

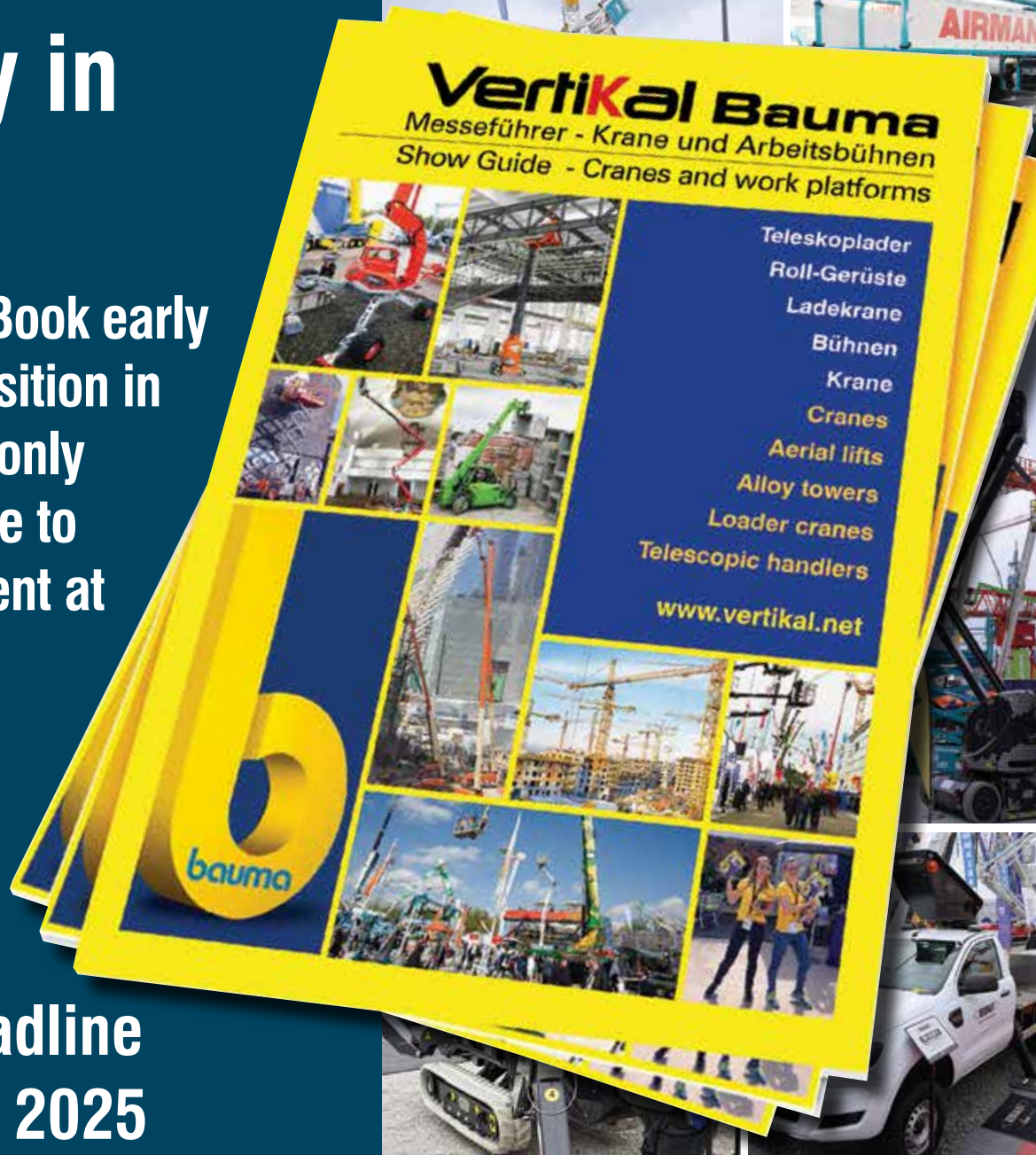
# Make sure to book early...

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Artwork deadline  
14th March 2025

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April 7th - 13th 2025

# READERS LETTERS



## GREAT COVER

Dear Leigh

Great cover in the latest issue, it captures Mr Bravi perfectly - that intense frown and concentration - that's him perfectly. He has been a real pioneer of low level access and deserves to be recognised more. Good issue of the magazine too.

Jeffrey Sleight

## LACK OF OPENNESS

I have been waiting for you to publish a report on the fatal accident that happened here in Northern Ireland last week. A delivery driver working for KDM died after he was crushed by a platform that moved. We all know it happened but nothing from HSENI, nothing from the company just a wall of silence with people discussing in hushed tones. But by the grace of god go I, but surely the safety authority ought to say, 'this happened yesterday because of XYZ - make sure your employees are made aware of exactly what happened so that they can be wary of it.'

If we are ever going to become safer we all need to talk - look whats happened with prostate cancer testing since Chris Hoy announced his diagnosis. IPAF needs to demand more openness from its members and the HSE - enough is enough.

Name supplied but anonymity requested.

*We could not agree more with our reader on this, we did eventually publish the story, after we managed to confirm the key details to almost beyond all doubt. We reached out to KDM repeatedly to obtain the full details and learn 'its side of the story' but to no avail. We do appreciate that it is a terrible and traumatic time when this happens to a team member. Made worse perhaps by the threat of prosecution.*

*Shame however on the safety authorities for not being more open. Their focus all too often appears to be totally misdirected, allowing the police to dither over an investigation for months, and giving more weight to blame and prosecution than safety. It's time for a change.*

*The following note came from a man calling himself Tommy D, a fall protection engineer in the UK, and part time trainee pilot and fitness coach. He recently operated a boom lift and came across Nationwide's Harness On device.*

"Out of all the work platforms I have been on, I have never seen this Harness On attachment before. I think it's a brilliant piece of innovation. I like it and think it's really cool, a lot of people though were talking negative about it saying it can be bypassed etc...but so can anything. I think the more loopholes you'd have to jump through to avoid using the machine properly, the more chances you've got to check yourself and make the right decision."

*While we are not convinced that this device is as great a game changer as Tommy does, some of the feedback he received after posting a video of it on a social media platform was utterly appalling. And what made it worse is that the comments came from people who regularly work with platforms, ranging from rental company owners to steel erectors. At best they were cynical, but in a good few cases rude, abusive and downright ignorant. Thankfully a decent number were encouraging, while recognising that the device is far from perfect.*

*You can see three of the comments below: note we have not published the worst one.*

"Absolute bag of s\*\*t, something added just to make idiots rich and further hinder the poor guy in the platform, who already has a double lanyard, half a dozen tool lanyards, anti-collision bars or wires and some dickhead safety guy watching him and making him nervous just in case he takes his glasses off for 5 seconds."

"Put a bolt in it works fine"

"Looks like a good bit of kit especially for new operators"

*We would be interested to hear some comments from our readers.*

## RICHARD JOHN 'DICK' LLOYD 1933 - 2024

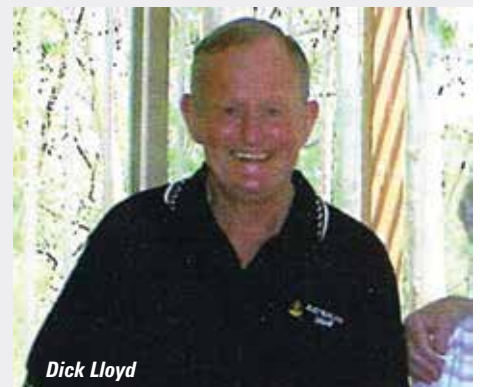
**Veteran crane salesman Dick Lloyd passed away in late September shortly before his 91st birthday, following a long struggle with prostate cancer.**

He passed away peacefully on the 21st of September surrounded by his family. He leaves behind his wife, Audrey, of 55 years as well as three daughters: Josephine, Fay and Lucy Jean.

Dick Lloyd left school in 1952 having secured a place at Merton College, Oxford, to study Jurisprudence, but first he had two years of

National Service to do. Having been a cadet at school he was able to choose which service to join and chose the Army's Royal Engineers. After a year training and working with the Bridge Classification, Mines and Demolition Group he was posted to Port Said, Egypt, where he was appointed as a liaison and troop welfare officer.

In 1954, he began three years of study at Oxford but realised that law was not for him, so as his time at Merton came to an end, he began looking for jobs with the usual companies attending University recruitment fairs.



Dick Lloyd

Continued on P70

He had two interviews lined up, the first to become a management trainee with Rolls Royce, but the interview with a board of stuffy and formal directors failed to impress. However, his interview at Coles Cranes with Robert Albon for the position of export sales trainee was far more to his liking, with the potential of overseas travel and excitement. At that time, Coles was the largest crane manufacturer in Europe, and one of the largest in the world.

His time with Coles was successful - especially once he was able to start travelling and selling outside of the UK - and as a result of those early years he remained in the crane business for the rest of his life, adding excavators along the way.

In 1965 Coles appointed a new sales director and Dick struggled to get on with him and accepted a job offer from the managing director of Hymac whom he knew well. The company had launched a hydraulic excavator and also dabbled in cranes and later platforms.

After five years with the company Hymac hired the very person that caused him to leave Coles. So, in 1970, he looked to move back to Coles, which was owned at that time by the family-owned Steel Group. While there was no suitable opening at Coles, it also owned crane and excavator manufacturer Priestman. So, in March of that year, Dick began his export sales career with Priestman, and later added Coles to his remit for certain markets.

Coles and Priestman had become part of the Acrow Group and when it went into administration in 1985, Dick and most of the other employees were laid off. Grove then stepped in and acquired the business, putting the Coles management in charge of the business and then merging its own European operations into Coles. Dick managed to obtain a sales role with the reformed company, mostly covering Poland. He was officially employed as a consultant with Grove with the plan that he would work with his contacts in Poland to set up a new distributor. The business they founded became Grabcranex. The new venture was initially supported by Grove and before long handled Grove/Coles cranes and Grove Manlift platforms and Dick had also become involved with Sennebogen and began selling its crawler cranes and other equipment later adding a Manitou dealership.

In late 1997 Dick sold his shares in Grabcranex and made his last visit to Grove's headquarters in Shady Grove Pennsylvania for an international dealer conference. He was one of the very few people or distributors that managed to sell the 150 tonne Grove RT1650, a four axle Rough Terrain crane with hydrostatic drive which was technically a major challenge, but Grabcranex managed to sell at least two of them and managed to keep them going and eventually sorted out some of its technical issues.

At the end of the year events conspired to cause him to retire although he was approaching 65, the age that he had always planned to retire, having served 40 years as a crane and excavator sales.

In retirement he began writing and publishing his memoirs. In his first volume "40 Years A Salesman" he gives a forthright account of his

career unabashedly writing about events at the companies he worked for as he saw them or believed them to be. In 2007 he joined Vertikal Press at Bauma 2007, where he sold and signed copies of his book from our stand. As you might expect if you knew him, he turned up in full Bavarian dress, complete with lederhosen, Tyrolean shirt, loden jacket and Bavarian hat, complete with feather.



His next two books were more personal memoirs about his earlier days, starting out with "Re-Incarnated A Boarding School Boy" covering his school years along with a large section on the teachings of Arthur Wyeth, a healer who spoke widely on the subject of incarnation to which the young Dick became a follower, thus the title of his book. His third book "Three Glorious Years" covered his time as a student at Merton College, Oxford. More recently he had been working with ex-Priestman colleague Bill Bromwich on a detailed history of Priestman. That text is currently with us for eventual publication.

Dick Lloyd was unquestionably a one off, larger than life and always a rebel. He was a true character, could be loud and was more than capable of irritating some people with his manner, but was also fiercely intelligent. Although he came across as being very 'English', he was very international and loved travelling and learning new languages as well as meeting people from different cultures. While he has been out of the crane or lift industry for a good few years, the lifting community has certainly lost one of its true characters.

The following are some of the comments received regarding the news:

*Very sad news. I knew in the late '80's/early '90's. I have a signed copy of his book, '40 Years a Salesman' on my bookshelf. A lovely man. My sincere condolences to his family.*

Steve Barnett

*Sad news. Dick was a lovely guy. Spend a long time at Bauma with him listening to his great stories. Have good journey Dick...*

Nicole Engesser

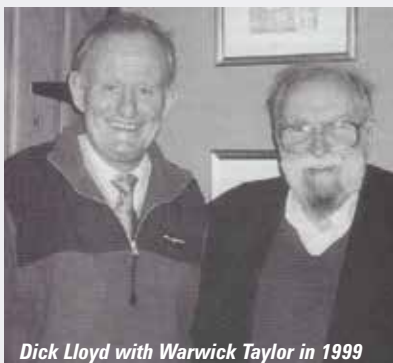
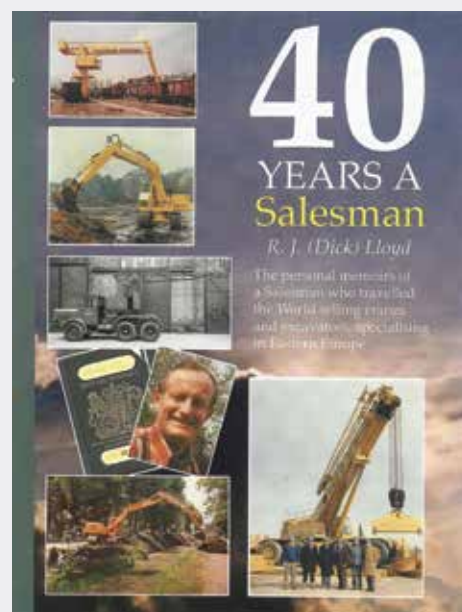
*Dick was a great guy, always smiling and with an infectious optimism - especially for the Eastern European market for lifting equipment, which he knew so well.*

*Very sad news. RIP Dick.*

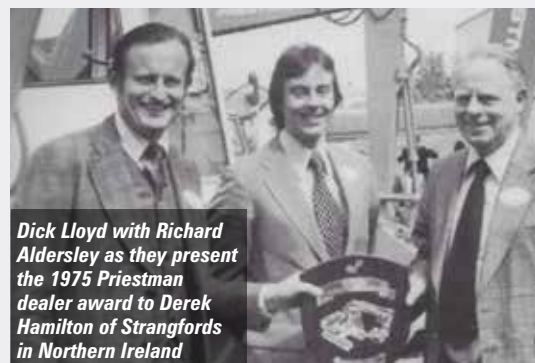
Paul Richards



Dick Lloyd



Dick Lloyd with Warwick Taylor in 1999



Dick Lloyd with Richard Aldersley as they present the 1975 Priestman dealer award to Derek Hamilton of Strangfords in Northern Ireland



# 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



John Hewitt

**JOHN ANTHONY HEWITT  
1947 - 2024**

**John Hewitt, the founder of J. Hewitt Crane Hire in Middlesbrough, UK, has died. He passed away peacefully on Thursday the 17th of October in hospital surrounded by his family he was 77.**

He leaves behind his wife Norma, daughter Jennifer, son Paul, five grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

John Hewitt worked at British Steel before deciding to get into the crane rental business, but in 1980 he purchased an Iron Fairy mobile pick & carry crane and began working as a one man band. The new venture went well, and he move up a notch in April 1982, when he registered the current company, with his wife Norma as co-director, she also served as company secretary. They built the company into a well-respected operation with between 27 and 30 cranes, along with trucks and ancillary vehicles, operating across the North east region of England. His son Paul came into the business and managed it as John began to take a back seat as he focused on the Navigation pub which he had acquired and loved.

Speaking of his father, son Paul said: "He was a really kind person who everyone loved. Everyone respected him and he was a very successful businessman. He was a self-made multi-millionaire. He worked from 5am to 6pm every day and built the business up with our mam. You couldn't keep him away from work he was still coming in until his last days and would go to The Navigation for his liquid lunch. He just loved the business."



His funeral was attended by around 500 people with his coffin leading a small convoy of Hewitt cranes. Such was the attendance that it made it into the local newspapers. Comments from staff, customers and suppliers give a flavour of the man:



Harness on Tommy



John Hewitt later

*"Always the life and soul of factory visits, always smiling. RIP John. Sincere condolences to the Hewitt family."*

*"Great guy, he had one of his drivers give me lessons on a small crane to help me pass my Class 2 licence and wouldn't take a penny. RIP John."*

*"He was a lovely man. He will be sadly missed by so many. He was always joking with me when I came to site."*

*"Best boss I've worked for, and absolute gent loved listening to the stories he use to tell down the Navigation, he will be sadly missed by all. RIP boss"*

*"John was a legend and one of the most honest men you could ever meet."*

*"RIP John the best boss I've ever worked for. Second to none"*

*"RIP John you were a true gentleman"*

*"Although a customer John was a friend. Always left his office with a smile on my face. So Sorry to you all for yours and our loss."*



J Hewitt funeral convoy



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