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On the cover:

Harsco Infrastructure helped contractor Taylor Woodrow speed up construction on a Glasgow commercial development with mastclimbers and a custom-made monorail system to lift and place glass panels without monopolising the site's tower crane.



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Tel: +44 (0)8448 155900 Fax: +44 (0)1295 768223
E-mail: info@vertical.net

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New president for IPAF, Sarens to launch heavy-lift crane, Ausa announces mini telehandler, Zoomlion introduces Rough Terrain cranes, Wemotec and Palfinger to launch spider crane, Oil&Steel goes regional in UK, New 500 tonne Liebherr for Bronzeshield, Palfinger enters US access market, Beaver 84 and Haki sign partnership agreement, Wolff 1250 debuts in Germany, Prolift Access takes first SIOPS safety system, Manitowoc goes direct in Spain, Potain opens new hoist line, More military orders for JLG, Yokohama introduces new crane tyres, Isoli to launch new 22.5 metre telescopic truck mounted lift, Outrigger accident costs £20,000, New Smart-Rig lightweight mini crane, NY crane inspector gets up to six years.

Truck cranes 17

The truck crane is easily the most popular type of mobile crane in the world today with thousands produced and bought in the Far East every year. In Western Europe there is renewed interest with several manufacturers set to introduce new products. We take a look at the latest additions and ask if lower life-time ownership costs are enough for users and rental companies to start switching to them from All Terrain cranes?



Mastclimbers and hoists 23

For all its advantages, the mast climber is still the access industry's 'invisible man'. Many large and sophisticated contractors still appear oblivious to the cost and convenience benefits for routine façade work. How can the sector spread the word and raise its profile? We also look at some recent applications.



Lifts for arborists 29

The recent batch of innovative and usual access platforms provide arborists with an even better choice of equipment making working at height safer and more efficient. We take a look at the new products including the self-levelling Mecaplus ME12SL specifically designed by tree workers for tree workers.

Last minute Bauma 37

So much information has been received since we ran our main Bauma coverage - 50 products not to miss at Bauma - last month that we have included an extended 'last minute' round-up of the biggest and most important equipment show in the world.



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In the next C&A

In the next issue of C&A our special features include: Vertical Days preview, Trailer lifts, Bauma review and Mobile self erecting tower cranes as well as the IPAF photo album.

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The Vertikal Press

PO box 6998 Brackley NN13 5WY. UK
Tel: +44(0)8448 155900 Fax: +44(0)1295 768223
email: info@vertikal.net
web: www.vertikal.net

In Germany:

Vertikal Verlag

Sundgaualle 15, D-79114,

Freiburg, Germany

Tel: 0761 8978660 Fax: 0761 8866814

email: info.vertikal@t-online.de

web: www.vertikal.net

Germany, Scandinavia,
Austria and Switzerland

Karlheinz Kopp, Vertikal Verlag,

Sundgaualle 15, D-79114, Freiburg, Germany

Tel: +49 (0)761 89786615

Fax: +49 (0)761 8866814

email: khk@vertikal.net

Italy

Fabio Potestà, Mediapoint,

Corte Lambruschini,

Corso Buenos Aires 8, V Piano-Interno 7,

I-16129 Genova, Italy

Tel: 010 570 4948 Fax: 010 553 0088

email: mediapointsr.it

The Netherlands

Hans Aarse

39 Seringenstraat, 3295 RN,

S-Gravendeel, The Netherlands

Tel: +31-78 673 4007 Mobile: +31(0) 630421042

email: ha@vertikal.net

Russia

Cranes&Access Russia

DM Publishing 127287 Pocc

Moscow

tel. +7 (495) 685 94 28

fax +7 (495) 685 94 29

e-mail: matrosova@vertikalnet.ru

UK and all other areas

Pam Penny

PO box 6998 Brackley NN13 5WY. UK

Tel: +44(0)8448 155900

email: pp@vertikal.net

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Editors:

Leigh Sparrow

Mark Darwin

Associate Editors:

Rüdiger Kopf (Freiburg)

Alexander Ochs (Freiburg)

Andrew Klinachev (Moscow)

Sales & customer support:

Pam Penny

Karlheinz Kopp

Clare Engelke

Production:

Nicole Engesser

Publisher:

Leigh Sparrow

Vertikal
Press

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MEMBERS OF



Letters, emails, faxes and
phone calls are welcome and
should be sent to:

The Editor,

cranes & access,

PO Box 6998, Brackley

NN13 5WY, UK

Tel: +44(0)8448 155900

Fax: +44(0)1295 768223

email: editor@vertikal.net



c&a comment

A time for change?

As we put the finishing touches to our second issue in four weeks and prepare to head off to Bauma for the world's largest and most expensive trade show, it is clear that the industries we cover are at a major crossroads of change.

Steve Shaughnessy a veteran of the crane and access rental industries and now president of aerial lift manufacturer Skyjack, became president of IPAF late last month. In his acceptance speech, he referred to the symbiotic relationship that exists between manufacturers and rental companies, and how each is dependent on the other.

While it is hard to argue with this, the plain facts are that when times are tough manufacturers are largely on their own, as rental companies stop buying equipment and shop harder for replacement parts. Conversely, when times are good many manufacturers exploit the supply-and-demand situation to increase prices and fatten margins.

To be fair, during the last boom many manufacturers did contain the excesses of previous cycles and strove to absorb some of the massive hikes in raw material prices by improving productivity. The silly financing that had been so prevalent in the late 1990's was also tempered - a little. And as the slowdown began to bite, most have cut production faster than in prior years.

Given that the majority of crane and aerial lift users will always rent rather than buy, the rental industry is an integral part of a manufacturers' route to market and critical to its success. Some manufacturers have tried to control this function by acquiring rental companies (the car rental business also went through this phase), however this has not proved a viable solution and most that tried have retreated.

David Shipman, chairman of UK aerial lift company AFI, and another industry veteran, made a bold speech at last month's IPAF conference calling for the industry as a whole, to speak with one voice to spread the message that powered access is the safest form of access in most applications, and hopefully to expand the number of regular access users.

At the same time the mobile crane business is struggling as rental companies find it increasingly difficult to make a living from general taxi crane work with the current All Terrain products. Manufacturers are launching new truck cranes as a response - at least to the running costs - and yet few hirers seem persuaded that this is the solution.

All of these examples confirm Shaughnessy's point that rental companies and manufacturers must work more closely together and that it is a life and death situation for each. And yet it looks as far away as ever. Something has to give.

If you are going to Bauma do stop by our stand.

See you there

Mark Darwin

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