



The Grange Courier

Happy New Year!



Happy New Year from our staff

Well here we are in 2003. What will it hold for us all? If I have not spoken to you, Happy New Year! Already, world events have made their mark on the global economy. Let us hope for a peaceful, lasting solution to these difficulties.

2002 was a hectic year for us all at John Mitchell. We were busy with volumes up on last year and almost a constant stream of new vehicles and trailers arriving to replace existing equipment and meet the demand of new business. The award, UK Haulier of the Year was well received by our team, we were quietly proud to receive it. Every man and woman employed by the company over many years has made a contribution to getting this accolade. We will work hard to maintain our standards.

I hope you find our newsletter interesting and informative. If you have any thoughts on articles or features you would like to see, please contact us at the email address given on the last page.

Iain Mitchell

Jailbreak!

In nearly fifty years of business we've done a few unusual jobs but until last September we had never helped anyone escape from prison! Thankfully, this 'Jailbreak' was for charity and the 'escapees' were Scottish Prison Service procurement staff, Ann Christie, Alison MacPherson and Jean Sutherland. The object of the challenge for the teams involved was to leave Saughton Prison in Edinburgh at 9am on 28/9/02 and travel as far as possible in 15 hours, without spending money or breaking the law (of course)! Categories included farthest travelled by: green energy, on foot, in the UK or in the world.

Our trio had the world in their sights and hitched a lift in our truck, driven by Stuart Brownlie to Edinburgh airport, eventually getting as far as Frankfurt, where they were driven into the city centre by kind hearted local police officers! Many congratulations to the girls, who finished 3rd. in their class, had great fun along the way and most importantly raised over £2,000 for the Children 1st. Charity.



Children 1st. can be contacted at 83 Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh. EH9 1AT or log on to www.children1st.org.uk



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A Full Service History

Our longest serving employee to date, Jimmy Gibb, finally hung up his boiler suit last November after an impressive 34 years service! Jimmy joined John Mitchell in the late 1960's when our fleet of seven vehicles were based at Fitzcharles' garage in the Newhouse Road area of the town, his main responsibility as mechanic being the smooth running of the lorries, which even then regularly travelled the length and breadth of the country. The move to our depot in Earl's Road in the mid 1970's was good news for Mr. Gibb, as he now had a purpose built, well-equipped workshop to look after the ever-expanding fleet of trucks.

The most memorable week of his career was in January 1984 when a group of our vehicles became stuck in the worst snowstorms for many years, which blocked the A9 at Dalwhinnie for almost a week. Jimmy was part of the rescue team despatched from Grangemouth and spent 3 days working in temperatures as low as minus 17, digging out and repairing the trucks to get them back into service. During his time with us our head mechanic has also done a fair bit of driving too and has had a lot of involvement in our innovative and progressive load transhipment facility.

We all wish to thank Jimmy for his considerable and invaluable contribution to our business. Here's to a long and happy retirement!

The Cairter's Ball

The Leapark Hotel in Grangemouth was the place to be on the evening of Friday November 22nd. When our annual party, this year known as 'The Cairters Ball' took place. This event is organised as a thank you to our customers, suppliers, appointed staff and friends to celebrate, as another business year draws to a close. A local salsa band, whose 'stage' took the form of one of our trucks, parked at the front door of the hotel, welcomed our guests. Once inside partygoers gathered in the reception area before being piped to the dining tables by Pipe Major David Hutton of the Gleneagles hotel. After a superb meal, dancing to a ceildh band and entertainer Jaquie James got everyone on their feet and worked off a few calories!

Half way through the evening, alternative piping band The Guppy Slippers invaded the hall and provided a brilliant foot-tapping repertoire of many 'weel kent' Scottish tunes. A charity auction, raffle, more dancing and the ever popular, 'sing a long', rounded off a very enjoyable and successful evening. We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who attended, for again making this a fantastic night.



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Rear View Mirror



In this new feature we look back at times past and for this edition we turn the spotlight onto 1983. Twenty years ago we had 16 vehicles in our fleet and the three new trucks pictured above were a considered a major investment to our business.

The ERF'S were supplied by James Bowen and Sons Limited, through salesman Dennis Carmichael and fitted with Gardner 265 engines, to take advantage of the recently introduced 38 tonne weight limit. The lucky drivers assigned to these vehicles were, Jim Hunter and now retired colleagues, John Marshall & Harry Campbell, who would no doubt be delighted with the amount of power available to their right foot and the luxury of the latest high roof double sleeper cabs.

The lorries covered the country with their general haulage work, operating from a much smaller Earl's Road depot than we know today, which was home to a grand total of 22 employees!

Just for the record, 1983 was also the year that Margaret Thatcher started her second term as Prime Minister, Derby winner Shergar was kidnapped and never seen again, CD's appeared in record shops, the film 'Ghandi' won 8 Oscars and breakfast TV was first broadcast, the most memorable presenter probably being one Rat called Roland!

Feedback on The First Grange Courier

Reaction to the first edition of our newsletter has been very favourable, thank you to everyone who passed on such positive comments. Our new venture has not gone unnoticed by the road transport enthusiasts website, Lorryspotting.com. The November edition of this premier sites monthly Journal states that, "John Mitchell are to be applauded for being the first known (Haulage) company to produce an e-newsletter, "The Grange Courier". Their article goes on to say, the newsletter and fleet list sections of the company's website should be of considerable interest to members".



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Press Cuttings

Our media profile has made interesting reading with a number of publications featuring recent reports on our firm: October the 13th's Sunday Times business section, featured a progress report on John Mitchell's strategy and progress, with analysis from a number of corporate experts. The article was positive and complimentary to the way our business has moved forward since August 1998, when this well-known Sunday broadsheet carried a full-page initial report on our company.

Interest in our new vehicles continues to make the headlines, with November's industry magazines 'Trucking' and 'Transport News' both carrying colour pictures and accompanying text on the recent Mercedes and MAN additions to the Mitchell fleet.

January's Truck and Driver also featured a letter, written by a driver employed by another haulage contractor with a large depot in our town, congratulating us on winning our recent award. The writer noted our distinctive livery, modern fleet and cleanliness of vehicles. It is always pleasing for us when people take the time to compliment us on the turnout of our trucks.

Competition



This month's competition tests your geographical and historical knowledge. A prize of £25 of Marks and

Spencer gift vouchers is on offer to the reader who can correctly identify the distinctive building, which forms the background to this photograph. E-mail your answer to newsdesk@johnmitchell.co.uk before 31st March 2003. The winner will be drawn at random from the correct entries and the result will be announced in the next newsletter.

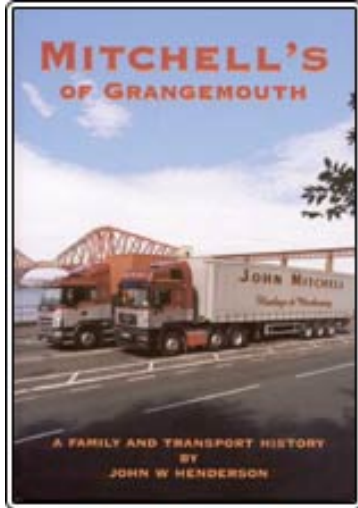
Congratulations to Mr. Jim Burns of Falkirk whose winning entry was picked from our Spot the Difference correct answers mail sack for newsletter no1 competition. The six differences were all in the top picture:

1. John spelt incorrectly.
 2. Web site address missing.
 3. Only two trailer axles.
 4. Two sets of trailer landing legs.
 5. John Mitchell logo missing on cab side.
 6. High roof missing on cab.
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Order Shop



A book on our Family firm was published in November 2000. "Mitchell's of Grangemouth ", a family and transport history, by John W. Henderson is a 48-page lavishly illustrated history of the Mitchell family's carting, haulage and local involvement in the area's heritage from 1892 right up to present day.

To order a copy of this book please send a cheque or postal for £12 (includes postage and packing) To John Mitchell Haulage and Warehousing, Earls Road Industrial Estate, Grangemouth. FK3 8XA. Please allow 28 days for delivery.

To commemorate our success as 'Motor Transport UK Haulier of the Year 2002', we have commissioned top model makers Search Impex ltd. to produce a detailed 1:43 rd. scale model of one of our MAN tractor units with a curtain side trailer. This model is an exclusive limited edition with only 100 units being produced; so early ordering will be essential to avoid disappointment. The cost of each model will be £95 with a charge of £5 for postage and packing if required. Please contact Lyn Sharpe at our office (01324 496307) to reserve your truck. Remember- first come first serve!



Thank you for reading The Grange Courier, if you have a story or picture that you think would be suitable for our magazine, please send a short e-mail to newsdesk@johnmitchell.co.uk