

Readers Letters



European Crane Operator Licences

We received the following letter following a couple of articles we ran online regarding the European Crane Operator's Licence, the principle of which we strongly support. However, after announcing that the licence was now available, we were approached by several highly experienced crane operators, some working on the largest crawler cranes, who had attempted to book themselves on a course and test, only to be told that an English language course would not be available until enough people applied for it. It sounded like a 'chicken and egg' situation to us. We mentioned this aspect when writing about the planned mutual agreement arrangements with British Columbia. This prompted Ton Klijn of ESTA/ECOL to write in, which we greatly appreciate.

Dear Leigh,

Thanks for your recent coverage of the European Crane Operator's Licence and our Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) with BCACS from British Columbia, Canada, on Vertical.net. Your comments prompted us to respond to some of the points you raised.

Lining up MRAs in advance of the launch, as you suggested, proved to be impossible as every organisation that has been asked to join wants to see a working syllabus and examination system. This is why we chose to first develop and register the system under EQF before we started forging MRAs.

ECOL is a major undertaking for a relatively small organisation like ours, and we have to take its development one step at a time to ensure that standards are professionally maintained.

Having said that, you are right that we need to raise ECOL's profile with major contractors and construction clients, while at the same time putting in place as many MRAs as we can across Europe, coupled with expanding the number of training and examination institutes. We are slowly and steadily making progress in that direction.

Your statement that operators need to be fluent in Dutch or German is incorrect. From the outset, the training and examination for an ECOL licence can be made in English, as well as in Dutch, Danish and German. We are planning to increase the number of languages in due course.

As you are aware, ECOL only sets the standards and does not administer training or examinations itself. For this reason, we are unable to comment on training costs quoted by Mammoet Academy, Liebherr or any other ECOL-certified training institutes.

Operators wishing to be informed about the possibilities of training and examination are advised to look for the correct information on the ECOL website.

We were pleased to read that you support the idea of the European Crane Operator's Licence as being a sound one, and we welcome your support in assisting us to deliver the marketing firepower that you advised us to use.

With this in mind, we are most willing to answer any queries you might have about the development of the ECOL system.

Looking forward to your reaction.

Ton Klijn

Correction:

As might have been anticipated when publishing such a mass of data as our side by specification comparison analysis of around 40 different 19ft scissor lifts, there was an error, the H (Hydraulic) and E (direct Electric) letters in the Drive column was inverted between two models, the GMG 1930ED (pictured), which is most definitely direct electric drive, which we knew, and the new Skyjack SJ3219 which is very much hydraulic, which we also knew! We can only apologise and repeat that we strive for accuracy but occasionally errors can creep in. The error was pointed out to us by Jim Tolle of GMG, who spotted it and was understandably not happy. Here is his letter to us.

Hello Leigh,

I felt the need to voice my thoughts here with you, I am a bit disappointed in the latest article regarding the small electric scissor lifts, identifying us as a hydraulic-driven machine. Where did that come from?

We have won numerous awards for our innovations and pioneered features that no one has ever done before. We've made our machines safer than any others in the world and have a better performing machine than well... anyone, ever, and I mean by a long shot! We believe no one else is even close to our performance and reliability.

Sure, we are a small company and don't spend the advertising dollars that others do but this was rather unfair.

Jim Tolle



We agree with Jim that errors like this are unacceptable and acknowledge that he and GMG have been pioneers when it comes to new ideas, etc. Most importantly, we urge anyone unhappy after spotting a factual error (which does happen occasionally) to contact us straight away. We can keep your correspondence confidential or we will publish your words in full if you prefer. At Cranes & Access, we are all about transparency.

Otto Rettenmaier 1926-2020

Otto Rettenmaier, the founder of TII, the parent company of trailer/transporter manufacturers Scheuerle, Nicolas, Kamag and Tiiger (TII India), has died at the age of 93. He would have been 94 at the end of July.



Otto Rettenmaier

Rettenmaier was born in the Swabian town of Holzmühle, near Ellwangen, Germany. In 1950, after studying business administration at the Technical University of Stuttgart, he joined his parents' company, Faserstoffwerke J. Rettenmaier & Söhne (JRS) which had been established 52 years earlier and produced wood fibres. Over the ensuing years, Rettenmaier and his elder brother Josef expanded JRS into a global market leader producing all manners of fibres for applications as diverse as road building and food production.

In 1998, Rettenmaier acquired trailer and heavy transport equipment manufacturer Scheuerle Fahrzeugfabrik out of a 'technical fascination' for

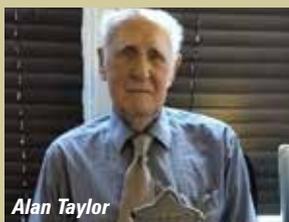
the company's products. In 1995, he added the French trailer manufacturer Nicolas Industrie, followed by Germany's Kamag Transporttechnik in 2004. In 2015 the company acquired the civilian business of Tratec, with a manufacturing operation near Delhi, to create Tiiger.

Rettenmaier leaves behind his wife Lore, who he married in 1959, two daughters, one son and eight grandchildren. His daughter Susanne Rettenmaier manages the family's holding company as a managing partner, while other members of the family remain involved with the business as shareholders and main board directors. A team of non-family executives runs the business on a day-to-day basis, under the chairmanship of Gerald Karch.

Outside of his business interests, Rettenmaier supported and funded a wide range of social, cultural and community projects, including the Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences and the University of Stuttgart-Hohenheim. As a highly successful industrialist, Rettenmaier was awarded Germany's Federal Cross of Merit First Class for his contribution to German industry.

Alan Taylor 1923-2020

We only recently learned of the death of Alan Taylor, the man behind the Taylor Jumbo crane, as well as some of the very first commercially viable hydraulic cranes. Alan passed away in April, after contracting Covid-19, at the age of 96.



Alan Taylor

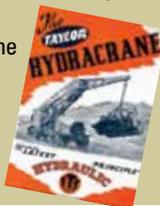
An engineer at heart, Taylor was born into the Taylor family that had been in business since 1895, originally making commercial bodywork for horse-drawn trailers and early trucks at the firm's plant in Pendleton, Lancashire. In 1938, the company won a contract to store and distribute imported cotton from America but found the handling of the large cotton bales was a problem. As a result, they designed a yard crane to lift them which was purely for the company's use. The crane was dubbed 'The Coffin' due to its shape.



The coffin

It was mounted on a truck tipper chassis, with a fixed boom, along the lines of a front end loader, that was elevated with the hydraulic tipper cylinders.

At the end of the Second World War, 21-year-old Taylor joined the company, just as it was opening a second production facility in Glazebury, between Manchester and Liverpool. The following year the company was renamed F Taylor & Sons (Manchester), and the company launched one of the very first commercially viable hydraulic cranes: the three-ton Hydracrane, mounted on a Morris ex-army tipper truck chassis and available with a 2.4, 3.0 or 4.3 metre boom. As the supply of army surplus



vehicles began to dry up, Taylors began building its purpose-built chassis. During the 1950s, the manufacturer developed the Taylor 42, a four-wheel drive Jumbo followed by the Taylor 50 or Jumbo Junior cranes which introduced telescopic booms and one of the first 360-degree hydraulic slewing mechanisms.

In 1959 the business was acquired by the Steel group which also owned Coles Cranes, and quickly merged the company into the Coles' operations, with the Glazebury plant becoming the production base for Coles Hydra telescopic cranes, Taylor Speedcrane yard cranes, and Coles Rough Terrains.



After the sale to Steels, Taylor went on to set up other businesses, including Cheswick & Wright, and Lathom Engineering - which produced exhaust silencers for many British car manufacturers.

Taylor's grandson, Paul Taylor, said: "We will remember Alan as a wonderful man who was giving, caring and always wanted to make sure that his family was okay. Having been taken into hospital he was calling everyone on Thursday when he seemed to be getting better and was looking forward to coming home. It was such a shame when Covid-19 caught up with the following morning."

A popular Matchbox toy made the Taylor Jumbo into a well known name in the UK.



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