

A VIEW ON COVID CHALLENGES AT MITIE

Covid-19 bought both new personal and work challenges across our Maintenance contracts which included considerations and an impact we'd not faced before in our lifetime and on many fronts, would have not expected to face.

On a personal front many of those normally based in an office found themselves working from home and whilst at first it may have been something of a novelty it soon became clear that general wellbeing was being massively impacted. Holidays were cancelled as were many social events including weddings and no longer could anyone visit relatives, shop/exercise normally or plan; the only certainty was the uncertainty.

From a field force perspective engineers had to learn how to work in a socially distanced manner and embrace different site provider demands to maintain sites located in buildings or areas of high risk; in addition, engineers also had to cope with the threat posed by 5G activists. The 'new way of working' bought new health and safety concerns that had to be assessed and mitigated and Mitie were well supported by its customers during these times. Stricter controls were put in place including typical one person sites now being made two-person, enhanced PPE and the resource of additional vehicles and protocols in travel and site arrival to maintain a level of social distancing. Supportive communication was also stepped up with a strong focus on mental health and how to stay resilient during such difficult times; it is noticeable that, even though we have moved to a lesser level of restrictions and a return to office has begun, the focus on mental health support remains as strong as ever for our staff.

By Marc Smith CMIOSH

Head of QHSE – Cornerstone – Technical Services Mitie



THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR...

2021 has continued to throw challenges at us all, from our summer holidays to the uncertainty as many start a new academic year as to what COVID-19 will throw at us next. I hope you managed to at least take some time away from work to recharge and have come back ready for the 2nd half of the year.

As posted on our website and social media, MATS have taken the difficult decision to postpone the MATS conference until April 2022. As a group, we feel this is the best decision, given all the uncertainty now. MATS will continue to closely monitor the situation and advise through our website and social media of anything required to be put in place again to enable you to continue to protect and maintain the telecoms critical national infrastructure that is a lifeline for so many. In the meantime, look after each other, stay safe and we'll catch up soon.



Stewart Mardle
MATS Chairperson

**PLEASE NOTE MATS CONFERENCE
5/10/21 IS NOW POSTPONED
NEW DATE - TUESDAY 26TH APRIL 2022**

MATS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Cornerstone is the UK's leading mobile infrastructure services company in the UK, managing over 20,000 sites and 12,000 landlords.

From the Shetland Islands to Lands' End, Cornerstone provides the passive infrastructure supporting the UK's leading wireless operators and enabling the digital lifestyles of our connected society. With evolving technologies such as 5G, we are well placed to meet the future demands on our networks across Street works, Rooftops and Greenfield locations within rural and urban areas

Cornerstone is proud to hold five international standards (ISO) across health and safety, environment, quality, business continuity, and information security and were recently awarded a gold award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents for our health and safety performance.



Andrew Alexander, Head of Operational Compliance & Governance at Cornerstone is the current vice-chair of MATS and will become the new Chair in January 2022 when Stewart Mardle's two-year tenure as Chair ends 31st December 2021.

TIM LORD (MOD) - RETIREMENT

Retirement is one of those times that you think is so far away, you never give it much thought, then it arrives and catches you unaware. Well, I've done it now with a bit of late planning all just in time.



The 44 years since graduating in Civil Engineering from Leeds University in 1977 have brought me a huge variety of work in a wide range of places, from a 120,000-acre irrigation scheme in Sudan to inspecting concrete platforms in the North Sea and more mundane work like sewage treatment works on Tyneside. Although I chose civil engineering for the appeal of outdoor work and the creativity of site construction, I eventually found the technical aspects of solving structural design problems more appealing which gave me a lot of interest. My whole career has had rewarding job satisfaction, but it sometimes came with downsides due to demanding and often stressful work in difficult circumstances with tough environmental conditions. This is balanced though by the sense of achievement and shared success of a team once these challenges are overcome – need to stay positive.

My 28 years in the MOD with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has been a mix of providing technical advice and project management, with the last 9 years leading the Structures team which of course covers the mast/tower area. It may sound grand, but we are only a small team, currently of just two, which provides us with a busy workload considering the huge range of asset types that exist on the MOD estate such as 100s of WWII hangars, listed buildings, assault courses and bridges, as well as the many masts and towers. The work also requires the setting of our work at height policy and procedures for safe systems of work on these structures, also known as JSP375 Volume 3 Chapter 7. My predecessors whom you may recall include Mark Grant and Jogi Hoonjan, both having provided difficult shoes for me to follow.

Hence the link to MATS which is an invaluable pooling of resource from the diverse range of mast and tower owners, bringing a terrific spread of knowledge and experience to be shared in the group, whether climbing, rigging and lifting operations, structural inspection or the RF hazard. I'm grateful for having been able to be part of MATS and having had the benefits of working together within the fantastic collective resource that the group provides. If I've any regret, it's been the busy MOD workload that has made it very difficult to find the time to contribute more to MATS; while I fully appreciate the efforts and enthusiasm provided by the Arqiva and BT guys which is difficult to match and much admired. Alan Trueman's parting note in the Spring of 2020 said he hoped he had "made a small difference to work at height and RF safety". Well, I can assure you that was a gross understatement, and he made a huge difference. Thank you, Alan.

In moving on, I know my successor David Warr brings extremely useful knowledge and expertise with his background much more in the mast and tower business than I could offer, and I wish him well. Indeed, I wish the whole MATS group well. The industry needs you. Keep up the good work.

Best wishes from Tim Lord, MoD (retired)

Editor's note: On behalf of everyone at MATS we thank Tim for his contribution to the Group over the years and we wish him a long and happy retirement.

KCOM SELLS NATIONAL BUSINESS

KCOM has sold its national ICT business to Nasstar, an established managed services specialist provider that delivers an integrated suite of services from cloud computing to networking and communication solutions.

The sale of the national business will allow KCOM to focus on their core strategy as a regional provider of full fibre broadband, growing our presence in both retail and wholesale markets as we continue to invest in our network expansion.

This follows an in-depth strategic review of the national business to look at opportunities for its development and its fit with KCOM's long-term strategy, which began in 2019.

Dale Raneberg, CEO of KCOM, said: "We have agreed the sale of our national business to Nasstar, a UK provider of managed communications and cloud services to large businesses and public sector organisations. Our regional wholesale and retail operations in Hull, East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire will remain part of KCOM and the focus of our business. "Our team is investing £100 million to expand our regional network, through which we are making full fibre broadband available to consumers and businesses in more towns and villages across East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire."

As a result of the sale of the national business KCOM will no longer be a member of the MATS Group. On behalf of the Group, we would like to place on record our thanks to KCOM for their past contribution to the Group and especially to Darren Ackroyd who has been a very active MATS Group member for many years and its predecessor SADG (Safety Advisors Discussion Group).



Darren Ackroyd showcasing a MATS branded water bottle near the Humber Bridge



KCOM is one of the longest-established providers of communications services in the UK, connecting both businesses and residential customers and investing in better digital solutions for everyone.

KCOM's regional business provides consumers and businesses in Hull, East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire with full fibre broadband and voice services. Through its wholesale business unit, it also provides voice, data and network services to other communications providers in the region.

Nasstar is a managed service specialist. We deliver an integrated suite of services from cloud computing to networking and communication solutions to provide businesses with greater flexibility and efficiencies. Through strategic consultation to implementation and management, we provide the vision and the mechanics needed to create transformational change for our clients.

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Working together to make your business safer

NEW LOOK FOR THE MATS BRAND

So how did it all begin? In 2005 a small group of safety professionals formed SADG (Safety Advisors Discussion Group). It was recognised that there was a need for the sharing of best safety practice in the telecom world. SADG began as a small, and effective group which progressed into MATS that you see today, with 17 member organisations, input and collaboration from the HSE, and input from across the industry. As the telecom industry progressed, in 2015 MATS leapt into cyberspace with a website providing guidance notes, best practice and current news for Working at Height Safety. Soon after, MATS entered the commercial "social media" arena on Linked In-we now have 3600 followers!

So, what is our latest development.? Over the last few months, a sub-set of the MATS team have been working with Graphic Design Company "Lacazte.com" to re-brand our organisation, re-designing our trusted "radiating tower" logo into what you see below to take us forward into the next few years. Our re-branding includes a new power point background, new logos and an animation-all are due to be launched later this year.



Our sincere thanks to Tommy Davies at Lacazte.com for interpreting our ideas and bringing them together into a sharp and effective re-branding package.

LacaZte.

For more information on LacaZte
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MATS GROUP MEMBERS

MATS members include:

- Airwave Motorola Solutions
- Arqiva
- Babcock
- BT
- Cellnex UK Ltd
- Cornerstone
- Freshwave Group
- MBNL
- MoD
- NATS
- National Crime Agency
- Network Rail Telecom
- O2 Telefonica
- Shared Access
- Wireless Infrastructure Group (WIG)
- WPD Telecoms
- Vodafone



MATS Conference 2022

Tuesday 26th April 2022

Coventry Building Society Arena

Find out more at matsgroup.info

Follow us on

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/company/mats-group

Now over 3640 followers



The MATS Group may be contacted by email at: enquiries@matsgroup.info