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READERS LETTERS

MAKING DAY TO DAY CRANE HIRE IMPOSSIBLE

The following letter was sent by a major crane rental company in the English Midlands, to several UK Members of Parliament, the CPA and several Police Forces. It raised a good few comments on line, and highlights several discrepancies between the stated rules, how they are applied, and their legality. It is an area that most certainly requires action and follow up by the English crane rental industry and its associations.

07/03/2024

Dear All,

We are writing to you to inform you of the struggles we are facing and ask for assistance in finding a resolution.

At the current time, the enforcement of the abnormal load embargo, particularly in the Mercia area is affecting our ability to maintain crane hire services for our clients.

Mobile crane hire has always been a daily and on-demand service, whereby we may be on a site for a single day or a few days. This requires mobile cranes to be driven from our depot to the location of hire each day and returned each day or after completion of the hire. We offer 24-hour, 7-day service and work to meet our clients and environmental demands.

We operate in many sectors, including, but not limited to:

- Construction (house builders, schools, hospitals, infrastructure, roadways, HS2) - all of which have targets and units to produce, emergencies to cover, and time restraints - most of which are behind current legislative needs, including the housing sector not achieving the supply demanded and legislated.
- Maintenance and manufacture (building and service, engineers, quarries, factories - all of which operate shift work, shutdowns, and emergency requirements).
- Emergency services (police, fire service, recovery).
- MOD, HSE, and airports are all in need of an on-demand service.

While we always try to plan and accommodate all eventualities, as we have multiples of the same type of vehicle, we cannot give specific registration numbers for vehicles due to a number of factors, including crane breakdowns, changes in availability, driver safety inductions for site and machinery, environmental and weather conditions, etc. Our industry by its very nature is extremely interchangeable, with cranes not being able to safely operate in high winds or on unsuitable ground due to flooding, etc., and with the current weather conditions and ever-changing climate, this is not expected to improve. We need to have flexibility to be able to maintain supply during these industry conditions.

The current embargo being enforced with us of not being able to travel cranes between 7am - 9.30am and 4pm - 6.30pm means several issues:

- Driver hours have increased, with drivers leaving the depot earlier and having to park up to wait to return later.
- The increased driver hours will have an effect on all those end users, effectively pushing up prices to an unmanageable level. It is likely house builders will be the worst affected due to the level of crane supply, and the increase in price will push up housing prices for both councils and private sector sales. It may also decrease the unit levels being achieved, which is in direct opposition to the supply and demand levels required by the government.
- The additional work and driving hours for the drivers will have a direct safety implication, and the risk assessment and factor for this based on the minimal gain the embargo will have on vehicle numbers for mobile cranes may not be suitable and sufficient and in fact increase risk on other levels to an unsuitable point.
- The work-life balance for drivers is being affected, with additional working hours for seemingly no reason, resulting in them being away from family longer and reduced rest time as mobile cranes are not tachographed as they are classified as special types.

Abnormal Load EMBARGO

- The mental, occupational, and physical health of both drivers and back-room staff is being affected at unsuitable levels. This is due to the sheer worry, complicated routing and notification procedures, the nature of the crane hire industry, the constant change, and the additional working hours being inflicted to maintain employment.
- The financial restraints placed on crane hire companies are also being affected, as the industry has recently, like all, navigated through Covid. The industry has also been subject to the reverse VAT changes and the new fuel levy changes. Clients have been reluctant to accept these price increases, and as such, further increases will certainly result in a loss of work and cash flow. This may result in the company losing its solvency.
- Several sites we operate on have environmental restrictions, meaning we cannot attend a site prior to 7am or leave after a certain hour to avoid disturbing residents and individual site safety restrictions. Some also have restrictions where we must leave the area for a certain time, including near airports, etc.
- As employers, we have a moral and legal duty to maintain and monitor the occupational health of our employees. We feel the embargo is blocking our ability to maintain this. Several areas of the country have adopted a dispensation for mobile cranes in so far as the embargo and notifications apply to mobile cranes of 5 axles and above. We are seeking a dispensation as we feel that although mobile cranes are classed as abnormal loads, they are special types and, as such, operate in much the same way as standard HGVs which are not subject to the embargo.

Mobile cranes do not generally require escort vehicles and do not normally take up additional lanes, and as such, they move like all other vehicles at these times. We do not feel enough due diligence in the sector has been carried out before this strict enforcement was undertaken. A lack of understanding of the industry and the vehicle types means they are being treated the same as large abnormal loads rather than standard HGVs. If the current embargo continues and is enforced in the current strict way, with vehicles being impounded, they will no longer be able to operate. This will inevitably result in around 70 redundancies for our company alone.

Kind Regards

The letter was signed by two individuals who preferred not to be mentioned in the media, although given the circulation of the letter it is no real secret. It seems that most of those contacting us since posting would prefer not to draw attention to themselves or their company fearing possible reprisals.



THANK YOU

Dear All

Thank you to all Plant Hire Alliance members that contributed to the 'Let's Give Ukrainian Children Another Christmas This Year'. It was another mammoth effort by everyone involved.

I'm pleased to report that our collective efforts resulted in the dispatch of 15,000 gifts (7,200 had to be wrapped by 100 volunteers), 14 tonnes of flour, 4 tonnes of feminine hygiene products, 1 tonne of pet food, blankets and clothes. The trucks left the UK on Thursday 14th December and by Monday 18th they had arrived near Presov in East Slovakia where they were greeted by 10 Ukrainian trucks and 12 volunteers who spent the day unloading them.

One batch of gifts was sent to Transcarpathia to an orphanage for children whose parents have been lost because of the war. The remaining gifts went to Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk, all of which are heavily impacted by the war.

Once again, thank you to everyone for helping to make this campaign a success.

Regards

Jeremy Fish

**ROBERT (BOB) BRADSHAW 1954 - 2024**

At the start of February, we received the sad news that Bob Bradshaw, formerly Genie regional vice president for the Western Region died in late January. He passed away at his home near Jacksonville, Florida, on January 21st having retired from Genie in 2019, after 22 years with the company, he was 70.

Bob Bradshaw spent more than 30 years in the equipment business, based for most of the time in California. He started out with Caterpillar dealers, initially Shepherd Machinery in Southern California and Hawthorne Bros. Equipment near San Diego. He was also with Morgan Equipment in Northern California, and then sales manager for aerial lift sales and rental company Adco Equipment - his introduction to the powered access industry. In 1997, after five years in the role he made his final career move to Genie, which he always said was his favourite job, becoming a regional vice president in 2008.

He loved to play the guitar at Genie events and apparently even wrote and performed a company song.

A message posted by some of his Genie colleagues said:

"With heavy hearts, we mourn the loss of Bob Bradshaw, a beloved member of the Genie team and rental industry. After 22 years of dedicated service at Genie, Bob retired to spend more time with his loved ones. His dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to his work set a shining example for all of us and his impact will be remembered for many years to come. We will forever cherish the energy and kind-hearted team spirit he brought into his work every day. Our thoughts and condolences are with his family and loved ones during this difficult time."

Another friend and competitor Mark Thurston added: "Bob Bradshaw was always a pleasant face to see. I crossed paths with him from time to time calling on customers when he was at Genie, and I was at Grove and then Snorkel. I always enjoyed visiting with Bob and did not consider him a competitor, rather, an industry associate I always respected and was happy to see. So sad to hear of his passing. My thoughts and prayers are with his family during their time of trial. Peace be with you."

Ex Terex chief executive Ron Defeo said: "We were all better off for knowing Bob Bradshaw. He helped make us all a little better. I am sorry I did not know Bob even better, but he represented what was great about the Genie company. The customer was at the heart of everything we did. Time flies and we must slow down to remember the difference makers!"

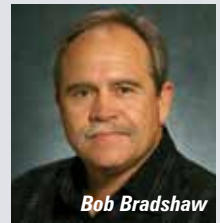
He leaves behind Carol, his beloved wife of 28 years, children including Ben - who followed him into the equipment business and is now senior vice president of sales at H&E Equipment Services - Jason, Shannon, Andy, Kevin and 15 grandchildren.

Ben Bradshaw said: "I was fortunate enough to work in the same business as my father from 2002 to 2019 when he retired. He was a second generation in the equipment business. His father, also named Bob, worked for Shepherd Machinery from 1952 through 1994, as the used equipment sales manager."

"My dad was a great man who treated everyone with genuine respect and friendship. He loved the equipment industry from his early days with Shepherd Machinery. I admire him for many things and appreciate his guidance throughout the years. He never made it easy and ensured we worked for everything we had. I'm going to miss talking to you every day about everything. You are my hero, my mentor and my best friend."



Among friends as well as colleagues



Bob Bradshaw



Matt Fearon - Genie president at the time - with Bob Bradshaw and a new guitar for his retirement

DANIEL NORMAN WOLFF 1946 - 2024

We have received the sad news that Dan Wolff a former engineer at US boom truck manufacturer National Crane has died.

He passed away on peacefully in Lincoln, Nebraska on Monday, January 15th at the age of 77. He was born in Tecumseh, Nebraska and grew up on the family farm south of Sterling and studied mechanical engineering at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. He started his career with 3M, moving to National Crane in 1971 as a mechanical engineer based in Waverly, Nebraska.

Wolff retired in 2011 having moved up through the company to become vice president of engineering. During his tenure, he led the development of many breakthrough crane models as well as product safety and reliability advancements. He oversaw the transfer of National Crane engineering to Shady Grove, Pennsylvania, and mentored numerous engineers along the way.

Dan Wolff was very active in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) B30 Crane Safety Codes and Standards beginning from 1976, becoming chairman for the development of the B30.22 articulating cranes. He was also a member of the B30.5 Mobile Cranes, B30.23 personnel handling subcommittees, and B30 main committees. He stepped down in 2018 becoming an honorary ASME member and was recognised for his contributions to the enhancement of public safety through the development and promotion of ASME safety codes and standards.

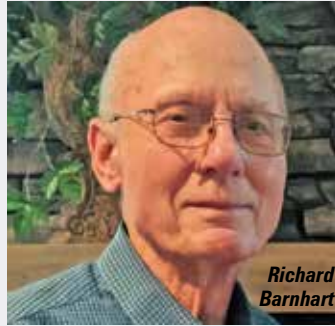
He married Kathy TeKolste in 1969, the couple only recently celebrated their 54th wedding anniversary. He is survived by wife, Kathy, daughter Danielle and son Mark.



RICHARD (DICK) BARNHART 1934 - 2024

We have received the sad news that Richard Barnhart, the founder of Memphis based Barnhart Crane and Rigging Co, has died. He passed away at his home in Millington, Tennessee on the 21st of January at the age 90.

Barnhart started out in the US Navy with the Seabees - United States Naval Construction Battalion - the Seabee coming from 'CB' for Construction Battalion. He served a total of four years and obtained a BSc in Civil Engineering from University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMASS). He then went to work with the contractor and civil engineering firm Chicago Bridge & Iron.



Richard Barnhart

In 1967 the company sent him to Memphis as part of the team building a plant on President's Island. On completing the project in 1969, he decided to stay on and teamed up with Jimmy Oldham to set up a local contracting company. Some of their early projects included the Schlitz Brewery and Cook Convention Centre. This transformed into Barnhart Crane and Rigging run by Dick and his wife Nancy.

In the late 1970s, Barnhart made the decision to focus on providing cranes for large construction projects, helping the company grow into a globally recognised business with 58 locations across the USA, with more than 1,800 employees. He decided to step back from the day to day running of the business in 1986, handing over to his sons Alan and Eric.

Not one to rest on his laurels he and Nancy fulfilled a lifetime dream to sail around the world, he also served as a scoutmaster, and donated millions to organisations that helped support young people. In 2008 he was inducted into the Society of Entrepreneurs.

He also made eight trips to the gulf coast with his specially modified tractor to help with clean-up operations after hurricane Katrina. He was apparently still driving his tractor a few weeks ago, helping his sons clear downed trees on his 200 acre home.

He leaves behind Nancy, his wife of 68 years, children Eric, Alan and Donna, 12 grandchildren, and 10 great grandchildren.

The crane rental industry has not only lost another of its pioneers, the world has lost a truly decent and thoughtful individual.

DOMENICO CIANO 1973 - 2022

We have only learnt of the sad news of the death of Domenico Ciano, the former chief executive of Raimondi tower cranes in early February. He actually passed away just over 18 months ago on the 19th of June 2022, at the age of 48, barely a year after he had stepped down as chief executive of the tower crane manufacturer in order to undergo treatment for a cancer diagnosis. He leaves behind his wife Cettina Iaconis and daughter Diletta.

Domenico Ciano began his career in 2002 as a mechanical engineer with Italian self-erecting tower crane manufacturer Vicario Gru, leaving after seven years with the company to join Terex as manager of its self-erecting tower crane line.

After two years with Terex he left the crane industry, taking a job with chemical bonding specialist Plasmec where he was appointed technical director. In 2014, clearly missing the crane industry, he joined Raimondi as technical director, shortly after it had been acquired by KBW Holding. In 2018 he was promoted to chief operating officer, moving up to chief executive eight months later. He stepped down due to ill health in July 2021, hoping to return to the business, following treatment for cancer. Sadly, he never made it.



Domenico Ciano

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