

intouch

The Hills Group newsletter

Issue 32 April 2014



The end of an era...

...after 20 years, Alan Mackenzie leaves
Quarry Products in good shape

**From Northacre to
North Germany...
the RDF journey**

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**Show home provides
platform for sales at
Station Meadows**

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**New concrete
plant at
Upwood quarry**

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viewpoint

Wet, Wet, Wet...!

If the pop group Wet Wet Wet had renamed their 1994 classic hit 'Rain is all around' it would have been an appropriate description of the first few months of this year! As with many other parts of the nation the conditions made life particularly testing, especially for our quarrying and house building activities. However, the outlook is a bit brighter now, so let's hope that we have the same wonderful summer that followed the last horrendously wet winter of 1995!

Raising a dram of 'Macallan' to 'Alan Mack'...!

The old order changed after company stalwart and group director of Quarry Products Alan Mackenzie left the company after 20 years of sterling service. Alan had the misfortune to be my first boss when I joined the company nearly 20 years ago, but managed to teach me many valuable things about the industry! We wish Alan all the best for the

future and are grateful for all he achieved. You can read more on the next page.

Together again!

By the time this issue hits your desk or doorstep The Hills Group head office would have relocated from Marlborough to County Park, Swindon (see page 7). It seems incredible that 25 years have passed since we moved from County Park to Ailesbury Court in Marlborough. The company has seen many changes in that time and we shall have many fond memories of our times in this beautiful market town. However, we are about to commence a new exciting era which will see group and operational management and administration brought together again.

**Best wishes,
Michael Hill, Chief executive**



The end of an era...

...after 20 years, Alan Mackenzie leaves Quarry Products in good shape

Alan Mackenzie joined the Company in 1993 to take the position of production manager at Shorncote Quarry with Hills Aggregates.



Alan's commitment to the role and ongoing contribution saw him rise through the ranks, becoming director of Hills Minerals and Waste in 1998 then group director for Hills Quarry Products in 2007.

Alan left the business on 31 December 2013 to spend more time with his family but he will still be assisting Quarry Products with planning and development projects. Reflecting on his time with Hills, Alan said:

"As a family business we have been able to adapt to market conditions and pull through a very tough economic climate. It has been a challenge with rising costs but one we at Quarry Products have met with the support of the directors and family.

"With new modern processing plants at Woodsford and Upwood, together with our new concrete plants, Hills is in a strong position to meet the high standards our

customers require. I have been supported over the years by talented employees and a committed management team which I believe will grow in strength in the years to come, thus Quarry Products is in good hands for the future.

I would like also like to take this opportunity to thank all the landowners, agents and consultants which I have had the pleasure to work with over the past 20 years."

The current group director for Quarry Products, Peter Andrew was keen to praise Alan's contribution: **"It has been a privilege to work with Alan during his time at Hills. It is no understatement to say that he has been an inspirational and knowledgeable leader."**

"Alan leaves the business in good shape and it is the responsibility of myself and everyone in Quarry Products to build on his good work as we look to increase production outputs and diversify the products and services we offer."



Chief executive Mike Hill pays tribute to Alan at his leaving dinner.

Achievements

- 1 In first role at Hills (1993) – increasing the production capacity at Shorncote, then obtaining further extensions to Shorncote and Dryleaze
- 2 Latton project – from conception to restoration. Preparing the site,

design and building the plant, managing the production and the restoration

- 3 Developing the Woodsford site from inception to maximise the sand and gravel deposits during challenging economic conditions
- 4 Negotiation, obtaining planning permission and development of

Upwood quarry, Oxford and subsequent concrete plant

- 5 Significant expansion of the concrete business at Newbury and Woodsford
- 6 Impressive health and safety record with no major accidents in 20 years overseeing Quarry Products.

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From Northacre to North Germany... the RDF journey

Ed Dodd, divisional director - Waste Solutions; Mike Webster, group director - Waste Solutions; Mike Hill chief executive and Simon Thomas, Northacre plant manager see the delivery of RDF bales arrive at the Remondis plant near Dusseldorf, Germany.

"Once we found the right calibre of people, they've needed to acclimatise quickly to their new roles and a unique working environment in order to meet some demanding deadlines. The Northacre team has shown impressive levels of enthusiasm, commitment and no small measure of hard work. They will continue to be pivotal to the plant's ongoing success."

Simon Thomas, Northacre plant manager

Chief executive Mike Hill joined a senior management team from Waste Solutions on a visit to the Remondis energy from waste plant in North Germany - to see one of the first deliveries of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) from the Northacre Resource Recovery Centre (NRRC) since the plant became fully operational.

The commissioning phase for the NRRC began in early 2013. During this time, plant manager Simon Thomas and key members of staff were fully engaged in fine tuning on-site operations and infrastructure as waste input volumes were steadily increased and the plant's performance measured.

The completion of commissioning at the NRRC in November 2013 also signalled the official start of the 25 year contract between Waste Solutions and Wiltshire Council to convert 60,000 tonnes of the county's household waste each year into RDF to generate power instead of being sent to landfill. The RDF is produced using Mechanical and Biological Treatment (MBT) technology at the NRRC

and is currently being exported to Europe, under a five year contract, where it is used to generate electricity. In the meantime Hills is looking into the options to secure a more local solution for use of the fuel where the benefits of that energy value could be retained in the region.

Setting up and operating a multi-million pound, high technology processing plant like the NRRC requires a talented team with the diverse range of skills and abilities. Plant manager Simon Thomas worked closely with Human Resources to recruit the current NRRC team, which is now made up of: two shift teams (each consisting of shift supervisor, shift operative, shift utility operative and a warehouse operative), a three strong maintenance team, a site support technician and site administrator. Waste Solutions were able to employ a number of people directly from the Westbury area, so the NRRC continues to reduce the amount of Wiltshire's waste that goes to landfill whilst also creating new opportunities for local people.

Pictured (left to right): Emma Hurst, administrator; Ian Hier, maintenance team leader; Lara Llewellyn, site support technician; Simon Thomas, plant manager.



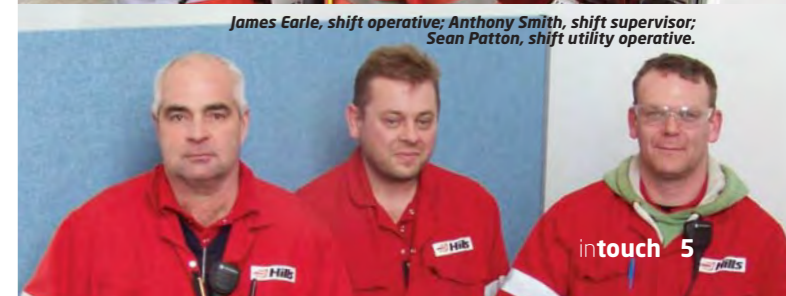
Chris Wheeler, shift supervisor; Adam Powell, shift operative; Harry Silcocks shift utility operative; Phil Mead, warehouse operative.



Dave Stebbings, mechanical engineer and Paul Bullimore, electrical technician.



James Earle, shift operative; Anthony Smith, shift supervisor; Sean Patton, shift utility operative.



The RDF bales are loaded on to the lorry at the NRRC in Westbury.



The RDF bales are split at the Remondis energy from waste plant at Oberhausen, North Germany.

How does MBT technology work?

The MBT process to treat waste employs natural microbes within the waste to accelerate the decomposition process. The process takes up to 14 days and is conducted in a sealed building which is maintained under negative air pressure to avoid the release of odours to the environment. Process air from the building is passed through filters prior to release into the atmosphere.

As the waste dries, it loses over 30 per cent of its original weight. Once dried, it is further processed to remove metals for recycling. It is from the remaining material that a refuse derived fuel (RDF) is manufactured. The RDF is a dry and sanitised material that can be safely handled.



John's 'Move to Improve' has it sorted

As was reported in the last issue of intouch, supervisor, John Chapman was an annual 'Move to Improve' winner with his suggestion to install a second NIR (near infrared) separator at the Porte Marsh Recyclables Management Facility (RMF).

John received a £300 prize for his excellent idea which has enhanced efficiency at the Porte Marsh RMF. As recycling area manager Henry Newbery explains: "Following John's suggestion, the addition of the new NIR separator avoids the need for running some cardboard material through the line twice. The end result is that contaminant materials in the baled cardboard and plastics are greatly reduced meaning we can produce a high quality product."



Move to Improve

Marlborough top



Congratulations to the Marlborough team of Kevin Archer, site supervisor and Tony Shepherd, recycling operative (pictured above) who topped the Household Recycling Centre league tables by recycling 76.93% of the waste received on

their site during the period November 2013 to January 2014.

1. Marlborough	76.93%
2. Melksham	76.03%
3. Warminster	75.8%
4. Trowbridge	75.16%

Second report shows Waste Solutions mean business

Waste Solutions has published its second Business Performance Report - highlighting how the continued investment in facilities is increasing the amount of waste recycling and treatment the business can offer its customers.

The report compares environmental, health and safety, and quality performance in 2012/13 against established targets and also examines the numerous initiatives undertaken as part of the Year of Health & Safety.

The Business Performance Report can be downloaded from www.hills-waste.co.uk/our-performance/facts-figures



an impressive new Hills sign in the reception (see left).

Whilst the end result is a smart, professional looking office

Julie and Kevin meet the naming challenge

There were joint winners in the name the Wiltshire House meeting rooms competition with Julie James, PA to group director - Waste Solutions and Kevin Robbins, concrete operations support manager each receiving £75 of One4All shopping vouchers.

The six meeting rooms will be known as: Kingshill, Langford, Swillbrook, Badbury, Ailesbury and Stratton and are named after sites and locations of importance from the company's history.



County Park update the new head office takes shape

The project to transform Wiltshire House at the County Park Business Centre, Swindon into the new head office for The Hills Group of companies is nearing completion.

Refurbishment work started in December 2013 when the ground floor tenants at Wiltshire House vacated. The works began with stripping out the old area to establish the new office space. More recently new energy saving lighting has been installed throughout the building; air conditioning has been fitted on the first floor and a number of IT infrastructure improvements have been made including: much improved broadband connectivity and a new telephone system which will allow up to 50 concurrent calls. A significant advance on the previous system which allowed 12 calls at the same time. Visitors to Wiltshire House will also see



space, not everything is brand new - in fact existing fixtures and fittings such as doors and partition panels have been reused whenever possible. One of the most notable improvements at Wiltshire House is the Robert Hill Lounge, a stylish coffee-shop style area on the ground floor for informal meetings and for staff to eat their lunch (see main image above).

Refurbishing a large office space with staff remaining on-site inevitably presents some challenges, but as chief executive Mike Hill commented: "The flexibility, understanding and professionalism of the staff at Wiltshire House has meant that normal business operations have been maintained whilst the refurbishment works have moved to different areas of the building."

Look out for a full report on the move to Wiltshire House in the next issue of intouch.

Show home provides platform for sales at Station Meadows



The spacious living room



The contemporary kitchen

Prospective buyers have been flocking to the recently completed show homes at Station Meadows in Calne.

The stylishly furnished four bedroom Marlborough show home is the largest of the nine house types being built for Phase 1 of the development - which also includes: the two bedroom Savernake (apartments), Chiseldon and Bromham; and the three bedroom Oaksey, Wilton, Dauntsey, Lavington and Corsham house types. The show home is open from 10am to 4pm Thursday to Monday and is closed Tuesday and Wednesday.

As you can see from the images shown to the left, the sumptuous interior design in the Marlborough show home helps to establish Station Meadows as an aspirational lifestyle choice.

The show homes opened on time despite the exceptional rain fall since the start of the year, thanks to a concerted effort from Hills staff and contractors. Construction work on the 38 Phase 1 properties is progressing well, with Hills properties scheduled to be completed by September 2014.

intouch will be following the progress at Station Meadows so look out for future updates.



Jan Pearce, site manager and Nick King, group director - Homes proudly present their awards.



Double accolade for Mendip Gardens

Homes' Mendip Gardens development in Holcombe, Somerset received a double accolade in the 2014 Mendip District Council Building Excellence Awards. Site manager Jan Pearce was the overall winner of the LABC site supervisor of the year award in recognition of his high standards of management on site. Reflecting on his award Jan modestly said: "It's great to win the award but it should be shared by all those who have been involved with the project."

The development itself also was also 'highly commended' in the category of new housing development of eight units or more which praised the high standards of design, construction and workmanship at Mendip Gardens. The site manager and development awards will now progress to the regional South Western awards to be held later in the year.



It's clear that Mendip Gardens has not only impressed the judges, because as **intouch** goes to press, eight of the ten plots have been sold and the remaining two plots are sold subject to contract. A big well done to Jan, Nick and everyone involved at Mendip Gardens.

A new digital home for Property

The Homes website has been given a contemporary new look and uses computer generated images (CGI) to give site visitors an engaging first glance of the variety of properties available for purchase.

Nick King, group director for Homes, said: "The website has been designed to make it quicker and easier for prospective buyers to navigate and provides them with the vital information needed when looking for a new home."

Take a look for yourself and visit www.hills-homes.co.uk



Ready-mixed concrete business is on the Up(wood)

The construction of Quarry Products' fifth ready-mixed concrete (RMC) plant is well underway at the Upwood quarry site, with the facility set to make its first batches for customers in and around Oxfordshire later in April.

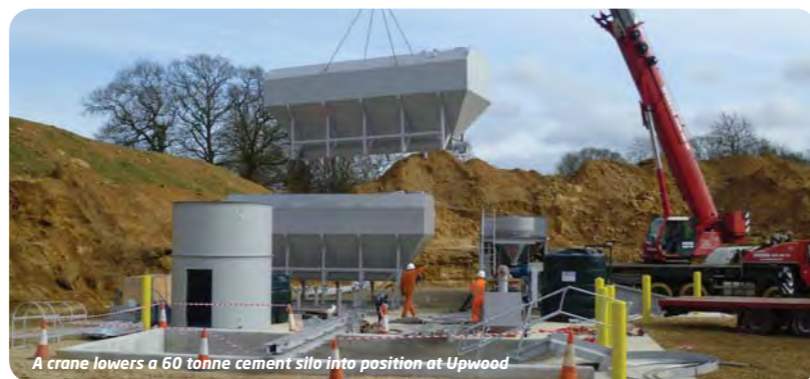
Like all Quarry Products' RMC plants, Upwood will provide ready-mixed concrete to the British and European Standards of BS8500 and BS EN 206 for customers of all sizes - ranging from major civil engineering projects to farms, small building companies through to domestic DIY projects. Customers can also be reassured as Quarry Products hold QSRMC certification, the best-known and most widely specified certification mark for ready-mixed concrete.

The new facility at Upwood near Oxford will be the most northerly of Quarry Products' network of RMC plants which include Woodsford in Dorset, Newbury in the east, Calne in the west and Shorncote near Cirencester.

The construction phase is the culmination of many years work led by previous group director Alan Mackenzie who secured planning permission for the Upwood quarry and subsequent RMC plant. Looking to the future, commercial manager Stuart Allen is excited by the opportunities the new plant will create: "The new RMC plant at Upwood expands our operating territory, and gives us a platform to service new customers in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and beyond."



A convoy of trucks arrive at Upwood quarry with sections of the plant



A crane lowers a 60 tonne cement silo into position at Upwood



Engineers get to work connecting the new plant



Andrew Liddle promoted

Andrew Liddle has been promoted from production manager to divisional director for Quarry Products. Andrew joined Hills in June 1996 as assistant production manager and reflecting on the recent promotion, group director Peter Andrew said: "Andrew's promotion to the role of divisional director is an acknowledgement of his ongoing contribution and dedication to the business. He has a wealth of expertise and will play a pivotal role in our future development plans."

Human Resources visit sHoRncote



Peter Andrew, group director Quarry Products outlines the aims for the day in a morning briefing.

The Human Resources (HR) team took up Quarry Products' invitation to experience for themselves the various job roles, vehicles and equipment in a busy working environment - and the day at Shorncote Quarry proved to be a valuable and insightful exercise for everyone involved.

Following an initial briefing from group director Peter Andrew, the HR team split up to join Shorncote employees and experience jobs including LGV driver, mobile plant operative and concrete operations assistant.

Anne Crosby, head of HR, said: "It was such an enjoyable and useful experience. The HR team will be able to use all they have seen and learnt into their support for Quarry Products in all aspects of HR, including the recruitment of suitable candidates for the varied and interesting roles. Thanks to everyone at Shorncote who made us so welcome. It was well worth doing."

Peter Andrew, group director for Quarry Products was similarly positive about the event, saying: "The Quarry Products' employees were able to share their experiences of working in a busy quarry environment whilst the HR team got invaluable insight about some of the roles they help to recruit by actually doing the job. All in all it was a great success and a valuable learning experience for everyone involved."



Business manager Gavin Walton shows HR assistant Nicola Cox and HR advisor Sandra Green around the concrete plant.



HR assistant Kerry Evans heads off on a delivery.

Whistleblower policy - doing the right thing



'Honesty & Integrity' is a core value which is at the heart of how The Hills Group operates. This company-wide commitment to be fair, truthful and to 'do the right thing' led to the development of the Whistleblower policy - which ensures that any employee can report concerns about poor or unacceptable workplace practices or misconduct without fear of reprisal.

Any Hills employee who has a genuine concern over wrongdoing at work should share their concern with their direct line manager or their divisional group director. Alternatively employees can safely and anonymously call the Whistleblower telephone line on **0800 915 1571**. The line is open 24 hours a day and is run by Safecall, a totally independent company, who employ experienced investigators as call handlers. Calls are not recorded further ensuring caller anonymity. Concerns can also be reported directly through the Safecall website www.safecall.co.uk.



As chief executive Mike Hill commented: "Issues of workplace malpractice within The Hills Group are very rare, however I would encourage any employee who has a concern over wrongdoing at work to either speak to their line manager or to contact the Safecall telephone line anonymously."

Eagled-eyed Andrew spots the difference to win £75 vouchers

Andrew Hehir, kerbside loader from Lower Compton (pictured below) was the eagle-eyed winner of the spot the difference competition in the last issue of intouch. Andrew correctly identified the 10 areas that had been retouched from the photo of Waste Solutions' RWM exhibition stand.



Sudoku competition

So do your best and you could win **£75***!

If you've not played before, the objective of Sudoku is to fill in the blanks of the 9x9 grid so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contain one instance of each of the numbers 1 through 9. No two numbers in the same column, row or 3x3

4	7	3			8			1
6		1	7	9	2			
				1		8		
	9				7	6	3	
2			4					
5		7			6			
	5		2	4			8	
1		2					7	
3			5		1		9	

grid can be the same. There is only one valid solution to each Sudoku puzzle. The only way the puzzle can be considered solved correctly is when all 81 boxes contain the correct numbers.

When you have completed the Sudoku puzzle add your name and location and then either scan and email your entry to darren.goddard@hills-group.co.uk or send via the internal post to the communications department.

Entries must be received by Friday 30 May 2014

Name: _____

Location: _____

**One for all shopping vouchers*

Jane's bundle of joy

Jane Parsons-Hann recently returned to her role as accounts consultant with Waste Solutions following her maternity leave. As you can see from the picture below Jane will certainly have her hands full out of work looking after her very cute bundle of joy 'Roslyn' who was born on the 3rd June 2013.



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