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Loads of interest

The battle for telehandler supremacy is hotting up. The machine's rapid rise in popularity both in the UK and Ireland and globally, has attracted the interest of almost every major equipment manufacturer. The sheer numbers - currently estimated at around 56,000 units worldwide and growing - has also tempted several smaller manufacturers into the market looking for even a small slice of the market. Mark Darwin looks at the latest developments in this fast growing, competitive sector.

In our last telehandler review a year ago, we commented on its tremendous growth and development. If anything, activity over the past 12 months has been even more frenetic, with many manufacturers using the Bauma show as a focus to get the machines in front of an international audience. While we all knew about the much publicised new machine ranges from Liebherr and Haulotte there were also totally new surprises from Spain, Portugal and China, all looking to enter the European market.

But why the enormous growth in telehandlers? And why has the telehandler usurped the backhoe loader as the most popular machine in the UK & Ireland?

The answer is the change in mentality of material supply and the vast increase in palletised materials delivered to construction sites. With estimates of more than 80 percent of materials now delivered on pallets, the telehandler is an essential item

of equipment of every construction site. And the biggest market in Europe is the UK and Ireland.

So what are the latest developments and types of machines that we are likely to see here? One thing is certain, North American manufacturers have realised that to sell into Europe, they need a specifically designed machine. Pettibone has manufactured telehandlers in America for many years, and although it is aiming to sell its unusual wheeled loaders in Europe, it realises that 'traditional American telehandlers' are never going to sell in the UK, not to mention the rest of Europe.

JLG has several ranges of machines for the American market including Lull, Sky Trak and Gradall, but it also produces a range of machines for Europe that came out of the Atlas telehandler acquisition. Its successful and developing alliance with Caterpillar is also concentrating on producing a new range of Cat machines, aimed specifically at the European market. Unfortunately these will not be seen until next year at the earliest.

JCB has improved visibility and manoeuvrability with its new HiViz machines.



The trend over recent years to go bigger and bigger appears to have waned with 30 metres still the maximum height with little apparent appetite to go bigger. At the same time more and more compact machines are entering the market. Whatever the size, improvements in safety - and for telehandlers this means all-round visibility - are at the top of everyone's agenda.

As in most markets two of the most popular marques in the UK and Ireland are JCB and Manitou. They are also fighting for global market-leadership with each claiming the number one slot.

Over the past few months, JCB has been previewing a new ultra compact telehandler called the miniscopic (not to be confused with Maniscopic). With a four metre lift height, a rated payload of 2,000kg and a full height payload of 1,500kg the 515-40 is aimed at jobs where low height and a small footprint area are required such as refurbishment work. JCB also claims a payload capacity of 750kg at a forward reach of 2.3 metres.

According to JCB the key features of the miniscopic concept are its compact dimensions, said to be narrower and lower than conventional telehandlers; hydrostatic four wheel drive transmission with rear wheel steering and versatile performance as a forklift or 0.5 cu m loader.

However at Bauma, JCB chose not to launch this machine, but used the

show to unveil two, low boom 535 HiViz telehandlers instead. The company also confidently claimed worldwide telehandler market leadership with a 22 percent share.

The HiViz machines feature an improved rear three-quarter view helped by lowering the boom pin pivot point by 235mm. Innovative use of materials and components also reduces overall boom section by 13 percent and the machine's improved manoeuvrability results from a 90mm decrease in rear overhang and a 300mm tighter turning radius. A side mounted 63kW, JCB Dieselmix engine and new dash and instrumentation complete the package although a 74kW Tier III engine will be available later in the year.



Popularity has grown with the increase of palletised loads

Manitou's MT 1030 now has a turbocharged engine and Load Place System fitted as standard



Manitou claims to be world leader of all-terrain lift trucks and having built over 236,000 units is clearly dominant in the overall sector. Manitou also claims quietly to be the leading producer of telehandlers and while not wishing to join the chest banging of its UK rival, did concede the information that it holds a 26 share of the telescopic handler market. Given that both companies estimates of the total market are not dissimilar to ours you can do the maths!

Manitou was certainly the first company to commercialise the first all terrain fork truck in 1957 when Marcel Braud - the son of the founder - had the simple idea of turning the farm tractor around and giving it a fork lift carriage. It was later given the Manitou name which is an abbreviation of the french for 'handles everything' even the red colour came from that first tractor, an International Harvester - and the rest, as they say, is history

Manitou's latest machines include the 18 to 25 metre, MRT 'Privilege' rotating telescopic units which have undergone a full make-over including fitting Euro III Mercedes

engines providing an additional 13 percent power. For the operator, the machines include the latest cab design with more space, electric windows and better visibility of attachments through the curved windscreen.

Shown for the first time at intermat last year, the MRT 3050 is now in production offering a lift height of 30 metres and maximum capacity of five tonnes. Its pentagonal five section telescopic boom offers increased rigidity, particularly when horizontal. Variations include winch and jib and a work platform with lift heights of up to 40 metres thanks to its 3D platform.

The smaller MT 1030 ST also gets improvements including a turbocharged engine producing 100hp and the LPS - Load Place System - fitted as standard.

New entrant Haulotte unveiled its own 'designed from scratch' telehandler range at Bauma with two machines - the Top Lift HTL 4014 and the HTL 4017 - both four tonne maximum lift capacities but with 14.1 metre and 17.2 metre lift heights respectively. According to Haulotte, one of the main features of the machines is their stability which it claims results from a rear deck blocking system that reinforces lateral stability. The interlocking of the two axles is said to more than double the usual

The new Haulotte dash features a single multi-function controller which allows one-handed operation.

'stabilisation'. Safety features prominently with several visual and audible indicators and interlocks. Also featured is a single multi-function controller which allows precise one-handed operation, whether in simple or combined movements.

As chief operating officer Alexander Saubot explained, Haulotte was not just aiming for a large maximum lift with these new models. He stressed that the machines have to be able to do the lift in all manner of conditions with all manner of operators who are all too ready to misuse and abuse them.

As production ramps up over the coming months few machines will be available, according to Saubot, only 1,000 units may be built this year, with most likely to come off the line later in the year.

complying with road regulations and new engine demands. The company sees the telehandler market as an important stepping stone towards diversification and likes the fact that there is an increasing overlap between the access and telehandler rental market.

Breganza-based Italian manufacturer Farasin - now free from its partnership agreement with Haulotte - is rapidly expanding its range with three new models, the compact 6.25 - a 1.9 metre high, 1.8 metre wide machine with a six metre lift height and 2.5 tonne capacity - and its first 360 degree models, the 15.45 and the 18.45. These two models offer lift heights of 15 and 18 metres respectively with 4.5 tonnes maximum capacity and of course 360 degrees rotation. The new models are quite



The new Haulotte telehandler attracted a lot of interest at its Bauma launch.

Overall the company states that it needs to produce about 3,000 telehandlers per year in order for it to be economically viable. In a very competitive market with many established producers Haulotte has optimistically set its sights on carving out a market share of around 10 percent over time, this equates to between 5-6,000 units per year. Its effort in just entering this market has taken its toll on new aerial lift products with the further development of its truck mounted platforms likely to be postponed because of problems with

sophisticated using a CanBus system for controlling capacity and stability, EISAS - an Electronic Integrated Safety Active System - for monitoring load positions and a 94Kw Tier III Iveco engine mounted in line with the chassis improving service accessibility.

Liebherr's new telehandler range has now been well tested in the German speaking world and the first models



Now free to do its own thing, Farasin is rapidly expanding its range with two roto models.





Liebherr's machines have good visibility

should now be arriving in the UK, however at Bauma the company was not making a big deal about its latest product sector. The four model line-up offers 10 to 13 metres of lift height and 3,500 to 4,500kg maximum lift capacity. The initial line-up is the TL4 35/10, TL4 35/13, TL4 42/13 and an industrial type unit the TL4 45/10. The unit's oval boom looks interesting and clearly benefits from the company's crane boom experience. With relatively compact dimensions and a low boom pivot point they appear to have good rearward visibility. A number of units are already destined to go into Liebherr's UK rental fleet which should be fully operational later this year.

As we have already mentioned the draw of the growing telehandler market is attracting several new manufacturers to try and gain a foothold at the same time as others, such as John Deere are calling it time. Spanish manufacturer MZ Imer already has both fixed frame and 360 degree models, and recently unveiled a good looking, compact machine the MZ-2706-Lift. Built at its facility in Zaragoza, the unit has a maximum lift height of six metres and a 2,700kgs maximum capacity. Measuring just over two metres high and 1,845mm wide, it has a Yanmar engine and maximum speed of 25 km per hour. Load charts indicate a maximum load of 800kg at 3.5 metres with the fully extended boom. The company says that response to the machine has been good and that it should be available by the end of this year.



Portuguese-built Galmax has launched a slightly smaller machine - the compact 6516 Giraffe. Although the machine was shown at Bauma without a cab it will feature a standard cab when it goes on sale later this year. Overall height is less than two metres and overall width is just 1.53 metres, in spite of its compact size it offers a 5.2 metre lift height but maximum capacity is just 1.6 tonnes.



Portugese-built Galmax Giraffe should go on sale later this year.

Chinese manufacturer Sunward is also looking towards the west and hoping to find dealers. Its first telehandler was unveiled at Bauma and as yet is still unsure on what sort of price it will carry. The 13.65 metre SWTH 3514 lifts up to 3,500kg, a two-speed transmission and maximum road speed of 35 km per hour, can tow five tonnes and can climb a 60 percent grade with full load. The company stresses that all pumps, motors and valves are supplied by the Rexroth Bosch group.

Merlo, has a reputation for being one of the most innovative telehandler manufacturers in the market, and just keeping up with its new product launches is a challenge. Its new Panoramic P 55.9 CS 8.6 metre/5,500kg machine uses a new frame design which also features a lower boom pivot point to give increased rearward visibility.

The compact MZ Imer 2706-Lift offers good lifting capacity for its size.

The all-new hydro-pneumatic cabin suspension further improves operator comfort and is one of many new features. The new model includes Merlo axles with epicycloidal reducers, a Tier III four-cylinder 140 HP engine which is said to be considerably quieter, a lower center of gravity for better stability, coupled with the compact and easy-to-handle structure of a smaller machine.

Production began last autumn and all of the dealers we spoke with were very happy with the product quality coming out of JLG'S Belgian facility. We will have to wait until next year though to see the new generation of machines that will come from the partnership, but the anticipation from Caterpillar's customers and dealers is high.



Merlo's new Panoramic P55.9 CS uses a new frame design which features a lower boom pivot point giving increased rear visibility.

Merlo has taken the view that rather than chasing greater heights its customers would prefer to see better lifting capacities. As part of this programme, its new five model compact Roto range, which upgrade the K and KS models, all feature 5,000kg maximum lift capacity. Lift heights range up to just under 16 metres. The new models feature a 415 degree slewing range, while the overall width has been reduced by 50mm and 130 mm cut from the length. A larger outrigger base increases the lift capacities but of course takes up more room. The new cab has been incorporated along with single joystick, electro-proportional controls.



The new Merlo cab has a single joystick with electro-proportional controls.

As we already touched upon, Caterpillar's telehandler alliance with JLG is developing well, possibly far better than Cat ever expected.

JLG-Cat alliance managers Mike Rafi (JLG) and Klaus Ukens (Cat) were both singing off the same hymn sheet during a joint interview with Cranes&Access, saying the focus of the first year dealt with the integration of the two companies. With full production of the JLG backed Cat machines since last October, the team can now start to look at the new designs.

Oshkosh, the new owners of JLG, sees the alliance as 'very appealing' and is 'happy to support JLG in everything it does'.

In the meantime JLG, has introduced a new and improved 'PS' series of nine machines for the European market. The new models feature full powershift transmissions as standard, giving better tractive effort. The variable displacement, load-sensing pump is now coupled to a new flow-compensating valve. This is claimed to give more responsive and balanced proportional control for faster cycle times, and better use of power, with improved overall efficiency and fuel economy.

JLG has launched nine new PS machines which feature full powershift transmissions as standard.



Provision has been made for the subsequent update to the new Tier III Perkins engine when it becomes available and the powershift transmission incorporates a selectable brake pedal operated de-clutch function. There is also an improved stabiliser/chassis leveling interlock system to facilitate positioning during loading operations.

A new, more robust engine cover replaces the old fibre glass version providing improved heat and sound insulation. Under the cover, a new JLG-designed engine and hydraulic electronic control system has been introduced and according to the company, provides better control and easier servicing. An in-built analyser incorporates an improved (optional) anti-theft system.

A distinctive new cab has improved access and visibility with the newly designed interior featuring a new 'comfort' seat, better driving position, repositioned pedals, adjustable steering wheel and multi-function joystick controls.

Bobcat's latest telehandler model is the compact T2250 which it says has many of the features and benefits of a skid-steer loader, articulated wheeled loader and telehandler in one machine. Like its skid steer models, the 4,500kg telehandler can be fitted with a wide variety of attachments.

With an overall height of only 1,970mm and width of 1,800 mm the T2250 has similar dimensions to Bobcat's largest skid-steer loader models and yet, says Bobcat, offers a loading performance comparable to that of an equivalently sized



articulated wheeled loader. With the skid steer market traditionally static in the UK and telehandlers still growing, Bobcat has a strong interest to carve out a bigger niche for itself the telehandler market.

Fast growing Italian producer, Dieci continues to add models to its already extensive range. With its move into its new factory due later this month, it will be able to almost double production to about 2,400 units this year. Total capacity at the new plant is said to be 5,000



Kramer is moving to a new € 30 million plant at Pfullendorf where production is set to double by 2010.

machines which means there is plenty in hand for the future.

Recent additions include the compact Apollo 25-6 with upgraded 85hp turbo engine and the high capacity 11 metre/7,000kg lift capacity Pegasus 70-11 360 degree machine. The unit features a new cab, new seat, instrument console and revised switchgear. A slightly smaller 360 degree unit, in terms of lift capacity, the Pegasus 60.16 - offers 6,000 kg and 16 metres lift



Genie's range continues to expand with the GTH-6025R Giro launched at Bauma.

height, it was launched last autumn and shares many of the features of the 70-11.

The Atlante is yet another new range from Dieci with lift heights of six to 11 metres, featuring a four forward and three reverse gear Powershift transmission in response, it says, to customer demand.

Bobcats latest compact T2250 can be fitted with a wide variety of attachments.



Models include the 30-6, the 30-9, the 33-11 and the higher capacity Zeus 38-10.

Genie has added a fourteenth model to its European range - the GTH-6025R Giro or 360 degree model. It offers a maximum lift height of 24.8 metres and a maximum forward reach of 20.85 metres, with a capacity of 6,000kg.

The 4x4x4 unit is operated via two electro-proportional four-in-one joysticks, with a button allowing the two speed transmission to 'shift on the fly'. The increasing use of electronics is seen in a maintenance service indicator and a black box that records 'functional parameters and anomalies'. An optional GPS module also makes it possible to locate the machine. Power is supplied by a 165hp Cummins four-cylinder turbo-intercooler engine, positioned sideways for easier access.

KramerAllrad now has three telehandlers available from six to nine metre lift heights but there are plans to extend the range upwards. By Spring next year, Kramer will move to a new €30 million plant at Pfullendorf, 20 km away from its current facility Uberlingen, where production is set to double by 2010.

The optional Ecospeed high speed gearbox - claimed to be a first in this sector - is said to give full tractive power over the entire speed range up to a maximum 40 km per

hour. A spacious cab giving good visibility particularly with the boom fully retracted into the U shaped frame should make the machines popular with operators.

If anything, the past year has seen more activity in the telehandler market than ever before. If demand continues as is predicted, it will be interesting to see if established



Latest New Holland is the LM1133 which can lift 2.5 tonnes to its maximum 13 metre lift height.

producers such as JCB, Manitou, JLG and Merlo maintain or increase their share, or will the new models from Caterpillar, Liebherr and Haulotte - which is pinning a lot of hope on its new machines - fragment the market? Either way there has never been more choice for those buying telescopic handlers, so the next 12 months could easily be even more exciting than this past year. Watch this space!