



Big Fridge

Mobile Chill or Freeze Trailers
for any occasion

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A Cool Result for Big Fridge

One year on and firm is really moving
(Published in the Evening Gazette, 21 April 2004)

A Teesside company which has just celebrated its first anniversary is about to double in size.

With its five "mobile fridges" in continuous use throughout the UK Thornaby-based Big Fridge is looking to add another seven to the fleet. The company's three directors are holding down other jobs while the business grows but expect soon to employ someone to have a permanent hand on the rudder.

Big Fridge was launched as a company just before the Christmas of 2002 but did not begin operating until mid-march last year.

The time was spent waiting for the first 220sq ft refrigeration trailer arriving, as well as working with Business Link on a marketing plan and with Stockton Council, which helped the fledging company by the way of its Vital Spark initiative.

"Once the trailer was out on sites word-of mouth really took over and referral work was astonishing" said director Nick Appleyard.

"From then the number of trailers has just boomed."

Nick and co-directors James White and Andrew Houston came across the idea while in Australia for Nick's wedding to Katrina.

"Our reception was in the open air and we used these mobile units to keep the food and drink cool," says Nick.

"They can plug into household electrical sockets or, in remote locations, operate from generators.

"We thought it was a brilliant idea and that there was a gap in the UK market for this service."

James says: "We appreciate the North-east isn't quite the same in terms of your average daily temperatures in Australia but caterers are more conscious than ever to avoid potential claims and prosecution against mishandling of food and drink at public events."

With an initial investment of about £6,000 they bought their first unit, but now import the boxes and refrigeration units from Germany.

These are put together by Allied Refrigeration, on Teesside Industrial Estate and the chassis are made to measure by a North Yorkshire company.

"We made a conscious decision from day one to buy new and provide a quality and efficient product," says Nick.

With a wide spread of clients – from local caterers to the British Army to a film catering company – all profits are being ploughed back into the company, but this year, with the help of a website designed by Darlington-based Edward Robertson, the order book is already looking healthy.

"We should be looking at a good turnover and we are at the point where the business is starting to need someone in a permanent position to look after it," says Nick.

The three directors bring their own strengths to the company.

Chartered surveyor Nick is from a business background – his father Colin developed a successful Thornaby van and plant hire business in the '70s.

James is an agricultural consultant with experience in the marquee industry, an area where he first spotted a need for on-site refrigeration.

Andrew, who has spent a lifetime in farming, brings business development experience after restructuring his family farm business.

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One year on and firm is really moving



BIG IDEA PAYS: Big Fridge directors from left, James White, Andrew Houston and Nick Appleyard

Picture by IAN McINTYRE

A cool result for Big Fridge

By ALAN PLEWS

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From previous page

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