

An Insight Into H.E. Services Over the Years

Hugh Edeleanu founded H.E. Services when he purchased a second hand JCB 3C while completing an engineering degree at Cambridge University in 1972. Driving the digger earned Hugh extra cash, but he soon realised the potential for self-drive excavators and expanded his fleet, turning it into Britain's biggest excavator hire company. Tracked machines followed the wheeled ones and this pioneering move saw H.E. grow into a business with a £5.7 million turnover by 1988.



Today the H.E. Group consists of H.E. Services (Plant Hire) and Masterhitch Europe. Associated companies include H.E. Services (Ireland) and the theme park arm, Diggerland. The group has an annual turnover of around £20 million.

H.E. Group headquarters in Strood near Rochester in Kent consists of one of the eleven plant hire depots as well as the head office and the engineering company, Masterhitch. In 1989 Hugh realised that he could offer great value to his customers in the form of time saving by fitting a quick-hitch system on excavators for changing buckets and other attachments. A search of the marketplace yielded a handful of second-rate products so Hugh put his engineering skills to use and designed one himself, overcoming many of the

design weaknesses he had seen in other products. The hitch was fabricated in H.E. Services' workshops and was such an improvement on existing designs that a company was formed to build and market it - Masterhitch was born. In addition to the hitch, Masterhitch diversified into building new buckets and designing new attachments. One of the biggest costs to the plant hire division was damage to hydraulic rams by hirers, so Masterhitch designed and built what it claims is the strongest ram guard on the market. In 1994 Masterhitch Europe was founded to market its products and develop innovations for the construction industry.

H.E. Services (Plant Hire) Ltd is the backbone of the group and has a core fleet of over 1600 machines split between 11 depots around the UK, including a new depot in Leeds. The plant hire fleet consists predominantly of 180° and 360° excavators with dumpers and telehandlers.

A 'family' is the best way to describe the team at H.E. Services. There is always a warm reception from the close-knit and highly enthusiastic staff. But the family tag is very real. Hugh Edeleanu's sister, Louise, is Events Manager for the Diggerland adventure parks and corporate entertainment division, 'Formula JCB Racing'. H.E. Services (Plant Hire) Ltd Managing Director Peter Durey, runs his part of the Group from Strood. Two minutes from his office you will find his wife, Pam, managing the National Hire Centre and the Sales and Marketing Department.

Diggerland was set up in the spring of 2000 at the Strood site. The adventure park enables children to

drive diggers and dumpers for fun. With visitor numbers topping 50,000 in the first year, 2001 saw two more sites open - in Durham and Devon. The Strood (Kent) site has now moved to Cuxton and more Diggerlands are planned for the future. Yet another string to the H.E. Services bow is the H.E. Services JCB Stunt Team. The Landshuttle (a souped up JCB 3CX) heads the team. Driven by Hugh, the Landshuttle broke the record in 1997 for the fastest digger driven between John O'Groats and Land's End - taking 22 hours 10 minutes 30 seconds. The JCB Stunt Team can be seen performing its dancing diggers routine

at shows all over the UK.

H.E.Services are still expanding within the UK and have plans to open more hire depots. H.E.Services (Ireland) Ltd has grown into the dominant company in the Irish excavator hire market by supplying the same quality plant as its UK associate.

Further international growth has also come from H.E.Services International Plant Sales division. Incorporated into the Group in 1990, the division currently supplies many leading makes of plant throughout Europe, the Middle East and Asia.