



BENCHPRESS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Welcome to this Christmas Edition of Benchpress as we all look forward to a well earned rest after what has been an extremely challenging year. There is no denying that 2009 has been a very difficult period for the company, both in terms of turnover and profit, not only for us but for just about everyone else who works within the construction industry. We have maintained our share of the available work but unfortunately there is less work out there and less projects going ahead. Consequently we have had to adjust our business model accordingly. As you are all aware we have shared the resultant pain proportionately; we all earn a little less than this time last year but at least we are still earning. The Benchmark family has shrunk over this period but those of us that have survived are still striving to maintain our attitude and to uphold our values whilst we continue to offer our customers that little bit extra so that we may bounce back in the future.

Attitude is, I believe, the key to recovery. If we react to the decision to lower wages by 10%, painful as it was, by lowering collective productivity accordingly and allow our heads to drop the cost cutting initiative will be ineffective. Unreasonable as it may seem I am asking for 10% more effort during the period that the pay reduction is in place. If this is achieved the time that the saving needs to be maintained can be kept to a minimum and at the moment we are targeting the 1st July 2010 as the date we would hope to reverse the wage cut. I cannot promise that this will happen on schedule as we must run our business on a sound financial footing and this is in the best interest of every one of us who depends on the company for our livelihood.

Prices have been driven down by far more than the reduction in your wages. Whilst the Shareholders and Directors are prepared to see a reduction in the company's profitability during these difficult times we must remain a viable proposition for our bank and customers alike in order to continue to enjoy their support. To win more work we must be competitive, to do this we must maintain or increase productivity and cut costs.

These are difficult times but please never underestimate the importance of your own individual contribution to the bigger picture. We are in this together and together we will come through it a stronger and more successful company in the future.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and urge you all to keep up the good work, I know that I can count on your support.

Rob West
Managing Director

The Café Royal Project Regent Street London

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Benchmark Hoists

Up and Running



We've not gone to press before, but Benchmark Hoists has only been in existence since the 1st September 2009!

The opportunity to form Benchmark Hoists arose following the departure of Steve Crompton from HTC Plant in February 2009 – Steve had been running the Hoist business of Wyseplant/Maxxiom/Hewden/HTC Plant for the past 13 years. He has undertaken many major projects, most notable being The Tate Gallery, The Royal Opera House and T5A Heathrow, providing a total package of Hoists and associated scaffold runoffs, with Benchmark Scaffolding as a preferred supplier. There has been a close working & trading relationship between Steve and Benchmark Scaffolding for the best part of 13 years.

So it made sense, when Steve and Rob talked about starting Benchmark Hoists.



There are clear synergies between the two operations and the benefit to customers will be a seamless single source supply of Hoists & associated scaffolds, including design responsibility for the whole works, improved co-ordination of the installation, maintenance & final dismantle, leading to improved safety, a more reliable service and ultimately cost savings! Our key customers certainly think so – Benchmark Hoists having already been endorsed by both Bovis Lend Lease & Mace by inclusion on their preferred supplier data base.

Added to this, we have the backing of AlimakHek in terms of product & technical support, recognised as world leaders in construction hoists, transport platforms and mast climbing work platforms.

So with the team in place, what have we been doing since 1st September?

We've been very busy letting Benchmark's customers know we now supply Hoists – already we've secured orders with Erith Contractors at the Mace Project at Cafe Royal: PAYE Stone at Q3 Regents Street and Irvine Whitlock on Project Slam at Hounslow Barracks as part of an overall package with Benchmark Scaffolding.

We've updated the Benchmark website to include product & safety information for Hoists – please take a look and tell us what you think – the website is constantly being updated with new information.

Training of Hoist Erectors – as part of the business plan we aim to use our scaffolders to erect the Hoists – it makes sense, as invariably we will be providing both scaffold and hoists together. We have already carried out training for four scaffolders from the Hanwell Branch, who attended a 5 day trainee hoist erector course at Alimak's premises in Rushden, Northants in early November. Many thanks go to Graham Parker, Barry Lane, Ceslovas (Cheesey) Andriuskevikius and Gary Hagger who suffered the best part of 3 days in the classroom learning about the Alimak product and legal requirements, but then seemed to enjoy the next 2 days practical work on the test tower, where they erected & tested a 20/30 2000kg passenger/goods hoist.

See photos

Well done guys – we will be using you on subsequent hoist installations, working as part of a two man team with Alimak.

Our first Hoist was installed in November for Erith Contractors at the Cafe Royal in London – a 20 week hire of a 1200kgs Alimak Goods Hoist to be used for removal of waste as part of the demolition works – we hope this will lead on to a further contract with Mace on site for the main internal hoists, which we will be tendering for in due course. Many thanks go to Gary Nelson the Benchmark Site Supervisor on site, who managed and co-ordinated the Hoist installation works on site.

We see this as our major selling point over our competitors – the fact that we invariably have an ongoing presence on many of our sites, who will be a point of contact with the customer during the installation & during the hire period.

We will post further updates as the business develops.

John Walton — Estimating Director
London Region



SAFETY AWARDS



September

Russell Mann won the Northern award. After a steel worker fell and was arrested in his harness, Russell rushed up 10 lifts of scaffold to help rescue the fallen person.

Chris Rabenda (Hanwell Driver) won the London award for his work at the Palace of Westminster. He was recognised by the contractor for his safe working practices when unloading his lorry.

October

Peter Spencer won the Northern award for introducing a system where power tools can be run from cars and vans instead of fuel powered generators, thus reducing manual handling, fire risk, substances hazardous to health and environmental risks.

Paul Rittenburg won the London award in support of his recent recognition at his current site, which is cited as follows: *"The Imjin Safety Leadership Team are pleased to announce that this month's safety awareness award has been won by Paul Rittenburg of Benchmark Scaffolding. Paul's commitment to the IIF philosophy is excellent and this is portrayed in his professional attitude on site"*.

November

Mark Bradbury won the Northern award for producing a system where tools can be tagged; displaying the noise and vibration levels and the amount of time the tool can be used. These tags will also be attached to harnesses showing clearly the number and date of 1st issue.

Tony Ellis & Richard Powell won the London award. A man was working down a manhole and became unconscious (overcome by fumes). His work colleague tried to rescue him but started to become disoriented. Tony & Richard managed to drag him to safety then raised the alarm.



Christmas!

**Billy Wood—Health, Safety & Environmental Advisor
Northern Region**

A time of goodwill and celebration, often accompanied by seasonal increases in eating, drinking and spending. If all goes well this combination should result in a lot of fun, but unfortunately it will also result in millions of tonnes of waste. But you can have the best of both worlds. With a bit of thought you can limit the impact you have on the environment this Christmas and still have a great time.

Overflowing dustbins and extra bags of rubbish are a common sight in the streets after Christmas. We all create more waste over the holiday period, up to one billion cards and 83 square km of wrapping paper will be thrown away this Christmas - "much of it needlessly" - the government has said. In all, enough rubbish to fill 400,000 double-decker buses will be produced.

Half of the festive waste could be recycled, but more than 80% will be binned. Your council provides you with the facilities to recycle jars, bottles, cans and you can give unwanted gifts to charitable organisations. Many local authorities also collect Christmas trees when the festive season ends, as more than six million Christmas trees will be binned, creating more than 9,000 tonnes of waste

Further waste is created by the traditional Christmas meal, with around 125,000 tonnes of plastic packaging and 4,200 tonnes of foil expected to be thrown out.

Recycling is easier than it has ever been before so everyone can do their bit. The benefits of recycling to the environment are clear:-

- Make a resolution to reduce, reuse and recycle as much as you can in 2010.
- Start by finding out where your local recycling centre is and which materials you can take there to recycle.
- Complete the recycling loop and buy recycled goods wherever possible.

The future of recycling ultimately depends upon there being a market for recycled materials.

So here's wishing you a

Merry Christmas and a Green New Year.

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

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

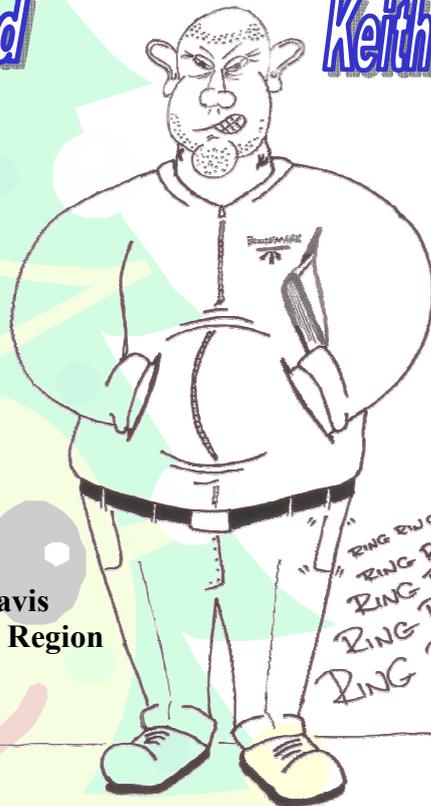
Our vision is to be the scaffolding contractor of choice to our customers and employer of choice to our people.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Meet a couple of the guys from the Barnsley Office

Billy Wood

Keith Lawson



Artist: Kevin Travis
Northern Region

"RING RING
RING RING
RING RING
RING RING
RING RING....."

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Name: Shaun Dundas
Position: Site Supervisor
Northern Region
Favourite Place: Las Vegas
Likes: Holidays & Saturday nights out
Dislikes: Bad Time-Keepers
Dream Car: Aston Martin



BENCHMARK SCAFFOLDING LTD



Setting the Standards