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# Tragic Collision Results in Fine for Wood Recycling Company

## Description

A tragedy unfolded at a wood recycling company in Nottingham, leading to the untimely death of an employee and subsequent legal consequences for the business involved. On April 29, 2019, Thomas Brooke, an employee at John Brooke (Timber Treatments) Limited, was fatally struck by a JCB wheel loader while walking across the company's yard. This incident, steeped in sorrow and preventable in nature, highlights the dire consequences of inadequate workplace safety measures.

The day began like any other, with vehicles moving about the yard, carrying out their routine tasks. Among them was a JCB wheel loader, its bucket raised as it maneuvered through the space. As the machine moved forward, it collided with Thomas, who succumbed to his injuries shortly after the incident.

Thomas Brooke's death sent shockwaves through his family and the community. He was not just an employee but also a father, a husband, and a cherished member of his family. At the time of his passing, Thomas's son Rupert was just four years old. Now, five years later, Rupert is nine, and the void left by his father's absence remains a painful reality for the family.

Jessica Brooke, Thomas's wife, painted a vivid picture of the man who was her partner in life. "Our hearts are broken," she said, encapsulating the grief that has weighed heavily on her and her young son. Jessica described Thomas as a kind and caring person, dedicated to his family and beloved by all who knew him. Her words convey a deep sense of loss, one that has forever altered the course of their lives.

"We were partners in crime, soulmates, and best friends," Jessica continued, her voice echoing the bond they shared. "Together, we took on whatever challenges life threw in our direction." The pain of losing Thomas is further compounded by the dreams and future plans that will never come to fruition.

The bond between Thomas and Rupert was particularly special. From the moment Rupert was born, Thomas embraced fatherhood with a natural ease, creating an inseparable connection between father and son. They were, as Jessica put it, "thick as thieves," finding joy in each other's company. Thomas wasn't just a father; he was a role model, a figure of admiration for Rupert, who viewed his father as his favorite person in the world. "Rupert couldn't have wished for a better father," Jessica said, her words a testament to the deep affection and respect they had for Thomas.

As Jessica and Rupert navigate life without Thomas, they are forced to confront a future filled with uncertainty and heartache. Jessica mourns not only the loss of her husband but also the experiences they will never share and the milestones that Thomas will never witness in Rupert's life. The family has asked for privacy during this difficult time as they continue to grieve.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) uncovered several critical failures at John Brooke (Timber Treatments) Limited. The investigation revealed that the company had not properly

organized its workplace to ensure pedestrian safety. There were no control measures, such as physical barriers, to prevent pedestrians from entering areas where heavy machinery like loading shovels, lorries, forklift trucks, and 360-degree grabs operated. The company also failed to adequately assess the risks associated with operating machinery with reduced visibility. Furthermore, the training, instruction, and monitoring of employees were found to be insufficient.

Workplace safety is paramount. Every workplace must be designed with the safety of both people and vehicles in mind. Traffic routes should be suitable for all who use them, and proper safety measures must be implemented to separate people from moving vehicles. The HSE provides guidance on workplace transport, offering advice on how to maintain safe traffic routes and ensure the separation of people and vehicles.

On August 20, 2024, John Brooke (Timber Treatments) Limited, based in Widmerpool, Nottingham, pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 17(1) of the Workplace (Health, Safety, and Welfare) Regulations 1992, as well as section 33(1)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, at Nottingham Crown Court. The company was fined £22,500 and ordered to pay additional costs amounting to £44,227.28.

Following the sentencing, HSE inspector Lindsay Bentley emphasized the importance of taking responsibility in the workplace. "This has been a very difficult case for all concerned," Bentley said. "However, those in control of work have a responsibility to implement safe methods of working. Had simple measures been taken, this tragedy could have been prevented."

This prosecution by the HSE, led by enforcement lawyer Kate Harney and supported by paralegal officer Rebecca Forman, serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of neglecting workplace safety. It also underscores the importance of adhering to safety regulations and ensuring that all employees are adequately trained and protected while on the job.

## CATEGORY

1. Nottinghamshire

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2. Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
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4. Incident
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