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Increased crane revenues at Manitowoc

MANITOWOC HAS reported a full-year sales increase of 17 per cent to US\$1.6 billion (UK£0.87 billion) for 2003, compared with a figure of \$1.4 billion (UK£0.76 billion) reported for the corresponding period of 2002. Much of the increase reflects the full year impact of the company's acquisitions in the crane sector, as revenues without the Grove acquisition would have been down by 11 per cent.

Focusing on the firm's crane business, sales for the fourth quarter of 2003 were up 16 per cent to \$255 million (UK£138 million), compared with the same period of 2002, despite sales of its US-built crawler cranes being cited as slow, particularly in North America. Crane revenues for the full year were up 44 per cent to \$1,023 million (UK£533.5 million), with over 70 per cent of the total coming from international markets. Asia and certain parts of Europe were quoted as the strongest performers.

Manitowoc said that it has completed the integration of its internal crane operations, which generated more than \$30 million (UK£16.23 million) in actual "synergy" cost savings in 2003, which it also claimed will improve to \$36 million (UK£19.48 million) in 2004.

The recent closure of the Liftflux plant in Germany resulted in an \$8 million (UK£4.33 million) write-off in the fourth quarter of 2003. It is understood that most of the employees at the plant have departed, but several interested parties are looking at the possible purchase of the discontinued aerial work platform assets, although no mention of this has been made by the company.

"While we expect weak demand for US crawler cranes to continue well into 2004, we are beginning to see other signs of an upturn in the economy," said Terry D Growcock, Manitowoc's chairman and chief executive officer. "Although the landscape remains very competitive, international demand for crawler, tower, and mobile telescopic cranes is improving."

Manitowoc said that it expects to see revenues grow by seven to eight per cent in 2004, in a market expected to be "flat to slightly up". The company also said that it is planning to launch 16 new crane products in 2004 and that a key new model will be the Grove GMK 3055 three-axle 55 tonne all terrain crane. ■

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UK Fassi first for Flegg

Flegg Transport of Aylesbury in the UK has taken delivery of the UK's first 100 tonne/metre capacity Fassi F1000XP knuckle boom crane. The unit

is rear-mounted onto a specially extended 15.9 metre Broshuis triple-axle all-steer low loader, which provides a maximum payload of 28 tonnes.

Flegg Transport's owner, Jayson Flegg said that the unit has not only eliminated the cost and need for a separate mobile crane, but it has also cut the time it normally takes to install heavy equipment by up to 50 per cent. "We chose this one not just because of its maximum rating," he said, "but also because it will lift 26 tonnes at 3.8 metres radius and 22 tonnes at 5.2 metres." ■

Kobe Steel to form Kobelco Cranes



JAPAN-BASED KOBE Steel and its subsidiary, Kobelco Construction Machinery have announced plans to turn the crane operation of the latter company into a 100 per cent owned subsidiary of Kobe Steel, leaving Kobelco Construction Machinery to concentrate on its core business of excavator production. The new company, to be called Kobelco Cranes Co Ltd and established on April 1 this year will operate as an independent business, concentrating on the manufacturing and sales of crawler cranes, rough terrain cranes and other civil engineering machines.

Kobelco Cranes will be capitalised at 12 billion yen (UK£0.06 billion) and employ 270 people at its Tokyo headquarters. Takashi Ishida (pictured), currently president and representative director of Kobelco Construction Machinery will take on the presidency of Kobelco Cranes. ■



MORE THAN 60 residents were evacuated from their homes when the jib of a Wolff tower crane partially collapsed on a Dublin construction site last month. The site was unoccupied at the time so nobody was injured during the incident, but residents were removed from surrounding homes and a nearby railway line was closed for two hours as a safety precaution.

It is believed that high winds caused the tower crane's jib to bend and snap, almost completely crushing the operator's cab as it fell towards the ground. A single pendant connected to the tower's main mast and jib remained in tact, which prevented the entire jib length from crashing down onto the job-site. A UK representative for Wolff visiting the site after the incident stressed that no predictions to the cause of collapse would be made until a full inspection had been carried out.

Unconfirmed reports, however, claimed that the crane's slew brake had either been left on, or had somehow applied itself or jammed, thus preventing free slew and subjecting the jib to extreme side winds. The investigation is pending. (Picture courtesy of Ed Fahey). ■



Healy takes first Case

CIVIL ENGINEERING and house building company, Healy Construction, has taken delivery of the UK's first Case TX140 telescopic handler from Case dealer for the Midlands and North of England, Saville Tractors.

The unit will be used in a general purpose role working on Healey's building sites and for applications for handling materials up to heights of 14 metres. Dominic Healey, managing director of Healey Construction said: "We are pleased with this new purchase as it is ideal for our house building programme and is already proving a valuable asset."

Case launched its new telehandler range, designed specifically for the construction sector, last November and now comprises three models, the 13 metre TX 130, the 14 metre TX 140 and the 17 metre TX 170. Mike Salmon (*right in pic*) hands over the TX140 to Healy Construction managing director Dominic Healey. ■

JCB to start engine production

JCB HAS purchased an 18,000 square metre warehouse in South Derbyshire in the UK to accommodate the production of its own brand of engines. The first JCB unit is expected to roll off the assembly line by October 1 this year, with output 'progressively' increasing in 2005.

The new business will trade as JCB Power Systems Ltd and will eventually produce diesel engines for around 70 per cent of the company's off-road machines, including all JCB telehandlers. The company currently buys most of its engines, around 40,000 units a year, from Peterborough-based Perkins, which is owned by larger rival firm Caterpillar, from which it will continue to source 1, 1.5 and 2-litre engines for the foreseeable future.

JCB chief executive John Patterson said that the engines would initially be made solely for JCB machines, and that the investment so far, which includes development work already carried out, works out at between £75 and £80 million.

Also commenting on the move, Sir Anthony Bamford, JCB chairman and managing director said: "The JCB engine will give higher performance than existing engines and also comply with future worldwide emission requirements. When manufactured, the engine will enable JCB to supply the best possible power train package for its customers." ■

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Revenue increase at Terex

TEREX CORPORATION has posted a 39 per cent revenue increase with its full-year 2003 results, the first with the Demag and Genie acquisitions under its belt. It also posted a net loss for the year of US\$25 million (UK£13.71 million), compared with a loss of \$132 million (UK£72.37 million) reported in 2002.

Revenues of around \$1 billion (UK£0.55 billion) means that the company is right on the heels of market leadership in the crane business and that it is now the largest producer of aerial lifts in terms of revenue.

Total group sales for the full-year were \$3.9 billion (UK£2.14 billion), a rise of 39 per cent from \$2.8 billion (UK£1.54 billion) reported the previous year. Much of the increase was attributed to the acquisitions of Demag and Genie during 2002, as revenues without the acquisitions rose by just 3 per cent to \$2.4 billion (UK£1.32 billion). Crane sales for the full year were up 45 per cent to just over \$1 billion (UK£0.55 billion), reflecting the full year effect of the Demag acquisition.

The outlook for the crane division in revenue terms is flat, compared with other parts of the business. Terex stated that it expects to see sales drop to between \$850 million (UK£466 million) and \$950 million (UK£521 million) with operating profits for the full year firming to four to five per cent.

"I am pleased with the growing strength of the Terex Crane franchise," said Steve Filipov, president of Terex Cranes. "Demag closed December with a record month – the highest revenues ever achieved in its history. Our all-terrain crane product line continued to gain market share in the largest market, Western Europe. However, the crawler crane product line continues to be challenging due to the difficult North American market. We closed the Peiner production facility in Trier, Germany and have started production of Peiner Tower Cranes in our Demag facility in Zweibrücken, Germany. We expect to see the financial benefits of this move in 2004." ■

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Telehandler fatality on Ireland jobsite

IRELAND'S HEALTH & Safety Authority (HSA) has launched an investigation into the death of a worker at the ESB power-plant construction site in Shannonbridge, County Offaly, Ireland. The ESB and Foster Wheeler, the main contractor, are participating in the investigation.

The man in his late 30s was working on the construction of the power plant, which is located in the west of the county, when he was involved in an accident involving "heavy-lifting equipment".

It is believed that the man was killed after getting out of a telescopic handler that he had just parked beside a trench on the site. After the man had exited the machine, it is said to have subsequently subsided into the trench, crushing its operator. The man was employed by a firm of sub-contractors working on part of the power-plant, which is being built under Turkish contractors Gamma. ■

Record revenue high for Palfinger

AUSTRIAN KNUCKLE-BOOM crane producer Palfinger has reported record revenue levels with the announcement of its preliminary 2003 earnings.

Despite what Palfinger says were "difficult economic conditions" during 2003, the company has reported a 9 per cent increase in revenues for the period, amounting to €334 million (UK£230.4 million), compared with €306.5 million (UK£211.28 million) in 2002. The jump in revenues for the 2003 period, however, follows a significant drop in the company's sales during 2002 from a figure of €332.1 million (UK£228.93 million) reported in 2001.

Palfinger said that the main factors influencing last year's earnings were good results from its Epsilon crane division and the positive effects of its Rapid Process (RAP) delivery programme for its knuckle boom crane division.

The main negative factor, according to Palfinger, was "unsatisfactory productivity" from its Guima hook loader division, which the company acquired back in 1999 as part of its purchase of Financiere Ghiretti SA. If economic conditions remain stable, Palfinger expects to further reduce its EBIT in 2004, while sustainable cost cuts are expected with the completion of its Location Optimization Program. The company said that it will also be expanding its service business and restructuring the Guima division in the coming months. ■



Dutch dozen for Kobelco

KOBELCO CRANES Europe has secured orders for 12 of its 250 tonne CKE2500 crawler cranes. All 12 units have been sold to Dutch joint-ventures that involve Hovago, the rental company owned and operated by Doron Livnat and the Baris family.

The first ten units have been sold to P van Adrighem and Hovago for delivery into the European market. The units will be jointly owned by the two companies, but the exact nature of the joint-venture has not been revealed. The units are scheduled for delivery this month.

The two remaining units have been sold to Mammoet-Hovago in The Netherlands and are destined for work in China. Both units are also scheduled for delivery this month.

Kobelco claims to have sold over 140 of its CKE2000 and 2500, 200 and 250 tonne class crawler cranes since their launch back in 2001. The CKE2500 can operate with up to 90 metres of boom and was designed specifically for the European market with fast set-up and dismantle times and easy transportation configurations. The company says, however, that the units have proved a major success in China, where Kobelco claims to hold an 80 per cent market share in the crawler sector. ■

UpRight reports 18 per cent revenue rise

UPRIGHT INTERNATIONAL Manufacturing Ltd, the main trading company of the UpRight Group has announced that revenues for the first six months of the fiscal year to the end of December 2003 were up 18 per cent, compared with the same period of last year.

The company has seen increased sales across all product ranges, including aluminium towers. UpRight's European plant saw a significant rise in electric scissor lift production, while sales of its US-built boom lifts reached their highest levels for over a year.

John Coughlan, president of UpRight commented: "Since December, every area of the UpRight business has been operating profitably, including North America, Europe, Asia, Japan and South America. We are seeing the best results since 2000".

"In the US, we have remodelled the sales organisation and I believe that we have a more focused approach with a lean and aggressive team in place," he continued.

When asked about the future of the company's Madera plant, Coughlan said that the company has a clear strategy and is building more booms there now than at any point during the last 12 months.

"The US business is now profitable," said Coughlan. "Some of the new products at Bauma, such as a new 40 ft plus boom lift, have been designed in the US and will be built there. You will also see some major changes and improvements to our customer support and parts services in the weeks and months ahead and, while it might seem that we have been quiet over the past few months, I can tell you we have been very busy." ■

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Holland Lift appoints UK distributor

HOLLAND LIFT, The Netherlands-based producer of heavy-duty scissor lift work platforms has appointed Russon Access as its new UK and Ireland distributor, effective from March 1, 2004.

Russon Access of Brierley Hill in the West Midlands was previously the UK distributor for the Liftlux, more recently trading as Manlift, range of heavy-duty scissors. Late last year, however, Liftlux's owners Manitowoc announced that it was ceasing production of the Liftlux product line and closing the Liftlux plant, which left Russon without a product line and with an uncertain future.

Russon already has a number of potential orders lined-up subject to confirmation. The company will still carry out service and maintenance work for Liftlux machines in addition to distributing spare parts. Allen Russon, principle of Russon Access said: "As far as customers for the Liftlux range are concerned, it is very much business as usual in terms of product support. It is just that new units are no longer being produced." ■

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£40,000 fine follows fatal fall

UK CONSTRUCTION company Eugena Ltd has been fined a total of £40,000 and ordered to pay £12,983 in costs after pleading guilty to a breach of health and safety legislation at the Old Bailey in London. The case was taken to the company by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), following a fatal accident during construction work at St Thomas' Hospital in London in June 2001.

Construction worker Ian Mallon was laying blockwork at a height of about 2.5 metres when he fell from the unguarded edge of a scaffold work platform. Mr Mallon subsequently suffered severe head injuries from which he died in hospital several days later. It was later discovered that the incomplete scaffold platform used by Mr Mallon and his workmates had not been inspected by a competent person after alteration.

Eugena Ltd pleaded guilty to a breach of duties under Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974, in that they failed, so far as was reasonably practicable, to ensure the health and safety of persons not in their employment. ■

Amco Veba acquires Ferrari cranes

ITALIAN KNUCKLE boom crane producer Amco Veba has confirmed in an interview with C&A the acquisition of F.lli Ferrari cranes for an undisclosed sum. The deal effectively doubles the size of Amco Veba's crane division.

Dr Giancarlo Perego, president of Amco Veba and its largest shareholder, confirmed that the Ferrari plant will remain open and that both companies will maintain their separate identities and distribution. "The two companies, which both hold small global market shares rarely competed head-to-head," he said. "They cover different market sectors and with both of them exporting around 80 per cent of their production, they have different geographical strengths.

"Ferrari is an excellent product and a very strong and prestigious name. They are mostly well-known for their smaller cranes, while Amco Veba has concentrated on mid to large models," concluded Perego.

The two companies generated revenues of around €20 million (UK£13.56 million) each in 2003, although Amco Veba also has other divisions. Ferrari employs up to 100 staff at its Beretto facility. ■

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Gruas takes Spain's first 3300 SL

SPAIN-BASED crane rental firm Gruas Alhambra has put the country's first Sennebogen 3300 Star-Lifter (SL) crawler crane to work on a bridge construction project for the N-340 highway between Almeira and Malaga. The crane is being rigged with a 29.9 metre boom configuration, where it can lift 8 tonnes at a 20 metre radius, and also with a 41.1 metre main boom, where it can lift 6 tonnes at the same radius, to lift iron and concrete foundations for the bridge's pylons. ■

Palfinger launches UK roll loaders



PALFINGER HAS launched a new range of roll loader cranes for the UK market in collaboration with its UK distributor TH White. The first model in the range, the PK12000 roll loader, was seen publicly for the first time at the recent opening of TH White's new Bradford workshop facilities, with a further three units expected to join the line at a later date.

The PK12000, capable of lifting 1.92 tonnes at 6.1 metres, has been designed to match the lifting capacities of Palfinger's standard PK12000 knuckle boom, while the three subsequent models will be based on the PK501, PK9501 and PK10000 with lifting capacities of 7.1, 9 and 9.5 tonne/metres respectively.

Commenting on the launch, Mark Rigby, TH White director and general manager of the Palfinger crane division said: "We have grown Palfinger lorry (knuckle boom) cranes into a leading position in the UK market. We know we can make serious inroads into this market sector as well." ■

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Half-year revenue decline at Ashtead

THE ASHTEAD Group has reported declining revenues of more than UK£21 million to £256 million from its main US and UK rental businesses, following the release of its half-year results to October 31, 2003.

The Group's Sunbelt business in North America actually posted a small improvement in revenues over the same period in 2002 at US\$293.6 million (UK£172.5 million), but fell by 5.7 per cent when converted back to sterling.

In the UK, its A-Plant business reported a 12 per cent drop in revenues to £83.5 million, but significant restructuring has, according to its management, stripped out £15 million in costs. Disposals and property sales netted £18.2 million, which included Big Air, its Mast Climber division, its Irish business and surplus properties. See *vertikal.net* January 15, 2004.

Chief executive George Burnett said: "While a weak dollar will continue to reduce reported sterling debt and turnover levels, the effect on profitability will be more modest. The Board is encouraged by the improved performance in its US businesses, particularly since the equipment rental industry tends to see late cycle recovery. The favourable indicators regarding the current strength of the US economic recovery enables the Board to take a more optimistic view of prospective trading conditions in 2004 and beyond." ■

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MCG survey shows skills shortage

THE MAJOR Contractors Group (MCG) has failed to meet its own target of achieving a fully qualified workforce on all construction sites where an MCG member is the principal contractor by the end of 2003, according to a recent survey. The results showed that 66 per cent of staff on sites where the main contractor is a member of the MCG carry an approved card such as the Construction Skills Certification Card (CSCS). The MCG claims that over 600,000 workers now carry a CSCS or equivalent card, which included a large number of the 100,000 International Powered Access Federation (IPAF) PAL card holders in the UK. The MCG could not confirm the precise number, however.

Commenting on the results, MCG chairman Dermot Gleeson commented: "While we would have been delighted to have recorded 100 per cent in every category, we believe the results are a tremendous achievement in a relatively short period of time, not only on MCG members' sites but throughout the industry." ■

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PANTHER PLATFORM Rentals has purchased what will be the UK's first Oil & Steel Eagle 4430 truck mounted platform, to be handed over to the company at Bauma 2004. The 44 metre working height platform provides 30 metres of outreach and features a jib that can be angled up to plus 170 degrees, and also a 360 degree rotating turret. ■



BUXTON LIME Industries, part of the Tarmac Group, has taken delivery of this new 17 metre Bobcat T40170 telehandler from Loughborough-based Bobcat dealer, Butler Reynolds. The unit was purchased with a number of attachments including a crane jib, fly-jib, winch, pallet forks with side shift, a bucket and a man platform and will be used for various material handling applications at Hindlow Quarry in Derbyshire. Bobcat claims that the unit is the only telehandler

on the market that can lift above 17 metres with or without stabilisers. ■

Atlanta showdown



AFTER TWO successive shows with poor attendance levels and minimal purchasing activity, the up-beat mood at last month's American Rental Association (ARA) Rental Show held in Atlanta cast a light at the end of the tunnel for the US rental market. ARA officials confirmed that total attendance was up by over 1,500 visitors over last years figure to 5,568. "The show generated incredible confidence and excitement about the industry," said Carla Johnson, ARA director of Associate Member Services, in a recent ARA report.

Using the opportunity to showcase altogether new products were the likes of Genie with its new 16.9 metre TZ 50 trailer-mounted platform and JLG, which launched its 1250AJP Ultra boom to the US market for the first time. Snorkel impressed with its 42 foot (12.8 metre) straight boom with new 'over-centre' jib, while SkyJack presented several new compact rough-terrain scissor lifts with new auto-levelling outriggers. SkyJack president, Lloyd Spalding, stated that he was relatively optimistic for the year ahead in the US.

The most talked about aerial product, however, was MEC's new 30 foot (9.44 metre) scissor lift (pictured) fitted with special wheels which provide totally omni-directional movement of the machine. Haulotte's Easy Crane, on show for the first time in the US, also attracted far more interest than expected, while the company received several orders for its joint-Faresin produced Telehandlers.

Terex showcased the newly "Americanized" TX5519 built at Italmec's Italian plant, while taking part in its first ever US show, the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF) exhibited under its new Aerial Work Platform Training (AWPT) banner and announced the formation of a new advisory council to help implement aerial work platform training programmes in the US.

Next year's Rental Show is scheduled to take place in Las Vegas between 14 to 17 February. See 'What's On', page 46. ■



ITALY-BASED PLATFORM producer, Barin SpA, has delivered one of its AB 17 under-bridge inspection units to Sichuan Chengnan of China for inspection and maintenance work on the Chengdu-Nanchong expressway project. The unit, mounted on a Volvo FM12 LHD, 8 x 4 truck chassis, provides a horizontal underbridge reach of 17 metres and a vertical underbridge depth of 21 metres. ■

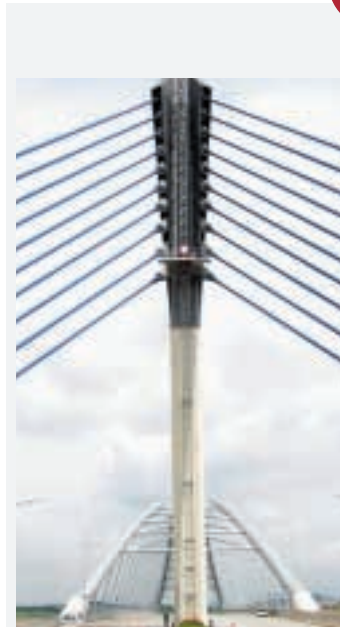
JLG completes military service

JLG HAS completed the transfer of its military design telehandler production, bringing the final phase associated with the company's OmniQuip acquisition. "The transfer of the remaining production of government design telehandlers marks the successful completion of the first phase of our integration plan," said Bill Lasky, chairman of the board, president and chief executive officer at JLG. "We will continue to work towards completing the transfer of all remaining activity including the worldwide service parts business by the end of our current fiscal year.

"The second phase of our integration plan, commonization of the supply base and integration of the OmniQuip and JLG brands and marketing programs, is well underway. And we have begun evaluating standardization of design, which is phase three of the plan, the details of which will depend for the most part on customer input regarding the critical characteristics of each of our brands," he concluded. ■

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BBR CONSTRUCTION Systems recently called on the assistance of this Scanclimber SC1300 mast climber for inspection and service work around the pylon area of the 60-metre high Seri Saujana Bridge in Putra Jaya, Malaysia.

A specially shaped platform was used to avoid contact with the wire rope attached to the bridge's pylon, which itself leans back at an angle of 12 degrees. ■

Haulotte on the move

FRENCH AERIAL lift producer Haulotte has finally made a move to acquire financially troubled UK Platforms, the company set up some three years ago with financial support from Haulotte, according to its employees and directors. Haulotte has declined to comment or make any announcement on the issue, so it is too early to say what it plans to do with UK Platforms, or even how the takeover might be structured. Options may include a full takeover along the lines of the LEV acquisition, or it may look to facilitate a sale to another rental company. The reports, yet to be confirmed by Haulotte, indicate that two of the three UK Platform partners have departed the company, while one has remained on board.

Haulotte has also seen its share price soar, following the release of Terex's 2003 financial results, which showed a substantial performance improvement in Terex's Genie division, and positive statements on the aerial lift market for 2004. The results, along with more modest but still positive statements from Haulotte president Pierre Saubot in an interview with a France-based financial newsletter, were interpreted by many French fund managers as a buying signal.

Saubot who said that he sees the early signs of a pick-up in the powered access market, also repeated an earlier statement made to *Vertikal.net*, in which he said that Haulotte's management was ready to look at any opportunities that might come along, just as they did with the LEV purchase last year.

C&a

News highlights

SENNEBOGEN HAS announced that it has chosen the UK's no.1 construction equipment show, SED, this year for the worldwide debut of its new 50 tonne capacity lattice boom crawler crane, the 640 HD. At the time of writing, further specifications were unavailable. The unit will be displayed along side the company's 80 tonne G83 HD telescopic crawler crane, to be seen for the first time in the UK. Both models will be on show on the stand of Sennebogen's UK and Ireland dealer, E H Hassell & Sons.

GEORGE BRUMWELL has been appointed as the new chairman of the UK's Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), after replacing Tony Merricks who stood down after serving as CSCS chairman for 10 years. Graham Medcroft takes on the role of vice-chairman.

JLG HAS announced the appointment of David L Pugh to its board of directors, expanding the company's board to nine members. Pugh is currently the chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Applied Industrial Technologies in Cleveland, Ohio in the US.

UNITED RENTALS' new CEO Wayland Hicks has stated that the company, which operates the world's largest powered access fleet, is likely to spend about US\$450 million on fleet replacements in 2004.

PETER HIRD, owner and managing director of Peter Hird and Sons Ltd, has announced his retirement at the age of 65. His eldest son, Peter Hird Jnr, who has worked alongside his father for several years, has taken over as managing director and joint-owner.

LIFTING EQUIPMENT specialist, Lloyds British Testing plc has acquired Somers Handling, a supplier of specialist handling equipment to the metal production and rail industries. Somers Handling will be integrated into the former company to create Lloyds Somers. Its head office will be relocated to the Lloyds service centre in West Bromwich.

SOUTHERN ELECTRIC Contracting in the UK has purchased a further 39 van-mounted platforms from Versalift. The order comprised a mixture of 12.9 metre working height ET36NF platforms and 14.2 metre ET38NF models, all of which are mounted on Mercedes Sprinter vans.

BROGAN ACCESS of East Motherwell in Scotland has taken delivery of a 35 metre working height Wumag WT350 truck-mounted platform. The unit is mounted on an 10 tonne Mercedes chassis, provides 30 metres of outreach and a 350 kilogram platform capacity.