

# Success is all in the McNaughton & Son



GEORGE McNaughton & Son is a proud family business based in Lochgilphead, which specialises in civil engineering and plant hire.

The contractor is this year celebrating 45 years in business, during which time it has evolved into a multidisciplinary company capable of taking on a wide variety of challenging projects, from hydro schemes and bridge building to wind farms and creating forestry roads.

The majority of projects are carried out in Argyll, where the firm has developed an enviable reputation as a reliable local contractor for a multitude of clients ranging from construction giants such as Balfour Beatty to Forestry Commission Scotland and Argyll & Bute Council.

George McNaughton & Son directly

# family for George

Lochgilphead-based civil engineering contractor and plant hire specialist George McNaughton & Son goes from strength to strength as the firm marks 45 years

employs up to 35 people and is today run by husband and wife team George and Janet McNaughton, along with their 19-year-old son Cameron.

George's father, George Senior, established the business in July 1975, with the early days comprising largely of tasks such as building forestry roads and ditching.

Back then, the company's HQ was a yard at the back of the family home. Today, George McNaughton & Son operates from a site in an industrial estate complete with its own workshop and teams of mechanics and fitters.

Due to the remote location, an ongoing challenge over the years has been recruitment and finding people with the right skillset to thrive

in some of the testing environments in which the firm operates. The company has proved its commitment to investing in and training young talent, both from within the local community and those willing to relocate to the area.

Workforce retention and development has been paramount, as has creating opportunities for employees to progress up the ranks.

Three of the firm's current foremen have been with the business for 30, 19 and 10 years respectively, emphasising the value the firm places on longevity and experience. The longest serving of those started out as a dumper driver back in the early 1990s.

Diversification has been central to helping the company not just survive



but actively thrive despite facing a number of challenges over the years including recessions, decreases in public sector spending and, most

recently, the coronavirus pandemic, which saw the firm forced to cease

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all construction activity for six weeks.

You don't survive for four and a half decades in a tough sector like construction without being capable of adapting.

When demand for one service dips, others pick up. The ability to offer a broad range of services is just one of the ways in which George McNaughton & Son has managed to stay ahead of the curve.

Currently the business is engaged in a large pylon upgrade project for main contractor Balfour Beatty, using its expertise to make high-spec forestry roads while taking into account stringent environmental considerations. Health and safety has always been at the forefront of the firm's operations and the business is making sure all employees adhere to Covid-compliant operating procedures.

Some of the company's standout projects over the years include helping to deliver high profile wind farm schemes by constructing roads, preparing bases and supplying ready mix concrete. Building bridges for forestry and agricultural use as well as re-enforcing existing bridges in need of repair are also undertakings that George McNaughton & Son has excelled in.

In the early years, George McNaughton Junior was instrumental in driving forward the plant hire side of the business. The current fleet



consists of excavators from 1.5 to 45-tonne and dumpers up to 30-tonnes, as well as operated plant. The machines are all manufactured by leading brands such as Case, Doosan, Hitachi, Takeuchi, Volvo and Bell dump trucks.

When it comes to transport, McNaughton & Son offers low loaders and tippers capable of transporting up to 20-tonnes of material.

The business also runs a small quarry – Clachan Quarry – and can supply and deliver quarry products and ready mix concrete. Other

services in its vast portfolio include contract crushing, demolition, rock breaking, site preparation and dredging.

George McNaughton & Son attributes much of its success to having a strong family ethos at its core. Not only has the family aspect provided continuity for employees and confidence that the business is there for the long haul, it has allowed clients to build up lasting professional relationships and fostered a culture of trust and openness. The door is always open, while clients appreciate the fact they can pick up the phone and speak directly to the decision makers.

The family tradition looks set to continue for some time yet, with Cameron McNaughton playing a prominent role after choosing

to leave school at 16 and follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather.

Although he was never pressured to enter the business, mum Janet said he has been a part of things 'since he could walk'. He was keen to learn as much as possible about all assets of the business and earned his HGV Licence at 18. He was due to go for his Class 1 licence before the Covid-19-related lockdown period brought that ambition to a temporary halt. Janet explained that he doesn't want to tell somebody to do something he can't do himself.

Management are keen to help drive positive change within the construction industry and, to this end, they play an active role in trade bodies including the Scottish Plant Owners Association.

To celebrate the 45th anniversary, as well as George's 60th birthday and Janet and George's 25th wedding anniversary, a party was due to be held in August. Unfortunately, like so many events this year, the Covid-19 situation put pay to that, though the event has been rescheduled for March next year. Instead, a road run, featuring George's 1959 vintage lorry, was held around the village to show support for the NHS and local hospital during these unprecedented times.

As for what's next, the plan is for more of the same. There are no grand plans for expansion or to double profits. Instead, George McNaughton & Son is focused on continuing down the solid and steady path that has held the company in such good stead for 45 years and laid the perfect foundations for a bright future.

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