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TOO GOOD TO MISS

Letters



Dear Sir,

I do not normally write to the media to highlight inaccuracies, untruths or to seek a right of reply to informed commentary or opinion. However, I was very surprised to read the published contents of a recent letter from Mr Trevor Bailie which made unfounded allegations related to the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI).

As chief executive of an organisation which works hard every day to ensure sensible control of work-related risk is the norm and work-related deaths, injuries and ill health are the exception, I feel compelled to inform your readers of several important facts and to correct inaccuracies in Mr Bailie's letter.

I can only assume the review of the HSENI to which Mr Bailie refers is the one carried out in September 2010. There has been no review since then. For those that wish to read the facts about the 2010 review, it can be accessed at: http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/a-to-z.htm/report_archive_2010_healthandsafety.

I must stress that there is absolutely no link between the 2010 review and movements in senior personnel in HSENI.

The previous Chief Executive of HSENI retired in August 2012 as was always his intention to do so. Also, importantly, I would like to make it known for the record that appointments to our Board are normally made for three years and in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies. The last changes made to this Board as a consequence were in October 2012. This is normal practice and indeed some Board members will change again in 2014.

My organisation works hard to provide the highest standards of service delivery, promote key workplace health and safety messages that resonate with our key audiences and to improve compliance with health and safety standards through inspection and investigation. It is our role to make sure everyone stays safe and we take our responsibilities very seriously. I therefore take real offence to the allegations made by Mr Bailie in his letter, which, despite HSENI requests to him to provide it, has no evidence to justify them.

I fully recognise that that the space dedicated to the publication of letters from readers provides a valuable and important platform for individuals and organisations across the industry to raise issues, highlight concerns or to provide informed opinion. However, it should never be used as a platform for the publication of unfounded allegations.

Nevertheless, I would like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to set the record straight in this regard.

Kind regards,

Keith Morrison

Chief Executive, HSENI

The letter from Mr Bailie was published in the October issue of Cranes & Access and was prompted by his belief that he was victimised and treated unfairly following an incident with one of his cranes. He made some strong accusations against past staff and actions of the HSENI, based on his views. Mr Morrison called us prior to writing his letter and stated quite clearly that he would be happy to review and investigate any evidence that Mr Bailie might have. There are always two sides to such disputes – we found Mr Morrison to be very sincere and open.

Ed

The following three letters appeared in the Glasgow Evening Times earlier this month which we thought showed an interesting view on the use of aerial work platforms by members of the public. The original story can be read in the Glasgow Evening Times archives.

Ladder of opportunity

I find it astonishing to learn that the council are using the services of a cherry picker truck at £100 a time to remove the cone from the Duke of Wellington statue. If the council are going to insist on removing the cones, a bit of common sense would tell you that there are plenty of window cleaners trawling the streets of the city centre every day, armed with ladders, who would be willing to take on this work at a fraction of the cost. Better still, leave the cones as they are and it won't cost a penny, while bringing a smile to people's faces as they pass.

Brian McLellan

Fine solution

One has to feel sorry for poor old Wellington, now that the council says it costs them £100 each time to remove the cone. Why don't they step up the security of the statue? Then if anybody is caught climbing the statue issue an instant fine £100.

J McArthur, Glasgow

Being a retired person, I would be prepared to remove the cones at least once a week throughout the year utilising a ladder and telescopic pole with loop at the end - all for the princely sum of £1,500 per annum. As for those who get carried away with themselves and condone the practice of having the cones on the statue - it surely shows a lack of social, civic and national pride.

Gordon McLellan

Excellent article

I am not much of a communicator so this will be brief and to the point. The article on Type Approvals For Vehicles in the last Cranes & Access was perfect I finally think I understand what it is all about now? Clear and easy even for a non-techie like me.

Keep up the good work

Alec Johns

This refers to an article on page 47 of the October issue regarding type approval regulation within the EU.

Dear Leigh,

I was sad to hear of the passing of Eric Millard. Eric was a fine engineer and a lovely man. His talent was soon recognised by Martin Benchoff who afforded him some of the prestige he so richly deserved. A smile and laugh were never far away. A wonderful, charming and kind man I will miss him.

Stuart Anderson

Chortsey Barr



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John Penny 1959 – 2013

John David Penny managing director of UK based loader crane and tail lift manufacturer Penny Hydraulics, passed away in mid-October after losing his battle with cancer.

Penny Hydraulics was established in 1978 by John Penny senior, a mining engineer, to supply equipment to the mining industry. With the UK mining business declining, the Pennys developed a lightweight, loader crane for vans and light trucks. Penny junior headed up the new business and broadened out the line into a range of vehicle loading devices. In 1992 he took over as managing director and the business expanded, working with most of the major manufacturers of light commercial vehicles.

John Penny was an active participant in the loader industry and was heavily involved with ALLMI the UK loader crane association. He was an active member of the association's technical and training committees, and played a significant role in helping mould industry standards for loader cranes, sitting on BSi and CEN committees. He leaves behind a healthy family business with his two brothers serving as directors, while his daughter and son have also entered the business.

Among the letters of condolence the following sums up his spirit

Dear Sir,

I have to say, right from the start, John Penny made quite an impression on me personally.

I remember on one particular occasion, being asked by a customer if we could fit cranes into the back of vans and at that time, I had no idea how this could be done and proceeded to go into a blind panic. I think in those days, I found the number for Penny's in the yellow pages and arranged for John to come to our old Coalville facility; to discuss my challenge.

He did no more than arrive in his old Volvo estate complete with a suit and tie.

I discussed my particular problem with him and after duly listening to me, he gave (as I am sure you will remember, his wry smile); and proceeded to advise me that he had brought one of his cranes along in the back of his Volvo; along with his overalls. He said if I was happy for him to work with one of our engineers – there and then – he would show us what we needed to know and do to fit a crane into the back of one of our vehicles.

He duly stripped out of his suit, toggled up with his overalls and spent two to three hours on site showing us the ropes. I have to say that even after all these years that particular recollection sticks in my mind as the ultimate 'can do attitude'.

He certainly supported myself and our business over the years and a more kind and gentle mannered person you could not hope to meet, coupled with the fact that he was brilliant engineer.

A winning combination you could not hope to beat.

Kevin Woodward

Bott Ltd



Dear Sir,

I received the new book GOING UP IN THE WORLD by Denis Ashworth yesterday and perused it this morning. It is impressive and I really enjoyed the cartoon on page 32. I hope the book sells well. It should benefit every reader and would make a great Christmas gift.

Sherman C Anderson

Best Tree Service,

We responded with the following

Dear Sherman,

We very much appreciate your comments. It was our first book, and thankfully IPAF helped support it by organising a copy for its members, but sales have been slow since then.

We would like to do more books like this but people seem very slow to put their money in their pocket for such publications.

Yours.....

He sent back the following

Dear Leigh,

Your reply and the sentence about people's resistance to part with \$ reminded me of two difficult selling experiences I had. First happened in 1999 when I listed a portable amplifier to sell for \$250 here in Mountain View, Arkansas - where we only play folk music on acoustic instruments, while the second story is about my auction on eBay in 2009 selling a client's 1960 right hand drive fully restored Bentley saloon to a chap in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma for \$29,000.

I bought the English made amplifier new in 1995 at a music store in Florida so that I could enjoy my 1994 custom-made left-hand Pimentel M1 student concert guitar that I had built by the Pimentel family in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It is the sixth guitar I have owned since 1960. From 1995-1998 I seldom had time to play music until I moved to Arkansas. So I listed the amp in the classified ads of the local weekly newspaper.

I hardly knew the man who came to look at the amplifier. He plays right-handed guitar and is very talented but didn't bring his guitar along. Thus I had to demo the amp using my left hand guitar in our living room. He pondered the purchase, for it seemed like eternity, then slowly moved his right hand up to the left pocket of his shirt to reach a pre-written check and said "I'll take it". Words cannot describe the relief I felt to close this sale.

Perhaps the odds of success to sell a beautiful white four door Bentley, a 48 year old car with right hand drive, were higher than the amplifier. That I will never know. My friend, and director of our church choir, owned and operated a work shop for restoring antique and classic cars. In 2007 he was so desperate to find skilled mechanics that I volunteered my Mondays for two months to work in the shop to help pick up the pace until he could hire some people. I really got close to the Bentley while working alongside on a 1937 Chevrolet truck and a 1940 Cadillac. Vince had owned the saloon for 21 years, restored it fully and had been trying to sell it for two years with no luck. He knew I had done some unique sales and buys on eBay so asked if I would write an auction using his photos. Once it listed we had six interested buyers and sold it in five days and the transaction was smooth as glass. Later I felt that I might have garnered more bidding competition had I written the narrative differently. We might have reached \$35K? None the less, Vince was happy and he and Diana took my wife and I to an elegant dinner at the Red Apple Inn near Greers Ferry Lake.

Time to quit and go make spinning tops as the bodger on the Foot Lathe at the Ozark Folk Center. We are hosting 275 youngsters on school field trips, so this day will fly by.

Regards

Sherman