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# COMMENT



Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all? A question that ex-Baldwins customers are no doubt asking themselves! Going with Baldwins seemed the safe option – it was listed on the Stock Exchange, had the City's backing and had a clean, modern fleet. But, as Railtrack and a few others have learned, all that glitters is not gold...

So, who should they put their faith in now? The pressure will be on to stay with Baldwins as it becomes part of Ainscough and it seems likely that room will be made at the Headley Hall board table for an ex-Baldwins man, but will all those blue-chip customers follow him?

Ainscough now has the largest fleet and most comprehensive depot network. But Hewden also has a modern fleet and Taylor Crane, now owner of the UK's third largest crane fleet, will be pushing too. Alongside them are about half a dozen regional size companies and it also looks like Mr Baldwin and his son will themselves be back in business in the very near future.

Quality service is what those blue chip customers are looking for and they need to be ready to pay for it. Operating cranes is a dangerous job if done badly and nobody can afford to cut corners, least of all large national organisations.

So, our tip to them would be: Look for companies that have new fleets, quality management systems, strong training programmes and a corporate emphasis on safety.

Our tip to the companies hoping to pick off Baldwins' projects is: Don't bid too low. There seems to be a real determination among the majors to see rates harden, so do your bit by holding firm.

**Tim Whiteman**  
Publishing Editor

**Vertikal**  
.net

PS: A Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year to all our readers.

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