

# BENCHPRESS

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

OK so those of you who are astute will have realised that this issue should have been out before Christmas and therefore would have opened with a different salutation but what's past is past and can't be changed – unless you're Ebenezer Scrooge anyway!



Speaking of things past let's cast our mind's back to 12<sup>th</sup> April 1999. Yes, I know that's 10 years ago and you're all thinking "well I can't remember & I can't be bothered seeking out old diaries to find out". True – and why should you? Well you shouldn't really so I'll explain.

That was the date that the first spanner turned in the Northern Region of your company (or, for the benefit of non-Benchmark people reading this – our company). During the earlier months of 1999 I had been making overtures to Schal (the management arm of Tamac as they were then known and Carillion as they subsequently became) in an attempt to secure work at the former steelworks in Templeborough, Rotherham. I succeeded in winning that contract and Benchmark's Northern Region was underway.

Magna was a millennium funded project that would create (from a disused steelworks) a sort of science adventure park/museum/visitor centre that would attract people from far and wide to experience the four elements of earth, fire, water and wind (I've listed those in alphabetical order to avoid you thinking of a 70's soul band). I visited the completed project myself and can confirm its value as a spectacle. Magna is still going strong today.

But what of Benchmark? Well we're still going too. I've missed out the word strong in the previous sentence and perhaps I should have omitted it from the previous paragraph too as I can't be categorical about the fortunes of Magna. Times are hard, we all know that, and may well get harder. What's also hard is the work that the directors, managers and employees of Benchmark are doing to maintain the success of the company. We can all help of course by doing that little bit extra to serve our customers and our colleagues just a little bit better, just a little bit quicker. Benchmark has always been a little bit different from other scaffolding contractors and I'm sure we all hope that, come the end of the economic downturn, we're still just a little bit different.

**Paul Taylor**  
**Director & Business Development Manager**  
**Northern Region**

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# Lucky Crash

Being a bit of an adrenaline junkie, I like my extreme sports, especially Freestyle Motocross. What on earth is Freestyle Motocross I hear you ask!? Well, basically, freestyler's take their motocross bikes, do trick's in mid air, whether it be ramp to dirt, or out in God's green Earth.

Me not having loads of money to buy a ramp, I decided to go to our local quarry, which me & my friends go to when we all decide to go out on our bikes together. I'm usually the one that does all the daft stuff first, I decided to go alone to the quarry on my new Honda CR250, with its many new trick parts. The quarry has all the big sand dunes, cliffs etc (basically a playground). I decided to hit a dirt to dirt jump, not a good idea I came up short, winded myself really badly, stood up & dusted myself off. Realising my feet hurt, I sat down, took my boots off, stood up again, and the lower part of my right leg folded. Then I dropped to the floor in agony! As I got my breath back I pushed myself backwards to straighten my mangled leg, then, realising my left wrist hurt, rolled my sleeve back to reveal a disfigured arm I had broken my left wrist, again! (3rd time!).

Realising I couldn't move, I just sat screaming for help for what seemed like days. As it was the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, it was bloody freezing. Then shock set in, uncontrollable shivering, I just sat there watching my ankles swell up! After an hour or so, a man appeared at the entrance to the quarry (I was the bottom of a valley) by this point my voice had gone, waving & shouting, he looked, and then disappeared! Bummer, then I thought "this is it", I stopped shivering, and then a weird warm euphoric feeling came over me. Then, finally a white van appeared, the Ambulance! Yey! Took them a while to descend to my location, upon arrival I got a nice warm blanket & a massive injection of Morphine, "ahhhhhh!" Off to hospital I went, they only could manage to find a pulse on the shin of my right foot: any longer & it would have been goodbye Mr Knitter!

The day after, I was pumped full of painkillers & taken for some X-rays.

**THE DAMAGE REPORT:** Broken Tibia & Fibula. Both ankles were broken beyond recognition (Dr Kuffash described it as "taking a hammer to a digestive biscuit") & a broken Radius. A few days into my stay at Doncaster Royal Infirmary they finally decided what they were going to do with me. Put on an external Fixator/Cage & screw me back together. It took them 8 hours to do the Fixator.

They finally let me out on Christmas Eve, in a wheel chair & with a bag full of dressings, pain killers & antibiotics. Eight or so months later, the removal of the Fixator! They took me to the plaster room (where they put pots on, not plasters!) no anaesthetic, just Gas & Air, which is rubbish! Then, he cut the rods that went through my leg & took the rest of the cage off, so my leg then looked like "Pin Heads" well, head! They pulled one out "JESUS!" I cried, "That hurt like f\*\*k!" "Shhhhh!", my mother said, as there were kids with their mum's & dad's waiting to have their Spiderman pots off in the waiting room.

Then the next one, he gave a pull, no movement, another big pull, then a pull and a twist, nothing! At this point I was in tears, then a massive pull/twist followed by a "Get it out you bas\*\*rd!!" I yelled (with my mother & the plaster man holding me down). The Doctor was sweating at this point! After a few of the most painful minutes of my life, they were out. Then on went a pot for few a months, after that, the pot's came off, and physiotherapy started.

First off, how to walk, (that's right, I had to learn how to walk again) with a Zimmer frame, few more weeks, out of the Zimmer & into something better for my street cred, crutches! Whilst all this was going on, the Doctors told me I couldn't do my job (Scaffolding Labourer), so I had to put some serious thought into what I was going to do. Luckily Paul Taylor offered me a job in the office: I took it, & unfortunately for him I'm still here!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank: my family, for putting up with me & basically looking after a 20 year old baby again; my friends who wheeled me down to the pub, & no thanks for pinching my wheelchair whilst drunk(!) & my work mates, especially Paul, without whom none of this would have been possible.

## Thank you.

Mark Knitter—Estimator/Surveyor  
Northern Region

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.



Right leg before



Right leg after fixator was removed



Left ankle with 4 huge screws

## BLACKBURN COLLEGE PHASE 2

Just a quick thank you to all the team who helped put up a great job in just 5 weeks at Blackburn College. The team was headed by Ian Hardisty and these are just a few of the good looking guys amongst Ian's team.

Keith Lawson  
Contracts Manager  
Northern Region



# Benchmark's going Green!

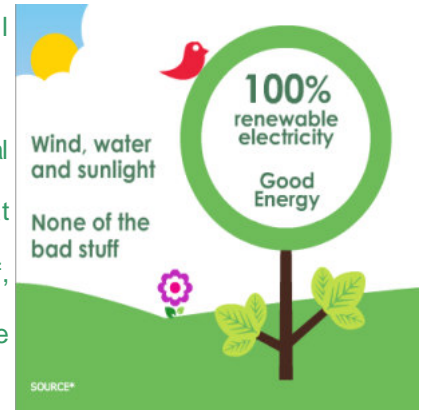


The Benchmark offices are now receiving their power from

Good Energy – a company providing environmentally friendly, 100% renewable electricity. Good Energy sources its renewable electricity from generators all over the UK, and it's made up of wind power, solar power and hydro electricity: all sustainable, all green. So, every time you switch on a light or boil the kettle in the office, you can be sure that the energy powering it is from a lovely, clean, green place – not from dirty, climate-damaging fossil fuels!

By switching to a green supplier, we've acted in accordance with the Benchmark Ethical Policy, in a socially and environmentally responsible way. But there's always more that can be done – such as the energy saving tips suggested in this, and other issues of, Benchpress. By being aware of the energy we're using, and its impact on the environment, we can each make a contribution in the fight against climate change.

Stephanie West  
London Region



## SAFETY AWARDS

### Company Safety Awards

#### September

**Gareth Williams** won the Northern award for finding an excavation with no protection, proceeded to erect handrails around it and place appropriate signage.

**Jason Smart** won the London award for creating a register for the nets on site, inspecting the nets and recording the findings and taking photos of damaged nets.

#### October

**Carlos Siqueira** won the Northern award for his attention to detail in all aspects of the job including safety, which we believe may have generated more work.

**Tony Meacock** won the London award for following a number of thorough inspections and audits by the main contractor (Bovis), no issues or problems were identified.

#### November

**William Wood Jnr** won the Northern award for noting that at site induction operatives were informed that persons other than scaffolders interfering with scaffolds would be given points (like on a driving license). William informed the Carillion Manager that this was an illegal operation and the operatives should be removed from site. This has now been taken on by Carillion.

**Dave Isbell** won the London award for during windy conditions went up in a MEWP to complete some netting to prevent incidents from materials blowing off the building. This was carried out without any risk to himself.

#### December

**Grant Lawson (yard staff)** won the Northern award for suggesting that handrails and toe boards be fitted around the materials stored above the saw bench, so they would not fall with the vibration, they have now been fitted.

**Rosa Garrigos** won the London award. She was recognised by the Principal Contractor (Balfour Beatty/Carillion) as demonstrating a good example of safe working practice and featuring in an article entered in the PC's magazine.

## Turn it off or leave it on?

Following a discussion in a recent safety meeting it was apparent that most people believe that leaving a fluorescent strip light on, is more energy efficient than turning it off, due to the power surge required when starting up.

This is in fact not true as the start up energy is offset by the power

saved in even the briefest outages.

So if you are leaving the room for more than a few minutes it makes environmental and financial sense to switch off the lights and save energy.

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](mailto:barnsley@benchmarkscaffolding.com)



**Mark Byrne's** nephew receiving his campaign medal from HRH Prince Charles on 2nd December 2008 at Colchester barracks.

Ronald is in 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Parachute Regiment- he was based in Helmand province.

Mark Byrne — Operations Manager  
London Region



**"Happy 40th  
Birthday love from  
all your friends  
and family"**  
**Gary Davies  
(Dabba)**

**Name:** Keith Lawson  
**Position:** Contracts Manager  
**Region:** Northern Region  
**Nick Name:** Fu  
**Hobbies:** Fishing  
**Favorite Band:** Meatloaf/  
Bon Jovi  
**Likes:** Football/Motor Sports  
**Dislikes:** Being let down  
**Dream Car:** Ferrari

## Benchmark PROFILE



**The Phoenix Netball  
Team** would like to thank everyone at Benchmark Scaffolding for sponsoring them, last year, to help raise funds to purchase a new uniform.

One of their players is Jackie Ferguson who's husband Sean works in our Head Office in London.

The team just wanted everyone to know they really appreciated your contribution.

Big thank you from Jackie Ferguson



**Kori Marcus Bradbury** born 2nd July 2008  
weighing 7lb 13oz Mark and Georgina are  
the very proud parents.  
A happy little chappy (even at 3am)  
Northern Region



Marcus Hart recently became the proud dad of baby **Maison** born 7th September 2008  
weighing 7lb 3oz.  
London Region

**BENCHMARK SCAFFOLDING LTD**



Setting the Standards