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## On the cover:

As tough as old boots - Niftylift's almost indestructible Toughcage basket for boom lifts, giving additional strength and security to the operator.



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Australia, 104 metre Bronto debuts, JunJin arrives in Europe, Half year results round-up, Upgraded Merlo telehandler, new Boomer self-propelled platform attachment for telehandlers.

Top 30 rental company survey 17

Now in its 11th year, the Cranes & Access Top 30 rental fleet survey for UK/Ireland crane, powered access and telehandler rental companies has been further refined and reveals just how hard this past year has been in terms of investment, staff and depot numbers.



Blade Access 28

Truck mounted rental company Blade Access, has major plans that might shake up some of the more established players. Cranes & Access visited one of its partners, Mark Bell, to find out more.

Trailer cranes 32

Given the trailer crane's significant advantages including lower purchase cost, good reach, low weight and reduced carbon footprint, we take a look at their advantages and why they are not more popular outside of their home market.

Face to face 35

Neil Berry of Berry Cranes is a man who speaks his mind and is happy doing his own thing, buying equipment that he thinks is right for his business. Since forming his own company about nine years ago, he has built up a varied and unusual fleet of cranes.



Mark Darwin paid him a visit to find out more.

Boom lifts 39

This month we take a look at the self propelled boom lift market focusing on some of the more unusual products and recent entrants into the market.

Cumberland Industries 49

Newly formed Cumberland Industries joins a small group of UK truck mounted platform manufacturers. Within six months of opening, it has already secured a sizeable deal for the Middle East and has been appointed as a dealer for Terex Utilities. Cranes & Access visited the company to find out more.

Shield Batteries 62



Bishop's Stortford-based manufacturer and distributor Shield Batteries can trace its history back 100 years and is the UK's only remaining independent battery manufacturer. We profile the company making big in-roads into supplying products for access sector.

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# cranes & access

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**c&a**  
comment



## Undercover and underhand?

We have recently highlighted the practice of following competitor's equipment to a job to gain information, presumably to win more business.

Whilst the most recent case was immediately condemned by the management of the stalker and the stalked, a poll 'Is it fair' on www.vertikal.net reveals a much more even view, with 56 percent currently saying no, with a surprising 44 percent saying there is nothing wrong with such tactics.

It would appear that the larger companies are currently the main perpetrators of what might be called 'unfair or underhand tactics' and not, as you might expect the 'small companies', maybe such tactics are taken for granted from them? This raises questions about expectations of market leaders being paragons and shining examples, setting an example for the rest of the industry to follow.

But what is a market leader? Our annual Top 30 rental company survey, published in this issue, rates the market leader as having the largest fleet or the biggest machines.

When times are hard specialist equipment hirers tend to fair better, leaving the massive hire fleets of the 'market leaders' with a lot of 'bread and butter' equipment sitting in the yard. No wonder then, that there is a tendency for them or some of their staff to resort to any tactics to find work for the equipment.

In many other industries the market leaders are seen as innovators, trail blazers, leading from the front and setting high standards and trends for the others to follow, while the UK rental industry has become something of a numbers game. The innovators here are probably the companies that are being followed. They are less concerned about the competition, having their own agenda to stick to, working even harder when times are hard, creating their own luck and business, rather than pinching it from someone else in an underhand manner.

As one company recently said - growing in the rental business is all about taking customers from competitors. This is true to a point, but that does not mean taking over hires mid-term with a cheaper price. It is more about persuading the customer that you can offer a better product or service and asking them to try you next time or to step in when a competitor screws up.

It seems though that there is a fair body of opinion out there that thinks that in times like this anything goes and that is a sad indictment on our industry.

Mark Darwin

Please mail, email or fax any comments you may have, to the editor, stating if we may publish them or not.

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