

40 years of Driver Trett

The business that eventually became Driver Group plc has roots dating back to Northampton in the early 1970s as the idea of Charles King, a partner in the practice Baker Wilkins & Smith, Chartered Quantity Surveyors. Charles had found himself fielding increasing numbers of requests from contractors and subcontractors for help with commercial manage-

ment, both in the UK and overseas. To service that demand, in 1973 he employed a contractor's quantity surveyor, Malcolm Sarjeant.

From Baker Wilkins & Smith's Northampton office Malcolm set about providing contractors and specialists with services ranging from the measurement and pricing of tenders through to claims

and final accounts, under the business name BWS International Construction Consultants ("BWSICC"). Internationally, early clients were the likes of Philip Holzmann, Hyundai, Fujita and Fujiko, where they were working outside of their home jurisdictions, particularly in the Middle East where there was a proliferation of British engineers, proffering English

language contracts based upon British standard forms.

In the early days the UK market was rife with what many subcontractors considered "Subbie Bashing" and key early clients included specialists in the fields of cladding, glazing, mechanical and electrical services, refrigeration, partitioning, and refractory linings.

1978

In 1978, the early growth of BWSICC saw it established as a separate partnership to Baker Wilkins and Smith, with Malcom as its Executive Director.



Malcolm Sarjeant

1979

In 1979, Paul Battrick joined the firm from George Wimpey.



1983

In 1983, he was followed by John Mullen from Taylor Woodrow.



1986

The 1980s saw steady organic growth in the practice, which was boosted in 1986 when BWSICC merged with the partnership Davison George. Peter Davison and Peter George brought extensive experience in the heavy engineering sector of the construction industry, with particular emphasis on offshore oil and gas projects, petrochemical plants, and pipelines. Their services included contract, time, and cost.

Clients included many of the world's major oil and gas companies and heavy engineering contractors.



1990

In 1990, Steve Driver joined BWSICC from Mowlem and set up an office in Rossendale, Lancashire, which would later become the practice's head office.

In that decade, the client base matured further to include most of the UK's major building and engineering contractors and some of the world's largest petrochemical companies. Services particularly expanded into project and forensic planning, to which the building and civil engineering industries were applying increasing emphasis and sophistication.

Expert witness services also became a growing part of the service offering, with Peter Davison particularly gaining appointments on some major cases in the UK courts and in international arbitration. The opening of several new offices, including London, brought the practice closer to that city's market for both domestic litigation and international arbitration.



BWS Group Partners 1986

1998

By 1998, BWSICC had significantly outgrown the firm of Chartered Quantity Surveyors that had spawned it, and the old partnership vehicle was considered unsuitable to facilitate the next phase of the business's growth.

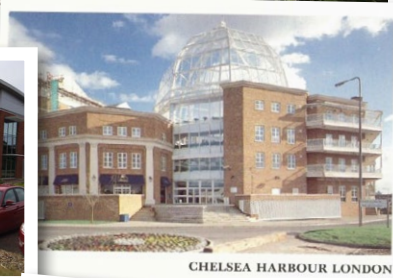
DIGEST



Oman office



Coventry office



CHELSEA HARBOUR LONDON



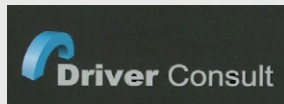
Haslingden office



London office

2003

In 2003, BWS Consulting Ltd became Driver Consult Ltd. Peter George's business (seconding contract, time, and cost staff into the offshore oil and gas industries) continued, for a short period, as BWS International.



2005

For Driver Consult, the early 'noughties' saw growth continue apace.

By 2005 BWS International demerged to allow Driver Consult to focus on its core business of providing the construction and engineering industries with commercial, programming, and dispute resolution services.

Five offices were established in the UK along with local vehicles in Belgium and Abu Dhabi.

With the UK offices thriving, emphasis was now on both growing the business in international markets and acquisitions, as the next steps in the growth of the Driver business.

The Board considered that these were best achieved by listing the company on AIM on the London Stock Exchange to bring in the necessary financial capital.



2008-2009

Among the early significant results of the listing were the acquisition of Commercial Management Consultants Ltd (CMC later rebranded as Driver Project Services) and the establishment of Driver Consult (Oman) LLC in 2008 and Driver Consult (UAE) LLC Dubai branch in 2009.



2012

2012 saw the acquisition of Trett Consulting in May and the launch of the expert witness brand Diales in June.

Further offices were opened in Africa, North America, Asia Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East.



TRETT CONSULTING 1977-2012



Trett Consulting was launched in 1977 by Roger Trett, with its first offices above a fish and chip shop in Great Yarmouth



The company developed into a distinctive commercial and contract consultancy across the UK with offices in Stirling, Leeds, Manchester, Coventry, London, and Great Yarmouth

Roger focused mainly on the engineering sector, the success of which resulted in further offices in Darlington and the Netherlands which specialised in these sectors.

Trett Consulting was renowned for the provision of construction expert witnesses specialising in quantum and forensic delay analysis.

Roger Trett was one of the founding members of the academy of experts.

Trett was bought by a Dutch engineering firm in 2008 before finally joining the Driver Group in 2012.

2014

In 2014 the Diales delay and quantum experts were joined by a team of world-class technical experts meaning that Diales could provide expert teams for diverse and complex international disputes from one main point of contact.



2018

These are just some of the highlights in the evolution of a global business that now has 28 offices around the world and a turnover of over £60 million.

As Driver celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2018, thoughts turn to what the future may hold.



Charles and Malcolm would hardly recognise the business, but they would surely be very proud.