

BENCHPRESS

Rob West

On 31st December 1994 I was made redundant by Formscalf UK as they had decided to exit “the suicidal London market” and return to their industrial roots in the North of England.

On January 9th 1995 a new company was incorporated under the name of Benchmark Scaffolding Ltd. It’s Head Office was in Redhill, Surrey otherwise known as Rob and Sue’s living room. We sent out a dozen letters saying that we were a new company with a dream of setting the standards for the scaffolding industry – the rest is history.

Twelve and a half years after we commenced trading on 1st March 1995 with our first contract for Stonewest Ltd at Garden Court (value £10k), we have grown to become the biggest and we believe the BEST scaffolding company in London and the South East.

We also have a fantastic business based in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, headed by Paul Taylor, our Regional Managing Director and Cain Eggleston our Commercial Director, Northern Region.

We have plans to open further branches, initially in East London, followed by other outlets in East Anglia and Edinburgh, who knows where we can go from there driven on by the repeat business from our loyal customers and the quality of our people?

Our success has always been based on our core values relating to technical expertise, a robust safety regime, a non-contractual and non-confrontational approach to giving an excellent service. These values have carried us a long way to date but our future is in your hands – keep up the good work and the sky’s the limit.

Rob West
Managing Director

Mother Nature Hits the Northern Region

Round One

June had been a rainy few weeks in the north on the 15th June 2007, the rivers began to rise flooding areas all over Yorkshire including Barnsley were Benchmark Scaffolding’s northern region is based.

Running at the back of Benchmark’s yard is a small dyke, which is a trickle most of the year, not on this day it rose 10ft flooding the surrounding areas including Benchmark’s yard and offices.

Doing everything possible to save what we could, we lifted up computers, furniture anything that was on the floor expecting the worse as the water was up to the door already as we abandoned our offices.

Expecting devastation the next day, to our surprise there was no damage at all.

WE HAD SURVIVED ROUND 1!!!!

Round Two

On the 25th June 2007 what didn’t seem quite as bad as previous, we prepared anyway for the worst, as the dyke had rose but only a few feet we left the offices and closed the yard at 16:00hrs. At 16:45hrs the Barnsley branch offices and the yard were both submerged under a metre of water.

Nothing could have prepared us for what we were met with the next day - devastation came to mind. Having come close to tears as everything was covered in sludge, a total mess including the yard, we shook ourselves down and got to work. The yard staff and drivers Dave Barnett, John Beattie, Gary Roberts, Ashley Wilkins, Grant Lawson, Darren Waltham and Andrew Bradbury and management Paul Taylor, Keith Lawson, Peter Spencer and myself Mark Bradbury pulled on a pair of white overalls, looking like something out of CSI or in Paul Taylor’s case going to a rave and immediately got to work clearing up the yard to get it up and running again, the wagons clean and back on the road and the offices started

Months down the line we are still in temporary accommodation and feeling the devastation caused by the floods. The cost is now running into thousands of pounds. You can find us high up on top of scaffolding in portacabins brought in until our new offices are prepared.

Thanks to everybody that pulled together in what seemed to be a crisis to keep Benchmark Scaffolding running and Georgina Bradbury for setting up office in our own family home whilst temporary accommodation was erected.

Mark Bradbury—Depot Manager Northern Region



The Three Stooges
Paul Taylor—Curly, Keith Lawson—Larry & Mark Bradbury—Moe



No its not a spaceman its our Peter Spencer



Everyone helped to clear up the sludge



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

Birdcage! Without Birds,

Waagner Biro AG, an international company based in Vienna, Austria, who specialise in unusual roofs & structural frames has employed Benchmark Scaffolding Ltd to design, supply and install a birdcage access platform for them to install a complex roof system at the Westfield Shopping Towns project in White City, West London.

The roof members were designed on an approximate grid of 2.66m x 1.33m to create a series of ladder frames, 71 in total, weighing approx 900 tons in all, welded together & craned into position onto the support birdcage scaffold. Each of the ladder frames, including glass, weighed approx 12.5tons & had to be accurately craned into position onto 8 scaffold support points per ladder frame, prior to the transfer of load onto the permanent columns within the building. The scaffold had to cater for all vertical loads from the roof with full wind loadings which were transferred to the ground through the bracing system within the designed frame.

The setting out of the scaffold structure was critical and a tribute to the Benchmark Team on site, who had to achieve construction tolerances in all directions of +/- 15mm in addition to catering for approximately 200 changes in deck levels to accommodate the roof profile.

The giant birdcage scaffold is 100,000 cubic metres in size which translates into the following materials quantities: 117,000m of scaffold tube (73 miles being nearly half way to our Northern Regional Office in Barnsley, South Yorkshire), 40,000m (25 miles) of scaffolding boards, 70,000 (100 tons) of scaffolding fittings and 760 modular beams. In total a combined weight of 850 tons equal to 71 lorries each delivering 12 tons.

The entire scaffold structure is approx 152m long x average width of 36m with a max height of 22m, what you might call a "giant" birdcage.

Key personnel involved in this project include Alan Abraham, Chief Engineer, Graham Laffar, Site Manager, Mel McMahon, Covering Site Manager and Gavin Mackay, Special Project Director.

by John Walton and Alan Abraham
London Region



An Edited Version of the Peregrine Article

A Peregrine Falcon chick photographed earlier this summer on the roof of the Aldersgate Street Bovis Lend Lease project.

This chick, about two months old and one of three surviving birds, probably siblings, has a nest (or eyrie) on one of the neighbouring City of London tower blocks, providing a safe, secure base and vantage point with an abundant food supply, mostly of feral pigeons.

The Peregrine is a cosmopolitan species, found on all continents and is the largest of the British falcons. Its primary prey is other birds, usually taken on the wing, with a top dive speed in excess of 180 kph, making it the fastest moving bird in the world.

Peregrines are generally territorial and nest sites are dictated by the availability of food. This explains their increasing appearance in built up areas. A clutch of eggs is laid in about March or April, both birds share the incubation, with the young fledging at about 35-42 days and fully independent approximately two months later. Less than a third of Peregrines reach breeding age; those that do can expect to live 5-6 years. There were an estimated 1400 Peregrine pairs in 2002 in the UK.

The Peregrine is afforded the highest degree of legal protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981. It is an offence to take injure or kill a peregrine or to take damage or destroy its nest eggs or young, with fines of up to £5,000 and/or a six month custodial sentence.

Mel McMahon—Site Manager
London Region



CARRILLION NATIONAL BUILDING CENTRAL SPINE, GRAND ISLAND, MANCHESTER

The Northern Region of Benchmark is delighted to announce the receipt of the order for the above job which is valued at over £600k.

Having worked extensively with Carillion over the recent years and developed sound relationships we were given the opportunity to develop the scheme for this prestigious central Manchester project.

We are grateful to Steve White & George Orton for their time and assistance. We look forward to working with them and the other members of their team – Bob Preece, Mike Stephens & Brian Culshaw.

The Benchmark Team consists of Keith Lawson (Contracts Manager), Alan Abraham (Chief Engineer) and Dean Gardner (Site Supervisor) all of whom have extensive Carillion experience having worked on the NV Buildings (also in Manchester) and the Leeds Schools BSF Projects.

In subsequent issues of Benchpress we will feature some images of the job and drawings of the scaffold.

Paul Taylor
Managing Director—Northern Region

TOLENT CONSTRUCTION - SAVILLE HOUSE, SHEFFIELD

Having recently completed the scaffolding at Marshalls Yard Gainsborough (exceeding £850k) we are grateful to Tolent for the award of a subsequent job.

Marshalls Yard was a mixed development involving the refurbishment of an old railway building around a former goods marshalling yard together with significant new buildings to form a commercial/retail park.

Saville House is an old industrial building on the fringe of Sheffield City Centre and towards the industrial east end which requires a full envelope scaffold for total refurbishment.

We appreciate our continuing association with Mick Pickersgill, Glenda McNichol and the Gainsborough team led by Mick Ashton. The Sheffield team consists of Roger Linton, Gary Farmer, Peter Swift & Steve Shaw.

Benchmark are represented by Wayne O'Loughlin (Site Supervisor also from the Gainsborough job), Dave Falkinder (Senior Contracts Supervisor), Mark Knitter (Estimator) with a keen eye on surveying matters being maintained by Cain Eggleston (Commercial Director).

Paul Taylor
Managing Director—Northern Region

Benchmark Heath & Safety

One of the factors of the growth and success of Benchmark over the last 11 years is our commitment to Heath & Safety.

Training

In 2001 we started a training obligation and to date have trained nearly 200 operatives to be trainee, basic and advanced scaffolders. We also carry out training in a variety of different construction related trades and skills at a cost so far over £320,000. This figure is not taking into account the expenses, accommodation and management time, with these costs added the figure actual doubles.

Health Surveillance

Last year we started health surveillance for all employees.

Accidents

In the past few years the amount of accidents reported has significantly increased, mainly due to an improved reporting culture, but the number of serious and RIDDOR reportable injuries has dramatically decreased.

In the northern region there has not been a RIDDOR reportable injury since July 2005 (21 months). This is not only down to Benchmark's investment in Health & Safety but also to the men on sites who have to carry out a difficult job whilst still being aware of their own safety and all others around them.

The large construction companies that employ Benchmark to carry out most of their work demand a high standard of safety on their sites. We, as a company, have to maintain a high standard of safety to continue working for these large companies. This in turn will generate monies to enable more training.

Peter Booth—Company Safety Manager
London Region

Down Hill Holiday – 8th June 2007



It was around 9.30am when my brother Jamie and I were putting our bikes in the back of my mate Tays van along with the help of his brother Steve to get on our way for Tays birthday party, downhill mountain biking in The Lake District, Tays van consisted of the 4 bikes & the BBQ. My car had the tents, food, clothes & protective gear & most importantly – BEER!! & we set off on our boring drive up to the Lakes.

We arrived there shortly after dinner, got out & got ready for action, Tay & his bro had been here before, Jim and I were virgins, so we let them go first, we'd heard stories about how dangerous it was, with it being part man-made with drop offs into berms, table tops into berms & wooden snake sections which wasn't for the faint hearted!

After a while I took the lead followed by Jim, Tay & Steve lagging miles behind! It wasn't long until someone crashed, fortunately it was Steve & not me, as we stopped & waited for him to catch up on one of the wooden snake sections, admiring how neat he was rounding the corners, he only managed to get about 10 foot away from the end until he lost it & fell, unharmed & embarrassed he got up to cheers, laughter, taking the mess & finger pointing.

The rest of the section was a grueling uphill climb for what seemed miles & miles, then the good bit, the long fast downhill section, getting up to speeds close to 100mph (well it felt like it!) then breaking off into the technical sections down through the forest, very fast & very tricky, luckily we all survived & after a couple of miles of normal green lanes we arrived back at the car park, which was empty. This meant party time! We got changed, put the bikes away & dragged the BBQ out & all the beer, food & the Haribo star mix. Got that son'bitch burning & eat like kings, & got drunk. Yey!

In the morning we decided to go to the infamous Dolby Forest near Scarborough, upon which we found a bad ass Bmx track (hence the photo) & rode around all the sections & after an hour or so, we decided to call it a day (because we were knackered!) & Jamie who is 16, the ale got the better of him the night before (sorry mum!) All in all Tays birthday was kick ass & we all loved it!

Mark Knitter—Estimator
Northern Region

SAFETY AWARDS

MAY

Terence Stenton received the Northern award for physically stopping site operatives (non scaffolders) from dismantling a scaffold, informing the site manager and his leading hand, in turn an investigation was held on how this happened. (See It, Sort It, Report It)

K Kenneally received the London award for an ongoing issue on site involving edge protection and others (non scaffolders) moving the edge protection. KK placed posters in key areas informing all that if the EP needed moving to phone BSL operatives (numbers on poster) so it could be carried out properly and safely.

JUNE

Martin Clarkson received the Northern award for being commended for his work on site by the site management and making changes to the scaffold to benefit all.

Dave Humphries received the London award for identifying a gap in floor where tubes could roll down and moving all the bundles of tube and making it safe.

JULY

Lee Caverley received the Northern award

John Yardy received the London award

Both regional winners received the awards for very good feedback from the principal contractor, they are working for, on the way they carry out their tasks in a safe manner.

The Monument

In the first edition of Benchpress we advised that Benchmark Scaffolding Ltd had been awarded the contract to one of London's great landmarks. Due to design differences *Benchmark Scaffolding Ltd* have withdrawn their Tender for the scaffold works to the Monument Tower.



'The Monument'

SLIDING ROOFS OVER DICKENS & JONES

Benchmark Scaffolding has built a double layer sliding roof over the old Dickens & Jones Store in Regents st, London.

The roofs which cover an area of 30m x 24m are constructed using the Hakitec 750 beam system, & can slide under or over each other to allow clear Crane access to the construction area below.



Bob Young—Technical Director
London Region

FRANKIE GOES TO CROPREDY

In 1967 a group (as they were called in those days) was formed in North London. They convened for rehearsals at the home of one the members parents in Muswell Hill. The house was called "Fairport" and the groups name became Fairport Convention.

Forty years and probably forty members later the band is still going strong and has an enormous back catalogue of music spanning several different genres which sit well together. At least they do in the eyes and ears of the Fairport faithful. Overall the band is pigeonholed as "Folk-rock" the genre they invented in 1969 with the release of the album "Leige and Lief".

As many close colleagues will know I number amongst their fans and have done so for many years. There is an annual festival, in the Oxfordshire village of Cropredy, which Fairport Convention organise and perform the closing concert at. Guests appearing over recent years include 10cc, Wishbone Ash, Steeleye Span, Viva Santana, Shameless Quo, Oysterband and Richard Digence.

The FRAnkie in the title is the 1973 Bedford CF Dormobile campervan who is in the background of the photograph. More officially known as FRA 566L she (yes, she – she's has curtains so must be female) has been a member of the team for about 3 years now and is both our conveyance and our home for the festival.

More information about Fairport can be found at www.fairportconvention.com

Paul Taylor
Managing Director—Northern 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

Say NO to
junk food!



Fat Club Monthly Winners

May—Lottie Creaser & Barry Baker both losing 4lb each
June—Mark Knitter losing 3lb

For the rest of us—Christmas is not far away!

From the 3rd September '07, Terry Maynard's title will be changed from Estimator to "Senior Estimator" based at the London office at Hanwell.

Terry has been with Benchmark Scaffolding for 12 years and in that time has served the company in many capacities from Site Manager to Supervisor/Manager in the Operations Department and most recent as Estimator in the Estimating Department.

Well done Terry from everyone at Benchmark.

Mel McMahon will also shortly be joining us in London as a Contracts Surveyor, working alongside Barry and Jane in the Commercial Department. Mel joined us as a chargehand scaffolder in September '05 and has worked on large projects such as the Intercontinental Hotel, Aldersgate and White City Development.

We wish Mel every success in making the transition to office life and are sure he will be a keen contributor to the company's trading performance.

Graham Pope—General Manager
London Region

Sean Ferguson will be joining the estimating department on 3rd September 2007 after having been with Benchmark since September 2005 as Site Manager. We would like to take this opportunity to wish him good luck in his new job.

John Walton—Estimating Director
London Region

The Proud Grandad

Dave Barnett

Northern Region

B
E
N
C
H
M
A
R
K
S
C
A
F
F
O
L
D
I
N
G



Born 12th July 2007
8lb 5oz

A Commercial View

The success of Benchmark Scaffolding is without doubt. The milestones that have already been reached on our journey are momentous, and the standards we set ourselves are without doubt the benchmark of the industry. (Pun definitely intended!). This month a further marker worthy of note, on our road to continued sustainable growth and success, is the achievement of £100,000,000 worth of turnover.

Just in case you lost count that's 6 noughts after the first £100! What is even more noteworthy, and something we are justly proud of, is that this figure has been achieved in just 12 years of trading! Whilst being a significant number in itself it is also with some pride and a huge sense of achievement that this does not just reflect the capable financial ability of the business but it also underpins our satisfaction in being able to provide stable and rewarding employment for over 300 people. So please, give yourselves a pat on the back, and long may it continue!

Keith Slight—Commercial Director
London Region



I went to the MGM Hotel
in Las Vegas and all I won
was this

Benchmark Viz Vest

Shaun Dundas
Northern Region

Head Office & London Region:

Waterside Trading Centre, Trumpers Way, Hanwell, London W7 2QD Tel: 020 8867 9977 Fax: 020 8867 9900

Email: info@benchmarkscaffolding.com

Northern Region Office:

Max Darby House, Valley Road, Station Road Industrial Estate, Wombwell, Barnsley S73 0BS Tel: 01226 755 922 Fax: 01226 755 166

Email: barnsley@benchmarkscaffolding.com

BENCHMARK SCAFFOLDING LTD



Setting the Standards