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# C&a Top 20

After weeks of painful scouring and pulling the teeth of the nation's top crane and powered access hire companies, C&A presents the 2004 Top 20 UK hire company survey. And, as an added extra this year, the 2004 edition also marks the first ever listing of the UK's Top 10 telehandler hire firms.

## Cranes

The Top 20 listings take on a new shape this year, with several of last year's entries falling outside the 2004 league tables. Of the 17 UK crane hire companies retaining their place in this year's survey, a significant 29 percent reduced their fleets by an average of 4.5 percent.

The remaining 71 percent showed an average growth in their fleets of 17.5 percent, from 830 units to 975 units combined. Showing the largest investment in new equipment was Hewden Crane Hire whose fleet grew by nearly 100 units. And, despite a reduced fleet size of 19 cranes, Ainscough once again showed the largest investment total at £10.8 million and remains the country's largest independent crane hirer with a fleet of 505 mobile cranes.

Ainscough has though, for the first time in recent years, had its fleet more or less equalled, if not exceeded, by the recently established crane rental consortium, National Crane Group, who, following in the footsteps of the Access Link, now operates a fleet in excess of 500 units across the UK.

Trailing second to Ainscough in the investment tables is a company that takes part in the C&A Top 20 this year after requesting its absence from last year's survey. Following a total investment sum of £7.4 million over the past 12 months, Baldwins Crane Hire makes its mark on the 2004 tables at the halfway stage with a fleet of 60 mobile cranes. It is also one of only just a few UK crane hirers, including Sarens, Ainscough Crane Hire and McNally's Crane Hire of Ireland, offering a lifting capacity up to 1000 tonnes.

Other new entries to this year's survey include James Jack Lifting, Terranova, Kier Plant and Sarens UK, leaving just two companies that are pushed out of the Top 20 this year, Emerson Crane Hire and Crane Hire (Dublin).

### C&A TOP 20: MOBILE CRANE FLEETS

Company	Units (mobiles)	Units (crawlers)	total
Ainscough Crane Hire	504	1	505
National Crane Group	-	-	500+
Hewden Crane Hire	365	0	365
Weldex	0	170	170
AGD Equipment	0	110	110
Quinto Crane & Plant	85	0	85
Marsh Plant	79	0	79
Bronzeshield Lifting	65	0	65
King Lifting	64	0	64
Sparrow Crane Hire	43	20	63
Select Mobile Cranes	25	35	60
Baldwins Crane Hire	56	4	60
William O'Brien	50	5	55
Emsley Crane Hire	52	0	52
James Jack Lifting	48	-	48
NRC Plant	0	48	48
BPH Equipment	0	45	45
Terranova	45	0	45
Kier Plant	22	20	42
Mammoet UK	40	0	40
Nationwide Crane Hire	38	0	38
Bryn Thomas Crane Hire	37	0	37
McNally's Crane Hire	35	1	36
Sarens UK	10	25	35

\* It is believed that JKB Rental Services currently operates around 50 mobile cranes, but the exact information was unavailable at the time of going to press. Source: The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5

### TOP 20: CRANE BOOMS

Company	Total boom length (metres)
Ainscough Crane Hire	18,740
Hewden Crane Hire	16,936
Weldex	14,994
Sarens UK	4,500
Select Mobile Cranes	3,700
Emsley Crane Hire	3,600
Marsh Plant Hire	3,420
AGD Equipment	3,160
Baldwins Crane Hire	3,157
NRC Plant	3,109
King Lifting	2,966
Bronzeshield Lifting	2,990
Sparrow Crane Hire	2,470
Quinto Crane & Plant	2,372
McNally's Crane Hire	2,120
Kier Plant	2,016
BPH Equipment	1,849
Terranova	1,800
James Jack Lifting	1,799
Nationwide Crane services	1,643

Source: The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5

### GREATEST CAPACITY CRANES: Mobile/crawlers

Company	Crane Model	Capacity (t)
Sarens UK	Demag PC 9600	2000
National Crane Group	Liebherr LTM 11000D	1000
Baldwins Crane Hire	Liebherr LTM 11000D	1000
Ainscough Crane Hire	Liebherr LTM 11000D	1000
McNally's Crane Hire	Demag TC 3300	1000*
Quigley Crane Hire (UK)	Demag AC700	800
Weldex	Demag CC 2800	600
James Jack Lifting	Grove GMK7550	550
Crane Hire	Demag AC1600	500
Nationwide Crane Services	Liebherr LTM 1500	500
Crane Hire	Demag AC 1600	500
Kavanagh Crane Hire	Demag AC500-1	500
Bryn Thomas Crane Hire	Grove GMK 7450	450
William O'Brien	LTM 400	400
NMT Crane Hire	Demag AC350	350
Terranova	Demag AC350-1	350
Hewden Crane Hire	Demag AC 300	300
Gabriel O'Brien Crane Hire	Demag AC300	300
Bronzeshield Lifting	Liebherr LTM 1300/1	300
Mammoet UK	Liebherr TLM 1300	300

\* Manufacturers rated capacity 500 tonnes  
Source: The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5

### INVESTMENT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS: CRANES

Company	Investment in last 12 months (£m)	No of depots	No of employees
Ainscough Crane Hire	10.8	22	972
Baldwins Crane Hire	7.4	6	94
Hewden Crane Hire	7.0	15	400
Select Mobile Cranes	6.0	-	-
Nationwide Crane Services	5.6	1	61
Crane Hire	4.5	1	44
Bryn Thomas Crane Hire	4.0	3	76
Kavanagh Crane Hire	3.5	3	45
Sarens UK	3.5	1	65
James Jack Lifting	3.2	6	90
Mammoet UK	3.0	2	60
King Lifting	2.8	7	131
Emsley Crane Hire	2.8	2	78
NMT Crane Hire	2.7	2	35
City Lifting	2.0	1	52
AGD Equipment	2.0	3	55
Sparrow Crane Hire	2.0	4	74
Marsh Plant Hire	1.8	7	160
NRC Plant	1.8	2	55
Bob Francis Crane Hire	1.3	4	46
Davies Crane Hire	1.3	2	30

Source: The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5

### Top 5 TOWER CRANES FLEETS

Company	Units	Biggest tower	Capacity (t)
Select Plant Hire	337	Comedil CTT561-32	32
Falcon Crane Hire	195	Jaso J300	12
HTC Plant Tower Cranes	170	Wolff 60140B	45
Airtek Cranes	103	Arcomet A45B	8
Kier Plant	101	Potain MD 345B L12	12

Source: The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5

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There's no change at the top of the access hire company table this year, as Nationwide once again claims the top spot with a fleet of 6,069 powered units. Even the inclusion of the access rental consortium, Access Link, with its 11 company members and a combined fleet of 3,560 units, failed to make a mark on Nationwide. The Link did, however, manage to exceed Hewden Instant Access' fleet of 2,216 units, an increase of several hundred on last year, helping it to maintain the number two placement in the 2004 chart.

Five new entries rank in the survey this year, including HSS Lift & Shift, Easi Uplifts, Hi Reach, Charles Wilson and Higher Platforms, while AMP Access and EPL Access fail to retain their 2003 Top 20 positions.

Showing the biggest growth over the past 12 months though is clearly The Platform Company. Partly due to its acquisition of the Meek Group in late 2003, and the purchase of a significant number of units from the ever-diminishing Independent Access, the company has injected around 1,000 platforms into its fleet during the last year giving it a present fleet of around 2,000 units.

Also well worthy of a mention is AFI, which reported a fleet growth of 70 percent from 950 to 1,600 units. AFI moves up six places from last year to take the number four spot.

Overall, 60 percent of the UK's leading access hire companies forming this year's Top 20 reduced their fleet sizes by an average of 13.5 percent, including the top four from last year, which equates to a reduction of almost 2,000 platforms to a figure of 12,658.

Of the remaining 40 percent who managed to increase the size of their fleets, mostly due to acquisitions, an average increase of 23 percent equates to an injection of over 1,500 units onto the UK market during the last 12 months, amounting to 7,873 units.

## C&A TOP 20: ACCESS FLEETS

Company	Booms	Scissors	Trailers	Truck Mounts	Total
Nationwide Access	2,693	3,174	15	187	6,069
Access Link	1,250	2,130	75	82	3,560
Hewden Instant Access	1,049	1,167	0	0	2,216
The Platform Company	755	1,221	10	40	2,026
AFI	570	1,022	8	0	1,600
A-Plant	653	851	32	0	1,536
HSS Lift and Shift	1,070 (combined)		200	(other - 250)	1,520
Independent Access	559	1,291	0	0	1,400
Loxam	-	-	-	-	1,300
EasiUplifts	725	400	12	15	1,152
Height for Hire	-	-	-	-	1,150
Panther Platforms	330	495	13	55	893
Universal	-	-	-	-	850*
UK Platforms	-	-	-	-	850
All Access Platforms	367	344	34	38	783
SGB	-	-	-	-	750
Hi-Reach	220	370	25	-	615
Charles Wilson	205	310	10	-	525
Higher Platforms	185	235	6	2	428
GT Access	165	245	15	0	425
Aerial Platform Hire	150	250	0	0	400

\*In UK - a further 450 units in Spain. \*\* It is believed that Ireland-based access hire company, GPT, currently operates around 350 units, but the exact information was unavailable at the time of going to press.

## ACCESS PLATFORM HEIGHT

Company	Total platform height (metres)
Nationwide Access	73,135
Access Link	46,280
The Platform Company	23,915
Hewden Instant Access	22,160
A-Plant	21,304
AFI	20,800
Loxam	19,513
Height for Hire	16,790
Independent	15,000
All Access Platforms	14,372
EasiUplifts	13,800
Panther Platforms	12,669
Universal	12,556
UK Platforms	12,410
HSS Lift and Shift	11,200
Hi-Reach	9,000
SGB	6,404
EPL Access	5,968
Aerial Platform Hire	5,700
Charles Wilson	4,981
Higher Platforms	4,653

Source: The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5

## TALLEST SINGLE PLATFORM

Company	Model	Height (metres)
Nationwide Access	Bronto T72B	72.0
Loxam	Bronto T72B	72.0
All Access Platforms	Bronto 562 MD	62.0
Universal	Bronto 562 MDT	62.0
Facelift	Bronto S62 MDT	62.0
The Platform Company	Oil & Steel Eagle 5634	56.0
EasiUplifts	Bronto S40 MDT	50.0
Panther Platforms	Oil & Steel Eagle 4430	44.0
Access Link	Bronto	44.0
EPL Access	Bronto 40 2T1	42.0
Aerial Platform Hire	JLG 1350	42.0
Independent	JLG 1350 SJP	41.15
Hewden Instant Access	JLG 1350 SJP	41.15
Hi-Reach	JLG 1350 SJP	41.15
The Platform Company	JLG 1350SJP	41.15
Rapid Access Platforms	Multitel 40TJ	40.0
Height for Hire	Grove 131xt	39.6
Higher Platforms	Genie S125	38.1
Charles Wilson	Genie S125	38.1
SkyLift Hire	Genie S125	38.1
AMP Access	Bronto	34.0
Max Access	Falck Schmidt TSB 34	34.0

Source: The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5



## INVESTMENT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS: ACCESS

Company	Investment in last 12 months (£m)	No of depots	No of employees
Access Link	12.0	25	252
All Access Platforms	6.3	6	41
The Platform Company	6.0	8	140
Hewden Instant Access	6.0	16	180
Panther Platforms	2.8	4	65
Charles Wilson	2.75	11	205
Hi-Reach	2.6	5	28
Southern	2.5	2	38
Cranes & Access			
SkyLift Hire	2.04	3	18
Aerial Platform Hire	2.0	3	30
Higher Platforms	1.94	4	30
EPL Access	1.5	8	128
AMP Access	1.4	3	31
A-Plant Powered Access	1.4	13	94
Nationwide Access	1.1	55	653
HSS Lift and Shift	1.0	90	330
GT Access	1.0	4	31
Rapid Access Platforms	1.0	1	31
North East Access	0.3	1	7
Northern Access	0.1	1	5
EasiUplifts	*	5	105
AFI	*	12	97
Skyhigh Access	*	1	12
Height for Hire	*	4	-
Independent	*	8	-
Loxam	*	-	-
Facelift	*	6	80
Max Access	*	-	-
UK Platforms	*	12	-
Universal	*	6 (UK/Spain)	-

\* Investment figure undisclosed

Source: The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5



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## Top 10

### Telehandler fleets

Heading the first ever Top 10 UK telehandler hire company listing is Hewdens, which, with a telehandler fleet of a massive 1,700 units, pips UK Forks to the post, which slots into second place with 1,100 units. Hewdens investment in new telehandler equipment over the last 12 months also tops the investment chart at £12.7 million.

#### TOP 10 TELEHANDLER FLEETS

Company	Units	Greatest lift height unit (m)	(m)
Hewden Plant Hire	1,700	Caterpillar 580B	17
UK Forks	1,100	Dieci Pegasus	21
A-Plant	790	JCB 540 170	17
GE Capital	750	JCB 540 170	17
Hessle Fork Trucks	450	Manitou MRT 2540	25
Fork rent	300	Manitou MRT 2150	21
Hawk Plant	200	Terex Girolift 3518	18
Jarvie Plant	150	Manitou MRT 2150	21
Hydrex	140	Manitou MHT 1740	17
Kier Plant	120	JCB 540-170	17

Source: The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5

#### INVESTMENT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS: TELEHANDLERS

Company	Investment in last 12 months (£m)	No of depots	No of employees
Hewden Plant Hire	12.7	65	1,350
UK Forks	6.0	6	100
Hessle Fork Trucks	3.0	3	65
A-Plant	2.0	223	2,200
Hawk Plant	2.0	4	400
Hydrex	1.25	9	350
Kier Plant	1.0	7	176
Fork Rent	-	1	20
Jarvie Plant	-	5	320
GE Capital	-	26	300

C&A would like to thank all companies that took part in this year's survey. Where we have estimated a figure it appears in *Italics*. All other information is as provided by the participating company. If you feel that your company should have appeared,

please contact the Editor on fax 01273 88 44 22 or e-mail [info@vertikal.net](mailto:info@vertikal.net). Last year's results, and those of our German sister magazine *Kran & Bühne*, can be found at [www.Vertikal.net](http://www.Vertikal.net).





## National Agreements and Associations

The emergence of national groupings or agreements between local crane and access hirers in the UK is a relatively new phenomenon, consisting principally of local family-owned concerns, who do not wish, or believe, in the benefits of going national, yet want to offer their customers a consistent national service agreement and "one stop shop". The Access Link is now well established, while the National Crane Group is very much a recent innovation, although to some extent it formalises co-operation agreements that have long been a way of life between local companies, particularly in the crane hire field. The ultimate aim is to combine personal local service with national coverage.

### National Crane Group

The recent formation of the NCG has given UK local customers access to more than 500 mobile cranes nationwide, including all terrain cranes from 7 to 1000 tonnes capacity, city class cranes from 10 to 70 tonnes, truck-mounted cranes of all sizes and various capacity crawler cranes. The total fleet is operated through the group's 28 member companies, which together, will cover the seven main UK regions, comprising Scotland, Wales, Midlands, North West, North East, South West and the South East of England. *The full story can be viewed in the 'News' section of this issue on page 7.*

#### NATIONAL CRANE GROUP

Fleet size	Mobiles/Crawlers 500+
Total boom length (m)	24,450
Largest capacity crane (t)	1000 tonnes
No of depots	28 (minimum)
Company members	Seven main members; James Jack Lifting, John Sutch Crane Hire, Mammoet UK, Bob Francis Crane Hire, NMT Crane Hire, McSalvors (Plant Hire), Terranova Lifting, plus 21 sub-members.

Source: *The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5*

### Access Link

In 2000, a group of regional, independent access rental companies sat down to confront what they described at the time as the 'tightening effects of multi-national access rental companies'. The result was the creation of Access Link.

"Access Link was set up in response to a trend by the bigger national hirers in setting up national and exclusive deals with the larger users of MEWPS" explains Malcolm Bowers, sales and marketing director at AFI. "It also serves as an effective talk shop providing pooled information for its smaller members and gives manufacturers the opportunity to demonstrate their products to what is now the second largest access fleet manager in the UK."

Four years on, the conglomerate comprises 11 member companies with substantial geographical coverage throughout the UK and Ireland, and a combined fleet of over 3,500 booms, scissors, trailer- and truck-mounted platforms.

#### ACCESS LINK

Fleet size	-	booms	1,250
	-	scissors	2,130
	-	trailer mounts	75
	-	truck mounts	82
	-	other	23
	-	total	3,560
Total platform height (m)		46,280	
Tallest single platform (m)		Bronto 44 m	
Investment in last 12 months		12 (£m)	
Depots		25	
Company members		AJ Access; Central Access; GT Access; Highway Plant (Ireland); Kimberly Access; Midland Access; North East Access; Panther Platforms; Plant Finder; Sky-High Access; Uplift Power Platforms.	

Source: *The 2004 C&A Top 20, Cranes & Access Vol 6.5*



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