

FOR **VOLVO** DRIVERS, OPERATORS & ENTHUSIASTS

VOLVO TRUCK DRIVER MAGAZINE

VTD

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VOLVOTRUCKDRIVER.COM
ISSUE 5 WINTER 2012-13



HOT BLACK METAL

COOL BOX WARRIORS

QUALITY FREEZE
ARCTIC TRUCK TEST

NEW FH NIGHT OUT
SWEDISH SLEEPOVER

THOMAS HARDIE
UPTIME ENGINEERS

VOLVO USED
I WANNA BE SELECTED

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COVER SHOT

Stanian Transport occupy a unique place in the great list of loyal Volvo operators over the 46 years since the first Swedish rep for the company sailed over from Gothenburg to say 'hej'. These proud Mancs have operated just about every truck in the Volvo catalogue. They only need an FH16-750 to complete the full Top Trumps set. Just saying, Phil. Just saying.

volvotruckdriver.com

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IT'S GRIM UP NORTH SWEDEN

Thanks to all the readers who wrote in to congratulate us on the last issue. We really appreciate your feedback. Apologies big style to anyone who we've not replied to personally. There were so many emails, letters and voicemails that we were a bit overwhelmed by the sheer volume of, for the most part, words of encouragement from our fantastically loyal and growing list of readers. It's great to be appreciated and we, er, really appreciate it! This is our fifth issue and we hope you enjoy reading what is a bit of a bumper pumper when it comes to pictures. The Stanian's photo shoot

provided a great showcase for our resident snapper Craig. We thought at first, with all the bad weather and grey skies we have been having lately (known up north as 't' winter'), we might have to buy him a new light meter. But no, the budget was spared and we hope you like the results in our Big Picture centrefold and front cover. Readers who would like a bit more detail about the Stanian's fleet may like to know that this issue contains part 1 of the Stanians story. We'll be continuing and concluding their fascinating story in the next issue - with lots more previously unpublished pictures. Our big scoop in this issue is the exclusive night out we spent in Volvo's new FH.

We did this under laboratory controlled conditions (yeah, right!) in a truck park in Sweden. Air temperature was well below zero. The result? We came away well impressed with the sheer amount of space in the new cab and total respect to the guys who designed the new night heater. If you like Volvos and you spend your week nights in the FH Hotel, you will absolutely love this new bit of kit. The report is on page 14. Once again, thanks for all your support for VTD. If you love Volvo trucks as much as we do, this is your magazine. Hej då, as they say in Sweden.

Matt
Editor
matthew@cvdriver.com

THE NEW VOLVO FH

With more space, new instrumentation, redesigned mirrors, the industry leading I-shift and the most advanced safety systems the new Volvo FH is a pleasure to drive and a dream to sleep in. And with up to 10% improved fuel performance you will even spend less time refuelling.

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Volvo Trucks. Driving Progress



It's a Volvo Jim, but not as we know it.



VOLVO BECOMES WORLD'S BIGGEST

VOLVO TO BECOME WORLD'S LARGEST TRUCK MANUFACTURER FOLLOWING ALLIANCE WITH CHINESE COMPANY, DONGFENG.

Volvo is set to become the world's largest truck manufacturer following alliance with Chinese company, Dongfeng. AB Volvo has signed an agreement with the Chinese vehicle manufacturer Dongfeng Motor Group Company Limited (DFG) to acquire 45% of a new subsidiary of DFG, Dongfeng Commercial

Vehicles (DFCV), which will include the major part of DFG's medium- and heavy-duty commercial vehicles business. At completion of the transaction, the Volvo Group will become the world's largest manufacturer of heavy-duty trucks. "This is a very exciting venture that will combine the best of two worlds, strengthening the positions of the Volvo Group

and Dongfeng and offering excellent opportunities to both parties," says Volvo's President and CEO Olof Persson. "Combining Dongfeng's strong domestic position and know-how with the Volvo Group's technological expertise and global presence will offer DFCV excellent potential for growth and profitability in and outside China." Completion of

the transaction is subject to certain conditions, including the approval of relevant anti-trust agencies and Chinese authorities. The purchase consideration amounts to RMB 5.6 billion (£ 569m). The ambition is to complete the transaction as soon as possible and completion is expected to take place within approximately 12 months from today.

2014 VOLVO OCEAN RACE TO RETURN TO AUCKLAND

Here at VTD, we like to plan well in advance, so we were pleased to receive official notification from Volvo that not only is the amazing Volvo Ocean Race on again in 2014 and 2015, it's also returning to our cousins in New Zealand, the land of the silver fern (plant that is, not Cotton). Widely reported results from Google showed Volvo Ocean Race was the second most searched term in New Zealand in 2012, demonstrating just how the event caught the imagination of the people there as well as around the world. Once again, the 2014-15 route will see Auckland play host to the start of the main Southern Ocean leg, sending the teams on their way around Cape Horn and on to the leg finish in Itajaí in Brazil. "Sailing into Auckland after a 10-year gap felt like the race was coming home," said Volvo Ocean Race CEO Knut Frostad. "Tens of thousands of passionate fans packed the Race Village each day, and the crowds for all the arrivals plus the In-Port Race and Leg Start were among the best we've ever had. Auckland Mayor Len Brown said: "This is an exciting win for Auckland. New Zealand's fabled sailing heritage, and the affinity Aucklanders have with the sea which surrounds us, makes this city the perfect Volvo Ocean Race destination." The Volvo Open 70 is the fastest racing yacht in the world and around four million people visited the Ocean Race villages in the 2012 race, most of them in Galway (only joking Ed.)



All hands on deck, the Anzacs are coming.

UBU'S SWEEPERS SWOOP OUT OF TIGHT SPOTS



Manchester-based UBU Environmental has increased its fleet of Volvo sweepers with the purchase of six new FLs

According to UBU Environmental company director Eddie Murphy, the excellent manoeuvrability of the company's fleet of 98 Volvo sweepers has helped the family owned firm's drivers out of many a tight spot when working around street furniture and parked vehicles. The number of truck mounted sweepers operated by the Worsley, Manchester-based business has recently been increased with the addition of six, short-wheelbase Volvo FL, 15-tonne GVW chassis. The '62' plate, Johnston-bodied vehicles were purchased from Thomas Hardie Commercials on Trafford Park.

Eddie Murphy reports that UBU Environmental operates Volvos because of their 'robust reliability'. The company, he says, has enjoyed good experience with the marque and also with local dealer Thomas Hardie Commercials since purchasing its first Volvo some twenty years ago. The FL's compact chassis and good ground clearance provides the advantage of being able to work over rough surfaces such as road construction jobs, while the short wheelbase ensures that the trucks are highly capable when it comes to working in confined spaces.

JET PLANT HIRE TAKE OFF WITH NEW FMX DRAWBARS



Two new Volvo FMX13-460 6x4 drawbars and an FH13-540 6x4 tractor are helping family run business Jet Plant Hire deliver a high quality service 24/7 to their customers across the country. Jet Plant Hire, who have operating centres in Evesham, Worcestershire and Newton Abbott in Devon, specialise in road planing contracts. As a contractor for all types of road planing, including trunk road and motorway maintenance, the company is given a precise window to carry out work so as to minimise disruption to traffic flows. Hence, maximum vehicle up time and reliability are crucial. According to Jet Plant Managing Director Sean Witheford, reliability is "incredibly important" and all the trucks are on Volvo's Gold

Repair and Maintenance contracts. Inspections and maintenance are carried out at the Gloucester workshops of the supplying Volvo dealer, Truck and Bus Wales & West. "With uptime so important," emphasises Sean, "it is imperative that defects are spotted and fixed right away. Our customers know us as a premium quality business," says Sean, adding: "That is our approach in everything we do. That's why we buy Volvo trucks. They're the best quality kit to do the job. We operate quality trucks and facilities to match. We work hard to deliver a high quality service to our customers. We're a family business and it's all about doing the best you possibly can for your customers."

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NEW WELLINGBORO' DEALER



TOP GUN VS THE DARK KNIGHT VS TWILIGHT VS SHERLOCK HOLMES!

The ultimate battle of the superpowers begins in gorgeous sunshine on the mean, block paved streets of a deserted container freight depot on Trafford Park. It's a not so moody Saturday morning in February and our Moaning Minnie snapper, Craig, 'the light's too bright' Eccleston, is hard at work arranging four of the most gorgeous Volvos we have seen in many a year into a stunning tableau of metal magnificence.

If the folks at nearby Media City on Salford Quays only knew what was on their doorstep this morning, they'd be firing up their executive spec cars and storming over here to join me and Craig gawping at the spectacle before us. While Craig does the honours with the Box Brownie I get to meet with the guys who own and manage the ultra professional set up that

is Stanians Transport Limited. Phil and Theresa Chambers run the busy company with Phil's brother Richard. VTD is here at their invitation as the company not only celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2012, it also put the four very unusual Volvo FH artics into service that are the subject of this issue's front cover and centre spread.

The company was founded in 1982 by Maureen and Stanley Chambers, parents of current Directors Philip and Richard. They operate 28 trucks and 40 trailers. The majority of the fleet is Volvo and, having run everything from F86s to FH16s, they are one of the marque's longest standing and most loyal customers in the north west of England.

Theresa asked if VTD could give a shout out to the rest of the crew who work with the Stanians drivers to keep the wheels Rollin' and the trailers Rockin', so here goes: Big shout out to Dale Hazzlewood and Carly Woolley. And now, another request from Theresa

Look out for the next issue of VTD when we talk to Phil Chambers and also carry an in-depth look at the Stanians Transport fleet together with news of a Volvo Trucks video about these Trafford Park Titans' stunning Black Metal trucks.

for an equally big shout out for Ian Taylor from Volvo Dealer Thomas Hardie Commercials and Darren Longden at Kelsa Commercials. Darren gets a special mention for his deep and abiding understanding, gained through personal experience, of what constitutes a deadline. Not that he had to get the first two FH16s ready for Truckfest under pressure and against the clock with only hours to spare or anything, oh no. Last but definitely not least – a big hand for Matt Paint. The top airbrush artist in the land. If there's anyone who thinks they're better, we'd like to hear from them please.

The job Matt has done on these four Volvos is pure magic. Stanians driver Warwick Clough (he pilots the FH16-600 Top Gun) tells VTD that literally every time he stops for a break, the trucks attract a crowd of people who want to know how much it cost (no, we don't know either, the invoice has been torn into its constituent components and locked in a bank vault until the Zombie Apocalypse has been defeated) and who did it.

Although the business is primarily based around container haulage, Stanians are also into providing support for the glamorous world of show business. The company supplies lighting rigs and generators for movie sets, outdoor sporting events and music festivals. These self contained rigs have provided lighting for many James Bond films and action movies like Thor.



(left to right) Rob Masters (Rob Masters Transport Ltd), Brian Hornigold (Hornigold Haulage Ltd), Paul Freeman (Freemans Auto Logistics), Ulf Magnusson (Volvo Group UK), Chris Williamson (MAM Transport Services Ltd), Ayub Abdullah (MAM Transport Services Ltd), David Sullivan (Volvo Truck and Bus Centre East Anglia Managing Director).

Typical of the comments were those of Chris Williamson of Earls Barton-based MAM Transport who had this to say: "All our Volvos are on contract maintenance and we have a good relationship with the dealership. Their moving nearer will halve the distance we have to travel when taking trucks to the workshop. The move to Wellingborough definitely offers an advantage in terms of time saved and a cost benefit in terms of fuel saved."

Volvo Truck and Bus Centre East Anglia is investing over £6 million in a brand-new, purpose-built Dealerpoint at Wellingborough, Northants. The new facility is conveniently located just off the A45 and is within easy reach of the A14 and M1. Watched by several high-profile Volvo customers whose businesses are based in the area, Volvo Group UK Managing Director Ulf Magnusson officially cut the first turf on the 2.43 hectare (6 acres) site which will open in the summer of 2013.

After welcoming the visiting VIP customers to the ceremony at the construction site on Park Farm Industrial Estate, Volvo Truck and Bus Centre East Anglia Managing Director David Sullivan emphasised the importance of the project, saying: "As a business we are totally focused on delivering excellent service to local customers. The major investment we have made to secure this state of the art facility represents our long-

term aspiration to provide local operators with the very best aftermarket service in the region." He added, "We are especially committed to our on-going employee training programme as we are aware that our people and their relationship with our valued customers are at the heart of our business. Providing what will be a superb working environment for them will set the scene for a high quality experience for our customers, whether they are looking to buy new and used trucks or having their vehicles maintained."

The state-of-the-art new workshop facility will include five, drive through, service lanes, VOSA ATF accreditation, a Roadcrew shop, dedicated Used Truck stock and display area as well as extensive customer parking.

Customers at the official turf cutting ceremony declared themselves impressed by the plans for the new Dealership, the convenience of its location and the drive through bays.

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VOLVO APPLIES SCIENCE TO HELP OPERATORS SOLVE COMPLIANCE ISSUES



Volvo Dealer ATF in action at Hartshorne, Walsall

Volvo Trucks has begun 2013 with a groundbreaking multi-media marketing campaign that showcases the company's user-friendly suite of solutions that can be used by operators to maintain compliance with O Licence regulations and thereby secure optimum OCRS scores. Titled 'The Science of Compliance', the campaign focuses on Volvo's impressive, proven range of solutions to help keep operators compliant and maintain vehicle uptime. They include: Dynafleet Online telematics with driver

and truck information monitored via the internet, real-time Onboard Fault Diagnostics, Volvo Service Point Online maintenance planning (with automatic updating for all types of truck, including non-Volvo), active Truck Load Monitoring System and fully accredited Driver CPC training courses, to name but a few. "We are working hard to get the message across to transport operators that Volvo Trucks is much, much more than a truck manufacturer," says Volvo Trucks Commercial Aftersales Director Tony Davis. "With our existing range of products and services, we aim to help operators apply a somewhat more scientific approach to O Licence

Volvo Trucks is much, much more than a truck manufacturer

compliance by opting to utilise Volvo's user-friendly solutions. They represent not only fantastic added-value, as many of our customers can testify, but, when it comes to the law, everyone knows that ignorance is no defence," he continued. "What's more, having trucks off the road because of non-compliance issues has a direct effect on uptime and therefore your businesses' bottom-line," concluded Tony. The Volvo Trucks campaign reminds operators of the consequences of failing to meet the tough stance VOSA takes on compliance. With ever changing Traffic Enforcement legislation and stringent penalties, it is more important than ever to stay up-to-date with the latest regulations. However, with Volvo's Science of Compliance scientific approach and impressive range of solutions, transport operators stand the best chance of maintaining their optimum OCRS score and being judged as compliant in the event of a VOSA roadside check.



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We turn a science into success



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To find out how your local Volvo Truck dealer can turn our science into your success visit www.volvotrucks.co.uk/compliance



Volvo Trucks. Driving Progress

*Source: VOSA published MOT data Jan-Oct 2013 YTD. National average is 79.5%. 52031/07

FEATURE

IT'S FREEZING ON QUALITY STREET

VOLVO'S ENGINEERS KIRUNA THE COLD ON THE SUBJECT OF NEW FH ARCTIC TESTS.



Developing a brand new range of trucks like the FH, with all new components and technology, involves thousands of hours of gruelling testing. As you would expect, there's only so much that can be done by the white coated engineers on their computer screens. To make sure the quality of the finished truck is spot on when it goes into production, these tests are done as much in the freezing conditions inside the Arctic Circle as inside the well equipped, cosy confines of the Volvo

development team's offices. In fact, Volvo tested the new FH in some of the coldest places on the planet. As we saw in the UK, there were also many disguised 'ghost' trucks on, over the road, real world test with operators around the world. VTD was intrigued to find out just how tough Volvo's testing procedures actually are. One of the proving grounds that Volvo Trucks uses is Kiruna in northern Sweden. The winter temperature can be as low as -44°C. Perfect for testing how the new FH would behave in extreme conditions. Hans Johanson was one of the test engineers: "The test drivers use

The winter temperature can be as low as -44°C. Perfect for testing how the new FH would behave in extreme conditions.

these vehicles in exactly the same way as they use their own trucks. They drive them, sleep in them and check them to make sure they start in the morning - even after a freezing cold night," he says. During the test period, every truck was driven for at least 20,000 kilometres in freeze the goolies off a brass monkey, brain-numbing Arctic cold. "The new Volvo FH has been subjected to a range of gruelling quality tests," says Hans, "It has been cooled and heated. It has been shaken and thrown around. It has been driven for mile after mile in extreme environments. It has taken the punishment - and come out on top." We think he's right. VTD's exclusive night out in a new FH in Sweden, in sub zero temperatures, certainly backs up Volvo's claim that this is the toastiest, cosiest cab on the market. Time to ditch the 12 Tog duvet, maybe?

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FANZINE

It's a fair cap. Croeso y Cymru! Ace snapper Ade Portlock rustled up this most excellent set of Wild Welsh Wizards steaming down the valleys on their way to Lloegr (England). Just for fun, the first person to email our plucky editor Matt with the correct translation of the Welsh phrase above, will win a VTD 'one size fits all' cap.

All you have to do is send your email containing the English translation of the Welsh words: 'Croeso y Cymru!' to: matthew@cvdriver.com. Include your name, postal address and a daytime phone number on the email. Good luck or pob lwk as they say in Cymraeg.

No cash alternative. Editor's decision is final. One winner only. Privacy policy – we will not sell or use your details for marketing purposes.

'GOOD NIGHT, SLEEP RIGHT' IN THE NEW FH

When we asked Volvo Trucks if we could have an exclusive sleep-out in the brand new FH, a resounding 'yes' came back from the lads in the press office.

We were expecting to be let loose in one of the launch vehicles in the UK but they came back with: "We think our night heater is the best in the business and we want to prove it to you, so we will make a new FH available for you on one condition – you try it in Gothenburg and in the winter!" OK the deal was on.

IT'S -7 DEGREES

We arrive at the Volvo Truck press garage on a night in mid-December with an outside air temperature of -7 degrees. It could have been a lot worse – it was -15 two days prior to our arrival. We set the night heater to a comfortable 22 degrees and let it take the chill off. Volvo's test team made available an FH 540 with the Globetrotter XL cab with all

singing all dancing Driving++ trim with the seats decked out in leather as well as a whole host of other goodies. Once on board, like with all truck sleep tests, it's important to make the cab as homely as possible, so with a bit of shuffling the hold-all was stashed away and we set about getting comfortable. The passenger seat had the optional swivel which gives the driver a chance to sit and take stock as well as giving a great view of the 19" telly, and the chosen movie of the night Gladiator.

The curtains are very effective as a black-out – they are heavy material and rely on the thickness of the material to provide complete removal of light. There is enough flexibility in the curtains to allow them to be stuffed into all the awkward corners to ensure total privacy and no light.

The Globetrotter XL cab is noticeably bigger than the outgoing FH and as this one is configured for single use with

no top bunk, there is a definite increase in useable space. The interior lights are dialled up and give multi settings including bright, mood and red running lights.

Time for bed. Getting undressed is easy, with

"GETTING UNDRESSED IS EASY, WITH PLENTY OF SPACE TO MOVE AROUND, ESPECIALLY AROUND THE SHOULDERS WHEN STANDING, A MARKED IMPROVEMENT ON THE CURRENT FH"

plenty of space to move around, especially around the shoulders when standing, a marked improvement on the current FH which received much criticism from drivers for not having much space when

standing due to the heavily racked screen on intrusive lockers above the screen.

DIGITAL PANEL CONTROL

The lights, audio and heat can all be controlled from the digital panel on the back wall of the cab. Thankfully, automatically adjusted by a switch by the bed the bunk tilts to a relax position so you can watch a bit of telly before you go to sleep. The mattress is comfortable and is comparable to one at home on a single bed and is available in three levels of firmness. Ours was the firmest of the three and it was just right.

As well as great in-cab entertainment from the combined radio/CD player, you can also choose your own sounds from your iPod or MP3, by using the USB port. The quality of the sound is nothing short of excellent, especially as our FH had the Advanced Power audio package that has eight 50w speakers as well as subwoofer

and high performance tweeters. Our hosts had pre chosen our music and as soon as the system was switched on the first bars of Enya's Orinoco Flow rang out. I think not! Now where's my Motorhead compilation?

The cab night heater interacts with the truck's normal heater and air-conditioning system to form the ECC (Electronic Climate Control) so the driver is guaranteed the most comfortable temperature to live in.

HOW THE HEATER WORKS

In basic terms, the night heater part of the ECC works by warming the water in the normal heating system and uses the air vents to warm the cab. The fact that it doesn't use the traditional night heater blasting hot dry air direct from the Sahara via a pipe under the bunk means you don't wake up with a dry mouth and red eyes. There is no necessity to leave the top off a bottle of water or even a cup of water out to ensure air humidity. The night heater is superbly gentle and has a virtually unnoticeable hum with its exhaust behind the offside front step, hence its quietness. The night heater uses the truck's air vents to heat the cab.

A great night's sleep was enjoyed. In fact a bit too good as I overslept. I had arranged to meet our hosts for breakfast at 7.30 in the staff canteen, but completely slept through my alarm and didn't wake till 7.40. I quickly got dressed and, making for a quick shower, I finally met them at 8.00. They had all been waiting for me so we could breakfast



together and do not seem too amused!

VERDICT

The new FH really does tick all the boxes when it comes to driver. As much as it's not your home, it does come very close to it. The space, colours and storage have been

impeccably planned by the Volvo designers. Admittedly the specification of our vehicle was very high, but the living space and mattress selection are all the same regardless of the final specification. The new FH is going to be a real winner with the drivers.



STANIAN'S SUPERHEROES

Manchester firm Stanians Transport recently celebrated 30 years in business with the acquisition of four top spec FH and FH16 Volvos. Supplied by Thomas Hardie Commercials, the four metal monsters are fully loaded, including artwork by top custom airbrush wielder Matt Paint. Cool as a tree, scary as the sea.



THOMAS HARDIE VEHICLE SOLUTIONS:

KEEPING TRANSPORT MOVING IN BUSY TIMES



Commercial Business Manager Steven Waterworth

No time for downtime is a mantra chanted by all truck operators and on all too many occasions it's little things that can render a truck unserviceable, with vehicles stood down while awaiting parts. In many cases the same rules apply to superficial damage – the truck may be able to operate but still has to be taken out of service. Volvo Truck Dealer Thomas Hardie Commercials, through their specialist vehicle body repair and refurbishment centre in Chorley, Thomas

Hardie Vehicle Solutions, have developed an innovative way to keep these trucks working in busy times while allowing superficial repairs to take place at a time convenient to the operator, which in most instances is at weekends. This scheme is regardless of vehicle make. VTD Magazine called in to THVS (Thomas Hardie Vehicle Solutions) to chat with their Commercial Business Manager, Steven Waterworth, who explained not only about “giving vehicles a weekend break” but also to tell us about the firm’s body and accident repair services and their specialised refinishing,

The fact that THVS is run by truck people who understand the business shines out clearly in all aspects of operation. They listen to the customer’s operational requirements and can offer an economical solution by often “thinking outside the box

refurbishment and bodywork engineering solutions. THVS is a unique ‘business within a business’, offering a much-needed high level of service to the road transport industry, and although Thomas Hardie Commercials are Volvo Truck main dealer for the North West of England and parts of North Wales, THVS is a non-Volvo branded operation – regardless of make, the same superb level of repair remains constant. Diversity is the key to success. THVS offers a supreme level of quality so it’s not just the tractor unit or cab body work they take care of but vehicle bodies and trailers as well – and not just run of the mill bodywork repairs such as bent side guards and deep scrapes to a GRP box. They also carry out tail-lift repairs and tail-lift installation to trailers already in service but destined for other types of work. They also install and commission PTOs and wet kits, all types of discharge equipment and



an economical solution by often “thinking outside the box” – which in many cases can innovative body design. With many larger operators choosing mid-term refurbishment Steven sees a lot more growth in this side of the THVS business. The low bake ovens can take pretty much any vehicle or trailer on the road. THVS manage the whole refurbishment process, so will plan, collect and return the trucks and trailers convenient to the customer. If it is just trailer refurb that are required, they use their own THVS tractor unit to collect and return the trailers. Also with many operators choosing to select used vehicles over new, and need them supplying in their own livery, THVS don’t just rub down and

spray. They remove all panel work and bumpers so to even the trained eye you would be hard pushed tell if it was a factory paint or not. Steven prides himself that his goal is to be better than new. Insurance authorised work is a fundamental part to any vehicle repair operation and by the fact that trucks and trailers are extremely specialised pieces of engineering, having the depth of knowledge and expertise to help both the Insurance assessor and the client with a vehicle off the road THVS can make the whole process a lot easier for all concerned.



walking floor, as well as supply and fit Edbro Skip and Hook Loaders. As Steven explains, for repairs to Volvo products, on many occasions a pre-visit is not required as THVS can access the Volvo vehicle database and in many cases a vehicle registration number can quickly identify the build details so that parts such as door mirrors or corner panels can be pre-ordered. Any parts that need painting can be prepared ready and the vehicle can drive by at a time convenient to the operator for the fitting. Depending on what is required, much work can be carried out while the driver waits. If not, the truck can be dropped off over the weekend, giving the vehicle a “weekend break”. The fact that THVS is run by truck people who understand the business shines out clearly in all aspects of the operation. Staff listen to the customer’s operational requirements and can offer



AFTER MARKET: THE LIFE BLOOD OF ANY VEHICLE BUSINESS



Jim Murray – “our people are the key”



Back in August 2012 Thomas Hardie Commercials appointed a new Aftermarket Director, Jim Murray. With over 20 years Volvo experience across many facets of business including dealer support, aftermarket in London, Volvo financial Services, and even working on covert European projects, Jim readily admits that “Volvo is in my blood”. Over coffee at their vehicle solutions operation in Chorley he explains the size and locations of the group’s outlets and also why they strive constantly for improvement – after all it’s

the name of the game. With five main sites located across the north west of England and North Wales and two VMUs (Vehicle Maintenance Units) operated at large customers’ premises, managing the Aftermarket process is no mean feat. As it stands today, Thomas Hardie Commercials are a very successful business that trade on a great reputation, but – and it’s a big but – they are not happy to rest on their laurels and want to constantly improve what they do and how they do it, in what is still a very tough and demanding market. Like all big businesses, customer satisfaction is key to its success

The firm have developed an internal group called the ‘Commercial Crew’ to ensure that dialogue between all parts of the organisation is always at its peak

and in the last half of 2012 Thomas Hardie Commercials have improved on their CSI survey (Customer Satisfaction Index) by 2% and are looking to improve by another 2%, and as much as Jim is extremely proud, he says: “We can always be better.” Over the last year, a real focus on the development of the ATF (Authorised Test Facility) has been of paramount importance to Thomas Hardie Commercials and in particular to Jim. Currently they offer the service at three sites – Trafford, Preston and Deeside – and account for the largest proportion of MOTs across the Volvo network. Up to the end of November 2012 they carried out just under 2,600 MOT tests with a staggering 94.8% first time pass rate. This is bound to be the envy of many dealers, but it underpins the commitment to their customers of “Minimum downtime, maximum uptime and the only way this can be done effectively is to get it right first time”. “Our people are the key,” says Jim. “We rely

on them.” In any modern truck dealership it is absolutely imperative that they understand what’s happening, both with their customers and potential customers, and that all departments concerned ‘talk’. As Jim puts it: “We need to ensure we have good communication.” Hence they have developed an internal group called the ‘Commercial Crew’ to ensure that dialogue between all parts of the organisation is always at its peak. With Jim as a relative ‘new boy’ to the Thomas Hardie business and having ultimate responsibility for the entire Aftermarket operation across all sites, he spends a lot of time in them and when he is talking to the staff he is staggered by the length of service most have. For example, 25 years plus is not uncommon. A critical part of the Thomas Hardie business is buses and coaches, and the firm offer ‘Frontline’ mobile support to its customer base, which involves a fully-equipped service van with a

Buses and coaches are an essential part of the business

specialised bus and coach technician to look after these very special and extremely complex vehicles. This part of the business is positively thriving. With the introduction of a wealth of new products from Volvo, 2013 is going to be a very important year for Thomas Hardie Commercials, but how do they deal with product familiarisation and staff training to make sure they are 100% ready when the new kit goes into service? Jim said: “With the new FH we started our familiarisation back in August 2012. Currently the technicians are going through both classroom and hands-on sessions and we will also be carrying all the relative parts to

support the new FH well in advance of products arriving.” We also talk about what further improvement can be made in an already high performing customer-led business. Jim said: “I see growth in 2013 by lots of small steps of continued improvements.” Finally we ask Jim as a potential Thomas Hardie Commercials client why should we spend our hard earned cash with them? He said: “We are your number 1 partner in the North West and offer the best area coverage bar none.”

DENNISON FIRST WITH VOLVO E-SERVICE

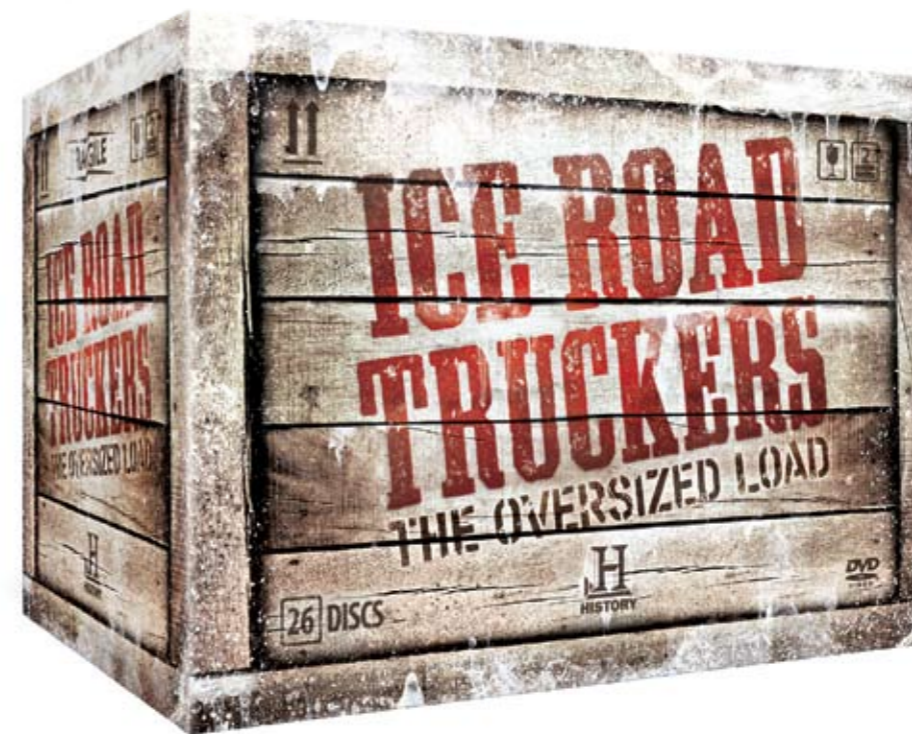
Thanks to a powerful, user-friendly, new Volvo dealer system application named 'E-service', customers of Northern Ireland's Dennison Commercials are receiving electronic copies of their service sheets by email immediately after work has been completed by the workshop. With the introduction of 'O' Licence legislation in Northern Ireland, E-service is helping operators comply with the requirement for accurate and timely maintenance record keeping while also potentially avoiding delays to deliveries waiting at VOSA roadside checks. In this trial, one of several at Volvo dealerships in the UK prior to a full roll-out in the whole network, Dennison Commercials - who have four Dealerpoints

in the Province, plus a bus and coach PDI unit at the Wrightbus manufacturing facility at Ballymena and a Commercial Vehicle Bodyshop - is the first multi-site Volvo dealer to carry out all servicing using E-service. In addition to providing customers with accurate, rapidly produced copies of completed service sheets, E-service supports automatic capturing and reporting of vehicle defects. As a result, Dennison Commercials' workshop technicians, who have E-service installed on their laptops, flag defects up on the system - in real time - while working on vehicles. This enables Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) on the front desk to provide customers with the option, depending on the type of defect, of when to have the repair carried out. E-service provides greater control of vehicle defects, improving communication to

ABOVE
Volvo's E-service improves communication with customers

the customer and ensuring documentation when presented to the customer is of the highest quality, which will help to reduce vehicle downtime and breakdowns. Lynn McBurney of McBurney Transport in Ballymena, had this to say about E-service: "I find the downloading of the service sheets an excellent way of keeping our records up-to-date. The format is easy to use and the service sheets are available on screen immediately after the work is completed, thus enabling any outstanding issues to be addressed as soon as possible." Volvo Trucks Managing Director Ulf Magnusson is convinced of the benefits customers will accrue from using E-service: "This is a first for the industry and represents a fundamental change in the way and speed with which Volvo customers receive this vital service information." He continues, "E-service is one more part in the growing portfolio of information technology-based applications with which we are supporting our valued customers and helping them maintain compliance with their 'O' Licence conditions," he added. "Dennison Commercials and a number of other Volvo dealers have successfully trialled it and we are now planning on rolling out E-service to the rest of the network during 2013."

This is a first for the industry.



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- A) Deadhorse B) Crazy Horse C) Pantomime Horse
(Circle the correct answer)

Your name:

Your address (inc postcode and email)

Post to: Volvo Truck Driver Magazine, 4th Floor, 19 Capesthorpe Drive, Eaves Green, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 3QQ. Closing date is March 15th 2013. Winner will be announced in the next issue of Volvo Truck Driver magazine

VOLVO: A VERY SPECIAL SELECTION

Buying a truck can be fraught with problems. Firstly you need to decide whether to go for new, pay a premium and possibly have to wait 12 weeks or beyond depending on what you want. Also you need to consider if the work you have and the rate you are paid can stand the cost of a 'brand spanker'. And then comes the headache of funding and what type of finance package best suits your business – if, of course, the chosen funder deems you worthy enough to lend the cash!

The other alternative is to look at a used vehicle. The plus side of a lower upfront cost as opposed to a new vehicle and near immediate availability may sound appealing, but could you be buying another operator's problems? Why did they sell in the first place? If it does go wrong what will happen? Will I get the help I need? Taking a stark view about

what could happen, if the truck lets you down and for whatever reason it is off the road for a week or until its settled who is going to pay, then from an owner driver's perspective, unfortunately, you could be out of business.

HALFWAY HOUSE IS THE RIGHT CHOICE

So, ideally, a halfway house could be the right decision – a pre-owned vehicle that is a couple of years old (thus offering a significant saving on new), a vehicle that has been maintained in line with the manufacturer's schedule and one that doesn't have 'starship' mileage, and for extra piece of mind is backed by the manufacturer's warranty. Does such vehicle and package exist? Well, according to Volvo Trucks it does. VTD was pointed in the direction of Volvo Truck and Bus Centre North & Scotland's operation in Stockton on Teeside to have a

look at such a vehicle and what we can get for our hard-earned cash.

We were met by used truck sales executive Craig Griffiths, and once we had told him of our requirements he took us immediately to a 6x2 11-plate FH 500 Globetrotter XL, finished in white and at just 20 months old and having covered 207,000kms, the FH fitted our initial requirements.

Looking round the vehicle, there is no sign of damage or abuse such as damage to the wing tops, twisted susies, or bent and buckled lead-up ramps. But what about the interior?

The vehicle had been specced with the leather prestige interior and it looked a picture – not a mark anywhere, no tears in the seats or floor and no missing blanks on the dash. Craig explained that as the vehicle was on their 'Selected' scheme, any damage to the interior of the cab would undergo a professional repair regardless. To be honest, you'd be hard-pushed to tell the difference between this vehicle and a new one!

Back outside the cab, Craig takes a few minutes to explain what a 'Selected' Volvo is.

CHOSEN FROM THE BEST

He says: "In essence a 'Selected' Volvo has been chosen from our stock as one of the best. This vehicle was on our contract hire fleet but the scheme can also include some of our demonstrators. The vehicle will have been maintained by Volvo under a contract hire agreement and all the vehicles will have covered less than 400,000kms. Once back in our stock, the truck will have its next scheduled service carried out, a 200-point mechanical inspection. Any rectification work will be completed, any interior or exterior repairs carried out and the vehicle will also get a full valet including a full interior deep clean. The vehicle will also be supplied



with a minimum of nine months MOT and a minimum tread depth of 7mm, which does not include a tyre recut.

COVERED BY 12-MONTH ASSURANCE

"When you drive away, the vehicle is covered by a 12-month Volvo Driveline Assurance, which is our scheme and not a bought-in warranty." Craig goes on to ask how we are planning on funding the vehicle and suggest that VFS (Volvo Financial Services) can offer a whole host of funding options that will suit your business. As the vehicle has been looked after by Volvo from new and they know its history, they can offer a number of very competitive preventative maintenance packages called 'Blue' cover starting from £195 per month all the way up 'Gold' cover which includes full repair and maintenance.

VERDICT

A question that is on everybody's lips at the moment is: Who's buying? And the other question from a potential buyer is: Should I buy? With the whole economy in a state of disarray, it is difficult to make a well-informed decision regarding the purchase of a commercial vehicle, even though on the face of it your business may seem to be bearing up well. One thing is for certain – the longer and older a truck gets, the more it's going to cost you in maintenance and that's a fact. Remember, when trucks do go wrong they really go wrong and potential repair bills



could run into the thousands, plus the downtime incurred with such a repair and for an owner driver or a new starter this could bring you down. For many operators big or small they will know the need to renew equipment but are lacking confidence and are potentially unable to commit to a three, four or five-year finance deal on a new truck. So what are the options? Do nothing, after which the consequences could be not only catastrophic but damned expensive to boot. For a traditional 'new' truck buyer the possibility of buying a late used model may be an option and the initial outlay may fall more in line with the business's current need to conserve cash flow. If you



buy a vehicle from Volvo on their Selected programme you will get their full support. You may be able to find a vehicle of a similar age at what appears to be a lower price but just ask yourself why?



Craig Griffiths – a 'selected' Volvo has been chosen from our stock as one of the best

INTERESTINGLY REMOTE

VOLVO HAS LAUNCHED WORK REMOTE. WILL IT REPLACE YOUR IPHONE?



For drivers, loading and unloading is a time-consuming activity. As a consequence Volvo Trucks has developed Work Remote - a wireless remote control device that streamlines the load handling process. The gains are lower costs for haulage firms and a better working environment for drivers. It is not exactly news that time equals money in a haulage firm. Nor does it come as a surprise to hear that time savings are a valuable commodity in everyday operation.

"For a haulage firm, it is important to have high productivity, which is all about transporting freight from point A to point B in the safest and most efficient way possible," says Christer Pehrson, Business Manager Long Haul at Volvo Trucks. One area of the transport sector where efficiency can

be improved is loading. In order to check that the weight of the cargo is properly distributed, the driver at present has to climb up into the cab several times during the loading process to check the load indicator in the instrument panel. Other load-related functions, such as raising or lowering the truck, are also currently performed from inside the cab. All this takes a lot of time, can be very tiring and represents a risk of driver injury since they can trip or fall. Volvo Trucks developed Work Remote to help both save time and reduce the risk factor. The new device is a wireless remote control unit which brings together all the functions that the driver requires while loading or unloading. With the Work Remote it is possible to control everything from raising and lowering of the truck's air suspension system to kneeling the vehicle, activating the power take-off, regulating engine revs, switching off the engine and

For a haulage firm, it is important to have high productivity, which is all about transporting freight from point A to point B in the safest and most efficient way possible

locking the truck. Extra controls fitted in the instrument panel via a Volvo Trucks accessory module can also be linked to the remote control, such as controls for a crane or pumps. "With the remote control the driver can immediately see the indicated load weight and its distribution across the axles of both the truck and trailer. In other words, the driver has all the necessary information in his or her pocket instead of having to run back and forth. Loading is more efficient," says Christer. In addition to saving time, the Work Remote also saves the driver's energy which can help promote better traffic safety. "For many, loading is a stressful task and stress easily leads to accidents. With the Work Remote we eliminate much of this stress since the driver doesn't have to run back and forth the whole time. If loading is easier, this ultimately means a more relaxed driver behind the wheel. This leads indirectly to a more alert driver and promotes improved traffic safety," says our mate Christer. Work Remote is being launched together with the new Volvo FH series and will be available on the market in spring this year.



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Terms & Conditions: Not suitable for children under 14 years of age. The winner will be notified within 30 days of the closing date either by letter, telephone or email. All entrants will be placed in a hat and selected at random by a third party. No money alternative will be offered. The winner's name and county will be displayed in the next issue of CV Driver Magazine.

Issue 4 Winner: Barry Cross of West Yorkshire

Winners details displayed in issue 6 of VTD



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