

Readers Letters

C&A

letters



Dear Leigh,

I was delighted to discover a new-to-me word in your caption for the Scheuerle SPMT (Heavy Transport, June 2015). I think "miximum" is wonderfully multi-purpose and will prove very useful in everything from product specs to Scrabble!

With best wishes,

Tim Rowley

Many thanks to Mr Rowley for spotting last month's deliberate mistake!

Ed

Dear Edward,

I am pleased to see your feature article on trailer lifts. I write while sore, tired, yet smarter and stronger after a tree removal job that my stepson James Hancock and I did in six or seven hours yesterday afternoon at his house on a slope next to his storage barn. Until yesterday afternoon there was a mature towering cottonwood tree of about 17-19 metres, growing next to the barn. Sunday night we mind-stormed and sketched on my iPad JOT app three screens on how we might access and remove the height material above the roof using the lower course limbs.

We agreed to examine the job first with the Niftylift TM40 trailer lift, to rise above the barn shooting phone pics and determine what access methods to employ to achieve the desired end result (D.E.R.). Monday morning he used his tractor with bush hog attachment to clear off the slope for access for my trusty old 2003 Niftylift steed, a Petrol TM40 AWP. After a safety discussion and tool loading I strapped on PPE and went up. The aerial view and the brush clearing done before gave us the vision and initiative to tackle the tree. When I exhausted my reach capability we retracted booms and jack legs and moved up to the muddy soft forest bed uphill from the barn to get closer to the target's upper structure...two major masts of growth.

The slope made a level set up difficult but with extra pad blocks under the outriggers and a tractor chain wrapped around the lift frame and secured around a mature tree using a tree-saver strap or choker uphill the lift could be secured for operation. The downhill side of this set consisted of rock bluff rather than soil and vegetation, insurance that we wouldn't start a landslide. I went up and posted my pull rope, made my felling cuts at safe angles to clear the lift the barn and land in vegetation below. We

used the tractor to make sure the two towering trunks came down as planned. We gave thanks to God for the project packed up the lift and used 4WD low speed to crawl out of the forest and return home for a delicious supper my sweet wife had waiting for me. By counting the two trees removed and majority of the cottonwood makes my total felled since 1992 at 4,414 trees.

I climbed trees my first seven years then fell 20ft with a safety belt around my waist. I forgot to tie in. Once recuperated, by 2001 and finding a customer turned partner, I started working trees again with a telescoping boom trailer lift made by Work Force and owned by my partner of six years. When his other priorities prevented participation in our service work I ended the partnership in early 2008 and bought the TM40 through eBay. By necessity and thanks to the amazing phone support of Niftylift I have kept the unit operating so I can keep dancing on the limbs. By volition of our location I must be my own mechanic in full array.

I am a self-appointed advocate for SAFETY and our industry has far too many accidents and fatalities. We cannot replace the people fast enough if we don't shape up our Shakespeare and get the Internet honed to be the tool with a cutting edge to make our work and operations safer. An example is to visit www.arboristsite.com and search Raschick or Kens Tree Co. accident of May 24. The term tragic isn't good enough to describe this stupid act and losses.

Sherman Anderson

Sherm Anderson is a very active 74 year old arborist, and owner of Best Tree Services in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas, he is passionate about safety and an avid Cranes & Access subscriber as well as a regular contributor to Vertikal.Net.

Intentional misuse

I couldn't believe my eyes when I read the headline on news article in this month's magazine about the intentional misuse of an AWP. I just cannot understand how any jury of sane individuals of 'sound mind and body' could agree that the manufacturer was guilty, after all the evidence that was given that the men ignored the safety rules and their own simple common sense. Could I sue Opel for crashing my car into a wall if I took my hands off the wheel. Or went too fast into a bend??

Thank god that common sense and justice finally kicked in. I wish that instead of dumping this on the manufacturer they had put the guy - the devil on the shoulder - who suggested they take the short cut on trial. Although the poor sod who died was stupid to have listened to him. I wonder what would have happened if, instead of following his advice he had said - "you show me then" you can be sure his wiseass advice would have changed!!

Sad sad sad

Proper name not given

This comment refers to a news item on page 7 of the last issue, in which we reported how Genie was finally cleared of blame for the fatality of Walter Matak after he and his work colleague ignored all the instructions and warning decals when they raised the outriggers on a vertical AWP lift while fully elevated with Matak in the basket. The Texas Supreme court overruled the guilty verdicts handed down by two lower courts.

An end to climbing

I read your article on tower cranes - Cranes&Access June - with interest and appreciated the technical cover etc... but what caught my attention more than anything else is how it seems that the days of slogging up the tower might just be coming to an end. It is interesting to see how after going nowhere for years and years tower crane elevators are now the sexiest new option on the market. OK this is being pushed by changing rules/laws or regulations but about time, with the average age of crane operators getting older the idea that the only way up is via a 10 storey stair - or in some places a vertical steel ladder! - is for the birds.

Older operators are more experienced - well usually - but not always the fittest and slimmest, as a result there have been plenty of cases where they have had heart attacks, slipped or fallen ill while climbing to the cab, or shortly after having reached it. If I am not mistaken, the only fatality on the London Olympics site was the 65 year old tower crane operator who died while climbing to his work place?

Well done for highlighting or at least covering the issue and maybe we will see elevators become a necessity and not treated as a luxury only to be fitted when the law dictates it.

Harold Simms

What can we say apart from yes he makes a good point, and perhaps we will cover this subject more specifically in a future issue, when we can hear a variety of views on this subject.

Ed

Phil Newby retires

Phil Newby, executive director of Australia's Elevating Work Platform Association for almost 17 years and chief executive of the Hire and Rental Industry Association since 1999 has retired, after 45 years in the access market.



Newby was born in the UK and began his career in 1970 as a management trainee with GKN, a major international scaffold company headquartered in the UK. In 1974 he became a branch manager at the company's Australian subsidiary, GKN Australia, working in both Sydney and Canberra.

In 1976 he moved back to the UK, where he joined Stephens & Carter - part of the BET group - as a contract project manager. He was promoted to branch manager and in 1979 became national manager. In 1982 it was back to Australia to join Instant Scaffolds in Sydney as national manager. The company was the Australian licensee for UpRight's Instant scaffolds, and distributor for its powered access products, owned by WR Carpenter, a conglomerate controlled by financier Rick Stowe.

Newby and the success of Instant Scaffolds played a role in Stowe's acquisition of UpRight in 1987, following which Newby was made general manager of Instant Scaffolds

Australia and New Zealand, a position he held until 1994 when he left to join the Wreckair division of Brambles as state manager. In 1997 he moved to Safe Access as managing director, but a year or so later joined the Elevating Work Platform Association of Australia (EWPA) which had merged with the Hire Rental Industry Association in 1994, but was becoming a separate entity again, with Newby as its first executive director. It remained affiliated with the HRIAA, sharing offices and staff, and in 1999 Newby was appointed chief executive of the HRIAA as well retaining his position at the EWPA.

In the following years he helped build the EWPA into one of the most dynamic access associations in the world, expanding its yellow card training programme into a national proof of training for aerial work platform users, and creating an influential organisation within the industry. He and the association have played a major role in improving best practice, while helping shape legislation. More recently he oversaw the creation of the Telescopic Handler Association of Australia as a division of the EWPA.

James Oxenham has taken over as executive director, while Nicolas Chiew had already taken on the role of operations manager. On behalf of all of us at the Vertical Press we wish him a long, happy and healthy retirement. He will certainly be missed.