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Long coiled extension leads an absolute No-No

Dear Mark,

May I take the opportunity to thank you for another interesting article about the "Black Art" of Batteries & Battery Chargers.

However, as an energy professional, I was a little disappointed to see an image of a coiled up extension lead that was connected to the wall socket! In my humble opinion this should not have been shown, as using an extension lead in this manner is absolutely a No-No.

Suffer me if you will. A fly lead used in this way will overheat and create at the very least, an electrical resistance. Take a Holland Lift N-165 EL12. This requires a current draw of 27.5 amps for the Bulk Charging phase of the battery charge. i.e. A period of several (six to eight) hours. A lead to charge this machine, used in this manner would most likely self-ignite or at least trip the breakers, resulting in a broken charge cycle.

Please, in future can you show equipment used in a SAFE & Recognised manner. Anyone looking through your article might easily be misled.

The real issue concerning Fly Leads has been missed in this article. The length of lead (the resistance of the cable) effectively 'reduces' the output of the charger. The solution is to either:-

(1): Select a charger with a varied input parameter e.g. 85~132 vAC. (n.b. These chargers will also cope with the unclean output from GenSets).

OR

(2): Select a "smart" charger that has a cable length parameter contained within its system.

In other words select chargers on specification, not price alone.

There are other ways of overcoming these issues, involving the use of isolation transformers, please let me know if you want any more please feel free to come back to me on these points.

Jim Davies

Norco Group

We fully agree with everything that Mr Davies says, and the article was in fact intended to make this very point, which it did within the text. But clearly our captions were not as clear as they might have been.

We responded to him saying:

This is much appreciated Jim,

The coiled lead was intended as an example of what NOT to do/ use, and we looked for the worst case example to highlight the point. Perhaps we do not make it clear, we were aiming to make the very point that you have raised.

If you agree we would like to use your mail in the letters section of the next issue of the magazine. Either fully attributed - or if you prefer anonymously.

He replied: "Many thanks for the reply. Understood now. Please use this as you see fit." Jim Davies

Asbestos spore or fibre

Dear Mark,

Looking through the latest edition of C&A, I came to the letter from Craig Evans of UKATA on page 68. In it, he refers to the danger of asbestos 'spores' which, coming from someone who presumably has direct experience of the industry, to me seems completely bizarre. Mushrooms and ferns and things like that produce spores. Asbestos produces fibres which, when they are disturbed, become airborne and hence are available for breathing in.

Mr Evans makes a very valid and important point in his letter, but then goes completely off-track by using incorrect terminology. Perhaps you could publish a clarification in the next edition?

Kind regards (from a geological standpoint),

Simon Walker Principal, I.E.T.S Ltd

Charlbury

England

Point well taken. Ed

A plea for help

Dear Sir,

I would like to publish something in writing, about how some of the managers in Scotland are putting unnecessary responsibility onto the mobile crane operators just to fill their pockets!

The offset of this is that the manager has a hold over his/her employees, as in there are not that many choices of other crane hire companies here in Aberdeen, so the crane operators who have costs like a mortgage the manager will, on a one-to-one basis make it clear that he knows how much debt you are in. Then he/she will prey on your darkest fears to get the said personnel to go and do the hires that no one else will do, because they have got not the same issue, or organised their life in a different way.

These situations have several complications, and they effect the whole operation, least of all by the pressure that has just been placed upon the operator, who already live on the edge of life!

To anybody out there could you please give any advice to the people who are in this situation, (just wanting to better themselves).

Name withheld

This letter came in not particularly in relation to another letter or article - at least that we know of - It is clearly a plea for help. Although the details are not exactly clear. If you have any advice etc we will of course publish your response.

Readers Letters

Crane operators doing it all

Following Tim Proud's letter published in the last issue of the magazine we published an online comment on the subject and are currently running a vote on what a company finding itself in the position he highlighted - i.e losing business to competitors who bend, or even flout the standards, regulations and best practice guides. So far no one has been prepared to put their head above the parapet and agree or disagree with this point. However on line a couple of people focused on a word rather than any significant point, however the consensus under the drama and rhetoric the point seems to have been made that even the most basic lift requires the crane operator and a slinger signaller and/or a crane supervisor and that having a crane operator do all three is not safe.

In one comment John Lowton said: "May I refer to a letter from Andrew East HSE Head of Construction, dated December 2004, take a look all and refresh your memory, especially when planning for a Basic Lift. With regards to supervision BS(7121) does state that the Crane Supervisor can take on the role of the slinger/signaller. I have inserted the definition of a "Basic Lift" If the weight of the load(s) can be simply established, and there are no hazards or obstructions within the area of the operation, then the duties of the Appointed Person should include the following which is a - k. Which you should all be able to reference from your copy of the standard. Thanks, John

In poll on the subject we asked:

'If faced with losing your business or joining competitors that miss-interpret best practice guidance what do you do?'

At the time of going to press 399 people had voted

65.6% said: 'Stick to your guns and try and stay in business'

4.0% said: 'Join them when doing so seems safe'

7.8% said: 'Demand that the rules are changed'

22.6% said: 'Blow the whistle and demand enforcement'

The past few weeks has seen the passing of several crane and access industry veterans, the following is a review of their lives.

Dennis Fokko Doornbos 1950-1915

Dennis Doornbos, owner and chairman of Dutch crane and access company Doornbos Equipment, passed away on the night of March 11th after several years of ill health. He was just 64. He leaves behind, wife Linda, daughter Denise and sons Frank and Stuart.



In May 2012 his deteriorating health caused him to hand over the day to day management of the company to Joost Buck, although he remained involved with the business. Last October his daughter Denise took over as managing director and now manages the business with her brothers, Frank and Stuart, the fourth generation of the Doornbos family to do so.

Dennis Doornbos began working full time at the family company - a diverse equipment rental and sales business founded in 1939 by his grandfather - at the end of the 1970s, joining his brother and two cousins. It soon became apparent however, that four family members at the head of one not so large company was too much, so they all agreed to split the business up and go their own ways. Dennis took the crane hire division, which apparently none of the others cared for - possibly because it was making a loss at the time?

Over the years he transformed the business adding aerial work platforms, forklifts and telehandlers to the core crane rental business. He then branched out into the sale and rental of high-pressure water jet/blasting equipment for shipyards. Today the company, still based in Rotterdam, has branches in Amsterdam and Billingham, UK.

Messages of sympathy can be sent to denise@doornbosequipment.com or Doornbos Equipment BV, Attn. Denise Doornbos, Postbus 11017, 3004 EA Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Terry Duxbury 1952-2015

UK crane operator and founder of the operators website Lifting World died on January 30th, following a short battle with cancer, he was 62. He leaves behind wife Christine and sons David and Lee, who is currently trying to get to grips with the website, as the family would like to keep it going as a tribute to Duxbury's work in his later years.



He was diagnosed in November, but chose to keep the bad news to himself and his family and was cremated in Ruislip on the 17th of February, when Lee Lifting, one of his previous employers, supplied a mobile crane for his funeral procession. Given his passion for cranes, he would have truly appreciated the gesture.

Duxbury spent more than 30 years as a crawler and mobile crane operator, and over the years worked for a number of companies including: Grayston Crane Hire, Kier Plant, Cox Cranes, Silwood Crane Hire, Westway BP Crane Hire, Baldwins Crane Hire, Marsh Plant and Lee Lifting Services.

Sadly his career ended prematurely when fell into a large unguarded hole on a busy construction site in Greenford, west London in 1998, shattering his leg and foot. He had been stowing the outrigger mats when the incident happened and stepped back into the void. He returned to work before he should have and suffered almost five years as his foot deteriorated. Eventually he had to have his leg amputated below the knee, ending his crane career for good. However he bounced back by mastering the internet and setting up www.liftingworld.co.uk as a site for operators to exchange views and discuss safety issues.

Improving crane safety is what persuaded him to become a founding member and director of the United Crane Operators Association (UCOA) - a lobby group for crane operators with aims to improve safety and working conditions.

Bob Dickey R.I.P

UK crane hire owner Bob Dickey passed away on February 26th following a long illness. Dickey was the owner of Crane Services Leeds, which he merged with David Slack's Nationwide Crane Hire in 1986.

The deal was accomplished with the two owners swapping shares in their businesses, so that each owned 50 percent in both companies. Eventually Crane Hire Leeds became a dormant company, the 'Leeds' was dropped and Crane Services used as an alternate trading name to Nationwide Crane Hire. In 2006 Dickey sold his 50 percent share to Slack, who was later bought out by Ainscough. His sons Craig and Paul still working within the crane hire sector. In the words of a contributor: "Bob was certainly a character to say the least and never minced his words. He started off in the steel erection business and latterly was co-owner of Crane Services Ltd one of the major crane hire companies in the UK. He will be a sad loss to all who knew him."

Ivor Kiddle 1925-2015

Ivor Kiddle, founder and previous owner of UK-based crane and access company Quinto Crane and Plant Ltd, passed away on February 14th, he was 89.



Kiddle spent most of his career in the crane business, although he started out in construction and was director of the concrete construction division of the Pointer group when it formed a crane and equipment rental business in 1966. Two years later he became general manager of the crane business - Pointer Cranes, with its distinctive pointer dog logo.

The Pointer group was acquired by RMC-Ready Mixed Concrete in 1970, mainly for the group's sand and gravel pits, however it kept the crane and equipment rental operation until 1977, when Kiddle led a Management Buy Out and renamed it Quinto, to reflect the company's five depots. He sold the business last October to local agricultural contractor Oliver Arnold of the Spring Farm Partnership.

Kiddle did a great deal more than found a major crane hire company, he also played a major role in the early days of the Construction Plant Hire Association and was elected onto the CPA Council in October 1979 and served as the council member for the London and South East regions for 19 years, before stepping down in October 1998. He remained an active member of the council, representing the association on various CITB committees until 2002.

During this time, he also served as a trustee of the association, with Tony Chapman (who passed away on 7th January) Bill Law, Ronnie Stuart and Keith Chaundy. In 2002 he received a Lifetime Achievement Award (at the Vertical organised Crane Dinner) for his work in establishing industry associations.

Oliver Arnold said: "Ivor Kiddle built Quinto into a substantial crane hire company with eight depots across East Anglia and the East Midlands with a staff of over 125 people. Under his leadership, Quinto was very much a family business and that extended to the staff. There are many instances of multiple family members working for the company. For instance, a father and daughter worked at Norwich head office and the daughter's husband is a crane driver at the depot. Ivor believed in these close ties."

"As the new owners we are continuing the family business model hoping that our children will one day take over the firm. When purchasing the company during the extended sale process we came to know the Kiddle family well. The sale process went very well due to their straight forward transparent approach. We finished the process as friends, so it was with great sadness to learn of Ivor's passing. Hannah and myself along with the staff offer our condolences to Mr Kiddle's family and friends."

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