

## 2017: Future proofing our businesses

As we enter Spring of a new year, we have many exciting projects in progress within the Group and a successful 2016 behind us.

1. Plysolene is now fully operational in its additional premises and is looking for an new production line to increase the range of products it can offer.
2. Truck and Van is expanding its after sales business and actively looking for new premises in Swansea.
3. Truck and Van was one of only 4 dealers to receive a coveted DAF 'AAA' status for not only the quality of after sales provision but also being the major sales franchise in South Wales.
4. Urethane has received Innovation grants for the development of enhanced polyurethane materials which should have numerous applications, some even pioneering and patentable.
5. Urethane is welcoming new employees – James, company chemist; Steve, an ex-Williams F1 contract engineer; and these new hires, along with the host of other changes in Urethane, is creating an exciting buzz and momentum for change.
6. Group is building new offices in Lydney for Aviation Services to enable it to expand its global operations.
7. To take advantage of the speed of technology, new communication networks are being installed across the Group.
8. Whilst much of the country face Brexit with some trepidation, Watts is approaching it as an opportunity to expand our markets and forge ahead whilst others hesitate.

Our recipe for success:

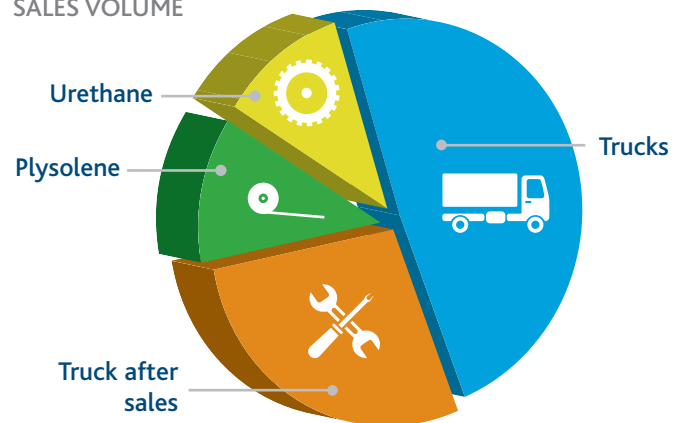
- Good people working in a team environment
- Excellent customer service offering products and services customers really value

Underpinned by:

- A solid heritage leading to clear values
- A strong debt free financial base
- Taking measured risks where appropriate, meaning we can change and innovate

John Thurston

SALES VOLUME



### \*\*\* STOP PRESS \*\*\*

Watts Urethane is delighted to have received a new order for almost 2000 urethane coated mine clearance wheels from a long standing military hardware customer. Urethane's CEO, Anthony Cooper, said: "I'm extremely

proud of the technical team for their hard work over the past 18 months ensuring we landed this order. It will have a significant positive impact on this business and is a welcome addition to the growth we are already experiencing so far this year."

### Watts inside

If you have any ideas you would like to have considered for the next newsletter then please email details to [dianeprice@watts-group.co.uk](mailto:dianeprice@watts-group.co.uk)

- DAF Eindhoven factory visit
- Dine with DAF event
- Farewell to Alex
- Praise for DAF apprenticeship scheme

- New large WUP storage system
- New members of the Urethane team
- Plysolene makes a move
- Footlocker uses Plysolene products

## WTV's Netherlands visit

In November a small number of clients and potential clients were given the opportunity to visit the DAF Factory in Eindhoven in The Netherlands. These trips are run by WTV and DAF to give our current and future customers a chance to learn about DAF as a whole.

The trip is spread over 2 days and takes in the factory floor, the vehicles and the history of DAF. The lucky participants this time around included Danielle Morris from Tarmac, James Hill of Jaga Brothers, Jeff Williams of John Raymond Transport, Jack Harding of Peter Harding Freight, Glyn Walters of DTH Walters & Sons Ltd and Meurig Bowen, West Wales Tippers. The visitors were given the unique opportunity to test vehicles of all sizes across the range.

Talking of the driving experience, Meurig Bowen said: "It was great. I got to drive 4 of the trucks on the track. I drove a rigid drawbar combination and I loved it. It's more solid with a more solid suspension than some of the other cabs. I haven't driven one for 35 years; in fact my first DAF was a rigid and it was great getting back behind the wheel of one again!"



A rare opportunity for a few lucky customers

## Dine with DAF

On the 14th January there were two major events taking place at the Liberty Stadium in Swansea; Swansea AFC were playing Arsenal at home and Watts Truck and Van were hosting a Dine with DAF event.

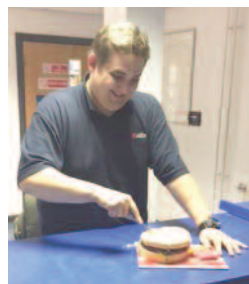
The Dine with DAF event is one of many held around the country throughout the year. "They help build relationships between the dealers and the customers," said Simon Griffin of Watts Truck and Van. Every dealer across the country gets a chance to host one and they are always co-hosted by representatives from DAF Trucks. It's an ideal opportunity to learn more about customers' businesses and for the customers to talk to the dealer and DAF personnel outside of the normal dealership environment.

"It doesn't matter whether it's a new customer or a long standing one," said Simon, "there's always something to talk about when meeting outside of the dealership environment to strengthen the relationship".

Previous events have tended to be more rugby focused due to the popularity of the sport in Wales, but there have been other events too, like the Goodwood Festival of Speed. But this time, Watts Truck and Van knew they had clients who were enthusiastic football fans and with Swansea's home ground being a short hop from their own dealership, the Liberty Stadium was the obvious choice.

## Farewell to Alex

WTV bid farewell to Alex Mayne after 8½ years with the company. Alex has been a valuable member of the Watts Newport team, and we wish him all the best in his new career with the family business. As a thank you for all his hard work, he was treated by his team with a DAF watch, cheese burger & chips cake(!), bobble hat and hoody.



## DAF praised for apprenticeship scheme

For the 5th time in 6 years, DAF Trucks has been recognised in the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer List. Watts Truck & Van is very proud to be a part of this. WTV Newport Technician, Nathan Llewellyn, has just successfully completed his DAF Trucks Apprenticeship. Well done Nathan!



Nathan Llewellyn receiving his official certificate from Service Manager Ben Adams

## Gareth's success as a DAF driver trainer

Congratulations to our very own Gareth Luke on meeting the standard set by DAF Trucks to become a Dealer Driver Trainer. After 12 months of coursework, assessment drives and handovers, Gareth is now qualified to deliver training & coaching to the highest standard, and ensure customers can obtain the best possible performance and economy from their DAF Trucks.



## The only way is up

Watts Urethane Products (WUP) has invested in a new storage system that may prove to be a game changer for the company by reducing lead times and boost the competitiveness of its world renowned squeegee blade.

- The new LogiMat Vertical Lift Storage System stands at 6.5m, and has 92 individual storage trays that can each hold 350kg of stock.
- It will store in excess of 460 urethane sheets, all laid flat and kept in darkness – both crucial elements to maintain the quality of the product.
- It manages itself! It is linked to 'M1' (our ERP system) and will manage its own stock levels, that along with with full bar code scanning means operator time and errors will be reduced.

Due to the ability to hold higher stock levels and quicker retrieval, customers will experience shorter lead times. This allows the business to drive greater efficiency and quality in batch manufacturing. In competitive global markets where long lead times can be a dealbreakers, this offers another all important edge.



## Urethane wins Innovate UK grant

WUP is delighted to have been awarded a grant for almost £60,000 to develop nanomaterial enhanced polyurethane systems. The development project will aim to improve the abrasion and wear resistance of PU systems through the additional of nanomaterials such as graphene, nano graphite and nanoclays.

The motivation behind the project is the desire to provide longer lasting materials in particularly demanding wear applications such as the quarrying and mining industry. The project will run for 12 months and will enable the business to develop Intellectual Property around its material systems.

Innovate UK

## Strengthening the Urethane team

January has seen three new employees join the team. James McKeag joins as WUP's very own Development Chemist. James previously worked at AkzoNobel and has an MSc in Chemistry from Bristol University. James will spend a large amount of his time working on the Innovate UK funded nano-enhanced PU project as well as the development of an in-house chemistry capability.

Harry Channer joins the team in a full time role as a trainee buyer having spent the past few months on secondment from Group Head Office to get an understanding of how manufacturing businesses operated. WUP will be supporting Harry through his Advanced Certificate In Procurement and Supply Operations and then hopefully onto a Diploma in Procurement and Supply.

Luis Moreno joins as a Design Engineer and brings with him a wealth of experience and knowledge in 3D CAD and modelling systems. Originally from Spain, Luis came to the UK in 2012 and worked for the Bristol-based company Universal Balancing Ltd where he was responsible for designing a number of complex balancing machines. Luis has a degree in Mechanical and Industrial Engineering from University Rovira i Virgili in Spain.

Anthony Cooper, CEO of WUP, commented: "I am delighted to welcome James, Harry and Luis to the team at Urethane. They are already starting to make a significant impact in their areas and will only help to enhance and accelerate the transformation of the business. The team is really starting to take shape and I consider us to be very fortunate to have been able to attract such high calibre candidates for these roles."



James McKeag, Harry Channer and Luis Moreno have joined the Urethane team

## Paving the way for Footlocker

In December, Plysolene secured a large deal with plastic paper and board specialists, Proctor Paper and Board Ltd. With centres based in Leeds, Leicester and London, the display material experts opted for a hefty 23 tonnes of Plyform High Impact Polystyrene Sheet. The sheet is to be used to kit out Footlocker, a leading global athletic footwear and apparel retailer.

Supplied in the company's iconic black, the eye catching display will be set up across Footlocker stores throughout the country. The dark black background being used to bring the latest in modern sporting footwear to light. With the American sportswear giant stocking huge brands such as Nike and Adidas, the Plyform sheet is mixing with some big names!



Plysolene - in good company

## Ply-Station makeover!

Plysolene proudly supplied a large quantity of colour matched blue High Impact Polystyrene to Leicester-based Point of Sale producer Mint Manufacturing, for the Sony PlayStation 2017 brand revamp.

The eye-catching units are guaranteed to be a hit with shoppers looking to get their hands on the latest consoles, games and accessories available on the market. So be on the lookout next time you're in your local Game store.



Plysolene is proud to be part of the PlayStation revamp

## Plysolene makes a move

As part of its future growth plans, Plysolene has successfully relocated its PIB production line into new premises. This move gives the company the opportunity to increase its production capacity in the main factory with the emphasis on expanding into new product areas such as ABS sheet.

The PIB production line is now located in adjacent premises which were purchased by the group in 2015. Managing Director, Steve Ratcliffe, commented: "The £100k project included upgrading the power supply and installing all the ancillary services required to run the line, including cooling water and compressed air. The move was also an opportunity to install the latest technology temperature control which will help improve our production consistency and quality".

Plysolene now has the space in its main factory to install an additional production capacity which will complement the existing Polystyrene sheet lines. The aim is to purchase a new machine in the next twelve months.



A new home for the PIB production line

We value your feedback on the newsletter. If you have any suggestions or ideas, please email [dianeprice@watts-group.co.uk](mailto:dianeprice@watts-group.co.uk)



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