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#### On the cover:

Part of Gunco's access fleet which is now the third largest in Europe. The company was acquired last year by Belgian replacement parts and fork truck specialist TVH. See the full story on page 47.

Mastclimbers

.oader cranes

SAIE review

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In the next bumper issue of Cranes & Access out early January we have our annual roundup of the major news stories from 2012 along with the 2012 rental rate guide. We also take a look at heavy lift cranes and review the large truck mounted lift sector.

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"I know no method to secure the repeal of bad or obnoxious laws so effective as their stringent execution."

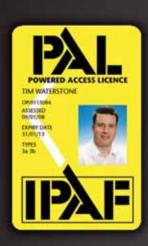


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## More problems than a solution

If nothing else, the recent furore in the UK concerning overly prescriptive requirements for anti-crushing devices on boom lifts tells us that contractor's 'safety' modifications are not the best way

forward. Forcing rental companies to modify machines to meet such demands may introduce other, potentially more dangerous problems, as well as causing non-compliance with legislation and industry best practice.

This year we have seen demands to modify scissor lift control boxes in the UK and Australia and a list of items for mastclimbers which are in some cases unworkable, while introducing new hazards. A couple of years ago it was a ban on any crane over 10 years old and in some places a ban on operators not trained under a certain scheme. All too often such blanket policies ignore practicalities such as the number of operators available with that specific training, or that the safest, most efficient machine for the job does not comply with the diktat. And with many contractors working globally the modification demands travel around the world.

Over the past 20 years the number of different standards and regulations governing cranes and aerial lifts has been substantially reduced as we move towards greater global harmonisation. This all began with the European single market and CE marking in 1992 which replaced a plethora of conflicting national standards and regulations which forced manufacturers to build dozens of model variations, and moving products from one country to another was a nightmare.

In more recent times we have seen worldwide crane standards become increasingly close if not yet harmonised, while Australian and European standards for platforms are increasingly similar and an ISO world standard beckons. Yet all this positive progress is in danger of being undermined by major contractors developing new ad-hoc rules on their own, rather than in consultation with the industry as a whole. Often the solutions are tailored to a one-off incident caused by incompetence, but which then add dangers for other applications.

Another by-product of such knee jerk development is that it can distort the agenda. The contractor-led development and adoption of anti-crush protection has meant more time, effort and money has been put into this single cause of fatalities while ignoring solutions that could potentially save many more lives by warning operators they are too close to overhead wires, or that outriggers are not properly set or the ground is too soft.

Manufacturers, rental companies and contractors, along with their associations need to come together to develop a procedure to avoid onsite one-incident development and introduce a more orderly way to develop new safety solutions that do not introduce new problems or hazards.

#### Mark Darwin

Please mail, email or fax any comments you may have, to the editor, stating if we may publish them or not.

