



Kevin Connelly,
this year's guest speaker.

Continuing professional development

IPAF's recent professional development seminar (PDS) for Approved Training Instructors drew an enthusiastic response from the 77 attendees. Over two-thirds agreed that the topics covered were relevant and virtually all agreed to the promoting of future PDS events. Amongst positive, general comments, the opportunity to meet other trainers was welcomed and there was a view that CPD (Continued Professional Development) should be mandatory.

The major criticism was that the workshop events were too short!

These included one by Dennis Hurren, Technical Director of Powered Access Certification Ltd on 'CE Markings, Machinery Directive and prEN280'. The important and topical issue of 'Equipment Restraint & Fall Arrest in MEWPs' was addressed by Simon Mitchell, Senior Instructor Height Safety, with Spanset Ltd. 'The NVQ System' was outlined by Lyn Scott – NVQ Course Co-ordinator at Lowestoft College.

The event was again sponsored by IPAF members, JLG and UpRight.

Popular demand saw the return of Derek Woodward, Principal Inspector for the HSE's Construction Division, whose contribution last year stimulated particularly lively discussion. A similar response to his contribution to this year's Seminar, 'Competence and Communication' demonstrated that safety within the Construction Industry remains a hot topic and one to which powered access has much to contribute.

Government responds on vehicle tax

IPAF's call for the return to the classification of truck -

mounted platforms as 'Special Vehicles' (*Cranes & Access* November/December, page 11) for the calculation of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) "will be considered in the Chancellor's Budget Judgement". That is the assurance given by Stephen Timms MP, and Financial Secretary to The Treasury in a recent letter to the Federation.

The document, 'Consultation on reform of Vehicle Excise Duty for Lorries', published at the time of the Chancellor's recent Autumn Budget Statement, explains that "The Government believes that tax can and should be used to promote environmental objectives. However, the Government believes that this must be done in a fair way...".

This raises hopes of a positive outcome to the campaign. That the different treatment of mobile cranes and truck-mounted platforms (in the context of fuel duty) would indeed "lead to unfairness", was the contention of Mr Justice Dyson's in his High Court Judgment (Commissioners of Customs and Excise v Nationwide Access and PTP Aerial Platforms Ltd).

Since the 1994 Budget, mobile cranes and truck-mounted platforms have been treated differently for

VED: mobile cranes are still classified as 'Special Vehicles', whilst truck-mounted platforms are rated as goods vehicles.

IPAF has responded to the lorry VED consultation exercise by taking the opportunity to reiterate its strong case for the return of truck-mounted platforms to 'Special Vehicle' status.

Manchester United FC venue for AGM

In scaling the heights, IPAF sees itself in good company with Manchester United FC, whose Banqueting Suite is the venue for this year's AGM and lunch on 20 March. Guest speaker is comedian and impressionist Kevin Connelly. Members are reminded to apply early for tickets, which are priced at £39.95 plus VAT, as the combination of a full AGM agenda, the prestigious venue, an excellent lunch and amusing banter from Connelly, are expected to place a heavy demand on tickets.

Proof of training - only accept the PAL card

Confirming the effectiveness of the security features incorporated into the PAL card – the only certain proof of IPAF-Approved training – is a recent unsuccessful attempt to provide bogus proof of

such training by a platform operator.

The combination of the IPAF hologram and the telephone hotline, which can be used to verify card details, have made fraudulent use all but impossible. The Certificate of Training, however, does not incorporate the same security and must never be accepted on its own as proof of effective training.

The operator in question presented a photocopy of a colleague's Certificate with his own name stuck over the original saying that he had lost his PAL card and was still awaiting a replacement. Underlining the importance now attached to ensuring that platform operators are properly trained, a less-than-convinced site manager checked out the details with IPAF and immediately uncovered the attempted fraud.

New Certificates now carry the reminder that they do not constitute secure proof of training and although most site and safety managers will only accept the PAL card, IPAF wants to reinforce the

International Powered
Access Federation
PO Box 16, Carnforth,
Lancashire, LA6 1LB, UK
Tel: 01524 781393
Fax: 01524 781301
E-mail: mewp@ipaf.org
Web Site: www.ipaf.org