

The Croydon depot is  
The Hireman's largest to date.



# Hireman heads south

The Hireman has expanded its operation in London with a new depot serving the south of the capital and beyond. Alan Guthrie reports.

The Hireman's new Croydon depot is the company's fourth location, complementing its others in Southwark, Wembley and Leytonstone. Between them they cover the Greater London region and many other areas further afield throughout the south east of England.

The Croydon facility is the largest of the four. It incorporates extensive warehouse and workshop space, as well as a PASMA training centre with an area to erect towers inside. As MD Neil Graham told EHN, "The depot officially opened in the first week of June and it has gone extremely well, surpassing our targets. Previously, our central (Southwark) and western (Wembley) locations had been serving an increasing number of customers to the south, in areas like Canterbury, Ashford and Guildford, so Croydon will relieve the strain and develop more business throughout the region.

## Serving areas outside the capital

"In particular, our central depot will be free to focus on the highly congested central London area. Our east and west operations will be able to better serve areas outside the capital: they already go out as far as Reading, Milton Keynes, Cambridge and Colchester, and will be able to do so more regularly now."

Reflecting this growth, the company has invested approximately £500,000 on new equipment for its fleet, much of this obviously to establish the Croydon facility. Based within easy reach of the M25, the depot is managed by Nick Goodwin who originally joined

The Hireman as a driver in 2014 and has progressed steadily through the ranks, having previously been hire controller at Southwark.

## "Driven by service"

"We now have 75 people employed throughout the business and we always develop depot managers and other senior personnel from within, who understand our corporate culture and our ways of operating," said Neil Graham. "Everything is driven by excellent service. Our aim is to be able to visit the same customer twice in one day if necessary, so that if they forget to order an item or want to exchange something, we can sort it. Some hirers offer a next-day service at best, but we want to ensure that we can fulfil our promise to support customers fully. And our service mix includes the way we talk to people, how our drivers interact with them, our regular fleet investment and vehicle renewal, and other aspects such as offering clients online account management.

"Many national contractors who hire from us in London say they would like to deal with us in other areas, too, and this gives us great confidence for the future. We now have four locations to cover London and the Home Counties, and we will continue to develop these facilities. When we re-located our Wembley depot from White City four years ago, the new premises gave 50% more space, leading to a subsequent increase in turnover, and we have plans for further expansion."

Looking ahead, Neil Graham says The Hireman could consider opening a presence in areas outside London as business grows and its existing facilities develop. More immediately, however, the new Croydon depot offers some exciting opportunities of its own. "The town centre is undergoing complete redevelopment with £5.3bn of investment planned over the next ten years. That includes a new shopping centre, housing, apartment blocks, offices and green spaces.

"Work has already been done to establish a solid infrastructure, with important rail and tram links, and the other projects will now follow. As our new Croydon depot is only five minutes away from the centre, we are very well placed to offer our services to contractors working on them."



The new facility offers extensive storage space...

... and dedicated workshops.

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