

lift torque

Autumn 2006

FLAGSHIP SITE FOR APOLLO

Apollo's growing reputation as the independent lift contractor of choice is no better illustrated than the recent award of a prestigious five year maintenance contract with Reuters. Apollo fought off some very stiff competition to win the work at Reuter's new Canary Wharf HQ, which will include a phased refurbishment of a six car group with state-of-the-art control systems.



Commenting on the acquisition of what is a flagship site, Apollo's managing director, Martin Bettridge said, "This is a significant win for us because it demonstrates that an independent can grow on merit - if you can deliver on value, service, quality and technology, then blue-chips will happily partner with you."

NORTH ON UP AND UP

Apollo's northern operation is seeing exponential growth as the team mines a rich seam of maintenance, modernisation and installation work from the Midlands to the Borders. Over the last 18 months, units under contract have increased by **700%** with the headcount increasing ten fold to handle the increased volumes of work. Meanwhile, installation work in the region has risen by a staggering **3000%** in the same period.

Up by 700%



Units under contract In North

NORTHERN NEWS

The northern team has been busy increasing our market share with some significant gains in all areas:

FM provider **MacLellan** Ltd has awarded us a long-term maintenance contract to look after lifts in Inland Revenue offices across the North East – hopefully, not too taxing!

Under the terms of a new contract with **Wigan Council**, we have supplied them with a dedicated engineer who will look after the authority's entire lift portfolio

Manchester City Council has appointed us to convert two skip stop lifts into duplex lifts, a project which will include all builders' works.

NORTH AND SOUTH

It is always gratifying when an existing client rates you highly enough to give you more work. We're particularly pleased that long-standing client Wilkinsons, whose southern portfolio we have serviced successfully for five years, has now chosen to appoint Apollo to handle more of its lifts in the North East and North West. It's yet more evidence that we are recognised as a truly national player, with sufficient resources to meet UK-wide requirements.



It's also encouraging

to see clients using our full spectrum of services. We have had maintenance contracts with Dacorum Borough Council for some time but increasingly we are gaining modernisation and installation business from them as well – most recently, we've been appointed to undertake a phased project for three new lifts.

NEW FACES...

The ranks in both southern and northern offices have been added to recently in order to keep resources commensurate with operational demands.

In the south, Steve Cronin comes in as a repairs supervisor with David McLaren taking the same role in the north. Joining David in Leeds are Ian Geldart as project manager and Peter Lohan as service supervisor.

We have also appointed our first dedicated engineering manager who will be undertaking in-house design work using the latest CAD technology - Darrell Brighton will be based at head office.



...AND NEW KIT

To support Darrell and boost our design capabilities, we have made a substantial investment in both hardware and

software, including a bespoke-built PC and professional HP A1-size plotter.

SAFETY FOCUS

As well as ensuring all our engineers are on the NVQ programme, we have also made a commitment to the safety passport training initiative. Our field team have or will be shortly attending courses to ensure that they are following best practice when it comes to health and safety. With the industry still witnessing too many safety-related incidents with sometimes tragic consequences, it's incumbent upon all contractors to send engineers out with not just the technical know-how but the operational awareness and expertise.

NEW SAFED GUIDELINES

Please be advised that we are now operating to the new SAFed guidelines, which means that:

With immediate effect lift guidelines (LG1) on the Thorough Examination and Testing of Lifts, "Volumes 1 and 2" have been withdrawn.

The tests have been replaced by new SAFed guidelines on the Supplementary Tests of In-Service Lifts.



The new supplementary tests will be called for by the competent person during the thorough examination as required under Regulation 9 of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 - this is normally your Insurance Inspector.

Please ensure that the copy of the Thorough Examination Calling for Supplementary Tests is passed to us as soon as possible.

More information can be obtained on the SAFed website - www.safed.co.uk

DASHBOARD UPDATE

Apollo's Digital Dashboard, the secure web portal that gives clients real time access to all their lift data and call-out and servicing information, goes from strength to strength. We now have 75 registered users, with 45 taking up the free facility in the last six months.

Twenty Questions - Keith Whitham, Sales

Name

Keith Witham

Role and responsibilities

Currently responsible for sales, customer liaison, contract management

What attracted you to Apollo initially

The company philosophy to do a good job

Your ambitions for Apollo

Expansion and growth to No 1 independent in the lift industry

Your view on the company's strengths

Short chain of command with innovative SMS system

Current challenges for independent lift contractors

Competing with the multi national companies on a technical level to be able to maintain proprietary equipment. Convincing customers we are equipped to compete.

The keys to being successful in today's industry

Doing what we say we will do

The thing you'd most like to change about the industry

Restrictive, expensive supply of spares by multi-nationals.

Most painful business lesson learnt

Never assume people give you the right information. Always check.

Proudest personal achievement

Not fainting at the birth of my daughters

Alternative career

Anything with less stress like an air traffic controller

Unfulfilled dream

100 break at billiards

Most useful desktop gadget

Tippex mouse

Favourite place to be when not at work

In a restaurant or a theatre

Secret vices

Not aware that I have any

Likes and dislikes

Like cooking and eating out, hate rude people

Music on your car stereo

Anything. I like a range of music from country to Queen

QUEENONLINE



Three things you'd take to a desert island

Music, a hammock and a barbeque.

Three words you'd use to describe yourself

Cool, calm and collected (occasionally)

Three words you think your colleagues would use

Pain in the **** (technically four words but who's counting?)

HEALTHY GROWTH IN NHS

Apollo has enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with the NHS, and is not just the longest-serving PASA approved contractor but also the largest by volume.

Apollo now works for well over 50% of organisations signed to PASA, with strong growth across the country. Most recently, we have started a long term maintenance contract with Skanska for the Royal London and Barts hospitals – we're supplying permanent site engineers at both hospitals for the duration of their modernisation.

Other new clients include City Hospital, Birmingham; Kent and Canterbury Hospital; Papworth Hospital and North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

Commenting on their continued success, Tony Dome, commercial director, said, "We've worked very hard over the years to establish Apollo as a specialist provider to the NHS, adapting commercially and operationally to best meet the needs of clients in the sector. Our sustained growth nationwide is testimony to this dedication and commitment and we'll be looking to build further on our excellent PASA achievements to date."

NO SUBSTITUTE FOR EXPERIENCE

Strengthening our field engineering team is an on-going process as we enjoy unprecedented levels of growth. To maintain high standards and the requisite level of professionalism means that we have to be pretty discriminating about who we take on – and sometimes that means the right person is not always a conventional choice. But when we see knowledge, experience and dedication in a prospective employee, we're keen to offer them a job – even if they are past retirement age! Ex-Thyssen man Brian Oliver is a very youthful 68 and now uses his 45 years spent in the lift industry for the benefit of Apollo clients. We're certainly in accord with the likes of B&Q and Tesco who have long championed the use of more mature personnel. We could tell you the average age of both southern and northern offices but it's a bit scary so we won't!

FROM THE FIELD

We look at all angles when it comes to building and consolidating our field engineering team. One of the real success stories over the past year has been the progress of our two Lift Industry Training Scheme apprentices, Steve Ross and Adam Camacho. No growing your own may be an option more for the long-term but building for the future is vital - and you can train them completely to your way of doing things. LITS allows for a mix of hands-on experience and college-based learning and we will certainly be looking to take on more apprentices both in the south and the north.

We've also been keen to retain foreign workers who have proved themselves. South African Steve Hakime has been with us for a year and he has now been able to extend his working visa for another five years.

In addition, the winning of contracts from other contractors has enabled us to bring in staff via TUPE. Our work for Royal London and Barts hospitals has been resourced through engineers transferring companies and we look to provide the right environment and rewards to encourage them to stay long-term.

Shirley Oaks Hospital expresses its appreciation of Apollo's efforts in a recent newsletter:

The new lift has had a number of admirers including myself. What a difference it has made. It will only be a few more weeks now and the second one will be completed. My thanks go to Robin the engineer and his team who have remained steadfastly cheerful whilst working down a 'hot deep hole!'