

# KEEP SAFE ON SITE WITH GGR GROUP



As construction sites across the UK begin to re-open, GGR Group is putting out a call to contractors and site workers to assist with ensuring that social distancing is maintained on site.

The two metre guidelines for social distancing has meant that there is increased demand for equipment that can support safe working during these unprecedented times.

GGR have been assisting sites that have remained open or are due to open in the coming weeks, to provide equipment to maintain social distancing and ensure safe methods of work.

We want to make it clear that our development team are on hand to come up with solutions and safe ways of working to support your lifting requirements on site.

**TAKING SOCIAL DISTANCING SERIOUSLY**

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# Gin Poles - the original crane

Eddie Bishop has been building traditional timber buildings in the UK for more than 30 years and while he uses cranes and a wide variety of modern access equipment he regularly resorts to more traditional lifting equipment. The following is his take on a form of lifting equipment that is rarely seen these days - Gin Poles.

As the crane and lifting industry constantly develops with more efficient and bespoke designs of equipment to serve our ever increasing requirement for lifting solutions, it is easy to forget that its origins lie in what was once a ubiquitous and simple design that is rarely used these days but which still has its place in the world of lifting.

The Gin Pole is essentially a single pole which is tethered by two or more guy lines to produce a simple, triangulated lifting arrangement when used in conjunction with a pulley system, chain hoist or winch. In its simplest configuration the Gin Pole allows for a vertical lift with an additional boom up/boom down facility provided by altering the length of the guy lines and



*The Gin Pole is rarely used these days but still has its place.*



corresponding pole angle. Correctly rigged these adjustments may be undertaken while under load by the simple use of pulleys or hitches in the guy line system.

In the traditional timber framing industry, for instance, heavy timbers or assembled timber frames may be required to be lifted into position in locations which may not have ready access for cranes or where the cost of crane hire is potentially prohibitive. Often the ability to lift on-site may be required over a period of several days, albeit only occasionally. This is where the Gin Pole really comes into its own.

"I have undertaken many jobs using a Gin Pole with great effect to lift frames safely and easily into their required locations in settings where a crane would not be practical due to restricted access or cost," said Bishop. "Typically when raising gable end frames onto buildings, the

Gin Pole allows the finished, fully assembled frame to be lifted into location and secured with ease as opposed to assembling the frame stage by stage at height with the inevitable safety risks of working at height."

Frames weighing from a few hundred kilos up to a tonne can be lifted easily using a pulley system or chain hoist attached to the Gin Pole. The capacity is obviously dictated by the strength of the pole and lifting gear - lifting heavier loads simply requires a stronger system.

## Ready in minutes

The Gin Pole is usually rigged in just a few minutes, requiring no more than a measurement to establish the base position of the pole and the insertion of suitable ground anchors for the guy lines. The Pole is raised by hand as tension is maintained on the guy lines until the lifting point is above the desired location the



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guy lines are then locked off before lifting commences. Adjustments of the final position can be made by shortening or lengthening the guy lines to raise or lower the pole effecting a boom in or out function. "Depending on the application, the pole may have between two and four guy lines and at its most basic a pair of guy lines running back from the pole and away from the load," he said. "The pole will typically be of round or square section timber with a braced footplate to spread the load at its base and attachment points for the guy lines and the hoist mechanism. On typically soft ground, long pins will be pushed through the base plate to prevent slip and screw-in ground anchors used to attach the guy lines. Pulleys may be used at the ground anchor attachment points to facilitate easier adjustment of the guy lines if required."

#### Cost effective

"The cost of a suitable pole and all the associated rigging of guy lines, anchors and pulley system or chain hoist for say a 500kg load to be raised by five metres

is typically in the region of £200 to £300 - considerably less than a single days' crane hire, and can of course be used whenever needed. The potential of damage to grassed areas is minimised in comparison to a crane and access is nearly always guaranteed."

"The downside is that slewing the load is not as straightforward as it would be when using a crane," he said. "It is still possible by using a modified design that utilises a second pole with the lifting pole attached forming a derrick, although in most applications where the lifting point is defined by the final position of the assembly this is unnecessary."

Much heavier loads of several tonnes can be lifted with a Gin Pole. They were once used extensively on larger construction projects such as cathedrals, with higher lifts being completed by using two or more Gin poles employed in stages. While the Gin pole still has its uses and is certainly worth consideration, modern Health & Safety considerations inevitably need to be factored into such operations, but these do not normally present any



Frames weighing up to one tonne can be lifted.



particular problems.

In summary the Gin Pole is a safe lifting method that can be easily deployed in many scenarios and

requires relatively little expertise, whilst providing a cost effective and ecologically sound solution. It is certainly worthy of consideration.

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