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Letters



Dear Sir,

I return my wishes for your 2015 to be healthy, wholesome, rewarding and beneficial to those you serve in our industry. I wish more people would hop on the bandwagon for safety in the workplace. The excellent reporting and photo descriptions have helped me and my small team to work safely. Words alone cannot express my sincere gratitude.

Yours

Sherman Anderson
Best Tree Service

Unfit and aging operators

Dear Sir,

I wanted to write to raise a question about crane operator fitness, after reading your online report of the 66 year old operator who died after he had a heart attack and fell from a tower crane in Australia earlier this week.

We are seeing a steady and relentless rise in the average age of crane operators, which is likely to get worse with too few entrants signing up and joining the business. As well as this the number of obese and unhealthy operators is on the rise, and given that it is generally a sedentary job this is unlikely to change any time soon. Companies have a responsibility to certify their staff as fit for the job they are expected to do, no matter what the equipment they control, but with cranes there are additional risks. Ideally crane operators ought to undergo an annual third party health check that certifies them as fit to carry out all aspects of their jobs. This is particularly true for tower crane operators who have to climb the tower each day and who then stay in their confined cabs for the shift. This is something that needs addressing specifically for cranes.

Ernie Bishop

Dear Sirs,

The letter from Brian Stead in the latest issue of Cranes & Access encouraged me to track down the Good Practice Guide that he refers to. I managed to find it after some difficulty on the CPA web site and have now downloaded it. While it is clearly written from an English perspective I commend its content and the thoroughness of its information. As Mr Stead says it is a bit 'hefty' but very useful. We are located in Finland rather than England but this guide is the best that I have seen and I would encourage other people from other countries to download this guide - if they can find it - instead of thinking that it is a document for English people only. It is good for wherever you are.

Pehr Eyvind

We had intended to host the guide on our website www.vertikal.net but had not yet done so. We have now added the final document to our online library where it is free to download for anyone who has an interest in ensuring the safety of cranes, aerial lifts and other equipment when working on varying ground conditions.

Ed

The way it was

Dear Leigh,

Take a look at the attached photograph of working at height, how they did it in the good old days.

Bill

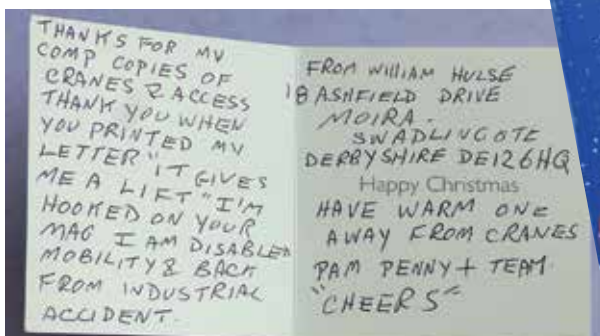


Kind seasonal wishes

Like most companies December brought a good number of Christmas cards and kind wishes to the office, which we very much appreciate. The one below though, from William Hulse, who is disabled following an industrial accident, was slightly special and we think deserves publication.

Many thanks

Ed



Recent polls

Every six weeks or so we ask a question about a current topic of interest to those involved with cranes, access equipment or telehandlers.

In November we asked:

“Do you think a widespread Experienced Operator ranking/qualification system would help raise standards?” Yes or No.

728 people voted in total with the vast majority 632 people - 86% - said **Yes**, while 96 - 13.2% - said **No**.

In December we asked:

“Which of the following terms for aerial lifts do you prefer? - AWP, MEWP or EWP

When the poll closed at the end of the year a total of 1,277 people had voted, with the following results.

A majority of people - 743 or 58.2% - said **AWP**

290 or 22.7% preferred **MEWP** and 244 or 19.1% voted for **EWP**.

While it seems that a solid majority of industry people prefer the abbreviation AWP it is also clear that the industry is split on this. We did have one letter where the correspondent who asked not to be quoted pointed out quite properly that the term MEWP has been adopted by a large number of safety authorities around the world and that as a result the term MEWP is here to stay. An editorial at the time lamented the fact that the regulations use a term which is not widely used by ordinary users on site. Here is the key part of his letter.

Dear Sir,

I was a little surprised at your current editorial comment and poll.

I feel the editorial would have been more balanced if it had pointed out that:

- For many years European standards CEN who produce EN 280 use the term MEWP and the CEN Committee is made up of representation from all member states. Hence MEWP is and has been in common use for some time
- ISO standards for design, safe use and training also use the term MEWP and ISO standards are truly international - used by many countries as a base for their own standards including Russia, China, Brazil etc.
- In the USA the SAIA/ANSI is currently drafting new standards A92.20 design, A92.22 safe use and A92.24 training. They are proposing to align with Europe and ISO and use the term MEWP in these standards.
- New Canadian standards in their final stages of development, for design B354.7, safe use B354.8 and training B354.9 are using the term MEWP in current final drafts.
- Interestingly AEM have a sub group which is the MEWP engineering council (MEWPC)

Bearing in mind all the above.....no matter what the poll shows, the fact is that the vast majority of the official organisations, standards and authorities are now using or will shortly be using the term MEWP. So love it or hate it MEWP is here to stay!!!!!!

We sadly agree that this is likely to be the case, but think that it is a shame, it would have been better if an abbreviation was used that rolls off the tongue as an abbreviation rather than an ugly word. Ed

Dorothy Mort 1930-2014

Just before Christmas we received the sad news that Dorothy Mort, one the true pioneers if the UK's powered access rental industry had passed away aged 84.



Dorothy Martin was born in Port Talbot, Wales in May 1930 - one of four children of the town's Butcher Jock Martin, she married David Mort in November 1952 and six years later the young couple established an equipment rental company Port Talbot Plant from the yard at the back of their house.

The two very much worked as a team and expanded the company steadily, and fairly early on added access rental to their activities, in the form of truck and van mounted lifts. Most importantly to the development of the business, they saw the potential of self-propelled lifts well before most other rental companies took it seriously. Contacts at the Port Talbot Steelworks certainly helped boost the business but they expanded to become the clear market leader in the UK under the PTP banner, a name more appropriate as the company expanded out of its local area.

In the early 1980s the market became rapidly more competitive as a good number of crane rental companies moved into the market boosting supply far faster than the increase in demand. A slowing economy exasperated the oversupply and rates were slashed. PTP held firm as a specialist against the newcomers which as the recession bit pulled out of the market leaving PTP stronger than ever.

In 1987 the couple decided to accept a takeover bid from BET Plant Services (The company was acquired from BET/Rentokil by Loxam in 2000) and then retired. In their late 50s they were young enough to enjoy and look forward to a long retirement and made the most of their shared passion for horse racing, travelling all over the world.

Dorothy was also a keen gardener and music enthusiast. She leaves behind husband David - having celebrated their 62nd anniversary in November - two children - Tony, an access entrepreneur in his own right and Catherine - four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Dorothy Mort played a significant role in the early days of powered access rental, a quiet but strong business partner, she was much appreciated and respected by those who knew her and dealt with as a fair, trustworthy, unselfish and ready to do the right thing. She will certainly be missed by those who knew her.



Dorothy and David Mort, enjoying retirement at the Ascot races.