

# Group branches out in South West

**THE WJ Linkline Group has opened a depot in Taunton, with a view to growing the company's business in the south west of the country.**

“WE took the decision to expand southwards as we were increasingly being asked by our construction industry customers to partner them on projects in the region,” said Wayne Johnston, MD of WJ Linkline Group. “We decided that to take on work in the south west and complete it to a consistently high standard we needed an actual presence in the region, as this would ensure we were efficient, flexible and on hand to deal quickly with any issues that might crop up on jobs.

“The move fits with our long term strategy of expanding the reach of the business to parts of the UK that aren't easily served by our depots in Newcastle under Lyme, Elland and Milton Keynes. Also, these three bases are currently experiencing unprecedented demand for road marking products and services.



Having a fourth base opens up more opportunities for cross-site cooperation and sharing knowledge, staff and vehicles, so customers in all regions receive a timely and responsive service.”

The new branch, which covers a marketing area from Gloucester across to Dorset and all areas to the west, is headed up by Dave Milford, who has over 25 years' experience in the white lining and over 40 years' experience in the construction industry. He is supported by a team of 21 key personnel, mainly recruited from the local area.

“I would like to thank all the

Taunton-based team for their dedication to making the depot a success to date,” said Dave. “Also, without the support of other group members and depots, WJ South West would not have succeeded in delivering the service to its customers – your efforts are very much appreciated.”

The depot has already secured a number of sizeable contracts. Its first job was with Kiely Bros on its surface dressing contracts in Somerset, Gloucestershire and the Isle of Wight. Since then the work has kept flooding in. The depot has now secured contract arrangements with Atkins for the

delivery of all markings, road studs and antiskid surfacing in Somerset for the County Council and has won the Dorset County Council Term Maintenance Contract to deliver the same services for a minimum of five years. In addition, it has secured contract arrangements with Hansons and CORMAC, the contracting arm to Cornwall County Council.

The depot's fleet of vehicles has been expanding to keep pace with its increasing workload and it now has four screed trucks, a road stud milling truck and a multi mark sprayer-extruder, with two more screed trucks being built.



**PAGE 2**  
**Wayne's word:**  
round up of  
the last quarter



**PAGE 4**  
**Hydroblast**  
adds colour  
in Somerset



**PAGE 6**  
**Ambridge:**  
securing raw  
materials



**PAGE 8**  
**People power:**  
staff help out

# Newcastle site completes record number of jobs



Martin Webb, operations director at Newcastle under Lyme

THE last 18 months have been the busiest ever for WJ Roadmarkings' Newcastle under Lyme site.

Over the last year and a half, the team has carried out on average 200-250 jobs a month, compared with 100-150 a month in the previous 18 months.

According to Martin Webb, operations director at the Newcastle site, one of the reasons for the upturn in the volume of work has been government spending on hard shoulder strengthening.

"Wherever there is hard shoulder strengthening work taking place there is a need for traffic management and therefore for temporary road markings," he says. "We service 85% of the UK market for temporary markings and our reputation in this field has enabled us to win a large chunk of the work generated by the hard shoulder schemes."

To keep pace with greater demand for its road marking services, WJ had to boost capacity by taking on 15 additional temporary staff – the majority of whom

are now permanent employees, renting additional equipment and enlisting the help of sub-contractors.

"It is credit to our workforce that we were able to deliver the work to the same high standard as we do at any other time even with this increased workload," he said.

With a new government in power, the boom looks like it could be coming to an end, but the additional capacity in Stoke won't be going to waste - the expanded team is already helping other sites within the group.

# Round up of the last quarter



WELCOME to our first edition of Chapter 5, the WJ Linkline group newsletter

As the group has grown so much in the last 12 months, we decided it would be a good idea to start producing a newsletter to update our customers and employees about the latest news and projects within the group.

We are extremely excited about having this forum for sharing news and views and we want it to be read and enjoyed by everyone, so if you've got any news of your own, or suggestions for improvements, the newsletter production team would love to hear from you at [newsletter@wjroadmarkings.com](mailto:newsletter@wjroadmarkings.com).

The main purpose of my column is to give an overview of the main developments within the business and the industry.

The last 12 months have seen significant changes internally to our business. Firstly, the Stoke team moved to a brand new purpose built two-acre depot which allowed for significant expansion, although looking out of my office window today there doesn't seem to be much space left and the offices seem to be filling up!

In April this year we started a new business, WJ Roadmarkings South West, whose offices are in Taunton, Somerset. This

was in response to demand from our existing customers and also to further our strategy of offering a true national service delivered locally.

In order to deliver the increased workload we have been investing heavily and finally after three years of searching for suitable premises our Huddersfield depot has moved to Elland. The depot is a one-acre plot with a 10,000sq ft building which has undergone complete refurbishment and alterations to suit our business.

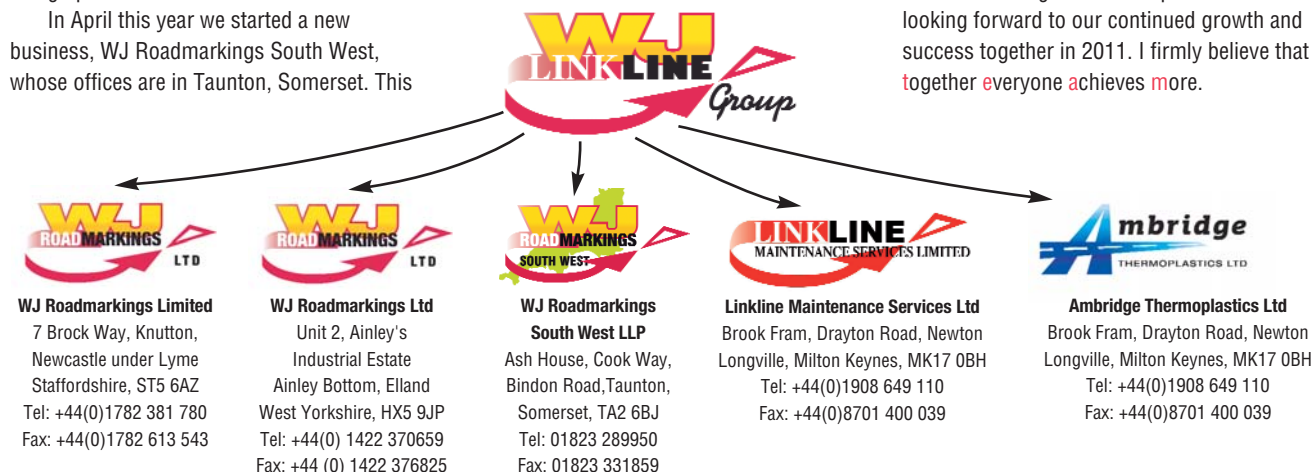
This means the group now has four depots across the country: Elland, Milton Keynes, Newcastle under Lyme and Taunton. For those who aren't familiar with the group structure, there are four companies within the WJ Linkline Group. WJ Roadmarkings Ltd carries out permanent and temporary road markings and has two depots - in Newcastle under Lyme and Elland. It also has a line removal arm called WJ Hydroblast. WJ Roadmarkings South West LLP is based in

Taunton and provides permanent road markings. Linkline Maintenance Services Ltd is the group's Milton Keynes based provider of permanent markings. Also operating out of Milton Keynes is Ambridge Thermoplastics, our thermoplastics manufacturing business.

This year we will have invested over £2 million in new trucks and equipment, including another Hydroblaster and a Borum 3000. The Borum will be used to promote our exciting new product, Weatherline+, a new profiled wet night visibility line.

The roadmarking industry is now entering a very uncertain future, the government seems to be cutting more transport funding every week. All the indications suggest that the Highways Agency and local authorities may well face cuts of up to 25% under the comprehensive spending review. Even with these uncertainties I feel confident that we have firm foundations in place to ride the storm and with our innovative and pro-active thinking we can deliver to our customers a first class service.

We have a great team in place and I am looking forward to our continued growth and success together in 2011. I firmly believe that together everyone achieves more.





## Smoother ride for TT racers

■ MOTORCYCLISTS taking part in the Isle of Man TT races can look forward to smoother road surfaces next year, thanks to hydroblasting being carried out by WJ Roadmarkings.

The road marking contractor has won a contract with Colas (IOM) Ltd, the Isle of Man's leading private road surface treatment company, to remove white lines prior to surface dressing.

This is the first time that hydroblasting has been used on the island. Colas was keen to deploy this method of removing white lines because it results in a more even surface - particularly important as some of the roads form part of the TT race track.

"When you surface dress over a white line it creates a hump in the road, which is why you need to remove the line beforehand," explains Martin Webb, operations director at WJ Roadmarkings. "The usual method is to scabble the line off but this leaves an indentation. Hydroblasting, which uses ultra high pressure water removal, is a more expensive method of removing lines but it creates a smooth surface and is more environmentally-friendly than burning or scabbling the lines off."

WJ Roadmarkings is also deploying hydroblast technology to retexture some of the island's highways. This involves removing fat build-up and restoring the skid resistance of the road surface.

## Smells like team spirit

■ HAVING four bases across the country is giving the WJ Linkline Group the flexibility to adapt to peaks and troughs in demand, and complete time pressured jobs to a consistently high standard.

The beauty of having operations in four locations across the country – Newcastle under Lyme, Milton Keynes, Elland and Taunton - is that if one depot is inundated with work, another depot in the group network can help out.

That is exactly what has been happening recently in the south west, where demand for road marking services has risen to the point where the team at Taunton has called on their colleagues in Newcastle to lend support.

The Newcastle depot despatched a road stud vehicle and crew to Somerset to help the Taunton team out for six weeks whilst they were awaiting delivery of their own road stud vehicle. In addition, a three-strong extrusion crew from Newcastle travelled to the Isle of Wight to carry out white lining work that the Taunton depot was too busy to do.

Staff from Newcastle have also been working with colleagues from Milton Keynes on the 'Birmingham Box' project, a government scheme to improve the motorway network around Birmingham. In order to create a raised line that vibrates when driven over and provides enhanced visibility in dark and

wet conditions both rib line and rain line elements were required. The Milton Keynes team applied the rib lines, while the Newcastle depot provided a vehicle and crew to help out with the rain lines.

"A lot of the jobs we do have very tight deadlines. Having four bases allows us to share expertise and move vehicles and staff between sites, so we can mobilise quickly and concentrate our resources where they are most needed at any given time. Our staff also benefit as they get to work with people from other parts of the business and see new faces and places," says Martin Webb, operations director of WJ Roadmarkings' Newcastle depot.

## Amey appoints Linkline on PFI scheme

■ LINKLINE Maintenance Services has won the contract to carry out all permanent road markings work on the roads in and around Birmingham.

The contract forms part of the massive £2.7 billion 25-year Birmingham Highways private finance initiative (PFI) scheme which is being implemented by public services provider Amey.

Amey appointed Linkline as road markings contractor on the back of the successful working relationship that already existed between the two companies, based on the shared values of service, quality and innovation.

Under the contract, Linkline will be responsible for marking Birmingham's 2,500km road network.

## WJ Linkline Group companies

■ **WJ Roadmarkings:** the largest independent road marking contractor in the UK, with sites in Newcastle under Lyme, Taunton and Elland

■ **Ambridge Thermoplastics:** a manufacturer of high quality road marking products

■ **Linkline Maintenance Services:** a Milton Keynes based road marking service provider

■ **WJ Hydroblast:** offering a revolutionary process for removing road markings quickly and efficiently

### Two new recruits



■ WJ Roadmarkings has welcomed two new additions to its team in Newcastle under Lyme.

Peter Woolley is an HGV mechanic who most recently worked at Volvo Construction Equipment. He has experience of working on quarry equipment, mining equipment and mobile and all terrain cranes. At WJ he is mainly responsible for vehicle servicing and maintenance.

Emma Arundel has joined the team as a receptionist and accounts and payroll assistant. Scotland-born Emma previously worked at packaging company Sonoco as a purchase administrator.

### Newcastle team scoops safety award

■ WJ Roadmarkings' Newcastle team has been presented with an award for work they have completed on the M1 J25 job for Aggregate Industries.

Bardon Contracting gave WJ the accolade in recognition of their significant contribution to safety.

The WJ Roadmarkings team, led by Gethin Horsley, has been responsible for applying temporary markings to a section of the motorway whilst it is being widened from three lanes to four. The job covers a 23km stretch, making it one of the longest road marking jobs WJ has ever completed.

"We place a great deal of importance on health and safety and are proud to have one of the best safety records in the industry, so we were delighted to receive recognition of our efforts by being given this award," said Gethin.





## WJ Hydroblast adds colour to seafront

WJ Hydroblast is set to give the promenade in Weston-super-Mare a facelift after winning a contract with Aggregate Industries to carry out decorative surfacing work for North Somerset Council.

WJ Hydroblast will be using hydroblast technology to create a multi-coloured surface from natural aggregate on the roads along the promenade.

Coloured road surfaces are usually achieved via expensive single coloured bonded surfacing. Hydroblasting is a more affordable means of achieving a similar look, and also results in a more durable surface.

The asphalt surface is laid in the conventional way but natural aggregates are mixed in with the black bitumen. A hydroblast machine is then used to remove the top level of the bitumen, exposing a more aesthetically pleasing, natural aggregate surface.

The eight-day contract will see WJ Hydroblast removing 12,500m<sup>2</sup> of bitumen off newly laid asphalt on the promenade at Weston-super-Mare. This is part of the town's £30 million seafront enhancement project, which will see the substantial up-grading of the promenade and the sea wall.

# Linkline launches specialist marking division

LINKLINE Maintenance Services has launched a new division to deliver specialist marking services to schools, rail service providers and airports.

In creating a dedicated division, Linkline's aim is to strengthen its presence and build a reputation as a national contractor in these sectors.

The majority of marking projects use thermoplastic materials. However, the purpose of the specialist division is to focus on those jobs where other more specialist marking materials are desirable.

For example, whilst thermoplastic is usually the specified marking material on railway projects, actually, MMA (Methyl Methacrylate Acryline) is far more durable and easier and safer to use. Because thermoplastic has to be hot applied at 200°C, it has to be kept warm during transportation to the railway station which can be very difficult and dangerous. MMA by contrast, is cold applied, so can be transported cold and mixed at its destination.

Another specialist marking material that the new division will be working with is waterborne paint. A lot of paints have solvents in them which are not good for the environment, whereas waterborne paints are inert, harmless and non-polluting, making them the preferred choice in projects for schools.

The new division will be headed up by Douglas Ewing, who has a wealth of experience from these sectors. "In the past Linkline Maintenance Services has done some work in schools, airports and railway stations but we hadn't really taken the time to analyse the specific needs of these sectors," he said. "With the new division we now have a targeted offering for these sectors, enabling us to develop marking solutions that address individual customer concerns and requirements."

Initially the division will operate out of Milton Keynes, but ultimately the aim is to roll out these specialist marking services to all four of the group's locations.

## WJ Hydroblast cleans up fuel spillages

HYDROBLASTERS from WJ Hydroblast are now being used in Area 9 to clean up fuel spills, offering a safe, clean and time-efficient alternative to traditional methods.

On its Highways Agency Area 9 contract, Amey has traditionally dealt with carriageway fuel spills using the absorbent granular method. However, this method has limitations, particularly when dealing with large spillages - if the majority of a spillage cannot be removed, the contaminated area must be resurfaced.

Frustrated by this, the Amey team set about finding an alternative method. It hit on the idea of washing lanes contaminated by fuel spillages using a Hydroblaster.

The Hydroblaster's clean-up capabilities were put to the test in June 2007 following a lorry fire on the M42. The sheer size of the area affected meant that the absorbent granular method was not sufficient to absorb all of the leaked fuel from lane one of the motorway and, for safety reasons, there was no option but to close the entire lane to traffic during the morning peak.

In fact, it soon became apparent that the contaminated surface would need to be removed and replaced. This would extend working into the evening rush-hour, and require closure of a second lane of traffic to achieve the necessary safe working zones for the workforce.

So, instead, Amey decided to put the jetwashing method into practice. As lunchtime approached, WJ Hydroblast was called in. The company's swift response allowed the team to treat a 120m length (438m<sup>2</sup>) of full lane width within just 90 minutes. Not only that, but because of the limited amount of workspace needed to operate the Hydroblaster equipment, the safety zone could be cleaned under a rolling road block, and the additional lane closures which had been planned for resurfacing were no longer required. Moreover, the speed of the jetwashing process allowed all lane closures to be removed prior to the peak hours of evening traffic.

## Linkline offers 'dot and line' marking

LINKLINE Maintenance Services can now offer 'dot and line' marking, following a £400,000 investment in a state-of-the-art road marking machine.

There is increasing interest from local authorities and the Highways Agency in better performing lines. Indeed, one of the principle findings of a recent report - 'Saving Lives For Less' - by the Road Safety Foundation was that for a relatively small amount of money a lot of lives can be saved by improving the quality of road markings.

This is fuelling demand for 'dot and line' road marking, which consists of an extruded base line overlaid with raised dots and represents a significant road safety improvement by giving greater reflective performance at night and in the wet.

Previously WJ Linkline Group did not have the technology to apply these roadmarkings, but now, following the purchase of the Volvo twin-steer 16

tonne truck from Borum in Denmark, Milton Keynes-based Linkline Maintenance Services has become one of just a handful of companies in the UK to offer dot and line. One of the advantages that Linkline has over some of its competitors is that it uses an environmentally friendly marking material for dot and line marking. Branded Weatherline Plus, the thermoplastic material is made from sustainable resins that are a by-product of paper production and come from responsibly managed forests in Scandinavia.

Besides dot and line, the new road marking machine will lay three other types of thermoplastic line: extruded lines, which are high quality, long lasting lines, rib lines, which vibrate when driven over, and spray lines, which are ideal where large volume, low cost markings are required.



# Rising demand spurs Yorkshire depot move

■ WJ Roadmarkings' Yorkshire team has moved into new, bigger premises to enable it to keep pace with growing demand for its specialist road marking vehicle manufacturing and refurbishment services.

The team has moved from its 3,200 sq ft site in Mirfield to a 10,000 sq ft site in Elland. The new depot boasts a spacious office, workshop and outside yard and gives the company the capacity to build up to 12 new vehicles a year, as well as refurbish a number of existing vehicles.

"At our old facility we had the capacity to build

four vehicles a year. That was enough at one time, but as demand kept growing, it became apparent we had outgrown the space," said Mark Fawcett, general manager of the Yorkshire depot. "The move to Elland has improved the efficiency of our vehicle manufacturing operation, enabling us to build and refurbish three times as many vehicles and shorten the lead time on new builds."

The last few years have also seen staff numbers swell to an all time high to handle the increasing volume of work. 24 people now work at the Yorkshire site - the site's highest ever head count.

## Mechanic top of the class



■ MATTHEW Schofield, a trainee mechanic at WJ Roadmarkings, has been named 'Mechanic Apprentice of the Year' by engineering training organisation KITS.

High flyer Matthew, who is in the third year of his motor vehicle mechanics NVQ, was awarded the accolade for achieving top examination results and turning in consistently high quality work over the last 12 months.

He works at WJ Roadmarkings' Elland depot, where he builds and repairs HGVs, cars and light vans.

"Everyone here is really proud of Matthew for winning this award. He's a hard worker and totally deserves it," said Mark Fawcett, general manager of the Elland depot. "As a business we place great importance on nurturing and fostering young talent as we strongly believe that a motivated, dedicated and well-trained workforce is the key to delivering a consistently high standard of work."

## WJ clinches council contracts

■ WJ Roadmarkings' Elland depot has been awarded a five-year contract to carry out all road marking and maintenance work in Rotherham.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council selected WJ Roadmarkings owing to its ability to demonstrate service and quality at a competitive price. Under the contract, WJ Roadmarkings is charged with not only remarking existing roads, but also marking any new road surfaces in the borough.

The company's Elland depot has also enjoyed success elsewhere in Yorkshire, fending off competition from five other companies to secure the road marking contract for East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

WJ Roadmarkings has been carrying out road marking and anti-skid work for East Riding of Yorkshire Council for the last three years. The contract it has just signed with Morrison Construction, one of the council's framework contractors, formalises the relationship.

## Road stud milling truck



■ WJ Roadmarkings' Elland vehicle manufacturing operation has just built and delivered a road stud milling truck with several unique features.

Unlike most other stud milling trucks on the road, the custom built Volvo FL has a body mounted vacuum recovery unit. This means that besides milling out holes to allow studs to be fixed into the road surface, the vehicle removes all debris from the holes and transfers it to a collection tank on the truck.

An additional feature of the 16 tonne truck is that the hydraulics that run the bitumen boiler are driven from the truck engine rather than from a separate, smaller engine, which means the vehicle is quieter to run.

## Linkline assists with asset management

■ LINKLINE Maintenance Services is rolling out a new electronic DRS (daily reporting system) which promises to serve as a valuable asset management tool for customers.

With the new system, which has been custom-developed for Linkline by software company Intouch, road marking crew members are given a PDA. Once they have completed a job, rather than creating a hand-written job sheet which is then processed by office staff, they enter the details of the job into the PDA and that data is transmitted to a central database.

This not only makes Linkline's internal invoicing and administration

processes more efficient, it also gives clients a dynamic database of their road marking assets. Over time, the system will build up a historic record of what road marking work has been carried out. So for example, a local authority could instantly find out what they have spent on markings on a particular road over a specified time frame, what markings are on that road and when they were applied.

"The system has the potential to be a really useful asset management tool," said Paul Aldridge, MD of Linkline Maintenance Services. "It could particularly help local

authorities with planning and budgeting as it will give them an approximate idea of the cost of the markings on a particular road or stretch of road, how much maintenance has been carried out on that road and therefore how much maintenance is likely to be needed in future."

The system could also be used to communicate with clients from the scene of a job. Say, for example, a road marking crew arrives on a job only to find a parked car or a pot hole prevents them from carrying out the marking, a crew member can take a photo on their PDA and send it to the client so they can take the necessary action to get the obstacle removed.





## Partners in paint

■ THANKS to a new partnership with a leading Belgian paint manufacturer, Ambridge Thermoplastics, the road marking products arm of WJ Linkline Group, now offers a range of premium quality road marking paints.

The water and solvent based paints are made by ACB (All Chemie Belgium), one of Europe's top paint manufacturers.

Garry Duncan, director of Ambridge Thermoplastics,

explains why the company's search for a high quality paint supplier took it overseas. "Continental Europe is a major user of paints, whereas the UK isn't, which means European paint manufacturers tend to have far more expertise than UK companies and produce a better quality product. We're very excited about our partnership with ACB as it will give our customers access to a quality of paint that is unrivalled in the UK."



## Weatherline is star of the show

■ WEATHERLINE and Weatherline+, two new generation road marking products from WJ Linkline Group, were shown to the industry for the first time at Intertraffic 2010 in Amsterdam and met with an overwhelmingly positive response.

"As always, Intertraffic provided a great opportunity to meet our existing customers and suppliers, but this year we also met a lot of companies we hadn't done business with before and who were keen to find out more about our product range and in particular Weatherline and Weatherline+," said Garry Duncan, director of Ambridge Thermoplastics, WJ Linkline Group's road marking products arm. "It was apparent from talking to visitors that throughout Europe there is increasing interest in road marking products that improve safety by increasing wet night visibility. Our Weatherline and Weatherline+ products do exactly that."

Weatherline is a new thermoplastic road marking product which has increased retro-reflectivity, luminance and skid resistance in wet conditions and achieves RW3 in screed and extrusion grades. Weatherline+ is the latest wet night visibility product applied as a dot'n'line, and is designed to give RW5. According to latest reports, 10% of Britain's motorways and A roads present unacceptably high risks. Weatherline and Weatherline+ should help reduce this figure if used in the appropriate locations.

## Ambridge shields customers from material shortages

■ DESPITE industry-wide shortages of two major raw materials, Ambridge Thermoplastics, WJ Linkline Group's road marking products arm, is still able to guarantee the continued availability of its products.

Titanium dioxide and resin are key ingredients in a range of road marking products, but in recent months, increasing demand from the fast-growing Asian economies and the temporary closure of two major manufacturing plants has led to restricted supplies of these materials. This has not only increased factory gate prices but also impacted on the availability of materials to the industry to the point where some road marking companies have been forced to cease production of certain products or source inferior quality materials.

Ambridge Thermoplastics, by contrast, has managed to secure a consistent and reliable supply of these materials. According to director Garry Duncan, this is thanks to the excellent working relationships the company has forged with its suppliers.

"We have always placed great importance on building strong, mutually beneficial relationships with our suppliers - we treat them with respect and as long-term partners. This works both ways and in return, they are extremely loyal to us. This is proving particularly beneficial in the current climate as with demand



exceeding supply, suppliers can choose who they deal with. Thankfully, our suppliers have pledged to stand by us, which in turn ensures that we can guarantee the availability and quality of our products."

Duncan says the inconsistency in supply is expected to continue to the end of 2010 and prices are also expected to continue to rise.

"There is nothing we can do about the restricted supplies or the price hikes but we can make a commitment to minimise the impact of these issues for our customers," he says.

## Renewable resin for road marking materials

■ AMBRIDGE Thermoplastics, the road marking products arm of WJ Linkline Group, now offers road marking materials derived from a sustainable source.

Most thermoplastic products are made from fossil-derived hydrocarbon resins, which not only deplete fossil carbon stocks but also increase atmospheric carbon. Ambridge Thermoplastics is using a renewable resin that is derived from crude tall oil (CTO), a by-product of the paper production process. CTO has several components - rosin, fatty acids, sterols and pitch - which can be isolated via fractionation. It is the rosin component that forms the basis of road marking materials.

The paper production process uses wood chips from sustainably managed forests in Scandinavia - which means it does not deplete finite resources.

"Many industries have been using high performance sustainable products for years," said Garry Duncan, director of Ambridge Thermoplastics. "We predict that the same environmental demands will soon follow for road markings and high friction road surfaces - our customers are already becoming increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of their activities. We are ready to work with customers to respond to these demands and one aspect of this is to offer an environmentally friendly alternative to hydrocarbon based thermoplastic products."

Besides being 'greener' than thermoplastics from hydrocarbon resins, thermoplastics from rosin resins offer superior performance in terms of thermal stability, oil and gas resistance, durability and retro reflectivity.



# Head office gets green treatment

WJ Linkline Group has boosted its green credentials with a number of improvements to its head office site in Newcastle Under Lyme.

The improvements came about as a result of an internal environmental risk assessment which identified the potential risk of oil spillages becoming absorbed in the soil and polluting the ground surrounding the head office building. To



## Craig goes for green

CRAIG Williams, WJ Linkline Group's health and safety manager, has achieved a national qualification in environmental management.

The National Certificate in Environmental Management is awarded by NEBOSH (National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) to health and safety professionals who demonstrate a sound understanding of environmental issues.

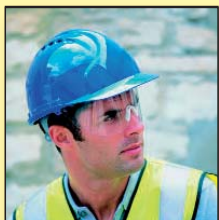
"We've long been proud of our excellent health and safety record. Now we want to bring our environmental record to the same level by focusing on the 'E' in 'SHE'," says group MD Wayne Johnston. "Arming staff with knowledge to identify and implement environmental improvements is key if we are to take steps to minimise the impact our activities have on the environment."

eliminate this risk, the company has had the whole of the yard area concreted, and installed interceptors and catchment drains to control any spills.

In addition, waste oil from the group's fleet of vehicles is now collected and recycled, and a new cardboard compactor enables cardboard to be recycled rather than sent to landfill.

"Green issues are becoming more and more important to our clients – they want to know that the companies they do business with operate in an ethical and environmentally responsible manner," explains Craig Williams, health and safety manager at WJ Linkline Group. "We recognise that environmental improvement is an ongoing process but we will continually strive to make our operations greener. The yard improvements have made a really positive step in the right direction."

## Fire alarm inspires hat design



THE fire brigade recently responded to a fire alarm at Linkline Maintenance Services, only to find it was a

false alarm. But the call-out wasn't completely in vain. The company was in the process of renewing its hard hats and seeing the firemen's helmets gave the company's health and safety manager an idea for a new hat design which is now protecting workers on roadsides throughout the UK.

Modelled on firemen's hats, the new hard hats incorporate built-in visors for additional eye protection. Inside the front of the helmet there is a slide-down, perspex visor which protects the eyes from any particles which may be thrown up from the road or the potential of paint splashes.

"When introducing any new item of personal protective equipment it's essential that it is accepted by the people who will actually be using it," says health and safety manager Craig Williams. "Because the hats are so easy to use they have been extremely well received by our workforce."

## Weatherline+ on trial

■ WEATHERLINE+ - a new generation road marking product for enhanced wet night visibility - has been applied in this year's International Road Trials.

Once a year, road marking companies from across Europe flock to the International Road Trials, which take place on the M4 junction 37 near Swansea, to test their newly developed road marking products. At the trials, products are applied to the road and then monitored for 12

months to determine whether they meet industry standards. This year's trials in June saw Ambridge Thermoplastics applying Weatherline+, a new thermoplastic road marking product which has increased retro-reflectivity, luminance and skid resistance in wet conditions and achieves RW5 in extrusion grades. Weatherline+ was developed to increase road safety in wet conditions and in response to demand from the Highways Agency for wet night visibility products.

## Bend it like Beckham



'Beckham boots' or boots that provide metatarsal protection are a must for construction site

workers. However, the problem with standard boots is that when workers push road marking machines along, they bend their feet in an action that results in blisters as the foot rubs against the reinforced boot tongue.

Over the past 24 months the WJ Linkline Group has invested in trialling various makes, styles and designs to overcome this issue. Personnel are now using a new lightweight metatarsal boot, which offers greater flexibility, is lighter in weight and offers the same level of protection.

## Training snapshot

In the last 12 months:

- 30 staff have been trained as emergency first aiders
- 26 staff have been specifically trained to address vehicle fires
- 7 staff have achieved NVQ Level 2 Temporary Road Marking Operative
- 6 staff have achieved NVQ Level 2 Permanent Road Marking Operative
- 7 staff have achieved NVQ Level 2 Road Studs
- 3 staff have achieved NVQ Level 2 Permanent Machine Works
- 2 staff have achieved NVQ Level 3 Site Supervisors



## Behind the wheel for cancer

IN March, Garry Duncan and Andy Stubbs took part in the Macmillan 4x4 challenge. The three-day event involved navigating a Land Rover through on and off road sections during both the day and the night.

The pair covered almost 600 miles, spent the night in a very cosy tent, didn't kill each other and raised over £1,500 for Macmillan Cancer Support. They would like to thank Lafarge Contracting, Aggregate Industries, Henry Kemp, Hoistmec and many others for their support.



## Office angels help local toddler



WHEN Lisa Webb and Kerry Flint heard about a local two year-old girl called Ruby who had a brain tumour and needed to raise £250,000 to go to America for treatment, they decided they had to help.

The pair arranged a food themed fundraising day, which involved everyone from the Newcastle under Lyme site bringing in home-cooked food to sell in the office.

The sale raised £240, which MD Wayne Johnston agreed to match. Another £500 was collected through loose change collection boxes, making a total of £1,000.

Thanks to the fundraising efforts of Lisa, Kerry and lots of other people in Staffordshire, Ruby managed to raise the money for her operation and is currently in America having her treatment.

## Night walking for cancer

KEVIN Gannon and Sandy Alexander recently took part in Manchester Shine, walking a marathon at night for Cancer Research UK. The dynamic duo from WJ Roadmarkings' Newcastle office raised over £800 between them.

## Anna's a tough cookie



HATS off to Anna Lewis of WJ Roadmarkings' Taunton office for finishing 14<sup>th</sup> in her age group in the gruelling Half Ironman triathlon. The event consisted of a 1.2 mile lake swim, 56 mile bike ride and 13 mile run.

Send your news, views and requests for electronic copies of the newsletter to

[newsletter@wjroadmarkings.com](mailto:newsletter@wjroadmarkings.com)

## Linkline saves summer fête

EVERY year, St Michael's school in Stewkley, Buckinghamshire, has a summer fête which includes a procession through the village.

However, this year it looked like the tradition was in jeopardy when the local authority decided the school could not organise the road closures in the village as its staff did not have traffic management training.

On hearing this, Linkline Maintenance Services volunteered its services and the carnival went ahead as usual.

## Emma runs for life

ON 20th June, Emma Arundel of WJ Roadmarkings' Newcastle team took part in the Race For Life at Tatton Park in Knutsford, Cheshire, together with her mum and nine year-old daughter. The trio raised £600 for Cancer Research.



## Craig takes the plunge

In September, Craig Williams of WJ Roadmarkings took part in the Great North Swim, a one-mile open water swim across Lake Windermere, raising lots of money for Cancer Research. He also completed the Great Salford Swim in Manchester, swimming one mile in water with a temperature of just 14.5°C in 36:58 minutes, again raising money for Cancer Research.

## One for the road



Needless to say WJ wasn't responsible for the above blunder! Send in your comedy road sign photos to [newsletter@wjroadmarkings.com](mailto:newsletter@wjroadmarkings.com) for the next issue. The best photo receives £50 worth of M&S vouchers.

## Garry on the run



ON 19th September, Garry Duncan of Ambridge Thermoplastics pounded the pavements of Newcastle. He ran the Great North Run in 2hours 42mins and raised £1,000 for Breast Cancer UK.