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READERS LETTERS

KEVIN O'SHEA 1960 - 2025

Kevin O'Shea, the safety director at Hydro Mobile and long-time mastclimber champion at IPAF and the North America's Scaffold & Access Industry Association (SAIA) has died. He passed away on August 13th, a few months after the cancer that he had successfully overcome a few years ago returned. He was 64, just five weeks off his 65th birthday and leaves behind his wife Alison, step son Andrew and at least one grandchild.

A proud Scot

Kevin O'Shea was born and grew up in Glasgow, Scotland, and remained a proud Scotsman all his life, in spite of spending so much of it overseas. He entered the access industry when he joined JLG in the 1980s. At the time the company had a production plant and offices in Cumbernauld to the east of Glasgow. At JLG he worked for Andrew Reid and formed a working relationship that would chart his future career and passion.



Kevin O'Shea with Angel Ibanez IPAF Elevation

When Reid established a mastclimber sales and rental business in the mid-1990s called Mastclimbers Ltd, O'Shea joined him and remained a champion of the technology for the rest of his life. Mastclimbers merged with SGB in 2001, with SGB taking a 51 percent stake, while Reid retained the balance until 2004 when SGB acquired the rest of the shares.

O'Shea and Mastclimbers colleague Mike Pitt moved to the USA and set up Mastclimbers LLC in Atlanta, Georgia, and over the next nine years built a highly successful business. In 2013 Kevin left Mastclimbers to join Canadian mastclimber manufacturer Hydro Mobile to handle international regulations and safety while assisting with export efforts. He remained with the company following its acquisition by Brand Safway.

Setting the standard

In addition to his career, Kevin O'Shea devoted a great deal of time to helping establish decent standards and training courses for the industry, especially in the USA, introducing the IPAF guides and courses to the North American market, building on what his mastclimber mentor Andrew Reid had started as long ago as 2001.

Kevin was appointed chairman of the IPAF Mast Climbing Work Platforms (International) Committee and in the USA did a great deal of work with OSHA on setting standards for North American mastclimber training, regulations and product standards.

He also became the mastclimber champion at the American Scaffold & Access Industry Association (SAIA), where he was a board director for Region 4, the chairman of the Mast Climbing Council, a member of A92 Main Committee, and A92.9 (A&B), A92.10 (A&B), A11.3, and A11.4 Subcommittees as well as being responsible for OSHA liaison, and responsible training hundreds of FedOSHA inspectors.

His former colleague Mike Pitt said: "Kevin spoke at a great number of conferences and events while heading numerous committees. He was a major influencer and protagonist for mastclimbers around the world."



A talent beyond access

We should also say that he was a talented singer and musician, in fact one of his colleagues went so far as to say that if he had not joined the access industry, he could have easily had a career in music!



Kevin O'Shea

Kevin O'Shea was a true one off, always ready to offer help, advice or crack a joke or two. They say the good die young - well Kevin certainly reinforces that statement. He will be missed by a great many people, many of them with no interest in mastclimbers.

The following colleagues wrote in without prompt.

Jackie Davis, associate director of SAIA said: "When I first started working with Kevin, I was a little intimidated, he was such a well-respected, highly regarded industry pro. The first time I travelled with him was to an OSHA Round Table meeting with my executive director, DeAnna Martin. DeAnna assured me there was nothing to be nervous about, and she was right.

From the moment we met, Kevin was genuine, welcoming, and quick to offer both good guidance and, just as importantly, a perfectly timed line of good natured BS to break the ice. Kevin had a rare gift for connecting with people, building relationships that lasted, and making sure everyone felt included. He also knew how to get a party started, and when Kevin O'Shea was around, you knew it was going to be a good time.

Kevin had a way of taking you under his wing, introducing you to the right people, and making sure both of you left that conversation with new knowledge and a new ally you could call on. He was one of the hardest working, most dedicated, and most genuinely caring people I've ever known.

He will be deeply missed, not just for his professional brilliance, but for the warmth, humour, and generosity he brought to everyone around him."

Executive director DeAnna Martin added: "Kevin's knowledge and passion led him down many paths, including several key roles within SAIA. Because of that, I was fortunate to work closely with him for over a decade. A proud Scotsman, Kevin had a rare gift for bringing people together - with humour, honesty, and heart. There was never a dull moment when he was around. One of my favourite memories is of him singing New York, New York - it was the first time I truly understood what he was saying. If you spent time with Kevin, you laughed. That's just who he was. Our thoughts are with Allison and the entire family. I raise a toast to you, my friend - cheers. You'll be truly missed."

IPAF North America country manager, Tony Groat said: "Kevin's passing is a real heartbreaker as he was loved by all who met him. A valued and active member of IPAF, Kevin was more than a colleague - he was a friend to all who knew him. Known for his unwavering positivity, Kevin would want to be remembered with smiles, laughter, and good cheer. His legacy will live on through the many lives he touched and the safety culture he championed."

IPAF chief executive Peter Douglas added: "Those fortunate enough to work alongside Kevin knew him not only for his professional excellence but also for his generosity of spirit, approachable nature, and Scottish sense of humour! Whether in the boardroom, on a job site, or over a shared drink, Kevin inspired those around him to strive for better - safer - ways of working."

"The powered access industry is stronger because Kevin was part of it, and his absence will be felt deeply by all who knew him. On behalf of IPAF, we extend our heartfelt condolences to Kevin's family, friends, and colleagues around the world. His commitment, his friendship, and his vision will be missed beyond measure."

Continued on page 109

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Celebration of a life

A celebration of Kevin's life will be held at GAS south arena, convention Center, 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth, Georgia 30097 on the 18th of October at 19:00 - 23.30. The Weston hotel is attached to it, with the Holiday Inn, Embassy suites alongside.

Expect food, music, Karaoke, laughs, plenty of stories, and above all drinks. All are welcome.

The following are just some of the messages that were posted on the Vertikal.net online announcement within the first two days.

Shocked and deeply saddened to read this news. One of our industries brightest lights has been extinguished. I have wonderful memories of many great nights with Kevin in various parts of the world. I especially remember his enthusiastic support for the IPAF Summit in Dublin in 2009 bringing as many as he could from Atlanta to the event and also making a first class presentation on Mastclimbers.

When I was trying to encourage IPAF to move the event from London to Dublin for the first time he reminded me that the best case that I could make to encourage UK members to travel was that the beer tasted far better in Dublin than London. He was intelligent, funny and always great company on a night out. He has contributed enormously to the betterment of our industry worldwide and will be greatly missed. My sincere condolences to Alison and his extended family RIP Kevin.

John Ball

R.I.P Kevin. One of the nicest and funniest guys in the powered access industry. I have enjoyed some rib breaking laughter in Kevin's company and his presence always brightened the room. Sincere condolences to Alison.

James Daintith

A true gentleman with huge knowledge about hoists and mastclimbers. The industry has lost one of the best guys I ever met during and after business. Rest in peace Kevin.

Diego Benetton

A great character and a lovely man. I'm sure there will be many great stories to be told around Kevin and his life. The world will be worse off without him, I'm glad to have known him.

Mega

I'm completely floored reading this news this morning. So young! Kevin O'Shea - what a guy - what a character - what a loss! In my early days in the industry, he was welcoming and supportive - something I really valued when just starting out. The ultimate industry professional, he worked hard, and he played hard - one of the most iconic and memorable moments being when he took the stage at an IPAF event many years ago. Kevin - it was a pleasure to have known you - you were some craic, RIP.

Julie Houston

RIP Kevin. You were a very special person, someone who I am immensely grateful to have been able to call a friend. You will be missed, condolences to Alison and the family.

Ian James

I have had the pleasure of knowing Kevin for many years and we have had some great times together from early Bauma days and many more exhibitions to just nights out in his hometown in Scotland. This was very sad news and a character we shall miss from our industry, for them that can remember he took the stage at one of the IPAF dinners many years ago and it was a great night and one I shall fondly remember, such a great comic, singer and all-round artist. From a business perspective he was the ultimate professional and always went the extra mile. My condolences to Alison and all the family far and wide, I shall be raising a glass to you tonight, or as you would say Kevin, only more! RIP Kev and sleep well my friend.

Glyn Goodwin

The saddest news. Kevin and I worked closely in the 90's, and we became close friends, he was instrumental in helping us navigate those difficult years in the access industry and putting JLG 'on the map' in the UK. What a larger than life character! ... so many fantastic memories ... karaoke night in Coatbridge will never be forgotten. Great times also with Kevin and Alison in Glasgow, Cardiff and London.

Incredibly knowledgeable and professional and someone you'd want beside you in the trenches, always the life and soul of the party, Kevin will never be forgotten by any who had the pleasure and privilege of spending time in his company.

My heartfelt condolences to Alison.

RIP Kev

Paul Richards

Very sad to hear of Kevin's passing.

He was absolutely a character. Those who knew him were lucky enough to know a very funny and talented individual and the industry is all the poorer for the loss of yet another pioneer. I send my heartfelt condolences to Alison and his extended family.

Jim Longstaff

I am so sorry to hear of Kevin's passing he will be genuinely missed by so many. My sincerest condolences to Alison and all his family. We enjoyed brilliant times together. Laughed a lot, sang a lot, drank a bit. He was incredibly talented, socially as well as in business. I will miss our regular phone calls. So sorry that we won't get to spend any more time together Missing you already, God bless.

Mike and Val Evans



Kevin O'Shea

JEAN-PAUL CAYON 1958-2025

Jean-Paul Cayon, the third generation president of French crane and haulage group Groupe Cayon, passed away on July 28th at the age of 66. He leaves behind wife Brigitte, daughters Anne-Sophie and Matilde along with his son, Julien who is already working in the company and will take up the baton as the fourth generation of the family to run the company.



A passion for machinery

Cayon joined the family business in 1985, having gained experience elsewhere and developed a passion for machinery, especially heavy transport and lifting equipment. He took over the running of the business in 1992, and within a few years set off on the acquisition trail, adding Millon, G. Belin, Herbrich, Desormière, and Mielly. He also established an Italian branch in Rome in 1998.

The original Cayon company was established in 1925 by his grandfather, Georges François Cayon when he acquired a single truck in Chalon-sur-Saône to transport stone, while also taking on any other work available, including home removals. The business was effectively shut down in 1940 when its fleet was requisitioned by the state.

Georges Cayon junior - Jean-Paul's father - relaunched the transport

business in 1955, and became involved with cranes and lifting in 1965, around the same time as the company began offering heavy haulage services.

The Cayon group is still based in Chalon-sur-Saône, offering a wide range of transport, industrial moving, handling and lifting services from eight locations, with more than 25 cranes - with capacities from 35 to 400 tonnes - along with aerial work platforms and transport within a total fleet of around 1,450 units with 700 employees.

Those who knew him well, say that Jean-Paul was "decent, decisive, hardworking, honest and warm hearted with a disarming and friendly personality". His passion for engines and things mechanical also developed into a keen interest in racing and rallying, cars and trucks.



Jean-Paul Cayon

GIUSEPPE CORNA 1950-2025

Giuseppe Corna, founder of Italian crane manufacturer GRC/TeknoGRC passed away on July 26th, at the age of 75 surrounded by his family. He leaves behind wife Rita and children Silvio, Paola and Elena along with several grandchildren.



Giuseppe Corna

Corna grew up on a small farm in Bariano, to the South of Bergamo, and started out working on the family's land, where he developed a lifelong passion for working horses, and in particular American Quarter Horses, which he shared with his daughter Paola. It is said that he, or more likely his family, introduced work horses to the area in order to replace oxen for ploughing.

Giuseppe and Paola went on to set up GRC Horses, which breeds and trains horses. They have become extremely well known in Italy's 'Western saddle'/Reining circuit and not only developed a top level reputation for breeding and training but have also been very successful in competitions.

From farm boy to crane magnate

However, back to his initial career, as the 1970s got going Giuseppe moved into industry, gaining experience and knowledge in engineering, steel fabrication and assembly over the next 10 years. Shortly after celebrating his 30th birthday, he set up his own company, GRC, in Bariano, opening its doors in 1981. Corna and his new business began by providing fabrications and in some cases sub-assemblies for agricultural, construction and railway related equipment manufacturers, ploughing the proceeds back into the business, investing in tooling and facilities.

One of his early customers was Italian crane company Hyco which offered a line of Rough Terrain cranes but tended to subcontract production to others. Other customers included Demag and - through Hyco - Krupp which had started branding Hyco cranes, initially for the Italian market. It also picked up a contract to build a purpose-built 30 tonne crane for the major Italian contractor Soimi.

With the help of GRC's partnership with Krupp, production was increased to three cranes a week, helped by Grove's acquisition of Krupp in 1995. GRC began assembling the 35 tonne two axle GMK 2035 All Terrain, which helped bring Grove back into the Italian market. In 2000 GRC was appointed as a Grove dealer.

During the 1990s, GRC also began assembling Rough Terrain chassis for aerial lift manufacturers including Oil & Steel, Cella, and Basket /Platform Basket playing a role in the production of its road rail boom lifts. In 2005, GRC began working in the foundation crane market with companies such as Soilmec.

TeknoGRC the next chapter

The TeknoGRC name arrived in 2014, when Giuseppe Corna passed the day to day management of the business to his son Silvio. The name also reflected the broadening range of products that the company had introduced such as specialist railway equipment for the Turkish market and a track welding system used on one of Algeria's longest rail lines as well as pipeline tools.

More recently the company has begun supplying some of its cranes on an own brand basis to Zoomlion, which exhibited its new 40 tonne city crane as the Zoomlion ATC 400C on its stand at Bauma 2022.

TeknoGRC has introduced its own line of cranes and now offers three telescopic crawlers, from 30 to 45 tonnes, a 30 tonne lattice crawler and a 40 tonne two axle city type All Terrain crane.

Speaking of his father's passing, son Silvio said: "He will always be our guide and will continue to build cranes from the heavens."

His daughter Paola added: "My family and I would like to thank everyone who remembered our dear father and thanks to IRHA, the Italian Reining Horse Association and Lombardia Reining for their words. I told my children that Grandpa will stop up there with Slide and Brigalena. Sincerely thank you all for the warmth and affection during these difficult days."

Many of Giuseppe's customers and suppliers have given tributes, saying how he will be remembered for his strong and frank personality, his ability to talk about almost anything - and everything and the ability to develop strong and lasting friendships.



GRC 10th anniversary 1991



Giuseppe Corna in 2024 with Silvio and Paola

MASSIMO DONDA 1962-2025

Massimo Donda crane sales and communications manager passed away on July 23rd following short illness, he was only 63. He leaves behind wife Patrizia and daughter Eleonora, who said: "Please remember him with a smile, as he would have wished, in the spirit of optimism and energy that characterised his entire life."



Massimo Donda

An author, film buff and writer at heart, Donda began his career in 1983 as a sales co-ordinator with an Opel car dealer in Papendrecht, the Netherlands. But in 2002 landed a job with Liebherr Italia as sales, marketing and communications manager, based in Monfalcone - north of Trieste. According to our Italian colleagues he took to the position like a 'duck to water' and fulfilled the role with professionalism and elan.

After 12 and a half years in the role, he was appointed Udine branch manager for Adriatica Commerciale Macchine which distributed Liebherr earthmoving equipment along with Wacker Neuson machines in the

Friuli Venezia Giulia region. But he missed the romance of the crane business and in 2017 joined Tadano dealer Tecno Trades as commercial and marketing director. More recently he worked with Miorelli Service, a facilities management company where he was manager of the Trieste region.

In the words of our partners in Italy, Mediapoint: "Massimo Donda was an extrovert, infectiously charming, always on the move, and, above all, had a talent for endearing himself to others. We journalists of the same age called him 'The Prince' precisely for this reason. He was able to convey the excitement of a unique encounter, an unmissable and unrepeatable event. He made you feel important, lavishing you with the special attention and trust that comes from those who love life and the magic of encounters. We will never forget him, for those of us who knew him, he will forever be the Prince of a world of affection and wonderful moments shared together."



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JOHANNES FLORIS WILLEM - 'HANS' - AARSE 1953-2025

Dutch crane and access industry veteran Hans Aarse passed away on July 21st after a short illness, he was 71 and would have celebrated his 72nd birthday at the end of August.

His passing was something of a surprise, given that he had overcome a vicious bacteria last year that caused the partial amputation of his right foot. It did not keep him down too long though, he was soon back on his feet and riding a scooter. He leaves behind wife Anneke along with daughters Esther and Sanne and three grandchildren.

Hans Aarse worked for the Vertikal Press for a time, selling advertising in the Benelux region, having left the access industry a couple of years earlier. He spotted a story on Vertikal.net stating that with so many Dutch readers it would be good to have someone local on the payroll. But more on that later.

A life in lifting

Hans Aarse began his career proper in 1975 when he joined the Coles crane dealer Van Kranenburg as a salesman, around the same time as it was appointed as JLG distributor for the Netherlands. This took him into the aerial lift business, where he 'found his niche' which would serve him well for the rest of his life. In 1982 Van Kranenburg ran into difficulties and filed for bankruptcy. Three of its managers, Wim Haasbroek, Frans van den Dool and Bas van de Wetering, set up a new company called HDW - but that is another story.

By the time Van Kranenburg closed its doors, Hans had joined the forklift rental company Gunco which had been adding aerial lifts to its fleet and was already becoming a significant player in the access rental market. His brief was to help build up a strong sales business, including obtaining the distribution rights for a major manufacturer. That same year Gunco was appointed Grove Manlift distributor for the Netherlands.

Hans Aarse certainly knew how to sell and Gunco, in partnership with Grove, became the one of the market leading aerial lift players in the Dutch market - especially when it came to boom lifts. Gunco and Aarse used their success to put pressure on Grove to add Germany to their Manlift territory. Germany was covered at that time by a Grove subsidiary in Bietigheim-Bissingen near Stuttgart in the south. So Gunco was given Northern Germany, and with Hans selling, they quickly outperformed the manufacturer's subsidiary. Based on the initial success Gunco set up a satellite operation in Hanover.

By the end of 2000, Hans was having difficulties with his health with extensive time off work and left the business following a highly successful 19 years with the company. In 2001 he began working with Mateco, but shortly after starting, left both the company and the industry. He eventually found work with his local Nissan dealer covering commercial vehicle sales, until 2004 when he made the call to Leigh Sparrow who had taken over at the Vertikal Press a year earlier. He joined Vertikal in October of that year, getting his 'foot back in the door' of the access industry.

Just over a year later he began working part time for IPAF as its representative for the Benelux region and was so successful that he ended up working full time for the federation, dropping his role with Vertikal. At the end of 2013 he began very, very gradually handing over the role to Jur Kamsteeg. He completed the process by the end of 2017, when he announced that he would be retiring.

During his time with IPAF he and Hans van Gameren took over the Verticaaldagen exhibition, which had started the previous year. In 2014 they sold the event to Evenementenhal, and it moved to the Gorinchem exhibition



centre, the two remained on board for a year or two to sell space at the event and help out.

In January 2019, barely a year after he had supposedly retired, he joined Chinese aerial lift manufacturer LGMG as senior advisor Europe and had some success with the company, but after 18 months moved to XCMG where he was appointed European sales and service advisor, which reintroduced him to cranes. He was consulting with the company until the end.

His family have added the following words about Hans on his funeral card: Sweet, Crazy, Funny, Stubborn, Fantastic grandpa!

We will miss you terribly. We will never forget you!

He was certainly all of those things, a man who was larger than life, entertaining, always enthusiastic, hardworking, knowledgeable, competitive, exasperating at times, extremely stubborn at times, kind at times, rude at times, but usually good, or at least entertaining company with a raucous laugh.

One thing is for sure, love him or hate him, you could not miss him. He was a true character. He had friends throughout the industry and will be missed by a great many people. It is very sad to think that he will not be popping up at the next industry event.

Rest in peace Hans.

It took a while to take in this sad news, Hans and I worked together over many years during the 80's and 90's and spent great times together in Europe. I always looked forward to meeting up with Hans in more recent times at Vertikal Days and we had an enduring friendship.

In the words of Housman: "That is the land of lost content, I see it shining plain, the happy highways where we went and cannot come again."

RIP Hans

Pauly

What a larger than life great character, with great enthusiasm for the Access Industry from selling Grove machines when I first met him to successfully promoting IPAFs message in the Benelux region in later years. Great memories. RIP Hans. My sincere condolences to your wife, children, grandchildren and extended family.

John Ball

Such sad news, having spent a few road trips round the Netherlands conducting IPAF audits with Hans, we had loads of laughs and plenty of food and drinks, we also managed some work too. I also had the privilege of meeting the Aarse family and know that he will be missed dearly. Rest in peace my old road trip friend.

Chris

Hans introduced me to the access industry in 2012, and we've shared many great memories since. I've never met anyone as straightforward and genuine - what you saw was truly what you got. He was a real character, with his heart in the right place. Your presence will be deeply missed, and my thoughts are with Esther, Sanne, and Anneke during this difficult time. RIP Hans

Flying Dutchman

What a character. I always enjoyed our conversations and will miss your laughter.

RIP Hans

Ian



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