

MINUTES OF THE FORTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE SHIPBUILDING AND SHIP-REPAIRING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON 18TH SEPTEMBER 2002 AT DML, DEVONPORT ROYAL DOCKYARD, PLYMOUTH

PRESENT

Mr Gregg Renfree, *A & P Falmouth Ltd*
Mr Trevor Heath, *A & P Falmouth Ltd*
Mr Pete Harding, *Vosper Thornycroft (UK) Ltd*
Mr Bill O'Neill, *HSE Northern Ireland*
Mr Steve Evans, *Appledore Shipbuilders Ltd*
Mr David Allison, *Marine Painting Forum*
Mr Brad Hicks, *Fleet Support Ltd*
Mr George MacLeod, *Engineering and Marine Training Authority*
Mr Jeffrey Arkle, *P & K Consultants*
Mr Graham Morrison, *Warship Support Agency*
Mr Alan Robson, *Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Union*
Mr Geoff Johnson, *Portsmouth Naval Base*
Mr Mark Lomas, *Devonport Management Ltd*
Ms Kay Nicholson, *BAE SYSTEMS (Marine) Ltd*
Mr Andrew Thompson, *HSE*

Mr James Barrett, *HSE*
Mr Roger Sykes, *HSE*
Mr Graham Watson, *HSE*

APOLOGIES

Mr Nik Parker, *British Marine Federation*
Mr Don McDonald, *HM Naval Base Portsmouth*
Mr Bill Steven, *MacDuff Shipyards Ltd*
Mr Keith Strachan, *Pyeroy Ltd*
Mr Nick Granger, *Shipbuilders and Shiprepairers Association*
Mr Andy Forbes, *Babcock Engineering Services Ltd*
Mr Bernard Dutton, *HSE*

WELCOME

Members were welcomed to the 45th meeting by Dr Frank Francis DML's Director of Nuclear, Safety and Quality. Dr Francis explained the background to the creation of his post. Members were invited to view DML's confined space rescue training facility and their ionising radiation, whole body monitor.

1. CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

Mr Roger Sykes introduced the members to the new SSHSCC chairman, Mr James Barrett who has recently taken over Rosi Edward's position as the Head of the Engineering and Utilities Sector. Mr Barrett explained he has been an HSE Inspector for 25 years and was looking forward to working with

the industry. He explained that he saw the Sector's job as making a difference in the workplace.

Mr Barrett welcomed: Mr Geoff Johnson from the Portsmouth Naval Base who was attending instead of Mr Don MacDonald; Mr Trevor Heath and Mr Gregg Renfree from A & P Falmouth; Mr Brad Hicks from Fleet Support Ltd who was attending instead Mr Barry Irvine; and Mr Andrew Thompson, the HSE Inspector responsible for the local shipyards.

2. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Mr Sykes spoke on the sad death of Mr Brian Callaway who had represented the Portsmouth Naval Base on the SSHSCC for a number of years. Despite having a fear of flying Brian still managed to make it to the meetings held in the North. His contributions to SSHSCC were valued. Condolences were extended to Brian's family.

Other membership changes, which were announced included; Semple Cochrane have sold off their Marine Division and as a result have withdrawn from the SSHSCC. A record of thanks was made to Mr Alan Kirkwood who represented Semple Cochrane on the Committee. A new partnership, Babcock Naval Services, has been formed between Babcock Engineering Services and HM Naval Base Clyde. Mr Alan Clisby will represent Babcock Naval Services on the committee. Mr George MacLeod has been confirmed as the new EMTA representative on the Committee. Ms Kay Nicholson explained that BAE SYSTEMS (Marine) Ltd had appointed two new health and safety managers to their health and safety team, she also entered apologies for the rest of the team who were unable to attend the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Members agreed the minutes following the correction of a minor error.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Minute item 10 – Plate clamps

At the last meeting Mr Watson presented paper 44/C, which raised the issue of plate clamps operating by friction having a minimum safe working load. More information on this issue was however required including for example whether or not all plate clamps of this type were affected. At the 44th meeting members were requested to look into this issue and to report back at the 45th meeting. Mr Arkle knew of 2 companies who used plate clamps, neither company's' clamps were marked with a minimum safe working load. Their employees were also not aware of whether or not there was a minimum safe working load. While there had not been any previous problems regarding this issue the employees were also not aware of whether any such problems could arise in the future. Members who had not had time to look into this issue were urged to do so and to report back at the 46th meeting. In the absence of

any data on the existence of a minimum safe working load members were advised to consult their plate clamp supplier.

Action: Members

Mark Lomas queried whether this was an issue that could be raised with examination bodies. Mr Barrett agreed to see if it would be appropriate to raise it with the Safety Assessment Federation (SAFed).

Action: Mr Barrett

(b) Minute item 9 – Health and safety passports

This followed on from paper 44/B issued at the last meeting outlining a number of health and safety passport schemes. Mr Watson provided an update on this issue including the introduction of a “passport” scheme in the ports, with the intention that people working in the ports will have a smart card pass indicating they have had basic health and safety training. The card could also show other competencies such as an ability to operate forklift trucks or cranes. This has been given a boost by security arrangements being discussed in the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), which may have implications for ships under repair. The IMO are asking the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to introduce requirements for all those working in ports and who have access to ships to be identifiable. If the ILO agrees, corresponding legislation will have to be introduced in the UK. This will apply to ship repair workers who go onto ships to sort out problems whilst they are in port. Work is already underway in ports requiring stevedores to be issued with passports. Mr Watson will look into this and report back at the next meeting.

Action: Mr Watson

At the last meeting Mr Granger agreed to look further into this issue on behalf of the Committee. However, it has since been agreed that the Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA) will instead progress this issue. Following on from this Mr MacLeod reported that he had made contact with the North East Maritime Group involving the shipyards in the North East. They had agreed common colours for various issues including safety helmets worn by the different trades working in the yards. A health and safety handbook was almost ready to be issued and an interactive induction built on one produced by AMEC has also been developed. Plans to produce a SMART card had so far stalled due to a lack of funding although this was being tackled. Mr MacLeod advised members that the Norwegians have developed a SMART card, as companies in the North East need to access Norwegian worksites work is being done to see if the development of a SMART card would make it quicker and easier to work in the Norwegian Sector.

Mr MacLeod also referred to a passport scheme that a group of yards in the Hull area were looking to develop based on the work of the Tyne Maritime Group. This has unfortunately stalled, as a way forward the Humberside

Offshore Training Authority has been approached to see if their scheme can be further developed to include shipyards. Literature supplied by Mr MacLeod providing additional information on passport schemes is enclosed for those members for whom the Secretariat do not have an e-mail address. This consists of a brochure providing details of the Safety Pass Alliance (SPA) entitled "Passport to Safety" and details of the IOSH-SPA passport scheme. Members who receive the minutes electronically can access these documents at: <http://www.safetypassalliance.co.uk/> and http://www.iosh.co.uk/training/iosh_spa_passport.cfm

Mr Robson stated that with the support of the DTI they were looking to conduct a nationwide skills audit of the shipbuild/repair sector. He stated it was important not to confuse this with a health and safety passport. A skills audit only identifies the training that an individual has had and not necessarily that they can work safely. As the skills audit progresses there could be a danger that if a health and safety passport was linked to it that the passport could be overtaken. He also appealed to the members to support the DTI initiative by releasing detailed information for the audit; it was critical for the industry that they did so.

Mr Barrett thanked members for their contribution. He agreed it was important to distinguish the skills issue from the health and safety passport issue. Obtaining a SMART card should not though delay people getting training or acquiring new skills.

(d) Minute item 5c – Notices Database

At the last meeting Mr Watson reported that Notices would stay on the database for 10 years. Mr Barrett advised members that the HSE has received a number of queries regarding this as under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act a conviction is considered spent after 5 years. The HSE is therefore undertaking a review of this issue although it is likely that they will standardise procedures in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Mr Thompson added that it was important to emphasise that an Improvement Notice is not a punishment. Mr Barrett agreed with this although an Improvement Notice can cause some companies public relations concerns and make it difficult for them to secure contracts.

5. ULTRA-HIGH PRESSURE WATER JETTING

Mr Watson presented paper 45/A referring to the newly issued Engineering and Utilities Sector Information Minute (SIM) advising on the protective equipment to be worn when ultra-high pressure water jetting. Members were asked to discuss their use of the protective equipment. Mr Allison had not received feedback from members of the Marine Painting Forum, as a result he was not sure if they were confident in what they were doing or not. Mr Heath stated that on the basis of practical observation and from carrying out a risk assessment he could accept the risk of injury at lower points. However, he found it difficult to see the risk of injury to the upper body when for example the operator was jetting from a basket where the lance will be held out of the

basket and it was not possible to bring the lance into the basket. He also stated that due to the length of their lances he believed it would be impossible for the operator to turn the lance around on themselves. Mr Watson replied that the approach adopted by the SIM was very much a risk assessment based approach and that it was not possible to give a carte blanche answer as to when protection for the upper body may or may not be necessary. This will depend on carrying out a risk assessment of each specific situation where UHP water jetting is undertaken. Amongst the issues the risk assessment should include are the task being undertaken, the location where the task is undertaken, the equipment used and the physical characteristics of the operator involved.

Mr Allison queried whether the jet bouncing back was an issue, which needed to be considered. Mr Sykes replied that as the bulk of the energy is likely to be dissipated bounce back should not be an issue.

Mr Lomas stated that he was aware of 2 serious incidents both involving contractors where a lance came in direct contact with the individuals involved. It was therefore important that whilst PPE is a step forward, it can only provide damage limitation, training in the safe use of the equipment was still essential as was using the equipment with respect.

6. WORK IN CONFINED SPACES

Mr Watson introduced paper 45/B continuing the discussion begun at the 44th meeting regarding the Glomar Artic fatal accident inquiry. He also outlined further developments including a recent prosecution case brought against a shipyard following a confined space incident. Many of the failings identified during the investigation of this incident were similar to those highlighted by the Glomar Artic inquiry. The shipyard was fined £10 000 and ordered to pay costs of £6 627. There had also been a recent incident involving two people becoming overcome by carbon monoxide fumes when using a petrol powered road cutter in a tented enclosure. This confirmed the urgent need for members to ensure that they were taking all necessary precautions in this area.

Members were asked to outline action they had taken in this area since the last meeting. Ms Nicholson stated that after having being issued with an Improvement Notice they had established a dedicated response team for confined space rescue. They had also provided training for all their confined space testers who were their own employees and not contractors. They had also issued new operating procedures although they had difficulties embedding the procedures into the workforce. Either the workforce was not aware of the issues or they did not understand them. Ms Nicholson asked for guidance on how to tackle this problem.

Mr Allison mentioned that it had been conveyed to him that there was a woeful lack of knowledge regarding the safe use of solvents in confined spaces. Many members of the workforce finding it difficult to understand all the issues involved. Difficulties arise in trying to understand what a confined

space is. The fact that people need to work this out for themselves is not proving popular. He therefore felt there was a need for additional training on this issue.

Mr Robson believed the concern should be with the environment in which people are asked to work. The radiation dose meters used in the nuclear industry alerting the wearer to the presence of high levels of radiation should be developed as a tool for use in confined spaces. He felt that unless this issue was progressed there would always be confined space incidents regardless of any training that is provided. Mr Robson referred to the incident aboard the HMS Coventry where people unwittingly went into an oxygen rich environment. These people did not have a lack of understanding; they simply did not have an awareness that oxygen levels had built up.

Mr Allison felt it was more than just a question of people not entering an area that was unsafe but also of them not doing something dangerous in a place that was otherwise safe. There was also the problem of a multiplicity of atmospheres and compounds to take into consideration. Whilst various methods are available for detecting particular substances there is the additional problem that the dangers of concentrations will vary depending on various factors such as the size of the work area.

Mr Hicks informed members that FSL had carried out a review of their confined spaces procedures. He also stated that monitors are available which can be used to carry out continuous monitoring. While this equipment is not very complex to use it is very expensive at a £1000 per meter. The oxygen meters that they have monitor for too much or too little oxygen and require only minimal training and calibration.

Mr Arkle thought the issue of oxygen leakages had been tackled by the stenching of bulk supplies of oxygen. Mr Sykes confirmed that the policy on stenching remains the same for bulk supplies. However, a lot of oxygen cylinders are still used and as these cannot be stenching the problem of oxygen enrichment remains.

Mr Heath referred to the problem created by a changing environment. Everybody has systems in place but can be caught out by the environment changing. Following an incident they reviewed their systems, while they had a comprehensive confined space entry procedure they had difficulty implementing it. As a result they made it more user friendly and improved supervision.

Mr Harding advised members that paper 44/A had been widely circulated within Vosper Thorneycroft including to the Managing Director and that it had generated a lot of interest and action. All their confined space procedures were looked at hard, they also reviewed their confined space training and looked to increase awareness of the issue, which all in all has proved a great success. As they use a lot of contractors they were also included in the review. He also mentioned that their local fire brigade now has a specific

rescue team for confined spaces, which will help Vosper Thorneycroft out with any such rescues in their yard.

Mr Lomas stated that they circulated an electronic version of the paper to every member of the dockyard's safety forums and all the directors. They also included an additional paper detailing what went wrong in the Glomar Artic incident and what DML have in place to guard against it happening in their dockyard. In the case of the whole body monitor as it uses liquid nitrogen they conducted a full risk assessment including an assessment of the risks associated with a confined space. Following on from this they fitted nitrogen monitors. Mr Lomas agreed to distribute a copy of the risk assessment to members for information.

Action: Mr Lomas

Mr Allison suggested that a seminar on confined spaces might be a useful way forward, this could include for example presentations by equipment suppliers. Mr Hicks believed that members were all doing the same things although in different ways and that they should all work together. The MoD had for example experienced problems in stretchering people out of confined spaces. They had however identified a stretcher that was ideal for confined space rescue. Members by sharing this type of information will help to avoid a duplication of efforts.

Mr Allison queried what the implications will be for those yards who rely on the fire service for confined space rescue should the planned strike by fire fighters go ahead. Ms Nicholson stated that their fire authority has said that they were not there to provide cover for confined space rescue. Mr Heath informed members that A & P Falmouth has their own team set up, trained and equipped in confined space rescue. Mr Heath offered to share details of this with members.

Action: Mr Heath

Mr Sykes confirmed that the fire brigade do not have a statutory obligation to provide cover for confined space rescue. The Confined Space Regulations also clearly require emergency procedures to be in place before work in a confined space commences. If the planned strike by fire fighters goes ahead people need to be aware that they are taking risks by relying on the fire brigade for confined space rescue.

Mr Robson stated that he had always assumed that most yards had emergency procedures in place. If somebody got injured the yards did not wait for an ambulance to arrive before trying to rescue them. He encouraged the yards to have adequately trained people in place. However, most companies he believed would have teams of specially trained dedicated people in relation to fire, rescue and medical issues.

Mr Barrett agreed that the Management Regulations place requirements on people to provide emergency rescue provision and that this was a serious issue.

Mr Lomas believed it was important to differentiate between confined space rescue and confined space recovery. Rescue from a confined space had to take place within 2 to 3 minutes given the dangerous environment inside a confined space and the need to get air to people. Once people have been rescued from that environment they can then be recovered from the location involved. The fire brigade have informed them at divisional level that they will not necessarily be able to rescue people in every case. At a local level however the fire brigade has said that they will always try and rescue people if life is at risk.

Mr Morrison advised members that the MoD will be holding a series of seminars for the industry in October on work in confined spaces. They are also looking at the design stage for future vessels to try and address the problem of confined spaces at source.

Ms Nicholson stated that the recommendations made by the Sheriff in the Glomar Artic Inquiry Report would have major implications for BAE SYSTEMS (Marine) if they were to be implemented. Given the lack of time it was agreed that this issue would be discussed at the next meeting. Mr Watson also mentioned that the Sheriff's recommendations will be considered by HSE during a review of the Confined Spaces Regulations and the associated Approved Code of Practice. As this review was not to happen until next year there will be time for the SSHSCC to feed into the review.

Mr Watson agreed to look into the practicalities of holding a series of seminars addressing the issue of work in confined spaces. An additional way of taking this issue forward was to develop a self-audit tool similar to that produced by DML for assessing confined space procedures. He will look to produce such a tool for the next meeting.

Action: Mr Watson

7. SSA HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE

Mr Watson presented paper 45/C, which summarised the recent review of the SSA health and safety guidance notes. Members were asked to agree that this was an accurate account of the review, which they did. Mr Allison had conducted a further review of the guidance note advising on contractor control. A paper was circulated (attached for members not at the meeting) outlining the findings of his review. This concluded that rather than updating the guidance note it should be redrafted, as there were a number of areas where it could be improved. Mr Allison was thanked for the work that he had done on this and it was agreed that the guidance note should be redrafted as suggested.

Mr Watson updated members on developments that had occurred since the last meeting. A working party has met to discuss the review of the SSA housekeeping guidance, it was hoped that a draft of the new guidance note will be available for circulation at the December meeting. Dr Mary Kinnouly an Employers Medical Advisor with the HSE has also conducted a review of the Occupational Health guidance note and suggested a number of improvements that can be made. An HSE Information Document advising on the safe use of tin free anti-fouling coatings has been issued which has also been sent to the SSA for inclusion in the SSA guidance note series. An electronic version of the sheet is also available at: http://www.hse.gov.uk/fod/infodocs/730_15id.pdf It was also reported that the SSA have now converted all the SSA guidance notes onto software. They plan to issue a memo at the end of October updating SSA members on the situation. The guidance should however be available on their web site by the time of the Shiprepair and Conversion Exhibition in November.

8. REVITALISING HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Sykes highlighted that half of the progress to be made under Revitalising is to be achieved by 2004 and already it was 2002. Revitalising will be kept on the agenda to remind members of the issue and to encourage the sharing of good practices. Achieving the Revitalising Targets will however require constant effort, as it is not a one off exercise.

Mr Allison queried how we will know when the statistical targets that have been set have been met. Mr Sykes acknowledged that there were difficulties in getting ill health statistics however for issues such as slips and trips it would be much easier. Accident by kind statistics should be available for the next meeting when they will be discussed. Mr Allison raised the issue of industry activity affecting the statistics. Mr Sykes commented that in the past a trend approach was adopted however it proved very difficult to get activity data in relation to slip and trips.

Mr Barrett emphasised that HSE on its own cannot achieve the Revitalising Targets and that it was up to industry to do so. The intention was to put the spotlight on accident rates in order to drive them down. One initiative in the Food Sector was to identify companies, which had accident rates higher than the rest of the industry. They were then persuaded that it was not inevitable that they were going to have accidents and instead by focusing on the accident rates they were able to drive them down. HSE sees the early days as where the big wins will come, in the final 6 years further reductions will be harder to achieve. Companies were encouraged to adopt the Revitalising Targets and to report back on what they are doing to achieve the targets set and the impact this is having.

Action: Members

Mr Thompson remarked smaller companies are less likely to know about Revitalising. The Priority Programmes are to be raised by HSE Inspectors at every visit, however this should not be to the detriment of other issues such

as work in confined spaces. The Plymouth office is preparing a programme of work for the yards in their area identifying the issues that they need to address. Mr Thompson agreed to forward this to the Secretariat for further circulation.

Action: Mr Thompson

Mr Allison queried whether there was evidence of an increase in accidents in other areas as a result of companies focusing on the Key Programmes. Mr Thompson replied that it was too early to tell. Mr Barrett stated that while the FOD priority topics are areas where big improvements are felt to be possible this does not mean that companies can take their eye off the ball in other areas. Inspectors will however be focusing on the priority topics during preventative visits.

Mr Lomas commented that the focus by HSE on priority topics has been useful in getting financial backing. Transport is a major issue in the dockyard. HSE's focus on workplace transport has helped them to get the financial backing needed to address transport problems in the dockyard.

Mr Thompson raised the concern that there was a problem focusing on industries out with priority sectors. As engineering is not a priority sector companies such as DML are not being inspected as frequently as they were. This was a concern echoed by Mr Lomas.

Mr Barrett replied that the position established by the Health and Safety Commission and agreed by Ministers was to concentrate on the priority topics and priority sectors. It is important for non-priority sectors to let others know about the Revitalising work that they are doing and the impact that they are having. The priority topics focus on areas where a lot of people get hurt and tragedies occur. This is not to say that people do not need to remain focused on other issues. There will be a time when things have settled down that we can see if we are having an effect and if not we can revisit it to see what changes need to be made. We also need to make sure that Revitalising works although we need to run with it for several years in order to give it a proper go. Mr Barrett thanked members for their feedback on this issue.

Mr Watson reminded members of the Good Neighbour Scheme involving companies sharing their experience of managing health and safety with others in their community. Leaflet MISC227 providing further details of the scheme was circulated to those present. Additional information on the scheme is also available from the HSE web site at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/events/goodn1.htm> Members were asked to consider participating in the scheme.

9. SSHSCC MEMBERSHIP

Mr Watson referred to comments made by members at previous meetings that their accident statistics often do not reflect the trends shown by HSE accident statistics. This indicated that some of the concerns identified might

lie with yards out with the SSHSCC. He therefore suggested that non-member yards be contacted to inform them of the work of the SSHSCC and to see if they would either like to attend the meetings or receive the papers. Mr Granger from the SSA has agreed to assist with this by providing contact details. Those members present indicated that they were in support of this course of action.

10. EUROPEAN DIRECTIVE UPDATE

Mr Sykes provided members with an update on the following directives;

The Physical Agents (Vibration) Directive was published in the Official Journal of the European Communities on 6 July 2002, implementation will be required by 6 July 2005. While the Directive has a built in delay in the implementation of certain aspects of the Directive, the important requirements of the Directive will be enforced by new Regulations from July 2005. Members were reminded that this Directive applies to hand-arm vibration and whole body vibration.

The Physical Agents (Noise) Directive – a formal trilogue between the European Council, the Presidency and the Commission took place on 3^d September to discuss proposed amendments to the Directive. It was expected that the Directive would be adopted relatively soon after. The new exposure limit value of 87 dB(A) above which exposure, taking into account any hearing protection worn, is prohibited and the upper action value of 85 dB(A) and the lower action value of 80 dB(A) will not however be changed.

CAD/ATEX – a Consultative Document will be published imminently containing proposals on implementing the safety part of the Chemical Agents Directive and the Explosive Atmospheres Directive. Members were advised to keep a look out for it on the HSE web site, as very little time will be allowed for replies. It is likely that the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations, which will implement the Directives, will be in force before the next meeting. Members were reminded that the new regulations will cover hot work issues and will replace the sections of the Shipbuilding Regulations 1960 relating to hot work.

The Temporary Work at heights Directive – regulations implementing the Directive have to be in place by 19 July 2004. HSC has now agreed that there will be a single set of Regulations applying to all industries.

11. FALLS FROM A HEIGHT

Mr Watson presented paper 45/D detailing accident statistics involving falls from a height in shipyards. Whilst the data was broken down into high falls (more than 2m) and low falls (less than 2m) it was emphasised that the divide between high and low falls was relatively arbitrary as somebody falling just less than 2 m could be just as seriously injured as a person falling more than 2 m. As a result it was emphasised that it was important to look at both high and low falls. Falls from a height over the period 95/96 to 00/01 accounted on average for 28% of the major injuries occurring in yards. Over the period

96/97 to 99/00 out of all the manufacturing industries, shipbuilding and repair had the third highest number of accidents involving falls from a height. Falls from a height is therefore a problem, which the industry has to tackle particularly if it is to achieve the Revitalising Target of reducing the incidence rate of major injuries by 10% by 2010.

Appendix 1 attached to paper 45/D identified the main causal factors giving rise to falls from a height as: unsafe scaffolding/staging; open voids; the use of ladders; and slips and trips. These issues were common to falls from a height occurring in other industries except for open voids, which appeared to be peculiar to shipbuilding/repair. Members were asked to focus on addressing the above issues.

Mr Allison agreed open voids were a big problem in the industry however they were very difficult to tackle. Mr Watson suggested that members could look at what they do to address this issue and to share good practices.

Mr Harding felt each member will have their own particular problem regarding falls from a height. Vosper Thorneycroft for example had a particular problem accessing/egressing ladders. To solve this they got their scaffolding contractors to provide corals at the top of their ladders to make it possible to get on or off a ladder without having to crawl over a guardrail. As all their contractors were asked to tender on the same requirement it did not cause problems as they were all being asked to do the same thing. Mr Harding suggested that members report back at the next meeting regarding any particular problems that they may have regarding falls from a height.

Action: Members

Mr Watson agreed to provide members with the Inspector Pack that had been produced to assist inspectors with the falls from a height priority topic. However, this would have to wait until the fully open version of the pack was available.

Action: Mr Watson

12. LANYARD SAFETY

Mr Watson presented paper 45/E drawing members attention to the availability of new guidance on fall arrest equipment. This included a new HSE leaflet due to be published on 30 September *Inspecting fall arrest equipment made from webbing or rope*, a copy of which is enclosed. Research has recently been conducted looking into the integrity of fall arrest equipment following the deaths of two people who died when the fall arrest equipment they were wearing failed. The research identified that apparently minor damage to a lanyard can result in a significant reduction in the lanyards integrity. It is therefore essential that lanyards and fall arrest equipment is regularly inspected. Members were therefore urged to read the leaflet and to make sure that their lanyard inspection regime corresponds with that detailed in the leaflet. As fall arrest equipment is also likely to be used by their

contractors, members are also asked to bring the leaflet to the attention of their contractors, where relevant.

Mr Watson also brought members attention to a contract research report that has recently been issued *Harness suspension: review and evaluation of existing information* (CRR 451/2002) which provides additional useful information on fall arrest equipment including the importance of having arrangements in place for the prompt rescue of anybody suspended from this type of equipment. The report is available on the HSE web site at: http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/crr_pdf/2002/crr02451.pdf

Mr Watson referred to an HSE Operational Circular OC 314/19 *Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) and safety harnesses* circulated at a previous SSHSCC meeting. The OC is due to be withdrawn as it has since been identified that not all MEWPs provide suitable anchorage for fall arrest equipment. Revised guidance will be issued in the form of an HSE Information Sheet. The SSA guidance note advising on the safe use of MEWPs will also have to be amended as some of the advice that it contains was based on the OC. Members were advised to verify with their MEWP suppliers the suitability of their MEWPs for use as an anchorage point. Where the MEWP does not provide suitable anchorage and where there is a risk of a person falling from a MEWP then an alternative MEWP, which does provide suitable anchorage should be used instead. It was however confirmed that fall arrest equipment should not be worn when working in a MEWP next to water, a life jacket should instead be worn.

13. NOISE AT WORK

Mr Watson detailed additional information regarding the research that Dr Prasher is undertaking looking into the combined effect of exposure to noise and solvents on hearing. A letter from Dr Prasher requesting assistance with this research was circulated at the last meeting. The solvents that are being studied include toluene and xylene both of which can cause damage to the cochlear by poisoning the inner ear. Some research already undertaken has identified that people who were exposed to solvents at levels within occupational exposure limits, were found to have an elevated relative risk of hearing loss. More detailed research on this is required. Members who have not yet contacted Dr Prasher to see if they can assist with this research were therefore asked to consider doing so.

Action: Members

Mr Watson brought members' attention to new HSE noise guidance that has been produced, free leaflet *Noise at work – Advice for employers* (INDG362) and pocket card *Protect your hearing or lose it!* (INDG363). Neither of these leaflets are included in the news update circulated with the meeting's agenda.

Mr Watson provided feedback on the Engineering and Utilities Sector's contribution to last years key FOD programme on noise. This had asked inspectors to ensure that in those premises visited there was an adequate

noise assessment and where relevant a noise action plan designed to reduce exposure to noise. It was identified that 45% of the premises visited did not have an adequate noise assessment, 30% of the cases where noise control was mentioned no action was being taken to control noise at source and 32% of the cases where ear protection was discussed it was not consistently worn. To tackle this continuing failure of a large number of engineering employers to adequately control exposure to noise the Sector is continuing its work with the Engineering Industry Noise Task Group. As shipbuilding and repair has given rise to a large proportion of the DSS disability benefit claims for noise induced deafness it was important that they were adequately represented on the Task Group. Currently Mr Robson and Mr Allison attend the Task Group meetings. Other members were asked to consider whether they too could contribute to the work of the Task Group. Work that the Task Group currently has in the pipeline includes a series of free information sheets and a toolbox talk pack for employees.

14. HYDROGEN SULPHIDE

Mr Watson presented paper 45/F concerning hydrogen sulphide an issue raised by Mr Granger of the SSA following an incident in France where a ship's engineer was overcome by hydrogen sulphide fumes. While it is likely that hydrogen sulphide can be found in ship's bunker fuel, as the sulphur content of the fuel is likely to be low, hydrogen sulphide levels are also likely to be low. Since 1995 there has only been one reported incident involving hydrogen sulphide in a shipyard however this did not involve exposure to the gas. While this is therefore an issue that yards should be aware of it is not believed to be a major problem.

15. VIDEO LOANING SCHEME

This was an issue raised by Mr Forbes from Babcock Rosyth, given the high cost of buying health and safety videos he believed it would be advantageous to set up a video loaning scheme. The Secretariat explained such a scheme would need to be run by members. Members were asked to consider whether they would wish to participate in such a scheme and if so did they have any existing videos that they could contribute to it.

Action: Members

16. HEALTH AND SAFETY NEWS UPDATE

Mr Watson presented paper 45/G and made reference to some recent developments not contained in the update. This included a report produced by HSE following on from the Ladbroke Grove Rail Inquiry. While the report *The use of contractors in the maintenance of the mainline railway infrastructure* is primarily aimed at rail companies it does include snippets of useful information on the control of contractors in general as does the Ladbroke Grove Rail Inquiry report. The 2 documents can be located on the HSE web site at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/hsc/contrail.pdf> and
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/railway/paddrail/lgri2.pdf> . Additional guidance on the

use of contractors has also been issued as leaflet INDG368 *Use of contractors – a joint responsibility*. Funding is available from the DTI's Partnership Fund to provide support for companies to develop partnerships between employees and employers, improve communications and solve cultural and business problems in the workplace. Among recent recipients of funding is Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council where the GMB created a project to increase awareness of asbestos and to allow current records to be updated. Additional information on the scheme is available from the DTI's help line 020 7215 6252 or <http://www.dti.gov.uk/partnershipfund> A Safety, Health and Environment Solutions Conference supported by HSE takes place on 15 – 16 October at the Harrogate International Centre. For further details contact 01923 690 632 or <http://www.she-solutions.co.uk>

17. RECENT ACCIDENTS

Mr Watson presented paper 45/H detailing recent accidents investigated in shipyards. Of particular note were the accidents involving wood working machines, which have become a regular feature in this report, as has the failure to guard them properly. Members were advised to check the guarding standards in their joinery workshops; to assist with this there is a series of free HSE woodworking information sheets covering a wide range of woodworking machinery. The sheets are available on the HSE web site at; <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/woodindx.htm> Reference was also made to fatal accident that had occurred during the dismantling of a ship's section, this involved a joint HSE / Police investigation. Accidents involving lifting operations were also identified as having become a regular occurrence including the use unsuitable lifting equipment. Members were advised to make sure that their lifting operations were properly controlled. An incident was also highlighted involving a failure to adequately maintain fixed electrical wiring. Members were advised to assess the adequacy of their arrangements for ensuring that their fixed electrical wiring was maintained in a safe condition.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Allison circulated papers produced by Stoddart Systems Ltd concerning a Perago Rotating Blaster, which they now import (papers are enclosed for members not at the meeting). It had been reported by the MoD procurement representative on the Marine Painting Forum that this equipment, which can be used for removing paint, had the potential to reduce vibration levels. Mr Allison had faxed Stoddarts asking if they could supply vibration data but had not yet had any feedback. Mr Barrett asked that if this information was supplied could Mr Allison forward it to the SSHSCC. Mr Watson also asked that if any members were using this tool and they had any data on it could they also forward it to the SSHSCC. (Update: Information has been received from BAE SYSTEMS (Marine) Ltd, which is enclosed.)

Action: Mr Allison and Members

Mr Granger had asked for a number of items to be raised including the implications for members of the Home Office proposal for the introduction of a corporate killing charge. Consultation on this proposal closed in September 2001, since then the Home Office has been working through the issues raised. They have also recently sent out a regulatory impact assessment to trade associations and other interested parties regarding the proposal. For there to be an offence there will need to be management failings resulting in a death and evidence of behaviour far below what is required. What is proposed should have no real implications for members provided they follow good health and safety practice. More information on this is available on the Home Office web site at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/consult/invmans.htm>

A further issue that Mr Granger had asked to be raised was the implications for members of the proposal put forward by the NHS to recover costs arising from treating work related injuries where the injured party goes onto claim and receive personal injury compensation. The NHS charges would be met by the person or company paying compensation and not by the person receiving treatment. This scheme will build on existing legislation in that hospitals have for the last seventy years had the right to recover the costs of treating people injured in road traffic accidents who also receive personal injury compensation. Consultation on the proposal runs until 8th November. The scheme will not be introduced immediately after consultation has closed, as primary legislation will be needed to introduce the changes. For further information contact 01132545380 or see <http://www.doh.gov.uk/nhscosts/> Mr Granger had also raised the issue of the Solvents Directive. This issue is being handled by the Environment Agency, information on the Directive is available on their web site at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/315449/?version=1>

19. DATES AND VENUES

The remaining meeting in 2002 is:

4 December 2002 Gosforth Cricket Club, The High Street, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.