



NewsBRIEF



A note from John Gregory, CEO

Another momentous year is nearly behind us and, like last year with the Ukraine situation, we now have desperately sad troubles in Israel and Gaza. Add to this the huge level of political uncertainty in the UK and we are surrounded by 'bad news'. But, whilst these are tough times, we do have positives to reflect on.

For our business, cost increases have been spectacular in the last few years and inflation has resulted in less volume coming through. Each of our Group companies have readjusted to more subdued levels of activity and we have clear plans across all operations as we move into 2024 to recover inflationary pressures and convert these into profit margins.

It's not going to be easy, and 2024 will unquestionably throw further challenges, but we are up for the challenge and remain optimistic for the coming year.

I have three reasons for this optimism: our people, our customers, and our heritage.

Our people are the core of our business. They work tirelessly, and often beyond the call of duty. We want to thank you all and convey our appreciation for steering our business through these challenging times.

Then there are our customers, whom, ultimately, are the paymasters. All our companies have been operating for a very long time, and without the loyalty of our customers, we would not be able to uphold the pride of more than 100 years of success.

Which brings me to my father who ran Gregory's for nearly 40 years between 1946 and 1985. Sadly, Dad passed away this year without quite making it to his own centenary. All his life was spent living in North Tawton... and breathing family and Gregory's. He was born in 1924, by which time his father Archie, had spent 6 years developing

the business. The company that I walked into in 1985 was truly 'fit for purpose' and I'm ever grateful for having the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of AJ and WJ - Archie and Jack.

Whilst remembering my father, we would also like to remember all other former employees who have passed away in recent times.

So, while we are facing another tough year, we have strength in our loyalty and experience. Not only that, we are also leading the way in protecting our planet for future generations. We have gas, electric and HVO powered trucks, as well as acres of solar panning. This ambition to be the very best in our industry is what will see us through.

As we approach the festive season, we want to say a big welcome to all new employees and thank everyone, for your commitment and support in 2023, by giving you and your family a hamper. We hope you enjoy the contents which consist of many of our customer's products.

Finally, on behalf of the Gregory family and all the Directors across the UK, we wish you and your family health and happiness for this Christmas, New Year and throughout 2024.

Merry Christmas

Two milk contract extensions

Thanks to our strong PARTNERSHIP approach, two major players in the milk industry have confirmed contract extensions. Well done to everyone involved in building such strong partnerships with these long-standing, valued customers.



Duration of contract extension:

5 years

No. litres collected per year:

650 million

No. farms collected from: 550

Location: South West with sites in Cullompton, North Tawton, and Victoria.

No. Gregory Group people employed: 185

History with Arla: We originally started collecting milk in 1994 for Milk Marque. In 2000 Milk Marque was split into three separate companies - one of which was Milk Link who we continued to work with. Then, in 2012, Arla merged with Milk Link which was the start of our relationship with Arla.

Interesting facts: Arla put health & safety and sustainability at the forefront of their business. This is reflected in the three different categories of milk we collect on their behalf - Ordinary Farm Assured, Organic, and CARE. Farms that supply Ordinary Farm Assured milk must meet a series of milk quality, food safety, and animal welfare standards. Those who provide Organic milk do the same but run their farms organically. And those who are part of the CARE (Cooperative, Animal welfare, Renewable energy, Ecosystem initiatives) programme put a large focus on using renewable energy sources and supporting biodiversity.

firstmilk™
The Regenerative Co-op

Duration of contract extension:

5 years

No. litres collected per year:

335 million

No. farms collected from: 234

Location: West Wales with sites at Whitland, Cross Hands, the First Milk dairy at Haverfordwest, and a satellite site at Felinbach.

No. Gregory Group people employed: 70

History with First Milk: We have worked with First Milk for 4 years.

Interesting facts: Sustainability is very important to First Milk. In addition to introducing HVO to their fleet, we are also using technology to help monitor, and minimise our impact on the environment. This includes reviewing ways to consolidate collections so we can reduce the miles travelled.



CYBER PROTECTION



As a business, we are officially Cyber Essentials Certified. The Technology team have been working tirelessly over the last 12 months to ensure we have the foundations in place to protect our business and the data of our people and customers.

This is a brilliant achievement, but the most important thing to remember is that cyber risk is always present. While the technology team can tighten security and reduce vulnerabilities, it is down to each of us to protect our business. We can do this by ensuring we don't click on malicious email links or share confidential information.

Through the pre-check vehicle app, which helps ensure our vehicles are safe to go on the road, we complete an average of 3,100 vehicle and trailer checks every single day!



DID YOU KNOW?



Bonded warehouse status success

Our Eurocentral warehouse in Scotland recently secured bonded status. A bonded warehouse defers the cost of duty and VAT until the products are sold. This means our customers can safely secure their goods and only pay the duty and VAT when the goods leave the warehouse. This benefits cashflow but also improves efficiencies because they can stock up during peak seasons without impacting their finances.

Bonded warehouses are tightly regulated by customs and as such, there are a lot of hoops to leap through to secure bonded status. Well done to everyone involved in achieving this. It is an attractive benefit which has been added to our customer offering.



TEAM SPOTLIGHT

We have a training team of 24 located across the UK who provide operational training. From DCPC training to warehouse inductions, they help us gain the skills and knowledge needed to feel confident in our roles. We asked Steve Rose, Group Training Manager, to tell us a bit more about the team.

What does it take to deliver training for a national company?

The training we provide includes DCPC training, driver development days, MHE training, manual handling training, and inductions.

Due to the nature of what we do as a business, we have to cater to the various shift patterns, so the logistics of scheduling training is itself a challenge.

We achieve this by being flexible with our working patterns to ensure

we maximise the training opportunities, and we very much work as a team. We talk regularly and I track progress towards our training objectives on a weekly basis. The Senior Training Business Partners (Sandy Dobie, Tim Bennett, Chris Rayner, and Jim Perry) plan the training and support their teams in it's delivery, the Training Business Partners (Alister Moreland, Andy Coaker, Bryan James, Bruce Keith, Chris Hodge, Colin Crosby, David Radford, Edward Crilly, Gerry Boyle, John Crawley, Mick Rose, Niall Carroll, Paul Clark, Peter Bomani, Stan Wagner, Stephen Burton, and Steve Jones) deliver the training and provide ongoing feedback, and our two administrators (Charlie Kitcherside and Emma Morgan) do a sterling job of ensuring our data and systems are up-to-date.

We also have to keep a close eye on any legislation changes and update our training and Safe Systems of Work (SSOW) accordingly. Due to our industry being so heavily legislated, this can consume a lot of time.

Tell us more about the training team

There are 24 of us in total - 13 who cover driver training, 3 who support with warehouse training, 1 who focuses on driver performance, 4 who oversee the training, and, along with myself, 2 others who help me keep everything on track.



Mick Rose teaching Bev Scott how to carry out PND assessments.



An MHE training course set up by Dave Radford, one of our warehouse Training Business Partners.



Claire Weeks during her 3-day VNA training which was delivered by Peter Bomani.

We are located across the country from Plymouth to Dyce and come from a variety of backgrounds. For some of us, training has always been our career, a few of us have come from the military, one worked in pest control and another was a H&S manager before joining our team.

What are your biggest challenges?

The fact we can now run courses online brings huge benefits - it makes our training more accessible, no matter where you are based. But while technology is our saviour, it can also be a real challenge. Poor reception and unexpected Teams software issues can frustrate our trainees, and our trainers!

Another challenge is when we onboard new customers with different requirements. Our team have to be trained before they can share their learnings with the people working on the contract. We often have to do this in tight timescales to ensure a smooth transition. But while this can be pressurised, the team love learning something new. Some recent examples include learning how a potato trailer works and how to set up timber loading areas deep in the Scottish forests.

What are some of the team's greatest achievements?

It may be a predictable answer, but our team's greatest achievement is helping our people improve their skills and knowledge. This motivates us all and as a consequence, we have achieved some brilliant things. For example, through the implementation of a report called the People Skills Report we can now analyse skills gaps and address them. This has seen an 87% reduction in the number of gaps in our desired skill levels. We've also adjusted our training model to

mirror service demand. This means we train more people in the quieter periods, making the best use of everyone's time. We're also very proud of the fact that our LGV pass rate is above the national average.

What don't you do?

We don't do all training! All of you are

trainers in your own right, imparting your knowledge in some form. With over 3,000 of us, your experience is just as valuable as our own. Some of you take this one step further by becoming trainers yourself. For example, we are currently training local Assessors who can carry out Potential New Driver (PND) assessments. This means PNDs can relate to each specific contract focusing on the key elements that the potential new driver is likely to encounter on shift.

As well as working with our people internally, we also work with external partners who supply additional training such as mentorship and first aid training.

WHAT'S IN YOUR FESTIVE HAMPER?

Where possible, the products in our festive hampers are sourced from our customers. Here's a list of the gifts included this year. (Everything in bold is a customer product.)

- **Black Wax Cheddar** - Barbers Cheesemakers
- Fionaghs Sourdough Crackers - Cornish Charcuterie
- Red Pepper & Smoked Paprika Chutney - Mackays
- **Sweet & Salted Popcorn** - Burts Snacks
- **Festive Shortbread Trees/Stars** - Walker's Shortbread
- **Forest Fruits Jellies** - Golden Casket
- **Fudge Milk Chocolate** - Kernow Chocolate
- **Sparkling Presse** - Frobishers Juices
- **Rose Cider** - Thatchers Cider
- I Heart Prosecco - Ooberstock
- Coffee Cup - The Purple Company

The life cycle of our festive hampers!

September

From the packing to how we get the hampers to your depots, the logistics are discussed and planned.

October

Products, hamper bags, and packaging are produced and delivered to our Willand warehouse.

June

A team of people start sourcing the products. Where possible we buy these from our customers.



November

For 4 days, volunteers pack the hampers by hand and create pallets for each depot.

December

The hampers arrive at your site ready for you to enjoy!

From all the Gregory Group Elves who help to create your hampers...

Merry Christmas!

Share your hamper moments

Send us a picture of you and your hamper goodies and you might appear in our festive social media montage. Send your photos to

GroupCommunications@gregory.co.uk. Just make sure anyone in the photo is happy to appear on the Gregory Group social media pages.

New site in Cornwall

At the start of November we opened a new site in Mitchell, Cornwall. Conveniently located in central Cornwall, the new purpose built site is home for both Palletways and Palletline. By bringing our two pallet services together we will be able to improve efficiencies and hone our customer service.



Mitchell replaces our site at Indian Queens which we had outgrown. Everyone based at Indian Queens has moved to this new site. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the set up of this new location. Once again it was a brilliant show of Partnership which resulted in a very smooth transition.



From left to right: Janet Eggar, Jamie Bishop, Graham Bird, Chris Dalgetty, Jeremy Barker, Steve Smith, Lee Eggar, and Paul Freer.

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

Congratulations to all of you who recently received your long service awards in the last three months. Many of you have secured your 5 year service award, and three have reached a whopping 25 years. Thank you to all of you for your commitment and loyalty.



Graeme Stuart, LGV Driver - Dyce

Richard Hockin, Office Supervisor - Davidstow

Andrew Clark, LGV Driver - Cullompton

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF... KIRSTY BLACK



Kirsty is one of four HR Business Partners in Gregory Group. Based in Scotland, she predominately supports our Scottish businesses with their HR requirements. This could be anything from TUPE transfers to guidance on how to support someone on sick leave. In this article Kirsty tells us about her journey into HR, together with what her role involves.

How did you get into HR?

I studied Psychology and Philosophy at uni but a deficit of philosophical psychologist jobs in the area led me to do my MSc in Human Resource Management. I was the only one on the course with no prior knowledge of HR which was a little daunting. But I think this motivated me to do well and that drive to keep achieving has stayed with me throughout my career.

My placement at uni was with the Army which led to a contract role supporting with their 2020 restructure which I loved being involved with. After my studies, HR as a career seemed like a no brainer and I have worked a variety of roles in both the private and public sector ever since.

What do you enjoy about your job?

One of my favourite aspects is seeing someone I support grow in their knowledge. It makes what I do very rewarding particularly when you see how their growth then supports others around them. While it's a cliché statement, I also love how no two days are the same - this organised chaos suits me down to the ground! I am also really excited by HR analytics. I keep up to date with employment trends and case law so that I can get geeky with a spreadsheet and measure our business performance against these learnings.

What does a Gregory Group HR Business Partner actually do?

A huge amount of our role is what it says in the job title - partnering with others in the business. This means offering advice, getting involved in ad hoc projects, influencing work culture, and generally being a sounding board.

What we don't do is to carry out HR actions on behalf of others. Our role is to guide, not to provide a third party resource. So, in summary, we give our people the tools and support they need to be confident in all elements of HR and people management.

What keeps you coming to work everyday?

I love the potential. I thrive on identifying ways to improve and make positive change - whether that is seeing a project come together seamlessly or implementing a change project.

What's even better is that I work with like-minded people who are equally committed to making positive changes.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

One of the first things I learnt in my career was the need to expect the unexpected! When you work with people in what can be difficult situations, you can be faced with volatility and indifference - both of which bring their own challenges.

The other element that can create challenges is when expectations of what we can achieve are unrealistic. While we have experience,

we can't read minds and we aren't trained therapists! Sometimes the pressure of the situation can mean people lose sight of this, so expectation management is a key part of our role.

What advice would you give to someone considering HR as a career?

I used to think you needed to have thick skin to be in HR but on reflection, I think it is more about having conviction in your values. You need to be extremely flexible in this role and you often support in situations when emotion can override

rationality. By knowing your core values, and those of your company, you can steer people in the right direction without losing sight of what is the right thing to do.

You will also need to be very good at relating to people. While HR has a very robust framework of legal regulations and policies, at the end of the day, we work with people and people are much more complex and layered than any policy can cover. Adapting to how different people think and react is critical.

What did you want to be when you were a child?

I wanted to ride a motorbike and have a shop called "Lots of Lovely Things". Apparently there was also a brief stint of wanting to be a budgie! More realistically, a fiddle player was also on the wish list. But I think I ended up in a career that really suits me. And my pet budgies have fulfilled the budgie dream!

“I used to think you needed to have thick skin to be in HR but on reflection, I think it is more about having conviction in your values.”

**Retail
TRUST**
1832 ONWARDS

Don't forget about Retail Trust - our wellbeing partner available to all Gregory Group employees.

Retail Trust provide a free and confidential wellbeing helpline and counselling service, together with lots of useful articles, videos and quizzes about your physical, mental, and financial wellbeing. Sign up for your free account at www.retailtrust.org.uk and click on 'Register'. Or use the helpline day or night by calling 0808 801 0808.

THANK YOU!

A simple thank you goes a long way

In May we launched the Gregory Group thank you cards. These cards are given to people who have demonstrated the Gregory Group Way to say thank you for their efforts. Each thank you is categorised under one of the 5Ps and here are a few that have been given out in recent months.



Pride

To: Gavin Jones,
Driver

Thank you for supporting BRC audit actions which were out of the scope of your role.



People

To: Jim Perry, Senior
Training Business
Partner

Thank you for training your colleagues late into the evening to ensure everyone left certified for their new roles.



Profit

To: Frances Morrison,
Driver and Compliance
Performance Manager

Thank you for determining an exceptional business approach to risk assessments for bridge strikes.



Planet

To: Rob Conway,
Driver

Thank you for replanning your route to support a particularly heavy load.



Partnership

To: Darren Elliott, Daria
Haas, Robert Smith
and Lee Gannon, Shift
Supervisors

Thank you for working in partnership to ensure peak trading for Coca Cola hit service levels.



How our tyre policy helps the Planet

Tyre regrooving is when a technician cuts tread back into the tyre to extend its life. Where possible, we regroove tyres when they reach a depth of 4mm. By doing so, we achieve the following:



We average **10,000km per mm** of tread after a tyre is regrooved. This has the potential to **extend the life of the tyre by 60,000km.**



A regrooved tyre typically saves **70kg of raw materials.**



Regrooved tyres increase fuel efficiency, saving us up to **2 litres per 100km.**

Last year we regrooved just under 5,000 tyres. That's 300 million extra km, 350,000 kg of raw materials saved, and a LOT of litres of fuel saved per year.

In addition to the environmental benefits, tyre regrooving also provides 10% higher traction in the wet, which improves safety.

What our customers say

“ARR Craib are our go to company for our transportation needs. All the staff are extremely helpful and over the years, they have shown us that they will go the extra mile to ensure our products are delivered on time. As a business we feel that the team at ARR Craib are proud to be associated with Walker's, just as we are proud to be associated with them.”

**Brian Shand, Despatch Manager,
Walker's Shortbread**

Are you missing out?

In addition to NewsBrief, the Employee Monthly Update is emailed to everyone who has supplied their email address in ESS. This includes info about our employee benefits and business updates. If you aren't receiving the newsletter, first ensure you are on the mailing list by logging in here: www.gregory.co.uk/employee-login and checking that your email address is listed in your profile. If it is, check your junk/spam folder.