

BENCHPRESS

Since I last wrote the front page of Benchpress, in the September edition, it is now clear that the widely predicted recession has well and truly bitten. You will also be aware, by virtue of the fact that you are reading this letter, that you are still part of the winning team who are managing to out-perform the competition by maintaining the values and culture of a company that understands the expectations of its customers in difficult times.

Forgive me for repeating some of the same messages explained in my previous article, but I find that this method of communicating, with each and every one of you, is the most efficient way of reinforcing the importance of differentiation from our competitors. The relationships, and dare I say friendships, that you establish day after day with our customers, contribute significantly to customer loyalty which is more than ever a cornerstone of our ability to ride this recession.

Many of you will be familiar with the very impressive structure that we designed and constructed for Stonewest Ltd to the façade of Selfridges in Oxford Street. This project has been covered within a previous edition of Benchpress but I felt that a front

page showing was appropriate for a flagship project of the company. This remarkable piece of engineering was not only capable of supporting pieces of stone weighing up to 1.2 tonnes but was provided without the need to take support from the pavement outside one of the world's premier retail outlets. It was erected, and is currently being dismantled, well within agreed programme dates and within budget.

It is also significant that Benchmark's very first customer, Stonewest Ltd, has displayed the loyalty, to which I referred earlier, by awarding us this most prestigious job fourteen years later.

It is a pity that such a great advert for the company has to come down as I have never received so many unsolicited compliments from customers and competitors alike for any other project. However scaffolding is a means to an end and this particular masterpiece has served its purpose.

I know that it is the more unusual and challenging projects which tend to receive coverage within our newsletter but every contract that we undertake is important and therefore we all have a part to play in maintaining our success. Remember, nothing is a problem for Benchmark; every challenge is just an opportunity to remind our customers of why they chose us ahead of our competitors and why they should choose us again on their next project.

Enjoy the summer, we anticipate being very busy, so please continue helping us to give our customers value for money by keeping up your good work.

Regards
Rob West, Managing Director



Congratulations



3 days after conception



Me and my boy aged 4 days



6 weeks and heart beat detected



12 week scan



16 week scan 1



3D scan at 28 weeks

After trying for a baby for 5 years we decided to get some advice and found out that children were not possible in the normal way so in 2002 we made the decision to try IVF for the first time. Full of anticipation we embarked on a gruelling course of treatment in the knowledge that within six weeks we would be expecting our first baby. It never occurred to us that the treatment would not work. So when we found out that it had failed we were both devastated.

We soon discovered that IVF held no guarantees, and our consultant explained to us that we had more chance of winning the lottery twice over than ever conceiving a child of our own. But we both decided to try again. In fact over the following 4 years we tried again and again. Then in 2008 we hit our fifth attempt and made the decision that after spending £50,000 and having had our hearts broken that this was the last time. I don't think either of us really thought that it was ever going to work, but on Monday 2nd June 2008 for the first time ever we found

out that we were pregnant.

It was the most exciting surreal day of both our lives, and it took a further four weeks before we had the pregnancy confirmed and told that our baby was due on February 14th 2009. It seemed that no sooner had we overcome one hurdle we had another to jump. Three months then six months and then finally at 4.37 am on February the 14th 2009, after three hard days Ryan Patrick David Chipp-Smith was born. A perfect baby boy weighing 8lb 5 and a full head of hair and the proudest Mum and Dad.

Ryan is doing wonderfully he weighs 9lb and is the apple of his dads' eye. Thanks to everyone at Benchmark who have supported us through some pretty dark days and celebrated through the most joyous occasion of our life.

**Peter Chipp-Smith — Contracts Manager
London Region**

LINGFIELD'S MORMON TEMPLE



Photo taken in 1965—7 years after the Temple was first opened

Situated just off the A22 Eastbourne Road, the UK's primary Mormon Temple, (or, to give it the correct title "the London Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints") is sited near the famous Lingfield racecourse, in Surrey. It was the first Mormon temple to be built in Britain (opened in 1958, at a cost of \$1,700,000) and the second in or near Europe (the first is in Bern, Switzerland).

Recently, a technical challenge arose when the Mormon trustees of the Temple wanted to erect a gold-plated 3m high statue of a celestial messenger on the top of the spire. They commissioned contractors **Stonewest** to undertake the task and they, in turn, employed our services in providing the scaffolding access from the ground to the top of the spire. Bob Young's design, which took 4 weeks to construct, suited the job perfectly for Brian West and Bob Bolton, Stonewest's management team.



The initial works involved the reduction and removal of the top 5m of the existing spire and then prepare it to receive the statue.

Now for the really tricky bit; the statue was lifted from the ground and then positioned into its final resting place by helicopter. The weather conditions had to be perfect for such a delicate manoeuvre.

Credit must be given to Peter Chipp-Smith and his team of Graham Parker (who also acted as banksman for the lift), Anthony Parchment and Ray Carpenter for a successful and prestigious project.

**Graham Pope
General Manager
London Region**





Energy Saving Tips

Like everything else, the cost of electricity is going up. There are a number of ways that you can save energy, cut your electricity bill, and create less pollution. Many of these tips are either free or inexpensive and won't take up a lot of your time.

- 1. Turn it off** - lights, the TV, the computer, the radio. It's common sense, but when these things are left on, they use up energy. When you're not using something, make sure that you turn it off.
- 2. Control the temperature.** Do you really need the inside of your house to be 80 degrees in the winter and 65 in the summer? Try to keep a reasonable temperature, so that radiators and heaters don't have to work so hard. Also, make sure that there is nothing blocking the heaters and radiators. Towels or clothes on radiators can reduce efficiency. A poorly placed couch can impede the flow of temperature controlled air throughout the house and make it twice as hard to heat or cool.
- 3. Cooking habits.** There are a few minor changes to the way that you cook that can help to save energy. Make sure that your pots and pans have a flat bottom. Pots with rounded bottoms don't transmit heat as efficiently. Also, get used to cooking with lids on; this captures more heat and allows you to cook faster and use less energy. When using the oven, try to minimize the number of times that you have to open the door. Avoid doing numerous spot checks; trust your timers.
- 4. Eliminate phantom power** Even when they're turned off, things like DVD's, mobile phone charges and computers are still drawing power. The simple solution is to unplug these things when you're not using them. An easy way to co-ordinate all of this unplugging is to use a power strip and just unplug that.

**Billy Wood — HSE Advisor
Northern Region**

REWARD FOR HONESTY

Darren (one of Benchmarks up and coming Scaffolders) found a wallet and mobile phone on site (Regents Place) and swiftly handed it in to Bovis (Main Contractor). He was rewarded for his honesty with a voucher for £50.

**Bill Humphries—Site Manager (Regents Place)
London Region**

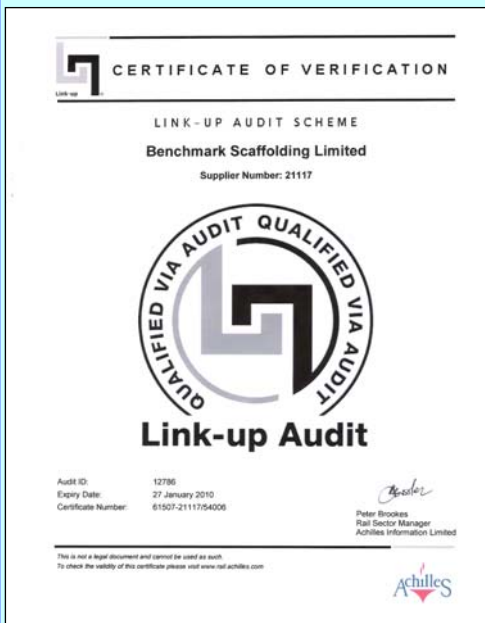


(from left to right) Dave Isbell (Foreman), Darren Fairbairn (Scaffolder) and Tony Fairbrother (Bovis Lend Lease Block Manager)

Our **vision** is to be the scaffolding contractor of choice to our customers and employer of choice to our people.

Our **mission** is to not only "Set the Standards" but to progressively and continuously raise them across all aspects of our business.

WE ARE ACCREDITED (AGAIN!)



In January this year, we passed another audit; this time it was conducted by Achilles and the achievement was "Link-up" accreditation for working on Network Rail projects.

We are now permitted to train our operatives to PTS (Personal Track Safety) standards and, once this is attained, we are authorised to work track-side under live conditions.

Part of the project's ethos is to promote the use of, and train, local labour. Hanwell station is on the Crossrail route; hmm... watch this space. We are confident that this will present us with previously untapped opportunities to work on the Rail system – mainline rail stations and, significantly, the Crossrail project. The main construction work for this starts in 2010.



**Graham Pope - General Manager
London Region**

If you've recently had a new addition to your family, or a birthday coming up send us a photo to the Barnsley office and we'll make sure we show them in the next edition or you could email us

barnsley@benchmarkscaffolding.com



Happy 30th Birthday
Damian



From all your friends
and family
(Damian Levitt—Scaffolder,
Northern Region)

Barry and Connie Lane's elder daughter Kiera was in Pantomime all Christmas with Linda Robson.

Their younger daughter Ella has been modelling for Marks and Spencer's over Christmas and January and is featured on their website.

Barry Lane - Site Manager
London Region

PROFILE Benchmark

Name: Dave Isbell
Position: Co-Manager,
Regents Place
Favourite Band: Killers
Likes: Rugby, Golf
Dislikes: Ignorance
Dream Car: Escort MK II RS 2000



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SAFETY AWARDS

January

Ian Jowsey won the Northern award for questioning the strength of the Apollo tie hook fitting and making a suggestion to improve and strengthen it, all with the consultation of the design team.

Steven Adams (BBC, Wood Lane) won the London award for assessing the hazards with walking materials through a live plant when other trades were present. He decided to erect a tower and walkway across the plant room roof in order to move the materials safely across, thus reducing the hazards.

February

Wayne Clarke won the Northern award for finding a lift shaft scaffold with the boards removed, leaving a potential fall hazard of 30m. He replaced the boards and secured them so they could not be removed and then reported the incident.

Vincent Hale won the London award for his continuing good safe working practices (Regent Place), by asking questions about safety issues and also being recognised and commented on by the Principal Contractor.

March

Wayne O'Loughlin won the Northern award for finding that there was a problem with fitting the toe boards to Haki staircases, discovering that the problem was not with the toe boards but with the way the staircase had been erected, thus generating a tool-box talk to be given to all operatives.

Shane Ginn won the London award for noticing that other BSL operatives on his site did not know how to operate the inertia retrieval block, then setting up a rig to demonstrate to all the BSL operatives on site how to use the block properly.

