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Technical Innovation Award 2003

The NASC Technical Innovation Awards are designed to encourage good ideas, methods and solutions to problems, and to provide a platform to demonstrate the levels of ingenuity that exist in the industry.

Entries were sought in two separate award categories:

1) Scaffold (completed scaffold structures)
2) Product (new inventions which will benefit the scaffolding industry as a whole)

Four entries were submitted in the Scaffold category and nine were submitted in the Product category making an impressive total of 13 entries for the awards.

All the entries took the form of written submissions of up to 500 words supported by drawings and photographs.

The judges for the awards were as follows:

Malcolm James (Independent Consultant)
Ken Barber (Haki Ltd)
Simon Hughes (Safety and Access Ltd)
David Chapman (NASC Health and Safety Advisor)
Robin James (NASC Director)

The awards were presented by Emma Davies from the Construction Division of the HSE.

Scaffold category

All four entries in the Scaffold category were considered worthy of merit. The winner of the NASC Technical Innovation Award 2003 in the Scaffold category was 2H Scaffold Designs for a mobile birdcage scaffold, designed to fix new services in the existing roof of the Base Hanger at RAF Brize Norton. The overall plan area to be accessed was 13,000 square metres and the contract was achieved by designing four separate scaffolds weighing more than 50t each. Each scaffold was moved using 24 air skates and the scaffolds were linked at high level after each move. The judges considered that the entry by Turner Access Ltd should be recognised by receiving the

Highly Commended award. This award was received for what was described as 'perhaps the world's highest freestanding weather protection structure, built at Niagara Falls during the winter of 2001/2002'.

Product category

Again the judges were impressed by the standard and level of ingenuity displayed by all the entries in this category.
From the nine entries it proved difficult for the judges to reach agreement over an outright winner and the award was only settled in the final analysis by a vote of three to two!

However all the judges were agreed that two entries in particular stood out.
It was decided that the winner of the NASC Technical Innovation Award 2003 in the product category was van Thiel United (UK) Ltd for the van Thiel toe board clip. The simple spiral design of this device was considered to be of excellent merit, and had the additional interest of being developed as a result of the concerns of a contracting member of the NASC about the use of the putlog coupler for retaining toeboards. The device had the benefit of minimal cost and ease of fixing and was in the opinion of the judges an improvement in terms of health and safety as it could be fixed from within the scaffold.

The judges considered that a combined entry from two NASC member companies, Scaffold Erection Services Ltd and JFE Attridge Scaffolding Services Ltd, should also be recognised by by receiving a Highly Commended award. This entry was for a Multi-function Scaffold Board Stillage that was in the opinion of the judges, an excellent innovation with many benefits in terms of space saving, economy, and tidiness.

BS5973 Replacement - Update

The European Standard for Scaffolding (EN12811-1) has been in progress since 1990 and the NASC Technical Committee believes that the earliest date that it could be published, and therefore in use, will be early to mid 2004.

There are a number of fundamental issues in EN12811-1, which could cause significant difficulty in the UK scaffolding industry. The BSI will be required by law to withdraw any clauses within BS5973 that conflict with the European code. This could mean that significant sections of the standard would have to be removed, all custom and practice aspects not substantiated by calculation would no longer be applicable and therefore the new standard would not be particularly helpful to the scaffolding industry.

At the end of last year the NASC Council decided to develop a Code of Practice as a guide to scaffolding, which would be compatible with EN12811-1. Essentially, it would be a re-write of BS5973 and provide appropriate solutions for the scaffolder.
All solutions would need to be substantiated by analysis and mathematical modelling.
The NASC Working Party decided that the revised Code of Practice should be written in such a way that it could form the basis of a new British Standard in the future.

By the end of January 2003, the Working Party had produced a tender specification for issue to selected consultants. The specification was issued to six consultants by mid February with a return due date of 28 March. The NASC had received four tender returns by the closing date. After review by the Working Party, 2 tenders were selected for interview. Following the interviews, the Working Party advised the NASC Council who they would recommend as the most suitable candidate to be awarded contract.

The contract was awarded to Slender Structures Ltd. on 13 May 2003.

The first meeting between the Consultant and the Working Party took place on 27 May. A further six (6) meeting dates have been agreed with the consultants to complete the works and to maintain the NASC Working Party input. After detailed discussions it was agreed that the contract completion date would be 13th February 2004. This will allow the NASC sufficient time to resolve any outstanding issues prior to the amendment of BS5973.