

BENCHPRESS



Welcome to the September edition of Benchpress and thanks to all of you who have made a contribution to this and previous editions of our quarterly company newsletter.

As we say goodbye to the 'glorious summer' our thoughts turn to the tough times that await us this winter. However things may not be so bad. Despite all the doom and gloom surrounding the state of the UK and world economy things are not too gloomy regarding the situation that your company, Benchmark Scaffolding, finds itself in. We operate in the 'premier league' of scaffolding contractors and most of us believe that we head that particular division. By virtue of that positioning we are managing to buck the trend of many of our competitors and are, so far, still managing to grow our business both in terms of turnover and profit.

Many people believe, and I happen to agree, that our economy will officially be in a technical recession by the end of 2008. That technical definition is two consecutive quarters of negative growth. Even if this happens it does not necessarily mean that we have to consider redundancies and cut backs. In fact our pipeline of secured work is just about as high as it has ever been and we are at an advanced stage of securing even more work on many other major projects.

What we must guard against is complacency. It is during these challenging times that we must all remember the values that have helped to get us to this enviable position. Every one of us who interfaces with our customers on each and every project must play their part in maintaining our success. We must continue to differentiate ourselves from our competitors by displaying a can-do attitude where no reasonable request from our customers is seen as a problem.

This positive approach to our work coupled with our combined experience and expertise and our excellent design department will help to maintain our hard won position as the scaffolding contractor of choice to so many of our customers.

We, as a company have never set out to be the cheapest of the cheap – how could we when you consider the standards that we set? However our customers have every right to demand value for money, more so now than ever.

This is where you all have a very important part to play. A fair day's work for a fair day's pay is not an unreasonable request in return for a secure future with a successful company. As the night draws in and the weather deteriorates don't be tempted to slip away a bit early. We are all part of the same team and we must all pull in the same direction to maintain our momentum. It is not part of our culture to police each other regarding time keeping and output, we rely on trust and your commitment to do your best.

Many of us have mortgages to pay and families to support and so I make no apology for repeating my earlier point. If we please our customers they will continue to use us again and again. If this happens we collectively have much to be positive about regarding our future irrespective of how challenging our market place becomes.

Keep up the good work and thanks for your continuing efforts.

Regards
Rob West
Managing Director



The Benchmark Ethical Policy

The aim of Benchmark Scaffolding Limited is to undertake all of its activities in a socially, ethically and environmentally responsible manner and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

In recognising our obligation to all stakeholders (shareholders, employees, customers and suppliers) the company demands the highest ethical standards from all those who operate on behalf of the Company and encourages exposure of any practises that may injure the reputation of the company or its employees.

Employees

All employees want and are entitled to a workplace where they feel safe, respected and appreciated. We will not tolerate any harassment or discrimination of any kind in respect of race, colour, religion, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. A documented code of conduct is detailed in our Employee Handbook which is given to all employees on induction, and clearly defines what is expected of them and what the procedures are for grievance.

Our Health, Safety and Environmental policies clearly state our determined intentions to provide a workplace environment where employees can expect to carry out their duties without risk of incident or accident.

Customers

Our customers are our livelihood and we will carry out our business with them in a fair open and honest manner with the intention of creating an environment of trust and integrity in order to maintain successful and sustained business relationships. We will maintain confidentiality in our dealings with them and will not use any information provided by them for any inappropriate purpose or personal gain.

Suppliers

The company continually strives to develop strong relationships with its suppliers based on mutual trust and dependency.

We will endeavour to pay our suppliers promptly and in accordance with our agreed terms of trading and will maintain appropriate confidentiality in respect of our trading relationship.

We will always endeavour to procure materials that are produced in a manner that does not support any kind of forced, inhumane, or child labour and wherever possible, from renewable or sustainable sources.

R J West
Managing Director

Something Topical

In today's economic climate with soaring costs it is essential that we reduce our waste and reverse the throw away culture that we have.

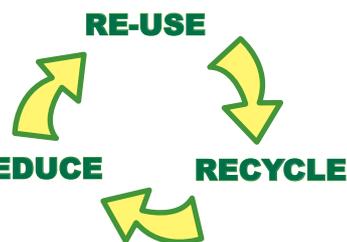
Thirty years ago the majority of homes were coal fired heating so large amounts of waste were burned. Today with gas and electricity being the main source of heating, our waste, if not segregated goes to landfill.

Every 8 months the UK produces enough waste to fill up Lake Windermere (the largest natural lake in England at 16.8Km in length).

Although the Council Recycling Kerbside Collections dramatically reduced landfill you could still do more. Plastics are one of the most discarded products that can be re-used. Fossil fuels are used in the manufacture of plastics so cost of packaging is increasing rapidly.

Plastics are non-biodegradable so in landfill they become toxic for many years. They also enter the food chain with vermin and birds consuming them.

Staggeringly £10 million worth of food is thrown away in Britain annually, if we stopped wasting food we could avoid 18 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents being emitted each year, the same as taking one in five cars off the road.



We need to act today for a better tomorrow..... So think.....

Billy Wood
Safety Advisor Northern Region

Just a small prick...



...could save a life

How many of us in Benchmark have either had, or know someone who's had hospital treatment involving blood transfusion?

I guess the answer at not being very far south of 100%.

How many of us are regular blood donors?

The indisputable answer is always "not as many as there could be". In reality, only 5% of people who could give blood actually do.

The need for blood never stops

Every minute of the day someone somewhere needs blood. A sick child. Someone's mum or dad. And not just for emergencies and accidents. They need blood to help them beat serious diseases like cancer, for a planned operation such as a hip or knee replacement, or to get through a difficult childbirth. They're counting on people like us to make sure blood is there when they need it.

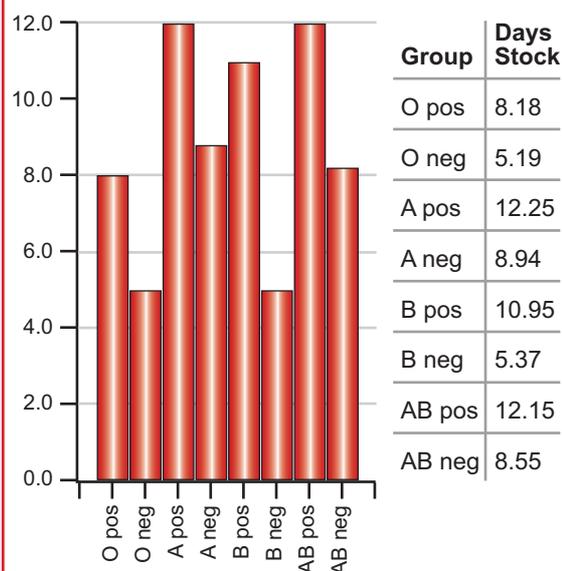
Most of the components of blood used for transfusions have a short shelf life, and maintaining a constant supply is a persistent problem.

At any one time, there is never more than 2 weeks of available blood stored in the nation's banks, so it is imperative that new stock is constantly obtained from willing donors.

Who can give blood?

Most people can give blood. If you're generally in good health, between the ages of 17 and 59 and weigh at least 7st 12 lbs, you are the ideal potential donor. You can give blood up to 3 times a year.

Current 'days of stock' levels (as at 12th September 2008)



If you are interested in becoming a donor...

Have a look at the **NHS** website at <http://www.blood.co.uk/index.html> for details (the Virtual Session is most useful), or contact me and I will send you an explanatory leaflet and enrolment form.

Graham Pope
General Manager London Region

MEMORANDUM

Date: 26 September 2008
 From: Bob Young
 To: All Operatives
 Copies: Operations team & site managers



Hanwell Office

Subject Tg20 /En12811-1 Bracing & Tie Configurations

Filename: M - Ties & face brace Sept 08

Please find below a copy of our Technical Alert which was issued last year with regard to Bracing & Tie configurations. This is being reissued to all our operational staff to ensure that everyone understands & is working to this as a minimum required standard.

I have also included a sketch (D/BM 2342/1), which will help to clarify these Requirements.

If anyone does need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or your Contracts Manager.

Regards,

Bob Young.
 Technical Director.

TECHNICAL ALERT

TG20 - Guide to Good Practice Update

23rd April 2007

Would you please all note that during the rewrite of TG20 it is the view of the HSE that principles contained within BS5973 will continue to meet the requirements of the Work at Height Regulations. That said, it is their opinion that Scaffolding Contractors should follow best practice using amended tie patterns & include face bracing as recommended in BS EN 12811-1.

These state that ties should be every other lift (4.0m) & every other line, with 2 fitting value for sheeted (including Debris netting) & 1 fitting value for unsheeted. Face bracing should be every 6th bay with either zig zag or same direction bracing from node to node points.

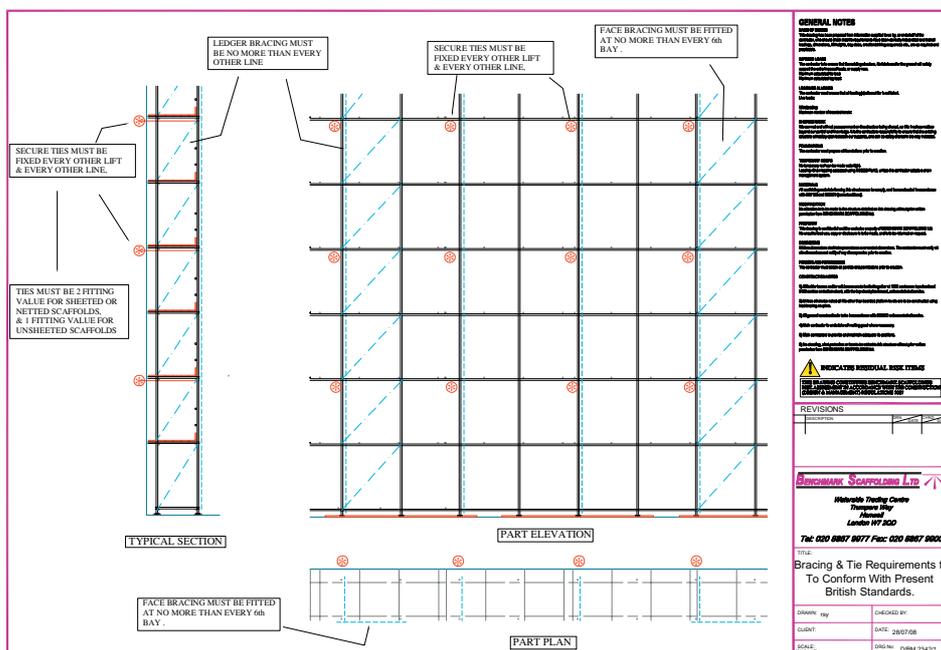
Would everyone note that under no circumstances are Fischer type ties to be used.

The situation with regard to Reveal type ties is not clear at the moment & I will clarify this when I have more information.

Finally I would point out that the new tying & bracing information will not apply to designed structures, or affect existing or new work about to start.

Regards,

Bob Young
 Technical Director



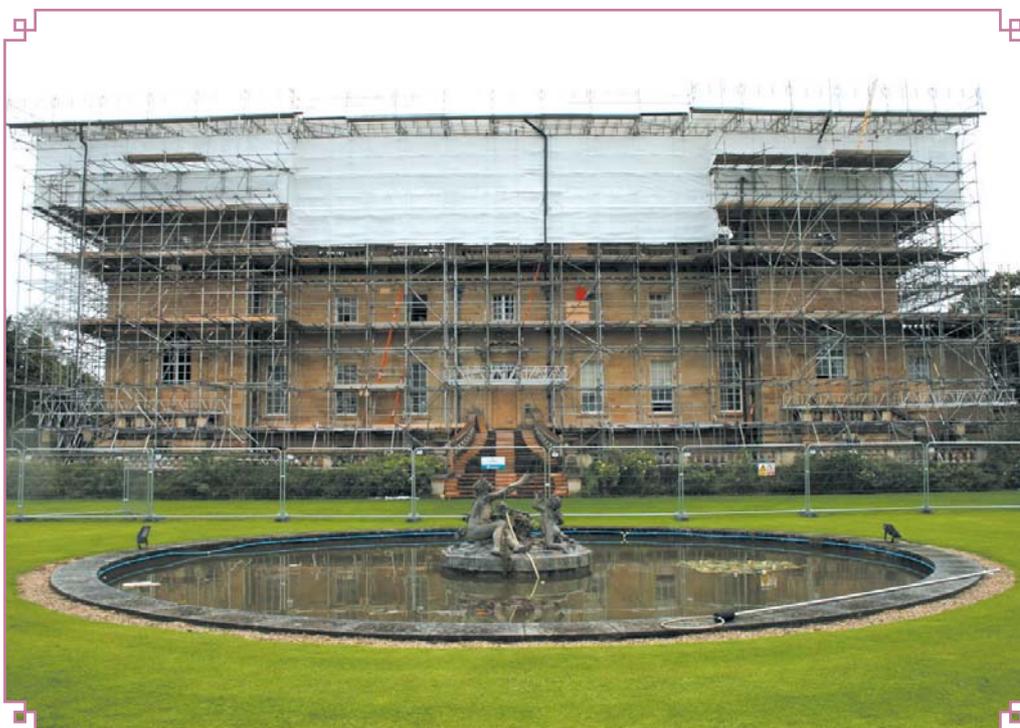
P.S Would all department heads please ensure this information is passed onto everyone who needs to know.

Benchmark Scaffolding Ltd - NASC 2009 Year Book

Moreton Hall Moreton Morrell, Warwickshire.

Following the recent fire which gutted the Grade 2 listed mansion at Moreton Hall, Warwickshire, Benchmark Scaffolding have constructed a free standing temporary building to allow the house to be restored to its original magnificent state.

The mansion situated at Warwickshire College has been selected as a training and accommodation facility for the Olympic Equestrian teams prior to taking part in the 2012 London Games.



The scaffold structure which measures 48m long x 30m wide x 21m high is free standing because of the condition of the existing building and has been constructed using traditional tube and fittings with a Hakitec 750 panel roof providing weather protection.

The main front elevation is secured against wind forces using a 7.2m wide buttress frame, which is held down using up to 1000kN of concrete kentledge.

The project is scheduled for up to 3 years and must be complete in time for the arrival of the Olympic teams.

Bob Young
Technical Director



MONGOL RALLY

This summer we escaped the British weather to drive to Mongolia for charity. Leaving Hyde Park on the 19th July in our £500 Subaru Justy we were nervous about what the world had to throw at us; with good reason.

Driving through Europe was very easy, and it seemed nothing would stand in our way, but soon we left Western Europe and entered Ukraine, a beautiful but very poor country we were immediately struck by how different it was to anything we had experienced before. There were bears in cages at petrol stations. The biggest shock was the police; they pulled us over at any opportunity and with threats of arrest forced us to bribe them. We soon left Ukraine and entered Russia, spending two days with a Russian family we met on the road, we had our eyes opened to all aspects of Russian culture, including vast amounts of Vodka.

It was soon after this that our mechanical problems began to materialise, as the strange rattling sound got louder we realised that something was seriously wrong. The engine was badly damaged when the piston finally shattered and we spent the night on the roadside doing some serious bodging. We took the engine from four cylinders to three, a serious drop in power resulted but it was our only option.

Shortly after this disaster and triumph in the same night we entered Mongolia, the lack of roads immediately hit us as we bumped off the last bit of tarmac for nearly a thousand miles. The car took a serious pounding; soon pulling the exhaust and back bumper off made the car sound like a Second World War aeroplane. The altitude took its toll on the car and on us; it coughed up the hills while our heads pounded.

In little over five weeks we had to make our final push to the finish line in the Mongolian capital, Ulaanbaatar, driving through the night we drove over the final hill and looked over the city we had worked so hard to get to. As we rolled into the city we saw some awful scaffolding in the form of a collapsed wooden structure.

The car was then donated to charity, where it will be sold and the proceeds donated to The Christina Noble Children's foundation. Our total was helped by Benchmark Scaffolding to whom we are very grateful.



Mel McMahon
Contracts Surveyor London Region

COMPANY SAFETY AWARDS

JUNE

Dale Benson won the Northern award. After leaving site he noticed that glaziers had started to remove some handrails. He informed the site manager who then stopped the job.

Gary Nelson won the London award for constructing a device that prevents Combi fans snagging the building when being fitted and removed.

JULY

Ian Hardisty won the Northern award for having an exceptional safety record recognised by the Main contractor, Marlborough Brickwork, at Project Slam, Gaza Barracks.

Kelvin Downs won the London award for his contribution to safety on site at Thames Valley Business Reading and winning the monthly site safety award from Mace.

AUGUST

Ian Jowsey won the Northern award. After erecting a lift on a scaffold, his duty was to hand over that lift. Instead he inspected the entire scaffold and found an excavation had undermined the scaffold. He informed the site manager and did not issue a handover certificate.

Ian Paxton won the London award for his contribution to site safety by ensuring that all lorries have edge protection on at all times at his Stratford City site. This was also recognised and rewarded by the main contractor.

Benchmark Scaffolding Ltd - NASC 2009 Year Book

Selfridges Make-over



The above photo and text is our submission for the 2009 NSASC Year Book. We are hoping to win 1st prize for the photo and for it to be used on the front page of the yearbook.

Oxford Street's retail flagship, Selfridges, has been through a dramatic transformation through the spring months. We were asked by the store to produce a scheme that would enable high level parapet inspections and repairs to be carried out in all areas whilst, (1) keeping the ground floor completely clear at all times and (2) maintaining minimum light reduction through the 1st-3rd floors.

Bob Young's creative design was able to meet the required criteria. The Scaffold, intended to support sections of the stone cornice of up to 12kN in weight, is trussed from the stone ledge at the base of the columns 5.5m above the Pavement and extends up to a total height of 24.5m. The design incorporates hakitec 750 alloy beams, supported by cantilevered ladder beams off supporting spurs of up to 7.5m in length, which are anchored back into the main stone columns using 4no screwbolts at each tie position.

The main deck is double boarded with 18mm ply overlay up to 2.0m wide and includes a lifting rail for the removal of sections of cornice and balustrade, which are then moved around on trolleys to gantry positions.

The structure includes side sheeting to encapsulate the working area, with a sheeted cover over the roof level platform, all to give full weather protection.

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.

Mark and Simon are 50!!!!



That is a combined age though. Simon turned 25 on September 9th and Mark follows suit on September 28th. Many happy returns to them both.

MARK BYRNE'S DAUGHTER

Sunday 22nd June Charlotte Mary-Jean before her first communion with her brothers Connor, Liam and Evan. The smiling lump is her proud father Mark.



I'M BACK ON STAGE AGAIN!!!

OK less of the excitement. It is going to be a busy couple of months for me on the stage. I am currently rehearsing 'Stags and Hens' which I mentioned in the June edition of Benchpress. We take to the stage on the 24th of this month and run until the 27th. I then go into a very challenging 8 week period where I am appearing in 2 shows 2 weeks apart from each other.

I am in 'A man for all seasons' at the end of October and then (for those of you who like me loved the C S Lewis books) I am in 'The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe' at the beginning of November, I'm playing my favourite character from the story too, 'Mr Tumnus' the faun. It would be great to see some of you in the audience for any of these shows, the support is greatly appreciated and I assure you it's a cracking night out and the beer is cheap if you are with me.

Simon Reece
Management Assistant Northern Region

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Extra Curricular Activities



Shane Ginn rode and completed the London to Brighton bike race in good time all for the British Heart Foundation. Shane is dressed in a very tight number with Benchmark across his chest. Shane raised almost £1000 for the charity partly sponsored by Bernie McDermott. For his good deeds, the very next day at work he had his bike stolen.

Les Dryden
Contracts 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 e-mail us at

barnsley@benchmarkscaffolding.com