



Contractors Mechanical Plant Engineers

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Welcome to another edition of your National Newsletter.

CMPE NEWS - Staffs & Midlands Branch

Some members may be interested to know what happens to (life after being) past national chairmen when they leave their position.



Here's some news from a past National and Branch Chairman, David John Edwards.

For the fourth year running David has been nominated as being the the world's top 2% of all scientists across all disciplines (as rated by Stanford University and the Publisher Elsevier). David also holds 7 Professorships internationally including one Distinguished Chair in Johannesburg - (details and stats below):-

Rated as a top 2% world leading academic (Stanford University/Elsevier).

Assistant Editor, Journal of Engineering Design and Technology (Q2).

Distinguished Professor, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Visiting Professor, KNUST, Ghana.

Docent, University of Oulu, Finland.

Visiting Professor, Nelson Mandela University, South Africa.

Visiting Professor, Deakin University, Australia.

Visiting Professor, UNISA, Australia.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/professor-david-john-edwards-7a770a33/>

ResearchGate: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David-Edwards-59>

Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.co.uk/citations?user=bqVBxrcAAAAJ&hl=en>

Well done David. Very impressive!

Preston & Fylde Branch

Preston & Fylde Branch have finalised their meeting dates up to their AGM on 2nd May 2024:-

14th December 2023 - Christmas Party.

18th February 2024 - “Sunday Lunch with Friends” at the Ship Inn, Freckleton.

12th April 2024 - “Mama Mia Abba” evening cruise along the Lancaster Canal and a fish & chip supper.

Wessex Branch

The **Wessex Branch Christmas Party** will be held on the 1st December 2023 and will be at the Botley (Hants) Masonic Hall, Brook Lane, Botley, Hants. This is always a great evening and anyone wishing to attend is advised to contact:- angiefarry@gmail.com.

Wessex branch also have another meeting in January (24th), when one of their Founder Members (George Farwell) is giving a presentation on his company (and indeed his life), and how he has managed to keep going for so long.

Peter Attwood says “George is a 'CRUSTY' old devil, but has CMPE running through his veins. He is also a keen Southampton supporter - perhaps that is his secret !”

Certificate of Competence



Congratulations are extended to the following branches and their CoC Trainers:-

Wessex, Staffs & Midlands, Preston & Fylde, and Glasgow for their continued efforts in the number of “Certificate of Competence” cards being issued.

Our thanks must also go to Denise Holcroft, our National Registrar and to VMR Training Services who produce our CoC cards and vet all of the applications and renewals.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Contractors back call for new approach to infrastructure.



Civil engineering contractors have thrown their weight behind the National Infrastructure Commission's second national infrastructure assessment, which calls for a 'new approach' to delivering the UK's national infrastructure.

In its second five-yearly independent assessment, the NIC has said that the UK must adopt an approach to infrastructure delivery that delivers clear policy stability, pro-investment regulation, and speeds up the planning system for major projects, particularly energy transmission schemes.

Marie-Claude Hemming, director of operations for the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA), said: "Driving economic growth, achieving net zero, and delivering improved infrastructure for businesses and communities, is of paramount importance to achieving the quality of life in the UK that we all want to see.

"And yet recent global economic factors have seen the UK government pause or cancel projects – most notoriously the northern leg of HS2 – in a bid to meet its own arbitrary fiscal rules.

"CECA has been clear that this is simply a false economy. Delivering infrastructure projects of all sizes and across all sectors is not simply spending, it is investment – delivering jobs and economic growth for a brighter future.

"That is why we are calling on political parties of all persuasions and in all parts of Britain to take on board the commission's recommendations and back its vision for the future, which will require increased investment in infrastructure in the coming years to deliver the low-carbon, high-growth economy the UK deserves."



Wigan groundworks firm stays loyal to Case.

Wigan-based civil engineering and groundworks contractor Civils & Construction Solutions has ordered four Case CX130E crawler excavators from its local dealer.

The company has seen rapidly increasing demand for its services this year from retirement and social housing projects. It currently has more than 20 live sites across the northwest.



“We are having to hire in a lot of machines at present,” says construction director Neil Barnes (*pictured left, on the right*). “We aim to own 80% and hire 20% but we’re way off that at the moment. We are one of the busiest civils companies in the northwest right now.

Civils & Construction Solutions has more than 130 staff but remains a family business. Neil’s brother, Phil Barnes, is managing director and wife Leanne is finance director. Commercial Director Scott Hickford is a family friend.

They operate a fleet of 25 machines, with excavators from 1.5-tonnes through to 35-tonnes, a road haulage fleet of tippers and low-loaders and a range of smaller equipment. Since its formation 12 years ago, the company has invested more than £1.5m with its local Case dealer Dennis Barnfield Ltd.

“We started out with a few used machines from various manufacturers,” says Neil Barnes. “We became friends with area sales manager Kevin Johnson from Dennis Barnfield Ltd and purchased our first two new Case CX145D short radius excavators in 2018. We were massively impressed with them and went on to buy a Case CX245D short radius excavator.”

Since that time the company has bought Case excavators up to the 35-tonne CX350D and was the first customer in the UK to order a 9-tonne CX90D. The business has now moved on to its first Case E-Series excavators, with four new 13-tonne CX130Es being delivered over the coming weeks.

The CX130E is the smallest of Case’s recently-introduced E-Series crawler excavator models but shares many of the features of its larger stablemates.

“The cab on the E-Series machines is more roomy for our operators, with a better and larger control panel screen, but they’ve always been a top notch machine,” says Mr Barnes.

“You need the manoeuvrability in residential work. The CX130E and CX145D are the most popular machines on site for us, while the larger models like the CX245D are used for deeper drainage work and for heavy lifting, for trench boxes and larger pipe sections.”

All of the service and maintenance work is carried out by Dennis Barnfield’s service department and the engineers have a *WhatsApp* group with Civils & Construction Solutions’ operators, allowing them to contact the dealer whenever they need.

“It looks after itself and it works really well,” he says. “We buy a machine and it gets a driver and that’s it. The machine is parked up if the driver is on holiday and the dealer performs all the maintenance on the machines. Nine times out of ten we sell them back to Dennis Barnfield and the resale values have been very good. They are a sought-after product.



Dawsongroup builds Pothole Pro fleet.



After initial struggles, JCB seems to have found a route to market for its pothole fixing machine.

Commercial vehicle leasing company Dawsongroup has placed an order for 50 JCB Pothole Pros, which it will lease to local highway authorities and their contractors.

The Pothole Pro was launched in January 2021 as an adapted Hydradig wheeled excavator, with tools for cutting and

cleaning around potholes. It includes a hydraulic cropping tool, which the previous JCB Pothole Master, a modified 3CX backhoe loader, does not.

According to JCB, tests show the JCB Pothole Pro can complete a pothole repair in less than eight minutes, four times quicker than standard methods.

JCB had high hopes but the initial upfront costs seemed an obstacle for local authority budgets.

In October 2022, more than 18 months after product launch, Dawsongroup took six Pothole Pro machines into its inventory and became JCB’s official rental partner for the Pothole Pro. Then in January this year it bought another five and soon had them all out on long-term hire with councils. Now it has ordered a full 50 of them.

Dawsongroup managing director Glen Carruthers said: “We only bought our first JCB Pothole Pro under a year ago and the response has been staggering, with the whole of the current fleet now out on hire. We have placed this additional order simply to keep up with demand.”

JCB Municipalities general manager Ben Rawding said: “It’s great to see the success that Dawsongroup is enjoying with the Pothole Pro. More and more local authorities, and the contractors working on their behalf, are recognising that the Pothole Pro is the best way to fix Britain’s roads quickly and permanently, first time. It is now easier than ever for UK authorities to get a JCB Pothole Pro on to their network, whether it’s in a city or in a rural county and the public will now really start to see their presence on the roads and streets around the UK.”



Fox secures funding for further expansion.



Blackpool-based Fox Group has secured bank support for further acquisitions.

Fox Group is active in haulage, plant hire, and aggregates supply, primarily across the northwest but has recently spread across the country via acquisitions.

The business has now received a £70m asset-based lending (ABL) facility from NatWest with syndicate bank HSBC UK to support fleet growth and renewal as well as pursue more acquisition opportunities.

Chief executive Paul Fox said: “This ABL funding from NatWest and HSBC is a welcome development to our business as we embark on the next phase of our journey. We are keen to enhance our long-standing position within our industry.”

Fox Brothers was founded in 1932 by Jack Fox; his great grandson Paul Fox took over the business in 2007 at the aged of 23. In 2020 he recruited John Flood, who had previously been commercial director of utilities contractor Enterprise, where he helped grow the business from £30m annual turnover to £1.1bn. In 2013 Ferrovial paid 3i £385m for Enterprise.

Since 2020 Fox Brothers, as it then was, has acquired Clive Hurt Plant Hire and sister company CMP Plant Hire, JJ O’Grady, Blackledge Plant Hire, Cotswold Roller Hire, Woods Waste and Tipworx.

Last December it added B&W Plant Hire & Sales, with depots in Blackburn, Keighley, Northwich and Southampton.

Turnover grew from £16m to nearly £100m in just two years.

Last month Fox Group set up an equipment sales division and signed a dealership with a LiuGong, a Chinese manufacturer of earthmoving machinery.

Jason Gledhill at HSBC UK said: “Fox Brothers is a great business in the northwest and a key player for the UK construction industry. We’re excited to see how Paul and the team will continue to build the business for many generations to come.”

Andrew Barraclough, head of ABL origination at NatWest, added: “We look forward to seeing this family-led business to go from strength to strength as it continues its growth journey.”

CMPE BRANCHES





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