

**The Vertikal Press,  
New England House/Level 5,  
New England Street, Brighton BN1 4GH, UK.  
Tel: 01273 884422 Fax: 01273 884477  
e-mail: info@vertikal.net  
web: www.vertikal.net**

**In Germany:  
The Vertikal Verlag,  
Sundgaualle 15, D-79114, Freiburg, Germany  
Tel: 0761 8978660 Fax: 0761 8866814  
e-mail: info@vertikal.net web: www.vertikal.net**

#### ADVERTISING SALES

##### Classified Advertising Worldwide:

Anja Hesse – Advertising Executive  
The Vertikal Press, New England House/Level 5,  
New England Street, Brighton BN1 4GH  
Tel: 01273 884878 Fax: 01273 884477  
e-mail: ah@vertikal.net

##### France, Belgium and Spain

Hamilton Pearman, GMT, 84 avenue André Rouy,  
F-94350 Villiers-Sur-Marne, France.  
Tel: +33 1 43 04 91 31. Fax: +33 1 43 04 91 31.  
E-mail: hpearman@club-internet.fr

##### Germany and Austria

Michael Boyle, Vertikal Verlag  
Postfach 1163, D-83080 Oberaudorf,  
Kufsteiner Strasse 20, D-83080 Oberaudorf  
Tel: 08033 91231 Fax: 08033 91288  
e-mail: MBoyle@tonline.de

##### Italy

Fabio Polestà, Mediapoint, Corte Lambruschini,  
Corso Buenos Aires 8, V Piano-Interno 7,  
I-16129 Genova, Italy.  
Tel: 010 570 4948 Fax: 010 553 0088.  
E-mail: mediapot@tin.it

##### The Netherlands

Arthur Schavemaker, Kenter & Co, Postbus 130,  
Sporstraat 21, NL-7470 AC Goor, The Netherlands.  
Tel: 0547 275005 Fax: 0547 271831  
e-mail: arthur@kenter.nl

##### UK and all other areas

Anja Hesse, The Vertikal Press  
New England House/Level 5,  
New England Street, Brighton BN1 4GH  
Tel: 01273 884878 Fax: 01273 884477  
e-mail: ah@vertikal.net

Design and typesetting by:  
Ampersand, Tunbridge Wells, UK.  
Printed by: Warners Midlands plc.  
ISSN: 1467-0852

© Copyright The Vertikal Press Limited 2001

incorporating

**CRANESUK**  
THE MAGAZINE FOR CRANES AND ACCESS

The Vertikal Press also publishes:

**Kran & Bühne**  
THE MAGAZINE FOR CRANES AND ACCESS

**Vertikal  
Press**

The Vertikal Press Limited

MEMBER OF

CPA

# COMMENT

## Buy, buy, buy!



There has just been a huge shake out. Ainscough bought GWS, something we had predicted for a few months, and then, out of the blue, Finning buys Hewden Stuart. This makes it the proud owner of about 500 mobile and tower cranes and 1600 platforms! Almost at the same time Lavendon has managed to strengthen its already strong position by buying Lex and Plettac to add to its Nationwide operation.

The implications are enormous and will take time to become clear. The biggest question is what will Hewden's new Canadian owners do with the lifting division? Finning's experience is in selling Caterpillar products – hiring out cranes and access platforms is "a whole new ball game". There are few clues in the official statements coming from Finning, but Richard Baldwin has immediately expressed an interest in buying cranes if they become available. His chances look slender in the light of information given to *Cranes & Access* (see this month's "Sharewatch").

So what is driving the big shake-out? Two factors seem to be at play – chance and low rates. The chance factor led to Hewden, GWS, PTP and Lex coming onto the market at more or less the same time as senior management could not generate the profits required to keep shareholders happy. This is where the low rates come in. Rates are low as this month's survey proves. Ainscough and Nationwide believe that consolidation will let them strengthen rates. History is not on their side – the British Crane Hire Corporation and GWS itself evolved with the same goal. What is really needed is tougher regulations that make it more difficult for companies to cut corners and rates. Compulsory MOTs for road going equipment, a realistic level of road tax, and much stricter operator training requirements would all hurt in the short term but be a great help in the long run. What do you think? Should *C&A* campaign for these? Send your views to The Editor at the address below.

Yours etc

**PS Exhibition alert:** Bauma is just over the horizon and is the best place to catch up on international developments. But, the UK's own SED is a month later in May and accommodation gets booked up very quickly for this excellent show. The organisers are predicting an especially good turn out of access equipment in the *Cranes & Access* village and the show will once again be the highlight of the UK's calendar.

Letters, e-mails, faxes and phone calls are welcome and should be sent to: The Editor, *Cranes & Access*,  
PO Box 3227, Brighton BN1 4UR, UK.  
Tel: 01273 884422. Fax: 01273 884477.  
E-mail: info@vertikal.net