children's Hospice).



Stephen Ferris, Irene Watt & Jonathan Lamberton (NI Children's Hospice).



Stephen Ferris, Brigid Derry (Derry Bros Shipping) & Jonathan Lamberton (NI Children's Hospice).



Special guest speaker Stephen Ferris.





Peter Morrow

FORS Manager – Northern Ireland.



FORS BRONZE – THE FIRST STEP TO OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Basic legal compliance exists for good reason: delivering a base level of operational standards to which all must adhere. But the FORS voluntary accreditation is about taking such compliance to the next level, delivering a clear pathway to operational excellence for all operators.

FORS Bronze accreditation is the first step for operators choosing to make best practice a day-to-day objective for their business, and in doing so, contribute to raising driving and operational standards and reducing environmental impact across the industry. Achieving FORS Bronze means operators can prove they work above the basic legal minimum standards, and this accreditation offers members access to a wealth of training and guidance on improving safety, efficiency and sustainability. What is more, because the FORS accreditation process is progressive, Bronze accredited operators are encouraged to not only maintain this accreditation, but to strive for continuous improvement and operational excellence. Interestingly a recent FORS 'Going for Bronze' workshop hosted at TTS, Nutts Corner, gave local FORS operators the chance to find out about how FORS, and its new Standard version 5 which comes into force in January 2019, can help raise operating standards across the industry. The event gave attendees the chance to engage with the FORS team to explore the new FORS Standard, and to discuss how they can start their FORS journey with FORS Bronze accreditation. The nature of FORS is such that, even at its entry level, any operator (provided they meet basic legal compliance) can join and begin the process of ensuring they meet FORS Bronze requirements ahead of their audit. And the revised Standard makes this even easier, with provision for a broader, more diverse range of vehicles, including powered two-wheeler fleets. This emphasis on diversity continues throughout the revised Standard, even in terms of understanding the geographical nuances evident in the now truly national scheme. The document now permits operators who do not have access to a fee-free driver licence check service to appoint a competent person or agent to conduct the checks direct. For operators in Northern Ireland this is especially pertinent, as unlike in GB, where the DVLA does not charge, NI driver licence checks are charged by the DVA. To help operators avoid a first time fail, and prepare for the audit, FORS has identified the top five most common reasons for

failed Bronze audits, along with some top-tips to avoid these common pit-falls:

Professional Development

One of the most common reasons operators fail the Bronze audit is not undertaking the required mandatory training courses or producing a professional development plan for all members of staff.

Top tips –

- Develop a training plan for all transport staff, not just drivers. The plan shall outline the type of training needed – this is to include approved courses and when the courses are required to be delivered
- Structure the training plan to include all transport employees, not just drivers. Toolbox talks and Driver CPC training (if in scope) shall also be used as evidence of ongoing professional development

Vehicle Manoeuvring

If an operator fails, it could be because they did not have a policy and/or the appropriate risk assessments in place, did not communicate these to relevant staff, and/or did not get the transport staff to acknowledge receipt of these.

Top tips –

- A policy needs to be in place regarding manoeuvring including forward motion, turning, reversing, towing, uncoupling, and parking movements
- Review the policy, and include the date the policy was reviewed
- Name the person who carried out the policy review
- Communicate the policy to transport related staff and that they have acknowledged receipt
- Provide risk assessments for vehicle manoeuvring
- Communicate the risk assessments to staff and drivers and that they have acknowledged receipt
- Have a system in place for recording near misses

Document Review

Companies must ensure policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually, or as and when required if sooner, and senior management must acknowledge the review.

Top tips –

- Review the company policies, procedures manual, risk assessments, training plans, other related documents and how any changes have been communicated to all transport related staff
- Record all dates of minutes from review meetings over the past 12 months
- Include details of the person who last reviewed the policies and procedures documents
- Version control processes need to be in place to ensure that only the most current documents are issued to staff

In-cab technology

Companies must have a policy and appropriate risk assessment in place regarding in-cab technology.

Top tips –

- A policy needs to be in place which outlines how in-cab technology is managed, which includes hands-free equipment
- Provide a risk assessment which supports the policy document
- Ensure both the policy and risk assessment have been reviewed at least annually and that the date is recorded
- List who has carried out the review

Inspection and maintenance plan

Inspection and maintenance plans are not being managed in a way that allows operators to ensure that vehicles, trailers, equipment and related machinery have planned and proactive maintenance systems in place so they operate safely, legally and efficiently.

Top tips –

- Ensure that 15 months of historical records are available and periodic maintenance and inspections are programmed six months in advance
- Ensure that a maintenance plan is used (wall chart or electronic) and show that it accounts for all vehicles held, for at least six months into the future
- Record if specialist equipment such as brake test equipment etc is inspected, calibrated, serviced in accordance with the servicing schedule

More Info

For operators completing the FORS Audit on or after January 14th 2019, the new Standard version 5 will apply. To access the FORS Audit toolkit, visit: <https://www.fors-online.org.uk/cms/forsaudit/>

Public believe seeing a driver's face helps understand their intention on the road

Visibility of a driver's face is paramount to not only understanding their intentions on the road, but also to our safety, according to new research released by Mercedes-Benz Trucks UK.

The survey of 2,000 drivers, cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians found that seeing a driver's face is important to understand their intentions on the road. In addition, this was of most importance to those on two wheels, with over four in five agreeing that they need to see a driver's face in order to feel safe on the road, and nine in ten stating that seeing a motorist's face helps them to understand their intention. Focusing on vulnerable road users such as cyclists and motorcyclists, the research also looked at their behaviour when sharing the road with trucks.

Although nine in ten (87% cyclists and 91% motorcyclists) are aware that truck drivers have restricted visibility, more than half (58%) admitted to having stopped or passed on the inside of a truck which then turned left. In addition, 61% of those on two wheels have



undertaken a manoeuvre within close proximity of a truck, then regretted it afterwards, realising that it was potentially dangerous. Traditionally, truck drivers sit above other road users in their cabs, which can make it difficult

for them to interact with both road users and pedestrians. That's why the Mercedes-Benz Econic features a low cab and deep, panoramic windscreen to maximise visibility, allowing cyclists and motorcyclists to make eye contact with drivers at junctions.

The Econic is fitted with Active Brake Assist 4 as standard – Mercedes-Benz is the only manufacturer to offer a system that can potentially reduce collisions with crossing pedestrians. The Econic can optionally be specified with numerous other safety features, including a blind spot camera system and Sideguard Assist to provide additional support for the driver where there is a risk of collision.

Commenting on the research, Mike Belk, Mercedes-Benz Trucks UK Managing Director, said: "At Mercedes-Benz, we are committed to using the very best technology to increase visibility on the road, helping to keep both the driver and other road users as safe as possible. We have been developing innovative safety systems for more than 45 years and we continue to advance road safety with our latest trucks, including the Econic."

Close Brothers: Supporting SMEs for 140 years

Close Brothers has been celebrating 140-years of business. Since being established in 1878, it has been recognised as a lender with a consistently strong credit rating and are listed on the London Stock Exchange as a FTSE 250 company. Today, it has offices across the UK and Ireland, and over 45,000 small business clients.

The origins of modern merchant banking are recognised in Close Brothers' entrepreneurial spirit, pioneering attitude and forward planning. These values lie at the core of its business and have enabled it to go from strength-to-strength. Close Brothers Commercial Finance opened in Ireland at the start of the financial crash in 2008. When funding challenges were facing businesses globally, it provided practical borrowing options to SMEs. Since then, it has supported business operating in the Irish economy. The company is proud of its prudent and flexible approach to funding. It offers SMEs an alternative way to improve cash flow and design bespoke solutions for the businesses it works with. Asset finance is a great example of its flexible approach. It offers a range of products, including hire purchase, refinancing and operating leases. This kind of finance releases capital tied up in assets, such as machinery, vehicles and stock. It can be much more adaptable than a loan or overdraft because the facility adapts in line with the business' trading cycle. Funding is dependent on the company's performance and balance sheet.

Unique businesses

Over the last ten years, the Irish economy has seen significant development. Recently, the European Commission predicted that the country will achieve the highest economic growth in the

EU in 2018 and the second highest in 2019.

Close Brothers Commercial Finance has supported the growth of Ireland's small businesses, both in times of prosperity and throughout more challenging periods. It has adapted to offer alternative solutions and created specialist funding plans for the wide range of sectors and companies it works with. "We know that every business is unique and, as a result, we respond to each funding challenge in a different way," says Head of Asset Finance sales in Ireland, Adrian Madden, who believes this approach is what makes Close Brothers effective. "Remembering that our clients are the experts when it comes to their business is key. We listen to SMEs to find out what their pressures and goals are, and work closely with them to evaluate balance sheets. Together, we can assess which assets can be used to free-up working capital and assist business strategy."

Helping SMEs thrive

Close Brothers Commercial Finance is proud to support the ambitious, resourceful businesses of Ireland. It works with a range of SMEs, helping them to achieve their growth plans and thrive.

To find out more about its tailored finance solutions, speak to a local expert from Close Brothers Commercial Finance today. Call 028 9099 7628 or visit the website: <https://www.closecommercialfinance.ie/>



Adrian Madden

Sports Direct take delivery of new SDC Boxvan trailers

Major retailer Sports Direct have taken delivery of 19 new 13.6m GRP boxvan trailers from SDC in Toomebridge as part of the company's on-going expansion.

The **£500,000** order was completed through trailer rental and leasing company Hireco NI who have a long-standing relationship with the retailer.

The two axle GRP boxvan trailers have been built by SDC to meet the customers' requirements, with the latest specification 1500 kgs Dhollandia SKS retractable tail lift fitted



for ease of unloading / loading onsite. The trailers are fitted with a roller shutter door for ease of loading on bays and an insulated roof to ensure the product arrives safe and dry.

Sean McErlan, Head of Distribution at Sports Direct NI, said: "We have made significant investments in improving our stores, enhancing our product offering and ensuring that we deliver what our customers need and want. Our latest fleet investment with SDC will allow us to enhance our distribution network across Ireland."

Enda Cushnahan, CEO at SDC Trailers, said "Sports Direct have been a loyal customer of SDC over the years and I am delighted to continue our working relationship together along with Hireco NI. Our trailers are recognised for their durability, maintainability and longevity, providing excellent value for Sports Direct and their customers. In 2018, SDC invested significantly in expanding our manufacturing headquarters in Toomebridge and we are well placed to meet the high demand coming from the lease and rental market."

The ongoing relationship with Sports Direct and Hireco N.I. Ltd demonstrates SDC's unrivalled customer service, delivering a product that will ultimately contribute to their customer's profitability. With over 500,000 sq ft of manufacturing facilities across 4 sites, SDC are the UK and Ireland's largest semi-trailer manufacturer, with an output exceeding 8,000 units in 2018, made up of curtain-side, boxvan, skeletal, platform, machine carrier and drawbar trailers.

MJ Close & Son top the ranks with SDC Trailers

MJ Close & Son, a Durham based family business with over forty years in the general haulage industry, have chosen SDC for their latest semi-trailer investment.

Company director, Bryan

Close chose SDC after much thought and research into the type of trailer they needed to correspond with their haulage requirements.

Specialising in the transportation of straw bales, crops and timber products in the North East, Cumbria and South West Scotland, M&J Close required a drawbar trailer that could be easily adapted for the transport of a wide range of goods on flat wagon and drag combinations.

The solution was SDC's 3 axle drawbar trailer with BPW 9 Ton eco-plus axles, Haldex braking system, 28mm keruing floor and 12 bespoke posts and sockets.

The 7.6m chassis has an overall length of 9.3m which is ideal for a MJ Close & Son's specialist loads.

Bryan commented: "We are delighted with the drawbar trailer received from SDC, the quality of finish is superb and we were able to customise the specification to



maximise our haulage operations. It was very important to us that we could add additional storage and load security features, to ensure the best possible service for our customers. I am confident that we have achieved

the best working solution for our operations and we aim to replace our entire fleet with SDC Trailers in the coming years."

The custom-built trailer combines seamlessly with Bryan's Scania cab

unit which also features a bespoke design both inside and out. The haulier exhibited at the Barnard Castle Truck Show on 25th August and received awards for Best combination, Best rigid truck and 3rd place in Best interior.



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Cartwright Creates 'Game Changing' Trailer For Culina Logistics

Cartwright engineers have created another industry first, designing a new low height double deck fridge, in what major customer Culina Logistics has described as a 'game-changer'.

Culina Logistics approached Cartwright with a problem it faced distributing to a large supermarket customer in the Republic of Ireland, where there is a restricted access height of 4,650 mm in the Dublin Tunnel. Because of this, mainland road access to the Ireland has been off limits to Double Deck Temperature-Controlled trailers coming into the country, ordinarily built to 4,880mm high. In an industry first, Cartwright managed to build a double deck temperature-controlled trailer at a height of 4,650mm, without compromising Culina's 1,830mm cage height requirement on each deck.



As well as this being advantageous to trailers entering Ireland, this changes the landscape of temperature-controlled trailer distribution by increasing fuel

economy up to 4% (Culina are currently undertaking road tests for an exact measure) as well as other advantages that come with a reduced height.

Culina can expect to see less damage caused by trees and low bridges, especially prevalent on unpredictable motorway diversion routes. Furthermore, the weight of the trailer has been greatly reduced, increasing the payload that the trailer can deliver. With a more efficient trailer, Culina expects to roll the new design out to its entire fleet across the U.K. Lionel Curtis, Technical Director of Cartwright, explained: "The task required different manufacturing and assembly techniques which we were already familiar with, but when we weight tested the deck there was no residual deflection whatsoever.

"The deck was carefully designed and analysed to make it work with different materials and processes. This project needed some careful structural design, but we are very pleased with the results," he added. Cartwright Rentals has also added five of the new innovative trailers to its rental fleet, which is sure to make an impact on the temperature-controlled market.

Health and Safety: Working in London

Raising driving and operational standards for operators regardless of fleet size, vehicle type, or geographical location, is one of FORS's principle goals. In fact, in the 10 years since FORS began, much has been done to ensure the scheme is applicable to as many operators as possible.

With FORS membership spanning the whole country, and even Europe, it is important that the scheme is not only open to a broad range of fleets, but that the guidance it offers reflects the differing operational requirements of this diverse body of 5,000 plus members. Peter Morrow, FORS Manager, Northern Ireland said, "The majority - 82% - of FORS members, are not based in London, yet for many of our members, operating within London is a key part of their business. To this end, FORS is designed to help fleets understand and comply with the requirements of driving there, even if they are based further afield." He added, "The new FORS Standard version 5, which comes into effect from 14 January 2019, has the task of ensuring operators can meet the specific needs of urban driving in both London and other major conurbations, while retaining relevance for operators across the UK as a whole."

Air Quality

One such recognition of the requirements of operating in London set out in the new version of the FORS Standard is an increased commitment to improving air quality, a focus for the capital in light of the launch of Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan's London Environment Strategy Implementation Plan in May 2018. This new mayoral strategy includes the introduction of the world's first Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from April 2019, and future provision for the extension of the current ULEZ boundaries. Equally, FORS Silver accreditation now requires the mandatory FORS Professional 'LoCITY Time to clean up' eLearning module to have been

completed by drivers within the past 24 months at the time of audit. In addition, drivers of FORS Gold members with van or HGV fleets are required to undertake the FORS Professional 'LoCITY Driving' classroom training course, while those with car fleets or passenger-carrying vehicle fleets are required to undertake a FORS-approved environmental awareness training course – both within the past five years.

Urban driving

Safety in urban driving environments is also crucial for FORS members operating in London. From FORS Bronze level, drivers must complete a safety eLearning module within the past 12 months of audit, whilst at Silver, drivers must have completed within the five years prior to accreditation, either a Safe Urban Driving or a Van Smart training course or a FORS Approved work-related road safety training course with an on-cycle element. Indeed, the Transport for London (TfL) requirements on managing work related road risk (WRRR) are embedded into the new FORS Standard, helping drivers learn how to minimise the probability and severity of collisions involving vulnerable road users in urban environments. FORS Silver accreditation is fully aligned to meet TfL's WRRR requirements, at the same time aligning with the new CLOCS Standard v3, which also comes into force in January 2019. FORS Silver now also includes a commitment to tackle noise pollution - a criteria formerly only mandated at FORS Gold. Operators seeking FORS Silver accreditation must complete noise assessments at operating centres and noise sensitive locations in a bid to minimise noise

pollution and its impact on local communities.

Direct Vision Standard

Peter Morrow commented, "While difficult to predict the future, it is important that FORS helps operators future proof as best they can, to make sure they are ready to meet the requirements of upcoming environmental and safety legislation changes which could affect how and even where they operate.

"The much discussed Direct Vision Standard (DVS) proposals are a case in point. A directive very much relating specifically to London in its current form, it is important that FORS members - whether working in London or not - are aware of the proposals and able to meet the safety requirements set out within." FORS vehicle safety equipment requirements at Silver now include both blind spot vision aids that provide the driver with a full view of the near-side vehicle blind spot, and audible warning systems. In addition, Fresnel lenses are no longer permitted but, to allow for older vehicles, a tolerance in the number of vehicles fitted with camera systems may be accepted for vehicles registered before 1 January 2015. FORS's comprehensive portfolio of training courses, workshops, eLearning and practical guidance is delivered through its FORS Professional training programme, designed to help members progress through the scheme, and meet the specific requirements set out for London, and other cities.

***Organisations with FORS audit dates from 14 January 2019 will be assessed against the new requirements of the FORS Standard version 5.**

FORS launches Bridge Smart toolkit

FORS has launched the latest addition to its series of toolkits. Forming part of the FORS Professional training portfolio, the new 'Bridge Smart, Prevention of Bridge Strikes Toolkit' is devised exclusively for FORS members and includes guidance for managers and drivers.

The 'Bridge Smart, Prevention of Bridge Strikes Toolkit' comprises three essential themes: 'Reset' the culture of preventing bridge strikes; helping members to 'relearn' avoidance techniques and raising awareness through education and training; and 'regain' industry best

practice to prevent bridge strikes. Delivered through two platforms, the toolkit is accessible as an online eLearning module through FORS members' own dedicated eLearning dashboard, or via group delivery if individual online accessibility is not possible.

It provides detailed, yet easy-to-digest, practical measures on reducing incidences of bridge strikes, while at the same time offering procedural advice should a bridge-related incident occur. Toolkit guidance exists for improving driver knowledge, to provide examples

of best practice and for internal communications resources.

"Bridge strikes can cause chaos," said Graham Holder, FORS Head of Quality Assurance and Compliance, "and yet they are entirely avoidable. They result in huge costs to industry, reputational damage for operators concerned and huge frustrations for other road users.

"This new interactive training seeks to ensure HGV drivers and transport managers have an understanding of these issues, and the knowledge they need to ensure bridge strikes are avoided."

Transaid Celebrates 20th Anniversary in Royal Style

Transaid celebrated its 20th anniversary recently with a special showcase event in London, attended by more than 150 industry supporters, partners and development organisations, together with its Patron HRH The Princess Royal and the entire Transaid team.

The event highlighted Transaid's activities in sub-Saharan Africa, which have been made possible thanks to the extensive support of the transport and logistics industry and key funding partners.

Addressing assembled guests, The Princess Royal said: "Thank you for being part of the first 20 years of Transaid. I hope you can all see what has been achieved and what is yet to come. Your industry expertise and knowledge has driven

this success, which is making a real difference in places where people are looking for change."

Commenting on the importance of one of Transaid's major initiatives, she added: "Evidence suggests that increasing driver training across sub-Saharan Africa has improved lives across the board – Transaid's programmes have been proven to work and I hope the industry recognises the value they add."

Transaid CEO, Caroline Barber added: "It's been an incredible journey for us and we have made real progress in transforming people's lives in Africa. We're stronger than ever and we have a clear vision to guide us, with 32 faithful corporate partners by our side. Together we can make the world a better and safer place."

Click here for dedicated fleet management

At last, dedicated fleet management software which covers all the bases. **FORS Fleet Management System** has been developed by FORS, the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme, drawing on the expertise of renowned fleet software specialist, FleetCheck.

FORS FMS is a full data platform providing online document storage, information portal and an advanced reporting suite to manage all O-Licence requirements. It's designed specifically to help **FORS** members prepare for and manage their accreditation and there's a Mobile App, too. **FORS FMS** – the single solution to your fleet management needs.



Safety, Efficiency, Environment

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10 YEARS

Renault Trucks Appoints Commercial Trucks & Services Director

Renault Trucks UK & Ireland has further strengthened its senior leadership team with the appointment of James Charnock to the role of Commercial Trucks & Services Director, reporting directly to Managing Director, Carlos Rodrigues.

In his new role, James is responsible for driving growth across the company's product portfolio of new trucks, LCVs and transport services.

James previously held the role of Used Truck Director, Volvo

Group, driving a strong used truck business across both Renault Trucks and Volvo Trucks brands.

As well as extensive knowledge of the business, James brings wide-ranging experience across

the automotive sector gained in roles including Fleet Parts Sales Director at DAF Trucks, as well as positions at Lex Auto Logistics and TRW. Carlos Rodrigues says: "I am delighted to welcome James to the Renault Trucks executive

team. His skills, experience and track record speak for themselves, whilst his drive, enthusiasm and inclusive approach will invigorate and accelerate our growth in the UK & Ireland."



James Charnock

Export & Freight's Cricket Hall of Fame

On the 2nd of November at the 7th Annual Turkish Airlines Cricket Ireland Awards, hosted at the historic Royal College of Physicians of Ireland in Dublin, our very own Garfield Harrison was inducted into the Cricket Ireland Hall of Fame by the Cricket Writers of Ireland.

The Waringstown all-rounder played 118 times for Ireland from 1983-97 including figures of 9-113 against Scotland. This is still the second best for Ireland in first-class cricket.

Garfield is one of a famous Irish cricketing family. No less than 4 brothers Jimmy, Roy, Derek and Garfield have played for Ireland, as has their brother-in-law Eddie Bushe.



Garfield Harrison, left, is presented with the Cricket Writers of Ireland Hall of Fame Award by journalist Ian Callender during the Turkish Airlines 2018 Cricket Ireland Awards at the Royal College of Physicians in Dublin. Photo by Seb Daly/Sportsfile

Truck Makers Concerned over CO2 Standards

The European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), which represents the EU's seven major truck producers, is highly concerned about the outcome of the European Parliament's plenary vote on the region's first-ever CO2 standards for heavy-duty vehicles.

ACEA is particularly alarmed by the excessively aggressive CO2 reduction targets that a tight majority of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have backed: -20% by 2025 and at least -35% by 2030. "These targets go over and above the proposal made by the European Commission last May, which was already very challenging," noted Erik Jonnaert, ACEA Secretary General.

The 2025 target would also require truck makers to fit new technologies to vehicles that are

already under development, even if this was not originally planned. "The R&D and production processes of the European truck industry would be negatively affected by these targets, for which the short lead time simply doesn't match the long development cycles for trucks," Jonnaert added.

ACEA welcomed in principle the Commission's proposal to incentivise zero- and low-emissions trucks via 'super-credits'. However, MEPs voted to set a benchmark system instead, which would include a

'malus' to penalise manufacturers who do not sell a mandatory quota of zero- and low-emissions trucks. "MEPs seem to be blatantly ignoring the fact that the potential for electrifying the truck fleet is far lower than for cars, due to issues such as extremely high upfront costs, range limitations, insufficient infrastructure – particularly along motorways – as well as reluctant customers.

"Our members remain committed to driving down CO2 emissions as quickly as possible. What we

are calling for is a well-balanced regulation which encourages, supports and accelerates the technological shift towards low- and zero-emission powertrains, without jeopardising the industry's competitiveness." ACEA takes note of the fact that there was a weak majority for the final Parliament report. "Looking ahead, we hope that national governments will take a more balanced approach when adopting their common position on future CO2 targets."

Translink is on board with ICE's Invisible Superhero campaign

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) Invisible Superheroes campaign has welcomed a new partner with Translink signing up to the campaign and commissioning three new sets of superheroes.

The Invisible Superheroes created exclusively for Translink will appear on posters

at train and bus stations across Northern Ireland and on Translink's social media, and website.



Launching the new Invisible Superheroes campaign partnership between ICE and Translink are (front) Ruairi Savage, Senior Programme Manager for Network Engineering who inspired the new 'Titan Tracker' superhero and Translink Programme Manager Louise Sterritt who inspired Invisible Superhero 'Captain Projecto' with (back L-R) Richard Kirk, ICE Regional Director and Chris Conway, Translink Group Chief Executive.

The Invisible Superhero campaign aims to tell the public how civil engineering has helped transform lives and shape the world. The superhero theme is intended to help inspire a new generation of civil engineers and promote the message that civil engineering is a rewarding and exciting career option.

ICE Regional Director Richard Kirk said: "I am delighted that Translink are on board with the campaign, civil engineers really are the invisible superheroes that create infrastructure that help us get to places where we need to be.

"Much of civil engineering is unseen but is critical to our quality of life. Invisible Superheroes is all about educating the public about the important role civil engineers play and inspiring the next generation to consider a rewarding career in civil engineering."

Translink Group CEO, Chris Conway explained: "Translink is delighted to support ICE and the Invisible Superheroes campaign. This is a really fun way to raise the profile of those engineers behind some of our exciting construction and engineering projects that are helping to transform public transport to enable Northern Ireland to prosper and grow.

"Our engineers have really got on board with the playful comic book creative, being keen to inspire the next generation to consider engineering within the public transport sector as a rewarding career".

The year-long exhibition is part of ICE's bicentenary celebrations - ICE 200 - running throughout 2018, with events planned around the UK to showcase and explain civil engineering to the public.



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Seamus Leheny

Policy & Membership Manager - Northern Ireland. Freight Transport Association



DRIVING SAFELY IN WINTER: MAKE SURE YOUR DRIVERS ARE PREPARED

We're now in the middle of winter but the need to deliver goods 24 hours a day remains therefore supply chains are at their most vulnerable to severe weather conditions.

In recent years during heavy snowfall here has brought roads such as the Glenshane Pass, the A5 and the A1 to a standstill. It is therefore advisable to look at your procedures to ensure the system for receiving information and dealing with the hazards is still robust. This will put you in a position to manage drivers and vehicles more efficiently.

It will also equip you to deal with severe disruption that could pose both a danger to drivers and to their vehicles and loads.

It is estimated that vehicle performance can be as much as 10 per cent poorer in the winter months. Winter conditions can mean greater use of equipment on the vehicle such as lamps, heaters and demisters. It is therefore important that vehicles are operating at their best to cope with conditions that they will face.

Ensure your drivers have a supply of kit for use during winter weather and have been given the information that is available on certain weather conditions. Here is some useful advice you can brief into your drivers regarding driving during Snow and ice:

- * Obtain weather information before setting off and keep up to date with changing conditions and closed routes via the radio or by regularly calling into base
- * Carry the following items in the cab: a shovel; a couple of strong sacks (to keep give wheel traction if stuck in snow); warm clothes and a blanket; a torch, food and warm drink in a flask; a road atlas; a mobile phone and charger; and sunglasses to deflect the glare from the snow
- * Clear the vehicle of ice and snow before attempting to move off
- * Lower the speed and maintain a



- good distance from other vehicles
- 10 times the normal stopping distances on icy roads
- * Brake gently over much longer distances, especially when driving articulated vehicles or those with a trailer attached
- * Sudden braking, steering or acceleration should be avoided
- * Falling snow can dramatically reduce visibility – use dipped headlights and reduce speed
- * Snow can obscure road markings and traffic signs so extra care should be taken at junctions
- * Do not attempt to overtake a snow plough or vehicle spreading salt
- * Be alert for a drop in temperature at night. If the steering feels light you may be driving on ice, so ease the speed as soon as it is safe to do so
- * If stuck in deep snow, engage the diff-lock to regain forward traction and switch it off as soon as the vehicle is moving and before attempting a turn.

- Alternatively, use the highest gear to improve traction, then alternate between reverse and the forward gear until forward motion is possible. Avoid continual revving in a low gear, which could lead to the drive wheel digging a deeper rut
- * When operating independent retarders, take care when going downhill in snow – the retarders could cause the rear wheels to lock

Exemptions

In January 2017, the Department for Transport (DfT) issued new guidance on Emergency Exemption & Temporary Relaxation of Drivers' Hours and Working Time Rules. The new guidance was tested for the first time in the severe snow of February and March 2018.

The new guidance clearly points operators – where it is appropriate – to make use of one of the exemptions from EU drivers' hours rules under Article 3(d): "vehicles used in emergencies or rescue operations". An emergency is

not defined in the EU rules but the document states that the four parameters laid down in domestic rules can be applied:

- * danger to life or health of people or animals
- * serious interruption to the maintenance of public services (eg water, gas, electricity, drainage) or in the use of roads
- * serious interruption in private or public transport
- * serious damage to property

Note that this is not a relaxation but an exemption, and the parameters also apply to domestic rules so when operating under this exemption no specific driving time rules apply, and neither does the Road Transport Directive (Working Time) whose scope is defined by that of the EU drivers' hours rules.

There is also no requirement to 'pay back' rest time. However, an operator's duty of care under Health and Safety legislation continues to apply, and an operator must not cause a driver to drive whilst fatigued nor do anything which could pose a risk to road safety.

The Department issued additional guidance recommending that certain parts of the rules continued to be observed, such as 45 minutes rest after 4.5 hours driving, and a minimum of nine hours' daily rest.

It is not necessary to seek approval to employ the exemption, although notifying DfI or DfT means that it can in turn notify the DVA or DVSA that a particular sector is operating under the exemption. DfT has made clear that it is for the operator – and ultimately the driver – to decide if the exemption applies. Let's hope we avoid serious disruption this winter and I hope that you and your drivers get through it safely.

PoC now provides a viable option for business communications

The advent of 4G means Push-to-Talk over Cellular technology can deliver a cost-effective private one-to-many voice and data network.

Businesses have traditionally relied on professional mobile radio (PMR) solutions to provide their communications systems. But Push-to-Talk over Cellular (PoC) technology now provides an alternative to PMR for organisations whose communications system is not 'business' or 'mission' critical to their day-to-day operations. PoC may also suit those with limited budgets or who require a large regional or nationwide network. The latter can be particularly important for freight and haulage businesses wishing to keep in touch with commercial vehicles crisscrossing the country.

The technology has now come of age thanks to the roll out of commercial 4G LTE networks, which deliver low latency connection times to rival PMR. End users do not have to pay for costly PMR infrastructure, as they simply harness the national 4G networks provided by mobile network operators (MNOs).

PoC provides many of the group, broadcast and individual calling options associated with traditional two-way radio technology. But PoC also has the added benefit of providing access to fast broadband data applications as well. Services are accessed via a PoC platform provider, which manages the relationship with the MNO. Generally, the PoC platform sets up its own high redundancy protected servers with dedicated links into the MNO networks. Each customer gets its own space on the server

and SIM numbers with individual IP addresses. The customer can then choose the level of service, device authentication and security it requires and establish its network management policies. There are two main approaches to how PoC platforms offer their services.

The first uses static (fixed) IPs and dedicated APNs (Access Point Names), which provide the gateway between the subscriber's mobile device and the mobile network. This enables the PoC platform to provide a higher level of service with faster connection times and higher priority access to the network compared with consumer subscribers.

The second option is to use a multi-network SIM, which allows the user's device to automatically roam across two or more MNO networks depending on which has the strongest signal. The advantage of this is that the user is less likely to encounter poor coverage areas. The disadvantage is they cannot access some of the higher levels of service associated with using dedicated APNs into a particular network.

Unlike PMR networks where channel capacity is finite, PoC platforms allow any number of virtual channels and call groups to be created. PMR-style dispatcher services are also available, including real-time GPS location applications, lone worker monitoring and alarms, workflow management and

job ticketing, and remote over-the-air device management.

Some PoC platforms also enable PoC services to be integrated with existing PMR systems using gateways to provide a unified PMR/cellular network. This allows customers to extend the range of their PMR networks and enables non-radio users to communicate with PMR users via PoC. Pricing and billing is simple as most PoC platforms buy terabytes of data off the MNOs and then offer SIM cards with a specified amount of data usage - often for a fixed fee per annum. When it comes to buying devices it is well worth investing in terminals from manufacturers such as Hytera Communications who have built up considerable expertise both in PTT technology and in manufacturing long-lasting, ruggedised devices. Hytera's PNC370 PoC device supports 3G, 4G, WiFi, Bluetooth, has built-in-GPS and offers a battery life of up to 18 hours.



Chevin encourages 'spreadsheet fleets' to reduce risk through fleet management software

There are a number of businesses that still rely heavily on spreadsheets or paper-based reporting structures to manage their fleets, according to fleet management software provider Chevin Fleet Solutions.

Chevin states that it often encounters quite large fleets that still use dated processes and systems such as spreadsheets as the primary management tool. The limitations and risks associated with using this approach always becomes immediately apparent.

"Fleets running hundreds or more vehicles using spreadsheets or paper-based methods are going to struggle to deliver the levels of data and reporting structures often needed to effectively manage areas such as cost control and compliance," said David Gladding, Global Director of Sales and Marketing at Chevin Fleet Solutions.

"Using such methods is a high-risk strategy that can prove slow, costly and hard to audit. Even the most basic software allows access to much more data and when supported by a mobile app, means real-time, paperless data capture for recording things such as driver walk round checks."



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Operator Convicted on a Series of Offences

A County Tyrone operator has been convicted on a series of offences at Omagh Magistrates' Court and fined a total of £600.

The conviction arose when DVA Vehicle Examiners stopped and inspected a two axle light goods vehicle box van in the vicinity of Omagh. Checks revealed that the driver did not hold a current/valid category driving licence to drive a vehicle over 3,500kgs. The driver was unable to provide a record of his driving for that day and the previous 28 days and also failed to provide evidence of a Certificate of Professional Competence qualification. When the insurance policy was provided by the operator it was established that the policy only covered a person who holds a valid licence to drive. The driver was interviewed and cautioned. At a later date the director of the company was interviewed and cautioned.

Overweight and Tachograph Offences

A County Down driver has been convicted at Ballymena Magistrates' court and fined a total of £375 plus £15 offender levy after his truck was found to be overweight.

The conviction arose when DVA Vehicle Examiners were carrying out a goods operations in the Larne area when a Scania articulated good vehicle in combination with a 3 axle semi-trailer was directed to the Department's weighbridge facility at Larne harbour for the purposes of an inspection and weight check. The vehicle was found to be overweight on the gross train weight by 2,610 kgs (6.5%), overweight on the gross vehicle weight by 2,490 kgs (13.9%) and overweight on the 2nd axle by 1,150kgs (10%). The driving records on the digital driver's card were analysed and it was noted that the driver did not take the required statutory break after 4 ½ hours driving (2 occasions). A prohibition notice was issued in respect of the overloads. The driver was interviewed and cautioned.

Driver Gets Penalty Points

A County Tyrone operator was convicted at Omagh Magistrates' Court and fined a total of £450 plus £15 costs and in addition received three penalty points on to his driving licence after DVA Vehicle Examiners stopped and inspected a 2 axle MAN rigid goods vehicle in combination with a 2 axle Chieftain plant trailer in the Omagh area.

On production of his current driving licence it was noted that the driver did not hold the category entitlement to drive the vehicle which invalidated his insurance. Subsequent enquires revealed that the driver did in fact hold a provisional entitlement but should have been accompanied by a suitable qualified driver and displaying "L-plates". It was also identified that the tachograph was not calibrated and the driver was not using the tachograph equipment.

Exceeded Tachograph Download Timeframe

A Belfast haulage operator was convicted at Lisburn Magistrates' court and fined a total of £2,000 plus £15 offender levy after DVA Vehicle Examiners stopped a DAF articulated lorry in combination with a 3 axle curtainsider trailer and directed the driver to take the vehicle to the Department's weighbridge facility at Sprucefield for the purposes of an inspection and weight check.

The vehicle tachograph data was analysed and it was noted that the data had not been downloaded within the stipulated 90 day period. At a later date the owner was interviewed and cautioned, with two offences relating to exceeding the tachograph download timeframe and vehicle being driven without a card (7 occasions) being highlighted. The owner when asked what procedures are in place to prevent recurrence of these infringements replied: 'I have put a reminder system on my phone, computer, diary etc to prevent this'.



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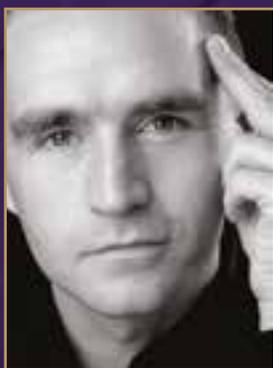
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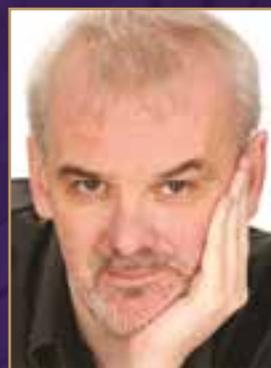
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Renault Trucks: Turning A Standard Tractor Into Multi-Purpose Rigid

Renault Trucks is expanding its range of used vehicles and bringing out a new model from the 'Used Trucks Factory' incorporated into the Bourg-en-Bresse manufacturing site in France.

The Range T P-Road is the result of converting Renault Trucks T Tractors into Rigid to meet customer demand.

Renault Trucks is bringing out a customised used rigid - the Range T P-Road - to meet the specific requirements of customers looking for high-quality, certified, used rigids. This new model (a Renault Trucks Range T X-Road worksite supply truck) is the latest addition to the manufacturer's existing 'Used Trucks Factory' range of customised used vehicles.

The Range T P-Road undergoes the same strict quality control and systematic

road test as new vehicles before delivery to Renault Trucks dealerships.

It is currently available in the 4x2 frame version, with a choice of three different wheelbase lengths (5600, 6000 and 6500 mm) as required. Vehicles can also be customised for use by driving schools or removal companies, for example.

The Range T P-Road is guaranteed for one year or 120,000 km (75,000 mls) and the manufacturer's guarantee (Selection Label) covers all driveline components (engine, gearbox and bridges) and applies to all Renault Trucks sales and service outlets throughout Europe.



Thermo King and Frigoblock Win Noise Abatement Society Award

Thermo King and Frigoblock have been awarded by the Noise Abatement Society in the UK with the 2018 John Connell Award in the Quiet Logistics category.

This award recognises

advances in low-noise technology, equipment and operations to facilitate safe, low-noise and efficient urban distribution services.

The 2018 John Connell Awards Ceremony was held at the Palace of Westminster in London, honouring local authorities, industry, organisations and individuals for the

significant impact they have made to improve the aural environment.

Steve Williams, area sales manager at Thermo King and Jon Jerrard-Din joined the other winners on stage to thank for this exceptional recognition.

"We are pleased to be recognized for our efforts to make refrigerated transport more sustainable and

quieter," said Williams. "In recent years, we have had an increasing number of requests from customers asking for our help in proposing solutions to address the issue of noise in urban areas. We have worked hard to develop and introduce a number of solutions that today help transport companies address the concerns of the urban communities. These solutions aim

at improving the quality of life in the cities with low noise and low emission operations and we will continue to innovate and lead the market in this direction."

"For years we have been working with retail and distribution customers in the UK to address noise and engine emissions concerns during deliveries in urban areas," said Jerrard-Din. "Frigoblock refrigeration units eliminate the need for an auxiliary diesel engine in the refrigeration unit and the associated noise. These units can also be combined with natural gas engine trucks, which gives transport companies one of the cleanest and quietest truck and trailer combinations in the market."

New apprenticeship pathway launched as NI logistic leaders meet to discuss future of industry

Leading employment and skills specialist Seetec has expanded its offering to Northern Ireland apprentices with a work-based qualification in the International Trade and Logistics covering air, ocean and road freight.

The International Trade and Logistics Operations pathway, which is the equivalent of NVQ 2/GCSE - grades A* - C is now available through Seetec to young people seeking a new career in the logistics sector.

Seetec, which operates across Belfast recruiting as part of the government-backed ApprenticeshipsNI programme, has worked closely with logistic, freight and transport firms in the north to provide talented apprentices to businesses.

Comments Julie Gorman, Operations Manager for Apprenticeships Seetec: "We worked closely with our business partners and recognised calls for a qualification that met the needs of the air, ocean and road supply chain network. This qualification now gives our users a much broader choice to pursue a career in this sector.

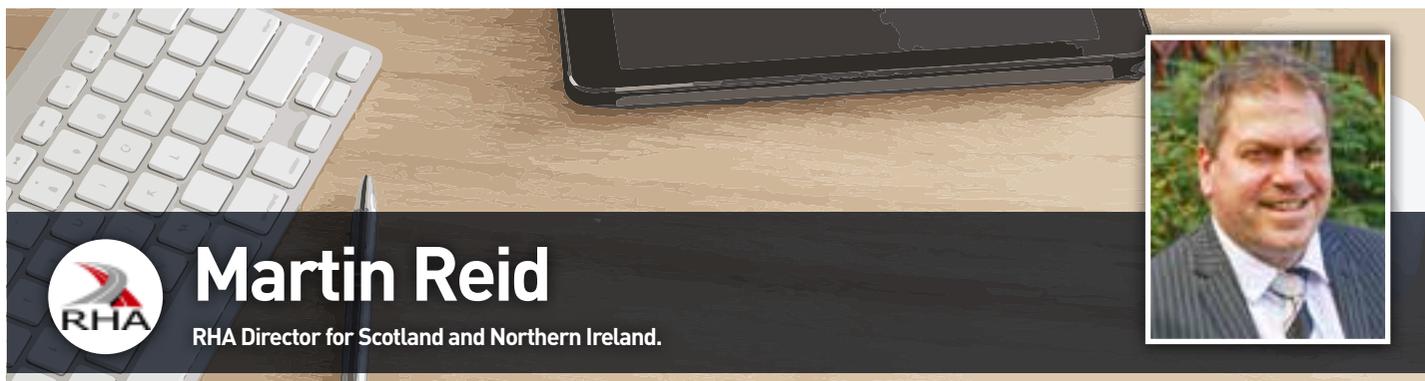
The freight industry is facing a shortage of new talent entering the trade with many young perceiving it as an unknown profession. With customs legislation getting more complex there is an opportunity for the emergence of a talented workforce with a greater understanding of the industry and we're delighted to be providing this to the people of Northern Ireland."

Seetec's new offering comes as senior officials from the logistics industry gathered at Belfast Castle for a seminar to discuss the role apprenticeships can play in the future of the sector.

The British International Freight Association (BIFA), which partnered with Outsource Training (part of the Seetec group), to host the event has previously warned businesses in Northern Ireland face a skills shortage if they ignore the potential

apprenticeships offer. The seminar focused on the steps companies can take to implement apprenticeships into their business strategy.

Nichola Hay, Director of Outsource training, was one of those who spoke at the event. She said: "It is no secret that industries in the north face a skills shortage if they don't embrace opportunities that apprentices provide them. The logistics, freight and transport sectors are not immune from this and it is vital we provide businesses with the necessary tools to integrate apprenticeships into their business plan. "The seminar was the first step to helping firms understand the potential having apprentices on board can have to their workforce. We know with Brexit looming there will be an increased need for knowledge and skills in customs operations and what better way to prepare ahead of this by investing in early talent now."



MORE CLARITY & STABILITY SORELY NEEDED

It would be the understatement of the millennium to say that 2018 was quite a year for everyone, a year that ended as it had begun, in total confusion and with a political system seemingly intent on imploding.

We have seen the Cabinet disintegrate with a number of resignations over Brexit, a party leadership vote of confidence and latterly, another motion of no confidence in the PM tabled by the leader of the opposition. Confusion reigns.

While this Brexit confusion takes up most of the parliamentary time and media column inches, "normal" parliamentary business is largely put to one side, or in some cases tried to sneak through on the quiet.

I was disturbed to read recently that Labour Shadow Minister for the Treasury, Clive Lewis wants Ministers to have the power to increase VED. He has stated that a Labour Government with John McDonnell in No 11 Downing Street would "review the entire spread of environmental taxes and tax reliefs" claiming that lorry taxes would rise by £12,096 per lorry per year. He wants to raise £6 billion in taxes from lorries alone.

This is not only madness but yet another example of the politicians not having a clue about the industry. He claims that "HGV's are paying for only 11% of their UK road infrastructure



costs". Has he any clue at all about how much hauliers pay in fuel duty to the treasury?

Fuel Duty

Road fuel usage in the UK amounts to 45.8 billion litres annually (16.1bn petrol + 29.7bn diesel) according to the recently released 2018 Statistical Review by UKPIA. The Chancellor's Autumn Budget estimates 2017/18 fuel duty income to be £27.9bn increasing to £28bn for 2018/19 and then

a jump to £28.6bn in 2019/20. VAT from road fuels accounts for approximately £8.4bn. 44.1% of every litre pumped goes to the government in fuel duty which is higher than anywhere else, and that is before we look at the fuel rebates available in some European countries.

It is totally disingenuous to suggest that HGV's do not pay their way and it shows yet again, a startling lack of awareness of our industry.

Yet again lazy politicians looking for headline grabbing soundbites without checking facts.

Our industry has so far spent £1.5 billion of its own money (no Govt help whatsoever) putting ultra-low emissions lorries on the road in the last 4 years. No other sector has done more to clean up and so it is wrong and lazy for Mr Lewis to portray the industry as stereotypically dirty smelly trucks.

As a footnote, Mr Lewis is also "content to see HGV businesses go out of business" as a result of this planned hike. There are 2.54 million people working in the transport and logistics sector who all rely on their jobs to support families.... and they can pretty much all vote!

Questions Abound

So, we are now faced with more confusion. Will there be a second referendum? Will there be a new Minister? Will there be another General Election, and if so, do we vote for a party that seems to be imploding or change to a party who want to tax the industry out of business?

There is little doubt that 2018 was a difficult year for everyone. I hope that 2019 brings with it more clarity, more stability and an opportunity for the industry to thrive but there is little happening just now to give us confidence that this will be the case.

'It is totally disingenuous to suggest that HGV's do not pay their way and it shows yet again, a startling lack of awareness of our industry'

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE OPERATORS USING OLD TYRES TO FACE INVESTIGATIONS

Vehicle operators found using tyres more than 10 years old will face a follow-up investigation and potential regulatory action.

From now on, if the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) finds a tyre more than 10 years old as part of its routine heavy vehicle enforcement work, it will carry out follow-up investigations on the vehicle operator.

If the operator cannot give an adequate explanation for using an old tyre, or their tyre management systems are not up to standard, DVSA may refer them to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner for potential regulatory action.

DVSA has updated its guide to maintaining roadworthiness; it builds on previous guidance issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2013 which strongly discouraged the use of tyres older than 10 years on coaches.

Jesse Norman, Roads Minister, said: "I asked the DVSA to consider this measure as a means to tighten enforcement against the use of older and potentially dangerous tyres. This is an important step forward in our efforts to improve tyre safety. The Department for Transport is continuing to work with experts to collect robust evidence on older tyres. This research will report back in the spring.

Gareth Llewellyn, DVSA Chief Executive, added: "DVSA's priority is to protect everyone from unsafe drivers and vehicles. Tyre safety is vital and DVSA has always taken strong



action to protect the public from unsafe tyres of all ages. By changing our approach, we're sending the message that no one should use tyres more than 10 years old."

Roadside checks

DVSA has also updated its categorisation of defects guide to include tyres aged more than 10 years old fitted to any heavy vehicle or trailer.

The guide, which is for DVSA enforcement staff, sets out what action they can take when they find roadworthiness defects on vehicles.

From April 2016 to March 2017, DVSA enforcement staff carried out:

64,690 mechanical safety checks on heavy goods vehicles and issued 17,405 prohibitions

9,787 mechanical safety checks on light goods vehicles and issued 5,434 prohibitions

11,324 mechanical safety checks on buses and coaches, and issued 1,760 prohibitions

A prohibition prevents you from driving until you get a problem with your vehicle fixed.

Tyre research

Earlier in 2018, DfT announced a study into the safety of ageing tyres - the first publicly funded research of its kind in the UK.

In 2013, DfT issued guidance to all operators setting out that tyres that have reached the age of 10 years should not be used on a steering axle, and stipulating strict conditions if they're to be used at all.

Since then, DVSA vehicle standard standards assessors and vehicle examiners have routinely checked the age of tyres on these vehicles every year, as well as in fleet and roadside inspections.

The 'guide to maintaining roadworthiness' has also been updated to help resolve bridge strikes. These cause significant disruption for the rail network and are often caused by drivers failing to appreciate the height of their vehicle.

It gives guidance for drivers to help make sure they record the height of their vehicle during their daily walkaround checks, which are part of an effective maintenance system. By improving guidance in this area, DVSA aims to see a reduction in disruption to travellers.

BOC Boosts Safety with Michelin Telematics System

As part of its ongoing commitment to improve safety, BOC, the largest supplier of industrial gases and medical gases in the UK, is to fit Michelin's EFFITRAILER telematics system to its entire bulk tractor and trailer fleet.

During a successful six-month trial on 10 BOC assets, the programme – which offers an on-board datalink, tyre pressure monitoring system, electronic braking system data analysis and constant geolocation – helped to enhance safety as well as prevent roadside breakdowns and minimise downtime.

Commenting, Roger Wilkinson, National Transport Manager, BOC UK & Ireland, cited the programme's safety features as key to rolling the Michelin equipment out across its fleet.

"EFFITRAILER connects to every BOC tanker's anti-rollover device and provides an alert to the transport office in the

event the system is activated which, from a driver training perspective, is very important." Wilkinson also highlights the

other extensive features offered by EFFITRAILER. "It doesn't just monitor tyre pressures – it provides hub heat readings which tell us

of any potential issues with the brakes or bearings. It also measures trailer utilisation from a time perspective, which is excellent.

"And Michelin's programme will tell a driver via a mobile device what their tyre pressures are before they go out on the road."



Henderson Group takes Conti360° fleet management for three years

The Henderson Group has switched to the Conti360° Fleet Management programme from Continental Tyres. Operated through local specialist tyre dealer, Modern Tyres, the comprehensive package will benefit a fleet of around 200 trucks and trailers.



Pat McGarry, Group Logistics Director at Henderson Wholesale, with Stephen Shaw, Modern Tyres Group Sales and Marketing Manager.

The vehicles serve the company's SPAR, EUROSAPAR and VIVO branded stores and food service customers, and clock up around six million kilometres a year.

The new arrangement has been set up as a fixed-price contract based on a pence-per-kilometre basis for three years.

The Group's Logistics Director, Pat McGarry, commented: "We have more than 1,500 food retailers and food service outlets that rely on our fleet for regular deliveries, many of them daily. Our job is to manage the logistics of these deliveries, not

the logistics of tyres. Our modern fleet is one of the biggest in Northern Ireland and includes rigid, tractors and trailers, all of which are serviced and maintained by manufacturers and their networks for us. We take the same approach to tyres. Our sole objectives are to offer outstanding service quality to our customers and to operate a safe, compliant fleet, so we delegate the day-to-day aspects of the latter to specialists in the field."

The new contract continues a previous three year-relationship with Modern Tyres, though with a different tyre manufacturer.

The renewal package was put out to a detailed tender process, with three tyre manufacturers and an alternative dealer all involved. The combination of Conti360° and Modern Tyres was selected, says Pat McGarry, "Because we wanted a tyre partner that could deliver what we needed, both in terms of a high-quality product and reasonable cost. "We run a premium-quality fleet and wanted a tyre policy to match. For us, this meant tyres that we could expect to perform in terms of safety, reliability and economy, with a thorough and dependable fleet management service to

ensure it. The tender process was very rigorous, but the team from Continental and Modern Tyres impressed us. We wanted to be sure we had a team that would match our standards, and their other key contract awards in the region inspired us with confidence."

The continuing relationship with Modern Tyres has other benefits for the company, as Henderson Group Fleet Manager, David McCracken explained. "Modern Tyres has probably the best coverage in Northern Ireland with around 40 outlets so, if we do get an unexpected tyre problem, they will have local support to get our vehicle on the move again.

Even though we have only recently signed the new contract, we have already established good relationships at all levels with the dealer. We have regular updates about performance and cost with both Continental and the dealer, as well as our own set of tough KPIs that we monitor."

The Conti360° Fleet programme gives the Henderson Group a complete service that includes tyre choice and correct tyre fitment, as well as regular inspections to ensure best tyre safety and performance. A tyre breakdown service helps to get operators back on the road with minimum downtime, while a complete used casing service deals with the collection, inspection, purchasing, retreading and/or proper disposal of tyres. Finally, a regular analysis of tyre-related data shows potential for tyre-related cost savings.

Continental Tyres appoints new Commercial Fleet Sales Manager

Neil Davies has been appointed as the new Commercial Fleet Sales Manager for Continental Tyre Group.

In his new position, Neil will take responsibility for the Sales Team at Bandvulc, supporting the ongoing integration of the Bandvulc brand with Continental Tyres.

The role will include implementing fleet business strategies for both the Conti360° Network and Bandvulc, working closely to support fleet customers, manage key accounts and provide data to ensure fleets can maximise tyre performance.

Neil has over 30 years' experience in the tyre trade industry, including more than 13 years at Continental. Throughout his career, Neil held a variety of positions within the tyre industry rapidly developing from a tyre fitter to senior sale roles, before joining Continental in 2005 as a Dealer Support Manager.

He soon progressed to Truck Sales Manager and became National Fleet Key Account Manager for UK and Ireland in 2011, responsible for targeting, winning and managing large national fleet accounts, while growing fleet business with financial models and whole life cost arguments.



Neil Davies

GOODYEAR LAUNCH MIXED SERVICE TRUCK TYRE RANGE

Goodyear is launching a brand new mixed service truck tyre range offering optimal damage resistance and longer service life than previous Goodyear mixed service tyres plus an accidental damage and retreading guarantee.

The new **OMNITRAC** range features new DuraShield technology and combines excellent robustness with enhanced performance and retreadability.

The new tyres have been developed for vehicles operating in today's mixed service applications where they face the difficult conditions of unpaved sites but predominantly operate on roads. These include tippers, cement mixers, concrete pumps and low loaders operating in construction as well as trucks in waste, recycling, timber and agricultural industries.

The new range comprises 10 sizes (six steer tyres and four drive tyres), including one new to the mixed service industry. This 315/70R22.5 size covers the growing trend for the use of standard tractors in this market sector.

DuraShield is a new Goodyear technology featuring an exclusive top belt for extra resistance to casing damage which also improves retreadability. The new OMNITRAC range offers improved service life¹ and full 3PMSF compliance to meet ever tougher winter tyre requirements.

A further feature of the tyres is the integration of radio frequency identification (RFID) allowing simple identification and connectivity to tyre management and tracking systems. The Goodyear OMNITRAC guarantee² gives fleets extra peace of mind covering accidental impact damage that



renders a registered tyre unrepairable and unusable. It also guarantees the additional 100% casing acceptance guarantee³

"Today's mixed service fleet operators are demanding tyres that offer both versatile on-road capability and greater resistance to the conditions encountered both on- and off-road," said Benjamin Willot, Director Marketing Commercial Tires Europe at Goodyear.

"Our new OMNITRAC tyres are a further development of our previous range and now feature DuraShield technology to make them even tougher and offer greater service life. We are so confident of the robustness of these tyres that we are guaranteeing them against accidental damage."

OMNITRAC S

The OMNITRAC S steer axle tyre is designed to cope with the specific conditions encountered in modern construction industry and similar applications where a high proportion of highway use is experienced in addition to off-road use on sites. Good on-road wear performance plus significantly high levels of resistance to tread damage and excellent retreadability thanks to the innovative DuraShield technology are the benefits this tyre offers.

OMNITRAC D

The new OMNITRAC D drive axle tyre features a tread with three rows of directional siped blocks, which optimise performance on highways and in winter. The OMNITRAC D provides good on-road wear performance, excellent traction on all surfaces throughout its life, longer service life and guaranteed retreadability.

Thanks to DuraShield technology, casing durability and resistance to tread damage are significantly enhanced with a high level of chip/chunk resistance under torque including that from retarder operation.

Trailer tyres

Goodyear OMNITRAC MST II 385/65R22.5 and 445/65R22.5 trailer tyres complement the new OMNITRAC S and D tyres offering high mileage and enhanced grip for on- and off-road applications. These tyres feature a wide tread and offer even wear and high mileage potential combined with excellent damage resistance and high stability.

Proactive Solutions

To get the best performance from any tyres, particularly in mixed-service, correct maintenance is of paramount importance. Goodyear recommends fleets to combine the use of high quality tyres with the right service and solutions. For mixed-service applications, Goodyear Proactive Solutions is particularly of great benefit.

Goodyear Proactive Solutions is a full suite of data-based solutions, featuring advanced telematics and patented predictive analytics technology, able to provide commercial fleets with precise, real-time monitoring of tyres.

In particular, Goodyear TPMS (Tyre Pressure Monitoring System) enables OMNITRAC tyre performance to be optimised even further to assure greater piece of mind for fleets – especially in remote locations.

Thanks to advanced telematics and Goodyear's unique algorithm, Goodyear Proactive Solutions can constantly monitor the tyres and give instant warnings if tyre pressure or temperature fails to meet acceptable parameters.



Oldest DAF truck still in commercial use

Following an international search, DAF has found the oldest DAF truck still in commercial use - and it is in operation almost every day after being first registered back in 1968.

The truck in question is an astonishingly sprightly A1600 owned by Frits and Nicky Hoefnagels, who use it to transport a nostalgia-filled fairground attraction all over the Netherlands.

"Yes, of course, we use it just like any other truck," said Frits. "What else is a DAF truck for?"

DAF announced its search for the oldest truck earlier last year, as the company continued to celebrate its 90th birthday in 2018.

The search was launched with a video on social media that features a cattle trader who has been operating his DAF truck across Ireland since the early 1980s. The video has been viewed almost half a million times, prompting an avalanche of contenders for the title.

Responses poured in from all over the world, but the oldest truck was found virtually in the back garden of the DAF factory in Eindhoven, in the village of Bakel.

DAF was inundated with reports of vehicles that had been in use since the late 1950s and early 1960s. But not all of these great trucks met the criteria; the winner had to be a truck that is still in regular use for commercial transport on public roads.



This photograph submitted to DAF via Facebook by father and son Frits and Nicky Hoefnagels, showcases no fewer than four classic DAF trucks, all in top condition thanks to the constant care and attention they are given.

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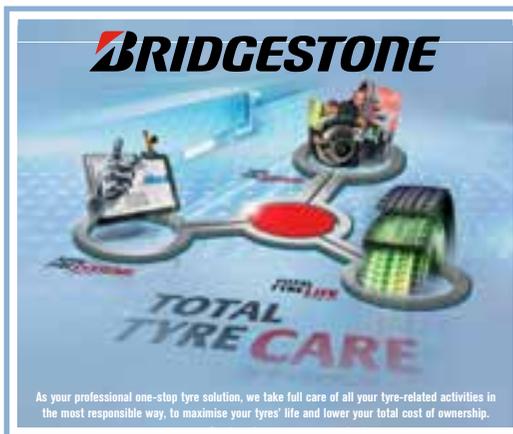
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Volvo Trucks' New Engine Improvements Offer Fuel Savings

Volvo Trucks are upgrading its D11 and D13 diesel engines for its FH, FM and FMX models to meet the new Euro-6 Step D regulation which also contain a number of improvements that will enable transport operators to reduce their fuel costs.

"With fuel chalking up about one third of hauliers' costs, we continue to turn every stone in order to find new ways of reducing fuel consumption in our trucks," says Claes Nilsson, President of Volvo Trucks. "This time, a combination of small improvements enables significant cost savings for our customers without compromising performance or productivity."

The new Euro-6 Step D regulation focuses on ensuring that vehicles conform to the emissions standards in normal operations of use. Volvo Trucks' steps to fulfil the more stringent emissions standard include new engine software and improved coating in the exhaust after-treatment system.

The upgraded D13 diesel engine also uses a new VDS-5 low viscous oil type and new piston oil scraper rings that lower fuel consumption and internal friction. Additionally, the 500 hp engine saves extra fuel by having the same higher compression ratio as the 460 and 420 hp variants.

Volvo's I-See map-based software, which previews the topography of the route and takes care of gear selection, acceleration and engine braking to utilise the truck's moving energy in the best possible way, has also been improved with a number of upgrades. These include a new gear selection strategy and selective coasting, which enables a more efficient use of I-Roll, the freewheel function.

Lorry Drivers Voted Safest On The Road

Lorry drivers, parents and delivery drivers considered to be the safest on the road, whilst those who drive a BMW 1 Series, a Vauxhall Corsa or a Ford C-Max are typically the worst drivers, according to a recent survey.

The team behind www.wmblogistics.co.uk carried out the research as part of an ongoing study into Britons attitudes towards road safety. 2,267 British drivers were surveyed, all of whom stated that they are over the age of 18, hold a full UK driver's license and own their own car. They were questioned on how safe they felt on the road and their feelings towards their fellow road users.

When asked who they considered to be the safest drivers on the road, the top five emerged as those considered to be the safest:

1. Lorry drivers - 22%
2. Parents - 21%
3. Delivery drivers - 13%
4. Coach drivers - 11%
5. New drivers - 10%

When asked why they thought these were the safest, lorry drivers, delivery drivers and coach drivers were all deemed safe due to the sheer amount of time they spend on the road and the extensive training they will have received, and parents were deemed safe as they have their kids to look after.

A spokesperson for www.wmblogistics.co.uk made the commented: "It's great to see that lorry drivers are considered to be the safest on the road, and we particularly pride ourselves on having the best drivers. That being said, if you see someone on the road you consider to be unsafe, give them plenty of space, slow down if you need to – where safe to do so – and stay calm."

All Change at Wrightbus

A refreshed management team, blending experience with talent nurtured from within the wider organisation, is now in place at Wrights Group as the relocation of the majority of the company's divisions from the site in Galgorm to nearby Gracehill has been completed.

Reporting to Group Managing Director Steven Francey, a team of eight directors have been appointed to drive the business forward in the new environment at the Gracehill campus, acquired last year from Japan Tobacco International (JTI).

"The revised management team reporting to Steven Francey is an exciting blend of considerable industry experience and emerging talent within the business," said Chairman & CEO Mark Nodder. "Wright's Group is a now £227m turnover business and the organisation structure and the people



The new Wrights Group management team reporting to Group Managing Director Steven Francey, pictured (left to right) are Chris Knowles, Mark Mitchell, Damian McGarry, Lauren Christie, David Murdoch, Kirsty McBride, John McLeister and Brian Maybin.

within it will play a key role in driving the business forward in the coming years.

The revised group organisation comes into effect as the company completes its relocation to the Gracehill campus, just a mile away from the current Galgorm site in Ballymena.

The 100-acre facility at Gracehill is the

new home to all UK-based Wrights Group activities, with the exception of Metallix and the third-party customer production side of the Wrights Composites business. Both will continue to operate from the Galgorm site, with Nu-Track also moving from its current premises to co-locate.

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All-makes TRP brand introduces brake calipers for DAF LF range

TRP, the all-makes truck and trailer parts brand, is to stock and supply remanufactured brake calipers for DAF Trucks' LF rigid range.

Remanufactured to OE-approved specification, TRP brake calipers for DAF LFs are offered at an extremely competitive cost for customers, supported by a two-year manufacturers' warranty; the same as that provided for genuine DAF LF calipers.

Following remanufacture to ISO TS 16949 standards, TRP calipers are 100% untested and approved for quality assurance. The re-use of existing componentry reduces the use of raw materials and associated energy consumption, thus providing an environmentally protective solution.

TRP Calipers are suitable for fitment on older DAF LF rigids equipped with PAN 17 and PAN 19 brake assemblies.

"TRP brake calipers for older DAF LF vehicles are remanufactured using solely genuine parts to original specifications and original quality standards," said DAF Trucks Parts Marketing Manager, Glen Crompton, "This helps maximise uptime, increases the working life of the vehicle and boosts its performance – and it's supported by a full manufacturer-backed two-year warranty facilitated throughout a 136-strong UK DAF Dealer network. Perhaps of most appeal to repairers and fleets of any size is the outstanding value for money we can provide through the TRP parts brand."

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Van Man's Best Friend – Dogs Are Keeping Our Van Operators Company

The UK's van operators are battling loneliness by taking their dogs on the road with them for company, with more than 200,000 van drivers hosting canine companions on any given day.

According to the Mercedes-Benz Vans Business Barometer, which monitors the opinions on more than 2,000 van drivers and owners, life on the road can be a lonely place for our professional drivers, with the average driver spending

over 17 hours completely alone and over a third (35%) spending at least 20 hours in solitude.

So with mental health and driver wellbeing taking more of a focus than ever before, drivers are

turning to the 'Van Man's Best Friend' to raise their spirits, with one in five agreeing that their dogs have had a direct positive impact on their mental health. Over half (52%) of van operators who bring their dogs with them

their vehicle say they do it simply because it makes them feel happier.

Those who take their dogs with them throughout their work days say they feel much happier (52%) and more relaxed (45%). A third (33%) say their dog simply helps them get through their day, and over half (53%) said having their dogs with them has actually assisted in winning new business.

Considering the average driver gets stuck in congestion for up to 13 hours a day, this friendship is really making a difference.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of UK van drivers and operators own at least one dog, with 36% of those having more than one. Proving that the UK really is a nation of dog lovers, 38% of road-going dogs are from rescue centres.

Steve Bridge, Managing Director, Mercedes-Benz Vans UK Ltd, said: "It's great that our canine friends can join the nation's hard-working van operators in the vehicles, providing much needed company along the way. However it is also important to remember that dogs need to be suitably restrained according to the Highway Code, so a seat belt harness would be a good investment to ensure that both the driver and the dog are safe and secure. I wish I could take Gilbert, my Westie, to work with me!"



Van Excellence Report Highlights Van Driver Shortage

Many van drivers, owners and operators are fearful that worsening van driver shortages could prevent their businesses operating successfully over the next year, according to Van Excellence's newly launched 2018-19 report, which identifies the opportunities and challenges facing the vans market.

Van Excellence is an industry-led scheme administered by the Freight Transport Association (FTA), the only business group representing all of logistics, and the annual report was supported by Mercedes-Benz Vans UK Ltd, Bott, Brigade, Hertz, Lex Autolease and Quartix.

Mark Cartwright, FTA's Head of Vans and Light Commercial Vehicles, comments: "In a testament to the value it provides to the

UK economy, the vans market has grown consistently since the 2008 recession, thanks in part to its versatility and flexibility. While there are many opportunities for further growth – such as booming online delivery services – there are also challenges ahead which all members of the vans sector should be aware of and prepare for, most notably, the increasing shortage of van drivers.

"One in five van drivers, operators or owners

believes a van driver shortage could prevent their businesses operating successfully over the next year. These fears are exacerbated by the large proportion of EU nationals currently working across the vans sector in the UK, as early indicators suggest fewer are choosing to move here in light of the UK's decision to leave the EU and the ongoing uncertainty about their future employment prospects."

The proportion of van drivers which are EU nationals fell to 7.3 per cent in 2017, compared with 12.9 per cent in 2015.

"Many van drivers are struggling with their mental and physical health but are unsure of where or how to obtain help. In fact, as detailed in the report, more than half of van drivers and owners believe there is a stigma attached to discussing mental health at work. Van Excellence is committed to addressing this issue and recently launched a campaign with the charity CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) to raise awareness of the resources available to those struggling with poor mental health."

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All-new Vauxhall Combo Leaves Lasting Impression

Vauxhall's award winning and just launched all-new Combo should soon be making an impression on our roads, as Van Ireland's Phil Eaglestone reports after a recent test drive in and around Luton in Bedfordshire.

The Combo certainly raises the bar for safety and comfort, as we quickly discovered. It is fitted with technologies and driver assistance systems that are more commonly seen in high-tech passenger cars – and it's a pretty versatile van, too.

Offered in a selection of variants, including short wheelbase, long wheelbase and crew van, the new Combo can carry a load volume of up to 4.4m³ and a payload of up to a tonne.

Its impressive interior provides everything you could possibly need. We found the layout sensibly designed, with all controls instinctively located and easily accessible. The seating position is more upright and gives a commanding view, while the compact, flat-bottomed steering wheel allows for easier access to the cabin.

There are numerous storage possibilities for smaller items such as bags, laptops/tablets and stationery, as well as large door and seat back pockets and two gloveboxes, all of which combine to provide a great working environment.

The highly versatile seating configuration options are further proof of just how flexible and comfortable the new Vauxhall Combo is. These range from a four-way adjustable seat for both driver and front passenger, to a six-way adjustable driver seat with adjustable lumbar support, integrated armrest and practical under seat storage compartment. Alternatively, three occupants can also sit abreast in the front of the Combo, thanks to the two-seater bench – which is optionally available with a moveable table, so the driver can catch up on work when stationary.

The driver and front seat passenger can also enjoy heated seats on cold days, while the optional heated steering wheel brings luxury and technology to the LCV market, usually only found in higher segments.

The cargo area's standard configuration includes wide-spanned rear swing doors and a nearside sliding door. Both nearside and offside sliding doors access is standard on long wheelbase and Crew Van models.



Another major advantage to the Combo is being able to easily load bulky items through the rear doors, with a low loading edge of just 548mm. Even in the standard Combo variant, there is enough space between the wheel arches for a forklift to load two Euro pallets. This saves time when loading and unloading and in turn money, as work can be turned around more quickly.

There are six tie rings on the floor and an



option to fit four more at mid-height to ensure everything is kept secure and in place. Furthermore, a partition available as a solid wall or with a window and protection grill, separates the cab from the loading area.

You can choose between a variety of turbocharged, direct-injection petrol and diesel engines, all of which offer low CO₂ emissions from 109g/km and fuel economy up to 67.3mpg. Although we didn't put it to the test, we are reliably told that fuel economy has been improved by at least 16 per cent over the outgoing model, which is not to be sneezed at in these times of high petrol and diesel prices.

The engines can be mated to five and six-speed manual gearboxes or, optionally, to a new eight-speed automatic transmission.

The new Combo comes with an impressive list of driver assistance features, including a sensor-based load indicator that warns you if the van is overloaded. Other innovations include a rear-view camera that acts as a digital rear-view mirror, and a second camera in the passenger-side door mirror which gives the driver an additional blind-spot detection aid.

With other notable features that include Forward collision alert, with pedestrian detection and automatic emergency braking, Lane keep assist, Hill descent control, Automatic cruise control and Driver drowsiness alert, this new Combo comes across as a practical, fuel efficient, safe and comfortable choice for those seeking a small, robust and reliable van to keep their business securely on the road.





Peugeot's Van of the Year is a Perfect Partner

We are not surprised the all-new Peugeot Partner was elected International Van of the Year 2019, having spent some time behind the wheel on a recent trip to the Chantilly region of France, reports Van Ireland's Phil Eaglestone. It is the fifth Peugeot 'International Van of The Year' awarded since the trophy was created in 1992.

Two major innovations

attracted the attention of the judges (and we, too) - the Overload Indicator for safe loading within the maximum authorised payload and the Surround Rear Vision, which gives drivers excellent visibility of the areas around the vehicle.

Available in Standard or Long versions, this new Partner is fitted with two cameras, one located at the base of the passenger side mirror and the other at the top of the rear doors. The images are displayed on a 5" screen located where the interior rear mirror normally sits and provides a close view of the immediate environment.

Meanwhile, the Overload Alert System, available as an option, is a new on-board technology to guarantee total safety. The weight is automatically measured when the ignition is switched on and can also be measured from the load area when the vehicle is stationary. Once 90% of the total load capacity has been reached, a white LED lights up on the control button; if the maximum authorised load is exceeded a yellow LED lights up, supplemented by a visual warning on the dashboard.

By avoiding vehicle overload, the handling is not compromised and associated dangers, such as burst



tyres, loss of control of the vehicle, premature wear of components, higher fuel consumption and the risk of being fined may be avoided.

Depending on the version, Partner has electric parking brake, adaptive cruise control, extended traffic sign recognition, active lane keeping assist, driver attention warning, active safety brake, a tow-bar stabiliser, automatic headlight dipping, blind spot monitoring and hands-free entry and start.

A large 8" colour touch screen to provide connectivity is located within easy reach and tilted towards the driver to give a clear

view of key comfort functions such as radio, navigation, vehicle settings and telephone.

Driving around the French countryside outside Paris proved to be ideal opportunity to put the new Partner to the test; there wasn't much we didn't like about its performance or handling – in fact, we were very impressed with the overall package.

Apart from its array of safety features and its car-like ride, the Peugeot Partner is a practical van that has wide appeal, offering a spacious and comfortable work environment with lots of versatile

storage space, such as glove box, boot bin, seat pockets and even an upper glove box. Located opposite the passenger, it uses the space normally taken by the airbag (now a Bag-in Roof airbag) and is big enough to house a 15" computer, and it can be cooled.

The 4.40m long Standard version ensures an effective usable length of 1.81m and a load capacity of up to 3.80m³, while the Long version offers even greater load capacity, up to 4.40m³, both more than sufficient to accommodate two Europallets. The payload is one of the best in the segment, with values of 650kg and up to 1000kg for certain versions.

The standard nearside sliding side door on Standard versions makes for excellent accessibility. An additional offside sliding side door is available as an option on Standard versions and is standard equipment on Long versions.

All-new Peugeot Partner is built on a version of the EMP2 platform that is used for the latest brand models. As we discovered on our drive, this tried-and-tested base provides a small turning circle for easy manoeuvring: the kerb to kerb turning radius is only 10.82m for the Standard version and 11.43m for the Long version.

Overall, this robust and versatile van represents a perfect business Partner that is certainly fit for purpose, with great handling, performance and payload – and it looks rather stylish on the road, too!



New Citroën Berlingo Van Moves Up Another Gear

Launched in 1996 and produced in over 1.5 million units, the iconic Citroën Berlingo light commercial vehicle is now available in its third-generation version, as Van Ireland's Phil Eaglestone reports following a test drive on the outskirts of Paris.

There's no doubt, this new Citroën Berlingo Van has moved up a gear or two in terms of styling and equipment, with a host of new features for extra comfort and driveability.

Aimed at a wide range of fleet, business and professional users, this latest Citroën Berlingo can be whatever you want it to be, with a choice of two sizes, M and XL, and two versions 'Worker' and 'Driver', each offering an array of equipment, trim and safety levels.

Our memorable test drive took us along the picturesque roads and through towns and villages of the Chantilly region, enabling us to assess its performance, handling and ride comfort, all of which impressed and sometimes pleasantly surprised.

No matter what business you are in, the van you drive can say a lot about you and your standards, and this new Citroën Berlingo will

do you proud, from the outside and the inside. It looks smart on the road and with its car-like features it feels sophisticated behind the wheel.

Compared to previous models, you will note some subtle outward changes in appearance. For example, there's a more forward set windscreen, a higher and shorter front end and a shorter front overhang.

The interior, too, hasn't escaped the attention of its designers, and provides an excellent, spacious working environment, with keyless entry and starting, comfortable seating for driver and passengers and other practical features such as air conditioning, electric power assisted steering with height and reach adjustable multi-function steering wheel and electric front windows with one-touch operation; the layout of the dashboard is uncluttered and has a modern feel about it.

You are also offered the option of creating

a second passenger seat as the gearstick is positioned high on the dashboard to free up more space. Lowering this seat will provide you with a handy work table.

Loading up the van is made easy, thanks to 180° opening rear doors and sliding doors on both sides of the vehicle; you can also specify just one side sliding door, or no side doors. There are plenty of useful storage spaces and, depending on version, a record payload of up to 1,000kg.

This new Berlingo is powered by the latest-generation engines that are strong on performance and efficiency: BlueHDI 1.5 diesel, PureTech 1.2 petrol, and the introduction of the EAT8 automatic gearbox.

Out on the road, safety takes priority, and this Citroën Berlingo offers no less than 20 driver assistance systems that make everyday life easier. Features include an Overload Indicator which informs you that the maximum authorised weight has been exceeded, a first in the LCV segment.

Colour Head-up Display, Automatic Electronic Parking Brake, Adaptive Cruise Control with Stop Function and Active Safety Brake are also available, along with four connectivity technologies, including Citroën Connect Nav and Wireless Smartphone Charging.

As we mentioned, the Berlingo has long been established as a proven and practical workhorse, and this latest generation will clearly serve to reinforce its prime position in the marketplace.



TOYOTA'S HILUX INVINCIBLE HAS THE X FACTOR, AND A WHOLE LOT MORE



Much has been written about the Toyota Hilux since it was first launched 50 years ago; indeed, it is a much respected pick-up around the world, so Van Ireland's David Stokes & Phil Eaglestone were absolutely thrilled to get the chance over a few days recently to test out the very latest model – a limited edition, top-of-the-range Invincible X, courtesy of Charles Hurst Toyota Belfast.



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The manufacturers proudly boast that the Toyota Hilux has 'an enviable and well-deserved reputation for rugged reliability and the ability to venture to places and endure environments that other vehicles simply cannot reach,' and who are we to argue!

We have to be honest here: this is one of the most impressive pick-ups we have had the pleasure to test drive in recent years; our South African friend was very jealous, as he tells us that the Hilux is a 'must have' in his native homeland.

And not just there, because this Japanese inspired pick-up has also been highly praised in those countries with wide-open highways and off-road tracks such as North America and Australia. It has even featured on the BBC's Top Gear whose presenters called it 'indestructible' having thrown everything they could at a fourth-generation model; although the pick-up was left battered and bruised, it still refused to die.

There is absolutely no doubt that Hilux is tough, reliable, and built to last. It's a reputation that has been earned over many years. Who of you can ever forget the tough pick-up's most famous exploits: driving to both the north and south Poles, or up the side of an erupting volcano, and who remembers Marty McFly's stunning black Hilux from 1985 classic 'Back to the Future'?

Since the Hilux first hit dealerships in 1968, over 18 million have been sold in more than 180 countries and regions. This eighth generation Hilux carries on that well earned success and tradition. More than that, it has taken this much revered vehicle to a totally new level.

There are only 150 'limited edition' models being made available for customers in the UK and we suspect most of them have already been snapped up, but have no fear: availability of the 'ordinary' version (although there's nothing 'ordinary' about it) is not an issue.



The Invincible X features a new grille with gloss black inserts and contrasting chrome frame, plus a new-look front bumper, fog lights and silver under-run. The striking styling continues at the rear where there is a new step and a silver under-run beneath the licence plate.

The interior of the Double Cab has an all-black theme, with contrasting chrome instrument panel trim and piano black inserts on the dashboard, door panels, steering wheel and gear shift lever and surround.

The instrument binnacle also has new features, including smart white dials and a centre TFT multi-information display with a dedicated Invincible X start-up animation that activates each time the ignition is switched on. Even the key is model-specific, featuring a silhouette sketch of the new frontal design.

In terms of specification, the Invincible X measures up well to the outgoing Hilux Invincible model, with an array of features that include Toyota Safety Sense, with Pre-Collision System Lane Departure Warning and Road Sign Assist, plus cruise control, Toyota Touch 2 with Go multimedia system

with navigation and six-speaker audio system, Bluetooth, rear-view camera, automatic air conditioning and leather upholstery.

This new Hilux Invincible X is powered by a 148bhp 2.4-litre D-4D engine, which offers more torque and an increased towing capacity over the previous model, and is equipped with a six-speed automatic transmission.

The limited edition comes in two exclusive stand-out body colours: Scorched Orange and, as was the finish on our test drive model, Nebula Blue.

These provide a strong contrast with the model's black exterior styling elements, including black 18-inch alloys, side steps and high-over bar. In other respects, the Limited Edition matches the Invincible X, including the new all-black cabin treatment.

Our verdict? With a wider load bay and bigger capacity, this latest generation Hilux is clearly a step up in appearance from previous models, it's more of a pleasure to drive and the level of equipment has certainly moved up a gear. The only downside? On our wages, we can only dream!



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PLUGS A BETTER GEAR

Ford Continues to Power ahead with another Record Breaking Year

The arrival of Ford's new Transit Courier and Transit Connect vans is set to propel the market-leading blue oval towards another record CV year.

Leading the CV market in every segment in 2018, Ford surpassed 100,000 new van registrations in October by running eight per cent ahead of 2017's best-ever figures when the blue oval delivered 123,958 of its four-model Transit range, Fiesta vans and Ranger pick-ups.

In 2018, Ford was the top-selling commercial vehicle brand for the 53rd consecutive year. Its Transit Custom was the third best-selling vehicle after first-placed Ford Fiesta and a competitor model.

This year will see the start of production of the Transit Custom Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV) which we got to hear more of during a recent visit courtesy of Ford to an event at Grange Farm in Peterborough.

The Transit Custom PHEV features an advanced hybrid powertrain system that targets a zero-emission driving range of 30 miles and uses the multi-award-winning Ford 1.0-litre EcoBoost petrol engine as a range extender for total range exceeding 300 miles.

Ford is the first volume manufacturer to offer PHEV technology in this segment of the van market. The technology enables the vehicle to be charged with mains electricity for zero-emission journeys, contributing to reduced local emissions and allowing the vehicle to enter low-emissions zones.

"The Transit Custom PHEV re-writes the rule book for a general purpose 1-tonne van, providing a versatile performer with zero-



emission capability," said Ian Porter, chief programme engineer, Transit Custom, Ford of Europe. "Transit Custom PHEV demands no compromises, offering the same load capacity as a diesel van, and the freedom to complete long-distance journeys without the need to stop for a charge."

Ford also announced major enhancements to the Transit Custom line-up, including an upgraded 2.0-litre EcoBlue diesel with more powerful 185PS variant, a segment-first diesel mild hybrid powertrain option, and advanced new connectivity and driver assistance features.

Ford tells us that the Transit Custom PHEV will offer operators 'outstanding' fuel and energy efficiency, and 'outstanding flexibility.' The advanced hybrid-electric powertrain system is perfectly suited to scenarios

from multi-stop delivery schedules to longer commutes between construction sites.

The vehicle uses a series-hybrid driveline configuration, the front wheels being driven exclusively by an electric motor, rather than by the combustion engine. Power for the motor is provided by a compact 14 kWh liquid-cooled lithium-ion battery pack located under the load floor, which has been carefully positioned to preserve the full cargo volume offered by the standard Transit Custom van, and a payload exceeding 1,000kg.

Using the charge port located within the front bumper, the Transit Custom PHEV can be charged using a domestic 240 volt 10 amp power supply, achieving full charge in five hours, or a commercial 240 volt 16 amp or 32 amp supply, which can bring the pack to full charge in three hours.

The FordPass Connect on-board modem technology is a standard feature, allowing fleet operators to improve vehicle utilisation and optimise running costs, and enabling a range of features to be accessed via the FordPass mobile app to make the vehicle ownership and operating experience easier and more productive.

Within the cabin, a power/charge gauge replaces the standard rev counter, and a smaller gauge for battery state of charge replaces the engine coolant temperature indicator. Trip computer functions are configured specifically for the PHEV powertrain, and EV mode indicators, maintenance alerts, and a warning when the vehicle is plugged into a charging point, appear on the instrument display cluster. A status line showing distance to empty for both the battery and range extender is visible on all screen displays.

The spacious and practical new Transit Custom interior provides class-leading stowage and all-new displays and control panels designed for enhanced ergonomics and ease of use. Ford's voice-activated SYNC 3 communications and entertainment system is available for high-series models, featuring an 8-inch colour touchscreen that can be controlled with pinch and swipe gestures.

The Transit Custom PHEV will be offered in a range of high-specification series and offering driver assistance technologies including Active Park Assist and Lane-Keeping Aid supported by standard electric power-assisted steering that is optimised for city driving and easy manoeuvring in busy commercial environments.

The new Transit Custom PHEV van is a key component of Ford's global electrification commitment, with an investment of \$11 billion to create a portfolio of 40 electrified vehicles globally, including 16 fully electric vehicles through 2022.



4-PHEV model will enter volume production in the second half of 2019.



4-PHEV model will enter volume production in the second half of 2019.

New Crane Enters Service at Warrenpoint Port Following £3m Investment

Warrenpoint Port has commissioned a new crane and has commenced the refurbishment of two other cranes following a major £3 million capital investment.

The new crane, built and supplied by Finnish manufacturer Konecranes, will significantly improve efficiency at the Port by reducing loading and unloading times, with the ability to lift 100 tonnes up to 42 metres above sea level.

Clare Guinness, CEO at Warrenpoint Port, said: "After much anticipation, we are proud to announce that works have reached completion on the build of our latest crane, which is now fully operational.

"The £3 million investment forms part of a major drive to facilitate our 25-year growth plan that was announced earlier this year."

In 2017, Warrenpoint Port, Northern Ireland's second largest port, handled a record 3.56 million tonnes of cargo valued at £6.2 billion.

The crane investment will improve the Port's bulk business, which includes grain, timber, steel, wood chip, coal and cement.

Clare continued: "This investment in our operational

equipment marks the start of a considerable port-wide capital expenditure programme to improve efficiency, customer service and throughput. This will help us obtain our strategic objective which is to boost prosperity in the region given our position as a major catalyst for economic growth."

Founded more than 80 years ago, Konecranes is one of the world's leading makers of heavy lifting equipment serving the manufacturing and processing industries, shipyards, ports and terminals.

Neil Griffiths, Regional Sales & Service Director, Konecranes Port Solutions, added: "We are very proud to have Warrenpoint, who has gradually invested in Konecranes Gottwald mobile harbour cranes, as our partner in cargo handling. The most recent addition of the eco-efficient Model 3 crane for handling all kind of cargo increases our long-term customer's fleet to six cranes and will significantly bolster up Warrenpoint's position in Ireland."



Clare Guinness, CEO at Warrenpoint Port

Irish Ferries Take Delivery of Cruise Ferry

Irish Continental Group plc has taken delivery of the cruise ferry, W.B. Yeats, at Flensburg, Germany. The W.B. Yeats will undergo commissioning with Irish Ferries and is expected to commence services initially on the Dublin to Holyhead route in early January 2019.

Offering up to four sailings per week directly from Dublin to France, this flagship cruise ferry will travel 125,000 nautical miles per annum, which is the equivalent of circumnavigating the globe nearly 6 times. Irish Ferries will offer an exclusive year round service directly from Dublin to France with W.B. Yeats operating from mid March to September 2019.

The W.B. Yeats will accommodate 2,800 lane metres of freight or 165 freight vehicles, 1,800 passengers with 440 cabins. Four main engines delivering 33,600 KW of power will ensure a high degree of service reliability. The flexibility in design includes the capability to service all of Irish Ferries existing routes and will provide even greater route management options.

W.B. Yeats will partner with Ulysses on the Dublin/Holyhead/Dublin route on entering service



until mid-March. The combination of these two powerful vessels will deliver unrivalled capacity on an intensely freight focused schedule. The commercial driver will experience state-of-the-art onboard facilities including exclusive

dining and luxury accommodation. From mid-March W.B. Yeats will take up service on the Dublin/Cherbourg/Dublin route. With up to 7 sailings per week Irish Ferries offers the only direct service from

Dublin to France ensuring that the critical freight market demands are met. In a volatile climate which has become a real challenge for both importers and exporters W.B. Yeats offers a credible gateway alternative to Europe.



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Stena Line's three Irish Sea E-Flexer ships now in construction

Stena Line has reached an important milestone in its major new fleet investment programme with the steel cutting of a third E-Flexer RoPax ship to be deployed on its Irish Sea routes.



An artist's impression of the new E-Flexer.

This means that all three of Stena Line's new E-Flexer ships, planned to enter into service on the Irish Sea during 2020 and 2021, are now under construction at the Avic Weihai Shipyard in China.

The first of the new vessels will commence operation on the Holyhead to Dublin route in early 2020, with the remaining two ships to be introduced on the Liverpool to Belfast route in 2020 and 2021.

All three Irish Sea E-Flexer vessels will be bigger than today's standard RoPax vessels at 215 metres long with a freight capacity of 3,100 lane metres and the space to carry 120 cars and 1,000 passengers.

In addition, Stena Line has also ordered a further two E-Flexer RoPax vessels with a larger design, to be deployed within Stena Line's network in 2022. These larger ships will be 240 metres long with a total freight capacity of 3,600 lane metres, and passenger capacity of 1,200. "With continued investment in our fleet, we want to lead the development of sustainable shipping and set new industry standards when it comes to operational performance, emissions and cost competitiveness," added Mr Arvidsson.

Brittany Ferries Winter Sailings Between Ireland and Spain

Building on the launch of its new Cork to Santander route in 2018, Brittany Ferries has introduced a new winter sailing schedule designed to facilitate its Ireland to Spain freight traffic.

The Connemara will now depart Cork on Mondays and Fridays at 23:30, arriving in

Santander at 08:00 on Wednesday and Sunday mornings respectively. This is the first time that Brittany

Ferries will offer a year-round service out of Ireland. Its Cork to Roscoff route serviced by the Pont-Aven, which has been operating for 40 years, will resume sailings in March 2019. The Connemara will also resume its weekly return sailing from Cork to Roscoff at this time.

Freight figures since the introduction of the new Cork to Santander route have been encouraging with nearly 2,600 freight units carried to date with demand rising significantly in the last month.

The change in schedule has been made in order to make the route more amenable to transporters in

Ireland. Simon Wagstaff, Brittany Ferries freight director explains: "We consulted with hauliers who unanimously fed back that they would like to see later evening departures to allow time to travel to the port. This in turn allows for an earlier start in Santander for the onward journey. As Brexit uncertainty continues, our new service provides a guaranteed connection for exporting freight from Ireland directly to mainland Europe, allowing freight carriers and passengers to bypass the UK and French land-bridge to Spain." The winter schedule runs until Friday, 1st March 2019.

Stena Line and its customers "Round Up for Charity"

During a month-long, fleet-wide donation campaign, Round Up for Charity, Stena Line and its customers raised an impressive £17,788 for the charity organisation Mercy Ships.

The funds will enable Mercy Ship to help 133 people to get their sight back on board the hospital ship Africa Mercy.

During the month of November, customers on all of Stena Line's 38 vessels were encouraged to round up their onboard purchases and make a donation to Mercy Ships – a charity organisation sailing around the world bringing free, life-saving medical care to where it's needed the most.

There was also an impressive number of employee-initiatives to raise even more money for the charity. Some Stena Line employees rowed and cycling on board



crossing the Irish Sea while others arranging quiz walks a shore and cake sales on board. "An essential part of our partnership with Mercy Ships is to raise awareness about the organisation and this campaign has not only resulted in a generous monetary contribution

from our customers, but also that more people are aware of Mercy Ships and their inspiring work. Many thanks to our employees for their engagement with the charity and their wonderful initiatives all across Europe," says Niclas Mårtensson, CEO at Stena Line.

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Compliance Drives Transport Operators to Digital Working with Freeway Mobile Apps

Freeway Fleet Systems has seen users of its software double in 2018 as transport and bus operators make the switch from paper to digital.

The supplier of systems for vehicle maintenance and asset management has seen an upsurge in interest for its mobile apps as operators demand more accurate and visible information to transform their fleet management and meet new digital compliance regulations.

Freeway's software platform replaces paperwork all the way from vehicle inspections to workshop job sheets, stock management and parts ordering with mobile devices linked to a central system providing live management information. Freeway believe the instruction of the DVSA's Earned Recognition scheme in 2018 has been an important driver in the move to digital.

"Transport operators know that they need to

transform their systems and switch away from paper recording, but many have been reluctant to embrace the new technology that makes the change possible. However, it is clear that 2018 marked the start of what we see as an unstoppable transformation to digital working," says Patrick Tandy, Managing Director of Freeway.

Freeway has seen an increase in digitisation amongst existing customers including McCulla Ireland, McDowells, R Swains, Brit European, Stobart Biomass, the Bartrum Group and Gregory Distribution. Freeway has also attracted new users, such as H Sivyer, Hayward Commercials and The McBurney Group.

"We've doubled our user numbers in 2018



and we continue to see a lot of interest from operators wanting to switch from older legacy IT systems to something new. Freeway appeals not just because of the mobile apps but because we offer an end-to-end system to meet all needs, with seamless integration to other systems and attractive options such as cloud hosting."

McBurney Transport Introduces Freeway Software to Manage Fleet

The McBurney Transport Group has recently introduced a new asset management software to support the management of its fleet of 1,400 vehicles and trailers.

Using the system, developed and supplied by Freeway Fleet Systems, the McBurney Transport Group can now control every part of its fleet maintenance operations from a single interface.

The company initially began researching IT systems that could automate its repair and maintenance process, but through evaluating the options available, discovered that Freeway could offer significant added value with additional product features, countless integrations and a high level of customisation.

McBurney's Fleet Manager, Sammy Hamill, explained: "As part of the evaluation process we visited another existing Freeway user to see the system working in a live environment. This gave us the confidence to proceed with the Freeway installation because



we realised how tailored it could be to our specific requirements. The visibility over asset costs and stock control, as well as simplified external and internal invoicing procedures, were additional benefits that we could see being extremely beneficial from the outset."

The company has been supported through the implementation by Freeway's Irish partner, Genie

Insights Ltd. After five months of planning and configuring the system, as well as providing staff training, McBurney Transport Group went live with Freeway in September.

The Freeway system is now managing over 1,400 live McBurney Transport Group's assets, including trucks, trailers, vans and shunters, with extensive vehicle

information available for analysis and reporting. Details available include everything from purchase date and horsepower to tyre size and emissions levels and even the asset's depreciation schedule.

In addition, McBurney Transport Group is now scheduling its 6,000+ annual service checks using Freeway, including truck and trailer OILs, MOTs, oil changes, tachograph calibrations and fridge motor inspections.

The system has also been introduced to 20 HGV mechanics and trailer fitters across the company's two maintenance facilities in Ballymena and Liverpool, all of whom are all using the Freeway mobile application for defect recording and for completing inspections.

Finance Director Pamela McCrea commented, "We are really pleased with how the system is working so far. We have found it to be a cost-effective solution and it is surprisingly easy to use, even for those that aren't particularly experienced in using technology. The back-up from both Freeway and Genie Insights has been first-class throughout."

Warrenpoint Port Ceases Revised Dredging Proposal

Warrenpoint Port will no longer pursue proposals to change how it deals with dredged material.

Authorities at the Port had been considering the feasibility of a new placement site in the mouth of Carlingford Lough between Cranfield Point and Greencastle. The plans will not proceed however, following the initial findings of site surveys. Clare Guinness, CEO, Warrenpoint Port said: "Early results from our site characterisation study have shown the proposal would potentially have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the ecology and aquaculture within the lough.

"Throughout the process, we have been clear that should the scientific research identify the potential for such an impact, then the proposal would go no further.

"We are pleased to deliver on this commitment, in our role as conservators of the marine environment, and will immediately cease pursuit of a revised dredging proposal."

Amet Insurance celebrates New office

Amet Insurance Solutions celebrated the opening of their New office on Chichester Street, Belfast with Christmas drinks and nibbles for their staff, brokers, solicitors and all those who work closely with them.

This was aculmination of 18 months of strong growth for Amet and the new office will allow them to continue to service the NI Insurance market and grow further throughout 2019 and beyond.

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Gareth Morgan (Risk Alliance), Gareth Brennan (Risk Alliance), Gary Magee (Risk Alliance) & Stacey Orr (Amet).



Simon Rotherham (Amet), Catherine O'Hara (Find Ins. NI), Elaine McGilligan (Find Ins. NI) & Ailish Hasson (Find Ins. NI).



Robert Caldwell (Willis IRM), Jack McIluff (EGI Consultants) & Cooper Duncan (Willis IRM).



Maurice O'Kane (Caulfield Insurance) & Vincent McIvor (Amet).



Niall O'Hare (O'Hare Solicitors) & Iain McKeown (Amet).



Sarah McDonald (Amet), Claire McIvor (Amet), Brendan Guinness (O'Hare Solicitors) & Paul MacAllister (BLM).



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