



CARDIFF
SWANSEA
TENBY

WG Davies
Servicing South Wales

Customer Newsletter

Q3 2024

Editor's message

Welcome to the Q3 newsletter. Honestly, we are wondering how we ever fitted it all into just four pages!

We've got a wonderful interview with Ryan Waite at Interhaul. He tells us how his father groomed him for greatness within the business from the age of nine and despite his attempts to escape to the French Alps. After his trip to the Ukraine to deliver humanitarian aid with Kelvin Miles, Roger

uses his column to reflect on what we do for charity and concludes that giving is a privilege.

We take the opportunity to introduce Ian Davies, our Business Development Manager, and of course, we have got our usual updates from the depots, the CSI programme, our staff survey, long service awards and social media.

I hope you enjoy the read, Rachel



The Inside Track: Roger Davies - Giving is a Privilege

As you may know September 5th is the day the world comes together to celebrate the International Day of Charity. The date was chosen because it is the anniversary of the death of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and was established by the United Nations in 2012. The aims are simple - to raise awareness and motivate people to give to charity and their community.

For us at WG Davies it is a time to reflect on what we have done for others over the past 12 months and an opportunity to plan ahead for the next year.

Thoughts of charity are front of mind just now because, following my trip to the Ukraine with Kelvin, we have been thinking about the Ukrainian people and the horrors they have been living through for over a year and a half now. We gave up only our time but we know that the aid we delivered will go to people who really need it and we are hoping for the opportunity to make that trip again in the future.

Closer to home we can give the gift of our time, our expertise and sometimes good old fashioned money too. Our charitable giving includes, for example, kit for two local rugby clubs, fundraising for a local mental health charity, time and expertise to help a local couple realise their dream of living off grid in a converted MAN and promoting



MAN Apprenticeships alongside South Mid & West Wales Fire.

We are not going to list all that we do, that would cheapen it. We believe true charity is to give without expecting anything in return but at the same time we want to celebrate the work that everyone at WG Davies does to help others.

Why do we do it? Because we can and because it makes us happy, because we want to and because it is the right thing to do. Giving really is a privilege and one that we should applaud and embrace.

Customer Spotlight: Ryan Waite, Fleet Manager at Inter-Haul



Ryan (background) with his father Mark

out. I was hesitant at first, but I decided to give it a go and six years later, here I am.”

It was clearly a good decision because the business has grown considerably since then. One depot in Pontypridd has become two with a second facility in Swindon. Staff numbers have grown from 37 to 92 and the fleet from 15 vehicles to 49. Of course, the significant increase in staff numbers adds complexity but was fascinating to learn that Ryan relishes that, approaching it with a real desire to understand what makes people tick. “Managing people is a real challenge,” Ryan told us, “but it’s something I enjoy, especially when it comes to working with someone who perhaps does not see eye to eye with me. It’s business, I do not take it personally, it’s about finding common ground so that we can work together. I’ve learned to adjust my character a bit to try to get the best out of people, rather than expecting them to change.”

Driver shortages are another frustration, one that is mitigated somewhat by Inter-Haul’s choice of vehicle.

“Our fleet is exclusively MAN for the larger vehicles and we buy them to a very high specification - we appreciate our drivers do a great job for us and we want to look after them. The MAN is a win-win because not only are the MANs popular with the drivers, they are reliable and fuel efficient too.”

Inter-haul is proudly a family business, started in 2001 by Mark Waite. Today, Mark runs the business with his wife Alyson and son Ryan, who we persuaded to step into the spotlight and talk to us about how he came to be a part of the business, the challenges they face now and in the future.

It is always interesting to understand how family members become a part of the business, for some it is the realisation of a life-long ambition but for Ryan it was the result of his father drawing him in, bit by bit, over a long period of time. “Honestly, I think I was groomed for it from an early age!”, Ryan laughs. “When I was younger, my friends always assumed I’d just go and work for my dad, but I told them I wasn’t interested. I didn’t realise it then but looking back, I can see I was being prepared for it all along. My old man has been dragging me into work with him since I was nine years old. I used to get £1 for washing a truck. I was using the pressure washer but they had to turn the pressure down otherwise I would end up on my backside! That was how I spent my summer holidays.”

Once Ryan finished school he escaped to the Alps, got his snowboarding qualifications and spent the winters teaching, returning to Wales for the summer months to cover holidays at Inter-Haul. It was actually Mark who first introduced Ryan to snowboarding as a child, they would travel up to Scotland for

the weekend, leaving straight from school on Friday afternoon and driving south just in time for school on Monday. So when Ryan was working in the Alps, his father would join him for a week or two. After a few years Ryan acknowledged “Snowboarding had turned into more of a job than a passion - I was teaching five or six days a week, and it stopped being something I did for myself. At the same time my dad and family visited me in the Alps. He told me he was facing some challenges with management back home and mentioned that he could really use someone he could trust to step in and help



Ryan (background) with his father Mark Inter-Haul operates in the highly competitive area of pallet transportation but they refuse to be drawn into price competition in order to win business. "Customers sometimes come back to us and show us prices they have been offered and we know they're not sustainable. We don't try to match them, there's no point in being busy fools and we have seen a number of companies going out of business. We prefer to offer a fair price and then deliver outstanding quality." That quality is endorsed by the Platinum Delivery Performance award which Inter-Haul have received consistently over the years from Pallet-Track network for achieving 99.9% on time delivery.



Ryan is quick to acknowledge the role WG Davies play in achieving outstanding service levels. "We have enjoyed a close working relationship with WG Davies for more than 15 years. When you're dealing with a family business you're not just a number - there's a genuine connection. The quality of the work done on our vehicles is always to the highest standard and the turnaround times are excellent - they really understand our business and we have made no secret of the fact that there is no one else we would trust with the maintenance of our fleet."

Like WG Davies, Inter-Haul is very much a family business, "We've got a lot of families here, with family members working side-by-side. Two of our drivers have sons who wanted to follow in their father's footsteps, they started in our warehouse and now they drive for us. Our warehouse manager's sons and cousin all work for us and our HR manager has one son driving for us and another in the warehouse."

So perhaps it is no surprise that Ryan hopes one day he will work alongside his own children. His transient lifestyle

with winters in the Alps, followed by a period immersing himself totally in the business, did not make it easy to build a lasting relationship but today Ryan is settled with Amy in Cardiff and very much looking to the future. "I'd love to think that one day my own children might work with me here, just like I've enjoyed working with my dad. In 20 years I'd like to be handing the business over to a family member, just as my dad is starting to do with me."

Thank you so much for your time, Ryan. It's been great to hear your story.

Staff Service Awards

Celebrating the loyalty of our long serving team members

This quarter we are proud to celebrate some prestigious long service milestones from five years all the way through to a truly astonishing 25 years. Thank you to the following for their commitment:

- Liam Harris (Technician) at Swansea has achieved his 5-year service award
- Daniel Castle (Technician) has been part of the Swansea team for 10-years
- Thomas Carroll (Aftersales Administrator) has contributed to the success of Cardiff for 15-years
- Gareth Lewis (Depot Manager) Cardiff and Amanda White (Finance Director) have been leading their teams for 20 years
- Last but by no means least Debbie Davies (Director, pictured right) has been an integral part of WG's for 25 years



We Are Recruiting

Qualified HGV Technician wanted for MAN Truck and Bus, Tenby

WG Davies is a highly successful, well-established family run business which currently employs over 100 people, all dedicated to providing exceptional service to our customers. We have a close-knit family feel that reflects our roots and the culture is both vibrant and nurturing.

Do you know someone who would like to join our team?

We will demonstrate an appreciation for your skills and provide realistic opportunities for career development.



WG Davies Managing Director Drives Humanitarian Aid to Ukraine

Roger received a cry for help while he was away on holiday. He did not hesitate to answer that call and then to volunteer his help

In July Roger Davies and Kelvin Miles from the WG Davies team in Swansea stepped up and volunteered to drive a vehicle loaded with humanitarian relief from Swindon to Lviv, Ukraine, where it is estimated that ten million people have been displaced and many are without access to basic needs such as food, water, healthcare and shelter.

Roger and Kelvin drove in shifts to cover the almost 1,500 mile journey and, on his return, Roger told us "It's impossible to imagine the suffering, fear and uncertainty that so many people in Ukraine are living with every day. I feel privileged to be able to contribute in some way. For me, it's just a few days of driving but I know it will make a significant impact on their lives."

Roger was drafted by Des Evans (ex MD of MAN Truck and Bus UK) at short notice

when the entire convoy of more than 50 vehicles was put into jeopardy because a Ukrainian HGV driver, a key part of the

convoy, found himself unable to leave the Ukraine.



Q3 Depot Update

The round up this quarter is all about new team members and PDI's, with some family news and training too

Cardiff Depot Update, Gareth Lewis



As Q3 draws to a close I am happy to report that we are nearing completion of the 120 DPD PDI's. The process has run very smoothly thanks to the excellent organisational skills of Neville and Tricia. The technician team also deserve a big shout out - they have really pulled together to meet the target of 10 vehicles per week over the past quarter.

As we transition into the next phase of PDI's there is no let-up in the pace, we are now looking forward to:

- ◆ 10 X TGX 26.520 for Gerry Jones Transport
- ◆ 5 X TGX 18.520 for Right Freight
- ◆ 1 X TGM 18.250 for Draig Haulage
- ◆ 1 X TGL 12.250 for CJ Bird Transport
- ◆ 1 X TGM 18.250 for Forward Waste Management

In order to further strengthen the technician team, we've welcomed two new apprentices: **Mackenzie Ellerman**, who joined on 12th August, and **Jac Burton**, who joined on 2nd September.



Both have settled in well with dedicated mentors and early feedback on their performance has been very positive.

A special mention goes to Gavin Lucas, one of our most experienced technicians, whose ongoing dedication and hard work continues to impress.

With the volume of PDI's alongside our regular workload, this has been a busy period for us, and we look forward to maintaining this momentum into Q4.

Swansea Depot Update, Daniel Jones

For myself, the quarter began with the addition of our baby boy, Brodie Jones - I can't believe he is three months old already! Keeping the family theme, our receptionist Deborah Davies has become a proud grandmother for the first time, welcoming her gorgeous granddaughter Melia into the world last week. Family always comes first at WG Davies so it is good that many of the team have been away for a well-deserved summer holiday with their families and we are now all rested and recharged ahead of the big push through to the end of the year.



Work in Q3 has been steady, with a consistent flow of jobs passing through the workshop. This has included numerous PDI's, repairs and some motorhome servicing to prepare for the summer holidays. Among the new vehicle PDI's, we've delivered an 8x4 hook loader for LAS Recycling, two 6x2 tractor units to D John Rees, an 8x2 tanker to Portable Toilet and an additional 10 tractor units for Owens and that is on top of the 20 we delivered in Q2.

Recently, Andrew, Gareth, Roger and I visited DPD in Hinkley, where we were shown around by David Winchcombe, Head of Fleet for DPD. David was most complimentary of the service provided by WG Davies, so huge congratulations to everyone involved with that. We

are aware that DPD head into their peak season in Q4, so we will keep focussed on maintaining that high level of customer service.v



A stunning new MAN is PDI-ed and delivered to LAS

I'm also pleased to welcome **Myrick Kidwell** (son of our wonderful Michelle Kidwell) to the team. Myrick has joined the light goods team as an apprentice, he has already made a fantastic first impression and is proving to be a great asset to the team. He will be attending Gower College, Swansea. And it is welcome back to **Kevin Davies** (Shift Foreman) after undergoing an operation at the end of the summer. Kevin is an integral part of the team at Swansea and his upbeat nature always gives everyone a boost. A big thank you to **Craig Vyner** (Technician) for stepping up to cover Kevin's duties whilst he was away. Craig proved to be a huge support and continues to always show how committed he is to his role.

Rachel and Michelle recently attended a "Technical for Non-Technical" course in Swindon, where they learned about the workings of the TGX and TGE products. Rachel even got the chance to jack a cab over - perhaps we'll see her with a spanner in hand soon!

The MAN Training Academy is making great strides and there is a new engine course available online now. Training is a top priority for us and we've developed a comprehensive plan for each staff member to follow until face-to-face training becomes available in 2025.

Finally, I'm honoured to have been invited to join the MDA (MAN Dealer Association) Operational Panel, where I'll have the opportunity to address operational concerns, especially regarding vehicle technical issues, directly with the MAN board. Meetings will be held quarterly at MAN Swindon so if you have any concerns or suggestions across the network, please don't hesitate to raise them with me and I'll ensure they are raised at the appropriate time.

Tenby Update, Sarah Spolton

We might not have seen any new customers coming into us this quarter but the workshop remains as busy as ever.

Busy means we are delighted to welcome our new apprentice, Charlie Maddox, to the team and we look forward to mentoring him through his training. In addition we have posted a job advert for a qualified technician to join us and I hope we get a good response to that.

Congratulations to Tomos Evans and Will Patterson, who have both recently completed their ADR licences - we need the expertise and they have put their new skills to immediate use.



WG Davies Annual Staff Survey - Key Takeaways

In July more staff members than ever responded to the annual survey and here are just a few of the key takeaways.

○Reported job satisfaction has increased for the fourth year

- Rating of morale also hits a new high



○Staff truly believe WG Davies values its customers

- We will always put our customers at the centre of our business



○Almost half had ideas for serving customers *even* better

- Better communication is the #1 suggestion, there is a desire to deliver that



WG Davies Business Development Manager, Ian Davies

Ian plays a vital role in respect of customer service and new business development, so we thought we should take the opportunity to get to know him a little better.



Please can you tell us how you came to be working for WG Davies?

ID: I actually started with WG Davies back in 2021, I loved working for the business but late in 2023 I left to help my wife nurse her mother who was suffering from dementia. When I was able to get back to work again I got a job with Stagecoach. Nine months into that I had an accidental phone call from Roger. During the conversation, I mentioned how much I missed WG Davies and he offered me my original role back. I grabbed that opportunity with both hands and here I am back with WG Davies as the Business Development Manager again.

What does your role entail?

ID: As the Business Development Manager, my primary goals are to bring new customers to WG Davies and to ensure that our existing customers, particularly parts customers, are satisfied and feel valued.

Much of what I do involves promoting the company's "can-do/will-do" attitude, which sets us apart from our competitors. It's not without its challenges, in particular we are always competing with people selling cheaper parts, which might not offer the same quality or warranties, and of course there are third-party repairers. Overall I work to overcome the perception that, as a main dealer, we are expensive by talking about the value we offer, the warranties that come as standard with our parts and labour, as well as the backing we have from the MAN brand.

What particular skills and experience do you bring to WG Davies?

ID: I've been involved in the motor trade for 36 years, since I was just 11 years old, and over that time I've accumulated a wealth of experience, particularly in the truck and bus industry.

With that time under my belt I appreciate just how important it is to properly understand customer needs and to deliver on your promises. The role is a very personal one too, so creating a rapport and trust is vital. I love that side of it, getting to know people, finding common ground and building relationships.

What are the biggest wins you have had in your role?

ID: Honestly I don't view any successes as mine and mine alone - they are always a result of teamwork, whether that is a win for the Swansea team or the Cardiff team, it's about working together for collective achievement. Wins, when they do come, are perhaps bringing a new customer into the WG Davies family, helping an existing parts customer understand all the parts required for a particular job, or taking on the fitting of parts in one of our workshops with all the customer benefits that go with that.

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

ID: I live up in the valleys in town called Ferndale, which contrary to Malcolm's (Mal Jones, WG Davies Operations Director) belief is in fact God's country! When I'm not working, I enjoy spending time with my kids, getting out on my motorbike and taking the dogs for a walk. That said, just now we're in the process of moving, so there is very little time to enjoy any of that.

Is there a little-known fact about yourself that you would share?

ID: No one at WG Davies will know that back in the late 90s and early 2000s I was one of the top yo-yo teachers in the UK. It's definitely one of the more unusual jobs I've ever had!

Thank you Ian, we really appreciate you telling us about your role at WG Davies and your life outside of work, as well as your experience as a yo-yoist - who knew that was a thing?!



Social Media Matters Q3 2024

During Q3 we made 56 new posts on each channel and we are thrilled to see that both the engagement and number of followers has increased across all three platforms.

- **Facebook** has the greatest number of followers at 1,700 and enjoys the highest level of engagement; there were 1,609 likes in Q3 and the most viewed reel had a stunning 1,300 views
- **LinkedIn** is the channel showing the most significant increase in followers, up 35% to 476

- **Instagram** is always popular, with 1,072 followers and we enjoyed 13,561 impressions (content visibility) across the quarter

Honestly, we do not mind which platform you choose to engage with us on, we are just happy that you are a part of the conversation.

The top performing posts (not including reels) were:



Customer Service Interviews

Giving our customers a voice because feedback is priceless

We believe it's good to talk, which is why we have been reaching out to our customers via the CSI programme for 15 years now. The programme gives us the opportunity to have regular conversations with our customers and gives them a voice to keep us focussed on what is important.

We genuinely want to know what we could do better and so each interview starts with an open question about the quality of the support we give, that is followed by probing around some key

performance areas and then we ask the killer question "What could we do better?". We love it when the response is "nothing" but we are not shy of hearing constructive feedback either.

So if you have spoken to Janet over the past 12 months, thank you, we are very grateful for your time and your feedback. We thought you might be interested to see how we are rated across all the KPIs over the past four quarters.

