



# BENCHPRESS



With Christmas almost upon us we have again cut it fine with the printing this year, but assuming this is with you in time; **Happy Christmas!** It is in fact a year since the last edition and it is not my intention to make this newsletter an annual event so I do plan to go back to quarterly updates in 2017. We have filed another set of accounts with turnover up about £1,000,000 on the previous year and profits up 25%, there is cash in the bank and new vehicles arriving thick and fast, a few of which are shown on this page. Two brand new Lorries will be on the road for us in January – photos of them to follow in the next edition. The first half of the current year; July – December, have been even more impressive than last year and so we are in a very strong position to weather any post-Brexit storm whilst also looking out for those opportunities to grow if the predicted fall-off in business does not actually materialise. At this moment the order book is the fullest it has ever been and we have hired a few more staff, and of course more scaffolders, to help consolidate our position as one of the leading scaffolding companies in our Industry. Mike Hanger and Lee Jones have joined the Safety Department and there is more about them inside. Joe Baker has joined the Commercial team in London, following in his Father Barry's footsteps, as similarly Marley Wood has in our Barnsley Branch where his Dad Billy has in turn stepped up to become Operations Director, Northern Region. In the same Region Mark Knitter has been promoted to Senior Estimator.



We feature the Houses of Parliament on this page again, not least because we are very proud of our association with the Palace over the last decade, but also because our scaffolding to the riverside elevation looks pretty tidy don't you think? We did unfortunately come second in our bid for the Big Ben refurbishment project and we were rightly disappointed but the next phases of the cast iron roof replacement works are worth far more to us and we are very optimistic about securing those next phases before the next Benchpress comes out – will update you then. In the autumn we re-joined the NASC after a few years' absence, as a result of our difficult period back in 2012. It is actually now four years since our friends and family syndicate buy-out of the Company and we have not looked back since. Most of you reading this were with us then, and have been since, and hopefully you feel that you made the right choice sticking with us.

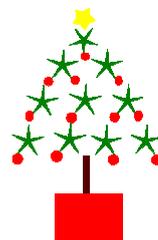


Bob Young, our Technical Director, who most of you will know, has asked me to mention a charity cycle ride (London to Brighton) that he will be entering a Benchmark Team for in September 2017 in aid of Cancer Research UK. He thought we should give you as much notice as possible so you can get fit enough to actually complete the course. Everyone who joins the Benchmark Team will receive £100 donation from the Company to give your fundraising efforts a kick start. Everyone is welcome but I am kind of hoping that you do not all enter.

As always I thank you all for your continuing loyalty and commitment and I also wish you and your families a **Happy and Healthy New Year.**

Regards, Rob West  
Managing Director

**BENCHMARK SCAFFOLDING**



*Setting the Standards*



# “Sur le Continent”!

Not strictly true but so very nearly!

Carillion have engaged Benchmark to carry out scaffolding works to the RBS office block in St Peter Port, Guernsey.

Paradoxically this job is being run by our Northern Region. That is despite the building sitting some 290 miles south of Barnsley and only 180 miles south of London!

There was 2 years of planning, numerous drawings and site visits by Alan Abraham and equally numerous pricing exercises by Paul Taylor before the job started. We eventually commenced work in June 2016 and had a six week programme with erection completing in August.

All the materials for this project were taken by road from the Barnsley yard to Poole Harbour and then by ferry to the island. Our people occasionally went by sea taking tools and equipment in Henry. Henry being the 8<sup>th</sup> pick-up on our Northern fleet and the sole double-cab version. More often they flew from Manchester with the cross-Pennine element being sometimes the most challenging.

The scaffold was cantilevered from the balconies and was erected to give access for the removal of the existing copper roof and replacement by an all new copper roof. At this time the cantilevers have been removed leaving only the west elevation for access. That section will be removed in February of 2017.

Our “island hopping” crew consisted of Gary Davies (Supervisor), Russ Mann, Gavin Dixon, Johnny Biff Boothroyd, and Andy Crowe.

Pete Spencer (Contracts Manager) also has been making regular visits and continues to do so to carry out the statutory inspections.

**Paul Taylor—Director & Estimating Manager**  
**Peter Spencer—Contracts Manager**  
**Northern Region**



# MEMORANDUM



Date: 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016

From: Safety Department

To: All Operatives

Copies: All Staff

**Subject:** No Hemping with 21ft tubes

As one of the leading scaffolding companies Benchmark has changed certain practices to be at the forefront of health & safety best practice within the industry.

With immediate effect there will be no more hemping, or topping out, with 21ft tubes. The new company policy is to use, as a maximum, 16ft tubes or shorter.

We can still use 21ft tubes to base out scaffolds and as ledgers and handrails, but not as hems.

As well as being more user- friendly this will be an effective way to reduce risk. With falling objects being the highest cause of accidents in construction, we are actively looking for ways to reduce risk of harm.

Any noncompliance, (scaffolder's bravado, cutting corners etc.), will be taken as a breach of your duty of care as well as a failure to comply with the new company policy and may result in disciplinary action being taken against offenders.



# Changes to the Health & Safety Team within Benchmark



In December 2015 we invited Michael Hanger to join Benchmark, primarily to provide cover in the quality and systems area of the business following the sad loss of Graham Pope. However he came with a big bag full of H&S qualifications, so he works in the H&S team. His title is QSHE Systems Manager and his duties are to keep us up to date with all our accreditations; CHAS, Achilles, FORS, Safecontractor, etc. Mike has already worked for us on achieving the integrated ISO 14001, 18001 & 9001 (Environmental, Health & Safety and also the quality standards) which was a big task, but he had this under control. He has also assisted in the audit required to enable us to re-join the NASC. You will see him on site as his duties include carrying out site audits. You will recognise him as a cheeky chirpy cockney chap. He is also known for appearing on TV (twice) first in pointless, and then in Egg Heads with his team "Box Clever", which was most recently on your screens in September.

Lee Jones was the very first operative employee of Benchmark in 1995 and is known by most of you; he is a very good communicator and has displayed a passionate interest in health and safety. Consequently, as from the 1<sup>st</sup> July this year, he has been adopted by the H&S department and is now the Company Trainer. Apart from training he will also be carrying out site inspections. He has attended a van load of courses and has successfully completed his NEBOSH qualification and at the moment is undertaking his IOSH Diploma.

These two new *acquisitions* should not only improve our, already excellent, health and safety record but help re-enforce our good name as a leader in Health & Safety in our Industry.

Peter Booth  
Company Health & Safety Manager





# SHOPPING CENTRE RE-MODELLING

Laing O'Rourke and their partners Clear Line & East Midland Diamond Drilling went on a shopping spree and bought a load of scaffolding work from Benchmark's Northern Region.

A good choice we feel! For the last ten months or so we have been beavering away erecting, adapting and moving a multitude of scaffolds within, and without, the Meadowhall Shopping Centre just beside the M1 in Sheffield. Much of this work had to be executed outside of our normal working hours to avoid interface with the public as the centre is still teeming with "real shoppers". There is still much to be done on giving the shopping malls a fresh new look to meet modern standards but things are looking really good so far. Laing O'Rourke, as principal contractor, have endeavoured to forge a great team spirit on land that, some years ago was the place to forge steel.

Our own team is led by Keith "Fu" Lawson (Senior Site Supervisor). Keith wishes to extend his thanks to Matt Wilkinson (Site Supervisor), Neil Orwin, Dean Norton & Richard Batty for the diligence & empathy displayed whilst working on this complex project. A big thank you is also due to Joe Laffar for the numerous design drawings and calculations which have been required.

Photographs show just a tiny proportion of our work. There's one of the umpteen "up & over" pipework scaffolds. A heavy duty walkway & ramp. Also a temporary tunnel within the Apple Store where our scaffold frame has vanished behind timber and ply cladding - we were praised for the line and level of this work as the joiners were able to follow on to produce an excellent finished product.



**Paul Taylor—Director & Estimating Manager**  
**Keith Lawson—Senior Site Supervisor**  
 Northern Region





Good afternoon all,

Attached are some pictures of the completed table my students made with re-claimed timber and the scaffold boards you very kindly donated.

There's a real story behind this one: Just recently, a lady donated her husband's tools to us; tragically her husband was murdered and she wanted to know that his beloved tools were put to good use. My students used some of those very hand-tools to complete this project.

The table will be given to Surrey Docks Farm for use in their classroom. It will have a plaque with all the names of the students who built it and will state that it is in memory of the gentleman who passed away.

I tell you this just to reiterate what a wonderful thing you have done. Thank you all so very much.

Best regards

Wendy

**Wendy Heller**

Training, Development and Curriculum 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.





# SAFETY INITIATIVES UPDATE

This section is to update on a few of the changes we have made in 2016

## Haki cassette roof panels – Upgrade and filon replacement.

We have committed a large sum of money to replace and upgrade the filon sheet covering on our system roof.

The 2.4m cassettes will now have a much stronger sheet that is more suited to the rough and tumble of our industry.

The 600mm cassettes (babies as we call them) have been extend to 2.4m in length, and on these we have used strongest make of filon sheet. It’s called “supersafe” and is used for fire escape walkways.

We have also changed the fixing bolts on the Filon, so now it’s less likely to cause” puncture” damage when being stored or transported to site and also changed over to stainless steel.

Finally, UV protection has been added to both sides of the new Filon instead of just one side when they were first made, this will stop the discolouring which sometimes spoils the roofs appearance.

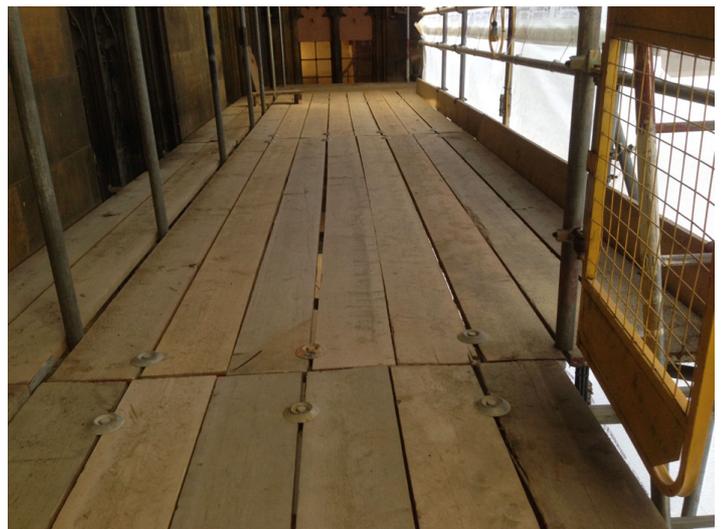
Chris Stranks and Andy Raghbir have already started fabricating the cassettes and the first batch of refurbished sheets will be on site in January 17.

## Tying down of scaffold boards on the working lifts.

As part of our offer to our customers, and our commitment to improve safety, it is now mandatory on this Company to secure the boards to the transoms on EVERY scaffold that we erect.

On every job we trialled this on, the customer was impressed.

It also has the added bonus of stopping warping in the summer, and ‘A.N.Others’ cannot remove the boards as easily as before.



## Exclusion Zones

We have purchased Heras Fence panels and Chapter 8 orange barriers for you to use as exclusion zones.

They will be delivered to you with signage already fixed.

Please order as necessary, but remember to return them to the yard when the task is complete.

The yard won’t mind delivering them back out for the dismantle stage.





## PPE for use with power tools

When using recip. saws, drills or skill saws, along with the Risk Assessed dust mask, you must wear impact goggles (safety glasses are not sufficient) and ear defenders.

As part of the ongoing improvements to the supplied PPE we have purchased ear defenders that slot into the Petzel hat... along with some rather snazzy goggles.



These are free issue to any of us who are competent to use the power tools. Please keep yours in your tool bag, and remember to use them whenever using the power tools.

## Geda and CWM hoists

As you know, un-braked rope and wheels are forbidden on Benchmark Scaffolding.

Our preferred method of raising and lowering equipment, in the absence of cranes or platform hoists, is to use our new scaffolders' hoists. We have invested heavily in these and they are in the yard ready for use.

HOWEVER:

Before you use them, you must have received training from Lee Jones or another member of the H&S team. This training will cover their safe use, necessary inspections, simple maintenance and storage of all equipment. It doesn't take long, and can be done on site, before first use. Without this training, please do not use the hoist.

They arrive on site in bespoke numbered boxes, with all the correct, tested lifting equipment (please do not add to, or take away anything that comes in the boxes.) We monitor the boxes to ensure all its contents are within their use by date.

Also in the box is a schedule of common lifts, with pictures to give a visual reminder, of what may and may not be lifted.



1. Last test of thorough examination
2. Design drawings for scaffolding structures supporting hoist
3. Certificate of conformance
4. Manufactures instruction manual
5. CWS hoist
6. Hoist control pod
7. Power lead
8. Tail rope with Eye Attachment
9. 2 x 2 metre x 1 tonne strops
10. 2 x 3 metre x 1 tonne strops
11. 4.75 tonne Bow Shackle
12. Folder containing: daily & weekly inspection sheets & certificates for the Bow Shackle & Strops Schedule of common lifts/Toolbox Talk



1. Last test of thorough examination
2. Design drawings for scaffolding structures supporting hoist
3. Certificate of conformance
4. Manufactures instruction manual
5. Geda arm which fixes to the top of the scaffold
6. Geda Motor which fixes to the base of the scaffold
7. Hoist control pod
8. Tail rope with Eye Attachment
9. 2 x 2 metre x 1 tonne strops
10. 2 x 3 metre x 1 tonne strops
11. 4.75 tonne Bow Shackle
12. Folder containing: daily & weekly inspection sheets & certificates for the Bow Shackle & Strops Schedule of common lifts/Toolbox Talk



# January Safety Award

The monthly safety award goes to Graham Smith (London) Hampstead School, Wates for coming top of the safety leader board for the month.

# February Safety Award

The monthly safety award goes to Tim Peters, Sky project, Mace, who won the monthly individual safety award for January for, over the past year Tim has always presented himself well and been seen to wear and use his PPE correctly, he has also been very helpful and polite whilst carrying out his duties in a safe manner. He won a free year's subscription for the full package to Sky TV. He was presented the award by Ollie Clarke, Mace Project Director.



# March Safety Award

The monthly safety award goes to Del Litwin who won £50 at Mace site Bedford Avenue and it was presented by Dan Rodgerson, Mace Manager, who commented: Del was rewarded with the safety award for his massive improvement on site and his attitude towards safety and helping the team out when needed.

He has also won the Benchmark Monthly Safety Award.

# April Safety Award



Alan Colyer

The monthly safety award goes to Tom Venables and his team at Sisk Wembley who won the sub-contractors monthly safety award and have been top of the leader board for the last 3 months. They received £60 from Sisk, Benchmark Scaffolding gave all our operative £50 each for achieving this. Tom Venables, Vic Schneider, Richard Lewis, Mark Gallagher, Mark Smith, John Beaney and Mat Tiborc

John Henry won an ipad from a Como Site, Project Interchange, Croydon. He also wins the monthly £100 safety bonus.

Alan Colyer at Bracknell, Mace was nominated for the monthly individual safety award.



# May Safety Award

The monthly safety award goes to Richard Batty who won a £50 Voucher at Alfreton Grange, Carillion site for identifying that the water supply on site was inadequate and he won the don't walk by award.

Another monthly award goes to Anthony Meacock. Brookfield Multiplex, Campden Hill. A site operative had an epileptic fit and Tony was present when this happened and did a great deal to help calm the guy down and look after him until the ambulance/police arrived. Kyle Wombwell, Site Manager, Szerelmey thanked Tony on site for his actions.



Richard Batty

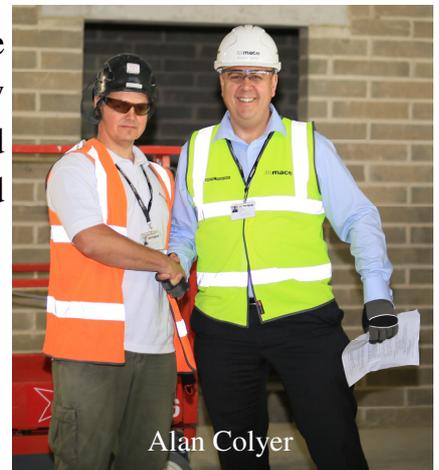
# June Safety Award

The monthly safety award goes to Matthew Wilkinson, Lang O'Rourke, Meadowhall Shopping Mall Projects, for erecting excellent scaffolding in challenging circumstance. Dealing with the public, out of hours working, moving materials and leaving the area clear of all materials when the task is completed. All with no incidents.

# July Safety Award

The monthly safety award goes to Alan Colyer who won the monthly site safety award from Bracknell site, Mace and Andrew James, Mace Project manager said: I have been very impressed by the nominations he has had – very safety conscious and a hard working can-do attitude.

He also won the Benchmark monthly safety bonus.



Alan Colyer

# August Safety Award

The monthly safety award goes to Bill Wilson, Carillion, Alfreton Grange School, for suffering 2 audits (Check the Checker and OHSAS 18001 (Health & Safety) and ISO 14001 (Environment) and passing both with flying colours.

# September Safety Award

The monthly safety award goes to Stuart Didd, Mace Project, Bracknell regeneration. Email from Chris Jones, Construction Manager, Bracknell Regeneration, Mace Project Office below:

*Just a quick email to give positive feedback to yourselves and your site operatives on the overall standard of the work which is very good. Also, the professional attitude by the site team working in and around the town centre environment. The Planning of these works was well executed by the Benchmark supervisors.*

*Please accept my thanks for this outstanding control within a very difficult demise.*



Ojay Roynon won the individual monthly safety award at HB Reavis site, King William Street. The award was presented by Parminder Barring the site Health Safety Manager, Ojay won the award for himself and his team's general attitude to safety.

Tony Martin, Mitchell Lane, Jack Kaminski and Pawel Wininski won the Lendlease September monthly safety award at the TIQ project, presented by Joshua Wild (LL Site Manager) for:

Working safely installing screens around the perimeter of each level while maintaining excellent housekeeping and a positive attitude. They received a £50 voucher each for Westfield Shopping Centre.



Ojay Roynon

# October Safety Award

The monthly safety award goes to Keith Dunk, Wates, Millbank, for getting excellent reports from Pat Jackson (Safety & Access independent site inspector) and other visiting staff, also the Wates Managers speak highly of Keith in the way that he carries out the work in a safe manor and communicates well with them.

Tom Venable and his scaffolders came top of the safety leader board at SISK, Maiden Lane.

# November Safety Award

The monthly safety award goes to Ron Clarke, New Era site, Sheffield, for winning the green award, this was presented by Steven Edwards Site Manager Bowmer & Kirkland who wrote *The award goes to Ron Clarke who has been extremely helpful with a very nice manner about him and has been cooperative with all the site team at some stage in the past two weeks, even generating ideas that have helped us progress elements of our works.*



The operatives at Mace site Bracknell Regeneration have won the quarterly team award, the team was awarded £250 by Mace Managers Cole Wright and Justin O'Kane. Benchmark Scaffolding matched this with vouchers.

Justin O'Kane quoted *"The Benchmark Team on site were awarded the Quarterly Team award for several reasons; as a team we discuss which contractor has gone the extra mile, demonstrates excellent H&S working practises and has a can-do attitude, we also consider attendance and participation in meetings.*



Ron Clarke

*Both Stuart (Didd) and Alan (Collier) are regular attendees at these meetings and are active participants in achieving the Mace vision for safety.*

*Well done to the Benchmark Team in winning this award.*

The team was S Didd, A Colyer, W Didd, D Banner, K Lynch, L Martin, E Martin, G Smith, J Skipp, P Maskill, A Green, A White, L Aurelius, G Fall, N Fall.

# Benchmark shine bright over Piccadilly Circus for the eighth time in 17 years



Benchmark have been contracted by EDS Ltd to design, erect and dismantle an access scaffold built off an extensive Loading/pedestrian protection gantry, to allow for a complete new sign to be built to replace the existing one. We have worked closely with Land Securities, who are the client, Electronic Display Services, who are Benchmark's customer, Westminster City Council, who are the local authority and the suppliers of the temporary banners that will be hung from our scaffold, and that will replace the existing illuminations when they are turned off on 16th January 2017 for six months, whilst the new illuminations are fitted.

The lights are rarely turned off, apart from power cuts, with the most noted switch offs being for ten years during and after the Second World War, the deaths of Winston Churchill and Lady Diana and most recently to mark Earth Hour for the WWF.

A Few facts about the sign:-

The sign itself is supported by steel work fixed to the façade of a 19<sup>th</sup> century building behind.

The first illuminated sign was switched on in 1908.

The present illuminations measure 767 square metres of advertising space, and are alight 24 hours a day.

Over 50 brands have advertised there in the last 100 years.

71,760,000 pedestrians pass the sign each year.

29,910,088 people drive past in buses, coaches, cars or taxis every year.

Coca Cola have had the longest continuous presence there of 55 years.

John Henry, Steve Valentine, Anthony Parchment and Alan Pomeroy are the team building the scaffold, with the pedestrian protection/loading gantry built at night, when the shops are closed, and the access scaffold above built during normal working hours.

Alan Abraham came up with the complex design after numerous meetings to satisfy the local authority, Land Security, which included the shop tenants who wanted as much of their windows being kept clear of scaffolding and EDS.

The scaffold will be fully erected by the end of January and the scaffold will be up for around six months.

It forms part of a much larger project as the main building behind is to be demolished next year, leaving just the façade and the sign standing, supported by a steel shoring system behind.

We are quoting for some of the enabling works at present.



Eamonn Golledge -  
Contracts Manager  
London Region



If you've recently had a new addition to your family, or have 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:

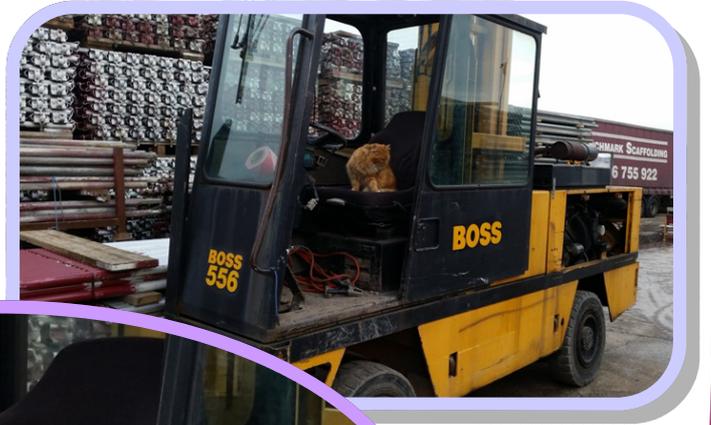
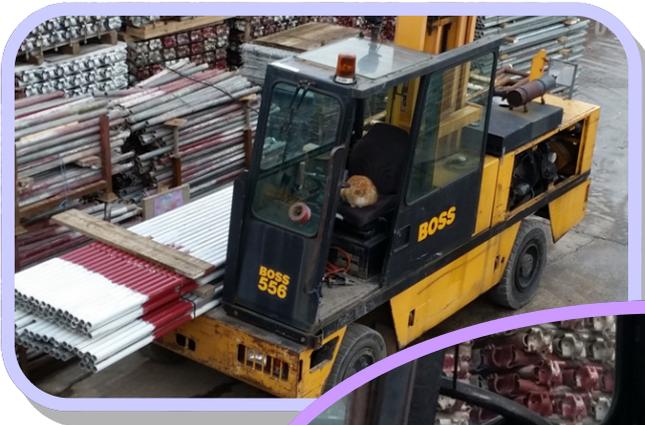
[barnsley@benchmarkscaffolding.com](mailto:barnsley@benchmarkscaffolding.com)



# Galore

Galore, our Barnsley Yard cat, completes one of her last tasks, learning to drive the forklift, before her mysterious disappearance early in 2016.

We all hope that she was adopted by a local family and is safe and warm in front of their fire but we may never know. 😞



Happy New Year



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Setting the Standards