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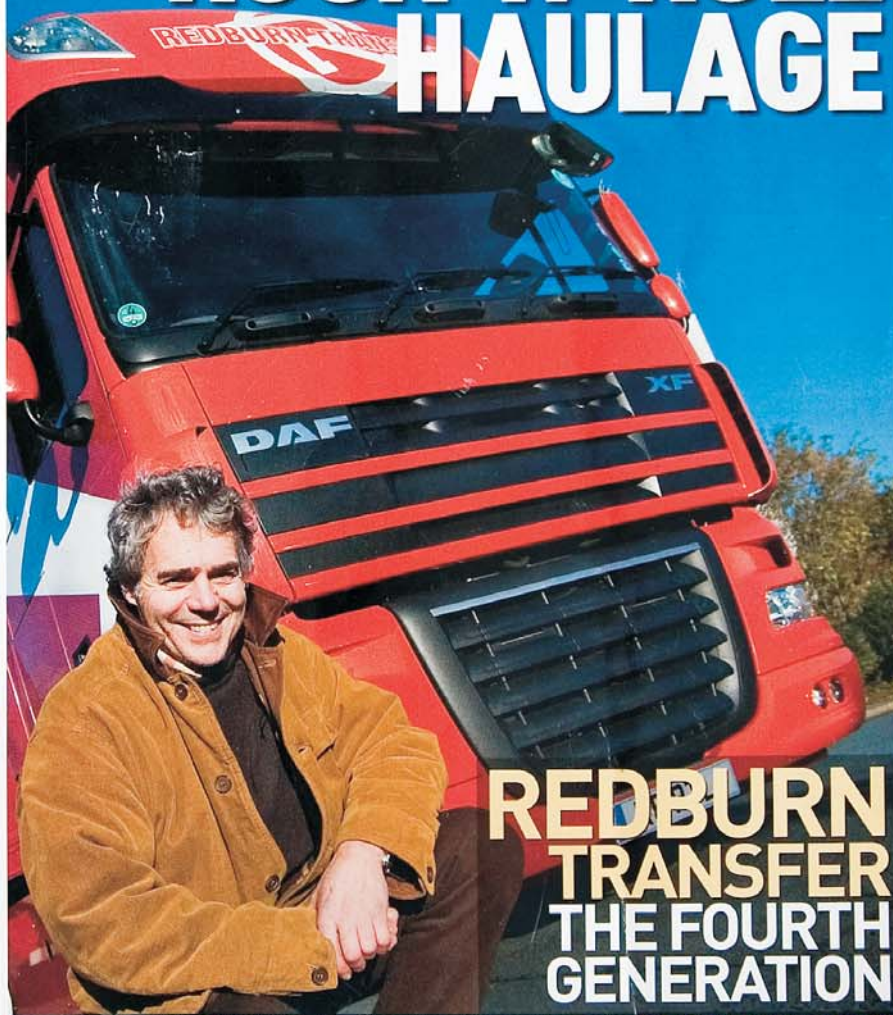
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Movers and shakers

Despite the recession taking hold in a big way, the removals industry still gathered at the NEC for the Movers and Storers Show 2009. CM provides some of the highlights...

Words / Images: Colin Barnett

WITH THE housing market being at the forefront of the recession, the removals sector is probably among the worst affected in the road transport business. But that didn't stop them attending an enlarged Movers and Storers Show 2009 at the NEC, where innovation and diversification were the key words for those hoping to survive.

The honours for the most eye-catching truck at the show had to go to SE London's James Removals, with its MAN TGX XXL 18,400 drawbar outfit. The bodywork, which carries eight standard removals containers, is by Unique Van Bodies of Warrington, a company effectively evolved from the old Marsden Vanplan concern. Unique also provides traditional cab conversions, such as a fully glazed roof pod on a Mercedes-Benz Axor that was on display. Used by specialist art and antique mover Constantine, it's often used to accommodate museum staff travelling with the load.

Self-storage

Hauliers with some spare warehousing capacity may be looking to diversify, and one opportunity CM will be looking at more closely in the near future is self-storage.

Big in America, the next big thing to arrive here could be mobile self-storage. Customers rent a storage box, which is left at their property on a 3.5-tonne trailer while they fill it with their possessions. It's then towed away to a storage facility for safe keeping. The system we looked at, from www.simplystore.co.uk, is offering franchises and licences with attractive start-up costs.

Ekeri, the Finnish maker of side-opening trailers and bodies, was on hand to attract attention from the removals sector. The truck on show was one of six general haulage Volvo rigidids that have been sold to Prima Distribution for garment transport.



▲ Top: James Removals' eye-catching MAN. Above: Simply Store. Right: Böcker Agilo lift.

SBS Removals, from Sheffield, has increased its operating flexibility with a Wilson trailer. Although much of its work is carrying removals containers, it also has a contract to move new wheelie bins as well as undertaking more general ad hoc work, and the double-decker is versatile enough to cope with it all.

If you need to lift a 400kg load to a 27m high location, while occupying a

car-sized footprint, the Böcker Agilo lift could be for you. The Nissan Cabstar-mounted machine includes radio control, which can even be used to stop and start the engine from the receiving point. The firm also makes a lightweight, full-size, truck-mounted crane. ■

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