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## On the cover:

A bloomin' big flower – a Unic URW 706 spider crane together with an aerial lift help erect a 14 metre high wind-powered illuminated 'flower' on the banks of the River Mersey in Widnes.



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The underlying potential of the industrial market is huge and yet still remains untapped. We ask why? and look at the myriad of products at the small end of the access scale for those planning their annual plant shutdown work. We also interview Cameron Reid (left) of Harsco about his plans for rationalising and reorganising the company's access fleet.



## Industrial lifting 27

Over the next month or two, production facilities throughout Europe will be carrying out planned maintenance and improvements as they close down for their summer break. While there are many different alternatives for the lifting and shifting aspect of the work, a pick & carry crane built specifically for the task is by far and away the best option. We take a look at the smaller end of the market.



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# cranes & access

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**c&a**  
comment

## Knee-jerk or lip service?

Most of you will know that here in the UK we have a new government, the first coalition government since the Second World War. Shortly after coming to power the new government was

confronted with a tragic incident in Cumbria in which a man went on a shooting rampage, killing 12 totally innocent individuals.

In recent years, British governments faced with such incidents have felt obliged to be seen to be doing something, announcing 'knee-jerk' legislation or mandates which were often excessive, ill-thought-out and not particularly effective. The Dangerous Dogs Act is a classic and oft cited example of this. Thankfully the new government did not bow to pressure from the mass media and other groups calling for tougher gun controls, preferring instead to conduct a proper review to see what might be learnt from the tragic incident.

Our industry has had its fair share of reactive regulations introduced to cover problems that are perhaps more perceived than real, along with mandates from large contractors intended more for pressure group and media consumption than for improving safety. Tower cranes are a case in point, having come under the spotlight in recent years following a spate of fatal accidents in the UK and USA.

As a result the UK has its tower crane register – which has little practical purpose apart from appeasing campaigners. More recently construction companies have started implementing bans on tower cranes older than ten years. While such a ban might well be appropriate for mobile cranes and aerial lifts, it is almost meaningless for modular products such as tower cranes.

Does that mean on-site staff will check every component or just check the serial number plate on the slewing assembly and if it is less than 10 years old all will be fine? The fact is that a tower section in a high stress area could well be 25 years old but it has no plate. Given that tower cranes are on site for extended periods, surely the type of job and number of hours clocked up is more relevant. A five-year-old crane that has worked around the clock in a salty or sandy environment is going to be a lot 'older' and more worn out than a 10-year-old crane used in a clean environment for occasional lifting.

While such a mandate might be well intentioned, it is meaningless and could lead to the less than reputable operators winning business by ignoring the age of the components such as tower sections, while respectable companies that take such things seriously may not bid for the job because they know that not all of the components are less than 10 years old... hardly a safety enhancing measure.

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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