

Readers Letters



Rate talk

I enjoyed the rate guide in the latest Cranes & Access - entertaining in places - useful? In parts certainly. I know this is a thankless task but definitely worth the effort you guys clearly put into it. I does strike me that nothing changes - rates always useless, everyone blaming someone else for cutting rates, yet nothing changes. How we all keep on going year after year just boggles the mind! Some of the results sharpens the mind and focusses attention that's for sure. What no one said - unless I missed it - is how you find a good niche product pay over the odds for a better or special machine - like spiders or hybrids - persuade your customers that you have something that will save them time or be easier to use even though it is more expensive. And as soon as you have some success some joker jumps in, buys the same machines probably with a 'buy now pay later' deal and starts cutting the rate! No wonder the majority don't want their kids to join them! Mind you I wonder why the crane guys are so enthusiastic? Something else going on there - looks like a business even less attractive than access hire.

Leonardo De Caprio

Before you say anything we are under no illusion that an Oscar winning actor is a regular reader. But this is the name we were given and so it's the one we will use. He does make some valid points though.

To use or not to use a ladder

Dear Sir,

A recent prosecution at Wellingborough Magistrates' Court has again highlighted the importance of ensuring work at height is properly planned, supervised and carried out by a competent person.

The court heard that a painter and decorator sustained serious, life changing injuries after falling from height while setting up ladders to paint the exterior windows and soffit boards of a private property. The fall resulted in the employee being permanently paralysed from the chest down.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive found that the incident could have been prevented if the work at height hierarchy had been followed in the planning process and if appropriate equipment had been provided to the employee. In this specific case, the risk assessment should have identified that the work was not of a short duration and as a result, ladders were not the most appropriate equipment to use.

The painting contractor was sentenced to a 12 month community order, 160 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay costs of £2,124.28 with a surcharge of £85.

In response to this prosecution, we at the Ladder Association are urging all ladder users, and those responsible for managing the safe use of ladders, to put ladder training at the top of their agenda.

Ladders can be a sensible and practical option for low risk and short duration tasks, but they shouldn't automatically be your first choice. The law states that ladders can be used for work at height when a risk assessment has shown that using equipment offering a higher level of fall protection is not justified because of the low risk and short duration of use, or there are existing workplace features which cannot be altered.

Unfortunately, this case highlights the devastating effect a lack of planning can have on using the right type of equipment for working at height. We strongly believe training is an important contribution in keeping people safe when working at height and that training is about more than just using the ladder; it's about understanding when it's right to use a ladder, and importantly when it's not, choosing the right ladder and then understanding the simple steps to take to use the ladder safely.

Dennis Seaton,

Chairman - Ladder Association Training Committee

The Late Bob Youngman

6 February 2020

Dear Mark,

Further to the Obituary on this New Zealander, published in last month's edition, I knew Bob personally for about 50 years starting from when he joined Richardson McCabe in 1972 as Sales and Marketing Director. He was like a breath of fresh air into that somewhat died in-the wool organisation, who had represented Priestman since the early part of the century. Bob was a 'larger than life' character, apart from his proven track record as an entrepreneur as described in your Obituary.

Under Bob, we had some great success with Priestman sales in the 1970s and early 80s. He had no equal in putting on a show to launch new product, in which customer participation in trying out the new machine was paramount. On one occasion, after a very good party put on by Bob as part of the Launch, a somewhat stuffy customer took me to task for a rude song or recitation which he felt went too far, and upon my telling Bob the next day, his succinct response was: "Oh him! Don't worry, he's just a bloody Pom!" In 1982, Bob had a terrible accident which would have killed most normal beings. He was crossing the busy road to Auckland Airport to buy a paper, and, halfway across, stepped right in to the path of a speeding car, and was knocked completely unconscious. In his own words later: "Some joker turned me over with his foot and said 'e's gorn', but I 'adn't' y'know!" After several days in a virtual coma, recover he did. Bob took me fishing on Lake Taupo. I am no fisherman, but we trawled the bait and I caught a large trout. It was against the rules to catch any small fish, and, if Bob felt that we had, he would chuck them back into the lake if a Ranger came close, and then re-catch the dead fish once he was out of sight. This was the true Bob, a great friend and mate, with whom I kept in touch up until his death.

Yours sincerely,

Dick Lloyd

Tony 'Nut' Nuthall 1974 - 2020

Well-known UK crane operator Tony Nuthall has died after a short illness. He was only 45. The following tribute came from one of his colleagues who knew him well. They are also looking to raise a little money to help his family at this challenging time. He leaves behind wife Shelley and three children Jordan, Connor and Arron.



It is with great sadness to announce that we have lost another brother from the crane industry. Tony 'Nut' Nuthall died peacefully at home with his family by his side on the 17th January after suffering a short illness. He was everyone's right hand to their left. He was the joker of the pack and never failed to make people smile with his quip - "happy sexy greetings from the tin tent" (the crane cab).

Tony Nuthall most recently worked with Baldwins Crane Hire but had previously been employed by Ainscough and Total Tyres. He was a well-known chap in and around the West London area, and will be sorely missed by his colleagues in the region. Our thoughts are with Shelley and family at this sad time.

Can you help Dave Foster raise £2,000 to help support In remembrance of Nutty (Tony Nuthall) to help his family at this difficult time? We all have memories of Tony, lets show how much we care X. Please donate to their JustGiving Crowdfunding Page. <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/dave-foster?>

Hubert Palfinger senior 1942- 2020

Palfinger loader crane founder Hubert Palfinger senior died on Sunday 19th January following a serious illness. He was 77.

Born in Grieskirchen (upper Austria) in April 1942, Palfinger signed up as an apprenticeship machine fitter, completing his Höhere Technische Lehranstalt (HTL) degree in 1964. He then joined his father Richard in the metalworking and repair workshop which he had set up in 1932 for agricultural trailers, tippers and vehicle bodies. The company had 12 employees at the time. In 1959, Palfinger built its first crane and designed its first loader crane in 1964 when Hubert Palfinger took over the family business. He began series production of loader cranes in 1968. The company weathered a number of global economic crisis, restructuring and reinventing the business in order to survive and grow. It went public in 1999 but retained control with a majority holding. The family, including his wife Josephine, two sons and a private foundation still hold a majority stake in the business, with his sons, Hubert junior and Hannes, both sitting on the supervisory board.

He stepped down from his operational role in the company in 2008 but remained a board member until 2011. It also gave him time to focus on his other company, Hubert Palfinger Technologies which specialises in marine related activities, including the maintenance of ship hulls, and won the prestigious Energy Globe World Award last November.

A statement from the company said: "With the passing of Hubert Palfinger Sr, Palfinger has lost an extraordinary person and a visionary entrepreneur who has developed the group into a global corporation employing around 12,000 people. Making people a top priority is an integral part of the corporate culture, and it was Hubert Palfinger who laid the foundation for that philosophy and played a key role in shaping its implementation.

For that, Palfinger pays tribute to its founder, to whom the company owes an enormous debt of gratitude."



Allen 'Al' Thomas Havlin 1945 - 2020

Former Snorkel owner Al Havlin passed away on the 26th January he was 74. Havlin had been a successful sales rep for Fluid Power Systems, when in 1978 he spotted the potential of a small local company named Fluid Tech that had been set up in 1972 but that was struggling in what was a tough market. He sold his home and cashed in the commissions that he had built up and used the funds to acquire the young company. At the time he said: "I didn't want to start a company from zero. This one was already started and was running. The core was basically there, and sales went up rather rapidly."

He expanded the company rapidly over the next 12 years and then in 1995 he founded the Midwest Suppliers Alliance, a sort of co-op which included a number of local suppliers working together to offer manufacturers a wide range of products and in effect reduce the number of separate suppliers they had to deal with.

In 2002 Havlin was chief executive and co-owner of Fluid Tech which by then supplied components to a number of crane and aerial lift companies, including Snorkel, Altec and Terex Cranes. When Snorkel ran into difficulties he teamed up with other local investors in Kansas City as part of Elwood Holdings, to acquire the company in order to maintain his business.

The Snorkel plant in Elwood and St Joseph, Kansas had been mothballed early in 2002 after owner Omniquip - part of Textron - had failed to find a buyer for the company as a going concern. Havlin managed, where others had failed, to persuade Textron to sell the company to him and his partners



at a sensible price and took over in late 2002. The new owners restarted the production lines a month or two later and recruited well known access industry sales manager Frank Scarborough as president. Havlin built the Snorkel business back up again before selling it to Tanfield in mid 2007. Tanfield merged it with UpRight, which it had acquired a few years earlier and after several years of mismanagement managed to 'sell' it to Don Ahern in 2013.

Al Havlin maintained an interest in the aerial lift market long after he had sold Snorkel and was a regular visitor to the ARA Rental show. He seemed to enjoy the more personable side of the business compared to the hydraulic component supply industry. He celebrated the acquisition of the Snorkel business by Don Ahern in 2013 which effectively saved the company he had saved for the second time.



Terry Jones 1942-2020

Although he had nothing to do with the lifting equipment industries we wanted to add our brief and humble tribute to the late great genius and Monty Python member Terry Jones, who passed away on January 21st, having suffered for several years from frontotemporal dementia (FTD), he was 77.



SUBSCRIBE TO THE C&A NEWS PACKAGE AND GET THE INDUSTRY'S MOST WIDELY READ NEWS



To get your **SUBSCRIPTION** up and running register online at www.vertical.net/en/subscriptions

EVERY ISSUE
Delivered to your door
PLUS
DIGITAL ISSUE
Online

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION
£40.00/€60.00 (UK and Ireland)
€75.00 (Rest of Europe) | \$110.00/£60.00 (Other regions)
Payable by BACS transfer/ credit card/cheque

AN INDEPENDENT NEWS SERVICE COSTS MONEY AND NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT SUBSCRIBE TODAY!