www.bulk-distributor.com

Est. 1990 January/February 2022

BULK DISTRIBUTOR

Your single information source for bulk and semi-bulk logistics

Tank Containers • Flexitanks • IBCs • Drums • FIBCs • Bulk Liners • Road Tankers • Loading/Bagging • Bulk Logistics • Cleaning & Repair Depots • Components

Port congestion in Europe and the US continues to slow the return of boxes to Asia

China moving containers faster

Containers are now moving in and out of China at record speeds as shippers desperately source capacity, but port congestion in Europe and the US continues to slow the return of boxes to Asia and is stymying the recovery of global ocean supply chains.

According to a joint report published in January by logistics technology company Container xChange and research organisation Fraunhofer–CML, as the rush to get exports to buyers soared last year, the average median time containers spent in Chinese depots dropped to just five days, down from 61 days in 2020.

China was not alone among leading exporters in seeing rapid box turnarounds last year. Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia recorded average median times that containers spent in depots of nine, 11, 16 and 19 days, respectively.

"Once containers reach Asia, they are being redeployed at record speeds. However, the mismatch between supply and demand at many origin ports, including in China, means it is sometimes hard for US and European importers to secure boxes unless they have planned ahead, or are working closely with their box supplier, forwarder or container line, to ensure they have both a vessel slot and a container available in advance," commented Dr Johannes Schlingmeier, co-founder and CEO of Container xChange

By contrast, severe congestion in many destination ports saw container dwell times at depots reach near-record levels in 2021.

The worst performing countries in terms of the average median time containers spent in depots last year were the US and the UK which suffered average dwell times of 50 and 51 days, respectively. The next worst performers were South Africa (47 days), UAE (40 days), Pakistan (31 days) and Germany (25 days).

Schlingmeier added: "Container shipping rates have bounced back after a slight downturn in the fourth quarter with the Shanghai Containerized Freight Index (SCFI) breaking through the 5,000 mark at the end of December. Port congestion is a major factor. Jefferies Equity Research found that in November last year some 36.2 percent of boxship capacity was at port. Until that congestion is cleared, we'll continue to have major imbalances in the supply and demand of both vessel capacity and containers. As the Omicron variant brings more disruption, with Chinese New Year around the corner and some ports including Ningbo already facing lockdowns, we are expecting a volatile start to the year for ocean freight logistics."

The study found that in the US, the second-worst performer in terms of the average median time containers spent in depots in 2021, performance varied hugely by port. Across the country, average dwell times were 50 days last year (2021), down from 66 days in 2020. New York recorded 61 days of container idle time followed by Houston (59 days) and Savannah (56 days). The ports of LA and LB, on average recorded 40 to 42 days of container idle time.

http://container-xchange.com

IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURES IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Industrial Packaging
Flexitanks & Liners
Leasing
Cleaning & Repair Depots

To advertise please email
anne@bulk-distributor.com
To contribute please email
neil@bulk-distributor.com

Opening doors in APAC

Den Hartogh Logistics has identified the Asia Pacific (APAC) region as a key engine of growth and has the ambition to be a leading regional tank operator offering one-stop deep-sea and intra-APAC logistics services.

As a step along this journey, Den Hartogh announced a merger with the MUTO group of companies operating in Korea, Thailand and Malaysia.

MUTO Global Thailand and MBT Global Malaysia will be rebranded as Den Hartogh Thailand and Den Hartogh Malaysia, respectively. The MUTO Logix Korea branding will be retained and rebranded as a member of Royal Den Hartogh Logistics.

With the merger, Den Hartogh is confident of increasing customer satisfaction by providing tanks at the right place, right time and in right quantities. Den Hartogh will be positioned to serve its customers better in Seoul, Bangkok and Klang with more personalised and innovative logistics solutions.

MUTO started its journey in 2003 in Korea. Founded by BS Kim, MUTO quickly established itself a leading independent logistics providers for the Korean chemical and petrochemical market. With a strong focus on customer relationships, reliable service and the ability to create fit for purpose solutions, MUTO has been able to strengthen its position in the Korean and intra-APAC market.

In 2007 MUTO reinforced its physical presence in APAC with offices in Thailand and Malaysia. Currently, it is one of the largest intra-APAC operators, with a team of more than 60 people, operating a fleet of around 2,500 tanks.

The Den Hartogh APAC team also launched a dedicated APAC website subdomain – **apac.denhartogh.com**

On this the team will share APAC specific news and information.

www.denhartogh.com

With the merger, Den Hartogh will be positioned to serve customers better in Seoul, Bangkok and Klang

Capacity to Move

Specialist Expertise
Bulk Chemicals and Foodstuffs

Efficient Service
Easy, Fast and Flexible

Global Reliability
Extensive Fleet and Depot Network

Find out more at
www.StoltTankContainers.com

With over 35 years of experience taking care of sensitive products, we don't just move cargo, we are dedicated to serving all your needs.

Our 40,000 tank containers, global network of depots and highly competent team of experts deliver the highest standard of service. So you can always be assured of safe and efficient transportation of your bulk liquids. Because we have the capacity to move.

- Flexible Service
- Tailored Solutions

Ask us what we can do for you:
stc-info@stolt.com

Stolt Tank Containers

Integration project leaves Peacock poised for growth

After years of steady, positive business growth, Peacock Container Holding has seen rapid changes in the past year or so.

In February 2020, Peacock was acquired by private equity investor Arcus Infrastructure Partners, which then moved rapidly to buy the assets of fellow tank lessor Gem Containers, more than doubling Peacock's total fleet to some 16,500 tank containers.

While this instantly made Peacock one of the six largest tank lessors globally, it brought with it the challenge of integrating not only Gem's 9,000 tanks but also the associated operating and financial leases into Peacock's system.

Happily, both companies were existing clients of MRI Intermodal Software using Rental4000 for tank leasing, and MRI was on hand to help merge the respective operations into one.

Peacock's managing director Jesse Vermeijden explained that the key issue in such a project is always integration, including data integration.

The fact that Rental4000 was already used by both companies gave confidence that a relatively rapid marriage could be achieved.

"Quite early on we started talking with MRI about how to integrate the two platforms," said Vermeijden. "The main challenge was to make sure that all the data came across and allowed us to run billing within four to five weeks after the project start date; while – critically – ensuring there were no issues for lessees, the end customers."

Such a strict timeline for execution needed commitment from both sides at a very high level. Thankfully, MRI's consultants are among the best in their field and so the tight deadline was not unduly worrying.

Vermeijden said the initial approach to MRI was made at the start of April 2021 around the time of Peacock's acquisition by Arcus. By mid-April it was known the Gem acquisition would happen, and by end-April the project was given the green light.

However, while the commonality of both leasing companies' systems carried advantages, significant work was still needed. "We had to do quite a bit of data mapping as the two companies, while running the same MRI system, used different codes for different clients, functions, locations, etc. This all had to be synchronised and involved teams from MRI, Peacock and Gem working together to decide which codes should migrate into the integrated system," he explained.

In addition, continuous error testing had to be carried out to make sure the resulting system was as robust as possible.

"However, we had good communication and very productive, proactive support from MRI that enabled us to get up and running in a short space of time," Vermeijden went on.

Despite these pressures the integration was successfully completed within the five-week target, for which Vermeijden is quick to thank MRI for its "great project management."

"We had some tweaks in June after the first billing cycle, but these were minor details; other than that, it's been really smooth," he said.

The Rental4000 suite supports the entire lease fleet operations, contract and asset management, maintenance & repair, billing, cost management and planning.

In fact, now the integration has been successfully achieved, Jesse sees numerous opportunities to leverage the platform and provide further benefits to customers.

"Document flow can be quite time consuming and costly," he says, "and our market (ie, tank containers) is still some way behind in terms of automation and digitalisation, so this has to become a focus for development."

A particularly important function is the use of an MRI partner's product, Intermodal Portal, which acts as a bridge between customers and the lessor's internal database.

Just like a bridge, Intermodal Portal allows for two-way communication, so not only can it be used to present information to customers and suppliers, but it can also receive data and post back to Rental 4000.

As an 'Open and Connected' architecture, the aim is to negate the need to key in data; instead, just to receive data from third parties via the portal, or indeed other protocols, such as EDI/API.

Moving to cloud processing is also on Peacock's radar. Vermeijden is happy that for now the 'traditional' server system works really well with almost zero downtime. But he points out that the life cycles of servers "are not super-long today" and so migration to the cloud is probably not that far away.

A big advantage of digitalising everyday processes is that it allows Peacock to free-up resources to focus on business development. "We have an ambitious shareholder and growth expectation is now part of our DNA," Vermeijden went on. "This will be via organic and inorganic routes; for example, this year we have acquired 3,500 new tanks in addition to those that came from Gem, and we have similar ambitions for the years ahead."

The main challenge with integrating Peacock's and Gem's platforms was to make sure that all the data came across and allowed billing to be run within four to five weeks after the project start date

He expects to see more consolidation in the tank leasing market, although "at least six or seven significant players are likely to remain as customers will still want choice".

"We are here as a long-term investor and player, and that is why we are investing now in our software and digital platform as this will be key to our growth ambitions," he concluded.

www.mriintermodal.com

The sustainable tank

Inherent sustainability is a key asset in the growth of the tank container industry, according to ITCO and members continue to promote awareness of the tank container as the transport mode providing superior environmental performance.

To this end ITCO published a Technical Guidance document late 2021 (TG-08 Tank Sustainability Repurposing and Recycling) to provide sustainability guidance from procurement to safe end-of-life repurposing and eventual recycling.

The tank operates in a business world where beneficial cargo owners (BCOs) are increasingly active in their obligations to implement environmental initiatives throughout the transport chain. ITCO members are also engaged in environmental programmes such as Ecovadis Assessments and sustainability policies.

A core advantage is that tanks are manufactured from sustainable materials, designed for continued re-use over a period of 20 years or more. Longer term, they have also proven to be suited to repurposing and recycling.

Once beyond its useful working life, a tank owner might decide to dispose of a tank when it no longer meets its business parameters.

Typically, the owner might sell the unit to a company trading in used tanks, or to a metal recycling company.

But there are other repurposing ideas to extend the life of the tank before eventual recycling. These include refurbishment and re-use, or even remanufacture, which entails the complete disposal of the tank frame insulation, and tank fittings, retaining only the barrel.

The used tank shell is then reconditioned, along with reuseable fittings as appropriate, and incorporated in the manufacturing process to construct what is effectively a new tank container, complete with regulatory approvals.

A webinar on sustainability hosted by ITCO was due to take place after Bulk Distributor went to press, and will be covered in full in the next issue.

www.international-tank-container.org

Another year of headaches?

The tank container industry is likely to experience another unpredictable year with significant operational challenges.

In a webinar hosted by insurance mutual TT Club in November 2020, William Leigh-Pemberton, strategic development director at Bertschi, and chairman of the ITCO operators division, said the outlook 2022 could be a year of further headaches for everyone in the tank business.

The challenges are less likely to be financial as demand for tank container shipments has remained strong throughout the pandemic. But the operational challenges and uncertainty of the past couple of years look to set continue.

"The outlook for 2022 is not a pretty picture," Leigh-Pemberton said. "Space problems on-board ships are likely to persist, and there is definitely a priority being given to carrier-owned containers (COCs). Feedback from carriers is they are not particularly interested in proposing long-term offers and capacity to shipper-owned containers, including ISO tanks. So it looks like we will be fighting for limited capacity on-board."

He added that the tank industry generally also faces a shortage of depot capacity, particularly in Asia-Pacific where a lot of cleaning depots have closed, largely due to enhanced environmental regulations and controls. Stricter environmental controls are, of course, positive, he stated, but the rate at which modern, properly-run depots are replacing ones that have been shuttered is not keeping pace with demand.

Trucking companies also face a shortage of drivers, and even when it comes to renewing their vehicle fleets, waiting lists for new trucks can stretch to a year.

These challenges have largely arisen from the fact that the tank business has grown significantly over the past decade. The number of tanks in daily use has doubled in the past seven years and at end-2020 stood at 680,000.

This was driven by a number of factors, he went on. In general there has been a large-scale migration of bulk liquids transported by parcel tankers to liquids in ISO containers of various types. This has allowed shippers to benefit from the inherent flexibility of containers that allows the supply chain to be fragmented into multiple collection points at short notice.

However, within that segment the past several years have seen the replacement of, say, 20 IBCs or 100 drums packed into a dry van container by less packaging-intensive techniques, namely tank containers and flexitanks.

Figures from Drewry suggest that between 2011 and 2020, the share of bulk liquids carried in flexitanks trebled, albeit from a very low base, while those carried in tank containers went up by about half.

Nevertheless, Leigh-Pemberton predicted that further volume growth in flexitanks could be in doubt due to rising concerns over the consumption and disposal of plastics.

"Cargo owners are increasingly uncomfortable about shipping product in a flexitank, which represents about 40kg of plastic, equivalent to roughly 7,000 shopping bags," he said. "In theory, recycling is possible but the efficacy of this is coming into question. A key message from the COP26 conference was that rather looking to recycle plastics, society should move faster towards their non-consumption in the first place."


The scramble for ship slots is likely to continue this year

And then came the virus

But against the background of rising demand for tank container shipments, the start of the global pandemic in 2020 made life more complicated. There was a surge in demand as businesses looked to make their supply chains less vulnerable by diversifying from single-source to multi-source, he went on.

Ironically, however, revenues for many tank operators also went down because tanks were being unloaded and discharged of their cargo immediately, rather than being left in storage.

"In pre-pandemic times the normal course of events would be for a tank to arrive at a destination port, say, and then go into storage for a few weeks until the cargo was needed," he explained.

But, by mid-2021 the tide had changed significantly. Laden-storage times lengthened as procurement managers caught up with inventory requirements. Many shippers then seemed to abandon just-in-time (JIT) processes to procuring as much raw material as they could lay their hands on and keep it in store. This in turn generated some of the best-ever demurrage figures for tank owners and operators.

To complicate matters further, though, there was a hiatus in the migration from bulk tankers caused solely by the shortage of slots on deepsea container vessels.

Nevertheless, Leigh-Pemberton believed all the adversities the industry has faced in past 12 months have had some interesting and maybe positive outcomes.

"More generally, what has definitely happened is that suppliers, whether of manufactured goods or logistics services, have seen their status elevated from a dispensable supporter in an over-capacity environment to that of valued partners acknowledged for being indispensable," he said.

"Competently executing logistics chains in a safe manner that protects the reputation of all involved has been working in the background for many years. But now this is being recognised as something of value – and something that costs."

As a result, manufacturing customers are now taking a deep dive into their supply chains. Cost down is in retreat as safety and resilience have overtaken price, Leigh-Pemberton said, while there is also a move from single to multiple suppliers, and from regional to global supply sources. This is being complemented by a buffer stock approach to procurement rather than JIT.

"Long term agreements are replacing both spot tenders and 'tender cruelty', whereby annual tender renewals were notified based on the assumption of cost reductions," he commented. "This trend gives LSPs a chance to become part of the shipper's team rather a dispensable supply partner. It may be that we will see the chief supply chain officer joining the IT director in more company boardrooms."

For their part tank operators have to engage more with their key partners. "Many of us already own trucks and cleaning depots, but none of us own ships, so working better with container lines must come more into our view," he continued.

"We must grow closer to our customers and be in genuine partnership with them, assuring them that we can keep their supply chains moving in a safe and sustainable way that is valuable for them and us. The days of taking logistics for granted as a low cost, readily-available resource are over," he concluded.

Impact damage

Another presentation during the same webinar indicated some interesting trends in the most recent TT Club policy year of 2020.

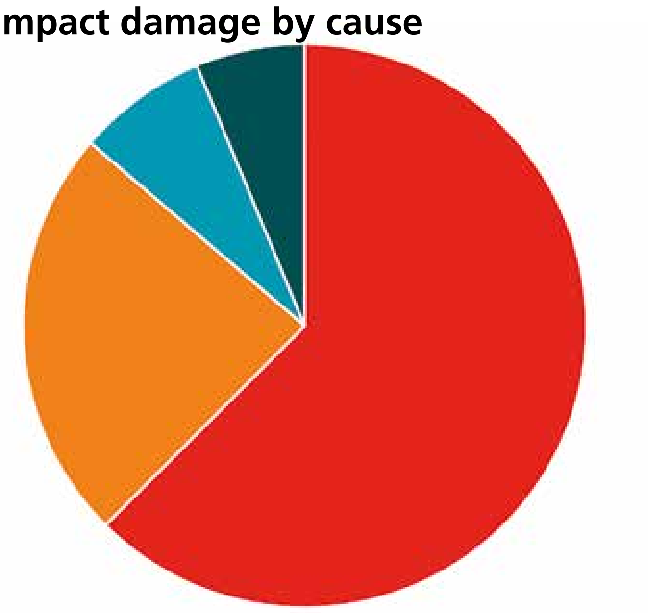
Mike Yarwood, the Club's managing director of loss prevention, explained that cargo contamination claims, which were previously the most frequent, had been overtaken by claims for impact damage through the supply chain. This was followed by pitting damage, with contamination claims dropping to the third most frequent occurrence.

Yarwood said that while there are usually a host of causal factors in impact damage, more than 50 percent of such claims to TT Club originated from handling incidents at container terminals, primarily maritime ones.

This could be a consequence of the pandemic-related challenges in logistics chains, he posited, as time pressures might have contributed to spikes in impact damage.

"Talking to people in the industry some terminals tend to leave tanks and dangerous goods (DG) containers as the last to load," he commented, "(but this is) the period which is most time-critical to ensure the ship sails on schedule. So in conjunction with the supply chain perfect storm, it could be this is a contributory factor."

Impact damage by cause



- Rough handling through intermodal terminal
- Road traffic accident
- Roll over
- Other

Road traffic incidents were the next most frequent cause, and, in contrast to other factors, almost 50 percent of such incidents occurred in the Americas, a region which currently accounts for quite a small proportion of tank container movements.

TT Club has previously drawn attention to the issue of pitting damage, as the number of such claims is on the rise.

Many of the claims identified involved damage that was reparable, but there were still several where the damage was so severe that the unit had to be written off, Yarwood said.

He added there were few identifiable trends as to which cargoes were involved, but those that appeared most frequently were fatty acids and emulsifiers.

The main takeaway, he explained, is that it is not just hazardous cargoes than can cause pitting damage, and while there is no obvious cause behind the increase in claims, it would be prudent for operators to be mindful of this risk exposure going into 2022.

"Operators should appreciate the ongoing supply chain challenges," he said, "prioritising tanks for cleaning once empty/dirty, considering inspections to see whether pickling or passivation is required, and to continue due diligence checks on the shipper and the cargo to be shipped."

www.ttclub.com

TT warning on DVB declaration

Shortly before Christmas, TT Club published a note concerning alleged misdeclaration of divinylbenzene (DVB).

The insurance mutual said it had been made aware that shipper interests have been seeking to transport DVB from China to destinations in both Europe and the USA, while misdeclaring the commodity as Class 9, UN 3082 Environmentally Hazardous Substance, Liquid, NOS.

TT Club pointed out that in the light of serious incidents, the IMDG Code was amended to include subdivision Class 4.1 for polymerizing substances with new UN numbers:

UN3532, Polymerizing Substance, Liquid, Stabilized, NOS; and

UN3534, Polymerizing Substance, Liquid, Temperature Controlled, NOS.

"While divinylbenzene (or related trade names, which may include Diethenylbenzene or Vinylstyrene) is not specifically named in the Dangerous Goods regulations, it is to be classified under one of these two numbers," the Club's advisory note stated.

It is understood that the shipper interests may be seeking to book this commodity using temperature controlled tank containers (which would generally be considered inconsistent with Class 9 in any event). The booking enquiry may be made with NVOC tank container operators or with tank container lessors.

DVB is a liquid chemical that is prone to polymerisation (a form of self-reaction). Such products generally use chemical inhibitors to prevent self-reaction taking place. The chemical inhibitors are effective for a limited period of time at a maximum temperature of about 27degC, assuming that a critical oxygen saturation is maintained. As a result, the current mandatory regulations require temperature control to ensure the cargo remains sufficiently stabilised.

"Freight forwarders, logistics operators, tank container operators and lessors, NVOCs and liner carriers are urged to be alert and to take necessary action to ensure that commodities being presented for transport are correctly declared and documented for safe carriage," the Club said.

www.ttclub.com

Bertschi posts record sales in challenging year

Bertschi performed well in a challenging environment in 2021 and demonstrated the resilience of its business model, the company said announcing its annual results.

With record sales of CHF1.02 billion, the company exceeded the one billion mark for the first time. Group-wide sales grew by 13 percent, with growth in worldwide business (particularly in Asia) significantly higher than in European business. The turnover share of global activities rose from 34 percent to 40 percent.

"This is an extraordinary achievement by everyone involved, especially considering that Bertschi only went global with activities in Asia, America and the Middle East 10 years ago," said Hans-Jörg Bertschi, executive chairman.

"In the current situation, marked by the pandemic and disrupted supply chains, this level of growth would not have been possible without the personal commitment of all employees," added Jan Arnet, CEO. The workforce grew by 60 new recruits to 3,160 people in 2021. "Due to the increasingly global nature of our business, our corporate culture has also evolved and become richer. This is evidenced by the fact that people from all continents work at the headquarters in Dürrenäsch and nearly 40 different languages are spoken," Arnet said.

The Bertschi workforce grew by 60 recruits to 3,160 people in 2021

Bertschi expanded its own logistics infrastructure in 2021 with investments of around CHF100 million. These included doubling the storage capacities for containerised chemical products in Rotterdam (Netherlands) and Middlesbrough (UK), and building a new chemical logistics hub in China. In addition, the fleet of tank and silo containers was increased by more than 2,000 units. Bertschi put the 40,000th container into operations at the start of 2022.

The group expects the economy to stabilise this year. "The positive trend from 2021 will continue, even if growth is set to slow down in this phase of the recovery cycle," said Arnet. Nevertheless, Bertschi will continue investing at the current high pace in 2022. A major tank container storage terminal for dangerous goods is being built in Antwerp. There are also plans to expand the existing logistics facilities in Duisburg, Schwarzheide, and in the Netherlands.

The new logistics centre for dangerous liquid chemicals, located in Zhangjiagang at the heart of the Yangtze Delta area not far from Shanghai, will open in mid-2022. It consists of a dangerous goods storage facility for up to 1,000 tank containers, as well as automatic filling systems and three warehouses for different classes of dangerous goods, with space for 25,000 pallets. The plant has an annual capacity of 300,000–400,000 tons of chemical products.

"This investment will consolidate our position in the Chinese market, where we already enjoy a strong position with our tank container shipments to and from China," Hans-Jörg Bertschi stated.

Bertschi will continue to pursue its digitalisation strategy. Last year, full visibility was ensured in intermodal transport chains by means of automated status and ETA notifications to customers, with a coverage level of over 99 percent. Bertschi is also investing heavily in more efficient planning systems for European and global transport execution. Further implementations are planned for 2022.

The group began its journey towards climate-neutral logistics in 2021. More than 90 percent of all European shipments are sent by intermodal transport, meaning the company is starting out with a favourable carbon footprint.

Bertschi's 40,000th tank container joined the fleet

"We will continue to invest in intermodal transport via the environmentally and climate-friendly method of rail, including investments in terminal infrastructure. In addition, we are planning to take steps to convert road transport to and from the terminals to climate-neutral propulsion energy, starting in 2024," said Hans-Jörg Bertschi. Further measures to reduce carbon emissions and use of photovoltaics for sustainable power generation are planned at the company's sites. Bertschi has already completed an initial project involving the installation of 44,000 sqm of solar panels on the roofs of the logistics centre in Singapore.

www.bertschi.com

44,000 sqm photovoltaic system at Bertschi's chemical logistics centre in Singapore

Talke, Leschaco in Klang moves

Asia-Pacific has for many years been a promising market for chemicals logistics firms and their involvement in the region continues to grow.

Recently, two Germany-based operators announced significant expansion in Malaysia, specifically Port Klang.

In spring this year, Alfred Talke will start the construction of a 17,500 sqm warehouse for dangerous goods in Klang, forming the first phase of a larger chemical logistics centre. The plot is located within the bonded Westports terminal.

This will be followed by a second phase of a similar size for non-dangerous chemicals. For this, Talke has leased an area of 14.7 acres.

Talke says the planned DG warehouse is unique in Port Klang. In addition to dangerous goods, Talke will also offer storage for polymers and other non-dangerous chemicals, complemented with value-added services such as refilling or packaging.

With this step, the company is creating a new hub in Southeast Asia. The region continues to experience high GDP growth rates in the chemical industry and expects consumption of polymers and chemicals to increase. Malaysia lies at the heart of this region, where intercontinental and intra-Asian maritime trade routes meet.

In recent decades, Malaysia has seen a big increase in container traffic, surpassing other emerging economies in the region. Port Klang is the country's most important port and is located on the peninsula's west coast on the Strait of Malacca. After Singapore, Port Klang is the second largest port in Southeast Asia and has become an attractive alternative. Major advantages are lower costs and the availability of affordable land.

And Leschaco…

Also in Port Klang, Leschaco recently opened a new chemical and DG warehouse with a floor space of 12,000 sqm on two levels. Within this new facility up to 13,000 pallets of chemical products and hazardous materials can be safely stored.

Contract logistics, especially for chemicals, is a fast-growing market in Malaysia, the Bremen-based logistics firm says. Accordingly, reliable logistics companies specialising in transporting and storing chemicals and dangerous goods are in demand.

Leschaco (Malaysia) has grown with its customers and developed into an important player for the logistics and storage of chemical products in the APAC region.

"The constantly growing demand from the chemical industry made the new building urgently necessary. This investment is of great strategic importance for our existing and new customers," commented Lothar Lauszat, managing director of Leschaco (Malaysia).

The state-of-the-art warehouse is therefore fully compliant with local and international EHS and DG standards, rules and regulations.

Meanwhile, the family-owned company is settling its succession in the middle of a growth phase, in contrast to many companies which undertake this change in times of economic crisis.

The turnover of the group with more than 2,300 employees worldwide is expected to exceed €900 million in 2021, after €600 million in 2020.

Yet, CEO Jörg Conrad sees a central challenge for the management of the company in this growth phase. "We want to remain a family-owned company with Hanseatic roots. This means that our course is defined by traditional and sustainable values," he said.

"At the same time, we want to continue to grow our business internationally. Digitalisation is a key success factor for Leschaco. It is therefore no surprise that my son (Constantin) has been responsible for this area in our group of companies as chief digital officer (CDO) for several years."

Leschaco's new Port Klang warehouse can store 13,000 pallets of chemical products and hazardous materials

44,000 sqm photovoltaic system at Bertschi's chemical logistics centre in Singapore

Jörg Conrad (centre) flanked by daughter Charlotte and son constantin

In August 2021, Jörg Conrad handed over the majority of shares to his children Constantin and Charlotte Palermo (HR projects manager at Leschaco). Until then, Jörg was the sole owner of the Group.

Constantin will gradually be prepared to take over the role as CEO from his father and Charlotte will continue to contribute to HR issues as an active partner and will increasingly take care of the development of the corporate culture.

"The company culture is crucial to recruiting and retaining the best employees," Charlotte Palermo explained.

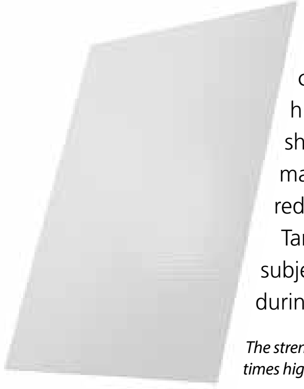
The management board will remain unchanged – Jörg and Constantin will continue to share the responsibility in the board alongside Sirka Hintze (CFO) and Oliver Oestreich (COO).

www.talke.com
www.leschaco.com

Built to last with Lamilux

Tank containers last for decades. During this time, they transport gases, oils, milk and other liquids – and an image. The exterior shell is the operator's business card.

Fibre reinforced plastics manufacturer Lamilux Composites says that cladding a container with Lamilux X-treme glass-fibre reinforced plastic permanently protects the representative shell from UV, weather and mechanical effects.



The strength and rigidity values of Lamilux X-treme are many times higher than those of normal composites, the company says

Lamilux X-treme is a composite material with the maximum possible content of reinforcement fibres in a highly elastic epoxy resin matrix. The shock-resistant material reduces maintenance and repair costs, thus reducing container downtime.

Tank containers of all kinds are also subjected to very high mechanical loads during loading and transport; whether on a cargo ship, trains or trucks.

Even under the toughest conditions, Lamilux X-treme remains visually appealing and maximises the durability of the life of the entire structure, the makers say. The operator also saves running costs for its fleet, as the tank has a significantly lower deadweight than ones with conventional exterior shells.

Lamilux X-treme and its carbon version absorb any load and tension forces on sandwich panels with their large-scale use in a wide variety of applications, making the whole structure resistant to torsion. This becomes clear when the carbon-fibre-reinforced polymer is compared with other materials used as sandwich face sheets. It is up to 50 percent lighter with a tensile strength three or four times greater than steel or aluminium.

The low thermal expansion ensures that large structural components can be produced without bubbles or distortions emerging in the long term. The low thermal conductivity in products and the consequent optimised insulation in cooling transport containers make powerful arguments for the material's use in refrigerated trucks.

Lamilux X-treme maximises the durability of the life of the entire structure

However, all such properties are not of any use to the commercial vehicle industry if the material is unable to take mechanical stress loads caused by shock and impact. X-treme products not only withstand such loads, but usually resist them in a way that completely prevents major damage and downtimes due to repairs in most cases. The material even manages to hold fast during hail storms and adverse weather conditions, making it ideal for both body interiors and exteriors.

Lamilux composites are produced in a continuous, automated production process. The separate production lines guarantee minimum delivery periods while providing consistently optimum quality which can be reproduced at any time. The product range can be manufactured in widths up to 3m, while the length of sheets or rolls are tailored to customer requirements.

Thanks to the maximum possible content of reinforcement fibres, equal to approximately 70 percent by weight, and perfect bonding with the high-strength epoxy resin matrix, enormous tensile strengths can be achieved which are more than twice that of steel.

X-treme thus achieves three times the tensile strength of other most other cladding materials and exceeds the strength and rigidity values of most materials many times over, the company claims.

Now a member of ITCO, Lamilux Composites says it is setting global standards for the transport of tank containers and is thus actively shaping the future of the tank container industry.

"We are very pleased to have become a member of ITCO in February last year and to be able to work with the organisation on its mission to promote and present tank containers as a safe, cost-effective and flexible means of transport. Here we can support the organisation especially in technological developments in the interest of quality and safety," said Sascha Oswald, head of product management.

www.lamilux.de

Suttons closes VTG tank deal

Suttons completed the asset purchase of the overseas ISO tank containers, personnel, and customer contracts of VTG Tanktainer.

The acquisition catapults Suttons into the top 10 global tank container operators, and opens up new markets such as South America.

"This is a major step in our strategy to grow our international operations, and to improve the value we offer to our customers through improved scale, increased flexibility and additional geographic coverage," said John Sutton, managing director of Suttons International and CEO of Suttons Group.

Relevant VTG staff have been transferred to Suttons.

Integration of the two operations included joint customer visits, updated agency agreements, transfer of all relevant assets, discussions with suppliers, IT systems implementation and training for the team. Logistics planning is now using the larger network, so existing and new Suttons customers will immediately start to see the benefits.

www.suttonsgroup.com

Fort Vale launches new LPG rail range

Fort Vale has announced a new LPG rail product range for 2022.

Building on the success of the existing rail liquid equipment line, the new range represents a substantial increase in corrosion resistance, flow rates and overall effectiveness.

The range includes a hydraulic bottom discharge valve; LPG bellows operated Y-valves; bottom discharge with hydraulic indicator, bottom discharge with mechanical indicator, hydraulic pump, bottom discharge and pump assembly.

One of the biggest advantages is that the equipment is manufactured from stainless steel – this improves corrosion resistance and ensures longevity while minimising down time and M&R costs.

The Y-valves have a lockable handle function for security and safety, are bellows operated and rated to an MAWP of 30 Bar (as are the bottom discharge valves) – which is comfortably higher than any other on the market, the company says. The Y-valves also offer significantly increased flow rates compared with other models due to the CFD optimised internal geometry.

Other features include: direct drive linkage; hydraulic indicators (mechanical indicators optional); 10kg lighter than conventional designs; anti-cavitation plate; increased flow rates; stainless steel construction; complete cargo compatibility; shear studs as standard; extra secure hydraulic sealing; designed for LPG market for high pressures up to 30 Bar.

Ashley Leach, technical sales engineer, said: "This equipment has been through extensive cycle testing over the past 12 months and we've also added a hydraulic vent valve to the range for specific customer requirements on the liquid tanks. We like to think years ahead, so (customers) know it will still be viable in 10 or even 20 years' time.

"Even though current regulations give an allowance of MAWP 25 Bar, our equipment is rated to 30 Bar, giving customers the reassurance that their equipment will not become obsolete as a result of future rule changes."

The new LPG rail product range represents a substantial increase in corrosion resistance and flow rates

IBC low profile

Prior to this announcement Fort Vale introduced a new 2ins BSP low profile IBC relief valve to improve flow rates and sealing performance and in the process sets a new benchmark for comparable models on the market.

The valve is perfectly suited to IBC applications where flow rates and sealing are key to the performance of the equipment – especially when used on low pressure, static vessels. The low profile feature increases the flexibility of the valve when space is a limiting factor and gives high flow rates with regards to pressure, while the vacuum relief offers increased vessel protection.

The potential for damaging leaks is reduced by using conical and guided seating – this significantly improves valve re-seating after relieving pressure – and CFD optimised flow rates allows balanced flow areas within the geometry of the valve (reducing the potential for leaks), which maximises both pressure and vacuum flow rates.

A hexagonal shaped body allows for use of standard tooling to fit the valve to the pressure vessel, while a push button feature for vacuum function allows for manual venting and the integral spring design allows for greater flow rates.

An internal labyrinth feature and angled vent ports reduces rainwater ingress and potential contamination of the valve and Fortyt 'O' rings give excellent corrosion resistance against many chemicals.

An addition to the Twinact pressure vacuum relief valve range, the development of this valve was initially driven by enquiries from customers in the road tanker and IBC sectors.

Global sales and marketing director Graham Blanchard commented: "With our state-of-the-art manufacturing facility we have total control over all processes from research and development, design, investment casting, pressing, forging, plasma and laser cutting, to assembly, testing and certification. This enables us to respond quickly to bespoke requests from interested clients."

Finally, a new online webshop went live late last year. The initial launch is for UK customers only, but this will soon be opened up to include European customers.

The site will feature a wide range of spare parts and accessories and give customers the ability to specify and order parts – safe in the knowledge that they come direct from the manufacturer.

Direct access is available at **https://shop.fortvale.com/en**

Alternatively, users can go to Fort Vale's website and click on the shopping trolley icon at the top of the home page.

www.fortvale.com

Fort Vale's new 2ins BSP low profile IBC relief valve

Nexxiot launches new big data hardware

Nexxiot has unveiled its latest gateway device for intermodal containers. The asset management company claims it will enable unparalleled big data-enabled traceability and visibility of critical assets.

The Globehopper Edge (pictured) is a self-sustaining, zero-maintenance wireless connectivity device capable of transmitting thousands of data points every day from multiple onboard sensors that transmit crucial information about a container's cargo such as precise location, temperature, environmental conditions and more.

Designed to communicate in real time with Nexxiot Connect, the company's customisable, cloud-based software solutions, Globehopper Edge is said to optimise asset utilisation through AI powered machine learning that has proven to impact on-time performance positively, asset management and achieve intermodal shipping efficiencies.

Nexxiot CEO Stefan Kalmund said: "Combining state-of-the-art sensors, gateways and global connectivity, Globehopper Edge is the most advanced cargo monitoring device in the world today with the present and future capabilities to provide our customers with the most accurate and reliable information possible about their cargo, ensuring unsurpassed accountability across all modes of shipping."

Custom engineered by Nexxiot's own Zurich based R&D lab, Globehopper Edge is built using advanced engineering methods and is designed for effortless use. As with all devices in the company's hardware suite, it is solar powered and built to provide zero-maintenance connectivity with a guaranteed lifetime of more than six years. The device is fitted to the outside of a standard container and is onboarded and paired within 90 seconds, providing access to essential data, powerful dashboards and actionable insights for many years.

Kalmund added: "Nexxiot is focused on the highest strategic level of supply chain digitisation and optimisation. We work in close collaboration with our clients and partners at the C-suite level to define optimal shipping performance outcomes, then deploy our technology to achieve those results. By remaining focused on the most impactful mega-trends across the shipping world, we are redefining the standards and capabilities for future-proof TradeTech."

Nexxiot co-founder Daniel MacGregor's ambition is to reduce worldwide supply chain emissions by five percent over the next five years by preventing empty moves and by removing process inefficiencies around ports and shipping hubs.

He said: "We created Globehopper Edge to take that next step in trade facilitation. Aimed squarely at the 30 million standard intermodal containers that travel around the planet, the rugged IP65, custom engineered, energy harvesting hardware provides unprecedented access to critical data to enable radical transformation for all participants and stakeholders in the global value network of trade, finance and transport."

Already a dominant presence in the digitisation of European cargo shipping, Nexxiot has been building up its Dallas-based US team of engineers and technicians to help fuel the company's expansion throughout the North American market.

The company went on to say that the Globehopper Edge arrives at a critical inflection point for the global shipping industry as an unprecedented 70+ container vessels languish off the coast of Los Angeles, unable to offload their cargo. "The industry must come to grips with wide-scale supply-chain disruptions around commodities and consumer products as well as a total lack of asset and cargo transparency on a global scale," Nexxiot stated.

www.nexxiot.com

Fuel transporter aims for ER Status

Road haulage firm AD fuels is working to secure Earned Recognition (ER) status and improve its fleet efficiency. The company's ER goal is being supported with the help of compliance control and fleet management software systems from both TruTac and Microlise.

According to AD Fuels managing director Jon Mayes, the transport team now has everything on one platform making complete fleet control easier, thanks to single sign on (SSO) between the two systems. All data is remotely captured, securely transferred and instantly accessible, saving time, increasing accuracy and virtually eliminating the risk of either duplication or human error.

"The integrated compliance portal from TruTac is easy to use and looks after everything from driver's hours and vehicle checks to licence details and workshop schedules. The Microlise system focuses on improving driver behaviour and delivers value-add benefits such as fuel reduction," he says.

From its Worthing base in the South of England, AD Fuels collects from gas suppliers and delivers to end users throughout the UK, supporting a range of industries and businesses including LNG and CNG suppliers, anaerobic digestion operators and local authorities.

Fuel transport, explains Mayes, requires maximum safety and compliance, plus every aspect of the fleet operation must run like clockwork and be open to scrutiny and checks. In this regard, he says the data captured and digitally stored by the TruTac and Microlise systems spans a wide range of driver and vehicle activity which can be accessed and retrieved from any portal for auditing and compliance checks at any time.

By using TruFleet on a tablet or any terminal, the workshop team can instantly view planned maintenance, inspections, MOTs and repairs, while adding calendar reminders for tax, insurance and service intervals. Furthermore, inspection sheets can be instantly uploaded and if needed, the system can also manage multiple garages, schedules and bookings.

Meanwhile, complying with Working Time Directive regulations is made simple for AD Fuels by using TruTac's time and attendance clocking system, TruTime. Using digital tachograph driver cards, TruTime supports duty of care and H&S obligations, plus HR records for holidays, absences and shift activity.

Also, by integrating with TruTac's TruAnalysis module, TruTime monitors and controls each driver's working hours and calculates lead-in and lead-out times, by comparing clocked time with tachograph start and/or end times.

"In essence" says Mayes, "our drivers have far greater control over their own performance. For example, via the TruTac App, every driver can receive instant information regarding their infringements, and debriefings can also be done via the App – digitally signed, sealed and stored on the system."

www.trutac.co.uk

Hitachi Rail partners with IMT on digital solution

Hitachi Rail and Intermodal Telematics (IMT) have agreed an exclusive long-term partnership that will add IMT's monitoring sensors to Hitachi's existing digital freight service.

The agreement will allow Hitachi to offer rail freight companies around the world a solution that provides real time monitoring to improve efficiency and safety.

Netherlands-based IMT has pioneered the development of digital monitoring sensors and telematics solutions for freight cars and containers. The sensors verify the exact location of the cars, the loading status, the open/close condition of doors and hatches, the temperature and pressure of the cargo and the health condition of bogies and wheelsets. The data is sent to the Cloud via a solar powered GPS device and allows the condition of the train and its cargo to be monitored in real time, as well as alerting operators about potential issues. The partnership allows the use of AI analytics to optimise the efficiency and safety of its customers' freight services worldwide.

Powered by IMT, Hitachi can now provide fully-fledged telematics solutions that improve reliability and performance for the freight market. The technology can give companies the vital information they need to control their supply chains more efficiently and respond with appropriate interventions more quickly. With global supply chains having faced major disruption throughout 2021 and challenges predicted to continue, the partnership offers enhanced resilience for companies transporting goods via rail freight, the two companies believe.

The partnership with IMT will complement Hitachi Rail's purchase of Perpetuum last year. Perpetuum, a British rail technology firm provides Hitachi with digital solutions that improve train reliability and performance. Its remote condition monitoring detects emerging damage in train bogies long before it can be identified by other means, thus preventing failures, facilitating more efficient maintenance cycles, and increasing the life of the wheelset. Coupled with the IMT solution, Hitachi will now be able to monitor freight vehicles completely in real time.

"Hitachi Rail is focused on growing its digital offer to develop data-driven solutions to meet our customer's complex challenges," said Edoardo La Ficara, executive officer and COO for operation, service & maintenance of Hitachi Rail.

"Our exclusive partnership with IMT delivers this and enables Hitachi to provide an enhanced digital freight offer across the globe, with a strong initial focus on European and North American markets. This solution will enable operators and maintainers to be aware of vehicles' position and status at all times. This will provide a radical evolution for the freight industry, whose railcars are overwhelmingly without any telematics or monitoring whatsoever."

IMT will now exclusively offer the Perpetuum sensor solution in the freight market, which will broaden IMT's full portfolio in asset and cargo monitoring for the international rail market.

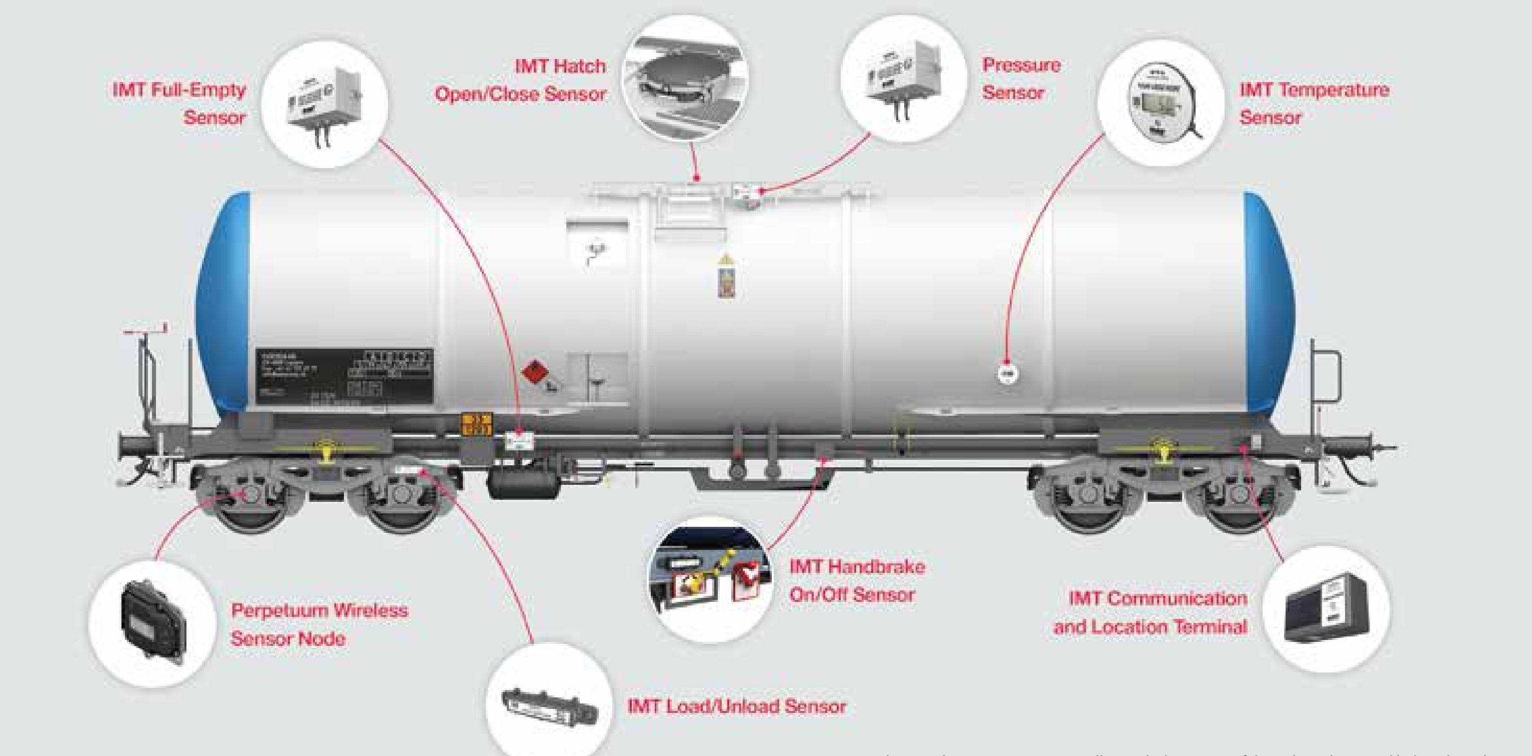
For Dethmer Drenth, managing director and founder of IMT, said the partnership adds significant value to its railcar market offering as it expands its assets and cargo related monitoring to specific predictive asset maintenance monitoring.

"(With the Hitachi/Perpetuum sensor) we can now create a holistic view of the railcar above and below the axle, alerting the asset and cargo owner on a need-to-know and managing-by-exception basis."

The integration of digital technology has a major role to play in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of operations, train maintenance and safety. The partnership follows the global mobility firm's strategy of expanding its digital capabilities, including Hitachi's Lumada platform that uses AI and the Internet of Things to turn data into actionable business insights.

The initial focus for the new digital service will be in Europe and North America. Hitachi Rail is already an established provider to freight operators in North America, where over 34.5 million carloads and intermodal units were transported in 2021, a growth of 4.8 percent compared to 2020.

www.intermodaltelematics.com
www.hitachirail.com



Using the Hitachi/Perpetuum sensor allows a holistic view of the railcar above and below the axle

L-r: Dethmer Drenth (IMT) and Edoardo La Ficara (Hitachi Rail) at the signing of the contract

Advertisers Index

Published 6 times a year.

ISSN 1462-0731

Events

The following event dates were correct at time to going to press

Logichem Europe
29-31 March 2022
Rotterdam, Netherlands
https://logichem.wbresearch.com

StocExpo 2022
23-25 May 2022
Rotterdam, Netherlands
www.stocexpo.com

transport logistic China
15-17 June 2022
Shagnhai, China
www.transportlogistic-china.com

Intermodal Asia
12-14 July 2022
Shanghai, China
www.intermodal-asia.com

Fecc Annual Congress
05-07 September 2022
Sitges, Spain
www.fecc.org

Intermodal Europe
8-10 November 2022
Amsterdam, Netherlands
www.intermodal-events.com

BulkDistributor

Managing Editor: Neil Madden, neil@bulk-distributor.com, Tel: +33 (0)3 88 60 30 68
Advertising Director: Anne Williams, anne@bulk-distributor.com, Tel: +44 (0)20 854 13130
Circulation: Rhian Burge, subscriptions@andpublishing.co.uk, Tel: +44 (0)1565 653283

Bulk Distributor is published by A&D Publishing
Caledonian House, Tatton Street, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6AG, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1565 653283
www.bulk-distributor.com

New tankers for Chemical Express

Italian chemical transport specialist Chemical Express has expanded its international fleet with a series of Van Hool road tankers.

Earlier this year, a series of chassis for transporting tank containers were also delivered.

For Van Hool, the delivery is a further step in its partnership with Chemical Express, confirming a long-standing business relationship.

www.chemicalexpress.it

Freeway boosts Abbey's fleet maintenance

Abbey Logistics is rolling out a new fleet maintenance system across its 4 workshop locations to help improve vehicle reliability and utilisation.

Supplied by Freeway Fleet Systems, engineers and technicians are being equipped with rugged tablets for digitally recording time and work activity. Synchronised in real time through a Freeway central asset maintenance system, the mobile devices and management software will give Abbey 24/7 visibility of the status of all maintenance work and costs associated with parts and labour.

Abbey had previously implemented a system to manage compliance and maintenance but with the business expanding, a more integrated and comprehensive system was required that would provide better management information and a platform for future expansion.

A key feature of Freeway is that it extends digital working into the hands of staff in the workshop and Abbey is equipping technicians with tablets to digitally record their timesheets, inspections and job cards.

"When it came to managing the fleet, our previous system was fine for monitoring vehicle and parts costs but that was only giving us half the picture. Missing was any information on arguably our most important single asset and that is labour," said Paul Jamieson, head of finance at Abbey.

"With Freeway's tablets in the workshop, we have visibility of all work in real-time allowing better co-ordination with the workforce, improving uptime. We also gain vital insights such as an accurate cost allocation per asset. That allows us to make properly informed decisions on how to improve the way we work."

As well as the core functions of managing services, inspections, defects and compliance, Abbey is implementing Freeway for managing stores for digital parts issuing and stock control, with automated replenishment on impress stock.

Abbey will also be using Freeway's driver app so drivers can use their mobiles to record their walk-around safety checks. This gives the workshop immediate visibility of any issues so decisions can be made immediately on the urgency on the rectification of any reported defect.

Whale opens in Scotland

Whale Tankers is strengthening its position in Scotland having invested in a permanent base there.

Whale is one of Europe's largest manufacturers of liquid waste vacuum tankers and jetting equipment. Managing director Mark Warmington stated: "Having serviced a customer base in Scotland for more than 30 years, we believe the time is right for us to invest in the ongoing growth opportunities that exist in what is a key geographic market."

Situated in the Fife town of Inverkeithing, the new location will become a service, repair and parts centre that will meet the needs of both private and public sector customers, not just within Scotland but also northern England.

Located on Belleknowles Industrial Estate, with direct access to the M90, the recent facility features a three-bay workshop – equipped with the latest service equipment and technology – an extensive parts stock, offices and meeting rooms.

Responsibility for developing Whale's new Scottish home and the person tasked with overseeing its strategic development and day-to-day running is recently appointed depot manager Ken MacLeod. Together with an initial team of four service engineers, one permanently located onsite and three operating in the field, MacLeod is also joined by a service and parts administrator, all of whom will be responsible for delivering a full range of aftersales service and parts provision.

Enjoying full integration with the suite of support systems deployed by Whale Tankers at its main head office and manufacturing site in the West Midlands, the team will manage and oversee the provision of a service offering onsite that includes routine maintenance and repairs, tank testing, as well as managing fixed price maintenance packages available through the company's WhaleCARE programme. The latter serves to ensure that all customer equipment is fully compliant with current legislative requirements.

www.whale.co.uk