

Driving the Turnkey revolution for UK rail freight

WH Davis Group offers a one-stop shop solution for rail wagons, from design and build, through to maintenance and repair



A lot has changed on the railways in the last 100 years, but one thing that is as important today as it was a century ago is the role of WH Davis Group.

One thing that is different is that the group now consists of two businesses – WH Davis and Davis Wagon Services – which together offer the expertise of designing, building, maintaining and repairing rail wagons.

The journey began in 1908 when the company started its life on the railways as a repairer and later as a manufacturer of small wooden-bodied mineral wagons.

As the rail industry has transformed, so has WH Davis, which is now the only independent freight wagon manufacturer in the UK, and one leading the way in the design and building of rail freight wagons.

Innovation has been at the heart of the company's success, a key reason why the company is the chosen organisation to build rail wagons, over rival competition in Europe and beyond.

'As the industry moves towards digitalisation, we are constantly reviewing our processes to make our operations as efficient as possible'

Attention to detail is key, and for WH Davis this starts with its UK-based design team, that

has extensive experience in bringing practical solutions to design issues, working alongside customers to satisfy operational requirements whilst ensuring compliance with required standards.

Creating the magic

Designs can be 3D models using SolidWorks or 2D using AutoCad, with design resources including Finite Element Analysis and in-house testing.

Production centres around a 4.25-hectare site at Langwith Junction, with its own rail sidings that can accommodate around 65 bogie wagons.

The factory has a workshop area of 7,500m², which has nine overhead cranes with capacities up to 30 tonnes.



The main workshop facilities have a rail connection to the sidings.

Proven track record of innovation

WH Davis is the trusted provider for the UK rail freight industry with many high-profile clients.

A long list of achievements includes working with a large biomass power station to create a bespoke 'supersized', fully automated, covered hopper wagon specifically designed for the transport of biomass, with a 30% increase in capacity of anything previously seen on the UK network.

More recently, WH Davis has led the way in the recycling of over 350 coal hoppers with its re-purposing design and modification into Aggregate Hoppers.

The company has also won the contract to design and build 84 new triple deck EcoFret2 container flats which will allow maximum optimisation of loads within train lengths.

The experts in maintaining and repairing rail wagons

Whilst the design and build expert is WH Davis; for the maintenance and repair of rail wagons it is Davis Wagon Services that is an industry leader.

Davis Wagon Services' head office is situated in Immingham, with nine outstations strategically positioned throughout the UK to provide maintenance and repairs to its customers' fleets of vehicles.

This year marks the 14th anniversary of the company's creation, following the acquisition by WH Davis, with the objective to broaden the offering to the UK rail market, and be able to offer a full turnkey product.

Although part of the group, Davis Wagon Services very much stands on its own, a continuing success story that has led to sustained growth and development year on year.

This is down in large to a passion to strive to set new industry standards for quality, innovation and the delivery of outstanding solutions that keep rail wagons moving, and moving safely and reliably.

While WH Davis is the expert in designing and building the rail wagons, maintenance and repair very much should be placed in the trust of Davis Wagon Services.

Delivering outstanding solutions

John Hall, Managing Director of Davis Wagon Services Limited, said: "We believe in momentum and will always push to set a new industry standard for quality, innovation and the delivery of outstanding solutions that ensures that our customers' availability levels meet their expectations.

"As the industry moves towards digitalisation, we are constantly reviewing our processes to make our operations as efficient as possible."

UK experts for the UK freight industry

Les Bryant, Engineering Director of WH Davis Group, said: "WH Davis and Davis Wagon Services are aligned in rail and working together we can offer that full turnkey offering for the lifecycle of the rail wagon, which has become the norm in the UK rail passenger industry.

"Collectively all the design, engineering and maintenance teams are based in the UK, with the skills and knowledge to be able to design, build and maintain rail wagons for UK customers.

"As an organisation, we have that unique ability of being able to offer a one-stop solution to the rail freight industry being able to not just build, but maintain the vehicle for its entire life." ■

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