



Contractors Mechanical Plant Engineers

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

CMPE BRANCH NEWS

Preston & Fylde Branch.



Earlier this month Preston & Fylde Branch went for a leisurely evening Canal Cruise, with a fish & chip supper and quiz. It was attended by 32 members and guests who enjoyed every minute on the Lancaster Canal.

We set off at 7.00pm on a lovely sunny Saturday evening. Along the canal we were treated to some lovely old stone bridges and amazing wildlife along the way. The supper was collected on route along the towpath and we tucked in to fish, chips, and mushy peas. Drinks were served as we slowly made our way north along the canal.

The quiz comprised of some quite hard and some easy questions but was eventually won by Malcolm Saddington's team who received a bottle of wine for their efforts.

We eventually arrived back at the marina at 9.30pm after a very pleasant evening.



INDUSTRY NEWS

Card scam warning.

CSCS, the Construction Skills Certification Scheme, has set its lawyers on to a website purporting to offer industry skills cards without any tests or exams.

An outfit calling itself 'Construction Card Scheme Online UK' is offering the full range of CSCS cards – including CPCS plant operator, IPAF PAL cards, CCDO (Certificate of Competence of Demolition Operatives), Gas Safe and CSCS Gold Card site supervisor – for prices ranging from £200 to £800.

It appears to be a scam that is simply taking money of would-be construction workers seeking a short-cut to qualification. Our call to the listed phone number went straight to voicemail.

A spokesperson for CSCS said: “CSCS has investigated the website in question and is working with its legal representatives to ensure the website is shut down as soon as possible.

“Initial investigations suggest those responsible are taking payments but not actually delivering any health and safety tests, training or qualifications. No cards or qualifications have been issued as a result of this fraudulent activity.

“Qualifications and training are an essential part of gaining a CSCS card so any organisation offering cards without them should always be avoided and, where possible, reported to CSCS.

“CSCS continually strive to shut down illegal sites and amend third-party sites who infringe CSCS copyright in order to gain an advantage by misleading applicants. We urge those within the construction industry to remain vigilant and only use official application services - CSCS.uk.com or any of our 38 partner card schemes.

“CSCS also continues to call on employers and principal contractors to carry out thorough electronic card checks at site gates, as this is the only means to accurately determine if a card is fake or has been fraudulently obtained.”

The first organisation to sound the alarm was the National Federation of Demolition Contractors (NFDC), which, together with the National Demolition Training Group (NDTG), issued an alert, saying: “NFDC and NDTG are advising the industry to be aware of a website ‘Construction Site Card UK’ (ccsouk.com) and corresponding Instagram account advertising various construction industry job cards, including CCDO, with no tests or examinations.

“As a reminder, NDTG is the only issuing authority for CCDO cards and this organisation is not approved to either deliver CCDO courses or issue CCDO cards. Please do not use this website. It is alleged that those who have fallen victim to its claims have made payments upfront and received none of the promised deliverables.”

Carl Hassell, group director (job cards) at NOCN, which runs the Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS) card scheme, said: “This investigation is being led by CSCS on behalf of the partner card schemes. The website is blatantly offering various construction cards without the need to test. This is an advanced fee money scam, not a carding scam. They do not send applicants any card. This website is linked to several others of a similar nature currently advertising on various social media platforms. The investigators are doing everything they can to close down the various sites, this type of fraud is dangerous and not acceptable.”



Fox puts electric tipper trucks to work.

Lancashire's Fox Group has taken delivery of two battery-powered 27-tonne tipper trucks.



Fox's Volvo FE Electric tippers are the first of their kind to be delivered anywhere in the UK.

The trucks operate from the company's depot on Enterprise Business Park in Leyland, where charging infrastructure has been installed.

Fox Group managing director Paul Fox said: "This purchase marks the start of the electrification of our fleet. We understand we are the first company in the UK to invest in electric tippers – and one of the first in Europe. We are strongly committed to playing our part in the UK's push to reach net zero and we will be making more of our fleet electric in the future."

Both Volvo FE Electric 6x2 rigids are plated at 27-tonnes – one tonne more than a standard three-axle rigid – which helps to offset the additional weight of the batteries. Mounted with Thompsons tipper bodywork, they will operate primarily on local contracts for customers such as Lancashire County Council, being used to move materials to and from construction sites, before returning to base each night to be recharged.

Volvo Trucks and dealer Thomas Hardie Commercials worked with Fox Group to determine specification for the vehicles, using Volvo's electric range simulator, which considers factors about a customer's operation, including payload, routes, driving hours and charging infrastructure.

The two trucks have a day cab, full air suspension and a hydraulically-steered rear axle for manoeuvrability. They offer a range of around 150 km on a full charge from their four battery packs, taking into account PTO usage.

The FE Electric powertrain consists of two electric motors and a two-speed gearbox, with power being generated by an electric motor with an output of 400 kW. The trucks can use different drive modes to help set the desired performance, comfort and energy usage levels.

Hitachi adds short-tail ZX135W-7 to wheeled excavator range

Hitachi Construction Machinery Europe (HCME) has expanded its range of wheeled excavators with the addition of a new 15-tonne short-tail model.

The ZX135W-7 has a compact 360-degree swing radius (1,740mm to the rear and 1,750mm at the front) for working wherever space is limited.

The ZX135W-7 has the same engine as the larger ZX155W-7 model but the HIOS V hydraulic system increases front speed and delivers up to 7% less fuel consumption than the previous Zaxis-6 range.



With the Zaxis-7 cab, the seat and console have a synchronised motion to help the operator put in a full day's shift. For extra comfort, the console and switches have been tweaked and there are features such as cruise control, automatic transmission and an optional ride control system to suppress vibrations from the front attachment. Added functionality to the screen and joysticks, and the auto working brake, have also been incorporated.

Visibility from the cab is boosted by a 270-degree bird's-eye view from the Aerial Angle camera system. Operators can choose from six image options on the monitor to view the surrounds. The view through the cab's front window is also improved by the slimmer steering column (with wider adjustment angle) and smaller steering wheel.



Builders ask Zahawi for red diesel U-turn.

With the government in a certain degree of chaos, the National Federation of Builders has taken the opportunity to try and persuade the new chancellor to make a quick policy reversal.



The National Federation of Builders (NFB) wrote to the new chancellor of the exchequer Nadhim Zahawi on 8th July 2022 asking him to reinstate the construction industry's access to red diesel.

The construction industry has not been allowed to use taxpayer-subsidised red diesel since the beginning of April this year – a measure brought in by the previous chancellor, Richi Sunak, who quit the cabinet on 5th July and is now considered a favourite to win the Conservative party leadership election that his resignation substantially triggered. Whoever wins that election will take over as prime minister by September.

Nadhim Zahawi, also running for leadership, may not be in the Treasury for very long, but the NFB suggests that he could at least do the construction industry a favour while he is there, and revive access to the rebated fuel. The move would save around 40 pence per litre of diesel burned.

Richard Beresford, chief executive of the NFB, said: "Covid stopped the development and growth of alternative fuels and machinery, and compared to the cost of red diesel pre pandemic, white diesel is now 200% higher. As we warned, fuel thefts have increased, the alternative fuel competition isn't yet delivering, almost half of industry can't access the 'super deduction' and businesses struggle with the accounting for 'annual investment allowance'.

"The previous system, where red diesel was simply accessible, meant everyone benefited; the new one penalises industry and especially small business and sole traders. The new chancellor should reinstate the red diesel access for 12 months, something his predecessor chose not to do even after a major industry campaign."

Richard Beresford concluded: "With the war in Ukraine, semi-conductor shortages impacting the growth of electric plant machinery, global lockdowns hindering bio-fuel production, new government regulation putting up the price of construction and a desperate cost of living crisis, the removal of red diesel access for industries that helped pay for furlough but broadly didn't avail of it, is hindering not helping Britain.

"The chancellor and [current] prime minister say they believe in lower taxes but will they use one of the only energy mechanisms they have and reinstate the construction industries access to red diesel for the next 12 months?"



Automated cone machines approved for M25.

Automated cone laying machines are set to go mainstream now that a first vehicle has received UK regulatory approval.



The Falcon ACLM automated cone laying machine is being deployed by Balfour Beatty's Connect Plus Services' consortium, which looks after the M25 for National Highways.

The new machine, built on a Scania low-entry L-series chassis, is designed to reduce the risks associated with cone laying activities in highways operations. It can deploy or collect a cone in under 10 seconds.

It has been developed by Kent-based Highway Care, with technology from Swiss firm Senn Engineering.

Balfour Beatty highways managing director Phil Clifton said: "We're delighted to become the first construction company in the UK to successfully roll out these revolutionary new automated cone laying machines...We hope the machines will radically improve the lives of highways workers by reducing their direct exposure to a live road environment."

Highway Care business development director Ben Duncker said: "We are very excited after three years of development in collaboration with National Highways and stakeholders such as Balfour Beatty and Connect Plus Services, to see the first production vehicles arriving on the M25 network. We now look forward to the machines making the desired impact and improving the health, safety and wellbeing of traffic management operatives."

It has taken a long time to get to this point. It was back in February 2020 that National Highways first released footage of the Highway Care vehicle undergoing testing at the Bruntingthorpe proving ground in Lutterworth, Leicestershire.

A second vehicle, developed by competitor King Highway Products, has also been trialled.



CMPE BRANCHES





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