

## WHO SAID WHAT

"The aim of this campaign is to increase general awareness of the risks with ladders as well as promoting their safe use" said Cllr Hazel Wright, portfolio holder for social inclusion.

"The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but only to hold a man's foot long enough to enable him to put the other somewhat higher."

- Thomas Henry Huxley

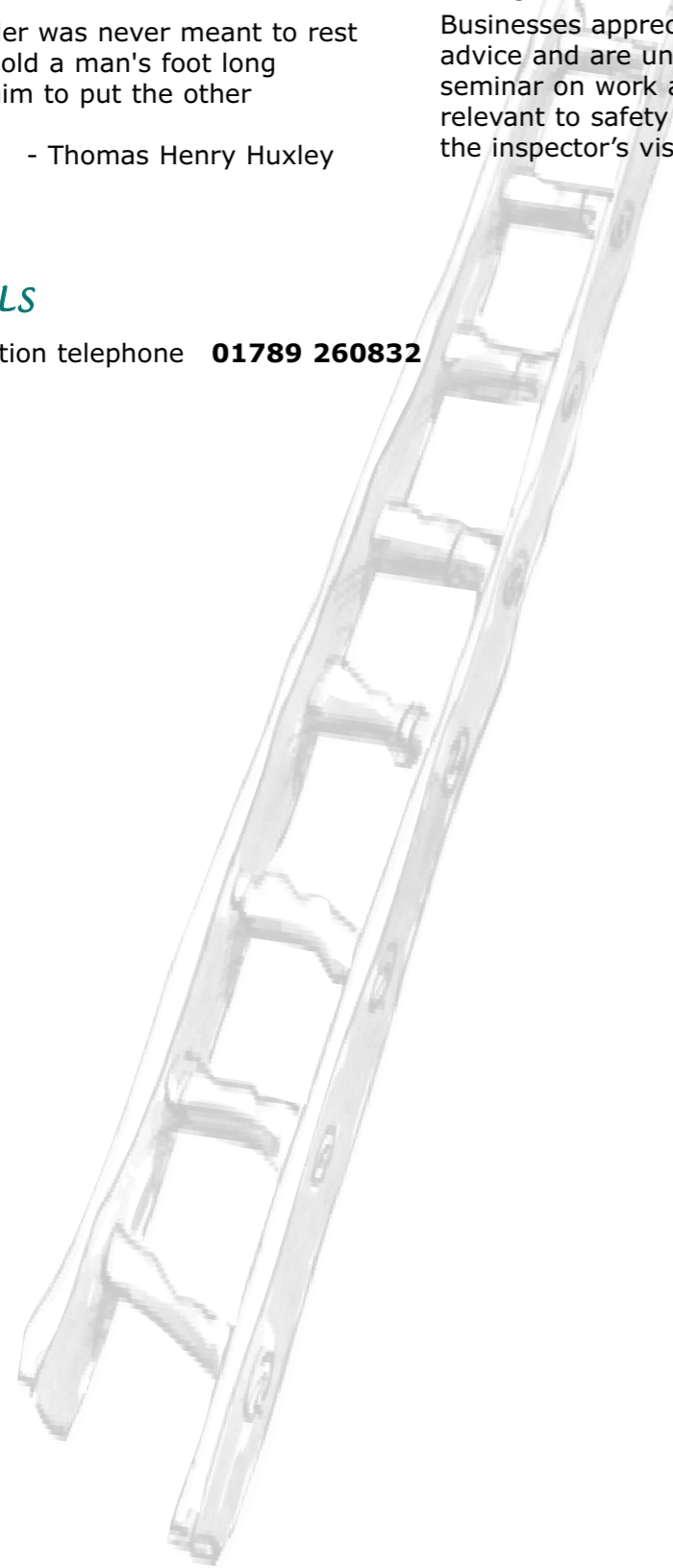
## MORE DETAILS

For further information telephone **01789 260832**

## KEY LEARNING POINTS

The project was a quick way of getting a vital message across to employers and employees and the information given should improve not only ladder safety but also safety management.

Businesses appreciated the personal visit with advice and are unlikely to have visited a seminar on work at heights as few felt it was relevant to safety in their undertaking prior to the inspector's visit.



# Health & Safety News

SPECIAL EDITION Ladder Safety

Produced by Environmental Services, Stratford-on-Avon District Council



## Public Protection Case Study

### Ladder Safety

#### Introduction

Last year 13 people died and over 1,200 people suffered major injuries from falls while working on ladders, (national figures from HSE).

Many of these injuries are caused by inappropriate or incorrect use of equipment and are therefore preventable.

Inspectors from Local Authorities and the Health and Safety Executive are responsible for enforcing Health and Safety Legislation and are consequently working together to address this high risk safety issue.

#### Legislation

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 require that every employer shall ensure:

**that a ladder is used for work at height only if a risk assessment has demonstrated that the use of more suitable work equipment is not justified because of the low risk.**



## PROJECT

To raise the profile of ladder safety within the Stratford-on-Avon District Council area during Ladder Safety Week.

The week was to be advertised nationally by the Health and Safety Executive and locally by contacting the local press and local radio stations.

We decided to participate in Ladder Safety Week on 21/25 November 2005. During this week Inspectors were to visit businesses in the area, examining work at height procedures, providing advice on the safe use of ladders and stepladders and recommending safer systems of work. Formal action being reserved for recalcitrant employers.

### What We Did



The Stratford Herald used our press release, reported the event and published a photograph showing a local authority inspector and a ladder.

Coventry and Warwickshire radio interviewed Peter Haigh, Food and Safety Inspector who highlighted the main features of the campaign.

The week was also advertised on the District Council website.



During the event officers visited selected towns in Stratford-on-Avon District Council area ie. Stratford-upon-Avon, Southam, Henley-in-Arden, Alcester, Studley and Shipston-on-Stour.

During the week seventy six premises were visited and 110 ladders were inspected.

The Officers targeted large and small premises including Shops, Department stores, Supermarkets, Leisure Facilities, Hotels, Warehouses and Offices.

Three free guides produced by the Health and Safety Executive were given to each of premises visited explaining pre-use checks, choosing the correct ladders for the job, their correct and incorrect use and how to look after ladders.

### The Inspections covered:

#### Management Systems:

- Planning the work to be done
- Maintenance of ladders

#### Competence of users:

- In-house users
- Contractor monitoring ie, window cleaners

#### Alternatives to ladders

- Exploration of alternatives
- Alternatives available
- Why alternative are not used

### FINDINGS

Eighteen ladders were found to be defective and were withdrawn from use by the owner/manager of the premises.

#### Defects found included

Faulty repairs, incorrect size ladder for the job, damaged rungs and stiles.

#### Ladders were used in the following applications

fitting windows, replacing light bulbs, stocking shelves, maintenance and window cleaning. Follow up action is being taken at all premises on which ladders were found to be faulty and/or lacking in the correct documentation for safe systems of use. Advice was given in all cases.

An example of good (and timely) practice was observed at a tyre fitting premises that had recently had an in-house safety inspection. There were no ladders on the premises except for a set in the bin. Posters had been reduced to a height that could be accessed more easily. Non commercial tyres could be reached from ground level and commercial tyres were brought down from high racking in stillages utilising a fork lift truck.

An example of bad practice was found at an hotel where a faulty ladder was found despite regular inspections being carried out and recorded by the maintenance man. The general manager did not need advising that this failure had wide ranging implications in that it also highlighted training and monitoring issues.