

# BULK & TIPPER

DEDICATED TO THIS DIVERSE SECTOR OF THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

ISSUE 4 £5.95



www.bulkandtipper.co.uk

## Features inside this issue:

AC Aggregates <  
Transport and aggregate supplies

Davidsons Animal Feeds <  
From rigids to tractors

L Townend <  
Award-winning bodybuilder

Hanson UK <  
Massive logistical operation

T&J Haulage <  
Next-generation Scania's

TATA Steel <  
The new Valast 450

JOST UK <  
Market leader

## COVERSTORY

# Staying with the MAN

PMW Quarries has chosen MAN as the sole provider of its 8x4 tipper fleet.



# NEGOTIATION, NOT CONFRONTATION

WEST YORKSHIRE-BASED PMW QUARRIES SUPPLIES ALL TYPES OF AGGREGATES AND ASSOCIATED PRODUCTS, INCLUDING RECYCLED MATERIALS AND HAS USED VARIOUS GENERATIONS OF MAN TIPPERS. **BOB BEECH** WENT ALONG TO SEE THE MODERN-DAY OPERATION AND TO FIND OUT HOW THE COMPANY CAME INTO BEING IN THE FIRST PLACE.

PHOTOGRAPHY: **CRAIG PUSEY**

There are two distinct approaches when it comes to choosing which make of truck to operate. One: play the field and run a variety of makes to ensure competitiveness and give yourself options. Two: stick with one supplier, build up first-rate working relationships with both the dealer and manufacturer's staff and deal with any likely problems by negotiation rather than confrontation.

Danny Watson and Paul Greenleaf, directors of Huddersfield-based PMW Quarries, take the latter approach and have chosen MAN as the sole provider of 8x4 tippers and support services for

their fleet. The family's association with the German manufacturer goes back some four decades. Although fully committed to MAN, they have tried other makes over the years, but find the product and dealer support they receive is better than the alternatives.

The current operation is centred upon supplying all types of aggregates and associated products, including recycled materials, to a wide range of customers. Other allied services include site clearance and muckaway. It operates a fleet of late-model MAN eight wheelers, along with a number

of regular subcontractors, but the operation wasn't always as diverse as this.

"My uncle owned Appleton quarry, which is behind where our offices are now," says Watson, explaining how the enterprise got underway. "It has substantial deposits of very hardwearing Yorkshire blockstone, that's been used for making flagstone for generations. The pavements in many of the upmarket areas of London were built with stone from this quarry. The quarry is still operating, but with different owners, it's no longer owned by our family."





The stone is covered by a deep bed of clay, a valuable material for making drainage pipes and other products. This has to be removed before the stone can be accessed. “The Hepworth Iron Company, as it was back then, have a big clay pipe factory in the area and they had the rights to the clay at the quarry. Obviously this required tippers to transport it to the works. My father Peter Watson, along with a business partner were given the job of transporting the clay, so they bought two used eight-wheel tippers. The route is very hilly, even though it’s not that far, but it’s very hard on the equipment.”

Once his business partner died, Watson’s father carried on doing the job with his wife, who was involved in the business from the start. The company name – PMW Quarries – stands for Peter and Marlene Watson. They are both still involved in the current business, but now take more of a back seat. “Their sheer hard work created the basis for what we have today, for which we will always be very grateful.” continues Watson. The clay shifting job built up to 15 loads per day for 15 years. “It was a really tough job. The drivers used to load



themselves with a big old face shovel. Dad said that he quickly learned to always park the truck in the right place so he could reach it without moving the machine.”

Once the clay had been removed, the stone was exposed and this, along with other aggregate, could be accessed. The current business evolved from these three basic products. “We built up contacts with construction companies and other end users, gradually developing the business as time went by,” says Watson. “Our experience in stone extraction and rock crushing led to us offering this service at other locations. There are a lot of quarries in this area. At one time we had three crushing gangs working on long-term contracts with mobile crushers and other equipment.” This increased the demand for tipper haulage, which meant that PMW’s haulage fleet grew. It also created links with a number of other quarries producing a wide range of materials. “We were able to source this material for our own customers, which increased the range of goods and services we were able to offer.”



The modern operation tends to concentrate upon all types of material supply. The contract crushing operation was very capital intensive and required considerable supervision. Combining aggregate supplies with muck shifting work means that it's possible to keep the truck fleet fully occupied – empty running is kept to a minimum. Material is also brought back to base for recycling, this is then sold on and provides a ready source of outbound work. PMW does the odd haulage job for some of the big quarries in the area, but only if it fits in with the overall workload, otherwise the vehicles are fully employed working directly for its own customers. Having a very wide customer base and being able to source a huge range of materials helps to even out the peaks and troughs of the marketplace.

As mentioned, MAN eight wheelers have figured strongly in the operation for almost 40 years and have been part of the MAN UK product line-up since the mid '70s. The original F8/30.232 VFRK eight-wheeler was considered to be a high-spec machine when it was first shown to the public at Harrogate



in 1975. MAN had only started selling trucks in this market the previous year and the new 8x4 used the same naturally-aspirated 230hp 11-litre engine and 12-speed splitter gearbox as used in the 16.232 tractor unit. It also had the same well-appointed tilt cab, with its unconventional column-mounted gear lever. The heavy-duty hub reduction rear bogie gave decent traction.

While this level of power seems a bit marginal for a modern-day 18-tonner, in the '70s most British-built eight wheelers had to get by with 180 to 200hp. The early MAN's attracted a steady following in certain areas, it all depended just how proactive the relevant dealers where. A few years later the truck was upgraded to 240hp and a floor-mounted gear shift, along with detailed internal cab changes. MAN attracted further attention a couple of years later, when it offers 280 and then 320hp engines in eight-wheelers, in conjunction with 13-speed Fuller gearboxes. These machines really flew and became popular with many muck-away operators because of the high power and excellent off-road traction.



It was the relatively high engine output that first attracted Watson's father to the marque. "As mentioned, the clay shifting job was pretty tough, you are either climbing or descending a hill around here. Dad had been using a series of older British made trucks with low-powered engines. Hepworth was an early user of MANs and had a couple of eight wheelers in the fleet. He reckoned that he was fed up being passed by them on the hills, also they had a fairly effective exhaust brake which was another bonus, so he bought a used 30.240. The truck did very well and opened our eyes to the benefits of running better vehicles. We used to do all of our own maintenance. We all mucked in together at the weekend – I was involved from an early age – you soon get to see the good and bad points of any vehicle when you spend plenty of time underneath it in a workshop."

Because of this good early experience, PMW bought more MANs, and as things progressed, it bought later models with more powerful engines. "They were very good, better suited to the terrain around here and we found them pretty reliable



considering they were bought as used vehicles" says Watson. The company's first new MAN was on a K registration. Buying new vehicles was considered an important milestone. PMW still did its own maintenance with full-time workshop staff, who also looked after the plant that it operated then.

The company stuck with MANs until it had three out of four vehicles stolen overnight. "Tippers in particular were being stolen from all over the country," recalls Watson. "We were really in a fix and had to find replacements really quickly. MAN couldn't supply and so we went to Pelican Engineering, who were Foden agents at the time. They were able to source two trucks at very short notice and so we took them up on the offer. This was the start of a long-term relationship that continues to the present day as they are now our local MAN dealers."

PMW also bought a number of Foden's from Pelican as well as trying some Hino's, as it was its agent for a time. "They were attractively priced and so we



took a few. They were reasonable machines, but not really up to the level of other manufacturers,” says Watson. “The parts supply was not very good and there were other problems with the brakes, they were difficult to work on and the residual values were poor, I suppose you get what you pay for.”

PMW also ran Volvos for a while and found them to be very good, with engine brakes that were very effective on the steep hills in the area. “The drivers liked them and we found them easy to maintain. But over a period, the dealer support declined and we felt that we had to look elsewhere.”

Things came to a head when one of the two fitters employed by PMW left – the one that looked after the trucks. Also the fleet needed to be updated as most of the trucks were approaching seven years old, the point at which eight wheelers of any make can get very expensive to run. “We had come to a crossroads for the business,” explains co-director Paul Greenleaf. “I started with the company back in the mid 90’s and married into the family. Danny and



I are brothers-in-law. We were working almost every weekend and needed to find a better way if we wanted to take the company further. We decided that the best approach was to buy new vehicles and take out R+M [repair and maintenance] contracts so we could fix our costs.

“Volvo was slow to respond, but MAN were able offer three new 8x4’s, ready bodied under the Trucks to Go programme virtually straight away – this also rekindled the relationship with Pelican.” Because Pelican was open at weekends and had a nightshift, PMW found that it fitted its operating patterns very well. The drivers could drop the trucks off at the end of the working day, and were given transport to go home and were then picked up in the morning. “This quickly became the template for all future truck purchases,” says Greenleaf. The dealer is located close to the local quarries, so the trucks are in the area every day.”

PMW has now built up its fleet to be 100 per cent MAN and looks to a three-to-four-year replacement cycle. “It often depends upon the workload at the



time and whichever method we used to finance them. We trade the trucks back to MAN. We would rather do this than sell them ourselves.” MAN uses the Freight Transport Association’s end-of-use inspection service to check the condition, and PMW finds it very fair.

“MAN now offers a four-year warranty on new 8x4s,” says Greenleaf. “We could combine this with a service package and did consider it with the latest trucks, but we prefer to stick with the full R+M package. It’s all encompassing, giving us a true fixed cost. We still look after the tyres in-house – we have a very good local supplier. We fit mid-range new tyres on the front and good quality remoulds on the drive axles. This approach definitely saves money; this type of work can be very hard on tyres so you have to keep a close eye on things.”

PMW uses a Tom Tom tracking and messaging service that allows it to keep in contact with its drivers and divert trucks if an urgent job comes in. “We try not to pester them too much if possible,” says Greenleaf. “The system also monitors driver’s



hours. We like to be able to get an overview of how a truck is performing, but are not obsessed with collecting reams of data – covering the workload and meeting customer demand are the top priorities.”

The company’s drivers seem to appreciate this approach and it has a relatively low turnover. “We have a low turnover of staff, with our oldest driver being 72 and having worked with us for 24 years. We also have younger drivers in their 20s, we find this gives us a good balance, its most important that they work as a team.”

It’s hardly a secret that MAN had its share of problems with Euro 5 EGR engines, fortunately all of the issues now seem to be behind it and the current Euro 6 drivelines seem to be very robust. The company has been very upfront and worked hard to put things right, PMW experienced some failures, but has nothing but praise for the way things were handled. “There were problems,” declares Watson. “But MAN and Pelican ensured, that if humanly possible, we kept working. Trucks would go in



overnight and only after the event we found out that they replaced the entire turbocharger and intercooled system as a precaution – you can't ask for better than that.

“The latest Euro 6 versions just get better and better.” Watson continues. “The engines are superb. We go for the 420 option and its well on top of the job. Ours are on 15 to 19 registrations and the new ones are even better on fuel by some margin.”

PMW moved over to automated transmissions a few years ago and Watson considers the latest ones to be superb to drive. The fuel consumption has improved by up to 19 per cent over the past few years. “We moved over to single reduction hypoid axle with the 18-plate trucks – this made a big difference. Also the traction and durability seems to have been unaffected. We were concerned about having disc brakes all round, with the muck and water, but apart from the odd sensor issue, we find they are very good. They are also considerably lighter, the 19 plates will carry 19,600kgs if they are



clean. We would like more and have considered alloy wheels, but the extra cost has to be factored in.”

PMW has specified lightweight Boweld Taperlite steel bodies and Edbro DX15 gear for some time, but has now decided to have Townend bodies on the next batch. “They are a good company and very local to us, we’ve dealt with them before and it’s good to spend money within the area,” says Watson.

“The cab interiors have improved no end in recent years and the drivers seem to really like the latest models. Driver training and a decent handover makes a big difference; the drivers know how to get the best out of the trucks from the start. Overall, we feel that the MAN is the best truck for us. We’ve recently taken an 8x4 with a grab crane and have a new MAN road sweeper in build. Probably the biggest factor is Ian Kilmurray our MAN sales contact and the team at Pelican, they all do a superb job. Quite honestly, I cannot see any reason for us to change to another make, we do try other demonstrators, but why try to fix something that isn’t broken?” concludes Watson.

#bulkandtipper  

# BULK & TIPPER

DEDICATED TO THIS DIVERSE SECTOR OF THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY



## Subscription Form

Please post with completed card details or cheque made payable to: Nimble Publishing Limited, 6 Burley Corner, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6DU.  
Alternatively, please call our subscriptions team on: +44 (0) 1572 504006  
or complete your subscription online by visiting: [www.bulkandtipper.co.uk](http://www.bulkandtipper.co.uk)

UK Annual Subscription  
4 Issues: GBP32.00

☐

European Subscription  
4 Issues: GBP51.00

☐

Rest of the World Subscription  
4 Issues: GBP81.00

☐

Card Number:

Security Code:

Expiry Date:

Signature:

Full name:

Company name:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Full postal address:

**Nimble Publishing Limited**  
The conscientious publisher

+44 (0) 1572 504006  
[subscribe@bulkandtipper.co.uk](mailto:subscribe@bulkandtipper.co.uk)

[www.bulkandtipper.co.uk](http://www.bulkandtipper.co.uk)