

7th March 2024

Point of Rental



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Present

The Friends of Ukraine

Charity Gala

EVENT

Join us for a heartwarming evening committed to making a meaningful impact in the lives of Ukraine's people! In the wake of an ongoing conflict, more than 10 million individuals have fled Ukraine, leaving behind their jobs, possessions, and families, and now grapple with an uncertain future. Families have been torn apart, individuals have been wounded, and precious lives have been lost. Thus far, we've successfully raised over £4 million, and with your support tonight, we aim to significantly increase our contributions, ensuring vital aid reaches those who need it most.

Thursday 7th March 2024 | 06.00 PM - 01.00 AM

Edgbaston Cricket Ground

Edgbaston Rd, Birmingham B5 7QU

Standard Table Package (12ppl) £4,000

Order of the evening:

06:00 PM	Welcome drinks
07:00 PM	Welcome
07:30 PM	3 course dinner (inc. bucket of beers or selection of wines)
09:00 PM	Auction
10:00 PM	Live entertainment & dancing
01:00 AM	Carriages

Rotary



To book your table, contact:

Joan McKinlay
Contact: 07565 772 547
Email: joan.mckinlay@pointofrental.com
Web: www.aid-alliance.com

READERS LETTERS

KNOWING THE PRICE OF EVERYTHING AND VALUE OF NOTHING!

Dear Leigh,

I read with interest your piece relating to Wilmott Dixon unilaterally instructing that all sites must have booms with the new Nationwide "Harness on" feature. I am minded to share with you an experience I had in the distant past:

Many years ago, whilst owning Clements Plant, I received an emergency call on a Saturday morning from a Wilmott Dixon Site Manager desperate for help.

It seemed he had a Nationwide S65 on site and needed to complete some snagging on a Care Home that was to be handed over the following Monday. The Operator had not turned-up and had taken the machine's key with him.

An impassioned plea and corroborating e-mail from the Site Manager resulted in me despatching a Mobile Engineer (on time & a half) with a key with the clear instruction for him to identify and ensure he was the Wilmott Dixon employee and for him to be given the key.

The man was most grateful and amazed at our service as all the calls that morning to Nationwide had gone unanswered. He promised to get Clements onto the Wilmott Dixon supply chain, as we'd "saved his bacon" and he was due to start a big job needing access platforms in the near future.

On that basis, we waived any charges for our time and the key.

He copied me into e-mails asking the purchasing department to start the process.

These were promptly answered by the department with the terse response that Nationwide (yes, the one's who didn't answer their phones that Saturday for an emergency) were their preferred supplier, and they were not interested in adding my company to their supply chain.

So, the moral of this story here is fancy gadgets, gimmicks and gizmo's on machines are brilliant at deflecting average service. Oh, also beware of purchasing departments who know the price of everything and the value of nothing!

Kind Regards,

Jim Longstaff.

(See page 7 for Harness On story)

BACK TO NATURE FOR HISTORIC CRANE

An eagle-eyed reader sent us photographs and a link to a video taken by a crane enthusiast in Taiwan which charts their discovery of an abandoned 500 tonne Gottwald AMK 500-93 telescopic truck crane left to rot on a patch of wasteland in Taiwan, apparently following a boom collapse some years ago. In the six years or so since it was left to rot, nature has started to take over.

Several other readers identified the crane as having been built for UK rental company Hewden Stuart in 1981. The crane was very similar in its construction to Gottwald's 1,000 tonne AMK-1000-103, for several years the largest telescopic crane in the world.

Both feature a large cross section removable boom and a dedicated, purpose-built Gottwald boom carrier. The Hewden crane was first registered in the UK in 1982. In the late 1980s - we believe - it was sold to Long Hook in Taiwan.

You can see the video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hE-ZFu5hfk&t=65s> give it 40 seconds before it gets to the AMK 500-93.



The historic crane as she is today



The crane as it was with boom carrier behind



THE HISTORY OF PRIESTMAN

Dear Leigh,

I am writing on behalf of my father, who while in a nursing home now, still thinks about the History of Priestman Brothers and has recently read the draft he had prepared before falling ill. He has been in touch with Bill Bromwich who worked with him on the original draft, they both still hope that their efforts could find its way into print.

We would very much appreciate your input on this.

With many thanks,

Lucy-Jean Lloyd

The main point in publishing this letter is to gauge readers views. We would be more than happy to publish it, particularly if we are able to cover most of the net design and print costs, but we are looking for input and possibly further contributions in the form of old photographs etc.

Please let us have your thoughts via editor@vertikal.net

Leigh Sparrow

A TRUE HERO

We covered a major fire at a high rise construction project in Reading, England in November - a man working on one of the floors was trapped as the flames moved ever closer to the corner of the building where he was stranded. Tower crane operator Glen Edwards, 65, came to the rescue with a man basket and saved the trapped man from injury or death.

The following are just a few of the comments from our readers:

Mr Edwards, You and your crew deserve high praise. Because of your quick thinking and actions, a man went home to his family safe and sound. I salute and commend you all !!

Red

The manual gets thrown out the window at times like this. Clearly a true professional with experience on how to fully utilise his equipment under pressure.

Not all hero's wear capes! I'm sure he isn't looking for any plaudits, but he needs to be recognised fully for saving a life.

TRay

Great thinking from the team to use the crane, and I guess great thinking from the driver to stay in the crane rather than evacuate when the fire broke out, assuming he thought that having an operational tower crane could only help the emergency services.

Graeme Davison

Thank God the crane operator was there to rescue the man trapped on the roof as it could have been a catastrophic deeply sad event otherwise. A personal thank you from me for your courageous effort, I can't imagine what thoughts must have been racing around both of your minds up there. What could have been so flammable for the fire to be so intense?

Kevin Morris



Glen Edwards



JOE SPENCER FOOT 1956-2023

We received the sad news in early November that crane and access veteran Joe Foot, owner of California based UpRight Scaffold North America has died.

He passed away on October 12th as a result of injuries from a road accident that occurred as he was being driven to a physical therapy appointment on October 9th - he never regained consciousness. He was 67.

Joe had been involved in another road accident a few years earlier, which left him with serious spinal injuries, that left him an 'incomplete quadriplegic'.

Although he was confined to a wheelchair he had been making progress, gaining enough strength and co-ordination to the point he was able to stand and walk on his own for short distances. He is survived by his daughters Sasha and Alexandria, his former partner Dawn and brother Jim.

Joe Foot was an out and out salesman and larger than life character. He came into the access business in 1995 when he joined Los Angeles based rental company Horizon High Reach, which had been acquired by UpRight's owner Rick Stowe in 1989. Foot was recruited to take the company into tower sales and rental and became involved with its aviation maintenance related business. He left the company in 2003 and joined Coast Crane as a territory manager where he stayed until 2010, when it was acquired by Essex Crane. After a number of unrelated jobs, he set up his own company at the end of 2012 in the form of UpRight Scaffold North



Joe Foot

America, selling a version of Instant UpRight's alloy tower system.

A tribute to him by the Bodega Bay Church said: "Joe was an outstanding musician and drummer. He played in bands most of his life. He also ran Upright Scaffolding North America, setting up scaffolding jobs for major construction projects. He was fun loving and hard working throughout his life. Although his previous accident robbed him of his mobility he would often say it was the best thing ever to happen to him. It caused him to draw closer to God and change his life for the better.



Joe played drums in the Bodega Bay Church band for nearly five years. Although he could not use his hands, we strapped his drumsticks to his wrists, and he was able to play very well. Over time he became the heartbeat of our Church band and was an amazing encouragement to all of us."



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We would like to thank our readers, sponsors and contributors for the fantastic support that you have given us throughout this year, all of which helps to make our publications, events and other activities a success.

We wish you all a very safe and happy holiday season and a healthy and prosperous year in 2024.

FROM ALL OF US AT

Vertikal
Press

FRANK SUMSION 1926-2023

Long retired UK crane rental veteran and, more recently, crane industry historian, Frank Sumsion, has died.

He passed away peacefully in his sleep in the early hours of Tuesday morning November 29th at the age of 97. He is survived by his two children, Mike and Julie, and four grandsons, David, Lee, Barry and Sam along with four great-grandchildren. Jane, his beloved wife of 64 years, sadly passed away in 2013.

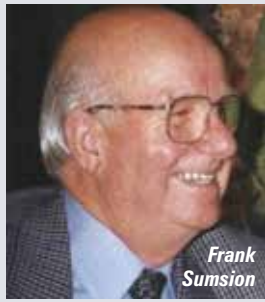
Frank Sumsion was born in the village of Combe Down, Bath, in July 1926. He left school just after his 15th birthday, and before the year end this involved a £2 fine, which he says, was levied back then for leaving school early. His parents paid it reluctantly on the understanding that he would repay them from his earnings.

His first full time job was as a truck driver's mate - yes that was a thing until not so long ago - and he was paid 25 shillings a week - £1.25p. His work involved collecting coal from the LMS railway sidings which they delivered all over the local area. Later he joined his uncle working as an apprentice at the local water works but was lured away after a couple of years with the offer of a truck driver's job at a local mushroom farm, followed by a similar role driving a small tipper truck for a builder.

In 1944, Frank signed up for a seven year stint with the British Army, as it allowed him to choose what he did, and he was keen to be a driver. His tours of duty included a spell in the British Mandate of Palestine, until partition in late 1947 and British withdrawal. The next stop was Kenya where the early rumblings that eventually led to the Mau Mau uprisings were of concern.

Arriving back in the UK, in October 1948, he married his wife Jane just 10 days later. They had met during the war and kept in touch. In the UK he was posted to Farnborough, where he was supposed to take up the role of a drill instructor. But when he arrived the position wasn't vacant, so he managed to step into a sudden vacancy as mess sergeant, a role that, after some negotiation on his part, came with married quarters. He was discharged from the Army in 1952 having more than served his seven years.

His career in the crane industry came in 1958, when he joined a young up and coming business in Bath - G.W Sparrow & Sons - as a crane operator and employee No 12. His first crane was one of the Sparrow brothers' home-built models based on US Army surplus Chevrolet gun tractors, with



Frank Sumsion



Frank Sumsion with wife Jane around 2011



Alf Sparrow (L) and Frank Sumsion with the company plane

a manual boom luffing winch. His operator training was conducted by company founder and the crane's designer and builder Alf Sparrow.

Pic 3](One of the home made Sparrow Quad cranes that Frank Sumsion started out on, working here in a gas pipeline in the late 1950s - note the manual boom/jib luffing winch at the rear)

In 1964, he left Sparrows, apparently due to an argument over his brother, who had also joined the business. Frank started his own business and did well until 1968 when he was obliged to sell up. He went back to driving a truck until a chance meeting with Alf Sparrow led to him rejoining Sparrows as a crane operator later that year. He was paid the equivalent of 33p an hour but often worked an 80-hour week. In the four years he had been away, Sparrows had grown beyond all recognition and was by now running a fleet of 140 cranes and 30 trucks from several locations.

In 1971, he hung up his driving boots when he was promoted to salesman at the company's newly opened London depot. Only a few months later, he had the opportunity to become assistant depot manager in the firm's Swansea depot followed quickly by a move to Scunthorpe where he was made depot manager.

In 1974, Frank got his biggest break when he was promoted to managing director of Sparrows Heavy Crawler cranes. The London based company had been formed from the acquisition of Plant Sales Ltd and Stanley Butterworth Cranes. A few years later a new division was created with the merging of Sparrows Heavy Cranes with all of the company's cranes over 200 tonnes.

Frank Sumsion headed the new division and moved back home to Bath. During this time, he also became involved with the Sparrow overseas operations, which included the Rezayat Sparrow joint venture in the Middle East, as well as the company's Universal Equipment acquisition in Houston, where he was based for a while.

In 1981 he was asked to take on a new role as group sales and marketing director, not one he relished, as he never considered himself a marketer. After two years in the job, he persuaded the Sparrow brothers to let him take up the vacancy of senior sales executive at Rezayat Sparrow, based in Saudi Arabia on a two year contract.

On returning to the UK, he moved back into sales and marketing, but in 1985 the company faced several challenges, involving the brothers, the Sparrow family and a slower market. This led to a hostile takeover bid from BET Plc. Before the bid moved to a conclusion he was offered and accepted early retirement at the age of 59.

After departing from Sparrows, he worked as a heavy crane consultant for a few companies, including Bateman Chapman, a loss adjuster specialising in the oil and gas sector and in 1994, he joined Grayston White and Sparrow for two years.

After retiring from consulting work in the early 2000s, Frank became a prolific historian of the crane industry, writing a book about the Sparrow business called 'Flying with Sparrows'. The book was self-published in a small print run, and he later set up a website hosting news, memories and photographs from the Sparrows Cranes business pre-BET. He also made numerous contributions to TV programmes such as the BBC's WW2 People's War with information about the Bath Blitz, and The Bath Blitz Memorial project, as well as writing about his memories of Combe Down in the 1930s.

Frank Sumsion's funeral will be held in Lincoln.

I worked with Frank for many years with Sparrows Heavy Crawler Cranes. Frank was universally admired by all who met him. He was competent, knowledgeable and knew his subject (cranes) well. His friends and work mates will always remember him for his humility and graciousness. Personally, I owe Frank a great deal for what he taught me. RIP Frank.

I had the privilege of getting to know Frank as a competitor. He was a true gentleman and epitomised Sparrows and what the crane hire sector was all about in the 70's and 80's.



Frank Sumsion the historian

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