

Back to New Orleans

The annual American Rental Association's convention and Rental show was back in New Orleans this February for the first time in 10 years. The show had been scheduled here a year after Hurricane Katrina hit, but the organisers decided at the time that the facilities were simply not ready for a return.

The venue and a more positive market for rental companies pushed attendance numbers up to the highest levels seen since 2008. In addition to that the atmosphere was upbeat with the vast majority of visitors and exhibitors in a very positive frame of mind helped by a good number of orders and enquiries taken.

Sadly new products and news were in short supply, the result of engineering cut backs when the equipment would have been at the

design stage and new engine regulations with Tier 3B and Tier 4 soaking up new engineering time. In spite of this there were some new products to see. Skyjack led the way with an all new 63ft articulating boom, the SJ63AJ. The machine on the stand, a first prototype, was decked out on the colours of the local American football team the Saints - given that this was also Superbowl weekend. Details of the new lift is covered in our news section, but the key criteria from



Skyjack's new SJ63AJ in Saints colours



Skyjack was to introduce a unit that offered the best outreach while matching the best specifications of the two leading producers in what has become the largest sector of the articulated boom market.

JLG also surprised with two new slab scissor lifts - the 1932RS and 3248RS Rental Series - to run along side its current ES range, outside of CE markets. The concept to these new lifts is simplicity - moving the electric drive motors to the rear axle, dropping active pot-hole protection for a passive system and building them at its plant in China. The aim is of course to offer rental companies a less expensive product that is cheaper to repair and maintain. Feedback was surprisingly positive, but whether the stated 10 percent cost saving is enough remains to be seen.

for its Chinese-built products growing slower than forecast, we might see more products being shipped to the west, particularly as capacity constraints start to bite.

All new mid Atlantic telehandler

Genie also unveiled an all new telescopic handler, while the company says that there is no discernible demand for European style mid-range telehandlers, the all new 8,000lbs/3.6 tonne, 44ft/13.4 metre GTH-844B telehandler has a definite European feel to it in spite of its North American high boom pivot point. The unit has a side mounted engine substantially improving rear visibility, a comfortable looking enclosed cab option which can be retrofitted to the standard open roll bar cab. Other numerous other



The new JLG RS models are simple no frills models aimed at the rental market

Over at the Genie stand the strategy was completely different with management sticking firmly to building products as close to market as possible and striving through manufacturing efficiencies to offer a fully specified machine at a competitive price. With both manufacturers finding that demand

sophisticated touches include tough-moulded, axle-mounted mud guards, although many are optional rather than standard. Even a suspension seat is available. The fully equipped unit on the stand looked a little like a European telehandler with an American boom configuration - take off the optional



The new Genie GTH-844B in the standard format which is likely to prove most popular.



The enclosed cab option

equipment though and it reverts to type. Other telehandler exhibitors included JLG, Manitou/Gehl, Dieci and JCB.

While not showing anything new Niftylift finally dispensed with the yellow livery it has used in the USA for many years in favour of its traditional green. As usual the company had a huge selection from its range and unquestionably the largest powered access display at the show.

Snorkel situated at the back of the hall had a full display with the 62ft A62JRT taking pride of place. The company says that sales are picking up strongly, causing long lead times which it is working to reduce. What



The Niftylift stand



it did not mention on the stand was its plans to raise £12 million through the issue of new shares to help achieve this.



The Instant-UpRight alloy tower stand with Snorkel in the background.

MEC was back at the ARA with its Titan 40s which appeared to attract a good deal of attention from



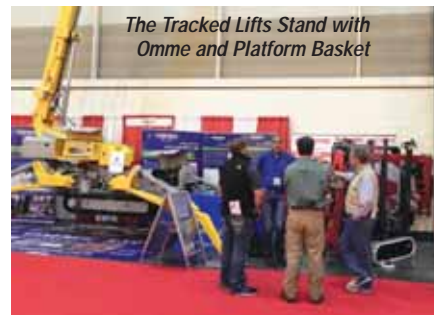
Mec Titan and Crossover

Lavendon senior management team attending the show. The high platform capacity lends itself to the rental company's Blue Sky pipe and cladding panel handlers. It also had its recently launched Crossover electric off slab scissor lift with unique 8x4 sheet rack and offset deck. The company says that it plans to show both products at Vertical Days in the UK this June.

Another range of new products was found on the LiftSmart stand where the young company launched its eight model material lift MLI Industrial Pro Series range, with lift heights to 7.6 metres and lift capacity of up to 454 kg. Three models will have adjustable flat forks and a width adjusting base, allowing the machine to pass through a single doorway, while adjusting wide enough to straddle a full size pallet. The other is the three model MLM Mini-Pro Series, ranging from 3.3 to 6.1 metres and loads of up to 318 kg. The range has been designed with European vehicles in mind. The stand was busy throughout and the company announced the appointment of Martin Davies as its UK distributor under a new company - Orange Lift.

Spider lifts were to be found on the JLG stand, where the

Steve Citron of LiftSmart seals the UK distribution deal with Martin Davies



The Tracked Lifts Stand with Omm and Platform Basket

company showed one of its Hinowa-built units, while Omm and Platform Basket were to be found on the Tracked Lifts stand and Bluelift on the Reachmaster booth.

As this was the Rental show rental software companies were well represented, led by the large stand of Wynne Systems and its Rental Man software. At the opposite end of the scale was InspHire which has now set up a US office to service existing customers and expand its offerings. The stand was manned by Graham Dodds from the UK, Olly Williamson and Mark Tedeschi both of whom are based in the USA.

Olly Williamson, Graham Dodds and Mark Tedeschi (L-R)



Steve Kissinger of Custom Equipment demonstrates one of his low level self propelled lifts



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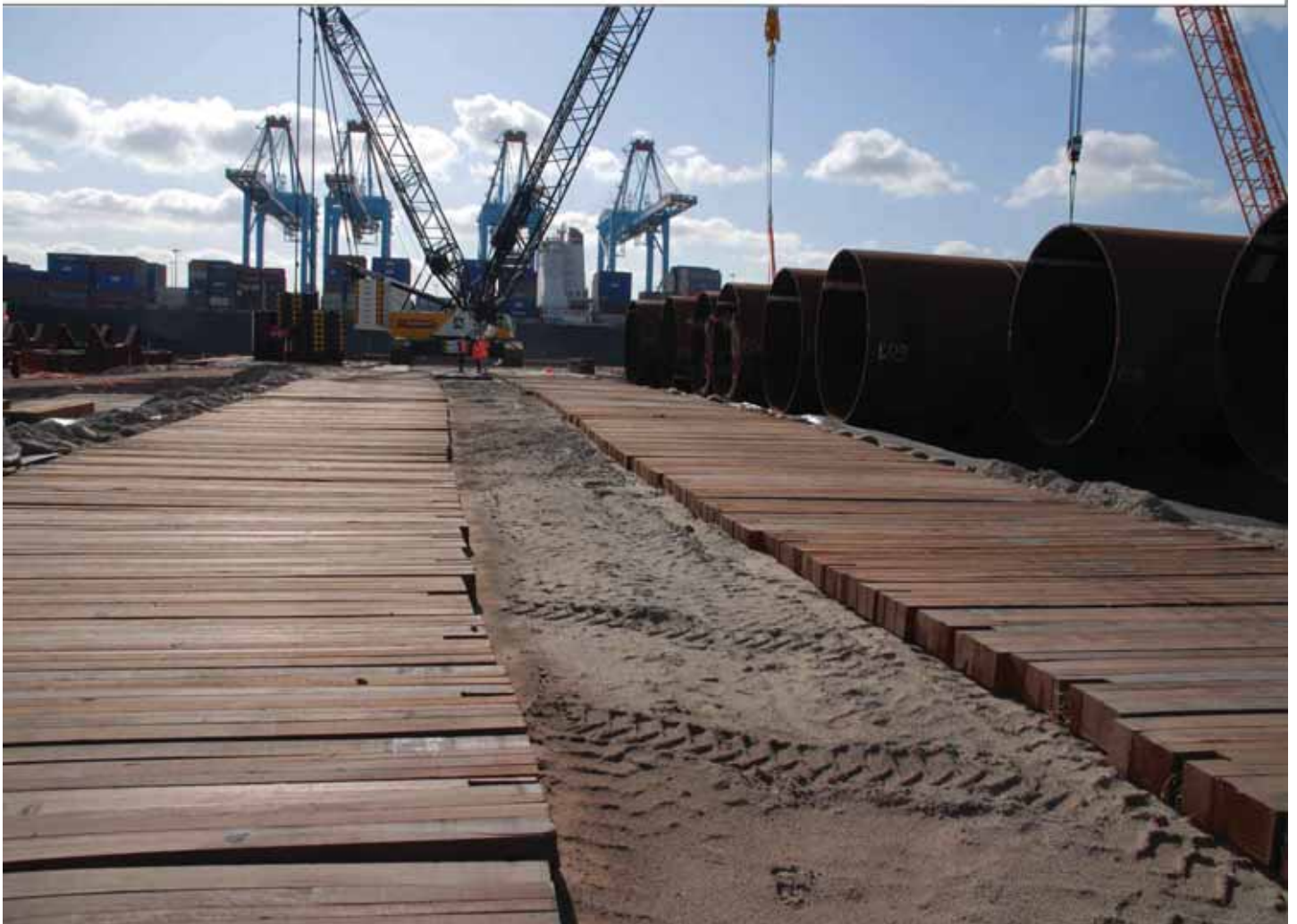
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Solid performance from the Hire Show

This year's Executive Hire Show - its sixth - appeared to stave off the ravishes of both the cold weather and the flat economic climate to record a solid performance, with visitor numbers probably similar to last year's record levels. This doesn't tell the whole story however as of the 131 exhibitors more than 30 were there for the first time, in fact a second floor was added to meet demand for space.

Generally there are only a few stands of interest to the readers of Cranes & Access and this was true again this year. However several exhibitors commented on the number of general rental companies asking about access equipment and spider lifts in particular. Like any specialist trade show - this one is aimed at the tool and general rental sector - visitor numbers are not the key to a successful show, it is all about the quality not quantity, yet even through the middle part of the second day, the show looked reasonably busy and the same applied the day before. Dates for next year have already been announced - the 6th and 7th February 2013 - so put it in your diary now. Here is a brief round-up of some products.

The inappropriately named push around Power Scissor - it has no battery, hydraulics, motors or pumps - from Russon Access Platforms is continuing its popularity and sales. Universally dismissed for



The Power Scissor 400 has enough capacity for two people and tools



Director Jon Lang demonstrates raising the platform using a drill

'being totally manual' this very fact has proved that sophisticated is not always best. All production is currently being absorbed by Speedy Hire so if you want one it will be March at the earliest (unless Speedy puts in another big order). On show was the two-man Power Scissor 400 which has a working height of over four metres, platform capacity of 210kg and weighs 265kg. Director Jon Lang said that he is working on linking two platforms together to create a platform seven metres long. Hopefully this will be on show at Vertikal Days in June.



Managing director Jim Sanger with his Stormer storage podium

First-time exhibitor Reading-based APT Construction Services featured its Stormer stepstore - a novel podium stand, with built-in storage for up to 50kg giving working heights up to 3.2 metres. Sturdily constructed, the unit features self contained outriggers, wheels for ease of movement and built-in anti-surf mechanism. The patented unit is designed and built in the UK and retails for about £900.

While there was nothing new on the Power Tower stand this year, we did



spot the familiar face of Ted Williams (ex SkyKing) who for the past month or so has been helping out with the sales of the Power Tower products, particularly to end users such as hospitals, the food industry and local authorities.



Ted Williams now working with Power Tower with Peter Ellis

Access Industries - UK distributor for Multitel Pagliero - said it had a good show, seeing many potential companies wanting to get into access rental - particularly spider lifts. While not showing new equipment, its new member of staff - Jonathan Wiseman - ex CTE, then briefly CMC - was manning the stand with Melvyn Else. No details yet but Multitel is looking at launching two new truck mounted platforms and a new spider lift later in the year, which may coincide with Vertikal Days.



Melvyn Else (l) with Jonathan Wiseman of Access Industries

Several software companies were present including Higher Concept which launched SyrinxRW allowing sales people to access and update Syrinx anytime, anywhere using their iPad or Smartphone. Working on customer sites, sales people can review customer information and transaction history, find accurate stock availability, provide up to date



Probably the only telehandler a compact Kramer Allrad 2506

pricing and generate detailed quotations on the spot.

CLM Construction Supplies - the UK and Ireland distributor for Imer - showed the Iteco EasyUp 5SP, self-propelled version of its push around lift, launched late last year. The new model features a 626 mm x 1,250 mm work platform with 3.2 metre platform height, fast lift and compact dimensions. It weighs just 490kg and boasts a platform capacity of 150kg. An Iteco 1248 scissor was also on display at the entrance to the exhibition. CLM director Bob Hughes said that his company is distributing Imer and Iteco access products but not the IHLmer spider lifts and is looking for sub-dealers around the UK.



Bob Hughes of CLM with the new Iteco EasyUp 5SP