

ONLINE

New Bitumen tank wagons enter service for Total



Photo: Bob Sweet

VTG handing over brand new bitumen wagons.

In November VTG delivered the first 26 tank wagons for Total under its arrangement to replace its existing fleet of 30 bitumen wagons with innovative vehicles to allow bitumen to be transported more efficiently.

The wagons feature a bespoke heating system of external heating coils, which are more modern in design when compared to the traditional internal heating system. A major benefit of the external system is that it makes it far easier to clean the interior of the tank wagon.

Mike Linley, General Manager, Total, said: "Total Bitumen and VTG worked together to eliminate the need for personnel to access the tops of the wagons, thereby removing risks from working at height and manual handling. Total Bitumen are a manufacturer of speciality bitumens at the Preston plant and as a sustainable supplier, the new wagons will improve the current rail payload, allowing us to save a further 300,000

road miles per year and more efficient insulation on the wagons will help to reduce energy loss too."

Occasionally vacuum relief valves, which can be a feature of this kind of wagon, have been known to become jammed with solidified bitumen. To prevent this, and offer additional safety, VTG's wagons have a positive vent valve fitted to the top of the tank. The vent valve is mechanically linked to the foot valve and is fitted with an indicator flag, which is visible from the ground level to confirm when the valve has opened. This valve allows air into the tank as the bitumen is emptied to prevent the creation of vacuum which could cause the tank to implode.

The wagons run on the latest TF25 bogies, which are more reliable than other types, requiring less routine maintenance, and are lighter than previous models, allowing an extra tonne of payload per wagon.

Paul Lugg, VTG's Tank Fleet Sales Manager,

said: "The delivery of the new wagons will allow Total to transport bitumen more reliably and efficiently, while also significantly reducing the amount of maintenance required."

The wagons will be used to transport bitumen from Total's oil refinery in Immingham, North Lincolnshire to the bitumen processing and distribution plant in Preston, Lancashire.



VTG wins top prizes at Rail Freight Group Awards



Paul Lugg of VTG receiving the award for Support Service Provider of the Year from John Smith of GB Railfreight.

VTG Rail UK picked up two of the top prizes at the 2010 Rail Freight Group Awards, being named Support Service Provider of the Year, and achieving the runner-up spot in the Technical Development category.

As the largest wagon provider in the UK, VTG can offer its customers a portfolio with the widest range of vehicle types, as well as extensive experience and expertise in maintaining and modifying wagon fleets. It has also used this expertise to develop offerings such as Sale and Leaseback and Fleet Management, to better meet the needs of its client base.

Rob Brook, MD, VTG Rail UK, said: "As no two of our customers are the same we recognise that there is no 'one size fits all' answer to providing the right wagons. In order to meet our customers' requirements, whether it's a sale and leaseback deal to raise capital, or because they want to alleviate ownership

concerns, we are happy to tailor a wagon hire offer which meets their needs.

VTG was listed as the runner up for the Technical Development Award for its work in developing the transportation of biomass. On this project VTG worked with its customer GB Railfreight, and key suppliers, Lloyds Register Rail, WH Davis and ITT Flow Control to develop an automated roof system for retrofit to a number of its new HYA hopper wagons.

Brook added: "After winning the Technical Development

Award last year, it is great to be recognised again for the development of the new biomass wagons which is unique to the industry."



Biomass wagons on track

Earlier this year VTG Rail UK celebrated the completion of the biomass wagons it developed with its partners GB Railfreight, WH Davis and Lloyds Register.

Commissioned by GBRf the bespoke wagons were designed specifically for carrying renewable biomass.

The wagons are a first of their kind, with top and bottom doors that are operated automatically by the use of magnets and sensors which control a pneumatic cylinder on each door.

VTG Rail UK's Sales Manager, Ian Shaw, said: "The automated roof system has been retrofitted to the wagons to ensure the biomass product stays in optimum condition during its journey. This is especially important



for this product, as water contamination would prevent it burning properly, as well as stopping it from being effectively discharged from the wagons."

In total 23 wagons have been modified

and they will be used to haul renewable biomass from Port of Tyne to the Drax Power Station near Selby, North Yorkshire.

News from the Group

VTG enters the grain market.

In July VTG AG announced that it had signed contracts for the purchase of some 1,100 grain silo wagons from Ermewa Ferroviaria SAS and a 75 per cent shareholding in the French rail logistics company TMF S.A.

The agreement sees VTG entering the European market for the rail transportation of grain products on a considerable scale, and also represents the next step towards diversifying its wagon fleet into transport markets outside of its traditional petrochemicals business areas. Additional benefits include an increase to the capacity utilisation of VTG's own repair workshop in France, while the company's German



construction plan, Waggonbau Graaff, will contribute its expertise in the building of new grain wagons.

In recent years the traditional European

grain market has remained stable, and lately the trend towards biofuels is also seeing an increase in the level of trade in, and transportation, of grain.

Bio fuels update

VTG has been continuing its study into the effects of bio fuels on railway wagon interiors.

In the last month tests have been carried out with 99 per cent Ethanol, containing 3,000 parts per million of water, which is what VTG understands to be the likely mix of the residue in a transport vessel/wagon/lorry. Results to date have shown there is a

possibility that this mixture could attack brass components within the foot valves in wagons. Measurements will be taken to quantify the extent of any modifications required to make VTG's wagon fleet fully compatible with this product.

VTG team doing well

VTG's sponsored football team 'The Coventry Girls' have also reported another good year. The girls at Coventry Football Club are currently second in the league as well as being involved in two cups, the League Cup and the County Cup, for which they will be playing the next round of matches in the coming weeks.

National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering gets go ahead

In November the government approved funding for the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering (NSARE). The funds from government are in the region of £2.7 million, which with the support from employers, represent a landmark step forward in ensuring there are enough skilled people in technical roles.

VTG Rail UK MD Rob Brook, a shadow board member, said: "NSARE is a really important scheme and it's brilliant that the government has shown its support. Histori-

cally there has always been a lot of expertise in rail and we need to make sure this continues and grows alongside advancements in the industry."

The aim of NSARE is to work towards ensuring that the rail industry in Britain has enough engineers with the right skills to deal with the challenges which the country will face in the future.

With the help of the recent funding NSARE will become the focal point for attracting young people into the industry and ensur-

ing they are trained to the highest standards.

The rail engineering sector is crucially important to the economy, especially with the development of large projects such as Crossrail.

More than 60 organisations came together to support the preparation of the business plan for the initiative. NSARE is also backed by railway supporter Pete Waterman who was one of the founders of the scheme.

VTG continues to recognise Railfreight Excellence

VTG Rail UK will return as the sponsor for the Railfreight Excellence Award at the 2010 Rail Business Awards. After a successful two years of sponsoring the first category at the RBA to recognise freight achievements VTG agreed to extend its sponsorship for a further three years.

The Railfreight Excellence Award provides an opportunity for rail freight companies to gain recognition in their own right, separate from those who provide passenger services.

The category recognises the development and introduction of new services and products for the freight industry, including attracting new freight to rail, innovation, improved performance and revenue and business growth.

The award also celebrates achievements for those that can demonstrate innovation and flexibility in meeting customer requirements and for communication with customers and suppliers.

To date those that have received the award has included The Malcolm Group for developing a trapezium shaped curtain-sided sloop wagon, which allows larger loads to be transported within restrictive loading gauges, and last year's winners Lafarge for its Rail Expansion Programme at Hope Works.



Best seller

Profile: Caitlin Lippitt

Position: Sales and Marketing Administrator

Caitlin joined VTG Rail UK in September of this year and has taken over the role of Sales and Marketing Administrator, previously held by Debbie Field.

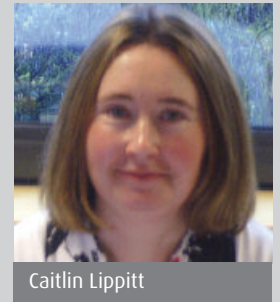
Caitlin said: "I am looking forward to a new challenge here at VTG, and so far I am really enjoying my new job even though at present I struggle with all the jargon!"

Caitlin's career started in quite different climes from the railways as she originally worked in a forge, still working in sales and then becoming a PA in the same company.

After 12 years the organisation closed down and Caitlin moved to a telecommunications company where she was based in the export department dealing with the company's foreign customers. Through this role she got to work with many countries and got to know their various customs. She was also involved in shipping, including obtaining documents from the chamber of commerce and making sure that the goods left the UK with the relevant documentation so they would not be held in customs.

Caitlin is married to David and they live in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire with their five year-old daughter

Isabelle who keeps them busy with dancing, swimming and gymnastic lessons. If Caitlin and David do get any free time they enjoy travelling and dancing.



Caitlin Lippitt

Happy retirement to Jean and Brian

We say a fond farewell to Jean Burgess and Brian White who both retired earlier this year.



Jean Burgess:

Jean worked at VTG as its Office Administration Manager for 12 years. Her wide-ranging role saw Jean take responsibility for HR and Health and Safety as well as the general office procedures – and of course producing OnLine!

Previously Jean was an IT Software Training Consultant for a logistics company and has otherwise predominantly worked in secretarial roles.

Since retiring Jean has found that she doesn't seem to have any spare time. Instead her time has been filled with visitors following her move to Scotland. Once things have settled Jean is hoping to have more time for some of her favourite pastimes which include golf, walking, counselling and reading as well as getting to spend more time with her grandchildren before they grow up and get a life!

Brian White:

Brian started at Procor, where he worked for approximately 20 years before the company became part of VTG. In 1988 he took over the role of Financial Controller for VTG and held this position for a number of years, and then became Fleet Operations Manager in 2005, which is the role he stayed in until his retirement earlier this year.

Brian will be spending his retirement playing golf, visiting his property in France, which he is currently renovating, and going to visit his son and his family in Australia.



A lifetime achievement



Steve Hyland, VTG's Maintenance and Wheels Cost Controller, recently celebrated 40 years with the company.

To mark the occasion Steve was presented with an engraved tankard from his fellow colleagues.

After finishing school, and one summer off, Steve started his career on 1 October, 1970 with "Wagon Repairs Limited", which over various name changes came under the VTG umbrella.

Steve said: "When I first started work, the firm was like a family, more social outings, and that's why in those days most people stayed loyal to their companies. Although I may be classed as one of "the oldies" it doesn't mean that I don't like new challenges and could teach the "youngsters" one or two things".

Through work Steve met his wife Debbie and they have now been married for 31 years.

Outside of work Steve's interest is Crown Green Bowls and he has been a member at the same club for over 30 years.

Nothing like a good read...

...even if it is on the UK's only quadruple corkscrew!

Sara Runciman, Supply Operations Manager, at ConocoPhillips Limited is the latest, and very worthy, winner of The VTG Challenge and a brand new iPod.

On a recent day out Sara, and her partner Steve, braved the seriously twisted roller-coaster, Colossus, at Thorpe Park. Obviously unaffected by one of the most daring rides at the theme park Sara got out her copy of OnLine to have a read.

As Sara said: "It took some doing to get the magazine past the ride staff, but it was well worth it!"

Sara is the third winner of The VTG

Challenge, our competition where we ask people to submit a photo of themselves reading OnLine in an unusual place or situation.

For your chance to win an iPod, VTG would like to see who can capture a picture of themselves reading a copy of OnLine in the most unusual place or situation.

Please send your pictures, details and location to Caitlin Lippitt at Caitlin.lippitt@vtg.com. The closing date for entries is 31 March 2011. Standard competition rules apply.



Maria completes Race for Life

Congratulations to Maria Connolly, VTG's Fleet Operations Team Leader, who completed the Race for Life in Redditch on 18 July, 2010, and raised £580 for Cancer Research UK.

Happy Christmas from VTG

VTG wishes all of its OnLine readers a Happy Christmas and New Year.

This year instead of sending Christmas cards we will be supporting the following charities: The Warwickshire Air Ambulance, Cancer Care QE, RSPCA and Muscular Dystrophy Campaign



Image: Francesco Marino