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On the cover:

Facelift's 52 metre truck mounted Bronto platform fitted with lifting jib for the placement and installation of large glass panels.



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Allan leaves £650k in debts, Winterlift acquires Yorkshire Crane, First job for McNally LTM11200, New head of operations for Manitou, Aichi confirms UK distribution, 190 Niftys for Boels, Ownership changes at Riwal, UpRight unveils RT Scissor range, Cutbacks at Ramirent, Liebherr builds Russian plant, Aichi and JLG break ground on new plants in China, Layher builds new plant in Germany, New head of construction at HSE.



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Going, going, gone 50

With order books almost vanishing overnight, stocks of new, unsold equipment filling yards and storage areas and access to money tight, are sellers and buyers looking more towards auctions to acquire bargains? Cranes & Access went behind-the-scenes at a Ritchie Bros' auction in Holland.



50 years on 53

Cork-based William O'Brien Plant Hire, best known in recent years for its crane hire activity, was founded 50 years ago by William O'Brien senior, the company has traded through several tough periods and economic downturns. We look at the company's history, while managing director Finbar Warren gives some survival pointers.

17 Crawler cranes



23 Truck mounted platforms



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Crawler cranes 17



When it comes to crawler cranes all eyes are to the East with Chinese manufacturers rapidly expanding production, product ranges and exports as they look like becoming the driving force in this sector.

Truck mounted platforms 23



Truck mounted platforms are undergoing a renaissance and even in the current climate, there is still good business being done particularly in the medium and larger sized platforms. Here we review the market as well as visiting Ascendant Platforms in the North East - possibly the UK's only truck mounted platform manufacturer - and hear its expansion plans.

2008 UK/Ireland rental rate survey 31

Once again we report on the trends in UK and Ireland for crane, access and telehandler rental rates. Is the current downturn in the economic climate starting to have an affect? We reveal all in our six page survey.

Look back at 2008 42

We take an extensive look at one of the most eventful years in living memory - the financial crisis, rising oil prices and varying fortunes for the crane, access and telehandler business, our largest look back to date.

In the next C&A

The February 2009 issue of Cranes & Access will feature: Spider lift aerial platforms; Tower crane trends; ARA preview; Batteries; Equipment for utility contractors.

Trick of the tail 65

Specialist access requirements call for specialist equipment, particularly in the safety-conscious aviation industry. Specialist engineering design company Semmco has introduced many working at height solutions but by far the biggest is its new, made-to-measure tail docking system for UK airline bmi's fleet of Airbus A320 at Heathrow airport.

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c&a
comment

All change for 2009

2008 will go down in history, along with 1929, as a significant year for the world's financial system. As our 'Look Back at 2008' on page 42 highlights,

the year began with a spring in its step, although in hindsight there were early signs alerting us to the dramatic events on the horizon. October, often the month for such things, saw a crisis of confidence in the world's banking system but thankfully governments acted quickly, shoring it up with cash and guarantees.

Unlike 1929, measures that took almost four years to be put in place are being enacted in as many months. As a result there is a good chance that 2009 will turn into a good old fashioned recession, along the lines of the early 1980's and 1990's, tough - but a piece of cake compared to the Great Depression.

After 16 years of continuous economic growth many managers have no experience of a recession and will cope differently with the slow down. Recessions produce winners as well as losers because it flushes out poorly managed, badly structured companies, driving them out of business or into the hands of stronger players.

The key is keeping a cool head. The economy has after all only slowed not stopped. Business is out there and companies will not only make mistakes as they adapt but will fail to spot and correct their mistakes, providing opportunities for those in a position to take them. There is a tendency to expect less and fall into a highly dangerous downward cycle of making fewer sales calls, accepting rejection more easily and cutting back on marketing efforts. All classic mistakes.

It has been proven on numerous occasions that the 'hunker down and hide' strategy simply does not work. We all need to make more calls, and yes do even more advertising, promotion and other forms of marketing. The effort is unlikely to boost revenues compared to last year, but it will help stop them fallin too far. Profits are likely to slip, but you will retain experienced staff while picking up new and lapsed customers and be ready to fly as soon as things pick up, which they inevitably will.

The best companies understand that when business is tough you have to do more not less and that the best opportunities often arise during times like this. Now is the time that astute and focused businesses - the tortoises - will overtake 'the hares' frozen in the headlights.

On behalf of the whole team at The Vertikal Press we wish you a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2009.

Mark Darwin

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