Mike Neill clocks up more than 21 years as Swift Group Graphics Store Controller

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Author:

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Mike Neill, Graphics Store Controller, Swift Group.

Caravan and motorhome graphics have changed beyond recognition over the last two decades, and Milke Neill, Graphics Store Controller for the Swift Group, has witnessed the changes at first hand…

- Mike Neill is one of two employees from CGI Creative Graphics (CGI) based permanently in the Swift Group production facility in Hull.
- CGI has worked in partnership with the Swift Group supplying graphics for its caravans and motorhomes for 35+ years.
- Mike Neill started as the Graphics Store Controller on 9th April 2001 – and has never had a day off sick in over 21 years.
  Mike is responsible for ordering the correct graphics (up to 50 per vehicle) and delivering them to the production line each day, plus managing archived graphics for Swift's Aftersales service

Over the last few decades, the graphics on caravans and motorhomes have developed from simple stripes to stunning high-definition, digital 3D renders, and there's one man who has witnessed this first hand. He is Mike Neill, the Graphics Stores Controller at the Swift Group's factory in Hull, who is celebrating his 21st year in the role – without ever having a day off sick.

All graphics and badges for Swift Group caravans and motorhomes are designed and produced by CGI Creative Graphics (CGI), based in Bedfordshire. CGI specialises in designing and producing graphics for the caravan industry in the UK and Europe, as well as other sectors, such as aviation and automotive, and has now worked in partnership with the Swift Group for over 35 years.

As part of this long-standing working relationship between the two companies, Mike Neill is one of two CGI employees based at Swift in its facility specifically used for storing the graphics and badging for all Swift's caravans, motorhomes and holiday homes.

A typical day for Mike Neill starts at 7.30 am when he delivers the exact sets of graphics to

the production line that are required for the models being produced that day. Each set of graphics can include up to 50 different items per vehicle required for up to 50 caravans a day. To avoid any delays in production, Mike works closely with the production team so he can order the correct graphics to be printed and delivered from CGI's UK head office in Bedfordshire for the models scheduled to go down the line in the weeks ahead.

Mike, with his colleague, Lee Kemp, are also responsible for maintaining an archive of about 10 years' worth of badging and graphics for Swift's aftersales department.

"When I first started this job 21 years ago, there weren't any computers and we used a manual paper system so ordering and finding parts was a slow process," said Mike Neill. "Since then, the volume of parts (graphics and badges) required for each caravan or motorhome has probably quadrupled. Thankfully, after our first computers arrived in about 2004, I set up a more efficient electronic system, so every single item is now easy to find. I like to make sure everything goes smoothly every day," he continued.

Mike's role is supported by CGI head office staff who work closely with the product design team at the Swift Group (and other manufacturers) from a first brief of a new model or model year, to engineer graphic designs for each model in a range, sometimes up to a year in advance, and also train the team on the production line to apply them to each vehicle.

Creative Graphics International (CGI)

Creative Graphics International (CGI) has almost 40 years' experience of designing and printing graphics, offering a complete branding service from its award-winning design studio. It serves clients in the caravan, automotive, marine and aviation industries across six continents in more than 30 different countries and prides itself on working closely with each one, from the initial design concept to final installation. CGI has manufacturing operations in the UK (Bedford) and South Africa (Cape Town). www.cgi-visual.com

Other caravan manufacturers that CGI supports in the UK include Bailey of Bristol, Coachman Caravan and the Erwin Hymer Group UK. It also designs and supplies graphics

for dealer special edition models.