



Welcome to the PASMA History Zone

Explore 50 years of tower safety

This exhibition was made possible thanks to a generous donation of archive material from Michael McGuire, formerly of Stephens & Carter, who helped establish PASMA in 1974

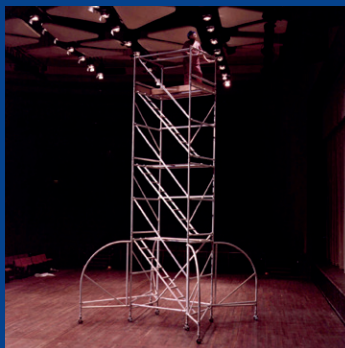


*"I was glad I started it. Really. And I'm very proud that people have taken up that cause, to ensure that **more and more people have been saved.**"*

– Mike McGuire, PASMA pioneer

A new trade association is formed to advance tower safety

Fifty years ago, a young electrician died after falling from a mobile access tower on a US airbase. This tragic event triggered the creation of PASMA, a groundbreaking trade association that, for the first time, saw tower manufacturers working together to advance safety.



It started with four founding members:

Access Equipment | **John Rusling**

Martin-Thomas | **Stephens & Carter**

By the end of 1974, they'd named the association PASMA – which initially stood for Prefabricated Aluminium Scaffolding Manufacturers' Association – and held their first official meeting.

How PASMA got its name

Naming a new trade association isn't an easy task, especially when you have to reach a consensus with your competitors. We're told that the debate got pretty lively! With names like 'Tower Association' put forward and dismissed, members looked to trusty standard BS 1139 Section 7 for inspiration, which at the time contained the requirements for alloy towers.

The standard described towers as 'Prefabricated Aluminium Scaffolding'. Add on 'Manufacturers' Association' – because that's what the organisation was – and there you have it, PASMA was born.

It was Mike McGuire, a true PASMA pioneer, who proposed the name. ***"You've got to have a catchy name which is simple and makes a word,"*** he said. Today's marketing team thank him for his foresight!



"The thing that stands out for me is the people. The strong characters, the pioneers, the go-getters. Some of them don't realise that's what they are. But they've made such changes, such impact on the industry." – Gillian Rutter, past chairman

Paul Pritchard first joined the PASMA council when he was 'young and ambitious' (his words!). He recalls that rather than holding elections, the four members simply rotated the roles of chairman, treasurer and secretary.

Another past chairman, Roger Verallo, remembers the early meetings as lengthy but very informal. But he adds: *"Within a few years, PASMA became an organisation that was really set to go forward. We had a clear vision that we wanted people to be safe using our equipment."*



"Aluminium towers were fairly new, quite niche. But they were starting to develop and grow rapidly. And we felt a need for something to represent the industry."
– Paul Pritchard, past chairman

The Health & Safety at Work Act launched in the same year, which motivated companies to improve their safety procedures and helped create a landscape in which PASMA would thrive.

PASMA was set up as, and remains, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting the safe use of towers. All because someone had finally said, ***"This cannot go on."***

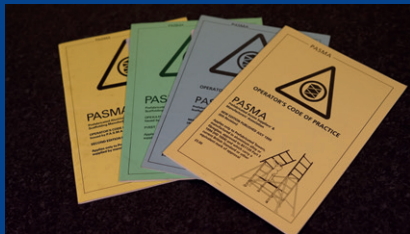


"I don't know how many lives we've saved as an organisation, but it must be hundreds and hundreds of them." – Roger Verallo, past chairman

Tower industry gets its first code of practice

Early on, members understood that official guidance from PASMA would help to standardise safety practices across the industry and keep more people safe.

One initial priority was writing a code of practice. By the late 70s the association had grown to 10 members, including some of the larger rental companies, who poured their combined experience into the project.



The **PASMA operator's code of practice for prefabricated aluminium alloy towers** was published in January 1980. For just 75p per copy, you could learn how to erect, dismantle and use a tower safely.

Since then, PASMA has firmly established itself as a voice of authority. Our expert guidance has helped countless people use towers safely.



*"If you have a body like PASMA, who is seen to be the **spokesperson for the industry**, they can recognise changes that are going on in the sector and produce authoritative guidance for them. And that's certainly been the case for PASMA." – Peter Bond, past chairman*

The code of practice remains in publication to this day, joined by more modern forms of guidance like webpages, quizzes, podcasts and webinars. And while we still make videos, they've moved from VHS to YouTube!



Over the years, PASMA has released some landmark – at times controversial – pieces of guidance, including the fall protection review, pavement licence guidance, compatibility protocol and most recently, our 'DIY' tower report. Our most ambitious piece yet is TowerSure, a mobile app for inspecting towers.



Instructor slides

In the days before PowerPoint, these hand-drawn slides were used for PASMA training. It's interesting to see how little our main messages have changed! Designed to raise a smile as well as educate, the slides are now part of the growing PASMA archive.

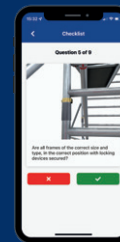
Released: 1980s



Fall protection review

A landmark report, written in collaboration with the HSE, that reviewed our recommended practices for the avoidance of falls from height from mobile access towers. The findings reaffirmed our equal support for the 3T method and AGR system of assembly.

Released: 2011



TowerSure

Billed as the smarter way to manage tower inspections, TowerSure by PASMA means that for the first time, operatives and managers can be sure their towers are assembled correctly. Based around a mobile app, this guidance is right there whenever you need it.

Released: 2022

First European standard for towers is published

Today, standards are a well-established part of tower safety. It wasn't an easy road to get here, but PASMA has always led the way.

In 1983, our technical committee began work on HD 1004, a transitional step between older national standards and a single European standard. It was completed in 1992, significantly changing the design parameters for aluminium towers.

"Suddenly people were talking about towers," remembers Peter Bond, past chairman. *"And PASMA was beginning to be recognised as a national name. You could mention it to almost anybody in the industry at that time and they'd heard of PASMA."*

Despite the buzz, it was to be another 12 years before the full European standard, EN 1004, was published.

The time in between, of course, involved a lot of hard work, discussion and negotiation. Reaching consensus between all interested parties, each with different local laws and working practices, is no easy task. It often comes down to one question: **"Can you live with it?"**



Standards today

After EN 1004, BS 1139-6 quickly followed. It's meant that since 2005, the UK has had a recognised standard for straight up-and-down mobile access towers as well as more complex configurations like cantilever towers, linked or bridged towers, large deck towers and stairway towers.



These standards set out the materials, dimensions, design loads, safety and performance requirements that towers should conform to.

"Having certification makes our customers realise that we're serious about the design process and manufacturing safe products."
– Mark Moreby, Lakeside Industries

New editions of EN 1004 and BS 1139-6 were released in the early 2020s, after lengthy revision processes. PASMA championed these updates throughout, and even getting the go-ahead for the committee to begin the initial review was a significant achievement.

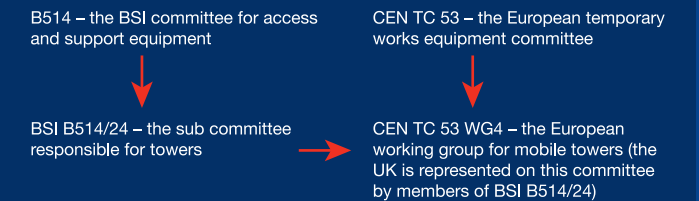


The people behind the standards

PASMA and our members have been active participants in the various BSI and CEN committees responsible for standards in our industry, with our own Don Aers having held the title of chairman and convenor of several.

"A standard can either say exactly what towers must look like or it can set a framework of goals they need to achieve. The latter is better because it's not prescriptive; it allows for innovation and for new approaches and technologies to be developed." – Don Aers

Committee structure:



Those involved in drafting modern standards are very aware that they are standing on the shoulders of those who took on the mammoth task of writing that very first European standard.

Over the years, notable contributors have included Brian Madden, Tony Williams, Peter Bond, Lewis Santos, John Cornish, Graham Maddox, Don Aers, John Darby, Stuart MacLean, Peter Harley, Roger Verallo, Chris Bowman, Peter Bennett OBE, Paul Cowling and many others. They have all played a role in making sure that this important work was done.

Test & Research Centre

PASMA helped found the Test & Research Centre back in 2018, providing the access industry with a UK-based certification body, test laboratory and training facility. Today, it operates independently and has established itself as a specialist in work at height equipment, having become the first UKAS-accredited test laboratory for BS EN 1004 back in 2021.



Don's Story

PASMA's contribution to tower standards is led by our technical director, Don Aers. Don graduated as a mechanical engineer and worked in research and development in various industries before being offered the position as head of engineering at SGB Youngman. With no prior knowledge or involvement in access equipment, Don initially planned for a short stay, but that was some 30 years ago! In his new role he was tasked with joining PASMA's technical committee, where he unexpectedly found his calling.

Don joined PASMA full time in 2009, and since then has contributed to developing and revising standards, including EN 1004 and BS 1139-6, chairing various BSI technical committees and influencing European standards as convenor of the committee for mobile towers. He advocates for safety, innovation and aligning standards, while recognising the challenges in enforcement and the industry's need to adapt to future changes.



The evolution of tower standards since PASMA began:

1983	1992	1996	2004	2005	2020	2021	2022
BS 1139-3	HD 1004	EN 1298	EN 1004	BS 1139-6	EN 1004-1	EN 1004-2	BS 1139-6 revision

A new name for PASMA to reflect its changing role in the industry



Around the turn of the millennium, PASMA changed its name to Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association. No longer was this a manufacturer's trade association, but one for the whole industry.

The new name marked the start of a new chapter. And with managing director, Peter Bennett at the helm, PASMA went from strength to strength.

The trajectory shifts

Training members joined our ranks for the first time, leading to a boom in membership numbers, and a new income stream to boot. The number of delegates rose from 3,000 per year pre-1999 to 14,000 per year by 2011 – a number that hasn't stopped growing!

Then came the Work at Height Regulations, giving PASMA an opportunity to demonstrate its industry leadership and influence. We played a pivotal role in shaping the legislation and championed its adoption across the tower sector.



*“Once the Work at Height Regulations came in, it expanded the use of towers substantially. It was very much to the benefit of safety, as it reduced falls. It brought a **whole new level of safety** into the industry.”* – Peter Bond, past chairman



And PASMA developed an increasingly international mindset, as the reputation we built in the UK began to reach foreign shores. As our membership grew in places like the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Singapore and Benelux, we were asked to share our knowledge and expertise with government bodies and industry representatives across the globe.

The PASMA team

To support the growing organisation, PASMA took on its first full time member of staff in 2007, Karen O'Neill – a familiar face to most members! Today, the PASMA team is 20-people strong.

Gone are the days when we worked out of Peter's garage. Today, PASMA occupies a 3-storey townhouse in Glasgow and the team also includes remote workers who are based across the country, from Inverness to Maldon, as well as international representatives.



Judith Hackitt DBE (HSE) and Peter Bennett OBE (PASMA) at the official opening of the PASMA office



Members are always welcome at the PASMA office. Here's Abid Gul (Simian International) with Chris Smith

Member services: the engine room of PASMA

Our member services team is the engine room of PASMA. It formed back in 2007, when data was still processed manually and held in physical files. However, it quickly evolved into the hub of efficiency you know today. Each day, Christine and Johanna help members with queries, welcome new ones, distribute tower safety guidance, protect our trademarks and issue PASMA cards – over a million of them so far! They are experts in the processes and procedures that underpin the smooth running of our operation, and they know what makes our members tick. This expertise, combined with their commitment to enhancing member experience, means they play a vital role in big projects, such as planning new online services. Today's member services team is helping PASMA transition into a digital, sustainable and international association, all while doing what they do best – supporting our members.



Over the years, our skillset has evolved to cover things like digital marketing, virtual reality and e-learning. Our team now includes a head of digitalisation, a sustainability advisor and an in-house drone specialist – job titles that didn't even exist in 1974!



Taken with a drone at our 2022 tower showcase in Nottingham

When asked what staff members had played the biggest role in PASMA's success, managing director Peter said: *“We've always had a really good team and I really could not single anyone out. PASMA has made the striking progress that we've made by having good people on our team – we've made a point of that.”*



PASMA's digitalisation team

It's true to say that every PASMA staff member, past and present, has played an important role in advancing tower safety.



The PASMA team in 2010

Peter's story

They may not realise it, but anyone who has ever climbed a tower has good reason to thank Peter Bennett. He has dedicated his career to preventing falls from height – so much so that in 2019, he was invested as an OBE by Queen Elizabeth II in recognition of his contribution to safety.



It came as Peter celebrated 35 years in the access industry, having joined Stephens & Carter in 1983 before moving to Turner Access. It was during this time that he started to get involved with PASMA. He became an active council member and served a term as chairman before eventually joining the association full time as managing director.

Throughout his career, Peter has consistently been at the forefront of change. He has a track record of leading our industry to do the right thing, even when it's not the easy thing, in the interests of saving lives and preventing serious injuries.

“If you work at height, I want you to go home safely at the end of the day. From speaking to survivors of a fall from height, I know that the consequences are often life-changing and affect not just the victim but also their family, friends and colleagues. If you work at height, or are responsible for those who do, please, please take safety seriously.” – Peter Bennett OBE

PASMA and HSE approve 3T and AGR tower build methods

Grand ambitions are rarely achieved alone. Recognising the power of collaboration, PASMA set out to build meaningful relationships with other organisations who share our goal of preventing falls from height.

The introduction of 3T and AGR is a great example of this. In the early 2000s, the idea that you could assemble a tower without ever standing on an unguarded platform was ludicrous. It couldn't be done. And yet, **it was done**. Today, 3T (through the trap) and AGR (advance guardrail) are standard practices that help keep operatives safe every day.

The impossible became possible because PASMA was recognised as a leader in the industry. The Work at Height Regulations were coming, collective fall prevention methods were needed, and people, including the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), were looking to PASMA to create a new set of rules that would work for everyone. And so, with the support of our manufacturing members who were willing to rise to the challenge, that's exactly what we did.



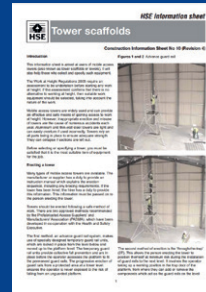
From the archives



How we got 3T and AGR

With the HSE pressuring the tower industry to improve the safety of our build methods, PASMA invited all manufacturers to gather at the Alto Access factory in Redditch. There, with the HSE in attendance, they pitched their best ideas. Out of the ensuing discussion came the Through the Trap, or 3T, build method. It joined recent invention, Advance Guardrail (AGR), as the two recommended ways to build a tower safely – endorsed by PASMA and the HSE alike.

When our industry innovates, it can save lives. 'What if we refuse to update our assembly guide?' one attendee asked the HSE representative. 'Choose a cell,' they were told. Needless to say, 3T and AGR were quickly embraced.



The new safety measures were incorporated in the HSE's Construction Information Sheet 10 (CIS10) and became the subject of a DVD released by PASMA called 'Don't fall for it'. A wide-ranging review of 3T and AGR in 2011 reaffirmed our equal support for these practices.



*"As an industry body, we build solid, trust-based relationships that bridge the gap between our members and key stakeholders, empowering our industry to **speak with one voice** and drive sustainable progress that benefits everyone."* – Jason Carlton, PASMA



Over the years, PASMA has continued to engage with the HSE on projects such as delivering the recommendations detailed in Professor Löfstedt's Independent Review of Health and Safety and hosting Working Well Together events. We also collaborated closely on the creation of PAS 250, an early standard for low level work platforms.

In addition, PASMA has sought to engage with other organisations including OPSS, HAE, IIRSM, RoSPA and IOSH (to list just a few friendly acronyms). The more people working together to prevent falls from height, the better.

Access Industry Forum

In 2004, the principal trade associations and federations involved in work at height got together to form the Access Industry Forum (AIF). Our message was stronger when we spoke with one collective voice, helping us make more progress on the issues that mattered most.

Today, the AIF encourages everyone to work safely and competently at height, using appropriate equipment, with all workers professionally trained to industry-recognised standards. A message any PASMA member would get behind! PASMA was a founding member and early champion of the AIF. We appreciate the support of our fellow members ATLAS, EPF, FASET, IPAF, IRATA, the Ladder Association, NASC, SAEMA and WAHSA.



All-Party Parliamentary Group

Falls from height account for the highest number of preventable fatalities and injuries across all sectors in UK industry. To tackle this issue, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Working at Height was formed. It brought together MPs and Peers with Government, industry leaders, SMEs and contractors to raise awareness of the risks and campaign for change.

Its inquiry report, 'Staying alive: preventing serious injury and fatalities while working at height' laid out its recommendations for preventing falls from height. PASMA helped fund the APPG, through its membership of the AIF.



PASMA instructors assemble in Nottingham for retraining

Today, every PASMA course is run by a qualified instructor who was trained by PASMA and mentored by a lead instructor. This ensures courses are delivered correctly, to the same standard, wherever they take place in the world.

But it wasn't always like that.

In 2005, with the Work at Height Regulations coming into force, PASMA invited all instructors to Nottingham to be trained by Mick Aston, Lee Choat, John Fidoe and Chris Smith.

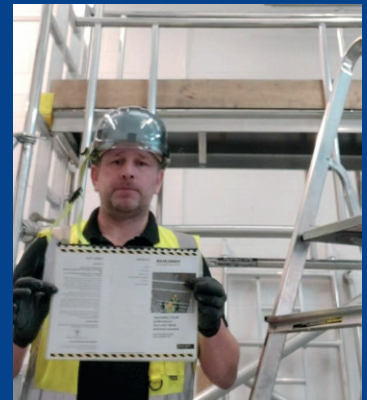
It meant that, for the first time, there was an official register of PASMA instructors. Today, there are over **400 qualified instructors**. Between them, they are responsible for ensuring that **80,000 people every year** know how to work safely with towers.



*Paul Hennessey
(Adapt Training)*



*Laura White and Jo Edmondson
(Kentec)*



*Craig Gorton
(Freelance instructor representative)*

Every year, they carry out continuous professional development, to ensure their tower knowledge stays sharp and that they're passing on the very best information to their delegates.

A special shoutout goes to our freelance instructors. A vital cog in the PASMA training machine, they allow training centres to react quickly to their clients' needs and build up a unique range of experience as they go.

Hire & assembly committee formed

PASMA embodies the principle of 'by the industry, for the industry'. From the manufacturers who started the association to the diverse range of companies involved today, it's our members who lead the way.

The PASMA council is a small group of representatives from across our membership who meet regularly to discuss, debate and make decisions about the work that PASMA does. We benefit greatly from their collective industry expertise and leadership.

Council is supported by four committees, each focused on a particular area of the industry. The technical committee came first, started back in 1974 with Mike McGuire (Stephens & Carter) chairing the first meeting. Their top priority was not actually to discuss technical topics, but to agree a training programme for towers.

In the early days, meetings were usually held in a member's bedroom at the Excelsior Hotel at Heathrow Airport. Paul Pritchard remembers there was a "congealed breakfast tray lying on the dressing table, and we were sat round the bed having a council meeting." Today, even our important council and committee work is mostly done online.

Over the years, new committees have been formed to deal with specialist areas of the industry. Today, there is a technical committee, training committee, hire & assembly committee and the most recent addition, a hirer/dealer committee.



Roger Verallo presents Peter Bond with a PASMA lifetime achievement award

Past chairmen of PASMA include:

Peter Bennett OBE	Paul Gallacher
Chris Blantern	Brian Houston MBE
Peter Bond	Paul Pritchard
John Bungay	Gillian Rutter
Paul de Chastelain	Roger Verallo
Carl Evans	Tony Williams
Richard Fairfield	



Spotlight on... the hire & assembly committee

Hire & assembly companies now have a whole host of tools that they can use to work safely and grow their business. That's largely thanks to the work of the PASMA committee. Their efforts have ensured the industry has access to safe equipment, a skilled workforce, smart inspection system, framework for good practice and increased recognition for their expertise, commitment to safety and the services they offer. The access tower specialist course is the most challenging PASMA course yet, aimed at experienced operatives, and those who pass are qualified to erect towers – including non-standard configurations – that allow others to work safely at height.



"It's as if we made a living out of playing with Meccano. It's challenging to think 'how can I use this equipment to meet this challenge?'. To get someone up to the fourth floor, cantilevered out of a window or around the wing of a plane. It's an intellectual challenge." – Paul Pritchard, past chairman

PASMA is a place where competitors set aside their differences and work together in pursuit of safety. No one would pretend that it's always easy. Our council and committees are excellent examples of this principle in action.



"You get people who have worked their way up from the very bottom of the industry and they know so much, and their contribution is absolutely vital. It's excellent sitting round the table, when everyone has different skills to bring." – Richard Fairfield, past chairman

The formation of new committees that began in the early 2000s provided some much-needed structure. Before that, council meetings could last all day, with lengthy debates making it difficult to reach a consensus and inevitably, progress was curtailed. After his first council meeting, past chairman Paul Gallacher remembers thinking, **'I can't do this!'**

"The training committee is just a group of like-minded people getting together. Even though we're all from different companies, you're striving for the same thing." – Dave Keen, training committee member

Thankfully, our committees are now well-established and they have played a crucial role in shaping policies, standards and safety protocols.

"Even now we still compete, of course, but we know that there's a purpose to get together and make sure this industry is safe. That's what PASMA was and still is." – Roger Verallo, past chairman

First PASMA training centre opens outside the UK

As the name 'PASMA' became synonymous with tower safety, we were increasingly asked to share our expertise with safety authorities – not just in the UK, but across the globe.

The first training centre outside the UK opened in Abu Dhabi in 2011. PASMA later helped establish a code of practice there, mandating the need for PASMA training, BS EN 1004 equipment and the adoption of 3T and AGR assembly methods.



*We have customers in Singapore, the Middle East, the Far East, France. All of them now are wanting to become PASMA members because they know **that's the way forward**. Having PASMA training is the accepted thing now.* – Roger Verallo, past chairman

Today, we have nearly **50 international members** in **15 countries**, including Ireland, Spain, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Between them, the training members have trained **over 19,000 people** on doing tower safety 'the PASMA way'.



*"It's great to see that we're being **recognised in other countries** for the high standard of training that we do in the UK. And that's something we can look forward to watching develop over the next 50 years."* – Steve Booker, chairman

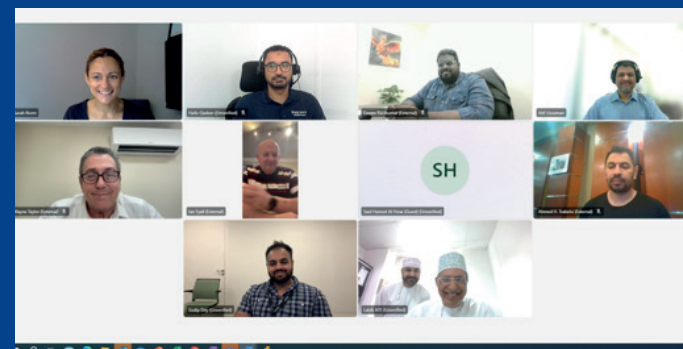


We have continued to collaborate with government bodies, safety regulators and industry leaders to embed good tower safety into local working practices. As a result, EN 1004 certification is now mandated in Dubai and Malaysia, as well as Abu Dhabi. PASMA has also helped create tower safety guidance for Singapore, Oman and South Africa.



Launch of Safe Use of Mobile Access Towers guidance in Malaysia, 2023

Our work overseas is supported by our safety at height advisory panels for the Middle East and ASEAN regions.



PASMA believes that anyone using towers, wherever they are in the world, should have access to safe equipment, proper training and expert guidance.



*"I think the international side of the association will continue to grow as more and more countries realise that PASMA is the lead industry body in this, **not just nationally but internationally**."* – Richard Fairfield, past chairman

PASMA gets its first female chair

Tower safety would not have advanced so far without the trailblazing women who've made their mark in this traditionally male-dominated industry.

In 2017, we celebrated the appointment of our first female chair, Gillian Rutter. And it wasn't just a first for us! We believe she was the first female chair of any construction-related association in the UK. Gillian remembers that after the initial congratulations, the first big debate was **"What do we call you?"**

Having settled on simply 'chairman' or when formality called for it, 'madam chairman', Gillian got on with job at hand. During her term, PASMA was involved in starting the No Falls Foundation and the Test & Research Centre. She also gave a presentation to promote tower safety in Abu Dhabi.



Women in PASMA



Gillian is currently chair of our training committee, where she works alongside vice chair Debbie Forbes – the first time two women have acted in this capacity at the same time. Debbie is a national training manager at HSS Training and a lead instructor for PASMA. After a career in the Women's Royal Army Corps and Thames Valley Police, Debbie brought her skills and experience to the access industry.



When Karen O'Neill accepted an administrative role in the Turner Access training department in 1999, she didn't realise the adventure that lay ahead! There she became a PASMA instructor and auditor before making the leap to join us full time. Here, Karen has been instrumental in creating, updating and managing our training courses. She managed the shift to e-learning during covid and continues to refine our offering to meet the industry's evolving needs, including digitalisation, gamification and innovative technologies like virtual reality.



It was a similar story for Joy Jackson, who became a PASMA instructor while working for M & H Plant Hire (later acquired by Hewden). After retiring, Joy joined PASMA as central region auditor at the invitation of our managing director Peter, where by all accounts she made an outstanding contribution to the association, right up until her retirement in 2011.



Over in Singapore, Anna Lim has been working for Instant Access Systems Pte Ltd since 1997. Anna was a founding member of the Access Solution Industry Association in Singapore and was part of the working committee tasked with revising the Code of Practice for Scaffolding, CP14. The previous version did not address aluminium towers, so the update was long overdue, and Anna is proud to have contributed to such a significant advancement in industry standards.



*"Going back to the founding members, there were no women. There are **a lot more women involved** today, so that's good. I like to think that we won't even notice it in the future, we'll all just be people doing our jobs."* – Gillian Rutter, past chairman

Covid-19 pandemic accelerates e-learning rollout



‘PASMA now **strongly recommends** that our UK members suspend all non-essential activities, in particular classroom and instructor delivered training, to help stop the spread of the coronavirus.’ – statement from PASMA, 26 March 2020

As the pandemic spread across the world, the tower industry hit pause. Our lowest point was May that year, when we issued just **373** PASMA cards.

But this industry is resilient. With social distancing, face coverings, thorough risk assessments and a new rule allowing one-person towers to be used in practical sessions, training was soon able to continue safely.

During this tough time, a glimmer of positivity came from seeing our members innovate, adapt, collaborate and pull together like never before.

The PASMA team adapted quickly to the ‘new normal’. Overnight, our office-based staff joined their remote colleagues in working from home. We phoned all our members to find out how they were affected, extended our membership renewal date to ease financial pressures and created realistic, practical guidance for running PASMA courses during the pandemic. We even held a Christmas party on Zoom.



The launch of e-learning

The start of the pandemic accelerated the rollout of something that had been in the works for a while: e-learning. For the first time, delegates could complete the theory session of our most popular courses from their own home or workplace.

“E-learning started as a way to give candidates more flexibility in how they learn, letting them get familiar with the theory before they step into a classroom,” recalls Karen O’Neill, head of training administration & delivery. “But when covid hit, it became essential. We had to quickly adapt, ensuring that our members could continue to access high-quality training remotely. It wasn’t about replacing in-person instruction, but about making sure learning never stops, no matter the circumstances.”



*“We were being asked by our customers, those running essential businesses, to help them carry out **training in covid times**. And because of that we worked alongside PASMA to help bring forward the online training programme.” - Carl Evans, past chairman*

As well as our e-learning modules, our next-generation suite of training tools includes our tower game and virtual reality ‘fall from height’ experience.



One millionth delegate gets PASMA trained

These days, there's an expectation that anyone working with towers will be PASMA trained. But it wasn't always that way. Once upon a time, there was no PASMA training at all.

A training programme was initially outlined by the technical committee in 1976 and from there, the very first Towers for Users course took place at CITB in 1979.

Soon after, past chairman Paul Pritchard remembers one member declaring that they'd trained 83 delegates that year. No one could believe it. How could there be so many people that needed training?



"More and more we were being asked by our customers how to build the towers they hired from us. Through the PASMA programme, we were able to take that training to them." - Carl Evans, past chairman

Since then, and particularly since training members were permitted to join the association in 2000, the market has grown exponentially. In 2023, a record-breaking 78,000 delegates were PASMA trained – enough to fill Old Trafford.

In 2023, instructor Andrew Legge at Speedy Training trained our one millionth delegate. His name is James and he has the honour of holding PASMA card no. 1000000.

Each delegate completed one of our 10 industry-leading training courses:

- Towers for Users
- Towers for Managers
- Low-Level Access
- Towers on Stairways
- Cantilever Towers
- Towers with Bridges
- Linked Towers
- Large Deck Towers
- Access Tower Specialist
- Work at Height (Novice)



Over the years, standards have risen. Past chairman, Peter Bond recalls leading a course for 50 delegates on a construction site – with only 10 chairs! That wouldn't happen these days.



"Fairly soon, we got to grips with putting a framework around the training programme and making sure that we had good instructors, good equipment, and that the questions they had to answer were fairly demanding. It was part of the 'growing up' of PASMA." – Peter Bond, past chairman

Instructors used to use acetates, then slide projectors. Today, it's PowerPoint. In the future, who knows?

The evolution of PASMA cards

Stuart Hopkins, retired director of training at PASMA, recalls the days when PASMA cards were made of cardboard and printed by your employer. We then moved to more durable plastic cards, over time adding security features to prevent fraud and more recently switching to 99% recycled materials in a drive to improve sustainability. The most recent development is that PASMA cards are available digitally, via the TowerSure app.

PASMA training has taken place in all sorts of workplaces, from museums and chapels to airports and nuclear research facilities. Chris Smith recalls being flown out to do training in Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Gibraltar and Ascension Island.

Other interesting locations include the Harry Potter Experience (George Lopez), the set of ITV's 'I'm a Celebrity' (Simon Blackham) and even Buckingham Palace (Terry Kirwan).



And to widen access to training, delegates can now sit their assessment in 14 different languages. None of this would have been possible without the support, effort and dedication of PASMA members and instructors.



"Everybody knows that the PASMA badge is about the safe use of mobile access towers. It's the go-to qualification for those using towers." – Carl Evans, past chairman



No Falls Foundation

For every person that gets trained, PASMA makes a donation to the No Falls Foundation, a dedicated charity for the work at height sector that we helped establish. This has amounted to around £40,000 each year. Every pound goes towards researching the causes of falls from height, preventing these accidents from happening and supporting those who have been affected by one.



"There are very few things you can do in this life where you can look back and say 'that was something positive and beneficial that I did'. So I think everyone involved in PASMA, in however small a way, should feel good about it. We have saved lives." – Paul Pritchard, past chairman

First hirer/dealer audit takes place

PASMA membership is used by the public as an indicator of safety, so it's critical that we uphold strict standards. Our auditors are the heart and soul of that ethos.

In 2024, PASMA introduced audits for hire centres and suppliers, so we can make sure the towers they stock are up to standard. It was an initiative spearheaded by the hirer/dealer committee, who were keen to drive up standards in their sector. Hirer/dealers join training, manufacturer and hire & assembly members who are all well-used to visits from a friendly PASMA auditor.



*"Being a PASMA hirer/dealer member is more than just ticking a box – it's a testament to our **shared commitment to excellence and progress.**"*

– Martin Doran, chair of PASMA hirer/dealer committee



"There was no auditing in the early days," remembers Paul Pritchard, a retired auditor, "And then gradually as training developed, the need for auditing came about. It became more and more important that we ran the training course properly."

Over the years, PASMA has been lucky to have many diligent, dedicated auditors. Notable names include Ernie Elwell, Karen O'Neill, Joy Jackson, Paul de Chastelain, Richard Steele, Paul Pritchard, David Walker and Geoff Carr.

Most recently, our audits have been conducted by Chris Smith and George Lopez, with many now taking place online. In 2024, their team doubled in size, as Helen Carr and Andy Pollard came on board to help manage the increasing number of audits.

Chris' Story

Our head of auditing services & professional standards started his working life at his stepfather's butcher's shop, at age 15. In 1990, he was hired as a van driver for PASMA hirer/dealer member Turner Access by Peter Bennett himself (before the OBE!). Chris quickly gained enough industry knowledge to become a PASMA training instructor and, between the 1990s and 2010s, provided his services, including auditing, for multiple association members, building the relationships he fosters today. In 2019, Chris started in his current role, lending his tower expertise to our training courses and managing PASMA training assessments and auditing in the UK and abroad, as well as the training committee and hirer/dealer audits.



*"Professional standards underpin what we do as an organisation. Whether you manufacture, hire, use or assemble towers you can trust that the equipment, processes and training meet the correct standard. Audits are **not just a tick in the box** for us, it's supporting our members and ensuring high levels of quality are maintained." – Chris Smith*

**Leave your message for
the future of tower safety**

A large, empty white rectangular area intended for a message or contact information.