

Hi Mark,

I am in the Outer Hebrides at the moment and it has given me a chance to sit down and read from cover to cover the latest edition of *Cranes & Access*. I was very interested in the article on the growth of the onshore wind farm population and from my experience with Renewable UK and some of the developers I can only concur with Declan Corrigan that the wind industry has an excellent future in the medium term. There will certainly be a strong market for maintenance as the numbers and height increase.

The article on insulated booms was also thought provoking. At Bronto we have been at the forefront of developing systems to allow the use of large truck platforms in live line working. I think that the next few years will be exciting for the larger truck market and hopefully we will be able to give you lots of good editorial.

Would you be able to send me a copy of the picture you took with our colleague Christoph regarding his total lack of will power in our charity non-drinking challenge. I lasted the whole three months and have now reintroduced a small amount of alcohol into my daily routine. Not sure how I feel yet, still like the clarity of abstinence though.

Catch up soon

Kind Regards

Ian James

Bronto Skylift UK

Dear Sir,

I would like to thank you for the update concerning SkyHigh and in particular of Erik Aghten. We are not able to contact him as his personal number no longer responds.

Our company ETIC distributes road/rail products on a national basis and we have numerous active quotations at the moment, so this situation with SkyHigh is troubling enough as it is, but I can understand also the economic problems facing manufacturers at the moment.

If you or your contacts can provide me with any information that would allow me to reach Erik I would appreciate it very much. I would also like to thank you again for your article and your kind words regarding this person whom we appreciate and respect very much indeed.

Sincères salutations

Michel MOURIER

This letter – translated from French - was one of several we received expressing sadness at the closure of Belgium-based SkyHigh and most particularly wishing to speak to owner and manager Erik Aghten and say how much they appreciate him, while expressing concern about his future and wanting to wish him well and in some cases discuss possible future business options with him. So far we have been unable to reach him and understand that he has taken the financial troubles at SkyHigh very personally and wants time to consider the future. If you are reading this Erik, please do feel free to make contact through our offices.

The Flying Garden

Dear Sir,

I read with both interest and amusement the chain of letters published in the current issue of *Cranes & Access* between Mr Paul Adorian and Judith Hackett of the Health & Safety Executive. The response from Ms Hackett (she surely must be a Ms) is all too typical of a career bureaucrat, hedging her bets and passing the buck as time makes the problem go away. While Mr Adorian clearly tried to pin her down and prevent her escape, I fear that she did in the end manage to get away from his valiant attempts.

As he pointed out it does seem to be a case of the HSE ignoring its own recommendations at best and double standards at worst. I am sure that as all too often of these political types, she had her eye on the possible 'red top' newspaper headlines if the HSE had put a stop to this popular gardeners whimsical ideas. 'Elf and safety Tsar spoils Chelsea fun'. So this project went ahead regardless and I bet no one locally actually responded to the tip offs and went along to check it out?

It can't be easy, imagine the headlines had this so called flying garden fallen and killed someone like Alan Titchmarsh in the process? And what would the HSE have said in an interview? 'Well it seemed perfectly OK, we checked it out and all the risk assessments had been done and they seemed like jolly nice people – it was just back luck' – 'But don't your own recommendations forbid such unnecessary messing about with cranes?' – 'Well yes.. but that's only meant to be for construction people... they can't be trusted... these people are different.....' The mind boggles.

The amazing thing is that the HSE issued such a clear dictat in the first place – what were they thinking? It must have slipped out by accident? Perhaps they were hoping that no one would recall it? If so they had not banked on a dogged individual like Adorian. Normally their tone is more typically 'well it's up to you what you do as long as you do a proper risk assessment and consider all the eventualities and show that you have taken note of all the standards and recommendations blah blah blah etc.... We can't possibly tell you how to do it' And all the time you know that if something goes wrong they will relentlessly prosecute you for having had a stroke of bad luck or missed some arcane best practice point or.... And then when you try and defend yourself they will dangle the get out of jail card... "plead guilty and we will just fine you a small amount... fight us on this and we will spend the national debt to inflict the maximum punishment possible on you' --- 'but I am innocent' – 'that's not the point'.

I am not sure if this recommendation of theirs on lifting for fun is good bad or irrelevant, I do though think that if they believe that this recommendation has merit and have issued, than as Mr Adorian says they ought to at the very least have checked out the site with an expert and if the guidance is not quite as comprehensive as it should be they ought to update it.

Keep up the good work.

Yours Truly

David J. Bethell



Hi Leigh,

Following your comments earlier this year about companies going bust and then starting again, I suggest that you look at the following web site www.people.co.uk go to news then politics headed 'Scandal of firm going bust and dodging fine'. As I am now retired I would ask that my name is withheld due to my connections both to my old employer as well as to the company in question.

Regards

We followed the tip off and found that the article that claimed that MPs had tabled a Commons motion criticising the North Wales firm Bryn Thomas Crane Hire for going into administration to avoid fines for a fatal accident and "that those who deliberately go bust to dodge hefty fines for fatal health and safety breaches could face a change in the law."

Some further research discovered that this is in fact Early Day Motion number 1834 launched in May that so far has so far attracted the signatures of just 34 MPs. The motion is as follows: "That this House is deeply concerned that companies continue to avoid prosecutions and have fines reduced for committing health and safety offences by going into administration and then re-establishing their business using a slightly different name with the same premises and the same equipment; notes in April this year that Bryn Thomas Crane Hire was convicted for health and safety offences following the death of Mark Thornton in Liverpool in March 2007 and were fined the significantly reduced amount of £4,500 due to the company being in administration; further notes that the owner of Bryn Thomas Crane Hire is now trading as Bryn Thomas Cranes Limited using largely the same plant and equipment; and calls on the Government to introduce stronger legislation to ensure that companies can no longer avoid justice by going into administration."

Interestingly 29 of the MPs are Labour, only one Conservative - Peter Bottomley, MP for Worthing - possibly due to having seen something similar occur following a tower crane accident in his constituency? The remaining four are Liberal or Social Democrat. The lack of more widespread support is odd.

Finally getting it right

I was encouraged to see that the Top 30 Telescopic Handler Companies article that you ran in this month's issue of Cranes & Access is finally beginning to look like something sensible. While the company chart and fleet numbers is not perfect, it is at least a lot more inclusive than your previous efforts and stands up to some scrutiny. I am just surprised it has taken you eight attempts to get there!

They say that persistence is what matters and my hat is off to you for doing so in this case. I am sure that you must have had plenty of brick bats in prior years so thought it only fair to drop you a line and congratulate you, now that you are getting close.

Other than that well done on producing a solid read, would like to see more handler material though.

All the best,

George Smiley

Bournemouth

Well we did make a supreme effort this year with the telehandler section of our Top 30 rental company survey, we have to say though that it is not an easy sector to cover.. but the co-operation this year was noticeably better than in prior years - we are not quite sure why though. So thank you Mr Smiley (we wonder in the office if this is your real name - George Smiley - Bournemouth? ?) Anyway no matter many thanks for your comments. Ed

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