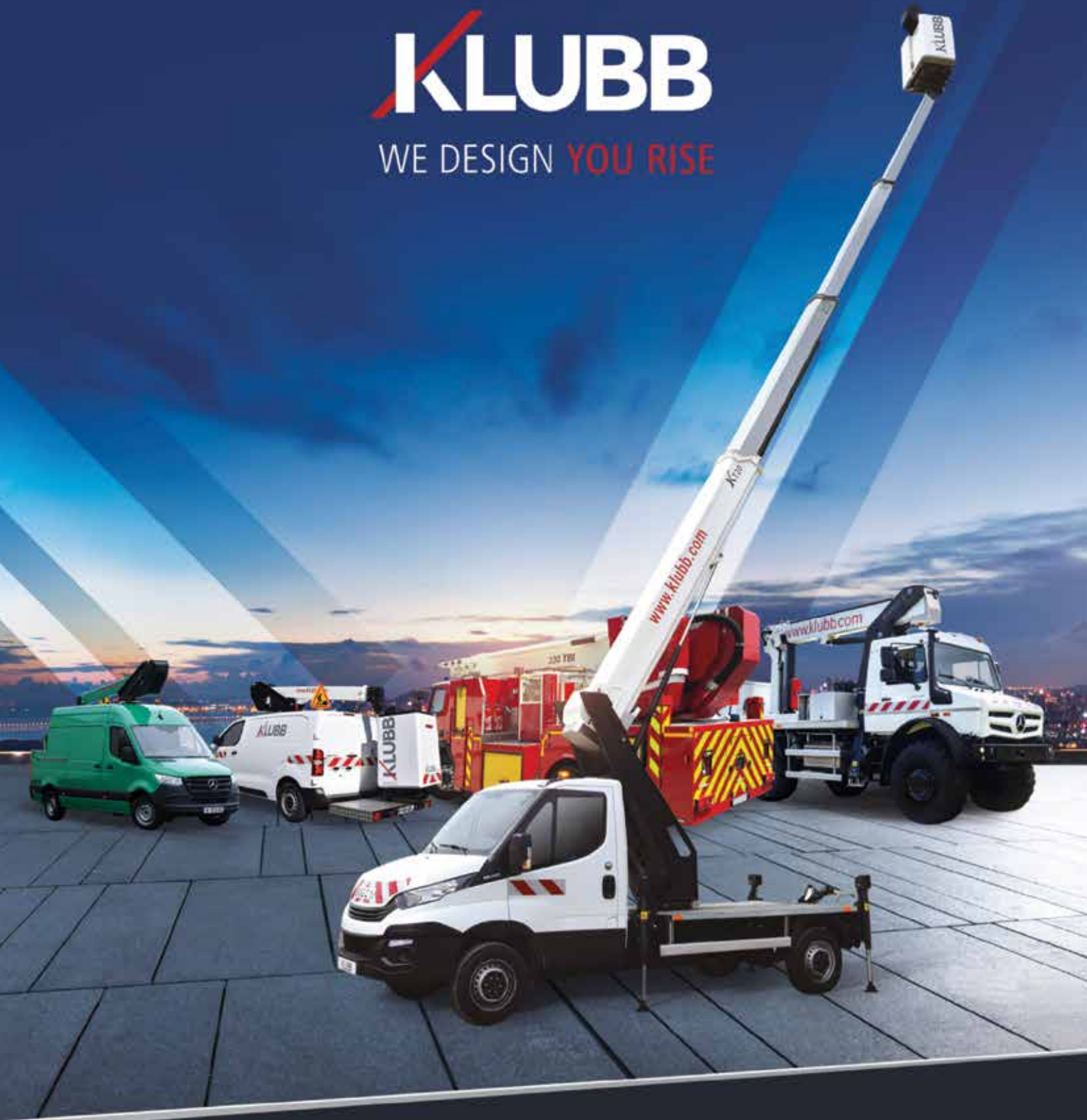


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What downturn?

Despite the countless challenges and complications caused by the Covid-19 pandemic European sales of van mounted platforms remained extremely buoyant. In fact, barring slight disruptions during the initial outbreak/ lockdown, the sale and production of van mounts reached all time highs for the major manufacturers. This was largely driven by increased demand for projects, such as the full fibre broadband and 5G roll outs, with the utility and telecommunications sectors taking full advantage of the lockdowns to carry out vital infrastructure repairs and upgrades.

High fibre

The pandemic and subsequent lockdowns have highlighted the importance of a reliable, high speed broadband network for both personal use as well as for maintaining business operations and allowing for remote working. So much so, the European Union has dedicated a fifth – €750 billion – of its recovery fund to improving digital capabilities, with the continued implementation of optical fibre and 5G likely to receive the lion's share.

A study from the FTTH Council Europe in December suggested that approximately 202 million homes will have access to high speed fibre broadband by 2026, up from 88.1 million in 2019. This will see a number of European countries experience exponential growth over the next five years with leading countries - Germany, the UK, Italy, the Netherlands and France - all forecasted to increase their connectivity by a massive

730, 548, 218, 133 and 79 percent respectively.

While the larger truck mounted platforms are being used for the installation of 5G antennas, the fibre roll out - which 5G also requires – is having a positive impact on the demand for van mounted lifts, which is largely centred around France, the UK, Germany and perhaps to a slightly lesser extent the Nordic and Benelux regions. This has resulted in manufacturers ramping up production capacities in order to keep pace with the rapidly growing demand.

New market leader?

Having gone out on its own just five years ago, Klubb is still relatively 'new' to the international scene, although owner Julien Bourrellis is a veteran of the industry having joined Versalift's French distributor JF Degrémont in the 1990s. After a slight depart from the industry he was reappointed to run the company after it was acquired by Time International in 2000. He went on to buy the business in 2002 through an



Julien Bourrellis has led Klubb to being one of the leading van mount manufacturers

MBO and established Time France as the clear market leader over the 12 years or so, sprinting past several domestic manufacturers. He then surprised everyone in 2016 when he decided that Time France would go it alone and the Klubb brand was born, moving to a brand new factory and launching an all new product range.

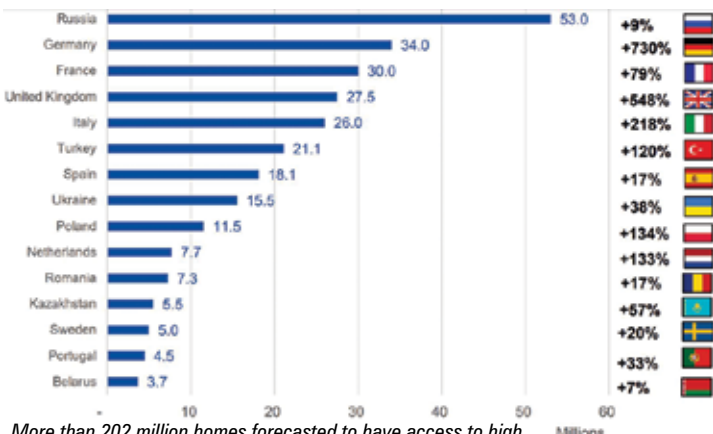
Klubb is now claiming to be the European market leader having produced more than 2,000 van mounted lifts in 2020. This is 300 percent more than the 500 Versalift van mounts it mounted and sold in its final year as Versalift's French distributor and installation partner back in 2015. Versalift may well dispute Klubb's claim but the fact is that in a few short years Klubb has become one of the two leading players.

A contributing factor to Klubb's success, other than the ability to sell outside of its home market, was a number of acquisitions along the way. These included the key assets of French manufacturers Comilev in 2017 and EGI in 2018,

while it also took on a majority stake in its UK dealer Cumberland Platforms (CPL) in 2018. Prior to its appointment - and subsequent acquisition - CPL predominantly focused on small truck and pick up mounted platforms. Its total van mount sales for the first few years were less than 100 units, with the company spending much of its time introducing the product to the market and carrying out customer demonstration and trials.

Its efforts have paid dividends however, with CPL's marketing manager, Anna Ramsden, explaining: "2020 was a period of real traction and reward from the efforts in the two years prior, taking orders for and building in excess of 240 van mounts and moving CPL to be recognised as having a tried and tested product in the UK market."

Gaining 'real traction' is perhaps an understatement with van sales between 2019 and 2020 increasing a massive 724 percent. And with January sales up 1,700 percent from the same time last year, it shows little sign of letting up with the company on track to build three times as many van mounted platforms this year. Not only was CPL able to remain fully operational and avoid any major disruptions in production during Covid-19, it also added a further 25 staff to cope with the steep rise in orders. This was in addition to agreeing a service partnership with Rivus Fleet Solutions which will now provide servicing, maintenance, repair and testing for CPL from 55 locations throughout the UK.



More than 202 million homes forecasted to have access to high speed fibre broadband by 2026



Van sales for CPL increased 724 percent in 2020



Klubb launched its Light range of van mounts last year which offer an additional 140kg payload

Let's get legless

With van and light truck chassis becoming increasingly heavier as they accommodate the latest emission standards, CPL and Klubb have focused their efforts on reducing overall weight of the lifts in order to offer increased spare payload. To this effect, the company was the first in the UK to obtain full European whole vehicle type approval on the Renault Master chassis, which is one of the lighter models on the market.

Working with parent company Klubb it also introduced the stabiliser free 'Legless' range which is proving particularly successful with the removal of stabilisers instantly saving 135kg in weight as well as offering reduced set up times. The most compact model in the seven model line-up is the 10 metre K20 on a cutaway pure electric Nissan eNV200 which offers a travel range of up to 125 miles. Other models include the 11.2 metre KL21B, 11.8 metre K26 and 12.3 metre K32, which are available on the type approved Renault Master chassis or a range of standard or cutaway 3.5 and 4.5 tonne chassis.

Murphy says: "It's taken a lot of pushing to get the market to come round to using van mounts without stabilisers, but it is finally taking hold

with the telecoms and rental sectors because ultimately its quicker. They are able to send a single guy out for the day going up and down with minimal messing around. When we asked one of our customers they said that it is now able to carry out a least two more call outs a day as a result."

The final and largest model in the Legless range is the K32 on a 4.5 tonne Renault Master cutaway chassis. Built specifically for UK telecommunication company Openreach, after it placed an order for 100 units, it offers a 12.3 metre working height, 6.9 metres of outreach and 120kg platform capacity. The company also opted for the company's hybrid 'Green Pack' conversion, which allows for platform functions to be operated without the engine being on. Not only does this provide substantial fuel savings, as well as reduced wear and tear on the engine, but it also allows for work to be carried out inside, in noise sensitive areas and in residential areas at night.

Murphy, adds: "A lot of local authorities and companies are now asking how businesses are helping to reduce their carbon footprint. By having a platform that is run using its own battery helps tick a



The legless Renault Master cutaway offers improve payload capacities



Versalift recently celebrated the production of its 1,000th VTL van mounted platform

box in becoming a 'green' thinking organisation. We've estimated an idling engine uses between half to one litre of fuel every hour, and by eliminating this unnecessary cost customers will be saving hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds every year."

Last year Klubb redesigned its van mount booms using high Elastic Limit Steel (HLE) to introduce a new 'light' KL range with weight savings up to 160kg. It also launched its KT range for the French market which will be available for the rest of Europe later this year. Available on a 3.5 tonne Iveco chassis the KT17, KT18 and KT20 offers working heights of 16.8, 17.6 and 20.6 metres respectively as well as platform capacities up to 300kg.

Strong year for Versalift

Looking to retain its position as market leader, Versalift also had a record year in terms of production numbers and sales in 2020, while getting off to a strong start in 2021. The company is also now benefiting from a strong investment surge from the owners that took over the business in 2017, the most significant being the acquisition of Germany truck mounted market leader Ruthmann (*see: p55 for more details*).

Its UK operation also encountered the busiest year in its history, receiving its largest ever intake of new orders, which has kicked its order book/backlog up 150 percent compared with 2019, in spite of the higher production levels it achieved. The company says that 2021 has already surpassed 2020 levels in terms of orders, with the

Versalift Telescopic Light (VTL) range - which combines the boom design of the VT series with the low weight of the existing ETL series - playing a major part. Since its launch during 2018, the company has produced more than 1,000 units.

Following the success of the 13.5 metre VTL135-F on a 3.5 tonne Ford Transit, the company is now offering it on Iveco Daily 35S chassis. It has also developed a new legless EVO range which will eventually replace its existing ETL range.

The first model is the VTL135 EVO which is available on either a Renault Master or Opel Movano chassis. It features a two section telescopic boom with a fixed jib to offer a working height of 13.3 metres and outreach of 7.6 metres with a platform capacity of 120kg. Features include zero tail swing, simplified EVO platform controls, and a spare payload of up to 425kg including the driver, passenger and a full tank of fuel.

The company also launched the 15.1 metre VDTL-150-F cutaway van mounted lift last year in order to target the inner city street lighting maintenance applications. Mounted on a 3.5 tonne cutaway Renault Master van chassis, it features a three section telescopic boom topped by an articulating jib to offer



Versalift's new legless VTL135 EVO van mount has been designed with the telecoms sector in mind

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The new 15.1 metre VDTL-150-F mounted on a Renault Master cut away chassis



7.7 metres of outreach with a 120kg platform capacity. It also offers up to six metres outreach with the maximum platform capacity of 230kg.

With an overall length of 5.9 metres and a stowed height of 3.3 metres, it offers 350kg of spare payload in addition to a driver, passenger and a full tank of fuel – which the company says is enough to include a bespoke racking system as well as carry additional tools and spare parts. The narrow stabiliser footprint also falls within the overall width of van's the extended wing mirrors. This, combined with zero tailswing, allows it to work comfortably from a single lane of the street without creating a traffic hazard.

In addition to the increased demand from utilities and telecom contractors, Versalift booked a substantial number of major orders

from rental companies, particularly in the UK, Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands.

France Elévateur expands

France Elévateur is slightly unusual in that it manages to combine highly specialised custom designed and built work vehicle mounted platforms with standard high volume products. Last year it benefited from the recent surge in telecom work which resulted in the company adding a second production line for its 12 metre van mounted lifts. It will now be able to produce a further 20 platforms a month to help cope with the increased demand, partly driven by longer lead times elsewhere, but also by the growing popularity of the product.

Mounted on a 3.5 tonne van chassis, the 121 FT features a one person fibreglass basket with an unrestricted capacity of 120kg and



Antony Fensom of Leeds Commercial Vehicle Hire collecting its first Aldercote VZ138 E-drive

up to seven metres outreach. It can be used with or without stabilisers while a hybrid version is also available.

The company also hired an additional 30 to 40 production electrical technicians, mechanics, hydraulic engineers and fitters staff to both man the new line and help reduce lead times. Company director Charles Goffin said: "The market is buoyant, driven as a whole by telecoms and fibre. To overcome this, we opened the new production assembly line over the lockdown period. The additional employees is part of a bigger plan for the Flavigny site, with the aim to recruit nearly 40 new people on fixed term contracts, including electrical technicians, mechanics, hydraulics and fitter finishers that will allow us to cope with a strong increase in activity while reducing delivery times."

Aldercote goes hybrid

UK vehicle mounted lift manufacturer Aldercote has been benefiting from the increasing popularity of its E-drive self-charging hybrid platform which it launched last year.

Unlike conventional systems which use a fixed output PTO mounted hydraulic pump, it is now using a permanent magnet electric motor to drive a helical gear pump to only provide the necessary oil required for the function speed selected. As a result, it claims to be able to use smaller batteries which hold up to 20 full cycles. A rapid recharge while driving to the next location is said to restore the battery pack for the next stop.

Having experienced the benefits of the E-drive on the 13.8 metre VZ138, UK based Leeds Commercial Vehicle Hire ordered a further three units, as well as the larger 16 metre VZ160, all with the E-drive technology.



A rise in telecom projects has seen France Elévateur add a second production line for its 12 metre van mounts

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270x305cm
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TRACKS



Small truck mounted developments

With the latest emissions standards leading to increasingly heavier chassis, many small truck mounted platform manufacturers have taken the opportunity to tweak, upgrade or completely overhaul their models. The following is an overview of the latest models introduced over the past 12 months.

Major milestone for CTE

Perhaps the busiest in the small truck mount sector was Italian truck and spider manufacturer CTE which is celebrating its 40th anniversary. Having started out as a sales and rental company and Italian distributor for Genie, the company built its first truck mounted platform in 1993 with the launch of the 16 metre articulated Z 166D - the predecessor to the 20 metre Z 20 which arrived in 1996. 25 years on and the company has unveiled the latest generation Zed 20 - the Zed 20.4.

Mounted on an Isuzu M21 chassis, the Zed 20.4 features the same dual sigma type riser and two section telescopic boom as previous incarnations to offer up to 8.2 metres of outreach at an up & over height of nine metres with an unrestricted platform capacity of 200kg. It can also be mounted on the longer wheelbase Iveco Daily chassis which offers the same working envelope but an improved 250kg unrestricted platform capacity.

The latest changes include the use of high strength Strenx SSAB steel which the company claims maximises performance and stability at height. Both versions feature the company's NH narrow, straight down inboard outrigger jacks, fully proportional electro-hydraulic controls, 130 degrees of platform rotation and a start/stop function for the truck engine.

The company has also introduced narrow jacking 'HN' versions on its 23 metre Zed 23.3 and 25 metre Zed models. Both are mounted on a six tonne Iveco Daily chassis, which offer an overall width of just 2.36 metres with the outriggers fully deployed.

B-Lift updates

CTE also launched a new version of its 27 metre B-Lift 27 and 23 metre B-Lift 23 HV telescopic models. The B-Lift 27.2 has a five section boom with up to 15.5 metres of outreach with 80kg capacity, while the maximum platform capacity of 250kg is available at



CTE celebrated its 40th anniversary with the introduction of its latest generation Zed 20.4

up to 11 metres. It also features the company's new S3 EVO Smart Stability System outrigger set up which manages the platform's key working parameters, providing a full readout of the working range and configuration on the platform control panel, including actual working height, outreach and platform load along with possible load and outreach depending on the stepless position of the outriggers.

Based on the company's B-Lift 230 PRO, the B-Lift 23 features a four section boom with a maximum outreach of 13 metres, an unrestricted platform capacity of 100kg and a maximum platform capacity is 300kg at up to 9.5 metres outreach. Mounted on a 3.5 tonne chassis, it features the standard S3 Smart Stability System.

GSR updates

Fellow Italian manufacturer GSR has updated its 3.5 tonne truck mounted platforms which include the 22 metre B220TJ and 23 metre B230T4 telescopics. The B220TJ features a four section boom with a 2.75 metre articulated jib to offer up to 14 metres of outreach with 80kg, or 10.6 metres with the

maximum 250kg platform capacity. The B230T4 has a slightly longer four section boom, but without a jib, for a working height of 22.8 metres and up to 14.4 metres outreach with 80kg, or 10 metres with 250kg. Both machines are mounted on the latest Mercedes Sprinter chassis, with four beam and jack outriggers with automatic monitoring and working envelope adjustment.

The two machines join the new 20 metre B200T4 which was updated earlier in the year after the production of the Nissan Cabstar chassis came to an end. Mounted on slightly shorter Iveco chassis, the B200T4 offers up to 10.85 metres of outreach with 80kg or 7.5 metres with two people/250kg. The Mercedes Sprinter chassis is slightly longer at just over seven metres but offers an outreach of up to 14 metres with one person, or 9.5 metres with 250kg.

Multi Multitels

At the beginning of the year Multitel Pagliero launched the first model in its new MJ range with its 25 metre MJE 250 truck mounted lift. Available on either an Iveco Daily 35S14H, Mercedes Sprinter 311-



The newly updated B220TJ and B230T4 from GSR



Multitel's latest addition to its range of truck mounted platforms is its MJE 250

314 or Isuzu M21 chassis - all with Euro 6 D low emission engines - it features a five section telescopic aluminium boom, topped by an articulating jib. Maximum platform capacity is 250kg, while maximum outreach is 14 metres over the side and 17 metres over the rear, both with 100kg in the platform.

The automatic set up and levelling system comprises four equal beam and jack outriggers, with completely variable set up and monitoring in the form of the updated MUSA (Multitel-Self-Adapting outreach) X system which monitors the actual outrigger position, weight in the platform, boom configuration and chassis inclination up to three degrees to set the working envelope.

The boom is made from high resistance aluminium alloys in a single extrusion without welds, with an all aluminium alloy sub-frame. Single button automatic outrigger set up and automatic return to transport position are standard. A full telematics suite is also available.

The company also introduced the 23 metre MTE 230 straight telescopic truck mount on the same chassis. Its new four section aluminium boom offers up to 16 metres of outreach over the rear, or nine metres over the side, with a platform capacity of 100kg in straight down outrigger set up. Its side outreach is increased to almost 14 metres with fully deployed outriggers, while maximum capacity



France Elévateur has sold more than 2,000 Topy 11s since its launch back in 1998

is also increased to 300kg. Features include hydraulic controls, one touch outrigger levelling and automatic return home functions.

Update for Topy 11

France Elévateur launched an updated version of its 11 metre Topy 11 straight telescopic truck mounted platform, having sold more than 2,000 units since it was launched in 1998. The latest version of the Topy 11 features a two section telescopic boom to offer six metres of outreach and an unrestricted platform capacity of 120kg and the ability to operate on side slopes of up to five degrees without the need for outriggers or stabilisers.

Other changes include improved

access to the fibreglass bucket, the addition of a storage box on the chassis and redesigned upper and lower controls. Mounted on a Ford Transit Trend 130, it offers an overall length of 5.9 metres and an overall height of 2.7 metres as well as 650kg of available payload and a towing capacity of two tonnes. Options include an insulated boom and platform, electric emergency pump, auxiliary battery, drop down sides and additional toolboxes on the truck bed.

Smart Plus from Palfinger

Palfinger has updated its Smart line of 3.5 tonne Italian built articulated and telescopic truck mounted platforms to Smart Plus. The new

Solo-Gyps Accessory
- 50% on installation time per panel and manpower

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Palfinger has upgraded its Smart range of Italian built truck mounts to Smart Plus

five model line up includes the articulated 20 metre P 200 AXE-E Smart Plus, the 22 metre P 220 AXE-E Smart Plus, the 24 metre P 240 AXE-E Smart Plus models, along with the 17 metre P 170 TXE-E Smart Plus and the 20 metre P 200 TXE-E Smart Plus telescopic models.

The Plus package includes multifunctional electric controls, improved platform entry, home and anti-collision functions and variable outrigger set up - fully extended, extended on one side and inboard/straight down - all with automatic monitoring and working envelope selection. The articulated models

have also been mounted on a shorter 3.45 metre wheelbase Iveco chassis, while all structural fabrications have a cathodic electrodeposition coating with Palfinger's patented KTL system. The P 200 A-R Smart and the P 240 AE Smart are also included in the new line up however they only feature some of the upgrades.

VTX240 truck mount

Versalift introduced the third generation 24.2 metre VTX240 truck mounted platform – the VTX240 G3 – which offers the same performance as its predecessor. Its twin three section telescopic booms offer a maximum outreach of 12.5 metres at an up & over height of 11.5 metres and a maximum platform capacity of 220kg. New features on the G3 include a digital display in the cab to assist with set-up, longer outrigger jacks allowing it to level on slopes of up to six degrees, and changes to the control valves to aid the emergency descent operation.

New platform from Ascendant

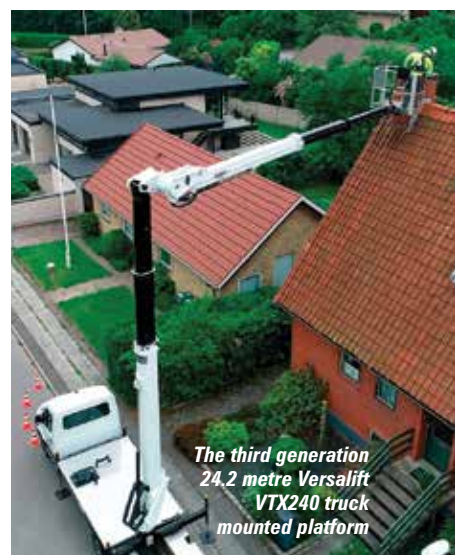
UK based Ascendant Access is back in business with the new 20 metre A20-15TJ truck mounted platform



Ascendant Access is back with its new 20 metre A20-15TJ truck mounted platform

on a 3.5 tonne Iveco chassis. The new model features a three section telescopic boom, topped by a 2.2 metre articulating jib. Maximum outreach is 15.1 metres with a platform capacity of 120kg, while it offers a maximum platform capacity of 230kg at an outreach of 13 metres.

All four outriggers are beam and jack, with the rear being regular out and down, while the front ones extend out, forwards and down. The unit can work with outriggers retracted, partly extended or fully extended on one or both sides. Overall length is just under 7.9 metres, with an overall height of 3.1 metres.



The third generation 24.2 metre Versalift VTX240 truck mounted platform



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