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Letters



Dear Sirs,

Whilst reading the latest issue of Cranes & Access (March 2016), I came across a two line comment in the news section. 'A crane operator in Israel was fired after refusing to work in strong winds'.

I have to admit, my jaw almost fell to the floor, so to speak. The worldwide crane family is not unaware of the dangers of operating cranes in strong winds. Yet, here we are in 2016, a time period that the crane industry is making huge strides in demonstrating professionalism and dragging itself out of the dark ages. Sadly, this simple two line comment speaks volumes about the hidden side of our Industry. How many crane operators do we know personally who have refused to operate their cranes in strong winds, suddenly finding themselves 'off-hired', or labelled as 'troublesome'?

I do not know the full details of why the operator was fired. There may have been other issues that we are not privy to that contributed to the sacking. The fact that it deserved a mention in the news section of your magazine subtly suggests that it is not only me that found this concerning. If this is correct, this operator deserves some recognition for being responsible and standing up and being counted, where safety is concerned. This calibre of operator should be the norm. The operators that I know are very knowledgeable and take their responsibilities very seriously, yet we will allow an operator to carry the brunt of ignorance to save face, or the hire.

Cranes are not an inexpensive item, and an operator is a skilled person, which I understand is in short supply. Additionally, the consequences of an avoidable accident resulting from operators taking risks with weather and ground conditions can be so financially crippling that some hire companies never recover from such incidents.

Your magazine regularly informs us of the consequences of an operator getting it wrong and the industry is fully aware of some catastrophic results of cranes overturning in high winds. Is it just me that thinks this is a travesty not just to the person concerned, but reflects pretty badly on the whole industry? I suspect that this is just the tip of a very large iceberg.

I sincerely hope that this unfortunate operator finds another job that recognises the dedication to crane safety her responsible attitude, whatever the consequences.

Regards,

Bill McLuckie/Lifting Engineer.

Magnox Limited,
West Kilbride.

Dear Leigh

I was interested in this month's front cover (March 2016) where was this taken and whose crane was it? Also in your News Highlights section on page 15 I see that a crane operator was fired in Israel for operating in strong winds which he considered unsafe. I can't understand how a company could do such a thing, surely all companies that use cranes know that this is unsafe practice? Hopefully the operator has some come back legally for having done the right thing?

Many thanks for magazine which I always read cover to cover.

Ian Metherell

Brighton

In this case the operator was a woman, and she held her ground knowing that the wind speeds were above that permitted for safe operation by the crane manufacturer. While a dismissal like this reaching the public domain is unusual, punitive action - overt or non-overt - against operators who stand firm like this is not as unusual as we might be led to believe. There are more than a few contractors in most European countries and further afield that pay strong lip service to safety - 'safety is job number one' and all that, while at the same time turning a blind eye to corner cutting on site when, and as needed to get the job done. Operators raising concerns or refusing to work when unsafe are often labelled as 'trouble makers' and if hired in from outside contractors such as crane rental companies, a call is often made to their employer, asking for them to be swapped for a less troublesome operator.

Until the industry is more open we will continue to see accidents on site as managers or site supervisors gamble that things will not go wrong with the risks they take to get the job done on time... as long as the paperwork at the gate has been completed and the boxes all ticked.

Ed

Dear Sir

Although amusing on the face of it, this picture of sheer stupidity was

forwarded to me by one of my customers.

Idiotic behaviour is alive and well in the UK, two people's lives have been put at risk for the sake of £300.00 or so?

Kind regards

Name withheld due to lack of time to obtain permission to use.



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Above all. Riwal

Hi Mark

I hope you are well. I read the battery specific update carried in C&A March 2016 (Vol 18 issue 2) with great interest. Yes, absolutely, the battery packs ARE a mission critical component of that burgeoning sector of the U.K. Cranes & Access park as you rightly say.

However, the battery is only a part of the Powerpack which includes the Charger. In my humble opinion this is a bit like looking at the kit without the Kaboodle. The state of charge is the determining factor within the operation of a work platform. This is affected by the two factors namely charging and watering. I have included a brochure about how much water to use and as ever the devil is in the detail - when, oh when do you put the water in?

AFTER THE CHARGING HAS FINISHED!

As for the charging side of affairs the UK is almost unique in that we operate, in the main with transformers and 110v AC. Most of the rest of the world uses 230/240v AC at either 50 or 60 hertz. This leads us to use either 110-240v AC OR a 240v AC charging system via an isolation transformer to take account of the site voltage. If we consider say Nifty's MPU 48/30B this is configured to accept both 110 & 240 v input, did you know that the output of this unit on 110v supply is different (by up to approximately half ?) of the same charger at 240 volts. So the charging time will be different.

Then consider my old nemesis the extended power cord. If you look at the output at the wrong end of a long lead, such as those used by hire fleets and equipment distribution depots and we get another, (even lower) voltage.

Add to this the differing level of charge when the machine comes off duty and we have yet another factor to consider. The secret to making your aerial lift work harder is to make your charger CHARGE SMARTER! To do this you need to use something like a Fronius charger from time to time in order to give your standard battery charge regime a fighting chance of succeeding.

Thanks for the rest of the article, it covers the battery side of affairs reasonably well.

Kind regards

James Davies

Christopher J. Dossin 1955 – 2016

In April we received the sad news that North American access industry veteran Chris Dossin had died following a short but aggressive illness. He passed away on Thursday April 14th having been diagnosed only six weeks earlier with stage four pancreatic cancer.

His career in aerial lifts probably began as a sales representative with leading scissor lift manufacturer



Chris Dossin

Economy Engineering, which was later acquired by Snorkel, then part of Figge. He moved to Skyjack in 1990 to head up sales, marketing and business development under founder Wolf Haessler and remained with the company for more than 19 years. He then joined Custom Equipment as vice president sales and marketing and less than a year later left to set up his own business, High Reach Solutions.

In 2014 he re-joined Wolf Haessler as director of business development at his new company WolfLift to help develop and market the unusual and innovative alternative to a conventional scissor lift. The radical nature of the product proved too much of a challenge and the business was closed late last year. In the mean-time he branched out into medical development and introduced an innovative method to help patients with the reminders and timing of the various medications they have to take. The device called Mem-O-Ring was patented and won at least one award for innovation. He was also an accomplished toastmaster.

Chris was gentle man, always consistent, tolerant and methodical. He was not always lucky in his ventures, or job choices but was always diligent and professional, and a true gentleman.

A celebration of his life will be held in a memorial on May 15th at Davidson United Methodist Chapel, 233 S Main Street, Davidson, North Carolina 28036.

Dear Sir,

Am I alone in thinking that there is a strange competitive relationship between the two German vehicle mounted work platform manufacturer's Ruthmann and Palfinger? I can't help noticing that when one of them announces a new product the other one often seems to follow up within a week or two with some sort of statement saying that they have the same thing ready for launch.

Its just that on your website you wrote that Palfinger was launching a 75 metre machine and hey presto

within a few days or certainly less than a week or two, Ruthmann says we have a new 75 metre platform too and trots out a sketch of it.

It was the same thing at the last APEX Palfinger says it will launch a 48 metre and before the show opens you report that Ruthmann is going to launch a 48 metre and we are treated to a drawing. But no machine at the show. Palfinger buys an Italian business and announces a spider lift and suddenly Ruthmann has both by buying Bluelift.

I have also now seen that Ruthmann showed a 57 metre platform at Bauma and suddenly Palfinger has one at the show and says it had it all along but didn't tell anyone?

Is this healthy or unhealthy competition? I don't know but from a distance it seems very childish or perhaps it is all a big coincidence? One thing is certain is that it is funny to observe.

Keep up the good work

Fergal Rogers

Mr Rogers is not the only one to comment on the timing of some of the moves that the two German market leaders make. There have been some connections between the companies in the past, but today they are just highly competitive. At least all is legal and above board and the two almost certainly keep each other on their toes with the result that buyers almost certainly benefit from better products and more new developments.

Ed