

# State of the art premises

At the end of last year Height for Hire, the Irish-based international sales and rental company, moved into its new greenfield headquarters. The new premises have been designed from scratch

to suit the company's operations, as well as to be as environmentally friendly as possible.

Trading as Easi UpLifts outside of the 'Emerald Isle', the company is by far the largest and longest established powered access specialist in Ireland and had the fourth largest UK/Ireland rental fleet in the 2008

Cranes&Access Top 30 rental company report. In terms of fleet size, its Dublin regional depot is possibly the largest single aerial lift location in the UK or Ireland and the second or third largest in Europe with more than 700 aerial lifts.

For many years the company had managed with the original premises which although expanded in terms of adjoining fields and an increasing number of cabins and temporary accommodation, were woefully inadequate for so many daily equipment movements.

situation it might not be the best time to be moving to such large new premises, but we really needed to have done it four years ago, we



Harry McArdle, John Ball and Fergus McArdle



The company had outgrown the old premises years ago

The premises also had to cope with the rapidly expanding demands as headquarters for its growing international sales and rental operations. All new machines for the group pass through the Dublin location before they are either sold or shipped onwards to the company's rental operations in the UK or Slovakia. Company founder and chairman Harry McArdle said: "Given the current economic

could not have continued as we were."

The new facility covers a total of four acres, plus an archaeological buffer zone between the useable part of the yard and the site of an ancient church and graveyard. The covered area totals 4,500 square metres/50,000 sq ft, comprising a large, high cube warehouse and workshop area, plus two floors of integral offices a third floor open storage area and a large ground floor training centre.



The new facility

## Green workshop and warehouse

The warehouse includes three large, fully equipped hi-tech pits, one of which is more than 12 metres long. All oil, air and grease is plumbed into the pits, along with oil drainage and vehicle exhaust extraction hoses. The facility includes a rainwater

Any oil changes are carried out over or close to the pits, with the oil passing through built-in plumbing to a special built-in recycling tank, with an access outlet to outside of the building for easy extraction by the collection vehicle. New oil is delivered in to the building's storage tanks via the same method.

A full-size paint booth - long enough for the company's vehicles and numerous small machines at the same time - is included. The booth is capable of full resprays but is intended for touch-up work on the rental fleet and to refresh used equipment before it is put up for sale. The company's policy of replacing its rental machines every three to four years, means that full resprays are a rare.



The paint booth is largely used for touch-up work

collection system using the building's large roof as a catchment area. Water passes through a centrifugal filter to a 30,000 litre storage tank, which is then used for all non-drinking water applications such as floor washing, toilet flushing and for the equipment wash-down point in the yard. The yard is fully concreted and all run-off water is collected, cleaned through separators and returned to the recycle tank.



The workshop includes three fully equipped pits

## Keeping the air warm

The air in the building is constantly circulated and passes through a heat exchanger as it exits the building. In the winter it passes on its warmth to the fresh air coming in and vice versa in the summer. The workshop areas use radiant heat which adjusts automatically and only heats objects below, rather than wasting energy heating the air at the top of the building. A fast-action automatic door helps retain heat within the building while a large baffle curtain separates the top third of the high building between workshop and showroom, again helping to save energy.

mistakes are made, not to mention the overall appearance that such clutter creates. A showroom area - for both new machines and a separate area for used equipment - is included in the warehouse.

## Functional offices

Moving into the offices, the entrance lobby comes complete with a large flat screen that includes all the visitor welcome information, as well as an overview of what the company does and a live news ticker tape service, making any wait more tolerable than usual.



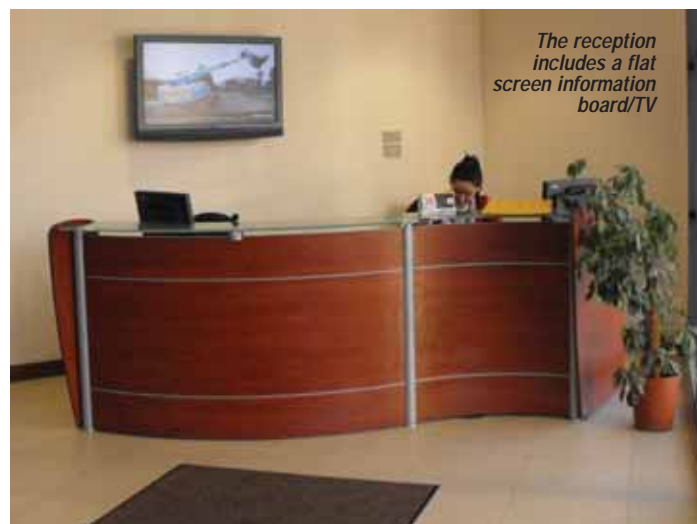
*The high cube warehouse and workshops are light and airy*



*The workshops are divided into sectors*

Lighting is also automated. The day C&A visited no artificial lighting was required at all in the warehouse/workshops. Vapour lighting system is variable, adjusting to the available natural light moving up from zero to 40 to 60 to 100 percent power as required.

The workshops include separate hydraulic and electrical rooms, complete with testing equipment. Any in-depth work on hydraulic or electrical components is moved into these rooms. This allows the main workshop to be virtually free of any work benches, which says Fergus McArdle, always end up as clutter areas, where things get lost and



*The reception includes a flat screen information board/TV*

The offices zoned, with special electronic fobs that each employee carries, providing them with access to permitted zones only. They also keep a track of everyone in the building in case of a fire or other emergency.

The offices have been kept as open-plan as possible, although they are split between rental, sales, parts and service, with only one of two enclosed individual offices one of which is for visitors to use. The 'feel' of each open plan office is that of a small nerve or call centre, with everyone in earshot and able to compare notes, keeping in tune to



*The warehouse includes a display area for new machines*



*And for used machines that have been inspected and prepared for sale*

what is going on and able to work as a team. While the entire fleet tracking system is computerised, Height for Hire also likes to keep track of depots machines on a traditional board, which is probably the largest in Europe spanning one entire side of the large open plan office.

Upstairs there are a few individual offices as well as a well-planned boardroom/meeting room. All offices include sensor controlled automatic lighting and heating in order to reduce power consumption and waste. They are all furnished to the same standard, being professional and functional without any feeling of unnecessary extravagance.

The third floor above the offices is currently a massive storage space, accessible via forklift from the warehouse, but it is also equipped with full stairs and elevator access as well as fire escapes, so that it could easily be converted to additional offices or training space, should that be needed in the future.

The training area was not fully complete when we visited, so the company's training operation still remains at the old premises. When complete it will include a large, fully equipped training room plus canteen and break-out area with access

*The refuelling point is located in the centre of the yard directly in line with the main gates*

directly to a separate yard and to the showroom part of the warehouse for practical indoor and outdoor hands-on sessions.

Outside in the main yard there are loading and unloading zones for trucks, but also a variable height ramp into the workshop for any trucks that arrive without a method of offloading their loads, including containers. One unusual idea is the diesel fuelling point which is located almost smack band in the middle of the yard. One side has white road-going diesel and the other green rebated diesel. The fuelling point is only an outlet point for the



*The rental office includes one of the largest machines boards in the industry*



*An industrial style loading ramp is built in for unloading containers*

fuel, the diesel storage tanks are located in buildings on the perimeter of the four acre site. John Ball says that the location was chosen for two reasons. First it allows the delivery trucks and truck-mounted lifts to drive straight in the gate to the fuelling point on either side, depending on their tank location, then turn and are ready to go straight out again. The second reason is that being placed in full view of everyone in the middle of the yard, it is far more difficult for anyone to surreptitiously fill a private vehicle or jerry can, reducing the likelihood of theft.

It is clear a great deal of thought has gone into the premises and set a standard for the equipment rental industry.

