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The Cat TH580B 17 metre class Telehandler launched last year tops out Cats range, it is available in Construction or Construction Plus versions

tele multi telescopic taskers

The telehandler has developed into a true multi task work tool at home on farm and construction site alike. The market is growing both in terms of units purchased and the range of products on offer.

The range of applications for telehandlers is growing at a rapid pace, thanks to the increasing range of models and attachments available. The number of manufacturers offering telehandlers has continued to grow at a time when rapid consolidation has occurred among producers of other types of equipment. In spite of this expansion most manufacturers currently have large order books and long lead times.

The world wide market for telehandlers is estimated to be in the region of 35,000 units with 22,000 or so sold in Europe and 11,000 in North America each year. The UK/Irish market is the largest European market, with annual sales approaching 8,000 units. The French market is similar to that of the UK with Italy a distant third. Central European markets such as Germany and Holland tend to use other methods of site handling, such as small self erecting tower cranes, however the use of telehandlers is on the increase.

In the past year, there has been much discussion in the UK over the pros and cons of using telehandlers compared to self erecting tower cranes; as if the applications for each of them were completely interchangeable. While it is true that the role of lifting materials,

such as pallets of bricks, onto a scaffold or upper floors, can be done by either machine, most projects benefit from having both on site, working together.

The use of small tower cranes is on the increase in the UK and Ireland, particularly on smaller building sites, whether this will eat into telehandler sales or not? only time will tell.

The trend is upwards

Most telehandler producers we spoke to confirmed that the general trend is towards higher reach telehandlers, with the most popular height now in the 12 to 13 metre range, while the 7 to 9 metre sector is falling away. Most truly new product development is focused at the extremes, with larger models coming onto the market and eating into crane applications, while new, smaller, more compact units, extend the concept down towards the skid steer loader market.

Most producers now have 17 metre units at the top of their ranges, with Merlo topping the charts at 18 metres. At the smaller end of the market, four to six metre compact models, with widths of under 3 metres are moving the concept into new areas.

There are a number of reasons for this increase in average height. First of all rental companies now

represent around 75 percent of UK/Irish non agricultural shipments, they have a tendency to buy larger for versatility. A large unit can usually be used on lower work while the opposite is not the case. The availability of stabilisers has also become a factor, it seems that many users, particularly large house builders, only want units on their sites that are equipped with them.

Few producers offer stabilisers on models under 10 metres.

There is also a trend towards more three and four storey buildings in the UK, thanks to the governments housing density requirements, such buildings require more height in order to complete the work.

360 degree operation

360 degree telescopic handlers are now offered by five of the larger producers. With boom lengths of up to 26 metres, the larger models are beginning to look like small Rough Terrain cranes, particularly when equipped with hoists. The cross over between cranes and 360 degree telehandlers has come very close with at least two crane manufacturers now offering AT City cranes that feature forks and fully integrated platform attachments, in addition to their regular crane

boom heads (see Telehandler or Crane?). Demand for 360 degree units is clearly increasing and yet many of the largest producers such as JCB and Cat see this as a niche market, best left to the French and Italians.



Genie markets a full range of telehandlers to the rental market, including 360 degree units

Road Rail handlers

Road rail attachments have been around for some time and are not new to telehandlers, however 360 degree telehandlers lend themselves to a number of specific applications such as rail maintenance and tunnel work (see Metro tunnel access).

One telehandler company that is building a speciality in the rail maintenance market is VHS, a Manitou dealer in Holland. It builds the Mani-Rail a modified MRT 1742, 360 degree handler, fully kitted out for rail maintenance complete with reduced tail swing to allow work alongside an open and operational second track.



The VHS ManiRail designed for intensive rail maintenance

The Mani-Rail offers all of the usual attachments, including a fully integrated work platform. Given that the unit is intended for production use, VHS selected "High Ride" rail bogies with a hydrostatic drive system. This provides the unit with a track speed of up to 40 kph and allows it to manage any gradient that it is likely to encounter, as well as level itself on banked and inclined tracks.

For a full report see (<http://www.vertikal.net/en/stories.php?id=1237>)

The new JCB 525-50 is aimed at the skid steer loader market.



Merlo has released its new Panoramic models

Merlo launch all new Panoramics

Merlo is launching a brand new seven and 10 metre range of Panoramic telehandlers at SED. The units replace the current seven and nine metre construction and agricultural models. All units feature 102 HP turbocharged Deutz engines with either fixed or sideshift/levelling axles, the latter with Merlo's integral sideshifter.

The key construction models are:

Model	Capacity*	Lift height	Engine	Front Axle
P34.7 Panoramic	3400/3400kg	7.0m	102HP	Fixed
P34.10 Panoramic	3400/1200kg	9.7m	102HP	Fixed
P36.7 Panoramic	3600/3600kg	7.0m	102HP	sideshift/levelling
P36.10 Panoramic	3600/3000kg	9.7m	102HP	sideshift/levelling

* Capacity at ground level/full lift height

The new cabs offer an increased glazed area for better visibility and an improved ventilation system. Merlo's trademark feature, the all-round tubular protection, the "Ring of Steel." Is also retained on the new models.

The six metre P26.6 SP and LP Panoramic models remain unchanged as do the compact construction models.

Skid steer sized Telehandler

The new JCB 524-50, compact telehandler, is aimed at skid steer loader applications, with a 5.3 metres lift height and up to 2,400 kgs lift capacity and compact dimensions. The new unit also introduces new levels of cab comfort, tractive effort and ease of operation. Other features include

two range hydrostatic drive, one for travel and one for on site and a 52 degree steer angle on both axles providing a three metre inside turning radius. New joystick controls are used for lift/lower and crowd/dump functions and the travel direction shuttle switch. Separate levers control the extend/retract and auxiliary functions, with an option available to have all functions on a single lever.

JCB says that it has designed the 524-50 to bring greater lift and reach to sites previously restricted to skid steer loaders and claim that it offers all of the benefits of a skid steer loader for operating in confined areas but with the advantage of a much smoother ride for the operator, with or without a load, not to mention of course the ability to telescope its load.

JLG launch new compact models

The latest models from JLG expands its presence at the compact end of the market, with the 307, launched late last year and most recently its sister model the 266 which starts coming off the Belgian production line later this month. The 266, which was first seen at SAIE last year, offers 2,660 kgs lift capacity with six metres

maximum lift height.

JLG say that while the

market is moving

towards larger

units, the five



The New JLG compact models include the 307 and 266

to seven metre market is also growing, as contractors replace regular outdoor fork trucks with telehandlers for moving materials around. Applications such as multi story car park construction call for such units for routine unloading and moving of building materials, the telescopic boom provides additional capability and versatility.

At the top end of the market the company's 4017 joins the 4000 series, the designs of which JLG acquired from Atlas, in order to spearhead its entrance into the European telehandler market.

JLG engineers have designed the new four section boom and combined it with the 4000 series frame and running gear to create the 4017.

JLG is market leader in North America with a market share of over 50 percent. In Europe it enjoys less than two percent. CEO, Bill Lasky has committed the company to winning 10 percent of the European telehandler market within the next four years. A tough challenge when competing with companies such as JCB, Manitou, Merlo and CAT, to mention only a few.

UK Diggers has spent £400,000 on Bobcat telehandlers.



First Bobcat T3571's go to UK Diggers

Bobcat has delivered the first three units of its new 7.2 metre T3571 telehandler to UK Diggers Ltd from Brailsford in Derbyshire. The units were part of a £400,000 order which included the 12 metre T35120, the 14 metre T40140 and the top of the range T40170, 17metre model.

UK Diggers was only established in 2003 and yet already operates over 300 pieces of plant. The company is a proud sponsor of Derby County Football club due to the fact that the two founders, Howard Thacker and Wayne Smith are keen supporters.

David Fletcher, commercial director said that the decision to buy Bobcat was made only after a detailed analysis, "We chose Bobcat over competitors because they provide excellent value for money and passed our evaluation

with flying colours". The local dealer, Butler Reynolds, which also sells Bobcat skid steers and mini excavators also played a major role in the decision.

Telehandlers sold in the UK/Ireland

Manufacturer	Standard Range	360
Bobcat	5.6m – 17m	Yes
Caterpillar	13.5m – 17m	No
dDieci	5.95m – 19.9m	Yes
Genie	5.7m - 17m	Yes
Haulotte	7.7m -17m	No
JCB	5m – 16.7m	No
JLG	6m – 16.7m	No
Manitou	3.96m – 16.75m	Yes
Merlo	6m – 17.8m	Yes
Terex	5.6m – 17m	Yes
Sennebogen	7m	No

JLG platform is interchangeable

JLG now offers a fully interchangeable EN280 Compliant work platform attachment on its telehandlers, the company says its new platform with its Can Bus technology is so safe that it is the only telehandler platform attachment that can be interchanged between all models and individual units in the new JLG range and still be fully EN280 compliant.

The platform has been designed to sense the individual machines characteristics and variations and adapt to that specific unit.

Metro tunnel access

A number of 13 and 16 metre Merlo Roto telehandlers, fitted with road rail running gear and integrated access platforms are helping with tunnel construction on Barcelona's new metro line nine.



A Merlo Roto in the Barcelona metro tunnel

Barcelona Metro Line 9 is the Government of Catalonia's largest Civil Engineering project. It links the urban centres that lie to the North and South of Barcelona with the airport, national high speed train system and other metro lines. The project includes 42 kilometres of new line, (34km of which passes through solid granite) with 46 stations. It is projected that 90 million passengers will use the new line in its first year, with a peak-time loading of 126,000 passengers an hour! It will be the worlds longest fully automatically controlled metro line, on its completion in 2010.

The stations are up to 65 metres below ground, as the route crosses existing lines, under very congested areas. The tunnels are 12 metres in diameter, in order to allow tracks running in opposite directions to be stacked, one on top of the other, in order to avoid the need for any crossovers or the need for increased tunnel size at stations.

UTE – a consortium of four companies, has a contract to build 11km of the line to the north of the city, it is already using 13 and 16 metre Merlo Roto telehandlers, equipped with integrated platforms, inside the tunnels on a wide range of fixing tasks during construction, as well as for maintenance and rapid intervention duties. Once the rails go down, The units are fitted with a road /rail conversion, allowing them to be used inside semi-completed tunnels and act as a rough terrain access platform during the main construction work.

Gruas Caballer, a crane rental company, is also supplying 16 metre K and KS Rotos, fitted with integrated TreEmme platforms to the Barcelona Metro contractor. The same contractor is using a Roto 45.21EVS fitted with a TreEmme tunnelling rig in this area.

"Working in the tunnels is a very different world, machines that work well above ground are soon destroyed down here", says Service Manager Carlos Jimenez. "The Rotos are used as rough terrain access platforms, because the site is impossible for conventional machines, with up to 30 percent slopes, in mud and running water over a rock surface. We prefer the KS machines in here, because the suspension protects the machines and the variable ride height means we can better handle the slopes."

The units used on the Barcelona Metro include Tre Emme work platforms and road rail gear





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Telehandler or Crane?

The latest 360 degree telehandlers, with their booms of up to 26 metres and higher specification hoist options are beginning to look more and more like small Rough Terrain cranes. When does a telehandler become a crane? Or for that matter a crane become a telehandler?

From a legal point of view, most crane rules apply once a load is suspended or is over 1,000kgs, our question though is not aimed at a simple definition, more at what is happening or likely to happen at this end of the lifting market.

There is no question that many lifting jobs previously carried out by small cranes are now done by telehandlers, roof trusses on two or three storey buildings being a classic case. The benefit of the telehandler is its versatility, with fully integrated work platforms, forks and a myriad of other attachments.

Locatelli, the Italian Rough Terrain producer, is launching its All Terrain City crane, the ATC20, in the UK and Ireland, and unusually it can be specified with Forks and a fully integrated platform attachment, in addition to the usual jib extensions. Locatelli told C&A that a standard Merlo integrated platform can also be installed on the ATC20 in around ten minutes. The company additionally offer jib mounted aerial lifts similar to the Merlo Space system for additional reach and versatility.

Combine these attachments with the lifting capacities of a true crane, add in the road speed and travel characteristics of a city crane and this unit could eat into 360 degree telehandler territory.

This is not the first crane to do this, that honour goes to Marchetti with its Trio, a few units of which were sold by Kato UK. However with its low mount boom and zero front overhang, the ATC 20 more closely matches the modern 360 degree telehandler.

Will this help crane hirers rethink this market and add telehandlers to the bottom end of their fleets? If so will telehandlers hired from crane hire companies have to go through the "straight-hire" or "contract-lift" analysis that applies to crane rentals? Once again time will tell.



This Manitou MT1033 made a perfect body for the Steel T Rex head.

Telehandler dinosaurs

Pennicott Payne Ltd used a Maniscopic MT1033HLT with the mechanical head of a Tyrannosaurus Rex, in the filming of a new BBC television programme hosted by Bill Oddie, scheduled for release in the second half of 2005.

The head consists of a fabricated steel skull with cast steel teeth, the steel neck incorporates a hydraulic cylinder for neck, head and jaw movements, the jaw must be capable of applying a bite force of 10 tonnes, plus an ability to close the mouth in seconds. A dual pressure hydraulic system in the jaw delivers the bite force at the required speed.

The majority of the programme will be computer generated. PPL's role is to create the robotic elements of Dinosaurs to enable the programmers to do bio-mechanical tests to measure the dynamic power of each dinosaur, such as the biting force and the tail swipe damage that could have been inflicted by a T.Rex.

Two of the programmes pit two dinosaurs against each other, a T-Rex versus Triceratops and a Velociraptor versus Ankylosaur.

A Twisco SLT415 was fitted with a mechanism replicating the tail of an Ankylosaur, comprising of aluminium sections fitted to a steel frame attached to the Twisco front carriage. The tail is operated by the release of a counterweight and cables, the tail swing motion can be adjusted to various speeds.



The Manitou Twisco proved ideal to support the tail of an Ankylosaur

Pennicott Payne Ltd has worked on special effects and model making for TV and film for 21 years and has worked on The Mummy, The Bourne Supremacy and Bond films.

Telehandler goes indoors

Charles Church Developments, is building 12 houses in Devonshire Mews in a preservation area of the historical city of Bath. Given the confined nature of the site it hired in a small tower crane for the material handling but once the roofs were tiled, the tower crane was no longer practical. Fenton Plant hire provided an unusual solution, a Manitou Twisco mini telehandler equipped with pallet forks. The Twisco was used to handle all of the building materials, including lifting materials to the top of a scaffold tower. It was also used with a mini-skip to remove site debris from the interior.



The Manitou Twisco proved ideal both internally and externally on a 12 house development.

Thanks to its 2.2 metre turning circle it proved ideal inside and out on the congested site, handling loads through narrow passageways and unloading materials quickly and efficiently from lorries parked in the busy street.



The ATC 20 fork head which also takes an integrated work platform



The 20 tonne ATC20 combines 360 degree telehandler capabilities with the All Terrain city crane performance



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