



CARDIFF  
SWANSEA  
TENBY

**WG Davies**  
*Servicing South Wales*

# Staff Newsletter

Q4 2022

## Editor's Message

As I write this we are racing towards Christmas and the New Year, seemingly busier than ever.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this festive newsletter which features an interview with Kelvin Walters that comes with a tissue warning! Roger takes the opportunity to talk about the future of WG Davies in his column, The Inside Track, with some big changes on the cards for 2023. Alongside that we have the usual round-up of news from our depots and parts, as well as some KPIs from our Customer Service Indexing programme.

2022 has been nothing short of stand out for WG Davies, with the two trophies for Parts and Service Depot of The Year to remind us that we were acknowledged as the best of the best across the whole MAN network. We have much to celebrate and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas and a healthy, happy New Year. Rachel



## Roger Davies: The Inside Track – “Ring out the old, ring in the new”



As 2022 draws to a close it is a great time to look ahead to the New Year. We are looking forward to “ringing out” some old systems and processes which have been slowing us down and “ringing in” some new ways of working that will make us more efficient and help us serve our customers even better, while also establishing a senior team for the future of WG Davies.

In recent years we have spent a lot of time and money ensuring our depots are among the best in the MAN network. That investment, along with the exceptional work you do looking after our customers, secured parts and service Dealer of the Year for WG Davies. Now the time is right to scrutinise what we do and how we do it, asking ourselves at every turn “what could we do better?”

This is not a one-time thing; this is an ongoing commitment to finding the best ways of working and that has driven us to redefine some roles. In short **Daniel Jones** has stepped up to Depot Manager in Swansea. This releases **Andrew Dyer** to take on the new role of Group Operations Manager and with the return of **Sarah Spolton** to Depot Manager in Tenby, **Rachel** will come back to Swansea to support the management Team.

The new structure will allow a senior team comprising Alun, Andrew, Daniel, and Gareth with equal influence, to play a greater role in managing the business, with Amanda continuing in her role while Mal and myself stay close but we will have less input to the day-to-day decision making.

These are big changes, the business has been led by Malcolm, Amanda, Debbie and I for some years, we have always wanted to create a group of people who can take the business on for the next generation. We four Directors are NOT retiring but we are likeminded in our wish to slow down somewhat and truly hand over the day to day running of the business to the management team from January 2023. Our wish is to ensure that the business continues to prosper, improve and grow further. MAN have sold out of product in both Truck and Van for 2023, with 6,500 vehicles hitting the UK next year. Orders are now being taken for Q2 2024, so the future is bright for us all. The new team will be working to achieve budgets agreed with the Directors for 2023, whilst Andrew will focus on “what could we do better”.

**Increased productivity:** with the right systems, we believe we can do more work, in less time and with fewer errors. We will start by identifying what we do well and what we could do better, with the dealer management software and our HR systems coming under particular scrutiny. Ideally, we want to move towards being a paperless office, with reduced errors and improved compliance, all achieved with less effort than is required today.

**Increased flexibility:** since the pandemic our customers need us to be more flexible and responsive to their needs than ever before. With employment at an all-time high, recruiting more people is not the answer - we need to operate with processes that allow us to adapt with minimal disruptions to our operations.

**Improved customer experience:** the ultimate outcome of ensuring we work smarter, with the most appropriate systems and with continued investment in the right areas, is greater customer satisfaction. The most appropriate processes will free up front-line staff to talk to customers, technicians to work on vehicles and support staff to do their jobs with more ease and greater accuracy.

Nothing worth doing is easy but I believe this will ultimately be rewarding and I look forward to updating you in Quarter 1 with our progress.

For now, wishing you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a healthy 2023. Roger

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## Sales Scoop, David Hopkins

*2022 was difficult but there are reasons to be cheerful as we look ahead to 2023*

Looking back 2022 has been particularly challenging, with delays on new vehicles and the order book being closed for a large part of the year. When vehicles have landed they have needed to be turned around very quickly and I can only thank you all for responding to the PDI needs so well.

The support from WG Davies this year has been outstanding – when I have needed something, often at short notice, you have always responded and this has been greatly appreciated by me and all at MAN.

Looking ahead to 2023 it is clear that we will continue to see some delays in vehicle production but I am delighted to report that we are starting to see the green shoots of normality returning. We have a healthy number of vehicles due to land in 2023 and we are starting to fill the order book for 2024 with both existing and new customers placing orders.

For now, I hope you and your families have a great Christmas and happy New Year, I will look forward to seeing you all in 2023.



Happy days, one of the biggest deliveries of new vehicles to Runtech back in the summer

## Staff Spotlight: Kelvin Walters, Auto Electrician

Kelvin Walters was persuaded to step into the spotlight this quarter and it was an absolute pleasure talking to him. He will be celebrating 17 years of working with WG Davies this January and must surely be one of only a tiny minority who can boast that he was headhunted by Roger himself!

From school Kelvin worked for Sharps Auto Electrical in Cwmavon, where he completed a five-year apprenticeship. He stayed on with them for a while after that was completed and then moved to WG Davies. It seemed fair to assume he always wanted to work with vehicles but he was quick to correct that, "I actually wanted to be a teacher when I was at school. I like sports, so I was thinking about something in Sport Science and I was going to go to college, but then this apprenticeship came up, I went for it and got it."

We put it to him that auto electricians practice a black art, part skill and part magic, and wondered if that is what attracted him to it. Kelvin explained, "When I was a kid, I was told you can be a fool without money or a fool with money. I wanted to be the latter, so I thought I should knuckle down and get some qualifications. These days I like to be the person who everyone asks what's wrong with a vehicle, when they have exhausted every avenue – if I don't know, no one will."



Kelvin with son Charlie at Cardiff Arms Park

For the first eight years Kelvin was WG Davies only "sparky". He worked out of the Swansea branch but was field based, travelling all around South Wales. He could not have known then how vital his skills would become. We suggested he would soon be nothing short of a God! Kelvin laughed, "Yes definitely with the new electrical systems coming out and the new TGE, there's quite a lot to get my head around to ensure I can help everyone out. The new vehicles are all going to be electric and that keeps me in a good place." A fool with even more money we joked? "Yes exactly!" he agreed.

We were curious to understand what it was about WG Davies that had kept him with them for so long, without hesitation Kelvin told us, "It is Roger and his father when I first started, they treated me really well. I've been through quite a lot of heartache over the years and they've supported me. In 2019 I lost my daughter, she was only 10 and I had six months off work. Roger and Debbie regularly came up to the house to check in with me and they paid me for the six months. Over the years they've always been very good to me and I will repay that with loyalty. I'll probably stay with them to the end of my time."

On a day to day basis Kelvin enjoys that he is trusted to get on with his job, "I'm left to my own devices and I enjoy fixing vehicles. It feels good to get to the bottom of an issue. If someone has an electrical problem they call me out, I will plug the laptop in but the laptop won't tell you exactly what the problem is, you've got to work it out. So you start testing systems ... With electrical issues it's usually three hours to find the fault and three seconds to fix it."

His view of the future is that "Everyone will need to step up a little bit and be a more rounded technician, with both electrical and mechanical skills. The future is exciting. We're constantly learning because new systems are coming up every day. I even did a night school in domestic electrics about 12 years ago, I'm very interested in the electronic side of things."



Kelvin is in amber/black, facing camera and jumping for the ball

Away from work Kelvin enjoys traveling and plays rugby for his local team Pontrhydyfen RFC. "I've played for them for 28 years." he told us, "I've picked up few injuries along the way and my bicep is ripped, my fingers are all broken and my ears are torn, nothing serious. (Ed: we beg to differ!) I'm 40 in January but I'm still enjoying it, although this is probably my last season." Happily he can fall back on his committee duties when his playing days are over, as he is the bar manager at Ponty.

Christmas for Kelvin will be busy, full on family affair, "We will be here, there and everywhere; visiting my sister's house in Baglan for a big dinner and a knees up with my Mum. We will also visit my girlfriend's parents' house close to where we live in Neath. And of course there will be time with my son Charlie, who is 17 next year, we do lots of things together. He likes rugby and comes up to the rugby club with me or into Cardiff to watch an international, the last one we watched together was Wales versus Australia."

Kelvin has suffered more tragedy than most of us could even begin to process and yet he is upbeat and grateful for the support he has had along the way. It was humbling and a real pleasure talking to him, thank you for stepping into the spotlight and for being so open with us.

## Depot News: *We are never not busy but have we ever been this busy?*

Cardiff, Tom Carroll



James Tucker the friendly face of our service reception

2022 has been a huge year for the team in Cardiff who have faced a huge workload. It is testament to the team spirit that they have turned around the volume of vehicles they have, day in and day out.

We are really happy to welcome two new starters, Andrew Jukes who joins us as a van technician and Nathan Catherall, as an HGV apprentice. Both have slotted in as if they were always meant to be here.

Alongside the new staff members we received a further boost with the substantial investment in two new sets of column lifts – it was like Christmas had come early! And talking of Christmas, we had a night out celebrating our achievements on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, which was hugely deserved and so it was great that it was well attended and much enjoyed too. Wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and healthy 2023.

Swansea, Daniel Jones

We have had a very busy Q4 here at Swansea and it has been great to see the team pulling together to keep our customers vehicles on the road. This has meant that we smashed the October and November targets, and appear to be on track to achieve December's too.

It feels like a very long time ago that we started the quarter by merging staff from Llanelli with those in our Swansea workshop. Stuart, Liam, and Kirsty are fitting in very well and it's been good to see everyone making them feel at home.

We are delighted to welcome our new yard man, Kelvin Miles. With his combination of a wicked sense of humour and a strong work ethic, Kelvin is a great mix with the technicians. And that team of technicians recently welcomed Joshua Morgan and Steve Devlin back in Swansea. Joshua has impressed by showcasing his knowledge on vehicle diagnostics, while Steve brings his wealth of experience to the workshop – both are real assets to the company.

We always enjoy preparing new vehicles, so it was a great pleasure getting seven new snowploughs ready for RCT council this month, with another three due in early 2023. Alongside those, Right Freight have taken delivery of three new TG3's to ensure they are geared up for the busy Christmas period, making deliveries to Lidl supermarkets and this is just the beginning - there are a significant number of new vehicles in the pipeline for 2023.

Finding time for training is always a challenge but we have had a number of workshop and parts staff on a forklift refresher course in early December, with the remainder being booked onto courses in the New Year.



Kelvin with his company "vehicle", complete with personalised plate KELV 1

Without the teamwork and goodwill of everyone at Swansea, achieving our goals would not have been possible. Thank you so much, everyone, for your resilience and hard work. I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and I hope you all enjoy a well-deserved break with your families. Nadolig Llawen!

Tenby, Rachel Davies

The last six months have been nothing short of a frenzy of activity in Tenby and it is amazing to think that Rachel's time managing the depot is drawing to a close. Sarah will be back at the helm from 3<sup>rd</sup> January and she will come back to a team that includes two new starters; a new technician, Tomos Evans who brings 11 years main dealer experience to the team and a new apprentice, Lucas Banks.

Reflecting on her time at Tenby, Rachel said "I want to thank everyone in parts and service who has assisted me here over the last six months. Everyone has been so patient and helpful, and that has meant that I have been able to really enjoy my time here. I would like to wish everyone a merry Christmas but with a special shout out to the boys at Tenby; they have been so patient and supportive, I would have been lost without them, and also for working really hard since I have been here. Thanks also to Andrew for being on hand whenever I have needed him, even coming down here to sit with me one or two days a week when I have needed some extra help." Rachel will be going back to her "Swansea family" in January but it is safe to say her time in Tenby will never be forgotten.

## Swansea Light Servicing / MOT, Michelle Kidwell

We are now deep into the final quarter of 2022 and what a year it's been! I am pleased to report that it has been very busy and we do not expect that to let up between now and the Christmas break.



Business as usual, Chris hard at work going above and beyond for another customer

It is great to continue to welcome some new names, which build on our already solid core of loyal customers who have been visiting the MOT workshops for many years now. The positive feedback they share highlights the ongoing investment in our facilities, which we can boast are now some of the best in the locality. Of course, the jewel in our crown has always been the WG Davies team who always go over and above for our customers and that is why they keep coming back year after year.

We are all looking forward to the Christmas break and will come back refreshed and raring to go on 3rd January 2023. For now, we would like to take the opportunity to give our thanks for the continued support and wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

## Parts Update, Alun Taylor

Alun reports that there has been a lot going on in parts and it all adds up to another fantastic year for parts sales. The team deserve huge congratulations for hitting the MAN parts target for the year, as well as smashing the monthly retail target almost every month, with December shaping up to be another good month for us.



Jeff with another van load of parts for our customers

We are happy to welcome John Taylor to the team, he has joined us as a part time delivery driver out of Swansea and we are currently recruiting for a parts advisor for Swansea as well.

A huge well done to the team for a truly amazing year, wishing you a wonderful festive break before we do it all again in 2023.

## Customer Service Indexing (CSI)

*Customer feedback is priceless and we now have over 1,500 interviews in the bank*

You are almost certainly aware of our CSI programme, where Janet Birkmyre talks to our customers to check they are happy with the service we provide and crucially she asks them what we could do better, before they rate a small number of key performance indicators (KPIs) for parts and service, but did you know the programme has been running since 2009 and in that time over 1,500 interviews have been conducted?

These interviews help us identify what is important for our customers, not just as a group, but on an individual level, because we know that each one has different needs. So while it is important to act on any issues, we also need to acknowledge what we do well, so that we can keep doing that.

Two of the most important numbers are the rating of our overall service and our communication with customers (see chart). We are not saying we cannot do better but we should accept that the numbers for 2022 are pretty good.

