

Readers Letters



Hello Leigh,

Hope this mail finds you in good health.

While I am always impressed by your infinite knowledge of our industry, I have to spot a mistake in the above mentioned article! Indeed, the Toucan 1210, launched in 2001 (launch attended by your predecessor Mr Whiteman, in Saint Emilion) has a telescopic jib offering an outreach of 5.22 metres !!

You are of course excused as the cover of the Feb issue had a nice picture of a 1250AJ in the Louvre !! :-)

See you soon, perhaps tomorrow in Rome?

Sincères salutations

Laurent Guillaux

Senior Director Sales and Customer Support Southern Europe

JLG France

This letter refers to our boom lift article on page 19 of the February issue, where we discussed the fitting of telescopic articulated jibs to self-propelled boom lifts. We credited Haulotte with introducing the idea with its H28TJ three years ago, (there was actually a typo' there in that it should have said adding a telescopic section to the articulated JIB on its H28TJ (it actually said to the articulated BOOM on its H28TJ - the H28TJ is a straight telescopic) with JLG adding it to the 1500SJ last year and more recently Manitou adding one to its 28TJ. Mr Guillaux is not wrong in that the Toucan 1210 was possibly the first self-propelled lift to have a telescopic jib... However... We would argue that the jib on a mast boom is more like a small boom, rather than an 'articulated jib' on a telescopic or articulated boom lift. His point is though very well taken and correspondence from such an esteemed source always very much appreciated. LWS

Dear Leigh,

You will find that JLG's 800A and AJ's hit bridges the most. Why? Well the 800A basket when stowed sits about 20" (508mm) above the ground or trailer deck, when tying down the basket for transport it may leverage the tower boom up or drivers are simply not lowering the tower boom all the way down as the tower boom and main boom can get out of sequence, leaving the tower boom raised enough to be over height. The 800A is 10' (3.04m) stowed plus a 3' (900mm) trailer height puts you at 13', 13'6" is legal US DOT maximum height. Interstate bridges are typically 14'6" minimum but off the Interstates there is no telling what bridge heights will be.

Anti-Entrapment devices. Not sure what all the discussion is about. It is a safety device like other device. There are crushing injuries and deaths, if they work they should be required. Seems the same discussions were around when people fought seat belts, air bags, etc... or pothole protection on slab scissors which has saved thousands of lives. Don't hear about that do we, since now when a slab scissor lifts falls into a hole the guy just backs out and gets on with his work. No harm no foul and no Near Miss report, Ha Ha! Yeah, yeah train, train, train, but if we can design better safer machines then let's do that too.

Seems there may be a "not my idea" mind set going on with the manufacturers. Just takes one forward thinker to push them, like Blue Sky and one manufacturer like Genie to authorise it and now it is something.

Try JLG's SkyGuard at Intermat and see what you think. I had a chance recently to try it and liked it and know that safety people who have seen it and Blue Sky's SkySiren like them both.

Name withheld on our judgement rather than any request of the correspondents..Ed

Dear Sir,

I feel compelled that I must write to you regarding Lee Rowe, of Primeserve / PSS / Brand 1. I used to work for Lee and am certainly bitter about how he fired me, however, everything I am telling you here is completely true.

Lee makes very rash decisions, and came into work one morning and told me that he could find someone else to do my job, for less than he paid me. When I threatened him with unfair dismissal, he told me to **** off, and that he was about to liquidate the company anyway. This was at the time he had differing versions of PSS.

He has a lot of enemies, mainly due to the amounts of money people have lost from his companies. A few years ago, he and his family moved into a gated house, with lots of security cameras etc.

Whilst I worked for Lee, he boasted about how he worked the system, and his continuing scheme to close companies down and open new ones. He used different liquidators each time, and different family members as directors / shareholders. He moved business premises each time he folded a company. He would pay rent for the first 6 months on a place, and then just stop paying. When he moved on, thousands were due to the landlords.

Likewise, he owed thousands to creditors and the VAT man. Amazingly, he NEVER paid any Corporation Tax - a fact he is quite proud of. Corporation Tax is due 9 months after the end of the financial year, so he could trade for almost 2 years before the taxman put real pressure on.

Brand 1 Solutions has been trading from premises in Salford. The reason that this company had lasted for so long is that they had CIS tax deductions taken from a large part of turnover, so that taxman got his money direct.

However Lee's past has caught up with him. He has been finding it increasing difficult for people to trade with him, and he has been operating on a skeleton staff now for a while. I understand that the financial situation is now at a critical point. He apparently owes a small fortune to several crane hire companies (including my current employer), he is again behind with rent.

Brand 1 is now trading as Contract Lifting which is being run by Lee's brother. This has been set up on the same telephone number as Brand 1, in the hope that his brother can pick up some tale end bits of business left behind.

This letter is one of several all saying pretty much the same thing. We have chosen to delete a large amount of the content, not that we doubted any of it, but felt that some of the information provided was private and some would have disclosed the writer, not that he was concerned about that. The fact is that if, as many people are telling us this man is heading to Canada permanently, he will hopefully find a new career and this will be the end of it. Ed

Dear Leigh,

It was good to have a chat last week on a variety of subjects and I must congratulate you on the progress you have made with the magazine, which really is a very respectable publication now with a very considerable amount of support.

I was indeed, sad to read of your uncle's death, not having 'heard it through the grapevine'. I used to see quite a lot of him in my John Laing days, as he and his brothers were obviously very involved with virtually all of Laing's major contracts and all too often in the days when we had a large crane fleet at EPL, we were in conflict with them!

I was also very pleased to hear that you had already decided to feature an article on Bernard James, as I do believe that our industry owes a great deal to him for the way he handled the health and safety aspect for this industry in the fledgling days and indeed, his continuing wisdom as the industry grew into something of a monster.

I first met Bernard in about 1973, when he was allocated by the HSE to take these new-fangled platforms (as they were then) under his wing from a health and safety point of view and looking back over all the years when he was with the HSE, I had nothing but admiration and praise for he performed a remarkably difficult job. There were no rules or regulations covering these machines at that time and everything came about by trial and error on our part and some very helpful input from Bernard on behalf of the HSE. In his position, a lesser man could have had a field day in making life difficult for this fledgling industry and with little or no effort could have influenced the industry so severely that it would never have developed to its present all-embracing worldwide status.

As the industry grew, so did Bernard's role and he remained active on the powered access front until his retirement from the HSE. Despite the reputation the HSE has gained for its somewhat clumsy handling of a number of safety related matters within our industry, (I refer, needless to say, to their totally irrational approach to the lifting of people by mobile cranes, in particular) Bernard's approach was always practical, sensible and to the point and he was always ready to rationally discuss safety issues with individuals and companies, large and small and I think, as an industry, we all owe a large debt of gratitude to Bernard for the diplomatic but positive way he conducted himself throughout his working life. His input on legislation over many years was valuable and based on practical experience of the safety issues in our industry, we should be grateful for the fact that the resulting regulation has been modelled on common sense and much of the credit for that should rest on Bernard's shoulders.

His retirement from the HSE more or less coincided with the formation of Powered Access Certification Ltd as a subsidiary company of IPAF and I was delighted when he agreed to join the board of PAC, remaining a Director until my retirement from IPAF when I purchased the company from the federation and introduced a policy whereby all the company's board members would be chosen from those working for the company.

We all enjoyed Bernard's company on social occasions after the formal meetings were over and I know he will be missed, not only by his family but by all those who knew and worked with him.

With best regards

Paul.

ALLMI and the intransigence of CPCS

Full marks to ALLMI, in their affiliation discussions with CPCS, for insisting on the mandatory pre-requisite of "training" in any testing regime. ALLMI's concept of a nationally recognised card for loader cranes is eminently sensible though CPCS's refusal to affiliate highlights the fault lines nurtured by Construction Skills, and their key stakeholders, which are detrimental to improving best practice, defying common sense, and logic.

Other attempts to forge CPCS affiliations with NPORS and LANTRA when the CPCS scheme was in its infancy, failed when CPCS feared they might be put at a commercial disadvantage regarding the issue of non CPCS cards. A more recent unilateral decision to opt out of an accredited bodies' training forum by the CPCS who claimed there was little purpose in them remaining after the HSE decided to withdraw its management function. The CPCS management committee decided that anything with a formal mandated training content would be best avoided relying on a pan sector NVQ for plant operators based on very generic national occupational standards, and not construction specific.

In the ALLMI/CPCS affiliation attempt the CPCS could not agree on ALLMI's insistence that "training" remain a mandatory part of any training and testing procedure. Why don't CPCS come clean and state that all they want is a "testing" facility and let anyone who happens to be passing do the training? In 2008 the CPCS deregulated their training for plant operators stating that this is what industry wants. If the truth be known they were pressurised by key stakeholders early in 2007/8 claiming that any mandated training would be disproportionately expensive, lack quality assurance and hinder the aim of reduced accident statistics on construction sites. In fairness to CPCS they produced some excellent learning outcomes for industry with the forlorn hope that employers would utilise them in fulfilling legal duties under Section 2 (2) (c) of the HSWA 1974, in the provision of information, instruction, training and supervision. Thus far, employers have rarely used the learning outcomes more inclined to let their prospective operators sit a theory test, (answers available through e-bay for £8.95!), and then chance the practical test at the local test centre. Needless to say the business development managers at Bircham Newton are absolutely delighted with this "testing only" policy, and its income generation, which grosses approximately £3 million each calendar year.

I have been associated with training and testing plant operators for nearly 50 years and have worked with various departments of the CITB, and its plant operator schemes since its formation in the mid 1960s. A now retired senior manager at CPCS always reminded me, prior to 2008, why, in his opinion, the CPCS scheme was the crème de la crème, and the preference of industry. "The others, (NPORS and LANTRA, etc ;), don't have any decent training standards." Now, in 2012 it's somewhat ironic that the tables are reversed, with the CPCS divorced from mandated training completely, purely concentrating on the need to test. A retrograde step for plant operators and industry's attempts to establish competency and the curbing of the ever escalating accident rate.

Good luck to ALLMI and their refreshing stand on "training." Industry should ask why the CPCS have such difficulty in forming affiliations with other interested groups and organisations seeking to encourage a training ethos. The refusal of ALLMI to associate with an NVQ also confirms the viewpoint of many, who question the current NVQs for equipment operators and their suitability as a true measure of competence. As for the use of log books, both ALLMI and CPCS have definitely got that wrong. Emphasis must be placed with an ongoing means of evidencing continued professional development, for which a log book, is ideal.

In summary we should all ponder what commercial, training, philosophical differences have made the meeting of minds of CPCS and their key stakeholders, with other accredited bodies, (including CSCS), so irreconcilable? The intransigence of accredited bodies will be the catalyst to engineer their demise and the prospect of having to face the inevitability of a statutory requirement for the licensing of equipment operatives.

Mick Norton

Norton Training and Testing

Wakefield

Preliminary summary/conclusions from ESTA's Expert Summit

Safety Issues in Wind Turbine Installation and Transportation.

The crane manufacturers organised under the FEM-umbrella will make a detailed summary/conclusion paper over the summer 2012, until then, this preliminary summary can be used.

Lifting of rotor blades and/or rotor assemblies.

The lifting charts for most, if not all European made mobile cranes, includes the following two assumptions:

- 1) A wind surface of 1 sq m per tonne of load lifted.
 - 2) A drag factor $CW = 1.2$.
- Rotor blades or rotor assemblies have a significantly higher wind surface than 1 sq m per tonne, often 5 – 10 times higher
 - The CW factor of a complete rotor assembly is often 1.5 – 1.8 and not the assumed 1.2.

Therefore:

The wind speeds in the cranes load charts are not valid when lifting rotor blades or rotor assemblies. Lifting these items will require lower wind speeds, compared to the wind speeds allowed, when lifting tower sections or a nacelle. Please refer to the crane manufacturer's manual for the correct wind speed.

Wind speed

It should be remembered, that the wind speed referred to in load charts is the so called "3 second gust" measured at boom head, and not the average wind speed measured at a 10 metre elevation over a time period of 10 minutes.

These 3 factors:

- the wind surface of the rotor/rotor assemblies,
- the CW factor and
- the "3 second gust" wind speed

are among the reasons why waiting time should be expected/calculated when planning the lifting of rotor blades/rotor assemblies.

Conclusion:

Delays in lifting operations should be expected, when lifting rotor blades or rotor assemblies, due to the often significantly lower wind speeds required, due to the above mentioned factors.

Outrigger pressure

It should be remembered, that the outrigger pressure chart from the crane manufacturer, does not include the added outrigger pressure coming from the wind acting on the crane and its load. When lifting tower sections and/or the nacelle, an additional 20 % of the maximum outrigger pressure, shown in the manufacturer's manual, should be added, in order to establish the correct outrigger pressure value.

This should always be remembered, when selecting the proper support plates under the cranes outriggers or under a crawler cranes tracks.

When lifting a rotor blade or a complete rotor assembly, an additional 35 % should be added to the outrigger pressure for this particular kind of lifting. It should especially be

remembered, when lifting down an existing rotor assembly, as a smaller crane often is used here, compared to the crane used, when erected a new wind turbine.

Conclusion:

Always remember to add the additional outrigger pressure created by the wind acting on both the crane and its load. Make sure, that the hard stands are designed accordingly and outrigger support plates take this added outrigger pressure into account.

Access roads

In many countries mobile cranes travel with an axle load of 12 tonnes. Due to time constraints, hydraulic cranes are very often moved from one hard stand to the next in a semi-assembled configuration. This requires a number of safety precautions ie:

The access roads must be able to handle the axle pressure from the crane in its semi- assembled configuration.

When travelling on access roads with super lift attachment and/or the base section for the luffing jib and/or part of the counterweight, the axle pressure on some axles could increase to 25 tonnes or more. Needless to say, the civil contractor responsible for the construction of the access roads must have full knowledge of this increased axle pressure.

Conclusion:

Access roads must be designed to accommodate the crane in that particular configuration, in which it is moved on the site and not according to a generic axle pressure.

Cross fall or chamber of access roads

When moving hydraulic or crawler cranes in a semi assembled configuration, the centre of gravity for the crane in question is then moving up to a higher position measured from ground level. Moving cranes on access roads or any other roads in a semi assembled configuration should only be done after consultations with the crane manufacturer. The chamber (or cross fall) of the road must be within the limits outlined by the crane manufacturer.

Conclusion:

The road must be designed to accommodate the crane in that particular configuration in which it is moved on the site.

Lead Time.

During the "Question and Answer" session many hauliers and crane rental companies complained over time constraints, as far as lead time was concerned. Especially, but not only, towards the end of a calendar year, lead time is often reduced to an unacceptable level. Without the proper lead time, the possibility of "cutting safety related corners" increase. This increases the risk of delays during operation.

Conclusion:

Proper lead times reduce the risk of delays later on during the project.

Regards,

Søren Jansen

ESTA General Secretary