



## BUILDING BRIDGES

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# HSS TO THE RESCUE!

Last month, it was a case of HSS to the rescue when Network Rail had a last minute request for a whole load of emergency lighting. After a goods train derailed on a Saturday night, Network Rail engineers were faced with the daunting prospect of replacing 1,000 sleepers as quickly as possible.

Knowing it would mean working through several nights, they got straight on the phone to HSS Rail Project Manager Steve O'Grady to arrange the lighting they'd need to get the job done. Steve mobilised the rest of the HSS Rail team and worked with HSS'ers from Derby, Solihull, Dunstable, Heathrow and Reading to get the kit to site by late that same afternoon.

He even arranged for a couple of fitters to be on stand-by just in case they were needed.

## *Heroes of Hire*

The story shows how the HSS Rail Project Teams heroically helped out with emergency equipment requirements... but we know it's not a one off.

Lots of our colleagues do a lot of great things a lot of the time and we like to celebrate them as our 'Heroes of Hire'. If someone at HSS has done something that's impressed you, why not nominate them as your hero – [www.hss.com/heroes](http://www.hss.com/heroes).



## HSS REVOLUTIONISES TOOL HIRE WITH AWARD-WINNING SYSTEM

Our customers told us, that when it comes to tool and equipment hire, they wanted control, transparency and cost savings. So, we developed and launched HSS LiveHire – an online business management tool that's packed to the hilt with management information, offering an instant and paperless approach to hire management but that also – and uniquely – offers online, real-time, transactional hire. Not only can HSS customers instantly see what they've got on-hire, they can also offhire at the touch of a button. It's all about driving down hire duration and the true cost of portable plant.

Users can hire anything from the extensive HSS range of tools and equipment at the touch of a button, bespoke with their individual pricing and discount agreements. They manage and control transactions with complete visibility and real time effective action so they only ever have – and only ever pay for – exactly what they need.

LiveHire also boasts fully personalised account statements and contracts, all updated in real time so customers can check what's due for payment and what's coming up. They know exactly what's what, to the penny and to the minute. And the rest of the site is packed with bespoke performance data and management information reports, ready and waiting enabling them to collect, use and share essential management information to improve the effectiveness of their hire portfolio.

LiveHire users are guaranteed the easy hire you'd expect from HSS combined with improved visibility and control of their hire portfolio, driving both cost and time efficiencies. That's got to be a good thing and we think it's simply the most powerful tool the hire industry has ever offered!

LiveHire has made such a difference to customers that it's even been highly commended by Real Business in their Customer King awards.

To sign-up for LiveHire or for more information please call **0845 604 3312**.



Hand-arm vibration occurs when the vibration effects from work processes such as operating hand-held power tools spreads into workers' hands and arms. Some industries, particularly those using heavy duty equipment, endure a much greater risk of HAV, with construction, rail and maintenance amongst those most affected.

HAV is an issue that's never going to go away but it can be managed and the risk reduced. And to do this, the importance of combining both the correct training and the proper maintenance of tools and equipment cannot be stressed enough – this dual approach will not only help ensure the protection of your workforce but should also help achieve optimal productivity. But, most of the current published

data on HAV levels is gained when using tools at optimum condition. Users may be adhering to the published EAVs and ELVs for an item of equipment but what happens when the tools get blunt?

Well, quite simply, a tool appendage loses its shop-bought condition after the very first use. Blunt and eroded tools are prone to increasing significantly the amount of vibration absorbed by the user as they produce more friction and impair efficiency as the task takes longer to complete. It is absolutely vital that users start off with good tools that are sharp and maintain them so they stay that way. Operationally and logistically, this can be something of a big ask – but hire can help! One of the benefits of hiring equipment is that all auxiliary items, as well as the powered item itself, are checked and maintained after each use, so you receive 'shop fresh' equipment each and every time.

You can rest assured that the theoretical EAVs and ELVs that you are working too will be as accurate as possible to the actual working conditions.

HSS has worked extensively with customers and universities to understand actual exposure levels. If you'd like to find out more about what we learned, or if you are concerned about the effects of HAV, we'd be happy to help.

# INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO MAKE LIFE EASIER

Last year, HSS were highly commended as one of Network Rail's most innovative partners and we're thrilled to have that recognition. But what did we do to deserve it? Well, when it comes to plant and equipment, every time Network Rail said: 'we wish we could....' we've worked to find innovative solutions to help solve practical problems that have really made a big difference to how Network Rail work and that have helped them deliver against various performance targets.

*If you have any innovative product ideas or need help finding quicker and safer ways to get tasks done, please speak to one of our rail team.*

We've introduced new suppliers and new products to make sure we always have the latest and most innovative ways to meet rail specific requirements; we've worked with Network Rail Operators to find new ways of doing things; and when nothing else would do, we've even worked with them to design ingenious solutions from scratch! Here's just some of the things we've come up with:

## Green Fingers

A significant part of the maintenance work undertaken by the rail industry isn't actually anything to do with the tracks themselves. Pruning and clearing vegetation on the embankments ensuring trains can run unhindered by low flying branches is as much a part of the job as track and signal maintenance - and it's just as labour intensive.



Our rail customers asked us to find a way to help make this never ending task a little easier and, at a recent demonstration day, we showcased the advantages of the Kyoeisha Hammer-Knife mower which clears thick vegetation in a fraction of the time it takes with traditional brush-cutters. As a consequence, the mower was approved for use by Network Rail and is now available from HSS OneCall.

## Tamping Tools

Network Rail historically used a 'swan neck' tamping tool to embed the ballast that supports railway sleepers. In what is an awkward working environment, the 'bent chisel' approach enabled the operator to get right into the crux of things. However, research showed us that the shape of the tool and the angle it needed to be used at also significantly compounded the HAV exposure. This meant the equipment could only be used for a very short period of time by each worker making it time consuming, labour intensive and costly.

We came up with a simple but effective solution. Our new tamping tool has a bespoke straight neck that still gets into the hard to reach areas but has significantly reduced the HAV implications.



## Night Working

Doing maintenance work trackside or in tunnels at night offers less disruption to the rail service but it also demands sufficient lighting to make sure repairs can be carried out safely, efficiently and accurately. Permanent lighting would be the ideal solution but as any trackside worker knows, space does not come in abundance in these areas.



Mile upon mile of lighting would also be needed! So for a long time, twilight repairs were lit by head torches or old-school temporary lighting that just didn't cut it. We worked with a new supplier to offer Ritelites - Halide lighting units that have all the power of our VT1 lighting towers in a slim-line format. We even designed a bracket to fix the light to the generator, removing the need for bulky stabilising ballast. Never again will it be the wrong kind of dark!

## Rail Trolley Cable Dispenser

When cable gets stolen or damaged, there are significant implications for delays, downtime and general disruption as well as the obvious cost of replacing the cable. Historically, signal cable repair was a time consuming and labour intensive process. The sheer weight of the cable meant that laying it out needed one person every 3 yards to take the weight - a stretch of cable repair could demand dozens of workers just roll the stuff out.

Again, employing simplicity as the best incarnation of innovation, we worked with Network Rail operators and sourced a new supplier to create the cable drum trolley. Instantly, signal cable became more transportable and could be laid out by a maximum of just two people, leaving everyone else to get on with the rest of the repair work.





## ALL POWERED UP!

At HSS, we're always powered up and ready to go – and even more so after a big delivery of rail specific petrol generators. These generators are bespoke for

powering rail related activity with bigger tanks for longer hours trackside and specifically colour coded to be easily visible and recognisable.

But that's not all we've been buying - over the past 12 months, we've spent more than £23million on equipment, consolidating a fleet that is now 25% bigger than it was 3 years ago.

Why? Well, to make sure we can continue to offer our customers a wide range of modern equipment in the quantities they need.

And to make sure we have industry specific equipment – like these petrol generators for the rail industry and remote control operated hoists for the lift industry.

And even to make sure we can offer our customers innovative products that offer new solutions to old problems – like our new and exclusive access products and our bespoke confined space training tanks.

Whether you need help powering up, lighting up, cutting up or even just clearing up, HSS invests to make sure we've got exactly what you need to make it easy.

## HIRE HAS NEVER BEEN SO EASY.....

### HOW HSS IS THINKING OUTSIDE THE OFFICE TO MAKE HIRE EVEN EASIER

In an interesting approach to making hire easy, HSS have 'given' Amalgamated Construction Limited their very own HSS'er. Steve Speed works for HSS; he's paid by HSS – but he shares an office with the Amco Rail team at Trafford Park in Manchester.

From there, he manages all of Amco's tool and equipment hire requirements for their off-track maintenance work in the LNW and Western operating regions - from order through to delivery, off-hire and invoicing.

Whether it's for a short-term project or part of something bigger, the Amco team place their equipment orders with Steve at the start of the week and he spends the week organising and moving equipment so it's ready for them to pick up from the various Amco locations at 6am on the Friday morning – perfect for making the most of the whole weekend to get the job done.

And does it work? Well, the hire process has been streamlined, saving both time and money and reducing administrative account queries. And the case in point must be that it's gone from being a local initiative to the standard practice.

Steve explains: "I'm based at the Amco offices in Manchester and used to just be responsible for any hire they needed within the scope of the LNW Minor Works contracts. However, it worked so well that I now co-ordinate HSS hire enquiries for Amco's entire business!"

Ged McGuinness, Supply Chain Manager at Amco added: "Having someone with an in-depth understanding of HSS' hire equipment and processes as well as knowing how we work and what we need to do has proven invaluable in ensuring the whole thing runs really smoothly."

Your very own HSS hire expert - now that's what we call customer service!



# BUILDING BRIDGES

## HSS lights the way...

The renewal of the beams on the King Edward Bridge in Newcastle is going to be a long project - only accessible on Christmas Day (the one day of the year the trains will stop), the maintenance work will take place once a year for the next ten years!

Given our recent success in responding to some 'interesting' requirements, we were asked if we could help with the lighting requirements and find a way to make it as cost effective, time efficient and environmentally friendly as possible.

Of course we rose to the challenge!! HSS Rail Project Manager Paul Capes proposed a new type of halide mast link lighting that offered more light from less units than the traditional link lighting solutions. More light, less energy and less space taken up - perfect.

However, the lights would need a semi-permanent power source that was more environmentally friendly than multiple generators and, given the listed status of the bridge, less intrusive than any permanent cabling. That wasn't quite so easy to solve - there wasn't anything 'off the shelf' so it was back to the drawing board.

Working with the manufacturers, Paul worked on site visit to assess the requirements and identify the challenges. He also discovered that the new lights couldn't be erected as planned as their footprint would encroach into the walkways designed to keep track workers out of the way of the trains!

The ideal solution would be brackets on the steel handrail to sit the lights in - but again, the listed status of the bridge meant it wasn't going to be so simple. So between them, Paul and the manufacturers came up with an ingeniously simple but effective solution - temporary hand rail attachments that sim-

ply hook over to hold the lighting poles combined

with a number of power boxes that sit cleverly in the recesses. So, from an insurmountable problem to being firmly on track for success, there is now a solution that enables semi-permanent lighting and power to be readily available for the seasonal work over the next ten years.



## LINK-UP WITH **ZERO** DISCREPANCIES

We know we're on the right tracks when it comes to working within the unique specifications of the rail industry and we've got the thumbs up from Link-Up to prove it! Link-Up is the rail industry supplier qualification scheme, providing a single common registration, qualification and audit process for suppliers to the UK rail industry and most of the rail industry will only use Link-Up accredited suppliers.

We're Link-Up accredited and have just gone through the stringent annual process to retain our accreditation. We passed with flying colours - or with zero discrepancies to be exact. It simply doesn't get any better than that!

John Helm, our Rail Director, told HSS Rail News: "To achieve the Link-Up accreditation is an achievement in itself but to get no audit discrepancies at all is amazing and a testament to the efforts of the HSS Rail team around the business".

# MEET THE HSS RAIL TEAM!

At HSS, we've got a dedicated team of Rail Project Managers who have years and years of experience in hire (more than a century between them!) and decades working specifically with the rail industry. They know what they're talking about and they really can help, so here's a quick guide to who's who and how to get hold of them plus a bit more of an in-depth look at our Rail Director John Helm:

## WHO'S WHO AT HSS...

**Name:** John Helm

**Job Title:** National HSS Rail Director

**How long have you been at HSS:** I joined in 1977 straight from school.

**In what roles?** I started in test and run and covered virtually every operations role up to Regional Director before becoming Director of HSS Rail.

**What do you like about it?:** Working with a great team to drive our rail business forward.

**Where have you worked before?** School!

**5 words to describe yourself:** Friendly, musical, competitive, kind, impatient.

**Favourite football team** I prefer rugby - Sale Sharks

**Mobile Ringtone:** The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

**What would surprise people to know about you:** I play lead and bass guitar in a rock covers band.



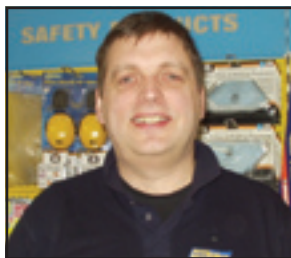
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## HSS GOES GREEN

Traditionally known for our distinctive blue and yellow livery, HSS has adopted a distinctively green hue lately.

HSEQ Manager for HSS Hire, David Wilson, explains: "As a large – and growing – nationwide business, we are very aware of our corporate social responsibilities. We know we play a big part in the well being of our local communities and the environment and we always strive to make only a positive contribution in these areas."

In 2009, we achieved ISO14001 accreditation and we won awards for our environmental efforts. We launched our first ever CSR report and a dedicated website ([www.hss.com/csr](http://www.hss.com/csr)) to showcase our achievements. From this great platform, 2010 has seen us launch some more targeted programmes to enhance our sustainable consumption efforts and to further reduce our carbon footprint.

We've introduced meters that monitor and record our electricity usage, by location, every half hour. This allows us to identify energy usage peaks, to assess why they occur and whether we can target any improvements.

We've also introduced a 'greener' vehicle fleet – they have lighter aluminium frames and new 'fuel saving' technologies to reduce MPG consumption. As a result, despite completing more than 30,000 additional journeys, we have reduced our fuel consumption by more than 13%!