

Vehicles

It has been said many times before how we value our liveried vehicles and the importance of their visibility in complementing our marketing and advertising campaigns. We appreciate that some of these vans have now seen better days and now that the new branding has been finalised, we have some new vans on order with a commitment to acquiring further new vans each and every year.

As it will not take too long to totally turn around our van stock, our Contracts Managers and Transport Manager will be checking that your van is kept cleaned and tidy and maintained in a safe way. Please treat it as your own, as previously stated, it is very much an integral part of our advertising.



Charity

In June Pat, Sarah, Tracey and Sharon took part in 'The Race for Life' they raised a total of £390 and wish to thank all of you who sponsored them.



In October David took part in the Great North Run and raised in excess of £3,000.00 with thanks to all who sponsored him.



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Underpin News

Making Good Communication

Welcome

Dear Clients, Customers and Colleagues

Welcome to the first edition of our new look newsletter which is intended to keep you up to date with all things current at the U and M Group of Companies. It is our intention to produce this on a more regular basis and it is hoped that more of you will contribute in further issues with either notes or photos from existing jobs that are of interest or stories about anything to do with work! Please send your articles or ideas to our Head Office?



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A Word from the MD

Firstly, a very Happy, Healthy & Prosperous New Year to you all.

The first thing you may note is the new look logo and colour scheme which will be mirrored right across the group over the coming months. We have launched a basement division within Underpin and Makegood and have taken the opportunity of rebranding our image to a more cohesive and contemporary design with the intention of advertising all of our Companies at the same time. We were in the situation where clients of our scaffolding company (M25 Scaffolding Ltd) did not know we were part of a larger group and thus carried out more diverse activities, and vice versa, and the aim of the 'group' logo is to address this point as part of our ongoing marketing strategy.

I am sure you appreciate times are currently tough. The UK's economy is not in a brilliant condition, especially within the construction sector and we will have to try and work hard over the next year or so to see us all through these potentially difficult times. You have only got to turn on the news or read the business pages of the broadsheets to realise that the house building sector is severely depleted by the lack of available funds, the new build market is not being driven by demand, the consequence of this is the national house builders are not building. This has a knock on affect through the entire supply chain, including their sub-contractors and suppliers causing a shortage of work in several construction sectors. Whilst this all appears as doom and gloom, it needs to be said that our group operates largely outside of this market and although this will cause tough trading conditions for a limited period, we are of the firm belief that survival through this period, procedural changes driven by cost cutting processes and more effective management will allow us to really reap the benefits once the construction market recovers in hopefully the not too distant future. Companies have and will go bankrupt and times will be harder, we do not intend to be one of those statistics. Our balance sheet is strong; we have an unrivalled reputation and a tremendous team of managers and staff. We will use these to our benefit and fight out these tough economic times and evolve a better stronger and more profitable business.

Special points of interest:

- New Company Logo
- Is your First Aid up to date?
- Your say—new committee forming



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A Word From the MD continued....

We would also like to confirm two key appointments made during the last nine months. Mike Forni, whom I am sure you all know, has accepted the role of Engineering Director and will sit on the board with myself, Heath Maddox and Graham Scard. Mike is a Chartered Civil and Structural Engineer with a wealth of experience in the geotechnical field, especially foundation design, underpinning and piling. It is one of our intentions, building on our marketing strategy, to be more active in the piling market and to that end we have budgeted to invest more heavily in specialist plant over the next 6 or so months.

We would also like to introduce Andy Parker who has been appointed as Operations Manager within M25 Scaffolding Ltd. Andy brings bundles of experience within the scaffolding and access sector as well as a ready made and complimentary client base and will work alongside our existing board to promote controlled expansion within our company as well as managing operational changes to achieve cost economies.

To summarise, whilst times are tough, the time to market effectively is 6-9 months before any such plan becomes effective and this is what we are currently doing. We are presently bucking the trend, our order book is relatively healthy and we are now actively looking for work in the next 6 months. This will all be facilitated by the introduction of our basement division, our planned increase in the piling and scaffolding sectors and the convergence of our brand within the new design to promote all of our businesses to our existing customer base.

We hope this newsletter is of interest to you and would welcome any feedback, critical or otherwise as well as any newsworthy items for incorporation into future issues.



New Piling Rig

Health & Safety

It is with regret that we have to report an accident which has caused a valued employee an injury forcing him from work for a considerable time. Whilst it is not always palatable to highlight accidents, the board have decided to publish details of certain accidents or incidents in order that we may all learn from them and prevent any such recurrences.

In this case an underpinning foreman was on the back of a skip lorry assisting the driver locate the chains onto the skip. The driver lowered the lifting arm and this crushed our colleague's foot, causing severe bone and ligament damage. Our Risk Assessment states that on no account should any of our staff ever get on to the back of a skip lorry and whilst we appreciate that assisting the driver promotes a speedier service, especially on a busy road, this very regrettable accident highlighted above should serve as a reminder as to why this practice is very dangerous and must be avoided. We are delighted that this valued employee returned to work on the 5th January 2009.

Health and Safety Committee.

We are in the process of forming a Health and Safety committee which will meet at least every 3 months to discuss any issues that need to be addressed. In order to ensure that we are communicating with staff in all areas we will require a representative from each aspect of the company. Please contact Sharon Tindale if you are willing to be a member of this committee.

Smoking

We all know smoking is bad for you, even the smokers have to admit this! However, my wife's 93 year old grandmother has smoked 20 cigarettes a day for most of her life and she firmly believes this is what keeps her going, so she is the exception to the rule!

Recent legislation involving workplaces and vehicles has effectively prevented smoking in all enclosed spaces due to the dangers of passive smoking and there are heavy fines for those that disobey. You should be aware that we have prohibited smoking at our Head Office and in all Company vehicles and this is now being extended to sites. Smoking within a building, whether on a site or temporary accommodation is legally prohibited and the Company seeks to now include the curtilage of a site. There are many dangers on building sites, fumes from excavations and flammable materials to name but two so the only place smokers can now smoke is within a public place (and if you are unsure, please ask your supervisor or manager); your co-operation in this policy is requested.



PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

Having had a few of our sites audited by our independent Health and Safety Inspector, one of the comments was the varied use of PPE on our sites. Our managers have therefore been instructed to invoke a zero tolerance policy towards the use of PPE; failure to comply will necessarily lead to disciplinary action. Don't forget that this is for your own safety.

In some tender documents there is an increasing trend for Main Contractors to fine their sub-contract supply chain if they are found not to be wearing suitable PPE, if you are found guilty of this, any costs will be passed on.

240 volt

Also, following this audit, there was a comment that a 240 volt radio was being used on a site. It needs to be said that we have strictly prohibited the use of any 240 volt electrical appliances and/or tools on our sites, please ensure this is adhered to.

New Appointments



We are pleased to announce the appointment of Paul Shipwright as an Underpinning Supervisor. Paul, a very experienced and valued employee will forge a smooth communication link between Contracts Managers and Site Staff and will be available to assist with any site based issues you may have.

Fire & Flood Damage

We are also very pleased to announce the introduction of Robert Fells to our management team. Robert brings with him a wealth of experience of undertaking remedial works to buildings that have suffered from all insurance related perils, including fire and flood damage. This has allowed us to include fire and flood damage remedial works within our portfolio of services, with some success, as we have repaired many buildings over the last 18 months or so suffering from such perils. We are steadily gaining an unrivalled reputation for undertaking such work in a sympathetic and timely manner, whilst ensuring the quality of the works and the finished article are to the entire project team's satisfaction, including the client.



Training



First Aid

Nearly all employees of the Underpin and Makegood Group should have been offered the opportunity of undertaking a one-day competent person's course under the First Aid Regulations. This is a basic first aid course and we would like to see every employee trained as a minimum to this level - not only is it useful in your working life, it could save the life of a loved one! Please contact Sharon Tindale if you are interested.

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