



FULL SPEED AHEAD!

We're on the road to Donington Park for an even bigger **Vertical Days**.

Strap yourself in and be a part of the UK's largest lifting equipment event.



**Reserve the dates now
May 16th-17th 2018**



Registration is now open for both exhibitors and visitors. Go to www.vertikaldays.net



Psst... Want to buy a crane...?

The market for second hand equipment is more varied than you might think. There are plenty of 'used equipment dealers' out there with just a website advertising equipment that they have not seen and do not own, but only a few offer a full range of used equipment services. Emails from companies looking to buy cranes or platforms are a daily scourge, most are just online portals aiming to put A in touch with B and take a cut.

There are however 'proper' companies in the market that buy used equipment, hold a sizeable inventory, carry out repairs/refurbishment where necessary and sell it around the world. Manufacturers and distributors taking equipment in part exchange operate this model to some degree while some larger rental companies operate in-house used equipment sales departments, largely to dispose of equipment from their fleet. There are also companies that specialise in cranes and/or

aerial work platforms, but only a few that offer these services for all types of equipment. One such company is Pfeifer Heavy Machinery of Groenlo in the Netherlands. Cranes & Access found out more about by talking to Wesley Wittstock, its UK-based area manager.

Pfeifer Heavy Machinery was established around 20 years ago by Gerrit Pfeifer who left school with a passion for selling equipment. He took a small family loan to buy his first item - a compressor - sold it a few weeks later to buy something



The Pfeifer Heavy Machinery yard in Groenlo the Netherlands.



else and as they say, the rest is history. Since then he has built up a successful company with a turnover in excess of €50 million primarily with powered access and cranes, but also by offering a plethora of used construction equipment such as dumpers, excavators, telehandler's and trailers - a one-stop used construction equipment shop.

"At the moment our largest equipment sectors are powered access and All Terrain cranes. We sell around 1,800 platforms and 200 All Terrain cranes a year," says Wittstock. "We also deal with crawler cranes, but the bulk are All Terrain's with capacities from 25 to 500 tonnes."

Pfeifer will look at larger cranes but as Wesley points out, the market for 750 tonnes and above is small. "The main reason we don't deal in these larger capacity cranes is that there are so few operating around the world. So sellers often already know of a potential buyer ahead of

the crane becoming available out their fleet."

On the access side the company deals with everything including boom lifts and scissors - diesel or electric - and truck mounts, any platforms with a working height of six metres or more.

Pfeifer has two main salesmen - Erik Frank, responsible for all sales activities within the company, and Kevin Stöteler who is both sales and a member of the management team, that also includes co-owner Ralph Koehorst.

"The buying is done by Gerrit, Ralph and myself," says Wittstock. "I concentrate on the UK whereas Gerrit and Ralph concentrate on the rest of Europe. We are reactive to enquiries we receive from all corners of the globe. To give you an idea, recently we completed the purchase of 30 cranes that were located in Brazil."

The sales process

Buyers that have not previously



Part of the access equipment stock



A Terex AC140

New & used machine sales

AFI
RESALE

AFI Resale is one of the largest New & Used powered access machine dealers in the UK, supplying equipment not only in the UK but Worldwide!

Call today on +44 (0)1924 224 392 or email info@afi-resale.co.uk



HAULOTTE HA20PX

TYPE	DIESEL BOOM
YEAR	2006
LIFTING	230KG
POWER	DIESEL
HEIGHT	20.65M



HAULOTTE HA16PX

TYPE	DIESEL BOOM
YEAR	2006
LIFTING	230KG
POWER	DIESEL
HEIGHT	16.00M



SKYJACK SJ9250

TYPE	SCISSOR LIFT
YEAR	2006
LIFTING	681KG
POWER	DIESEL
HEIGHT	17.20M



UPRIGHT MX19

TYPE	SCISSOR LIFT
YEAR	2008
LIFTING	227KG
POWER	ELECTRIC
HEIGHT	7.8M



TCA LIFT
Tall Compact Aerial
The original Falcon Spider 29-52 m

www.tcalift.com





Pfeifer specialises in Haulotte access equipment

dealt with Pfeifer tend to make contact often after seeing the company details on the web or in an advert. Sourcing equipment worldwide is possible, given its high value and relatively cheap ocean shipping. Shipping a crane from Brazil to the Netherlands for example takes between two to three weeks and costs in the region of €5,000. The exact items of equipment on offer need to be identified and this includes photographs to establish the quality and specification, before the price is discussed.

"In all the time I have been doing this I have never come across someone selling equipment too cheap," says Wittstock. "Unfortunately there isn't a little black book of industry prices like the automotive sector, so each deal is individually negotiated. However, because of the volume of equipment we deal with, we know the prices we can offer and when to walk away. On average, a crane takes us three to four months to sell so this has to be built into the price. Everything we buy is for stock and then we look for a customer. It is fantastic if we have a buyer already lined up but this rarely happens. If the asking price is sensible then the next step is to travel to see the machine and very importantly, meet the seller and see the premises/yard etc."

"How clean and organised the yard is often a good indicator of the quality of the machine. The

best equipment usually comes from Germany and Holland, where they are typically kept under cover and when a crane is not working the operator is often cleaning and carrying out maintenance. In the UK the quality is more varied, but overall I would say it is average, mainly because of the climate - the salt on the roads in winter - and most of the time the equipment is left outside. Also numerous operators on a particular crane usually results in some regular checks and smaller maintenance issues are missed."

"Everyone describes his machine as first class and well maintained, however once you see the machine in the metal, the quality and condition varies enormously. You can have two similar machines, both 10 years old and with 3,000 hours but one is well looked after and the other a wreck. Everything has a value and we will buy if we think we can sell it, but obviously the one that has been looked after achieves the higher price. The hope is that you build a long-term relationship with the seller and get to know the type and quality of his equipment and perhaps the type of machines he wants to buy. Getting the purchase wrong can be expensive - €20,000 for a new slew ring, €30,000 for a new engine - and these problems may only be found after we get it back to our workshops."

People buy used equipment of all



It sells around 1,800 platforms each year

ages and conditions for various reasons. Some are looking for younger machines, because a contractor may only allow equipment of a certain age on site, others are happy to have an older machine and a lower price.

"All machines purchased for stock are checked over at our new five-bay, five-man state of the art workshops in Groenlo which has full diagnostics testing and two overhead cranes. However sometimes a customer does not see the value in a new paint job or fitting new components so machines are usually machines just checked over before sale."

the major manufacturers I would pick the Liebherr first - after that there isn't much between the others brands."

"Chinese-built cranes are totally different. We have tried them and may perhaps take one in part exchange but we would not actively buy a Chinese crane for stock because there is very little demand for them," he says. "However, owners still have high expectations for them, even after having failed to sell them. Global demand changes because of many factors, for example the 'flavour of the month' at the moment is for mobile tower cranes. Three to four years ago



Mobile tower cranes are flavour of the month



What is hot

"The global standing of a brand creates a demand and this is reflected in the used equipment prices. Pfeifer sells to 120 countries and Liebherr seems to be the most desirable and does command a small premium in the market place. This is primarily because Liebherr has a global parts and service network - mostly wholly owned - so wherever the crane may be there is always support. The newer products from Grove, Demag and Tadano all have good performance, but appear not to have the same global recognition and support. If I had to choose a 60 tonne AT from

these cranes would have been selling at almost half the current price. Demand has increased due to the manufacturers' long lead times - around 9 to 12 months the last time I heard - for a new crane while demand is growing."

"Learning the pricing of used equipment - and cranes in particular - can be a hard and costly process. If there is a shift in market that you don't anticipate, you could lose tens of thousands of Euro's."

Who is buying

About 80 percent of Pfeifer's business is done with customers it already knows and has a good

The ultimate answer to overall efficiency



↑ 16 m ↑ 19 m

2 m

IN DOOR

OUT DOOR

750 kg 550 kg

ELEC TRIC DIE SEL HY BRID

2WD 4WD

SWING AXLE

2 I

230V

EASY LUBE

Holland Lift presents its new smart models: HL-160 and HL-190. The concept is designed for tailored efficiency. A modular system with various options: 16 or 19m high, electric, diesel or hybrid; the base of the machine always remains the same. These scissor lifts have attractive exploitation costs and a high return on investment. And whatever configuration you choose, Holland Lift quality, safety and durability are as always part of the deal.

HOLLAND LIFT

innovation at great height

Holland Lift International bv
 t: +31 (0) 229 285 555
 e: info@hollandlift.com
 www.hollandlift.com



working relationship with. However even trusted customers machines can have problems that they do not know about themselves.

"We had one crane that initially looked good but needed axles and brakes refurbishing, which costed us €10,000. There can also be problems when transporting equipment back to the yard. A while back we purchased two 250 tonne and two 100 tonne Groves from the UAE. During the shipment to Rotterdam the boat encountered very rough seas off the coast of France. One of the machines on the deck broke its tethers and started moving around the deck, bashing into other machines including our cranes. By the time the boat landed all the equipment on that deck looked like it had been in a blender and the ship had holes punched into its hull. Nothing was salvageable. You have to be prepared for every eventuality."

Aerial lifts

When the company first started it was buying one and two platforms at a time. Over the past 5 to 10 years it has progressed to larger packages up to 300 platforms at a time, mainly from larger rental companies. With thousands of units, they have a lot of equipment to dispose of with constant fleet renewal. Some are geared up in house while others use a mix of used equipment dealers, auctions and end user sales. Viewing large numbers of machines before purchasing is challenging, especially in times of high utilisation. Many are therefore bought blind or by sampling a small cross section. While others have an employee

present when loading.

"There is a leap of faith but the sellers know that the process is ongoing so 99 percent of the time the machines are as described," says Whittstock.

Pfeifer buys platforms from all over the world as they can be shipped in containers at a reasonable cost. All purchased equipment is shipped to the Netherlands facility for checking, even if it is going to a buyer in the original country.

The good and the bad

So which access platforms are currently in demand?

"Young small electric scissors are getting very difficult to deal with because they are so cheap to buy new. Clients don't appreciate that prices have to be at a point where we can operate - €10,000 may buy a new 10 metre electric scissor but many owners want €6,000 for a four year old unit - there just isn't the margin for us."

Platforms currently in demand are large diesel scissors - 20 metres and above. Demand is fuelled by the increase in the type of construction they are used for and manufacturer's long lead times.

"Used mid-range 50 to 60ft booms are still popular probably because the rental returns do not justify the new equipment cost. I know of one large company that is refurbishing its own 60ft articulated booms because the returns do not justify replacing with new machines. Like the crane sector, the major global brands such as JLG, Genie and Haulotte are always a safe buy. For many years if you wanted a used Genie in the UK, you went





The company now buys large packages of equipment up to 300 machines

to AJ Access. If you want a used Haulotte you come to Pfeifer. We have specialised in the brand for many years and have a big following among Haulotte users around the world. There is nothing our technicians don't know about a used Haulotte. It may not have the best reputation everywhere, but the new products are great. There are very few used Chinese lifts in the market at the moment but if there were, I would be less favourable dealing with them. As with all used machines the critical requirement is can I get parts? Can I speak to someone to sort out a problem? So any product without a strong brand presence will struggle. Take Italian manufacturer Airo for example. The product is great, but every time we take in some of this equipment it takes ages to sell - in my opinion its primarily because of its lack of brand awareness and support infrastructure. Because of this, buyers will stick to safe brands such as Genie, JLG and Haulotte. One brand that has improved enormously with increased demand in Europe is Niftylift which is now up with the best. It has always been a good product but brand awareness has grown over the past four years."

As is typical in the used market Pfeifer does not offer a warranty on what it sells. "You could have a warranty, but you would pay for it," says Whittstock. "There are a few companies that offer a warranty, but similar machines are priced around 30 percent more than we would sell for."

Pfeifer also buys and sells construction equipment



Bare rental

Pfeifer also rents cranes and occasionally platforms on bare rental terms if it makes financial sense. Most of the crane rental fleet has been purchased new with recent additions of a new Liebherr LTR1100, MK140 and a Spiering's. Some of the fleet are used, such as a few of the 11 ex-Hewden cranes it bought at auction this year. After 12, 24 or 36 months in the fleet, the cranes are sold through its normal channels.

Lack of equipment

There is currently a shortage of 8 to 10 year old equipment, caused by the financial crisis when new equipment sales slumped. High utilisation rates also mean companies are keeping equipment longer. However Pfeifer fares better than most because it will buy any brand and any age and has strong established partnerships with many hire companies across Europe.

"While our aim is to sell equipment, we sometimes have to say to potential buyers that some items they are looking at is not for them - perhaps because it doesn't have the life span they are looking for. There are not many dealers that will do that!. We also encourage potential buyers to view the equipment, if not we try and give the best visibility with pictures and videos. A significant number of buyers do not come to look at the equipment, perhaps because we have a sound reputation in the used equipment market?"