

# BENCHPRESS

## WAIT FOR THE TIDE TO COME IN

Twelve months on and the Northern Region has relocated to new offices adjacent the existing premises in Barnsley.

Actually we've re-united the existing plot as when Benchmark bought the property from ECL back in 1999 we negotiated with them for their retaining a corner of the plot on which to build their new offices. We joked that one day we would buy that building too.

On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2007 our offices were subjected to the flooding which we told you about in issue number 2 of "Benchpress" and, to cut a long story short, we ended up doing exactly what we had joked about and bought ECL's offices again.

We now have an excellent two storey office block which we've had refurbished by local builders under the scrutiny of our Depot Manager Mark Bradbury. He acted as "The Client" or "Clerk of Works" to ensure the right quality was obtained.

The existing building has now become our training centre and in addition to those training facilities contains three offices, a gymnasium, two showers a drying room and toilets.

Elsewhere within this issue is an article about the training centre.

Only the Warehouse needs work doing now and we'll feature that another time – watch this space as they say.

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**Paul Taylor – Managing Director**  
**Northern Region**



# BANKING ON SUCCESS!

The Northern Region has recently had great success with our friends at Carillion Property Services in securing no less than 11 contracts for refurbishment work on HSBC Banks.

These include Worksop, Retford, Kirton-in-Lindsey, Wisbech, Belper, Matlock, Uppingham, Long Row Nottingham, Victoria Street Nottingham, Wetherby & Thirsk.

The total value of these jobs is in excess of £100,000.

Most of the scaffolds are in "High Street" situations and are, therefore, being carried out during the evenings and/or weekends to avoid inconvenience to the general public and banking staff.

**Paul Taylor—Managing Director  
Northern Region**



The London Branch have built this highly complex curved gantry and double width scaffold at Gracechurch St, London. The scaffold provides access to the building & supports 6 no Levels of steel trusses that form restraint to the front facade of the building. It was built by Vic Sneider and his team of Cosy Powell, Gary Martin, Shaun Ferguson, Paul Skinner and Adam Slack. The main contractor Squibb & Davies Demolition were very impressed with the structure and further projects have been secured on the back of this success.

**Terry Shiel – Design Engineer  
London Region**



## GRACECHURCH ST LONDON



# The Flag Ship of the North

## Carillon Central Spine Building Manchester

The former BT building has successfully been refurbished to a British Gas building with the help of Benchmarks leading hands Dean Gardner, Chris Manley and their band of merry scaffolders.

The building has been totally gutted, having to be de-clad then re-clad and atrium had to be redesigned to enable the two new floors to be added. All in all a huge task for Dean, Chris and the gang.

The scaffold is 15 lifts high all fully boarded using the new extendable transoms, the existing atrium 20m x 20m has had to have a weather proof crash deck with Haki 750 beams erected to enable the two new floors to be added. A birdcage was also erected up to all seven floors of the building along with numerous other scaffolding works carried out throughout this contract. All designed by Benchmark's Alan Abraham to whom we owe many thanks.

**Keith Lawson – Senior Contracts Manager**  
**Northern Region**



We've had some constant criticism from safety people and contractors about our stay safe loading bay gates not having toe boards fitted. This is the result we've come up with.

**Question from safety people:** What can we do about it?

**Answer:** Fit the new Stay Safe Loading Bay Gate Toe Board Shoes.

**Question:** THE WHAT?????

Yeh, ok, the name is a bit long and needs to be improved. After coming up with a design and making up a prototype, we sent them out to site for trial. They worked and are now in use on sites. (pictured right).

## TWO NEW FITTINGS ON THE BLOCK



Before



After



Before



After

**Question from Dean Gardner—Site Supervisor:** Is there some way of saving time when we drop on a gap in a toe board instead of putting in a dead leg?

**Answer:** Of course there is, use the toe board lapper.

**Question:** THE WHAT?????

Ok you get the gist. Whatever size gap you drop on, place boards to suit, pop on a pair of lappers (that's toe boards lappers in case anyone thought different).

(pictured left)

**INVENTOR:** Mark Bradbury (Depot Manager—Northern Region)

**PROFILE:** Age 11 paper round, yeh yeh etc etc

**POSSIBLY ANOTHER INVENTION IN THE MAKING**



# Goods Inwards!

I thought you all might like to see another picture of the stolen goods, reported in our previous issue, but the good news is that this time its back in our yard at Beckton from whence it came!

It took a while but eventually we managed to produce all the paperwork, get it translated into Lithuanian, pay the not inconsiderable fees, safely load it onto a lorry (compare with load outbound!) and get it driven back to dear old Blighty, where-upon Renzo lovingly offloaded it, and put it safely away where it belongs. A bit like losing your favourite teddy and then finding it again!

This story is only half a happy ending though, because we actually lost about two lorry's worth of materials, but now that the recovery people have had a result they have agreed to continue to make discreet enquiries regarding the remaining gear. As time passes the trail gets cold but if there is any further news, you'll be the first to know!

**Keith Slight—Commercial Director  
London Region**



## SELFRIDGES MAKE-OVER

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 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> floors.

Bob Young's creative design evolved over several meetings with Selfridges QS, their engineers and our customer, Stonewest Limited, until the needs of all parties had been met and we subsequently turned the store

from this



in just nine weeks. *(The low-level gantry is another company's temporary structure and is being removed as our work progresses).*

This is an impressive performance by us and has attracted many compliments from professional bodies, as well as competition envy.

We commend Peter Chipp-Smith and his A-team, headed by Barry Lane, for meeting the challenges of this difficult project. We also extend our thanks to Barry's key team players, here listed in alphabetical order: D Cheney, D Crawford, G Haggard, D Hastings, J Henry, K Piper, S Punnett, M Thompson, J Undy, J Venables, T Venables and R Wood.

**Graham Pope—General Manager  
London Region**

to this



**To:** All Staff  
**C.C.:**  
**Subject:** Changes for 2009

# MEMORANDUM

**From:** P D S Taylor  
**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> May 2008  
**Ref.:** PT9

I write this note with a feeling of immense pleasure.

For several years now I have been proud to be known as "Managing Director – Northern Region" and equally proud to lead the team here in Barnsley. I also felt, however, that one day it would be time for a change of leadership.

That time has now come and I am contacting you all to make the formal announcement that, as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009, I shall be stepping down as the aforementioned Managing Director.

Now the bad news – I'm not leaving! My new role within the company will be Director & Business Development Manager – Northern Region. This function will encompass anything and everything to do with Business Development – either qualitative or quantitative. Within that portfolio will fall Sales & Marketing, Estimating, Health & Safety, Investors in People (and the dreaded expression) "etc".

My place as leader of the team will be taken up by my close friend and colleague of many years Cain Eggleston. He will assume the new title Director & General Manager – Northern Region. This will give Cain control over all Operational & Commercial activities within our region.

For the avoidance of doubt I confirm that I will be reporting to Cain and that I look forward to working for him, and with him, for many years to come. I trust that you will feel the same and will join with me in congratulating Cain on his succession.

Best Regards

*P D S Taylor*

P D S Taylor  
 Managing Director - Northern Region

## STUDS

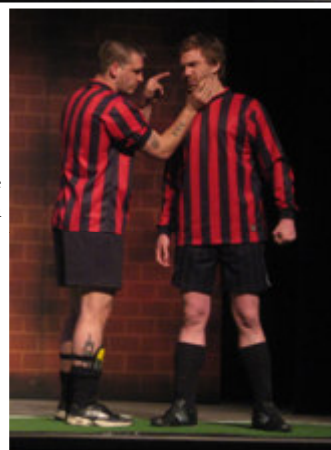
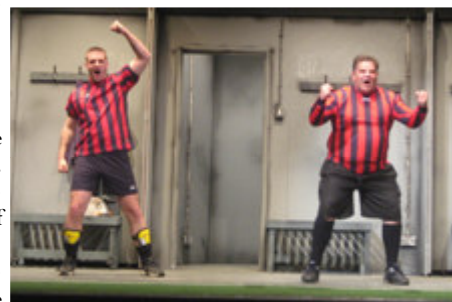
"Mac's the name, centre forward and top scorer "...And so began another venture under the bright lights of amateur theatre for Benchmark's newest recruit Simon Reece-Resident Thespian (though that is not my new role within the company). I have been involved in amateur dramatics since the tender age of 9 years old, though only in the last 7-8 years have I taken a more serious interest in it. Over the course of those years I have played a wide and varied range of interesting, integral and on occasion downright bizarre parts (that's pantomimes for you though I guess). Nonetheless I have loved each part equally and attacked each one with the same vigour, enthusiasm, dedication and discipline as I do each time I tread the boards. Those of you who have given up your time to come and be tortured.....erm... I mean entertained by myself and fellow actors will know that if nothing else you are guaranteed a cracking night out, and for a reasonable fee I might add. That was certainly the case on May 19<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> 2008.

'Studs' by 'Gordon Steele' is a story about Sunday league football, or to be more precise Sunday league footballer. It is centred around 5 characters, 'Mac' played by myself, 'Tommo', 'Kylie' (Mac's girlfriend), 'Mandy' (Tommo's girlfriend) and Ronnie (manager of the club). The story is set during the clubs quest to reach the county cup final, the Johnson's paint trophy of Sunday league football. It depicts the trials and tribulations of the beautiful game coupled with situations and experiences of each of the 5 characters. While Ronnie has to deal with the impending doom that is the local council's decision not to renew the club's lease and close the place down, the 2 young men and their respective partners grapple with their own demons and sometimes each others as the cup final, and the clubs last ever game, approaches. It is a funny and at times tragic and moving depiction of this country's favourite pastime coupled with the realism of the experiences the 4 young people encounter. I would like to take this moment to thank those of you in the company who caught the show, your support means a lot to me and the cast as without you there would be no show.

We also performed the play at the Wakefield Drama Festival on 26<sup>th</sup> May and placed 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 7 separate companies who performed over 7 nights at the festival. We also received 7 nominations including a nomination in the Best Actor category for yours truly. All in all the show was a great success.

I am sure you are all waiting with baited breath to know when I am on stage again; I am appearing in 'Stags and Hens' by 'Willy Russell' at the Wakefield Theatre Royal in September. I will attempt to keep anybody interested in coming to see it posted on any dates, ticket availability etc.

Simon Reece-Management Assistant  
 Northern Region





# Series 3 Rides Again!

## Series 3 Rides Again!

My dad owns a bit of land in Old Cantley, near Beach Tree Farm Riding Stables. The surrounding fields are sectioned off to different pony owners, of whom we're all friends with. Every weekend we go down there to mess about with stuff, mostly my dad's Land Rover 90 Hybrid, which has interested most of them. Anyway, one of our neighbours said "Do you know anyone who wants my landy?" So we said, "Yeah, we do!" To which the reply was – "you can have it" (this is all text speak!)

We were puzzled "You sure?" "Yeah, it's failed MOT and I ain't got the time" he text back. "SWEET!" I shouted, so off we went to pick it up, joking on the way saying how much of a heap it would be!

We got there & there it was this little green series 3 Land Rover. We loaded it up and off we went.

We got to the workshop, drove it over the pit & had a gander at the chassis, to see what I can only describe as a patchwork quilt of old rusty steel, with bits of new rusty steel welded everywhere. The near side leaf-spring hanger had rotted off, there were holes everywhere! It would have bankrupted him to get it through another MOT!

So we got straight to work, rubbing down, filling, welding, waxoyling, undersealing & then a bloody good wash, (all over a matter of weeks, not the same day!)

So then we did our mock MOT, checking lights etc, & then we booked it in for real (gulp!) To our surprise – a pass!!

Then the best bit, with him being born in 1973 he is tax exempt & very cheap insurance, so we got him all legal and off I went, not the most pleasant drive:- 1973, over a tonne & a half, on leaf-springs & no power steering! It's the most I have had to concentrate whilst driving, about 20 corrections to the steering wheel per second! But he was ours & we feel a great deal of accomplishment in getting him through the MOT 1<sup>st</sup> time, after seeing the horrors that lay beneath!

Now we have named him, (him because Land Rovers I think are manly, with them being big heavy & ugly!) "Lincoln Lawless the Land Rover", a 1973 Land Rover series 3 – 2.25L petrol 88 inch short wheel base, oh, & he sounds well too, due to a stubby silencer (that backfires too!)

Mark Knitter—Estimator  
Northern Region



## That 'cold' could be a killer boiler

Millions of people who believe they have cold or flu symptoms could actually have carbon monoxide poisoning caused by a faulty boiler at home, says new research.

The discovery emerged from the results of breath tests on shoppers who had gone to buy medicines for what they thought was an illness.

Many were found to have low level of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, which caused their symptoms including headaches, nausea, tiredness and other flu-like complaints. Over-exposed to the gas can be fatal. The Lloyds Pharmacy chain originally carried out the breath experiment to promote CO testing kits and had not expected so many customers to have such high levels. Further research found that up to 7.6 million households could be at risk from not doing regular checks on boilers.

The average boiler is estimated to be at least eight years old. One in five is more than a decade old and up to half of younger households do not get their boilers serviced annually. Furthermore, most are likely to have an open flue which creates a downward draft in windy weather so even a small leak means the CO will be blown back into a home. The pharmacy chain is calling for a campaign to fit council-owned and rental properties – presently, only about one in four has one.

**NB: YOU CAN GET A CO ALARM FOR AROUND £28-30 FROM HOMEBASE, PROTECT YOURSELF AND LOVED ONES....**

**GET AN ALARM.**

Keira Leoni—Administrator  
London Region

## SAFETY AWARDS

### Company Safety Awards

#### MARCH

Glen Smith won the Northern award for having an exceptionally run and safe site.

Alan Collier & Dean Ryan won the London award for noticing in high winds that a sign had come loose on the top of a tower crane and safely secured the sign to prevent it becoming loose.

#### APRIL

Steve Gregory won the Northern award for stopping people standing on a protection fan while trying to install a concrete pump pipe, they also cut the Monar-flex sheeting. These people were removed from site.

Gary Ellis won the London award for identifying an edge protection handrail that had been tampered with then repaired it, preventing it from falling off the edge or worse and reporting it.

#### May

Steve Gregory and Simon Boss won the Northern award for preventing others carrying out dangerous practices by tampering with or altering scaffolds.

Barry Lane won the London award for his excellent work at Selfridges, Oxford Street and for erecting a complicated structure whilst controlling a large amount of men with no incidents.

#### SAFETY SCORE

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

If you were not already aware Billy Wood and myself can handout safety scores. These are bonuses of £20 that we issue to operatives that are seen to be taking safety seriously. This can be in many forms and are issued solely at our discretion so don't stand in a line

Peter Booth—Safety Manager  
London Region

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

## Not quite training for the Olympics

Following hot on the heels of Beckton our Barnsley Branch has now got a training room which will be used for internal and external training. It has already had two training days and the consensus was good.

It seats 10 people and has a plasma screen TV, white board and a flipchart. There is a second reception area where refreshments are served.

We are soon going to be running our 'One Day Safety Awareness' course which has just been finalised so you will be able to judge for yourself our gold standard commitment to being the industry leaders in safety.

Billy Wood—Safety Advisor  
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**

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April marked an important day for Peter Gammons. He retired from the company, having been one of the longest serving team members.

Peter joined us in 1996 as an advanced scaffolder, working on such important projects as The Royal Opera House during those early days of the company's history.

In 2001-2002, Peter ran the job in Goswell Road, Islington, involving some complicated and challenging protection and access scaffolds.

More recently, Peter has worked on some massive projects such as Mace, 51 Lime Street, adjacent to the Gherkin and also on Bovis' flagship at 240 Regents Street (Dickens & Jones).

When Peter wasn't at work, he occupied his time with his passion for angling and line-dancing. His wife has a website dedicated to Victorian doll's houses; buying, selling & building etc. Peter decided to take a pragmatic approach to this on the basis that if you can't beat them, you might as well join 'em and plays an active part in the processes involved.

If you are lucky enough to socialise with Peter at some time, ask him about the chocolate heart; the conversation is guaranteed to take a comical turn!

We all wish Peter a long and happy retirement and thank him for the loyal service and input that he has given us during his years at Benchmark.



### Berney's 60th Birthday



Berney celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008 where he confirmed that the last 13 years have been the happiest of his career. Florence, being Berney's wife, thought she'd better get him a cake and some bubbly, to which we at the office added a few too many sandwiches...

Keira Leoni—Administrator  
London Region



**Proud Parent Dave Isbell with  
Millie Mae Isbell Born on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008  
at 05.56hrs weighing 7.11lbs  
London Region**



**Proud parent Mick Merrimen with  
Maizey Angelina Merriman Born 23<sup>rd</sup>  
March 2008 weighing 5lb 12 oz  
London Region**

**BENCHMARK SCAFFOLDING LTD**

*Setting the Standards*

