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Tel: +49 89 949-11478 | Email: info@bauma-network.com

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For further information, please visit:

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The new 50th anniversary livery



Three and a half year old Ernie Johnson in front of the old Coles EMA truck crane

AINSCOUGH'S 50TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Ainscough Crane Hire in the UK is celebrating its 50th anniversary, quite an achievement in a market where many prominent players have disappeared as owners retired, sold out or closed their doors. Ainscough is an exception. Founder Gerald Ainscough started out in 1976 with an ex RAF truck crane, in Wigan, Northern England. Today, it is the UK's largest mobile crane rental company, with a fleet of more than 400 cranes operating across 30 locations. C&A features editor Nick Johnson volunteered to attend one of the family open days.

To celebrate its five decades in business, Ainscough organised both corporate and Family Days at its Feltham and Leyland depots. Living close to Feltham I decided to attend the Family Day at that location, arriving on a bright sunny morning with my son Michael and my three and a half year old grandson Ernie.

On arrival we were greeted by the sight of a superbly restored Coles EMA crane from the earliest days of the company. This provided a good picture opportunity once Ernie had been issued with a mini hi-vis tabard and a plastic 'hard' hat.

The crane - one of the first in the Ainscough fleet - was an ex-RAF, five ton capacity Coles EMA mounted on a 6x4 Thornycroft Amazon chassis, built in 1943 to lift the Supermarine Spitfire fighter aircraft off the runways. This example was superbly restored under the watchful eye of Martin Ainscough - one of Gerald's three sons - who built up the crane hire company before selling the business in 2007 in a private equity funded management buy-out.

This old Coles is as different as you can get to the company's latest Liebherr All Terrain cranes now joining the fleet. And to celebrate the 50th Anniversary, a number of its new All Terrains carry a special, and very distinctive, livery. These



include two LTM 1060-3.1s, one LTM 1090-4.1, two LTM 1110-5.1s, one LTM 1300-6.3 and one LTM 1230-5.1.

To mark the company's achievement through organic growth and acquisitions - including T W Glover Cranes, Diamond Crane Hire, Coventry

Visitors could 'ride the elevating cabs of both an LTM1050-3.1 and MK140-5.1E



Crane Hire and GWS, a merger of GW Sparrows & Sons, JD White and Graystons - Martin, James and Brendan Ainscough's names have been added to the front of three of the new Liebherr cranes. A 300 tonne LTM1300-6.3 is called Martin, a 110 tonne LTM1110-5.2 call Brendan and James, a 90 tonne LTM1090-4.2.

Another new crane on show with the special livery was a 60 tonne LTM1060-3.1. which was available for visitors to operate, to lift and place



Placing the big duck with the aid of the 60 tonne Liebherr All Terrain



A good selection of the latest Ainscough mobile cranes on display at the company's Feltham Family Day.



Ernie Johnson at the controls of the crane carrying the big duck

elevating operator's cab up the mast of a MK140-5.1E Hybrid mobile self-erecting tower crane.

The biggest crane on display at Feltham was a 450 tonne LTM1450-8.1 with its main boom only partially extended due to Feltham's proximity to Heathrow Airport.

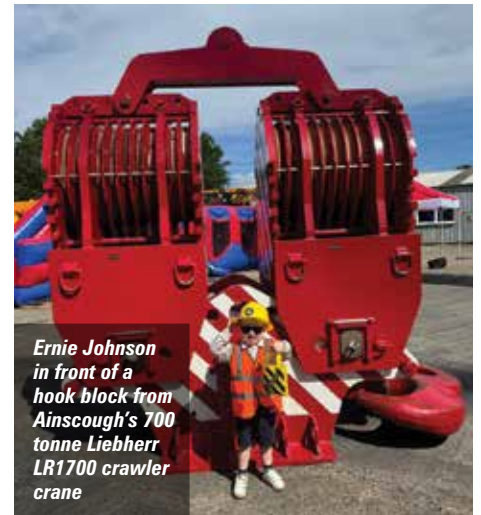
Ernie and the other young visitors also enjoyed the bouncy castle, while sustenance was provided by a hog roast, ice creams, popcorn, candy floss, all washed down with range or drinks and slushies.

Another attraction at Feltham was the arrival of an Emergency Rescue Tender from the Heston fire station of the London Fire Brigade. I was told that, at the Leyland Family Day, where more space was available, a crew from the local fire station even carried out a line rescue from the Ainscough yard tower crane.

Before each Family Day Ainscough hosted two Corporate Days for existing and prospective customers. They were shown the features of the latest cranes and the company's technical support. On show was a Wolff Vita Inclinator Load Navigator attachment able to rotate or hold heavy loads without the need for a tag line.

A raffle with a large selection of interesting prizes also raised £1,885 for The Lighthouse Club construction industry charity.

Ainscough chairman Peter Gibbs said: "Reaching our 50th anniversary is a proud moment for everyone at Ainscough. These open days were the perfect way to mark it alongside the families



Ernie Johnson in front of a hook block from Ainscough's 700 tonne Liebherr LR1700 crawler crane

and communities who have supported us over the years."

Ainscough is clearly committed to developing the next generation of people to join the industry. Involving youngsters with cranes through family days like these is a very good way of stimulating interest in this industry and hopefully attracting some of the operators, support staff and managers needed in the future."

Ernie certainly had a great time and was clearly inspired by the big yellow machines. It was also good to allow the children of Ainscough crane operators to see at first hand what Daddy does for a living (and hopefully follow in their footsteps). Well done Ainscough. ■

a large rubber duck onto a target mat. This task proved very popular with grandson Ernie who was allowed to operate the crane - under close supervision - and 'land' the duck. Considering his age, he achieved a very competent performance!

Much to his obvious delight, Ernie was also allowed to drive - again under close supervision - a 6x4 Scania 660S XT tractor unit, coupled to a six axle Nootboom ballast trailer. Other highlights included going up in the elevating cab of a 50 tonne LTM1050-3.1 Hybrid city type All Terrain and for the teenagers and adults, a ride in the



Martin Ainscough's preserved Coles EMA crane greeted visitors to the Family Days



Visitors could drive a 6x4 Scania 660S XT tractor unit coupled to a six axle Nootboom ballast trailer.