

Cold Storage Construction

For a professional finish from a long-established family firm, the company to call is W D Hobden Ltd.

With nearly 30 years' experience in constructing cold stores and controlled atmosphere buildings across the South East, our skilled team works closely with growers to achieve the best results, on time and on budget.

Whether it is a large farm complex or a one off store for top fruit or soft fruit, you can rely on W D Hobden Ltd for quality workmanship and a flexible, customer-focused approach.

"The highly experienced, customer-focused team at W D Hobden has an excellent reputation and is always a reliable choice for quality cold store construction."
John Haffenden,
Freshcold Ltd

W.D. Hobden Ltd

Cold Storage Construction

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CHILLED DISTRIBUTION

Colin Goldup may have grown his business from 'one man and a van' to '70 people with 24 refrigerated lorries', but he would be the first to recognise the contribution made by other people – and one man in particular.

Freshcold's John Haffenden has played an important part in Colin's business, Staplehurst Transits, since its earliest days, and has become his 'go-to' expert not just for refrigeration but across many other technical areas.

Over the past 45 years, Colin has grown Staplehurst Transits into one of the leading players in chilled distribution of fresh fruit and produce from growers in and around Kent to wholesalers across the length and breadth of the country.

That growth has required considerable modernisation and expansion of the operation, which has been based at Branden Farm, Staplehurst Road, Marden, since the 1980s.

Freshcold, which supplies refrigeration and controlled atmosphere solutions to growers across the South East, has just completed two more chilled stores at the Staplehurst Transits operation to take the depot's capacity to 1,000 pallets of fruit and other produce.

The latest expansion will allow the business to move between 130,000 and 150,000 pallets of fruit a year, mostly home grown but with some continental fruit helping to keep the 24, 40-tonne refrigerated lorries busy throughout the year.

While John and the Freshcold team have been increasingly involved in delivering the whole project,

rather than just focusing on the refrigeration in which he specialises, this latest development took that a step further still.

"This was the first time I asked John to project manage the whole contract," explained Colin, who still plays an active role in Staplehurst Transits despite his 73 years. "Freshcold has played an important coordinating role in the past, but this time I asked John to act as main contractor."

Freshcold brought in Wealden AM, headed up by Rob Kendall – another equally well-known name among farmers and growers across the south east – to provide the steel-framed structure of the two new buildings – and more besides.

"We were pleased to be asked to be involved in Staplehurst Transits' new project and to work with John Haffenden and Bill Hobden on providing additional chilled storage facilities for the client Colin Goldup," said Rob. Wealden AM provided the planning, design and building of the steel framed buildings, along with the cladding and groundworks and including all associated planning permissions.

"The building design and construction was challenging and we had to look carefully at a number of key design issues," Rob added. "We also had to cope with the constraints of a restricted site at the end of a busy transport facility."

"That meant teamwork was particularly important. We worked closely with Freshcold and W D Hobden to devise a programme that made sure the project was

completed on time."

The two new stores, one 24m by 24m and five metres high and the other 17m by five and the same height, were built by another long-established firm, Hadlow-based W D Hobden.

"Bill and the W D Hobden team have an excellent reputation for their knowledge, flexibility and experience and I was pleased to link up with them once again to deliver the new buildings at Staplehurst Transits," said John.

"When you are trusted to deliver the whole project it is vital to build a team that you can rely on not just to do their bit but to work in harmony with the many other teams involved. That takes flexibility and professionalism, which is where the likes of Wealden AM and W D Hobden score highly.

"Our team has experience, know-how and expertise that goes well beyond designing and commissioning controlled atmosphere or refrigeration systems and allows us to deliver the whole building, but that does rely on bringing in the right team."

W D Hobden is a family firm that has been in the business for almost 25 years and prides itself on delivering exactly what the client needs.

Flexibility and customer focus are also important to Tudor Multi Services, the Paddock Wood-based company that supplied the doors and barrier systems for the new buildings at Staplehurst Transits.

That flexibility turned out to be a vital ingredient, since, in managing director James Tumber's own >>



"Building the Future of Farming and Industry"



Wealden AM have been supplying and managing steel-framed building projects in the South East of England for over 25 years.

Offering a complete package to customers who are looking for a carefully thought out, well-designed agricultural or industrial building.

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PLAN

DESIGN

BUILD



« words: "Everything on the job was bespoke".

He explained: "Nothing we supplied was off the shelf and everything was designed to suit the customer's exact requirements after talking to John and to Colin. We put forward ideas, agreed what would best suit the project and then supplied and installed it.

"The barriers were ordered in to the sizes required and were supplied in three different styles to suit the particular needs of the building. We also supplied three different kinds of roller door – some with standard pull cords, some operated by intelligent radar and some using an induction loop system."

The intelligent radar system helps to maintain the cool chain by ensuring that the door only opens when a vehicle is heading straight for it, not when it is going across the door or heading away from it.

The most recent extension, which includes a refrigerated passage between the buildings, follows a major expansion just a few years ago – and has itself been designed to allow for further future growth.

Colln set up the business in 1973, providing general light haulage using one 35cwt Luton van. "It was just general shifting," he said. "If it fitted in the van I'd move it." While the business grew steadily, it was in the early 1980s that Colin spotted his opportunity. Mitchell and Robertson, a haulage company serving wholesale markets from nearby Branden Farm, ceased trading, leaving a gap in the market for a new entrant.

With growers quite literally needing a route to market, Colin rented part of the site and added seasonal fruit to the loads he was moving with what was then still a comparatively small fleet.

It was at around this time that Colin, who was at

that time delivering fridges and freezers on behalf of Prestcold Southern Ltd in Maidstone, met John, who was working at Prestcold as an engineer.

As he developed Staplehurst Transits into a fully integrated cool chain operation, Colin increasingly needed expert advice on refrigeration and for that he turned to John. More than 30 years on, that relationship is stronger than ever.

"I use John and Freshcold because of the peace of mind it gives me," Colin explained. "I can get hold of him 24/7 and if there is ever a problem he's here in a heartbeat to sort it out. He is probably the most responsive supplier I have ever come across."

That prompt service and attention to detail was behind Colin's recent decision to ask John to take over the maintenance of all his electrical systems at Staplehurst Transits, as well as the refrigeration equipment. "If it's plugged in and it stops working, Freshcold is there to put it right, and that knowledge helps me sleep at nights," he said.

Within a few years of moving to Branden Farm, Colin began renting the whole of the site to keep up with the growth in his new business. Soon after that he bought the site, adding two chilled stores and beginning a steady expansion that has continued ever since.

In 2013 Colin committed £2m to a major expansion, modernising the facilities at what was then his 20,000 sq ft distribution centre and adding five cold stores, each capable of storing 125 pallets, together with a holding area for 700 pallets.

Freshcold was again integral to the project, which was completed in 2014 – not just contributing the refrigeration expertise but providing in-depth advice on

the scheme as a whole, as well as saving Staplehurst Transits a considerable sum of money.

"John looked at the plans that had been drawn up for me and told me that they were hugely overspecified," Colin recalled. "He then redesigned the system to suit my business and oversaw the installation of what I really needed."

John's hands-on engineering experience plays a vital part in the service he offers clients as it means he is not limited to the parts, or even the systems, that are available 'off the shelf'.

His technical background means he has even been known to develop completely new kit such as Freshcold's chiller defrost system, a unique piece of kit that uses heat that would otherwise be wasted to defrost the chillers at regular intervals.

"Freshcold designs fully bespoke systems that tackle each grower's specific requirements, and because I am an engineer rather than a salesman I know how to make each system perform at its best," he added.

The extension means Staplehurst Transits now has a total of 40,000 sq ft of chilled storage plus parking for 30 refrigerated lorries. The depot has six loading bays to meet the most rigorous cool-chain requirements as one of only two Kent businesses serving all the country's wholesale markets with Garden of England fruit and other produce six nights a week, every week.

The larger of the two new chilled stores can hold 300 pallets, while the smaller one will take a further 80. Solar PV panels were installed on the roofs of the original expansion two years ago, reflecting Freshcold's own focus on operating in as 'green' a fashion as possible.

Stay cool - we'll take care of everything



If your priority is making sure fruit comes out of storage looking and tasting as good as the day it went in, then talk to Freshcold about your new cold store.

With around a century's experience in looking after top fruit across the south east, Freshcold leads the way in delivering controlled atmosphere storage systems using the latest and most cost-effective technology.

Our project management skills and close links with other industry professionals mean we can take your installation from the drawing board to completion, leaving you to get on with the day job.

"I use Freshcold because of the peace of mind it gives me. I can get hold of John 24/7 and if there is ever a problem he's here in a heartbeat to sort it out."

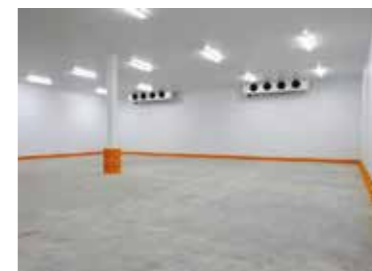
Colin Goldup,
Staplehurst Transits

"On a busy farm you need a contractor who will just get on with the job, bring in the right people and deliver a great result by the promised date. That's Freshcold."

Robert Pascall,
Clock House Farm,
Coxheath



**Cost-effective and eco-friendly solutions
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Refrigeration Management

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