

Access Alliance

Hi Leigh,

I note the news item and whilst we have no wish to be awkward for its own sake we need to point out that earlier this year Kimberly Access registered a business name at Companies House i.e. The Alliance Access Group Ltd. We did this for the very specific reason that it is our short term strategy to make acquisitions in the powered access rental sector and those acquired businesses would retain their identity, culture and management [where possible] but be wholly owned subsidiaries of The Alliance Access Group Ltd as indeed so would Kimberly Access Ltd. This is a well thought out strategy which has been the subject of detailed discussion with our major shareholder Lloyds Development Capital the private equity arm of the Lloyds Banking Group.

Regards

Ray Ledger
Chairman
Kimberly Access Ltd

The following letter was sent in response to the news that a group of independently owned local rental companies have formed a new association to offer their customers a national service along the lines of the original Access Link.

The letter below was received in response to the November report of a 550 tonne Grove All Terrain crane that tipped over in Cedar Rapids, while relocating with its retracted boom raised and jib fitted. Initial reports blame the tip on the uneven ground. This was the second such tip over in a few weeks and prompted our correspondent to comment.

Dear Sir,

Re large AT crane tips. As you asked for feedback it seems obvious that the crane was travelling with its boom over the front which contravenes most manufacturers' instructions for 'over rear travelling'. However operator experience plays a large part in any safe operation and necessary questions should have been answered before taking on such a move. It is also not clear if the crane had any ballast either left on chassis or on superstructure which adds to its stability in the event of side loading during movement.

WR California

The following comes from a regular correspondent to Cranes & Access since the tower crane accident in Battersea, London in 2006. In this letter which was written as a public response to a speech made by David Cameron, leader of the opposition in the UK, in which he claimed that Health & Safety regulation or more likely its interpretation, had gone too far.

Dear Sirs,

David Cameron's ill-informed, myth believing, tabloid-pleasing, evidence-free, mischief-making about health and safety has gone too far. It would be laughable if he were not the leader of a party seeking to be in government! David Cameron appears to have taken stories from the tabloids and concocted a web of myth and mischief around them, without doing any research to ascertain the real numbers killed and injured in workplace incidents - 1,500 to 1,600 each year not just those reported to the HSE - let alone the thousands made ill or dying from work-related illnesses caused by exposure to unacceptable conditions at work- up to 50,000.

He should read Hazards Magazine and all of our stories about how the people we love went off to work and because their negligent employers killed them, they never came home again! Much of what he rants about is compensation and concerns children, not workers, but he should know that less than 10 percent of workers get any compensation when injured or made ill by their work.

He also talks of Health & Safety preventing responsibility, yes quite so, the real issue is of employers refusing to take responsibility for ensuring basic minimum standards of health and safety, which are not draconian or over zealous, but very basic avoidance of most serious risks like fire, explosion, exposure to carcinogens, falling from height, being crushed or electrocuted. All of our loved ones would be alive today if their employers had just complied with these very basic minimum standards. When you go to work you are exposed to the risks your employer creates: don't blame the victims David, blame the perpetrators.

Linzi Herbertson,

Founder member of FACK

Families Against Corporate Killers

Dear Mark,

I have never written to a magazine or newspaper before, but just wanted to say well done on your article talking about the dangers of not putting a good base under crawler cranes. (Stopping that sinking feeling - C&A Nov/Dec) As these cranes have grown bigger over the years, their undercarriages have not grown in the same proportion and so where in the old days base preparation was only needed in virtual bog conditions, modern cranes tend to put much larger tops on the same size bases. Anyway I digress - just wanted to say well done, and that I am keeping this issue to use with those who don't appreciate what can go wrong, nice job.

Steve Jones

The following letter concerns a news report that covered the appointment of former prosecutor, George Stamboulidis, to investigate corruption and mob influence in Local 14-14B of the International Union of Operating Engineers, the union that represents most tower crane operators in New York City. The article also pointed out how powerful the union was given its ability to close down New York construction through calling an operators' strike.

Dear Leigh,

In the past you were gracious enough to send me a video link to what was, I believe, a Russian crane accident for use instructing apprentices. I have often referred Vertikal.net/Cranes & Access to many of my acquaintances. Among who are in fact, a number of OSHA (our equivalent to your Safety and Health Executive) contacts.

In a comment concerning 'Prosecutor heads NY crane investigation' I felt the article put the tower crane operators (some of who I know personally) in a questionable light that I do not believe they deserve. Although it is not meant as a criticism of you or your publication and the work you put into it, which I feel to be exemplary.

Lastly, Ken Derry tells me he sent a copy of his book Chicago, a view from the top. Ken's crane was the highest in Chicago to date, a position I enjoyed when my little 1400 Pecco topped out at 900 N. Michigan Avenue in 1988. I took hundreds of pictures with film type cameras, only to have many deteriorate in various ways. Attached is a photo from those days looking north along Chicago's lakefront from a paltry 900 ft., with, and without, fog.

Hope this finds you well and keep up the good work!

John T Rickert
Chicago

The article largely reported the facts and the comments from the appointment notice, but also pointed out how powerful the Union was thanks to its operators who effectively control most of New York City's construction sites due to the majority being high rise developments, Naturally within any union many if not most members are regular decent and fair people. We publish John's two photos below.



*A high level view of Chicago's shoreline
- circa 1988*

Hi Leigh,

Last week I received an enquiry from a gentleman who wanted to surprise his neighbour, a lady in her 80's. He told me that they had worked alongside each other for the same company for a considerable number of years as well as living in the same village in North Yorkshire. And for several years she had mentioned to him that one day she would like to get some lights on her Christmas tree that she had grown in her front garden. She had planted the tree when it was about three foot high, it's now 37 _ feet (I measured it for him). He wanted to know if I could supply a 'cherry picker' for him because he wanted to put the lights in the tree. After I had surveyed the location and informed him that I could and as I thought it was a generous idea I offered my 'lighting' services free of charge. He was over the moon as they say and then arranged for another neighbour to take her shopping for several hours.

On the day I waited in the next village until the all-clear was given. It was then a case of getting on site, arranging barriers and getting the lights in the tree. It all went well and we were nearly finished when the kindly neighbour brought her home from shopping half an hour early without letting us know first, shame.

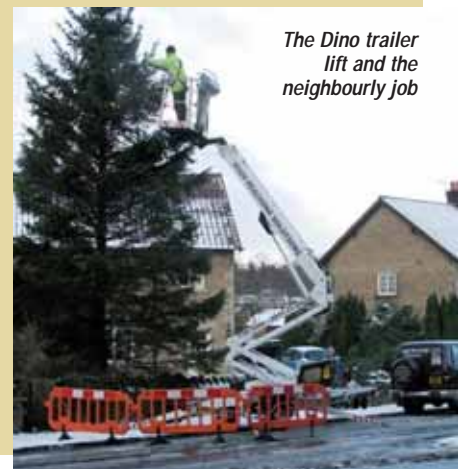
It was hoped that on her return she wouldn't notice the lights and that she would have a surprise two days later (Sunday) when the lights got switched on with all her family visiting. But as she was brought home early they had a preview that evening. Needless to say it was quite emotional for her. The kindness of her friends and neighbours and of course having the tree lit up.

It's nice to be able to do something for generous people and not just the normal everyday routine if you get my meaning. I thought this little story might brighten up an ordinary week.

Merry Christmas to you Leigh and everyone at Vertikal and may next year be a BIG improvement on this one.

Best regards

Shane Wakeford
High Reaching Solutions



The Dino trailer lift and the neighbourly job

Dear Sir,

I could not help but respond to a letter you published concerning a roofer in Ormskirk. This attitude that because someone has been doing something dangerously for 25 years it makes them safe! In fact I see or hear of accidents regularly where a man has fallen and been seriously injured after having worked in the same way for many years..... in essence he has been lucky to get away with it so long. I took a look at the article which I had missed and note that there are two men on the job, I wonder how long the younger man has been doing it? And was he an employer of the older man? If so he would be responsible for him.

Finally as you point out in your commentary if one of them had slipped and fallen, especially if it had been fatal, the pub would have been far from happy.

No name provided