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CUSTOMER SERVICE: AFI MAKES SIGNIFICANT STRIDES FORWARD



By Richard Saunders
Managing Director

In the last issue of Aerial View I said that despite challenging UK trading conditions AFI was confident of making continued progress on developing our business and, in turn, our service to our customers.

I'm now delighted to report that we have made significant strides forward towards achieving both these aims.

We are continuing to relocate depots to larger premises, examples of this being the recent relocation of our East Midlands and North East depots (Page 7).

We will also be moving our Wakefield depot to a newly-



AFI is keeping existing machines in top condition through a programme of refurbishment.

built facility in Normanton, near Wakefield, shortly.

We have also been further strengthening our rental fleet in two key areas – refurbishing machines in our existing rental fleet, including the recent refurbishment of a number of Nifty HR12s (Page 6), and new additions to the fleet to support

major projects, including the 'Media City UK' project at Salford Quays, Manchester.

As well as investing in our fleet, we continue to invest in our team through staff training to support their development. This commitment has been

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AFI MAKES SIGNIFICANT STRIDES FORWARD

(Continued from Page 1)

demonstrated by our recent successful reassessment and continued recognition as an Investor in People (Page 6).

Hand in hand with these investments is a strong commitment to ensure that we have the best possible processes in place to underpin all our activities. With this in mind, we are carrying out a number of further initiatives to ensure that our business is fully geared up to meet your requirements.

For example, we have recently introduced a new training diary system, which will be linked to the AFI-Uplift website to enable customers to see the availability of training places in real time.

We are also ensuring that the latest IT systems are in place to increase our efficiency and services. We are trialling a digital pen system which enables details on forms such as Pre Delivery Inspections, LOLERs and Test Certificates to be directly uploaded onto our IT system as soon as the form has been completed (Page 3). We are also rolling out new phones to our Account Managers to enable them to receive emails whilst out on site and visiting customers.

Still further emphasis on our processes has come with the recent extension to the role of Brian Parker, our Training Manager (Page 5). He is now also responsible for AFI's Health & Safety policy, ISO 9000 quality systems and environmental standards, as well as developing our Green policy to ensure that AFI is acting responsibly in the best interests of the environment.

As we formalise and consolidate our procedures, practices and operations we will be able to provide an even stronger platform for further growth.

AFI-UPLIFT MACH

IT'S A WRAP!

These two AFI-Uplift scissor lifts have helped to carry out one of the UK's biggest ever shrink wrapping jobs – involving two storage tanks each measuring 60m x 15m.

The AFI 9250 diesel scissors were hired by PK Marine Freight Services to shrink wrap the two tanks in a special waterproof membrane for long term storage at Ellesmere Port Dock before they are shipped to an overseas customer. Each of the scissors lifts had two 1.2m deck extensions, providing a total platform length of nearly 7m per scissor.

PK Marine Freight Services Managing Director Ian Kirkham said: "The AFI scissors were ideal because of their platform length – the shrink wrapping process required a large area to be done at once, and with



the long platforms we were able to have three men working on each scissor lift at the same time."

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION AT BRIDGEND

It was a case of "lights, camera, action" in Bridgend recently when AFI's South Wales depot donated a boom lift and operator to help in the production of a film to raise awareness of abuse to vulnerable adults.

The AFI 450AJ boom helped Bridgend College students to cover all the camera angles for the film they are producing in collaboration with South Wales Police, its Adult Protection forum and Bridgend County Borough Council. With its working height of 15.54m and horizontal reach of 7.47m the AFI boom was able



to provide a bird's-eye view of the action as it worked on location at a nearby beach. Clare Pompa, Creative Industries Foundation Degree Course Tutor at Bridgend College, said: "The AFI boom gave us the opportunity

to capture large scale shots. The platform was extremely stable so it proved to be ideal for filming. We are delighted that AFI came forward to support this worthy cause."

MACHINES IN ACTION



HELPING TO CREATE A LIVING ARTWORK

Two articulated boom lifts from AFI helped clad a sculpture to create a large-scale planter as part of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture programme.

Scott Associates of Glasgow selected two HA16PX booms, which have a working height of 16 metres and outreach of 9 metres. Hired from AFI's Liverpool depot, the machines were used to help attach expanded mesh to the outside of the steel sculpture to encourage plants growing inside to spill over the outside of the structure. The planter will form an eye-catching centrepiece of a new garden being created on derelict land in the middle of a housing estate.

Simon Hopkins, of Scott Associates, said: "The AFI boom lifts were the ideal choice for the job. They were delivered on time and our operators were given a comprehensive practical training course by AFI before using the booms. Every facet of the sculpture was easily accessible and the job was completed without any hitches."



DIGITAL PEN TRIALS IN FINAL STAGES

AFI is now reaching the final stages of trials of a digital pen, which is already proving to be very successful.

The digital pen system is designed to increase efficiency by saving time and cutting down on paperwork.

The pen eliminates the need for engineers to input information into our computer systems that they have already filled out in forms. A camera in the pen records the engineers' handwriting as they complete forms and the pen then transmits the information into our computer systems.

We will be able to instantly update our main software with details of the six monthly LOLER inspections, Pre Delivery Inspections, servicing breakdowns and warranty work completed by the engineers.

Within minutes, a copy of the actual paperwork will be emailed to the AFI depot, who will be able to process any further work that needs to be done as a result of the engineers' visit.

We can also forward a copy of the results to the customer instantly for his own records.

■ **AFI Apprentice Phil Baines is pictured using the digital pen.**

AFI-UPLIFT TRAINING UPDATE...AFI-U

Court case highlights the need for ladder training

The Ladder Association has again called for all employers to address the need for training when using ladders and stepladders.

Their call follows a recent court case in which a school caretaker successfully claimed damages against his local authority employer by demonstrating that their failure to train him in the proper use of a stepladder was a major contributory cause to the injuries he sustained.

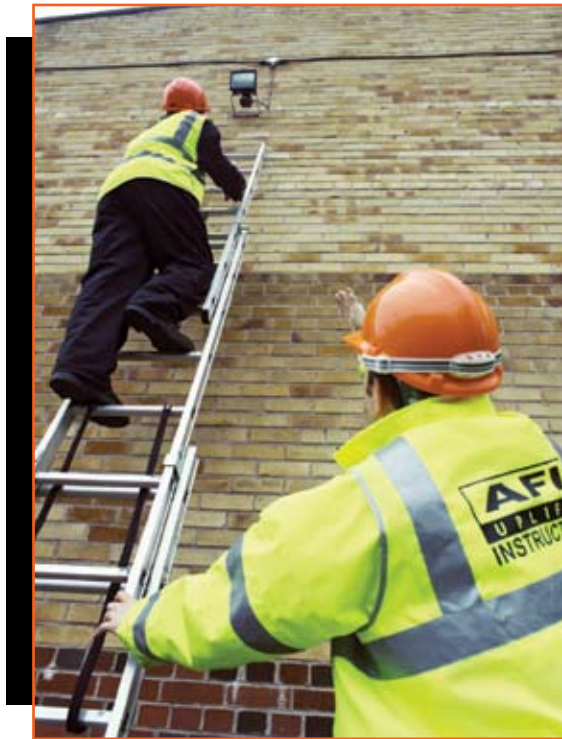
"Although it seems straightforward, it's essential to decide if a ladder is the right piece of equipment through risk assessment, then to choose the right type of ladder and to know how to use it safely. It's about taking an informed, common sense approach to working at height," said the Association.

"The Ladder Association has long advocated the need for formal training to combat the potentially dangerous mentality practiced and entertained by those who rely solely on learning on the job. There is no room for this sort of complacency," it added.

The caretaker, Anthony Gower-Smith (73), successfully sued Hampshire County Council after he fell off a 1.8 metre (6ft) stepladder he was using at Awbridge Primary School in Romsey in 2004. In court, he claimed his employer had not shown him how to use the ladder.

The council denied negligence. He won his case on the basis that the council was 75% to blame. His compensation is now being assessed although he is claiming £50,000, having suffered

a fractured skull, fractured cheek bone and kidney injuries in the fall, leading to treatment in intensive care. He has not been able to work since.



AFI runs Ladder Association courses throughout the UK, covering the following:

- Selecting appropriate equipment for a task
- Assessing applications appropriate to use
- Correct location of ladders and stepladders
- Inspection for damage of ladders and stepladders
- Regulations and legislation
- Standards and Classifications
- Hazards

TO BOOK A COURSE CALL AFI ON 08707 871511

PROVIDING COVERAGE THROUGHOUT THE UK

Birmingham

Tel: 0121 525 7226

Fax: 0121 525 5547

birmingham.depot@afi-uplift.co.uk

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Tel: 01277 812 976

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Milton Keynes

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Fax: 01908 669 408

miltonkeynes.depot@afi-uplift.co.uk

North East

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Fax: 0191 416 5513

northeast.depot@afi-uplift.co.uk

PLIFT TRAINING UPDATE...



Additional responsibilities

In addition to his existing role of General Training Manager for AFI, Brian Parker will now also be responsible for Health & Safety, ISO, Environmental and Green policies at AFI.

Brian's new role will enable the company to clearly focus on further improvements to its quality standards and procedures, to offer greater value and service for customers. His new responsibilities will include:

- Health & Safety policy and implementation of these procedures throughout the company
- ISO 9000 quality systems, including working with our audit team
- Environmental standards
- Green policy – to ensure that AFI is acting responsibly in the best interests of the environment.

AFI produces harness inspection guide

In conjunction with IPAF, AFI is continuing to promote the use of harnesses and short adjustable restraint lanyards in all boom-type platforms.

As part of this campaign, AFI has produced posters (as shown) highlighting everything an operator needs to know about inspecting a safety harness.

The posters are being displayed at AFI training centres throughout the UK and have also been reproduced in the AFI IPAF Operators' Safety Guide, which is given to everyone attending one of our IPAF operators' courses.

Safety Harness Inspection ... AFI UPLIFT

WEARING When checking sitting look for cuts, tears, abrasions and distortions. How should I wear? By back and feet.

BUCKLES When checking buckles and adjusters look for deterioration, damage such as sharp edges, corrosion, cracks and check the function. How should I adjust? By back, feet and function check.

SIDING The important stitching is identified by a contrasting colour. Look for all these areas and inspect them. Any missing, worn, damaged or frayed stitching is unacceptable. How should I correct it? By back and feet.

NEW TORN Are they still used or are they missing? If they are missing they can often be replaced. How should I correct it? By back, feet and function check.

FITTING Ensure you are trained in the correct use and fitting of all equipment before you use it. How should I do that? Look at the fitting instructions. What if I need help? Talk to your supervisor or assistant.

ATTACHMENT LINES Any deterioration, damage, cracks or corrosion are unacceptable. How should I do that? By back and feet.

TRACEABILITY The need to know when the harness came from, when it was last used and when it was last inspected. Can you do that? How should I do that? Keep a record of when you purchased it, when and when. Ensure the harness has an identification number. Record all inspections in an inspection log. Marking all these items for you and their points to check.

If you do not understand what is an acceptable level of damage then:

YOU NEED TRAINING!

Training is available at one of our IPAF approved training centres, on site or at your premises.

For advice, to book a training course or to purchase a safety harness please contact:

AFI Training
T: 08707 571 511 E: training@afi-uplift.co.uk



The Health and Safety Executive is currently running a Shattered Lives campaign to raise awareness of the risks of slip, trips or falls at work.

The campaign is targeted both at people at risk and those best placed to take action.

Campaign packs cover the construction, building maintenance, food retail, food manufacture, and catering industries.

See www.hse.gov.uk/shatteredlives

Peterborough

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Fax: 01733 205 791

peterborough.depot@afi-uplift.co.uk

Preston

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South West

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Fax: 08701 126 844

southampton.depot@afi-uplift.co.uk

Wakefield

Tel: 01924 383 833
Fax: 01924 383 832

wakefield.depot@afi-uplift.co.uk

DEPOT NETWORK APPOINTMENTS

See the article on Page 7 for details about two new key depot network appointments made by AFI.



MORE INVESTMENT IN AFI-UPLIFT FLEET

As well as investing approximately £70 million in powered access machines for its hire fleet during the past six years, AFI is also making substantial investments in ensuring that its existing machines are maintained in tip-top condition.

As part of this strategy, the company has employed Independent Parts and Service (IPS) to refurbish a number of its machines, including four Niftylift HR12 bi-energy units.

AFI National Service Manager Tony Kelly (right) is pictured with IPS Operations Director Kevin Shadbolt following completion of the latest refurbishment.

AFI Director Nick Higgins said: "The refurbished machines are now in excellent condition and back in our hire fleet. They received a top to bottom refurbishment that included an engine overhaul, new hydraulic hoses, new wiring, new batteries and a repaint."

"This is all part of our investment in our hire fleet to ensure that we not only have the most modern and versatile fleet but also that all our machines are in optimum condition," he added.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE: AFI PASSES ITS FIRST REASSESSMENT

After gaining Investors in People recognition three years ago, AFI recently passed its first reassessment for the Standard.

The Assessor listed a number of particular strengths at AFI, including:

- By using Key Performance Indicators effectively, the Directors can give greater freedom to operational managers as their performance can be clearly monitored.
- The Directors provide a great deal of support to operational managers.
- There is a strong team ethos, which is reinforced by team targets.
- The Performance Review process is consistently applied.
- Learning and development activity is high on the agenda.

■ Where targets are not met, the organisation views this as an opportunity for learning rather than waving the 'big stick'.

The Assessor also identified areas for development which included a continued focus on management development (programmes are now in place to support this).

Other points raised including having sufficient information to assess the return on investment in relation to learning and development activity, and implementing already-planned recruitment and selection training for staff.

AFI Managing Director Richard Saunders said: "We are delighted to have passed this reassessment because once again it demonstrates our commitment to our team."

"We remain committed to staff training, even in today's challenging trading conditions, because we recognise that our people are our greatest asset," he added.



AFI staff are pictured taking part in a team building course held earlier this year in the Forest of Bowland, near Clitheroe, Lancashire.

MORE AFI DEPOTS ON THE MOVE



AFI staff at the recently-relocated East Midlands depot.

In response to growing customer demand for powered access machines, AFI has continued with its programme of relocating depots to larger premises.

The most recent examples are the East Midlands depot's move from Breaston in Derby to Bulwell, Nottingham, and – at the time of going to press – the North East depot was completing its relocation from Hebburn to Wardley, near Gateshead.

Both of the new depots are more than three times larger than the previous locations. The East Midlands depot – on the Blenheim Industrial Estate at Bulwell – has an initial fleet of nearly 300 boom and scissor lifts, and operates with 12 staff.

The North East depot – at the Follingsby Park Industrial area, Wardley – has direct access to the A194(M), giving easy access to the A1(M) and A19 trunk road. The depot has nine staff and nearly 250 machines.

AFI Director Nick Higgins said: "Our move to these new depots will give us the capacity to cater for both recent and future increases in customer demand. This kind of investment in the infrastructure of our business can only improve the level of service that we offer our customers."

AFI MAKES NEW DEPOT NETWORK APPOINTMENTS

AFI has appointed Shaun Donnelly as Account Manager for Scotland and Paul Mason as Regional Operations Manager for the North East.

Shaun, who has spent 18 years in the construction and powered access industries, will



Shaun Donnelly

operate from AFI's Scotland depot at Bellshill near Glasgow, which has a rental fleet of 150 machines.

He said: "I'm delighted to be taking up this role with AFI and am looking forward to helping to further develop the company's customer base in Scotland, primarily in the central belt but also throughout Scotland."

Paul, who will cover AFI's depots in Wakefield, Hull and the North East, has worked for nearly 20 years in the plant and tool hire industry, where he held several positions of Regional Manager.

He said: "Everything about AFI, from the teamwork through to their quality standards, is what I've been looking for in a company and there's plenty of activity in the North East Region, particularly with the Wakefield and North East depot relocations."

AFI Managing Director Richard Saunders added: "We are delighted to have Shaun and Paul on board – they bring a wealth of experience to AFI. Their appointments will further strengthen our existing team and assist us in driving the business forward."



Paul Mason



CHAS DONATION HIGHLIGHTS AFI'S NEW CHARITY PROGRAMME

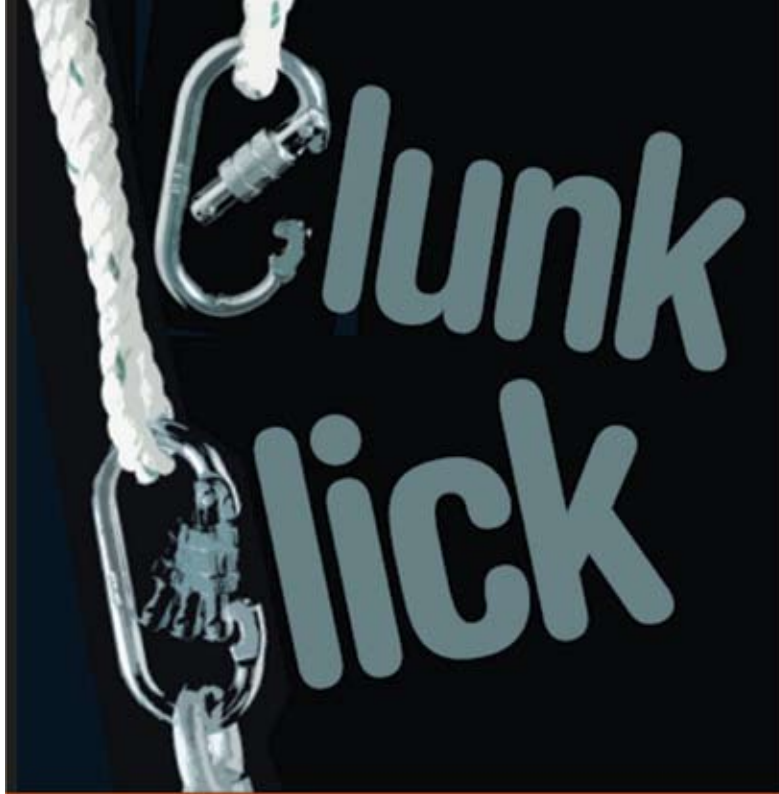
AFI's Glasgow depot has given a lift to the Children's Hospice Scotland (CHAS) by donating a cheque for £1,000.

The money was raised through AFI pledging a sum of money for every powered access machine hired by customers of the depot over a three month period.

The fundraising highlights the launch of a new charity programme by AFI in which the company is putting something back into the local communities where its depots are based.

CHAS provides hospice services in Scotland for children with life-limiting conditions. The organisation offers professional care, practical help and emotional support to the whole family from the day they are referred. For more information visit www.chas.org.uk Scottish Charity No. SC 019724.

■ Shaun Donnelly, AFI Account Manager for Scotland, is pictured with CHAS Regional Fundraising Manager Victoria Cartwright.



Wear a full body harness with a short lanyard in boom type platforms

To find out more about the correct use of harnesses in boom type platforms and the wide range of training courses offered by AFI call:

08707 871511

or email: training@afi-uplift.co.uk



- BIRMINGHAM ...
Tel: 0121 525 7226
- EAST MIDLANDS ...
Tel: 0115 975 3064
- HULL ...
Tel: 01482 341 799
- LIVERPOOL ...
Tel: 0151 545 2190
- LONDON EAST ...
Tel: 01277 812 976
- LONDON SOUTH ...
Tel: 01732 781 034
- LONDON WEST ...
Tel: 01753 783 744
- MANCHESTER ...
Tel: 0161 707 7895
- MILTON KEYNES ...
Tel: 01908 670 237
- NORTH EAST ...
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- PETERBOROUGH ...
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- PRESTON ...
Tel: 01772 709 731
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- SOUTH WALES ...
Tel: 01656 767 456
- WAKEFIELD ...
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