

OPEN ROAD

BPW TRANSPORT EFFICIENCY'S MAGAZINE FOR THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY.

WINTER 2014



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You Could Write a Book About It

In 2014 Hilton Haulage celebrates its 20th anniversary under current management. **6**





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OPEN ROAD - WINTER 2014

From the GM



One of the fascinations of putting together a magazine such as Open Road is that we constantly come across people who are doing fascinating things.

"Who knew?" is a frequent response to some of the innovations, inventions, background stories and—in this edition—celebrations, we come across when we research these stories.

Personally I am a little envious of Open Road's New Zealand-based editor and photographer, Mike Isle, who gets to travel the country and ferret out these stories. In the process, he meets some great people and soaks up fabulous scenery. Jon Harmer, Matt Hunt and Staveley in mid-Canterbury (see Harmer Earthmoving story page 14) are examples. Who knew?

Among other stories we have in this edition—the husband and wife team, Blair and Carolyn Bennett, who are just that—a team; Mark Bartlett and his BCP team bringing in the 'big guns' to help rebuild Christchurch, a 'moving' story about Taylor Bros in Tauranga, and a south Auckland produce grower, Hira Bhana and Co, who has a real case of the Blues.

The people and places of our industry—that's what Open Road is all about.

And, on that subject, if you would like to your company featured in Open Road, or maybe you just have a story you would like to share, you are welcome to drop me a line kateb@tenz.co.nz and I'll have our team get in touch with you.

I want to mention one further story we have in this edition—that of Hilton Haulage (page 6). The Hilton team this month celebrates their 20th year in business. And what a celebration it will be—they are planning a party for all staff and there is even a book in place recounting the—often vivid—history of the company. Congratulations guys.

Coincidentally, this also marks our own 20th anniversary. Twenty years since my fledgling Transport Efficiency company caught the attention of global giant BPW and we became the New Zealand operation for Europe's largest manufacturer of intelligent axles and suspension systems for trailers and semi-trailers.

But, as always, we like to introduce the human element. And on this occasion I want to acknowledge my longest serving team member. He has been with me all of those 20 years and even before that.

He has anchored a sometimes difficult job—and done so with patience, professionalism and, obviously, perseverance.

Tim Faser, BPW Transport Efficiency parts, I have a lot to thank you for.

KATE BUCKNELL

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TAILOR—MADE FOR TAYLOR BROS

We visit a Tauranga-based company that is finding new and innovative ways to conduct its business and give something back to customers and the community.

Words and photographs by Mike Isle



Garry Taylor (left) and son Andrew

The noise was coming from the Bay of Plenty and Waikato.

Talk is of an alternate derivation on the conventional Cargo Floor Moving Floor system, commissioned by Tauranga-based Taylor Bros Transport and made by Transfleet Equipment in Wiri that is exceeding its performance expectations. This is going to be worth a visit.

But as so often happens in our stories a trailer is only part of the story. It doesn't take a trip to Tauranga to show this is a company with impressive credentials when it comes to looking after its customers and community.

A preliminary reconnoitre of the Taylor Bros website shows Taylor Bros has no fewer than 17 community and charity organisations that it supports, among them Surf Lifesaving, St John's, hospices and food banks.

On the customer-side, the site catalogues an equally impressive array

of procedures and processes that enables Taylor Bros to maintain optimal resource management and service delivery. Implicit in the service delivery seems to be a horizontal management structure in which customers are able to, and are in fact encouraged to, deal direct with the company's despatchers and admin staff.

It's a process honed to perfection by nearly 50 years (50th next year) of uninterrupted operations in the Bay of Plenty, and now across the upper North Island. Of the original Taylor Bros, Kevin and Garry, Kevin is retired, but Gary is still there every day, helping out his son Andrew, who joined the company as a driver in 1990 and is now its managing director.

Core business is aggregate, post peel, stock food, and wood waste cartage with processes and contracts that allow for substantial backloading. The company operates 30 trucks and trailer

units, mostly UD's and tippers and employs staff out of depots in Matamata, Katikati and Tauranga.

It's in Tauranga that we catch up with Garry and Andrew. And the trailer.

At first sight and from the exterior, it is already impressive: 11.5 metres, 5-axle bulk with 80 cubic metre capacity that, when combined with its UD tractor and its 50 cubic metre bin, delivers up to 130 cubic metres of load capacity.

The truck and trailer are off the road for the moment but that is only because of our visit and for the photos. "Otherwise," says Andrew, "it would be on the road and working at full capacity."

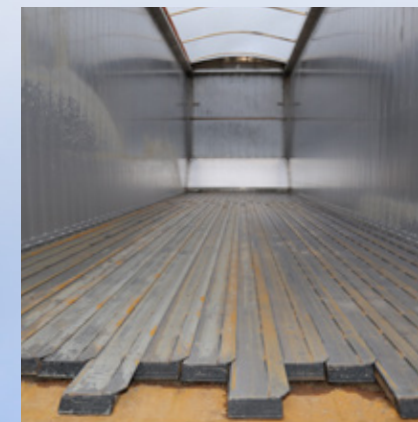
Obviously Andrew and Garry are pleased with their new acquisition and its performance. They took a bit of punt—moving floors are hardly new, but rarely have conventional profile floors stood up to the hard-grind of loose material, particularly aggregate.

The concept was still worth a punt though. Moving floors, in some situations, offer better accessibility and off-loading than tippers.

They also allow a greater capacity—good luck in finding and operating an 11.5 metre tipper. There are also major safety benefits.

But it still comes down to the wear and tear of standing up to loose materials such as aggregates and wood waste—the staples of the business.

Steel would do it. Cargo Floor's 3 millimetre



steel profile. Trade off would be tare-weight. But, built for purpose, tailor-made for Taylor Bros, Andrew and Garry could live with that. Maybe.

Time to talk it over with Transfleet.

"Matthew Gillies (Transfleet's chief executive) was on top of it," says Garry. "He knew moving floors inside out—knew what they were capable of and when we went to him and said we didn't want to replace the slats every two years—well, it was Matt who came up with the steel option in consultation with BPW Transport Efficiency and Cargo Floor's Australian distributor BPW Transpec.

"Okay, tare weight was a consideration. But in our business, with relatively light load material, we were more interested in the 80 cubic metre load capacity...and safety.

"We gave Matt and the team the greenlight."

Six months later the trailer was on the road. It's been on that road since April this year, and principal driver Bevan Cruikshank couldn't be more pleased. A ten year veteran with the company, he says the steel profiles are working better than anticipated and, there is no discernible wear. The Cargo Floor system of seven sets of three profiles has the trailer offloading a full load in less than seven minutes.


From Andrew and Garry's points of view the punt has paid off—high volume loads of the 11.5 metre trailer offer a dramatically lower economic and environmental footprint, and two loads a day rather than the three of conventional trailers.

So, then, the big question: Will moving floors replace tippers?

Andrew says "maybe". He's more than happy with his fleet of Transfleet (alloy) and Cambridge Engineering (steel) tippers some of which have been around and fully operational for ten years or more.

But he could use some more moving floor trailers if the situations warranted. And that may happen, he says. The trailer has already attracted extra business.

"The main thing is that we have proven that Cargo Floor can work for loose materials of such diverse types.

"It's the punt that paid off." 



YOU COULD WRITE A BOOK ABOUT IT

Words by Mike Isle

This month South Canterbury's Hilton Haulage celebrates its 20th anniversary under current management. In that time the company has expanded rapidly, yet rarely does it operate beyond its South Canterbury catchment. We find out why it doesn't need to.

There will likely be a few sore heads in Timaru this month.

The bustling port town 150 kilometres south of Christchurch has a lot to celebrate. The local economy is booming, exports receipts are steadily growing and the town with fewer than 50,000 residents is attracting a disproportionate number of New Zealand head offices and distribution centres.

But it is a local "favourite son" company—and one of the town's biggest employers—attracting most attention this month. Hilton Haulage turns 20, and is going to celebrate that milestone with style. It is throwing a huge party for all 250 fulltime employees and, in tandem, self-publishing a history of its first 20 years – "20 Years on Hiltons Highway"

To the outsider without knowledge of the company all of that may seem a little premature, maybe excessive—20 years is after all not a long time. But as we delve into it deeper, including a lengthy interview with one of its founding directors, fleet and commercial manager Peter McAuley, the scale of the Hilton operation and what the company has achieved in those 20 years more than justifies the celebration and certainly warrants the book.

We are talking a big story here. →





“TODAY THE COMPANY COMPRISES 150 TRUCKS, 250 EMPLOYEES AND 200 TRAILERS. BY ANY STANDARD THAT IS SPECTACULAR GROWTH IN SUCH A SHORT TIMESPAN.”

Peter McAuley is a big man. He towers over our interviewers. The hand he thrusts out for us to shake is huge, even without the bulky bandage protecting a recent and unexplained injury and probably now protecting our hands from a bone crushing injury.

But he is friendly, incredibly passionate about his company and one of the most optimistic and positive people we have had the pleasure to meet.

He tells us of the beginning of the company.

Peter's brother Sid started it with a mate Angus Murray in 1972 when they bought a mid-size transport operator McBride Transport. The mates kept the name for a time but changed the operations “carting a bit of fish about the place” as Peter McAuley

laconically puts it.

Sid ran the business up until 1994 when he sold it to Peter and Peter's partners brothers Peter and Bruce Anderson and Stu Read. At that point the company, now Hilton Haulage, comprised a small office and yard at Washdyke, 16 trucks and 20 staff.

Today the company comprises 150 trucks, 250 employees and 200 trailers.

By any standard that is spectacular growth in such a short time.

Peter attributes the growth to the vision and provision of a full gate to plate operation—offering total logistical involvement in the food chain, including warehousing.

There is also a degree of pragmatism and a

garnish of the well-documented Canterbury pride involved. From the outset the company consolidated in Canterbury. Peter and his team recognised that there was more money to be made in short haul and there was more than enough food business ripe for the picking in South Canterbury. Hiltons was a Canterbury company, they could remain—confidently—a Canterbury company. That is where their focus would be.

Today that is expressed in a simple but precise company credo that appears on all their trucks: “Carrying Canterbury's Future.” Peter admits the business has grown a little beyond its self-imposed boundaries but 95% of turnover is still in Canterbury.

Is it likely to stay that way? Is it sustainable? Is

that the “future”?

“Yes!”

Peter is emphatic. The Canterbury dairy industry alone has a forecast 5% compound growth for each of the next 20 years. A new irrigation scheme—the Hunterdowns—is about to open up 44,000 hectares to grazing—100,000 cows. And that is just one scheme; there are at least three others of equivalent size coming on stream.

Conspicuous by its absence is any mention of the Christchurch post-quakes rebuild. Peter shrugs his shoulders. “It is there,” he acknowledges. “But the real story—the big story—particularly for South Canterbury is still dairy. And that is massive, with massive on flow to other industries, including our own,” says Peter.

Growth doesn't come without its challenges. One of the biggest facing Hiltons, and it has been for some time, is people. Good people. Finding them.

Peter puts some figures to it: “Typically road transport grows at twice the rate of GDP. If South Canterbury has 7% GDP, transport has 15%. If we have 200 drivers, we need 30 more in the next year, just to cover organic growth’.

The same situation applies to fleet escalation; with 150 trucks and a turnover for each every 10 years, 15 trucks need replacing each year, just to stand still!”

The introduction of HPMV (High Productivity Motor Vehicles) with increased gross weights and cubic capacity are assisting in slowing


the increased number of trucks and drivers required. Hilton has so far introduced 30 nine axle HPMV units into their fleet with another 10 planned over the next year.

For all of that, the acquisitions, and the challenges—such as they are—are still all growth related. And the company will continue to grow to meet demand.

“Standing still” doesn't sit well at Hiltons. It is not in their vocabulary or plans.

“The real growth, and the most sustainable,” says Peter, “is still the region's food producing industry. That's where South Canterbury's future lies...and ours:

“Carrying Canterbury's Future.”

With a future like that, there is clearly a lot more to the Hilton story yet and another book still to be written. 



Bruce Anderson, Peter McAuley and Peter Anderson



A MATCH MADE FROM A POTATO PATCH

At first sight it may seem an unusual match, the super successful market gardeners from South Auckland and the Auckland Blues rugby franchise. But as we see when we visit the latter's open day for fans there is a certain logic to it.

Words by Mike Isle



The small boy, he must be only 10 or 11, is mesmerised. He's staring up into some classy shades worn by a man the boy has seen many times on television and, for such a young life, has been a life-long hero. The man is Piri Weepu, former Hurricane, former All Black half and perhaps the most recognisable and, to the boy, most revered of the current crop of Auckland Blues. We are at a 'Meet the Blues' open day at North Shore Stadium in Auckland's Albany. Almost the full contingent of Blues is there but they are vastly outnumbered by the legion of fans. It's a good day to be a fan. It is also a good day for Balrent "Woodsy" Bhana and his elder brother Amrut. The brothers are joint directors of one of the larger market garden operations in

Pukekohe—arguably the most productive patch of dirt in New Zealand. Their company, Hira Bhana and Co, is also a principal sponsor of Auckland's Super 15 team The Blues, which is why the brothers are there under a blazing February sun that is somewhat eclipsed by the huge smiles of the Bhanas and those of the thousands of young fans. The Bhanas have not come alone. They have brought with them their latest acquisition or—in rugby parlance—their biggest off-season buy. And it is big. Big enough to compete with the stellar Blues for a young boy's attention. Trucks attract. And this immaculately appointed Isuzu CYJ530, the flagship of the Isuzu range, is certainly gathering an admiring audience.

The Bhana brothers have brought it here to Albany for a couple of reasons. The first is that it is an impressive promotional vehicle. The colourful livery, designed by Frank Bogaart of BOGAART D-ZIGN in Papakura and featuring photos of one of the Bhanas' six farms, sets the tone perfectly. The rear of the Roadmaster-built five-axle trailer proudly proclaims the company's Blues sponsorship for all those who follow—the trailer and rugby. The second reason the truck is there is that it is carrying four tonnes of the company's Moonlight potatoes for free distribution in five kilo bags to Blues supporters. And therein lies the germination of the sponsorship. It began with a chance

meeting Woodsy Bhana had with some of the Blues players. It soon transpired that the Blues are big potato eaters—consuming potatoes every game-day lunch. For Woodsy, the potato penny dropped, he says. "What are New Zealanders passionate about? Rugby. What is the country's biggest city (and Bhana home base)? Auckland. Which team does the large population most support? The Blues. What do the Blues like? Potatoes." The match was made. The Auckland Rugby Union initially offered Bhana and Co sponsorship of its ITM Cup team and then, in October last year, a principal sponsorship of the Blues franchise. "They are a great franchise to go with," Woodsy says. "They are so easy to work

with and they have welcomed us like members of the team." Clearly the good humour and rapport are reciprocated. The Blues have visited the Bhana operation in Pukekohe, and the company's website has a photo of Blues' coach Sir John Kirwin sitting gleefully behind the wheel of the new Isuzu. Trucks attract. Leverage is a word often used in connection with sponsorship. And there is no doubt the Bhana brothers and their families are getting maximum leverage off their sponsorship of the Blues. But it doesn't come easy. The boys have put a lot of work (and expense) into it and financial benefits aside the company also has a genuine desire to be involved with the community—particularly sport, which they see as the perfect match for the health benefits of their produce.

This is a successful operation: six flourishing farms, 1,500 acres of land, 40 full-time staff and a distribution network that extends from Kaitia to Christchurch. The four brothers Dinesh, Amrut, Bharat and Balrent, sons of the founder Hira Bhana, along with younger third generation family currently manage the business growing potatoes, onions, carrots, pumpkins, cabbage, cauliflower and lettuce. Fresh produce, delivered daily. The sun is setting on that brilliant Albany day. The Blues have stayed a little longer than anticipated. So have the fans, so have the Bhanas and their families. Nobody wants to leave and there are still lots of kids doing a Kirwin and getting their photos taken in the Isuzu. It's that kind of day—a day to be enjoyed—with (a) good company. 🍟

Roadmaster's low profile fi e-axle Glidemaster is fully insulated, and equipped with BPW Airlight air suspension, and drum braked axles.



The Blues with their bags of potatoes, just some of the four tonnes given to supporters at the open day.

WIND OF CHANGE

Words and photographs by Mark Pearce



“IT’S ALL ABOUT GETTING INTO A NICHE PART OF THE MARKET. EIGHTY PERCENT OF OUR BUSINESS IS NOW DAIRY AND THAT’S WHAT WE WANT TO CONCENTRATE ON,” SHANE MUIR

identity for us, both within and outside. It emphasises the history of what we do,” explains Shane.

The Saldam name had its origin in the initials of the family names; the initials of ‘Shane’, ‘Anthony’, his wife’s first name ‘Leanne’ and his son’s names ‘Damon Anthony’. The ‘M’ of course stood for the family name, ‘Muir’.

“When my daughter Taylah came along, to keep her happy we would say to her you’re the ‘T’ in Transport,” chuckles Shane.

Shane believes the new name helps educate farmers, dairy manufacturers, distributors and people looking for the company online and on social media to better understand what they do and what they deliver.

“The Saldam name was a tough one because people never really knew what we carried. They always had to ask us. We’re moving away from ‘Saldam’ to concentrate on what we do best. Dairy Transport Logistics is an exciting new choice which I think represents our future and hopefully people will relate to us and be able to find our services more easily,” says Shane.

Shane ultimately decided to go out on his own in 1998 and set up his own family business. He bought his own truck and subcontracted for some time at Booths Transport until projects reached full swing.

“I just wanted to go out on my own and have a crack at it. I only wanted one truck for myself and things just snowballed. I got more work and I said to myself, ‘here’s an opportunity for it to grow,’ and that’s how it all started.”

Left: The recently purchased 20’ Lucar refrigerated van on the road delivering dairy.

In the mid-to-late nineties, work brought him back to Shepparton as he went into carting potato chips from Shepparton to Sydney every week.

Over the last decade Shane has had plenty of highs and lows. After a massive growth period in the mid-2000s, he decided to scale back the business after the Global Financial Crisis in 2008.

Today, business is building again. Although he’s just changed his company livery, the conundrum today for Shane is trying to find a balance between what he has now and growing the business.

“I’m at the stage where I don’t want to get too much bigger because that’s when you start losing control of things. But if your customers grow, you’ve got to grow with them. If you don’t grow with them, you get left behind and someone else will handle it, so it’s a bit of catch-22 at the moment,” he admits.

Changing the fleet size has been a constant practice for Shane. Over the last six months he’s purchased five new refrigerated vans to take his fleet total up to 20, including 19 refrigerated vans and a flat top.

The majority of his purchases have been Lucar trailers and he’s now running 50 percent of his fleet on BPW axles, suspensions and drum brakes.

“The first time we used BPW was about two and a half years ago. When we started buying Lucar it was all BPW-spec’d and we thought we’d give it a try. Since then we haven’t had any shocker issues or anything. They are heavier and bigger bags but they do handle better. They’ve been as good as gold.”

The latest Lucar refrigerated van Shane purchased three months ago (pictured) carries around 22 tonnes of dairy product from Shepparton to Melbourne on a daily

run. It’s also his first trailer in the fleet fitted with EBS.

“We’ve only got that one trailer at the moment fitted with EBS. It’s just peace of mind more than anything. At least you know if anything does happen, it’s there. It’s one more thing to make life a bit easier.”

Shane’s first 52’ turns up on his doorstep in August and he’s about to set up all of his trucks to accommodate 52 footers which will be integrated throughout his whole fleet.

“You’ve got to be up with it. The days of not being compliant are gone so we’re standardising things. The biggest thing is when our 52’ rolls in, the truck, the trailer, the whole unit will be EBS, and that’s what I can’t wait to see,” says Shane.

The reputation of his business has been built on his persistence and loyal service to his customers over 16 years; it’s only a matter of letting Shane know what you want and he’ll do it.

“If you want something done, all hours of the day or night, just ring me and it’ll get done. I make things happen and I pride myself on that.”

More changes are occurring at Dairy Transport Logistics with Shane’s wife Leanne stepping aside from the administration role of business to pursue her own business with Arbonne and son Damon likely to head into the fridge mechanical world for Thermo King.

“Hopefully he’ll do that and then he can fix my fridges if they break down,” laughs Shane.

And as the signage is changed on vehicles and premises, the new trailers, new trucks, new equipment, new name and new logo will collectively reflect the premium quality and service which Dairy Transport Logistics will continue to deliver, just as Saldam Transport has always done. 🇺🇸

Change is afoot in the Shepparton region of country Victoria as Saldam Transport changes its name to Dairy Transport Logistics. Managing Director Shane Muir will continue looking after his premium dairy customers, as well as finding new opportunities to flourish.

Shane Muir has recently renamed and rebranded his company as the next step in his strategy to serve as a leading transport provider within the dairy industry. The plan to change to Dairy Transport Logistics has been in the background for a while; it is a customer-focused decision that better reflects the company’s new direction, as well as Shane’s aspirations to cement his place in the northern Victorian country dairy market.

“It’s all about getting into a niche part of the market. Predominately that’s what we now

cater for. Eighty percent of our business is now dairy and that’s what we want to concentrate on,” says Shane.

The rebranding is also aimed at continuing to drive premium cheese, milk and yogurt products plus other leading brands to the Lemnos-based business, which has been in the transport industry for almost seventeen years.

“In the past, we have been appealing to a broader range of customers, which wasn’t really where I wanted to go with the business. Our new name creates a distinct



“When we started buying Lucar it was all BPW-spec’d and we thought we’d give it a try. Since then we haven’t had any shocker issues or anything.”

WHERE MATES RATE

Mt Somer casts a long shadow over the small mid-Canterbury community of Staveley. Yet out of the shadow emerges a shining light example of NZ no.8 wire enterprise at its best.

Words and photographs by Mike Isle

This is a largely untouched part of New Zealand.

Still pristine, and, while the rest of the country seems hell bent on moving into the fast lane, Staveley, just inland from Ashburton, keeps to its own pace and preserves the values that have forged the small but prosperous mid-Canterbury community.

Values such as mateship.

We meet two mates who grew up in the area, and have been friends since school days. One became the best man at the other's wedding and then, almost inevitably given their respective businesses and skills, they built a trailer together.

From scratch.

Jon Harmer—the erstwhile groom—has been in the earthmoving and general cartage business a long time. He started behind the wheels of his father Jack's dozers and diggers at the age of five, and as an adult bought the transport and earthmoving divisions, Harmer Earthmoving Limited from Jack who retained the company's quarry division.

That was in 2004. In 2011 Jon added logging to the Harmer mix.

Over in Ashburton, and a year later, Matt Hunt, Jon's best man, and Matt's father Colin bought an existing engineering repair business.

And so began the second company in the equation, Engineering Repairs (2012) Ltd.

With complementary businesses and Jon and Matt's long friendship the inevitable result was a joint project build.

That build came in the form of a low-loader to carry a newly acquired Harmer digger. The issue was that Matt's company, just a year old, had not yet built a transporter—of any kind.

That wasn't a problem for Jon—it simply meant he and Matt and their respective teams could start with a 'Greenfields' development, build from scratch and integrate the innovations and specifications Jon identified as unique to his business.

It started with what Jon didn't want. He didn't want a conventional three rows of eight: "too many tyres on the road."



Instead they opted for BPW spaced axles, and then maximising on that, moved the axle space an additional 100 millimetres. Each 100 millimetres added a tonne to the legal rating.¹

That was just the beginning of the innovations. Jon says he had ideas of his own—ideas that he and Matt would draw up over in Matt's workshop. But they were always subject to change and outside input.

An example was the suspension. Early thoughts were to go with conventional wisdom—hydraulic suspension. But there came another thought—a thought that, like

much of the trailer and its componentry, rocked conventional wisdom in scope and practicality.

Jon takes up the story...

"It was my idea how to set up (the running gear) and I knew what I wanted. I then talked it over with Matt and we decided we would use a self-steer in the rear and three fixed axles, including two lifting axles, in the front.

"Matt then sent those ideas to Allan Hesom, chief designer at Altec Engineering who came back to us with detailed plans."

The collective contributions and the choice

of BPW running gear produced highly desirable results. As well as less wear and tear on the suspension (and the tyres), the axle weight distribution is uniform across the unit, adding both stability and weight reduction.

There were further modifications during the build. Jon and Matt both refer, somewhat ruefully, to the build being "an evolving process." It was after all, a first for Matt and his team, and Jon wasn't interested in anything off the rack.

It was trial and error at times, but, more often, trial and success.

That is how Jon and Matt operate—working things out between them ably supported by their respective teams—Jon's workshop team doing the wiring and painting; Matt's the engineering.

And in the end—as Jon says, "We got everything we wanted. Sixty thousand kilometres later we have had no trouble with it. None."

In some places in New Zealand the no.8 wire mentality still survives and suffices.² It's just that, these days, it is more likely called innovation and enterprise.

Whatever else you call it, what these two

mates from way back achieved is something you could call a throwback—a throwback to those days, when you could successfully ring up a mate and get him to build something for you.

Days when you could say, "I reckon we could do this. What do you reckon?"

"I reckon we could...mate. Let's give it a go."

1. The expedient of widening the space between axles succeeded. A normal four-row transporter can get a 20-tonne rating; the Harmer transporter gets a 26-tonne rating—on the back axles alone.

2. 'No.8 wire' You could solve the world's problems with that common gauge wire—given Kiwi ingenuity. That's the way they told it down on New Zealand farms. That's the way they kept on telling it right into the Internet Age and still do. Gotta be a grain of truth in there, eh?



Matt Hunt and Jon Harmer

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHT SOLUTION

Words and photographs by Mark Pearce

With industry demand to pack more product into today's road freight containers, Kreskas Bros Transport has found a solution to deliver higher payloads at twice the efficiency: enter the Hammar 160S – the world's lightest sideloader.

Transport has been in the Kreskas family a very long time.

In 1945, two brothers from northern Greece, George and Arthur Kreskas, settled around the Shepparton region in Lemnos, 200 kilometres north of Melbourne. Like so many migrant families in the area, they formed an orchard-growing partnership to eke out a living. →



The Hammar 160 Series is the eighth Hammar sideloader in the Kreskas Bros fleet.



“What we had to do in the past with our previous sideloaders was operate with a chase truck. That means we had to utilise and tie up two operators, two prime movers, and two trailers to go and pick up one container, so the operation was a lot of time and organisation as well as a significant financial in-house cost.

“With the new Hammar it cuts everything down by half, so we’re twice as efficient with the one trailer. Importantly, it’s less to manage in terms of risk by having only one truck and trailer on the client’s site, and clients are much happier about it,” remarks Peter.

we had no issues with that original second-hand lifter, and that’s been the case with all sideloaders we’ve purchased. Hammar recommends the BPW product as well so there’s obviously a good reason for that.”

Spec for spec, the Hammar 160S is the world’s lightest sideloader with a tare weight of just under 8.7 tonnes. The trailer itself is 1.8 tonnes lighter than any of the Kreskas Bros’ traditional-style, sidelifting trailers in operation today.

“These lifters are now becoming a more popular option as operators look to have less tare weight and more tonnage in every load they move,” states John.

out switches when you’re lifting and loading.”

In this day and age of ‘getting ahead of customer requirements’, the Kreskas Bros are proud as punch with their new custom-built, super lightweight solution.

“It’s about making sure we not only meet but go beyond what our clients want or need and you’d have to say the combination of the BPW and the Hammar would be the standout piece of equipment we’ve got in the business,” says John.

Les agrees, saying, “The suspension and trailer are just as good as each other. It gets the hardest workload of all our units. It works at its maximum weights and it’s always stood



Left to right: Brothers Les and John Kreskas in front of their new Hammar 160S.

In 1968 the brothers began carting their own produce and their neighbours’ produce and eventually the Kreskas business was known around town for being the largest mover of fresh produce into the Melbourne markets. When older brother George retired in the 1980s, brothers Les and John became active in the Lemnos-based business and joined forces with their father Arthur to turn the fruit carting company into a substantial operation.

Around the time of the millennium, Les and John looked at trends of how the orchard industry was changing. From their point of view, they could foresee the future of growing fruit was going to be a battle at best. They reacted swiftly to the needs of the market and their clients; they stopped carting fresh produce and shifted focus to transporting general and refrigerated freight.

“We were doing a small amount of freight container work for fruit growers and our general customers and then it began to strengthen,” explains Joint Managing Director, Les Kreskas. “It reinforced our confidence in where we were going and by the mid-2000s container carting became a significant part of our business.”

As it stands today, in the Shepparton region of Victoria Kreskas Bros is the largest mover of road shipping containers, with end-to-end services in and out of the Melbourne ports. “We run 30 prime movers and just over 60 trailers. Next year we will move well over 10,000 TEU (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units) into and out of the Port of Melbourne,” says younger brother and Joint Managing Director, John.

Servicing all the major food industry and dairy manufacturers like Bega Cheese,

Tatura Milk, SPC and Campbell Soups, demand to pack more product into containers prompted the company to uncover cost effective and safer ways to pick up containers and move them legally on the road.

“We needed to keep up with the rest of the world in container carting to compete in the export market,” declares John.

Enter the Hammar 160 sideloader; a model which has been used in Europe for more than 40 years but wasn’t as popular with Australian operators when it first hit the local market 15 plus years ago.

A re-launch of the sideloader encouraged Kreskas Bros Governance, Risk and Compliance Manager, Peter Hill, to further investigate the low tare weight technology that takes efficiency to a whole new level.

Fleet Manager, Ben Jeffers lifting off a load at the Kreskas Bros depot in Lemnos, Victoria.



“DAD ONCE SAID TO ME, DON’T WORRY IF YOU LOSE WORK FROM A PRICE PERSPECTIVE, JUST START WORRYING WHEN YOU LOSE IT FROM SERVICE.”

LES KRESKAS, JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR – KRESKAS BROS TRANSPORT.

When Kreskas Bros originally introduced sideloaders into the fleet back in 2006, they looked no further than Hammar. With reliability being a major factor in choice of brand, the purpose to obtain a risk free and cost efficient operation has motivated multiple orders of Hammar sideloaders; the company has owned eight Hammar units since 2006 and now has three in the fleet, each fitted with BPW axles and suspensions. “It wasn’t a conscious decision to go with BPW to start with,” notes Les. “Our first sideloader we bought was a second-hand trailer and it had a BPW suspension. After that experience we specified BPW because

Complete with on-board power pack and scales for weighing, the lifting and loading is controlled by a cable/radio-controlled unit that allows operators to stack loads safely with ease.

The state-of-the-art machine can lift up to 36 tonnes and takes just three and a half minutes to raise a container to or from the ground. Kreskas Bros Fleet Manager, Ben Jeffers, has been encouraged by some of its stand out features. “One of the best things is that it’s very user-friendly,” he says. “They’re simple to train the operators to use because the control unit is easily diagrammed. It’s easy to follow and has all the safety features in terms of cut

up to the test. We don’t have to worry about time, safety, cost or lack of service factors.”

Handed down from their father Arthur was a lifetime of sayings on the importance of old fashioned service. Les recalls a significant moment he has never forgotten...

“Dad once said to me, don’t worry if you lose work from a price perspective; just start worrying when you lose it from service.”

Arthur’s main motto was to ‘treat other people’s business like it’s your own’. This dictum is now instilled in all 65 staff members and still reverberates around the office walls in Lemnos today. 🇦🇺

BEAST BRINGS OUT THE BEST



With a pour potential of 170 cubic metres an hour, this is a powerful resource to have on hand for big jobs.

“IT IS A BIG BEAST. THE SECOND LARGEST OF ITS TYPE IN NEW ZEALAND, AND LARGEST OF ITS EXACT CONFIGURATION IN AUSTRALASIA.”

BCP has been in Christchurch since the late '90s. It is a family company—owned by Mark Bartlett with mother Eleanor helping out in the office. Its principal business is concrete—pumping, placing and finishing. But that has expanded to include asphalt and rebuilds—residential and commercial.

BCP has a reputation for getting the job done. But even Mark and his team could never envisage pre-2010 the 'job' would include rebuilding their city—and the resources and commitment that would take.

That would take something big. Real big. Sooty meets us at BCP's Harewood yard to show us the company's latest acquisition and major contribution to the Christchurch rebuild.

It is big, the second largest of its type in New Zealand, and largest of its exact configuration in Australasia. It is the 'Z' fold Putzmeister piston pump, sitting atop a purpose-built Fruehauf quad trailer equipped with BPW axles and suspension.

The rear axle is self-steer and a godsend, says Sooty, considering the tight places and urban environment this unit is expected to operate.

The Putzmeister is here for a purpose, to help rebuild Christchurch, and it is uniquely configured to do that. Under the post-quake building codes for the city, five storeys is the maximum height limited. The Putzmeister with its 50-metre vertical boom extension can handle that. It has a pour potential of 170 cubic metres an hour, which makes it a powerful resource to have on hand for the big jobs.

They are all big in Christchurch these days. It takes two to tango with this machine. One operator regulates it by remote control—and as Sooty puts it somewhat laconically, that is a job best left to someone with the dexterity of an X-Box player. A second operator is on the hose.

Sooty describes it as “awesome” to drive and to operate, though the latter takes a lot of strength to harness the “beast” and the former takes a lot of skill and dexterity.

“There are a few tight places in this town,” says Sooty ruefully. “Thank goodness for self-steer.”

Cleaning the beast is altogether another challenge. With 50 metres of pipes it is a

mission. A manual mission. While there are other ways of cleaning, Mark and Sooty prefer a manual flush with a thorough push-through sponge to remove any residue—residue in the concrete game, in these units, would be a disaster.

We have seen the beast in action. It has been out at Rangiora, just north of Christchurch, that morning. With its pour volume it gets through an impressive amount of work. At times the two operators, particularly the one on the hose appear to be struggling with its strength, but they are deft hands at this.

On a construction site next door there is another pump and boom unit. It is doing its job okay, but it is not BCP and it is not a 50 metre Putzmeister. The contrast is obvious and marked.

One is for everyday projects; the other, the BCP Putzmeister is not—it is fit for purpose. And that purpose is to help rebuild Christchurch quickly and efficiently. That is why Mark bought the beast. He wanted the best—to get a difficult job done and done well.

Just like he and his company, BCP, have always done. 

Words and photographs by Mike Isle

It is one of the largest and most challenging construction projects in New Zealand's recent history. But it is bringing out the best in companies, people and equipment. We profile a company where all three come together.

There are two traits notable among many Christchurch people you meet these days—a phlegmatic humour and a grim determination. Both stem out of adversity and the tragedy of the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. It's called bringing out the best in people.

Walter Hanara, more widely known as Sooty, is one of these people.

Sooty is the administration and bookings manager for Bartlett Concrete Placing (BCP). He is big, jovial and, like most Cantabrians, and the company he works for, passionately proud of the province and determined to get it back on its feet as soon as possible.



Sooty (right) with Rhys Harnett, BPW Transport Efficiency

IT'S ALL IN THE NAME

Words and photographs by Mike Isle

We journey south to meet an owner-driver who, despite his relative youth, has done most everything in trucking, including driving interstate in Australia, but still retains his passion for the industry and for the road.

We are to meet Blair Bennett on the road. A dangerous road. It's a state highway with a long central Canterbury straight, and a speed limit providing juicy revenue fodder for the unmarked police car just along from where we are parked. At this point Blair is 30 kilometres south of us travelling north from Dunedin on his final leg to Christchurch. We are in phone contact with him trying to arrange a photo. We think we have found a spot on the side of the road but we don't think he can stop there. We tell him to keep going and we'll try and take the photo as he goes past. That is the best we can do. Or so we think.


As Blair's magnificent Mainfreight-liveried Western Star looms up from the south twenty minutes later, we see him visibly slow as we requested. But then, 100 metres away, the left indicator starts flashing. My god, he is going to pull in. Our safe haven layby (in someone's drive) can't fit a truck and trailer unit of that size. Can it? You learn very quickly in this job that drivers of Blair's experience are capable of most anything. His 23 metre unit is quickly and expertly parked safely and securely off the road. The cop seems happy. We are happy. Blair has a grin. We have our photos.

Blair and wife and business partner Carolyn are into the eighth month of their Mainfreight contract. But Blair's experience as a driver and then owner-driver goes way back and includes a two-year stint driving for his father out of Dunedin and driving interstate in Australia. He used to do the Melbourne to Brisbane run, dossing down in the back of the cab. To the uninitiated it's the stuff of road romance and countless trucking movies, but for Blair it was exhausting work and the trip he has made today from Dunedin to Christchurch is nothing by comparison. That trip is a regular for him, but it is also one of the reasons he and Carolyn recently

"BLAIR'S PRIMARY SPECIFICATION FOR THE UNIT WAS BPW RUNNING GEAR. BPW WAS HIS FATHER'S PREFERENCE AND BLAIR HAS GONE FOR THAT FOR HIS EMERGENT FLEET."

moved from Dunedin to their new home in Rolleston, just south of Christchurch. Christchurch centralises them in the South Island, and Blair is now securing loads from Mainfreight for the north of the island, and occasionally the North Island. He retains a second vehicle in Dunedin, driven by his brother Jamie. His main truck however is the pictured Western Star. His first purchase after securing his Mainfreight contract was the trailer. Built by Roadmaster in less than eight weeks the six-axle b-train unit has done 86,000 kilometres at time of writing. Those are 86,000 hassle-free kilometres. Blair's

first and principal specification for the unit was BPW running gear. BPW was his father's preference and Blair has gone for that for his emergent fleet. Trucking is in Blair's blood. His father, Brian, who still operates out of Dunedin, put it there initially. But it is kept there by Blair's love of being on the road. He almost lost that a few years ago when an employee crashed and wrote-off his first Western Star leaving him wondering whether "to give the lot away". It was Carolyn who pulled him back together and gave him the will to go on. BCB is their business (the C stands for Carolyn) and while

Carolyn didn't come initially from a trucking background (her father and brother both now drive) she is today very much a part of the day to day running of the company—even to the point of coming down and washing the truck if, as Blair admits, he is lucky. As the interview draws to close—thankfully conducted in the comfort (and safety) of the Bennetts' Rolleston home rather on the side of that road—we give Blair the opportunity to add anything he wants to this article. He thinks for a moment, shakes his head, and says "Nah. Just spell Carolyn's name right, that's all." Obviously this is a trucking couple together for the long haul. 



NOTHING WORKS AS HARD AS HARD WORK

You don't come across success just by hoping for it. It takes ingenuity, risk, courage and a steely resolve to continually work hard. Craig Arthur and his family have embodied all of this throughout their entire working lives in the understanding there are no short cuts to success.

Words and photographs by Mark Pearce

Craig Arthur's grandmother, Silvia McInnis, planted the first seeds of the family business—literally on the smell of an oily rag as she cleaned the offices and workshops of the South Australian Commercial Motor Vehicle Group (CMV) in the 1970s.

Then it was Craig's parents, Trevor and Marilyn, who incorporated the business as TV&MJ Arthur Pty Ltd in 1981; they tirelessly cleaned and detailed Kenworths and Mitsubishi's as well as organising the pre-delivery of B60 Buses, also for the CMV group.

Trevor and Marilyn based their business out of the CMV truck sales premises at Regency Park, and in 1983 Craig joined the company, helping refurbish and detail new and used vehicles.

When Trevor passed away in 1990, Craig took over the reins and went from truck detailing to truck paint and panel crash

repairs, and began revamping all the trucks at the CMV.

"We've worked hard with the CMV group for 35 years. It's a long and proud family history we have with them and the relationship is still there today," says Craig. In 2000, Craig decided to extend the business line and began buying trucks for general freight transport and logistics. Subsequently he re-formed the business and it became known as Craig Arthur Transport.

From one determined grandmother, the family business now employs around one hundred staff with substantial operations in truck detailing, engine and chassis steam-cleaning, panel and paintwork as well as general and commercial freight operations across Australia—24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

"The last few years have paid off for us. When I was younger in the early 90s, the industry was in pretty bad shape and we

Craig Arthur (left) and Chris English, Vawdrey Australia

were struggling, but as I've got older, I've got better and we've got better," says Craig. Despite the countless past struggles and failures that beset any business, Craig never allows himself to be disappointed; instead he focuses on the company's ethic: hard work complemented by smart working methods, both inside and outside the doors of his Wingfield, South Australian depot. "Over my lifetime, I've moved from doing things I know to doing things I love. It's about being responsible along the way and not taking shortcuts.

"In one corner there's the blue-collar ideal of working harder and in the other you've got the white-collar notion of working smarter. The question I always ask is: why aren't we doing both?" declares Craig.

An essential part of working smart is to take advantage of technology you have and work it to its full efficiency. With 45 trucks and 100 trailers including singles, tautliners and 45 double sets drop decks, Craig Arthur Transport has always believed in putting the fleet to optimal use, using reliable equipment to deliver what they promise for the customer.

The Vawdrey drop-deck mezzanine trailer purchased in April this year is a case in point. Vawdrey's South Australian Sales Manager, Chris English, explains, "The mezzanine floor is always handy to have because you're not allowed to double stack a lot of freight these days, so having the mezzanine floor permits you to put freight across the bottom, then lower the floor and stack freight across the top, so you can essentially carry more product."

Carrying more products on trailers and using quality equipment allows Craig's company to offer a cost efficient service for his customers. Fitted with BPW axles, suspension and drum brakes, the Vawdrey drop deck is doing just that as far as Craig is concerned.

"You've got to be smart at what you purchase these days because it's useless unless you can save time and money in the long run. It's about getting maximum utilisation from your investment. "So I'm always looking out for dependable engineering and a friend of mine said to me years ago, 'Get BPW—they last longer, they're more durable and harder wearing.' So I did," says Craig.

Around 80 percent of Craig's fleet runs on

Craig Arthur (right) and son Jesse

BPW gear and ever since Chris has been supplying Vawdrey trailers he says that it's the serviceability of the product that gets customers across the line.

"As a fitment, we have certain customers that prefer to run the BPW product and generally once they have that product they stick with it," states Chris. "I've sold about 40 trailers to Craig over seven years now and I've been dealing with BPW since the beginning. With customers, it's about knowing you don't have to strip everything down all the time."

As a fourth-generation family member working in the company workshop, Craig's son, 19-year-old Jesse, has just finished his motor mechanic apprenticeship. Jesse comments that the brakes and bearings on the new Vawdrey trailer are near foolproof. "This trailer is doing about 4,000 kilometres a week (Adelaide to Melbourne)," says Jesse. "We don't have to touch the bearings on this gear compared to some of the other gear. The best thing about it is the service life using the synthetic grease because it doesn't need to be pulled down and re-packed every 100-200,000 kilometres."

Supported by his wife Jo-Ann who works in the panel shop, Craig came to the realisation around the time he became a father that his work ethics needed to be reflected in what he taught his kids.

"It's not just about supporting my kids and accumulating money, it's about self-worth. I knew I could teach my kids self-worth so they could make the most of their talents and opportunities. I let them steer their own destiny to a degree but the one thing I've always said is you just have to stop making excuses and do it yourself," says Craig.

A 35-year longstanding relationship with CMV is proof in the pudding that Craig has been doing something right to create opportunities, but as for the real secret his success, there seems to be no other substitute for hard work.

"Making a success out of your business is always a work in progress. If we want to be successful, we shouldn't be content to just work smarter. You have to work harder, longer and better because our competition already is."

The newly purchased Vawdrey drop deck mezzanine trailer purchased by Craig Arthur Transport in April 2014.



IDEAS WORTH SPREADING

Words and photographs by Emily Weekes

Despite starting at the beginning of a drought, this farming family's perseverance and openness to change is yielding great results.

When Steve Lanyon left school to work on the family farm, he had no idea one of Australia's worst droughts was on its way. "There's nothing like having no money to make you more efficient," says Steve, wryly. It was 1996. One of Steve's high school teachers remembers thinking Steve was 'bloody mad' at the time; mid-drought, Steve admits he started to wonder that himself. While it didn't rain until 2010, these days, Lanyon Farms is thriving. "We've come a long way," says Steve, "but it's certainly been a battle."

The Lanyon family has been farming in the Boort area, since 1869. A 320-acre property was handed down to Steve's father. By the time Steve left school, the farm had grown to 2,500 acres. Today, Lanyon Farms is made up of 10,000 acres of canola, corn, barley and faba beans. The family's decision to overhaul farming practices during the drought has, in turn, made all the difference. Situated ten kilometres west of Boort in northern Victoria, Lanyon Farms is proof that change can yield great results.



Carmen Ohler (centre), BPW Transpec's National Product Manager – Agricultural Equipment, with Stephen Freeman (left) from Eastern Spreaders and Steve Lanyon (right), Lanyon Farms.

3-metre wide Marshall Multispread Spreader

Technical information:
BPW agricultural unbraked axle
wheel connection: 10/335/285
axle beam size: 150 x 16 mm
track 2,960 mm



Marshall Multispread with a 3-metre BPW unbraked axle

In 2002, Steve introduced Controlled Traffic Farming (CTF) a system that involves creating permanent three-metre wide wheel tracks in a paddock in order to separate crop zone and traffic lanes. This reduces soil compaction traditionally caused by tractors and ensures fewer crops are damaged. "With less overall compaction, our soil holds more water and we grow more grain," says Steve. "We don't get much rain, so we have to conserve every bit of moisture that we can." Moisture probes gather data to a depth of 1.2 metres, which helps determine when a crop may be out of moisture and if there's time to use more fertiliser. Lanyon Farms also switched to a No Till Farming approach, so that a layer of stubble remains on the ground, protecting the soil beneath and ensuring rain seeps more quickly into the earth, rather than pooling on the surface. According to Steve 20-25 percent of Australian farmers already use Controlled Traffic Farming. Within the No Till Farming community, it's closer to 80 percent. In nearby Kerang, Stephen Freeman from Eastern Spreaders has begun to notice an increase in the number of enquiries for three-metre spreaders. Today, at least 25 percent of his orders are for spreaders with this track. Introducing a new system is not without its challenges and being able to rely on well-designed and well-crafted equipment is crucial to any kind of success. Eastern Spreaders is a local dealer specialising in high quality products. Nearly all of its spreaders are equipped with BPW axles, which are known for their long-lasting reliability and sophisticated design. Lanyon Farms' three-metre wide spreader, fitted with BPW axles, traverses the required

wide wheel tracks perfectly. But Steve has customised the spreader even further to distribute variable levels of fertiliser, depending on moisture levels and other data collected on each paddock. This brings us to Steve's greatest adaptation - one that has made him an industry leader in Australia. When the family was forced to find new ways to farm, in less than ideal circumstances, Steve travelled further afield to see how things were grown. In the United States, he discovered Precision Planting, a seed planting technology that drops each individual seed at a precise distance from the last, with the entire process recorded and monitored on an electronic device, like an iPad. While the technology was a \$16,000 investment, it has already produced results. "We now know that every single seed is placed perfectly, which has been amazing," says Steve. "It's made a huge difference to how we grow our corn. Now we can see the location of every seed, work out what's gone wrong and then determine whether it's been a planter or soil type issue." For the past three years, Lanyon Farms has used precision planting to grow its faba beans, with interest now emerging from the industry and neighbouring farmers. As a dealer for Precision Planting, Steve also runs his own company, Spot on Ag, helping farmers to assess how they might adopt this new practice. "The last three years have been fantastic," says Steve. "The farm is really flying." On an iPad, he points to a map of a nearby paddock, showing the variable levels of seed distribution in different colours and explains how they can be matched to a GPS, so that

the spreader can apply more accurate levels of fertiliser. "I've got a little drone that flies across the paddocks and maps out where the crop is growing better and worse," he explains. "Then the spreader can go across the paddock, putting more fertiliser where it's needed and less where it's not." While it's a more holistic and sustainable approach to farming, as Stephen Freeman notes, it does come at a price. Farmers can buy a basic spreader, but would need to customise the machinery to suit their specific needs. For Lanyon Farms, it's money worth spending. "Everything is based on a variable rate," admits Steve, "but that's fantastic for us, because then we know what we can afford to do, given how much fertiliser is needed in different soil conditions." More than eight farms use Precision Planting in Australia, while three are currently underway, led by Steve and with support from the United States. "I meet so many great farmers and we have a beer afterwards and talk about stuff like this, swapping all sorts of tips that we'd never find out otherwise," says Steve. "The three-metre wide tracks aren't rocket science, just common sense, but you'd be surprised how reluctant farmers can be to change their ways." Steve now speaks to No Till Farming association groups and farmers from all over Australia about the benefits of Controlled Traffic Farming and Precision Planting. "It's amazing the responses we've had," he says. "Farmers think our maps are unreal and we've now proved that it creates a more uniform crop!"

THE PERFECT SOLUTION

Words by Petra Wurm, photographs by Norbert Schmelz

Knauf Gips KG has succeeded in achieving an advance in underground transport in terms of technology and efficiency: with an enormous payload gain, faster transport speed and lower diesel consumption.

Knauf Gips KG is part of the German Knauf Group. In a recent survey in Focus magazine titled 'Germany's best employer,' it was the highest placed SME in the category of 'Manufacture and processing of process and construction materials.' One of the high-quality products from Knauf Gips KG is liquid screed, a free-flowing screed variant made

from the precursor material, anhydrite, which is mined underground.

1.7 kilometres that present a challenge

The dry anhydrite is mined near the Lower Franconian town of Hüttenheim. It is extracted by blasting about 150 metres

underground, then transported 1.7 kilometres along tunnels to the crusher. This sounds easier than it is, because the route to the destination is very tricky: barely lit galleries, sometimes only 3.3 metres high and a maximum of 6 metres wide, rough and rocky ground – a real challenge for the driver and vehicle, and made all the more so

when towing a load weighing many tonnes. For decades, Knauf used 2-wheel trailers with a steel framework that it built itself for transporting anhydrite. These were towed by conventional tractors, such as from John Deere or Deutz. Not an ideal solution, but no other alternative was available. Norbert Feilner, head of the workshop and the fleet, explains: "The commercial vehicle sector did not have any towing vehicle available to help us make our extremely tricky raw material option more profitable; as a result, we took the decision to build it ourselves."

From the idea to the ideal solution

"We wanted to reduce equipment wear and tear significantly, cut the safety and health risks to the drivers – as well as saving diesel and expensive working time," explains the 54-year-old Feilner, a true stalwart of Knauf. He started his apprenticeship at Knauf in 1974, and is still active in the company. "After working for the company for 40 years, I know precisely what our vehicles need to be able to do." He worked to understand the transport problem and instigated the 'Trailer' working group in 2012, comprising himself, tractor drivers, controllers, health and safety experts as well as colleagues from the motor vehicle workshop. With a cold eye for figures, technical expertise and plenty of commitment, the team worked on finding a solution to the problem of underground transport. First they produced technical

specifications, then a 1:20 scale model and finally the prototype trailer suitable for working in the mine, built in the plant's own motor vehicle workshop. Combined with a Mercedes-Benz Zetros as the tractor vehicle, the trailer proved to be the ideal solution. The Knauf development is equipped with BPW axles which, according to Feilner, also perform excellently underground: "It was a good decision to equip our new development with BPW axles," says Feilner happily. Prior to the new tractor/trailer combination being used, the rough route had been imposing significant strain on people and machinery.

Intelligent ideas are welcome

The commitment and wealth of ideas displayed by Feilner is by no means rare at the world's leading manufacturer of building materials and building system solutions. "I'm a typical Knauf employee," he says with a grin. Knauf welcomes intelligent ideas, and operates a company suggestion scheme to encourage them specifically. "Every employee," says HR Manager Irma Amrehn, "can feel part of our company family." This confidence in the ideas and skills of employees also



Driving in extremely cramped conditions with a 330HP all-wheel drive tractor vehicle and about 23 tonnes payload: Knauf's in-house development.

The even weight distribution of the cargo, significantly improved payload and improved manoeuvrability making underground transport easier, safer and more efficient.



Norbert Feilner, head of the workshop and fleet at Knauf Gips KG



Knauf – a company on course for success

What started out in 1932 in a small gypsum mine at Schengen an der Mosel has developed into a globally active group of companies over the past 80 years. Nowadays, Knauf Gips KG, part of the German Knauf Group, operates more than 150 plants with a total of around 25,000 employees from its company headquarters in Iphofen. Knauf produces modern dry wall systems, plaster, insulating materials, accessories, thermal insulation attachment systems, paints, flooring systems, machinery and tools. In 2012, the group of companies earned more than EUR 6 billion in this line of work.

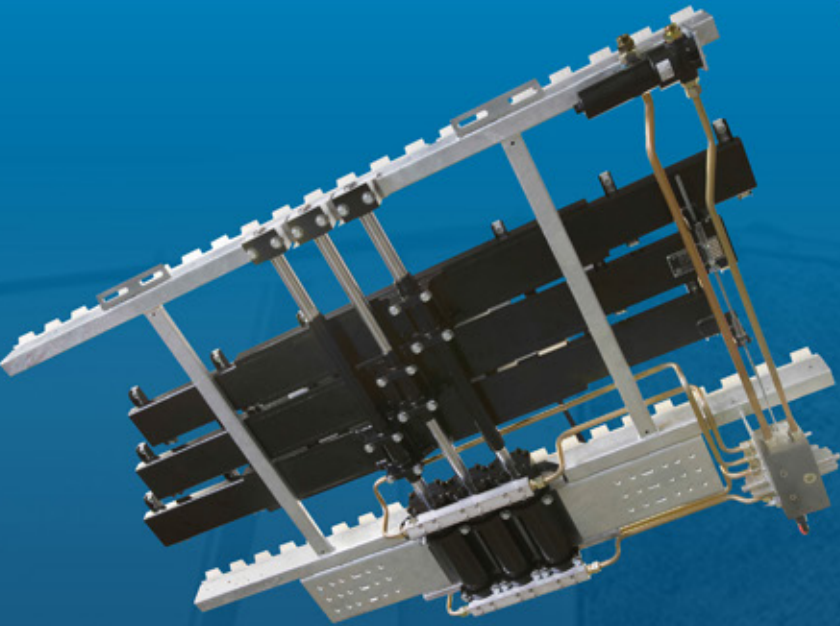
Knauf’s product range also includes liquid screeds. The raw material for these is anhydrite, a dry gypsum-like sedimentary material. Since 1957, it has been mined underground near Hüttenheim in Lower Franconia, about 40 kilometres from Würzburg. There is a total roadway network spanning about 160 kilometres in the mine, and only the numbered stone pillars provide help with navigation. Nowadays, the anhydrite is transported about 1.7 kilometres from the extraction point to the crusher using the tractor/trailer combination of a Mercedes-Benz Zetros and a trailer that Knauf developed itself.

helped in the ‘Trailer’ project when the going got tough, remembers Feilner. “After all, we occasionally also had our doubts or got frustrated because of short-term setbacks,” admits Feilner. His conviction

and experience indicates that projects such as developing the trailer for use in the mine can only be achieved if you have a good connection to colleagues and superiors – right up to board level.

Achieving more through ongoing development

The combination of the Mercedes-Benz Zetros and the trailer developed in-house, features appealing design and, above all, ingenious technology. The prototype trailer designed by the team had a 20 percent heavier payload: its gooseneck coupling is connected to the rear axle of the Zetros using a special ball joint also developed by Knauf. Work is now underway in the Knauf motor vehicle workshop to develop this further: future solutions will be tested for their practicality on the company’s own track. Feilner is convinced it will be possible to increase the trailer’s payload by a further 10 percent. The tractor/trailer combination could quite easily demonstrate its potential in other locations: “We could well imagine,” explains Norbert Feilner, “using further developments internationally in the future for extracting raw materials, for example also in the states of the former Soviet Union where the Knauf Group has mining operations. In any case, our new development satisfies realistic requirements with regard to the cost-benefit ratio of the investment.”



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Phone: (64) 3 349 0690 Mobile: 021 628170
Email: rhysh@bpwte.co.nz

Dealer Network

HAMILTON

Tidd Ross Todd
(07) 849 4839
Service & Parts

MT MAUNGANUI

Central Diesel Services
(07) 574 8407
Service & Parts

CHRISTCHURCH

Commercial Transport Spares
(03) 349 9202
Parts

HASTINGS

WR Twigg Hawkes Bay
(06) 879 9232
Parts

TAUPO

Parts & Services
(07) 378 2673
Service & Parts

NEW PLYMOUTH

McCurdy Engineering
(06) 769 8032
Parts

DUNEDIN

Commercial Transport Spares
(03) 260 8000
Parts

WELLINGTON

WR Twigg Wellington
(04) 570 6688
Parts

(06) 769 8031
Service



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Systems for Commercial Vehicles



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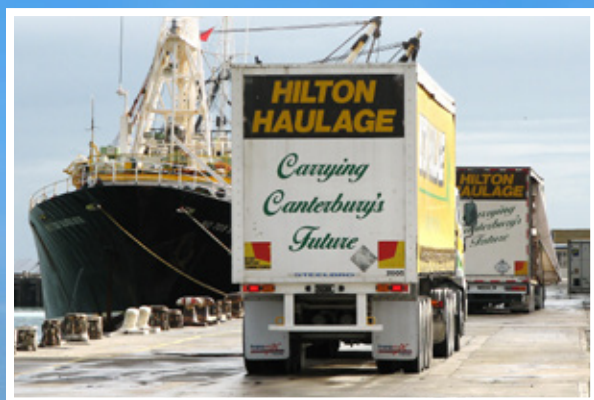
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