

# AGM and Luncheon

Chris Stanton previews the forthcoming IPAF AGM, 2002.

**T**he IPAF AGM and Luncheon is always a major draw for the platform industry. The opportunities it provides to cement business relationships, to get to know new people in the industry and to talk informally about key issues with customers, suppliers and even competitors, have always made this an exceptionally popular event.

This year the Safety Forum will offer an added attraction. It is to be held on the morning of 16th April, immediately prior to the AGM and Luncheon, at Manchester United Football Club. International speakers will present, and be presented with, views of where industry and governments need to go with safety.

There really can be no doubt that safety is moving into the foreground, playing to what is one of the industry's marketing strengths. Government pronouncements are one thing, but industry initiatives, building on this, underline the force for change.

IPAF and its members can claim a good deal of credit for this. They have helped raise the profile of safety and establish the importance of consistent, high quality standards of training. IPAF is also active in promoting the importance and design and manufacturing standards. There is still a long way to go but the result has been a shift in atti-

tude. Poor safety standards are becoming less tolerated by governments and, more importantly, by the industries who use our equipment.

The venue  
This year's Annual General Meeting and Luncheon is again being held at one of the most exciting venues in the country – Old Trafford – the home of Manchester United Football Club. Even on non-match days, Old Trafford has an atmosphere few places can equal.

So, apart from being an excellent day out, it will also be a superb business opportunity for IPAF members to invite the sort of guests you would like to get to know better – either customers or colleagues.

You and your guests will also have a chance to meet everyone at IPAF, including the President and all the sub-committee Chairmen.



IPAF President, Nicholas Davin

The AGM... The formal business of the AGM may be short but will provide an opportunity for Nicholas Davin and Paul Adorian to report on a year of real progress for IPAF.

The success of the operator training scheme underlines the impact that IPAF has made on the industry. It has already trained over 60,000 operators as well as demonstrators and instructors. It has in excess of



Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United FC is again the prestige and exciting venue for the IPAF Safety Forum, AGM Luncheon

120 centres, which cover the UK and the network is steadily expanding into Europe and beyond. It now trains more than 100 new operators every day and is by far the most widely known and recognised of all the many platform operator training schemes.

IPAF believes that the expansion of the scheme is making a real impact on safety and helping to secure the long-term future of the industry. Income from it is helping members develop and expand their own businesses as well as to provide additional services for members in their day-to-day activities.

The appointment of Giles Councill to the new post of Membership Support

Administrator is a step with which President Nicholas Davin is especially pleased. The development of member services was one of the goals that he set out for his two-year term of office at last year's AGM.



Michael Dobbs, TV writer

... and Luncheon The AGM itself will be followed by a leisurely lunch and then by guest speaker Michael Dobbs, the former Conservative MP best known as the author TV's *House of Cards*, *To Play the King* and *The Final Cut*. Those who saw the TV trilogy may recall that its lead character, Francis Urquhart, was only too familiar with one particular Fall from Height and how the circumstances surrounding it contributed to his own ultimate Fall from Grace.



Giles Councill, Support Administrator

## Book Now!

Tickets for the IPAF AGM and Luncheon are available at £39.95 (plus VAT where applicable) from Jean Harrison at IPAF Head Office, Tel +44 (0)1524 781393 Fax +44 (0)1524 781301 email mewp@ipaf.org website www.ipaf.org All IPAF members and their invited guests are also welcome to attend the Safety Forum without charge, whether or not they are also attending the AGM and Luncheon. They should contact Jean Harrison to reserve places.

## Safety Forum

The Safety Forum, to be held at 10.00am, immediately prior to the AGM itself, is intended to focus the minds of everyone involved in the worldwide powered access industry on the vital importance of safety.

It is aimed not just at those within the industry itself but also at those responsible for informing the government and enforcing legislation. It is the ideal opportunity for IPAF members and their guests not just to hear what others are saying but to be heard too.

Government and industry Speakers include the Head of the UK's Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Safety Policy Directorate, Nick Starling and Dave Merrifield, Chairman of the ANSI A92 Committee in the US, Head



Nick Starling

of US Delegation to TAG-214 and Corporate Director of Product Safety for Omnicup Textron Inc. Also invited is the President of the EC Technical Committee (TC98) responsible for overseeing development of the EN280 standard, Pierre Trabold.

'Falls from Height' has been identified as a priority programme in the Health & Safety Commission (HSC) Strategic Plan 2001/02 -

2003/04. IPAF has welcomed this, but called on the government to provide even more funding to ensure that the HSE is able to make an even greater impact on unnecessary serious injury and loss of life.

Bill Callaghan, HSC Chairman, has accepted that ▶



Dave Merrifield



Deaths and injury resulting from falls from height are inevitable whilst enforcement agencies fail to prevent such dangerous practices

### Safety: the platform industry's trump card

Pierre Saubot, Chairman of the IPAF Manufacturers Technical Committee and CEO of Pinguely Haulotte insists that safety is good for business.

A few platform manufacturers and rental companies are claiming that they are not making profit. Some analysts have jumped to the conclusion that the market has little growth potential, that there are idle machines in rental company fleets and an overhang of unsold machines in manufacturers yards.

I just do not see it like that, for three good reasons.

- Literally thousands of rental companies are not just profitable, but are expanding.
- Some manufacturers are not just making profits, but are launching new products.
- There are numerous customers ready to rent or to buy the right machine at the right price. When I say "right", I mean "value for money": I do not mean "cheapest".



Pierre Saubot

Everybody has seen what Paul Adorian, IPAF and its members have achieved in the last 20 years, in developing powered access applications. Even so, there were still 120,000 accidents in Europe in 2000 involving falls from height by workers who were not using platforms.

To reduce the frequency of these accidents, manufacturers have to launch new products and improve existing ranges. Rental companies have to find new customers and develop new services, and end users have to change their ways of working and make greater use of platforms.

Working together, whether rental companies, manufacturers or users, we can succeed in improving safety at work. At the same time, this is the way to ensure a good level of profitability, which is the only language our financial partners – bankers, shareholders and investors – understand when we need to convince them to finance us adequately for continued business development.

Safety is good for everybody, especially for all of those who will avoid accidents and even escape death, thanks to our machines.

demands on HSC and HSE to improve health and safety will always outstrip resources available. He stresses, therefore, that the Strategic Plan is all about prioritising those resources that are available. He has also reminded that this agenda cannot be delivered by HSC and Government alone but needs everyone in the health and safety system to play their part.

### Key issues

This of course is what the Forum is all about. The key issues to be addressed are:

- The urgent need to eliminate the improper use of non-access plant.

Forklift trucks, telescopic loaders and other similar machines are commonly used to lift people through means with are neither approved nor certificated. The IPAF campaign to outlaw these dangerous practices has been initiated as a result of pressure from IPAF members and has already gained a good deal of support. Paul Adorian has already criticised the UK government for not taking decisive action. Not only does allowing the practice to continue cost lives, but it sends the wrong message on safety.

- The creation of a level playing field in respect of EC certification.

EC notified bodies around Europe – responsible for type examination of platforms sold in Europe – differ considerably in their interpretation of particular aspects of the safety systems of different types of mobile elevating work platform. Similar designs of scissor lift from different manufacturers have been certificated by different notified bodies to different levels of safety. For example, some have been required to be fitted with guards to prevent the trapping of persons' arms or legs between the scissor mechanism and yet others are not so fitted. The reason for these discrepancies is interpretation

## The statistics of safety

Paul Adorian, IPAF managing director, argues that proper recording of the details of accidents is vital to improving safety standards.

Accident statistics are a pretty obvious place to start when it comes to planning a decisive intervention on safety. Yet these are not easy to come by in a form that is really helpful in this context.

In some countries, accidents are still a closely guarded secret. In others only one in twenty is investigated or statistics are not properly maintained. There are some places where accidents simply do not happen, judging by the fact that no records of any description are kept.

Even in the United States, the subject of accidents is taboo. Often, meeting rooms where accidents are to be discussed are checked for electronic listening devices and notes made by participants confiscated on exit.

Of course, one reason is that the 'accidents' we are talking about are not accidents at all. They are not events 'without apparent cause', nor should they have been 'unexpected or unforeseen'. This of course is part of the problem; someone was to blame and those involved, either directly or indirectly, are naturally reluctant to incriminate themselves. This extends upwards from the operator, through their own employer, the site supervisor and even to the enforcement and regulatory authorities in some parts of the world.



Paul Adorian, IPAF Managing Director

### Forewarned is forearmed

We do not want accident statistics and details to punish those who have got it wrong – although in serious cases of negligence and neglect of duty that may be well deserved. What we need is full and detailed reporting on a consistent basis that will assist the whole industry to develop safer platforms and adopt improved working practices.

Of course, extrapolating from our own experience and knowledge tells us a good deal. We know, for instance, that the most significant cause of injury is overturning, which accounts for almost 40% of accidents.

We know this and are aware, in general, of the various causes. Yet the more detail we have as an industry, the safer we can make the use of platforms. This is the simple, yet crucial point.

Manufacturers adopt high-tech and simple approaches to preventing overturns. These range from computer controlled safe-working envelope software to basic but effective, pothole protection on scissors. Yet many of these overturns are caused by operator errors. Typical of these are incorrect (or non) deployment of outriggers, misinterpretation of ground conditions or failure to take account of wind loading.

Details of the relative frequency and results of these mistakes will help inform trainers exactly what it is that operators get wrong. Training operators means making critical safety considerations second nature – not something they have to remember.

The key issue is that proper, detailed reporting of accidents and the recording of statistics is of vital importance to safety. Most accidents are preventable with just a small amount of extra care and attention. The more we know about potential safety blind spots, the better we can attend to improving safety for all.

of directives and standards by different engineers within the notified bodies. This does nothing to ensure the maintenance of safety, but confuses the marketplace and, worst of all, the users.

- Accident reporting and maintenance and publication of statistics.

Vagaries of accident reporting persist throughout the UK and Europe. Reliable, obtainable statistics relating specifically to platforms are non-existent. Until the industry knows exactly what types of accidents are occurring it is difficult to take effective steps to avoid repetition.

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## Safety on their minds



The PAL card is relied upon by 60,000 platform operators as evidence of proper training. The associated Log Book provides a verified record of operating experience

**A**ny question of the commercial importance of safety and recognised training for platform operators has pretty much wilted in the heat of

the initiative from the Major Contractors Group. From 1st January this year, only certain plant operator training cards are being recognised on their sites.

Whilst this covers all plant used on site, platform operators can be in no doubt about their position. Any old card will not do. If they do not have one that is approved, and relatively few are, they will simply not be allowed to work on site!

Concern and media confusion over acceptable cards has led the MCG's John Bradshaw to clarify the position on powered access. He has confirmed that the IPAF scheme has always been accepted and that platform operators holding an IPAF PAL card should be welcomed on MCG sites.

## Joint initiative with CPA

**I**PAF and CPA, the Construction Plant Hire Association, share a common interest. That is of course the hire of platforms, used in increasing numbers by the construction industry. Companies involved in this sector are often members of both IPAF and CPA.

A good deal of recent discussion has focused on how to avoid duplication of effort and combine the full weight of the experience of the two organisations to work for safety in this fast expanding industry sector. IPAF has its long-established Hirers' Committee - chaired by John Jennings and CPA recently established its own PAIG - Powered Access Interest Group, also chaired by John Jennings.

The decision to combine these two interest groups within IPAF and CPA has now been agreed by the gov-

erning bodies of both parent organisations. All the other functions of the two organisations will remain entirely separate, but the merged interest group will represent the relevant members of both organisations and will work for the overall benefit of the platform sector of the hire industry. It is expected to go under the self-explanatory name of the 'Powered Access Interest Group jointly sponsored by IPAF and CPA'.

With the formal decision made, some practical details remain to be thrashed out and interested members of both organisations are invited to attend an open meeting of the new body on Thursday 4th April, to be at the Bromsgrove Golf and Country Club, just south of Birmingham. Full details are available from either IPAF or CPA head offices.

## CPA supports HSE clampdown

**A** clamp down on the way that contractors hire cranes from rental companies is being launched by the Health & Safety Executive, with the full support of the Construction Plant-hire Association. Action was agreed at the most recent meeting of the CPA's Crane Interest Group, following an approach from the HSE.

"In a simple hire, the crane hire company has traditionally sent off its equipment and operatives to a job that it assumes has been risk assessed, planned and will be properly supervised", explains CPA chief executive Colin Wood. "It's all the customer's responsibility and quite often none of this has been done. On a contract lift, under British Standard 7121 for safe use of cranes, the crane hire company must supply an appointed person, a method statement and a risk assessment. The HSE feels that, when a crane hire company is contacted over a simple hire, the person taking the booking should ask more questions about the job. If the hirer does not understand its obligations or has omitted to do any anything important, it will be advised to take out a more expensive, but safe, contract lift, handing responsibility over to the crane hire company."

The HSE has pledged to back up this advice by instructing its inspectors to approach site agents when they see a crane at work to ask the relevant questions. If they are dissatisfied with the procedures in place they will be able to stop the work and take the contractor to task. The HSE could bring charges of a breach of health and safety at work.

The CPA predicts a rise in contract lifts due to the HSE's clamp down. "In our experi-

ence there is still a lot of ignorance on site, even though BS7121 has been out since 1989", says Wood. "When the HSE starts targeting cranes more, medium to small companies will realise they do not have the expertise to supervise jobs, so more hires will become contract lifts."

This led on to the CPA's Conditions of Business. It's Model Conditions of Hire have been established for years, but the group is now pursuing the development of an improved set of Consumer Conditions for the hire of operated plant. As Wood explains: "The Office of Fair Trading says that you cannot expect a private individual to understand business conditions, so we are concentrating on getting these operated consumer conditions right now. Conditions are already in place for non operated equipment."

Moving up in scale, of several other points covered the most important for manufacturers was the CPA's involvement with ESTA (the European Association for Heavy Transport and Mobile Cranes). ESTA is lobbying the European Parliament to try to influence directives on crane manufacture and movement. At present, when moving a crane through Europe, many different road regulations have to be considered. The CPA and ESTA agree that the regulations should be standardised to promote easy transportation. A sub committee has been created at ESTA, including representatives from the major crane manufacturers, to encourage makers to accommodate the needs of the end user more readily.

**You can contact the CPA at enquiries@c-p-a.co.uk or call 020 7630 6868**

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