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Articulated Self propelled booms

C&a articulated booms

Articulated telescopic booms, particularly under 50ft, have been the boom of choice among European buyers of self propelled boom lifts, ever since they were introduced. Over the past few years this love affair has extended to larger booms and to other types of aerial work platform, including truck mounts and larger trailer lifts. It seems that the now widely used configuration of a sigma or telescopic riser plus telescopic top boom, has converted a good number of straight boom fans to the benefits of up and over reach.

Over the past few years, at least in Europe, the increasing availability and performance of articulated booms has largely consigned the straight boom to the 60 to 120ft height range and specific heavy duty applications. All of the smallest booms and increasingly the largest boom lifts are now articulated while 60 and 80ft applications, once the exclusive domain of the straight boom, are also succumbing to the charms of articulation.

45ft still the most popular

The most popular articulating booms by far are the 45ft (13m) platform height models. More boom lifts of this size are sold in Europe than almost all of the other heights added together. Time was when all booms in this sector were about the same - 45ft platform height. The occasional maverick producer would go to 46ft, but that was about it. Any more and your product would have been in no-mans-land, neither fish nor fowl - stuck between the 45ft and 60ft models. Not only would no-one pay for the extra height, but you could not even give it away. At one time in the UK users would simply call the rental company and ask for "a Genie 45". As lift users have become more knowledgeable this has started to change, with many appreciating the more subtle features of different machines.

Chart 1: 50ft class articulated booms

Manufacturer Model	Nifty HR17	Snorkel AB50J	Haulotte HA18PX	Iteco IT150DE	Haulotte HA18SPX	Genie Z-51/30JRT	Manitou 180ATJ	JLG 510AJ	Nifty HR18
Platform Ht	15.2m	15.2m	15.30m	15.3m	15.30m	15.62m	15.65m	15.80m	16.0m
Outreach	9.1m	8.5m	10.0m	10.1m	10.0m	9.25m	10.1m	9.48m	9.5m
O/A Width	2.0m	2.3m	2.30m	1.8m	2.25m	2.29m	2.3m	2.26m	2.48m
O/A Length	6.0m	6.4m	7.60m	7.7m	7.60m	7.50m	7.7m	7.68m	7.08m
GVW	6,140kg	7,795kg	8,120kg	10,000kg	7,500kg	7,213kg	8,090kg	7,300kg	6,850kg
Jib	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Articulation	150°	145°	140°	150°	140°	135°	140°	145°	130°
Platform size	180x0.70	183x0.76	180x0.80	180x80	180x0.80	180x0.76	180x0.80	183x0.76	150x120
Lift capacity	225kg	227kg	230kg	220kg	230kg	227kg	230kg	230kg	300kg
Transport L	6.0m	6.4m	5.9m	7.7m	5.8m	7.5m	5.77m	7.68m	7.08m



Applications for the largest articulated booms include large industrial plant maintenance and construction

One of the changes slowly creeping in is a shift from the 45ft boom market upwards by as much as 8ft. There are now at least 10 different models of articulating boom with platform heights in the 50 to 53ft range. We compare nine of them in Chart 1, below.

This new class of boom with its 17 to 18 metres working height is providing a positive contribution to manufacturer's bottom lines. Price premiums over similarly spec'd 45ft units range from €2,000 to £2,000, while the additional material and labour cost is minimal. However this is one of those win win deals, with the savvy rental company able to achieve better rates for the extra couple of metres, providing a rapid pay back on the additional cost. At the same time many end users are

benefiting, especially on jobs where 45ft lifts are marginally too short, they no longer have to migrate to the extra cost of a 60ft boom.

Now that the 51's are gaining in popularity one wonders if manufacturers will start stretching their 60's into 70's? After all the 76ft work height was once a popular size in the straight boom market. You can be sure that at least one or two manufacturers have looked into the possibilities.

So what's new or on the way?

The pace of articulated boom product development has picked up in the past year or so and while it can hardly be described as 'scorching' a good number of new products have been launched this year with several more on the way.

articulated booms C&a

Looking at smaller articulating booms the big news so far for 2007 is that Genie, will introduce its long awaited 40ft boom at the ARA and Bauma in the spring. We are told that the battery powered Z-40/23N will be based on the structure of the Z45/25 with an all new steering geometry, light weight, compact dimensions and AC drive technology. How this machine turns out will be of great interest. Genie has long threatened to introduce a boom to compete with the Nifty Height Rider HR12N and the UpRight AB38N, highly popular models in Europe. In order to go head to head with these units requires a machine with a gross weight in the region of

3,000 to 3,500kgs, an overall width of 1.5 metres and an overall length of around four metres. Not to mention of course a very attractive price in comparison to the company's narrow aisle 30/34's or 45's.

Alternatively the new Genie might have more in common with the JLG 400An range. While this size of boom sells well in North America, it has not been a star performer here in Europe, due to its high gross weight and pricing levels too close to 45ft models. For the new Genie to succeed in the UK, it will need to have some significant performance advantages to the Nifty and UpRight products or carry a significantly lower price tag to the Z45 or preferably both. Either way we will know soon enough which path Genie has decided to take with its new boom. If the Z40/23N, as has been suggested, shares components with the Z45/25 it might also be a candidate for European production.

The Niftylift HR12-4x4 takes the popular machine into rough terrain applications and improves its aesthetics

Genie has said that it will begin assembling the Z-45 and Z-51 booms at its telehandler facility in Perugia, Italy. The company's first ever European production line will start turning out product by the start of the second quarter 2007.

Nifty which leads the small boom sector in the UK, introduced a rough terrain version of its popular HR12N earlier this year. The original Nifty HR12 was weak when it came to gradeability, the later Bi Energy version significantly improved on this, although it's off road - steep slope capability can hardly be called impressive and is not among the reasons buyers like this machine. The new HR12-4x4 changes all that. Available in Electric, Diesel or Bi-Energy formats, it can now demolish steep slopes and loading ramps. Its four wheel drive and extra ground clearance as well as its light weight makes soft muddy conditions a pleasure, rather than an obstacle to skirt around. The new model weighs in at 3,300kgs and is a touch wider than the standard 'N' at 1.6 metres. Finally the new engine cover gives the gawky looking HR12 a more attractive and rugged look, although it will still not win many beauty contests.



Larger retail applications such as cleaning and repair are ideal for 35 to 45 ft articulating booms - note the tyre covers.





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A TEREX COMPANY



A number of booms can tuck their jibs under to reduce transport length

French curves and bulges

If attractive lines are your thing, very few lifts can match the voluptuous shapes of Manitou's two rough terrain articulated booms. The company's 160 and 180ATJ, now in their second year, are beginning to win a share of the market, particularly in the UK where Russon Access has helped boost the company's sales to the rental sector. Manitou's latest articulating boom models are not nearly as curvaceous, but the range of electric powered machines, offer platform heights of 32ft, 43ft and 49ft. The three models utilise two chassis widths to create a five model line up. The 32ft -120AETJ

has a choice of 1.2 or 1.5 metres overall width, the 150AETJ -1.5 or 1.76 metres, while the 170AETJ is 1.75 metres wide. The lifts boast some excellent outreach, topping out at over nine metres on the 170. The narrow, or 'C' versions, of the lower two units also offer a rotating jib which the company calls '3D'. The downside is that all five variants are heavy ranging from 6,550 to nearly 7,000kgs.

How do they do it?

Moving up the height chart, Niftylift is planning to launch a narrow, 1.5 metre wide Bi-Energy version of its 15 metre platform height HR17 boom in the spring along with an HR21 Bi-Energy, weighing 6,100kgs and offering over 12 metres of outreach. At least six orders have already been received from customers in Holland for the 21 metre model which was announced at Hoogwerker Dagen in September. Nifty has in recent years managed to pull off some surprising design feats on larger articulated booms that have often gone largely unnoticed, with combinations of greater outreach, narrower widths and lighter weight. How it manages this apparent paradox, remains a mystery, when questioned all you get is some mumbling about lighter boom technology and from majority shareholder, Roger Bowden, a smile and a twinkle in the eye.

Nifty's latest boom lift follows a different approach; the HR18 was designed originally as a special product for a leading steel erector. As such it is heavier, wider, sports a beefy riser and an unusual 1.5 metre by 1.2 metre - almost square - platform that offers 300 kgs of lifting capacity. The aim of the new machine was to create an articulated boom that offers the performance characteristics of a straight boom, which are the lift of choice for steel erecting. Nifty says that the specials have proved so popular that the company has decided to add the HR18 to its standard product line.

Long life prototype

At Intermat this May Iteco, showed of a new 15 metre articulated Bi-Energy boom, in prototype format, the IT150DE. This is by no means the first Iteco boom lift, but probably it's most important. The company failed to make a real success with any of its previous boom lift introductions, whilst a fair number of its scissor lifts have sold in volume over the years.

The design of this new machine has some strong features, with over 10 metres outreach from a 1.8 metre overall width, beefy sigma riser configuration and a rotating jib. The downside is that this Bi-Energy unit weighs in at over 10 tonnes.

The company is struggling with battery life in its test programme, possibly due to its excessive weight. It may have to drop the hydrostatic drive system in favour of direct electric drive. Given that weight usually also reflects cost, it might be that Iteco can simply not afford to build this model as it is. The prototype is now very well travelled having visited a number of exhibitions all over Europe, but so far it is still a prototype.

New models from Snorkel

Snorkel is another producer looking to gain a bigger share of the articulated boom market. The company has made tremendous progress since its remnants were acquired by Elwood Holdings in 2003. However the renewed business has been built on the back of the company's straight telescopic booms which always had a strong reputation. More recently Snorkel has reopened a facility to step up electric scissor lift production, we also understand that is working on at least two new articulated booms although the company would not confirm this. The Snorkel UNO41 is ancient and long overdue for replacement, its AB50J, a more recent offering, is now coming into its own as the

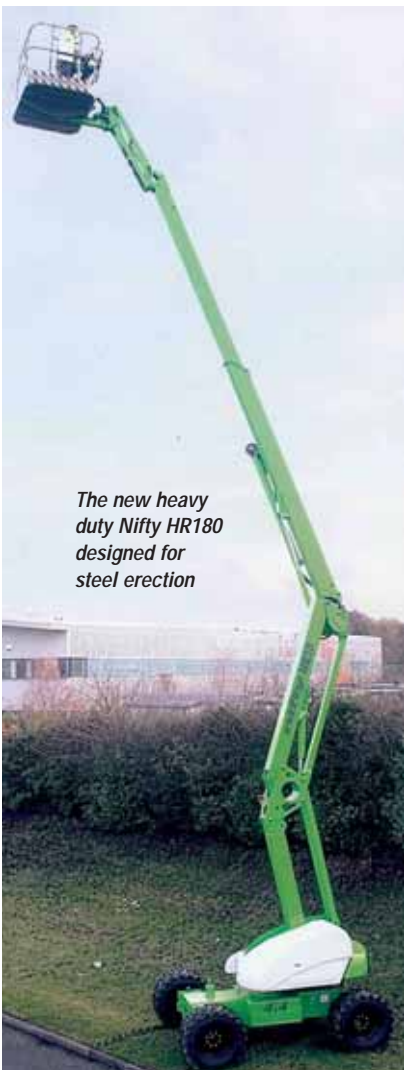


The Snorkel AB50J, its newest articulated boom has simpler, more reliable controls

market moves up from 45ft. The re-engineering and simplification of its control system has turned a machine with a poor reputation for reliability into a strong performer that many buyers are just beginning to discover. The AB60J loved by those who own them, is beginning to show its age, and could do with an update. As with Haulotte booms in the 60ft range, the Snorkel uses a single stage riser, which limits up and over reach but provides up to two metres more outreach.

Back from the grave

Since the purchase of UpRight powered access by Tanfield earlier this year, the company has announced that it plans to reintroduce the larger UpRight boom lifts, this includes the AB46 and AB62 ranges. Both products were strong performers by the time UpRight ceased production with the closure of its American plants. The 46 would need updating and restyling while the 62 would require less of a facelift. Tanfield are not yet ready to commit to any timescale for any re-introduction.



The new heavy duty Nifty HR180 designed for steel erection



The UpRight AB62RT may be set to make a comeback

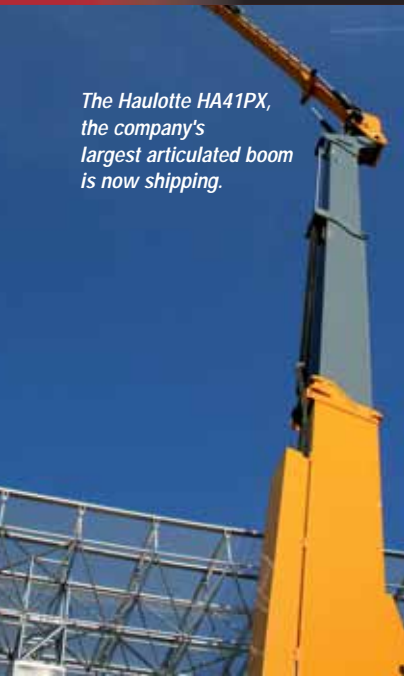
articulated booms C&a

Chart 2: Articulated booms 125ft and over

Make model	Haulotte HA41PX	JLG 1250AJP	Genie Z135/70	JLG 150HAX
Platform height	39m	38.1m	41.15m	45.72m
Max outreach*	19.20m	19.25m	18.13m	22.16m
Up & Over height	16.5m	18.44m	23.01m	24.38m
Working width	2.53m	3.81m	3.94m	5.49m
Transport width	2.53m	2.49m	2.46m	3.51m
Transport length	12.5m	11/46m	12.93m	12.01m
Gross weight	22,500kgs	19,960kgs	20,366kgs	25,855kgs
Lift capacity	230kg	230kg	272kg	230kg

* With riser extended

The Haulotte HA41PX, the company's largest articulated boom is now shipping.



machines differ significantly is the working width and gross weight. Haulotte has elected to go with a fixed overall width of 2.53 metres which dictates a gross weight of 22,500 kgs. Compared to JLG's telescopic axles which extend to 3.81 metres for work but which provides a lower Gross weight at just under 20,000kgs and a slighter narrower transport width.

With the general trend away from the complexities of extending axles, many users will find the more compact (in work mode) and slightly higher Haulotte an attractive proposition.

The Genie, while bearing some resemblance to the other two

possibilities within the working envelope. It doesn't stop there either; the split chassis opens up into a cruciform shape reducing the wheelbase and expanding the machines width into a squarer base. The advantage is a higher unrestricted lift capacity with a lower gross weight. The Genie has sold in surprisingly large numbers, at least in Europe. Its success, unusual for such a large lift, has possibly created a temporary over capacity for such products. If so this may limit the expected take up for the new Haulotte?

The very top end has become more rarefied

At the very top of charts for working height is the aging JLG 150HAX, clearly a machine from a different era. This model, introduced in the 1990's has gone largely unchallenged, although Italian producer Basket did build a few of its 46 and 48 metre boom lifts. With the demise of this company earlier this year it is unlikely that the new company, Platform Basket, will re-introduce these Behemoths.

So what does the future offer for self propelled boom lifts with work heights in the 50 metre range? At present no company will admit to

The big up and overs

Closer to the top of the tree Haulotte has started shipping its new 39 metre HA41PX articulated boom. The new model features a three section telescopic riser plus a three section top boom and articulating jib. The combination provides up to 19.2 metres of outreach at 16.5 metres up and over height.

The new product goes head to head with the JLG 1250 AJP-Ultra Boom, and comes close to many of the performance characteristics of the larger Genie Z135/70. Compared to the JLG, Haulotte offers almost a metre more working height, similar outreach and unrestricted lift capacity, and a very similar lift mechanism configuration. Where the two



JLG is not planning new booms for the next 12 months, but is working on user friendly features such as better baskets.

products in terms of outreach and transport dimensions could not be more different. It employs a four section telescopic riser, with a two section main boom and long two section articulated jib for a wholly different range of

The HA41PX features a three section riser, three section boom and articulating jib



The Genie 135/70 boom configuration offers some interesting new reach potential

be working on such a machine. After all the benefits of being self propelled at this height are limited. Particularly as truck mounted booms have become more compact and more sophisticated. 50 metres is now a modest height in the truck mounted world, while still a challenge for self propelled. If the market for big oil platforms picks up and the buoyant lift market continues, one of the manufacturers will eventually find the prestige of building the largest self propelled lift too alluring.

If we were to put money on which one it might be... it would be on Haulotte, but don't hold your breath.

Fixing the light

The Souter Lighthouse in Tyne & Wear was the world's first working electric lighthouse. It was built to protect ships from the treacherous rocks at Whitburn Steel which has one of the greatest concentrations of shipwrecks in the British Isles.

While the lighthouse is no longer functional the building is maintained to a high standard by the National Trust. When the time came to carry out routine external checks and repairs to the light and paint work, it contacted the Newcastle branch of the Platform Company to provide an efficient access solution. The company supplied one of its new Genie Z60-34 articulated booms. The lifts geometry and 1.8 metre jib proved ideal for reaching all of the contours of the lighthouse.



The Platform Company supplied a Genie Z60/34 articulated boom to carry out work on the Souter lighthouse

Big booms assist carbon plant

Bechtel is nearing completion of the Mosjøen Carbon Plant Project, roughly 1,000km north of Oslo in Norway. Located in the tiny town of Mosjøen, the plant will be the largest single paste train/paste plant in the world and will supply baked anodes to Alcoa's Fjardaal smelter in Iceland and its Elkem smelter in Mosjøen.

Local rental company Odd Olsrud supported by Riwal Scandinavia, has supplied more than 60 boom lifts and a large number of scissors. High-rise steel construction began in March with the highest point for cladding being 48 metres. Among the articulated booms on site are the JLG 1250AJP and the 46 metre 150HAX all of which have been shipped in from Riwal in Denmark.

A Riwal 1250AJP at work at the Mosjøen plant, not exactly using its maximum work height



A Genie 135/70 at Mosjøen, using its outreach to reach an awkward spot. A 26m Riwal Liftlux scissor lift is in the foreground.



Booms with outriggers

Matilsa is one of the few producers that offers its articulated boom lifts with optional levelling outriggers. The jacks can be used on slopes to level up the machine



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