

Bodybuilder achieves sales record in 2011

When operator Mick George acquired another 10 Charlton SuperLite-bodied DAF 8x4 tippers for its fleet, 2011 sales for Dover-based bodybuilder reached a record.

For Mick George, which operates a large fleet of tipper vehicles, the requirement was for the lowest possible bodyweight, without sacrificing steel's strength and versatility.

"Quite simply, payload equals revenue," explains Pete Newman, engineering director at Mick George. "What we have to do is combine that earning potential within a wider vehicle specification that also maximises our operating reliability and versatility."

Newman explains that the operator's trucks are contracted to carry out a variety of jobs for a range of customers.

"So what we need is a single truck specification that can handle just about everything. On balance, the Charlton/DAF combination is the most productive tipper we can devise," he says.

Built throughout from high-yield steel, Charlton's SuperLite bodies feature single piece, full length sides with a heavy-duty floor. Mick George's specification also includes a steel front spillboard, electric front



to rear sheeting, VWS electronic weighing, and pushbar and plastic ducting for all body wiring.

To complement its SuperLites, Mick George also chooses Hyva FC149 front-end

tipping gear, says Newman, because of its lower weight and higher performance.

Mounted on DAF CF 8x4 chassis, the virtually bullet-proof Charlton body affords a payload of almost 20 tonnes.

Canter's deliver fare gains on Scottish ferries

Waltons of Oban is benefiting from the short length of its fridge-bodied Fuso Canter's, in being charged less than other commercial vehicles on ferries to and from Scotland's Western Isles.

Indeed, the 3.5-tonne vehicle crosses for the £48 cost of a car, rather than the £140 fee payable for many vans that cannot meet the ferry operator's 5m length rule.

According to proprietor Eric Walton, these savings make a crucial difference to the viability of his operation. "Without the Canter, our costs would be a lot higher; in fact, the business just wouldn't work," he says.

Vehicle lengths are minimised by the Canter's cab-over-engine design and both of Waltons' were also specified with the shortest available wheelbases – 2,500mm, in the case of the smaller 3.5-tonne Canter 3C13, and 2,750mm for the 5-tonne Canter 7C15.

Looking at the rest of the specification, power for both trucks comes from a clean-burning, fuel-efficient 3.0-litre engine that not only meets Euro 5 emissions limits, but also the EEV standard.

Both vehicles have also been fitted with dual compartment insulated box bodies, with movable bulkheads, and Thermo King refrigeration units.

The operator has just ordered two more Canter's, a 6.5-tonne 6C15 with 2,750mm wheelbase and a 3.5-tonne 3C13 TF model from the 2012 range.



Switch to Isuzu results in five-figure savings



By changing truck brands – in this case to an Isuzu Forward 7.5-tonner – Classic Catering estimates it will save in excess of £10,000 on its annual fuel costs.

With the company running a daily trunking operation from Manchester to London, the new Isuzu is already showing an improvement in fuel economy over the incumbent brand.

This is the company's first ever Isuzu in its 19-strong distribution fleet and the N75.190 4x2 rigid vehicle is covering more than 2,400 miles a week.

It transports patisserie products from Classic Catering's Manchester production facility to its London-based distribution centre in Wembley.

Within the first month of service, the Isuzu returned a 3mpg improvement in average fuel consumption over the previous vehicle on this six-day-a-week, 430-mile daily operation.

Classic Catering anticipates this fuel saving will improve even further as the Isuzu settles into its working life.

"We were aware of the Isuzu payload and fuel economy before we bought the vehicle and everything we heard has materialised already with this first Isuzu," states David Mincher, logistics and warehouse manager at Classic Catering.

Scottish construction firm turns to Thompsons

One of Scotland's leading construction groups has just replaced more than half of its eight wheeler tipper fleet with new trucks bodied by Thompsons.

The Harte Group's new 8x4 tippers comprise five Scania sleeper cab models, one Scania day cab and one MAN truck.

The MAN chassis is the lighter, more payload-conscious 32-tonne version, with single reduction drive axles.

All seven trucks carry Thompsons' double skinned, all-steel Loadmaster Lite tipping bodies, but with the addition of smooth exterior sides, enclosing full body side insulation.

"Above all, we chose

Thompson's bodies, because of their reputation for standing up to continuous hard work," says Harte's transport manager Colin Crawford.

"We are looking for at least five years' operation for the new vehicles and with minimal downtime. And when selling vehicles, we now know that one of the very first questions people ask is 'has the truck got a Thompsons on it?'," he continues.

Crawford says Harte chose a part-insulated version of the Loadmaster Lite body to improve operating versatility.

"We generally don't do third-party tarmac work, simply because the trucks can be



standing around for far too long," states Crawford.

"On the other hand, we do need vehicles that can handle

our own in-house tarmac work, where we can determine the timing of loading and discharge much better," he adds.

Lenham Storage takes Britain's first Atego hybrid

Waitrose stores in central London are now receiving deliveries from the first of a new breed of low-emission Mercedes-Benz trucks.

Operated by shared user distribution specialist Lenham Storage, the Atego BlueTec Hybrid truck employs a Euro 5/EEV (enhanced environmentally friendly vehicle) diesel engine and an electric motor, which can power the vehicle individually or in tandem.

Depending on the application, Europe's first series-produced hybrid truck is claimed to offer fuel consumption savings of up to 15% and a similar reduction in CO₂ emissions.

Lenham Storage's new 12-tonner is also equipped with a specially developed version of the Mercedes-Benz MSS (Motor Stop-Start) system, which boosts fuel economy by switching off the engine whenever the vehicle is in neutral and stationary for more than three seconds.

Interestingly, Lenham has also gone beyond green engine

technology – specifying, for example, the wind-cheating 'Freddie' roof deflector and collar, from specialist Hatcher Components, on the cab. And aerodynamics also extends to the streamlined Bevan Group Bevan21 box body – complete with curved roof, tapered sides and roof-mounted rear diffuser, as well as lightweight, recyclable panels.

Returning to the powertrain, the 60bhp (44kW) water-cooled electric motor offers instantly accessible maximum torque of 420Nm. It draws its energy from a high-performance, lithium-ion battery that is charged mainly during braking, through the conversion of kinetic energy into electrical energy.

When starting off, the vehicle is driven by the electric motor, thus ensuring quiet, fuel-efficient and low-emission progress. The 218bhp (160kW) 4.8-litre conventional diesel engine acceleration then moves from idling to power output during acceleration, but with assistance from the electric motor.

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