

TSG News - April 2005



Company News

As mentioned in last months Newsletter Total Solutions Group had won the contract to provide the stage and set for Kylie Minogue's upcoming Showgirl Greatest Hits Tour. In this months newsletter we are finally able to bring you the full low-down on the beast that is Kylie Minogue's mammoth stage set. After two months of hard work from our in house technical design team, our skilled fabricators, welders, machinists and local crew the stage and set were completed and delivered out to Kylie's management team and crew. To help on the project Total Solutions called in old friends Neil Darracott, to provide additional expertise on engineering and as usual Charlie Kail as the set consultant.

The stage itself had three prongs, extended out from the central stage area. Two wings extending out to stage left and stage right terminating in circular decking. The final circular ended prong thrusting out up stage like a giant pendulum. five cut-outs in the stage, two centre stage and one on each wing and one in the thrust allowed for positioning of five different lifts. The stage sits on three levels – gradually rising up to the highest level at the rear of the stage. The set sat on the rear of the stage, a central satellite giving a final trim height of over six metres, sets of stringer stairs provided access down from this top level to the stage. The upstage facias have been filled with large LED banks which span the entire distance between the left hand and right hand of the stage. At twenty three metres wide and twenty nine metres from down stage edge to up stage edge this really was a large undertaking both in terms of design and engineering and also fabrication and machining. All the decks were clad in a high gloss toughened black vinyl. The decks at the edge of stage, the stairs and any visible edge had been given a special finish by Tom Watson our resident angle grinder artisan. Spirals and swirls adorned the stage edge, catching and reflecting the lights providing a nice aesthetic touch to this already breathtaking stage.

The Kylie Showgirl Greatest Hits Tour is now out on the road, as I sit writing this the load out from the first few nights in Glasgow will be going on and the stage and set will be winding their way into Europe housed in a fleet of articulated lorries, followed by the band and crew buses. Kylie will be back in the UK next month to play to a packed out crowd at Birmingham's very own NEC. By the time the final load out of the stage set and extras occurred everyone involved was tired, run down and in some circumstances ever so slightly stressed – yet amongst all this elated that a job had been well done and we had a certain little Australian client who was very happy with her new toy.

Its our Business to Design! Total Fabrications, the bespoke manufacturing brand of the Total Solutions Group, has just taken on a brief to design and fabricate a removeable staircase for the Business Design Centre in London. Currently this exhibition and consumer fair venue has a removeable staircase fabricated from steel that takes two crew a day to rig or de-rig. The design brief provided to the group is for a set of removeable staircases fabricated from aluminium which can be rigged or de-rigged in two hours

Birmingham Catwalk. Total Solutions Group are proud to announce the sale of a Superbeam Catwalk based system to the Birmingham Rep Theatre. Already appearing at the ENO the catwalk helps to facilitate safe access when work needs to be undertaken on a grid operating at trim height, without the need for the full use of PPE. The Catwalk is able to sustain a span of up to twenty metres without the need for additional pick up points and therefore without providing further hindrances to work access.

Total Solutions Group are proud to announce the signing of a new partner in the TSG Global Family. ShowQuip, a New Zealand based truss manufacturing firm have just signed three separate manufacturing and service provision contracts with the group. There will be more news to follow on this in next months issue suffice to say that the Kiwi firm have signed licences to manufacture both Slick and TFL trussing. The third agreement they have signed will see them become the first group-licensed training provider on behalf of Total Training. For the moment there is not much more to say except to welcome ShowQuip to the groups extended family.

Frankfurt. TSG will be exhibiting at Prolight & Sound from the 6th to the 9th April, Hall 8 Stand A81

Product Focus

Damn big Truss! Mega Beam was designed by Slick as the worlds largest portable structural system which can be installed without the need for cranes. Standing 1.4m tall with a depth of 80cm this trussing system will typically take an unprecedented 5,600kg CPL or 11,300kg distributed over 20Mts. It is ideally suited for very large outdoor roof systems where there is a need for a large unsupported span taking a large load. With a five inch diameter main tube, a forknend connector as big as your head and a connector pin that is not unlike a world war 2 artillery shell this is a very serious beastly. So large that a five metre span of this truss has a self weight of just over half an imperial tonne! With this in mind those lovely boys at Slick designed the truss to come with castors included so as to make loading this truss in and out an easy process. NA Sound, our Latvian connection, own a massive Mega Beam rooftop which means that they may possibly also own the largest modular demountable aluminium rooftop in the entire world! It is a mark of pride that a Total Solutions Product is once again providing a benchmark for the rest of the industry to follow.



Safety Focus

Total Training have busy with work at height this month, delivering a special one day course to technicians at the Comedy Theatre. The Ambassadors Group theatre had correctly identified a situation where using traditional PPE they would be unable to effect a rescue should a harness fall occur. The use of traditional fall arrest lanyards on the truss could mean loading outside its design capacity in the event of a fall; even if the truss was strong enough to sustain the forces imposed, a rescue was technically outside the competence and job description of the resident staff. In an ideal world, we would have preferred a T2 truss to have been specified, but the installation had already taken place and a solution was needed quickly. Two fall arrest grid rope systems with a built in rescue facility were selected, and these will protect personnel focussing from a ladder to avoid climbing on or even attaching fall arrest equipment to the truss for the rest of the run of "Whose life is it anyway?". The equipment was delivered within one week and 5 technicians attended a one day intensive course to learn how to use the system.

News in Brief

End of an Era. It is with deep sadness that Total Solutions announce that Focon Showtechnic are no longer our Slick Distributor in Germany. After an extended period of negotiation and talks we were unable to secure a mutually beneficial agreement and we have therefore decided it was in our best interests to part company. We would like to make any customers operating in the German or Austrian markets aware that Focon no longer have the authority to source Slick Trussing. Anyone wishing to know more should contact either Mervyn Thomas or Ian Hall of Total Solutions Group for more information.

A New Addition. Everyone at TSG would like to join together in wishing Anthony Sansom and his partner Jo heartfelt congratulations on the birth of their first child – little Georgia. For those of you who don't know Anthony he is the guy in charge of purchasing all materials and consumables for the company. Having worked under Brendan Cusack, our general manager, for a number of years he was originally going to call his daughter Brenda, after his mentor, but decided against it at the last minute for unspecified reasons – although he was heard in the production office mumbling something about long cold nights on the sofa with a view to long cold nights out on his ear! Anyway, congratulations Anthony and Jo and we wish you every success as parents.

Character Profile

Mark Payne a.k.a Kram a.k.a. Senor Kram a.k.a. Uncle Kram a.k.a. Krammy Baby is the only member of TSG staff to have truly tasted the wonder of playing in a halfway successful band. His rock n roll roots may go some way to explaining the constant presence of a dry ice mist circling the floor around his desk. It might also explain why he has been at TSG for so long and when he joined the company there was a rumour going round that his mother had used nappies embossed with the Total Fabs logo. Currently seen heading up our design office and often seen banging his head against a wall muttering about 'x' braces and one metre modules he is the joker of the office and a big fan of Krammy Snacks – Hob-Nobs to the uninitiated.



