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# MOVING IN ANOTHER DIRECTION?

Over the past 20 years or so, two Japanese companies - Unic and Maeda - have been at the forefront of the spider crane market, gradually adding new models as the international market for these tiny cranes - originally seen as mere toys by the crane rental companies - transitioned from niche to mainstream. While both have stepped up their pace a little on new product development, in recent years they have been outpaced by European producers such as Jekko and Hoeflon in terms of pure innovation. But are they in danger of becoming overly complicated and as a result less reliable?

**The Japanese producers have traditionally tended to be slow to introduce new models or adopt innovative new concepts unless really pushed to do so, and then only after the novel idea has been welcomed by end users. The benefit of this approach is that their products are fairly simple and predictable to use and are virtually bullet proof. There is no money at all in selling replacement parts for them! But more on spider lifts later.**

## A CHANGING MARKET

The mini crawler crane - virtually a shrunken crawler crane - has been around in one form or other for far longer than the spider crane, both in Japan and parts of Europe. In the UK it was not uncommon to see little cranes on the side of the road in cities like London, lifting things in and out of a hole. In the beginning most were wheeled with fixed booms made by companies like Henry Cooch, but began to be replaced by mini crawler cranes with telescopic booms from companies such as IHI and Hitachi, although a line of British-built models was launched by Sandhurst. Companies such as AGD built up a substantial fleet and several Japanese manufacturers including Komatsu and Kato launched models and the mini crawler crane market took off as most models were based on

a mini excavator platform, at least at the smaller end of the market. Demand in Europe seemed to fizzle out after the millennium and most Japanese manufacturers pulled out. But Meada kept the concept going and as the sector picked up again with Jekko entering the market along with Chinese company Sunward. As numbers begin to grow it looks like it is changing again.

Over the past few years tracked articulated cranes such as the JF range from Jekko, Palfinger PCC machines and BG Lift's CWE range have become increasingly popular, essentially an articulated loader crane mounted on a spider lift type chassis. They sort of fit between spider cranes and mini crawlers and they need outriggers, although most can pick and carry smaller loads.

## TRACKED CARRIER CRANES

Another emerging product are small loader cranes with capacities up to about six tonnes mounted on the increasingly popular tracked material carriers. The tracked carriers have been growing in popularity for several years now making it easier to move bulky and heavy materials, particularly on uneven ground or fragile surfaces. However, there is always the problem of how to load the material or item that needs to be moved onto the carrier. A small



*A typical spider crane application - a BG Lift M250 ECO lifting in a confined factory production area*



*A five tonne Sunward SWTC-5D mini crawler crane*

loader crane at one end of the bed is the simple answer and several manufacturers now offer such a machine. That concept appears to be developing into a sector of its own.



## SPIDER CRANES



*Specialist tracked machines include this Marooka fitted with an articulated loader crane*

They are tremendously compact and are light enough to be transported to site on a 3.5 tonne trailer and when working have very low ground bearing pressure.

Large, tracked carriers with a chassis cab, such as those made by Marooka have often been built with an articulated loader crane on the back, but these are larger, far more specialist machines with wide tracks for the ultimate 'go-anywhere' capability and more similar to the more recent tracked articulated cranes.

### MINI TRACKED CRANES

#### Elma

A new arrival to the mini crane market sector is the Platform Basket group company, Elma. It currently offers two ranges of mini cranes, which it describes as either 'stabilised' or 'pick & carry'. The basic PCR10 crawler has a 1.1 tonne capacity on its deck which also has fold down sides that can be used either for retaining the load or folded flat to almost double the deck width to 1.54 metres.

The entire range has extendible width tracks - from 700 or 790mm wide to 1.18 metres. They are offered with an engine, usually petrol, or a form of hybrid version with the addition of a single phase 220 volt AC electric motor, while a lithium ion battery powered option is also available.



*Elma PCR12 with 990kg capacity crane*

The PCR12 is a PCR10 with the addition of a 1.2 tonne metre telescopic loader type crane with four section boom, with the option of a fifth manual section for a maximum tip height of around 5.5 metres, a winch or other attachments for applications such as glass handling. The unit can lift 990kg towards the front end of the deck and 150kg at its maximum radius of 4.2 metres. It is a compact unit with an overall retracted width of 790mm, an overall length of 2.52 metres and is 1.68 metres high.

The MCR30 and MCR40 are three and four tonne mini tracked cranes with two stage spider type outriggers taking the working foot print to 3.85



*Elma MCR30 can lift 995kg at 2.65 metre radius*

metres by 3.88 metres. On its main boom it has a maximum tip height of 6.7 metres or 8.55 metres with the two manual sections extended. It can lift 995kg at radius of 2.65 metres and has a maximum radius with the boom horizontal of 6.82 metres at which it can handle 250kg. Like the PCR they can be used with a winch and attachments. However, both MCR models can be used without the outriggers as small pick & carry cranes, but do not have any deck carrying capability. All the MCR models have full radio remote controls for the crane and attachments. The MCR30 has an overall width of 790mm, an overall length of 2.22 metres while weighing 1,400kg.

Largest in the range is the four tonne/metre MCR40 which can lift 2,100kg at a 1.87 metres radius or reach 7.1 metres at which point it has a capacity of 400kg. Maximum tip height on the five section boom is 8.3 metres, while a manual section takes this to 9.3 metres. Overall length is 2.54 metres with a total weight of around 1,500kg depending on power source.



*A 1,500kg capacity Hooka mini tracked crane*

#### Almacrawler

Having made its name with its dynamic self-levelling Bibi scissor lifts and more recently its Jibbi Primo boom lifts, Almac/AlmaCrawler has introduced a range of five 'Multi-Loader' tracked carriers with capacities from 1,500kg to 6,000kg, two of which feature the 'Bi-Levelling' system capable of keeping the deck level when travelling across uneven ground or slopes of up to 20 degrees.

The six tonne capacity Multi-Loader 6.0 BL and three tonne Multi-Loader 3.0 BL both feature the auto levelling system, however it is only recently that the larger machine has the capability of adding a 990kg capacity crane attachment.

The Multi-Loader 6.0 BL is a sizeable bit of kit weighing 2,400kg or 2,900kg with the crane

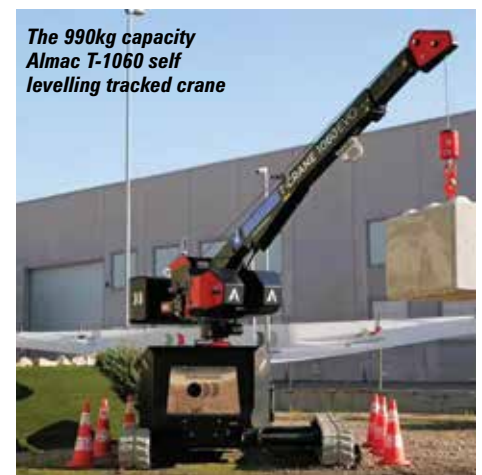


*The Almac Multi-Loader 6.0 BL*

installed. The deck payload is reduced by 500kg with the crane fitted, but is still a healthy 5,500kg. The unit is battery powered with a 48 volt system, and a battery pack that according to the company can be recharged from 20 percent to full in around seven hours. Direct electric track drive motors are both powerful and efficient, while the machine is operated by radio remote control. Deck size is 2.4 by 1.11 metres, while the unit has an overall width of just less than 1.5 metres with the tracks retracted, extending to 1.8 metres when they are fully out. The deck height ranges from 920mm to 1.28 metres depending on track extension - high when narrow, low when wide.

Longitudinal levelling is 20 degrees at the front, 15 degrees at the rear and 15 degrees laterally. Gradeability is 25 degrees and maximum speed is 3.6kph. The four section boom has a maximum tip height of seven metres and a maximum radius of 4.3 metres at which it can lift 300kg with an up & over height of almost three metres. The crane kit can be removed when not required, allowing rental companies to offer it as an option.

Almac also launched the 990kg capacity T-1060 self-levelling tracked crane at the end of last year. It can handle its maximum capacity at a 3.5 metre radius and a maximum tip height of 7.7 metres at which it can still handle 990kg. The maximum radius is 6.1 metres with a capacity of 450kg. The winch is included with 30 metres of wire rope.



*The 990kg capacity Almac T-1060 self levelling tracked crane*

The crane is mounted on rubber, non-marking tracks with a retracted width of 1.35 metres extending to 2.45 metres for maximum stability. If one track is left fully in while the other is fully extended the overall width is 1.9 metres. The





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## SPIDER CRANES

overall length is 4.32 metres - slightly shorter if the 1,000kg counterweight is removed. The overall height is 1.91 metres. Power comes from either a Yanmar diesel or a 300Ah lithium ion battery pack. Total weight is 3,850kg or 2,850kg without counterweight - the battery machine is around 60kg heavier.

A key feature of the crane is its self-levelling ability, taken from the scissor lifts, with automatic dynamic levelling of plus or minus 15 degrees in both axis. The crane is operated via a compact remote controller, complete with information screen.

### TRACKED CARRIERS

Built in the UK in Tiptree, Essex, Tracked Carriers produces a range of five tracked carriers from the 300kg capacity 300 L to the 4,000kg 4000 PRO. All are battery powered and have fully proportional radio remote controls, 45 degree gradeability and travel speeds from 1.1 to 3.5 km per hour.

A wide range of accessories for the carriers include a fifth wheel and a dolly for transporting long and heavy loads. The dolly - available on the 1200 and 2200 R/PRO models - is manually steerable and gives an additional 1,000kg capacity. Also available on the same models is the rotating platform making it easier to manoeuvre loads through awkward spaces, an A frame stillage for moving sheets of glass and other panel materials, a dozer blade, corner posts, tow bar, winch, stair climbing kit, pallet cradle, pivot bearers and the AC1200 crane attachment.



Tracked Carriers  
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BG Lift M 060 with glass handling attachment



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Power for the crane attachment is taken from the smart auxiliary output socket featured on all 1200 PRO machines. This provides power on demand for the hydraulic pump within the crane and also disables drive functions once the crane is operational.

### MOVEX INNOVATION

In Quebec, Canada, Movex Innovation produces the XC-270 Cross-country mini crawler crane. Based on its XC-30 All Terrain carrier, the crane is also available as the TT-270, a stair climbing crane based on the company's TT-66 stair climbing chassis.



The XC-270 can lift 500kg at five metres



BG Lift M 060

### BG LIFT

As well as its larger capacity CWE articulated crawler cranes, BG Lift offers a Mini pick & carry crane - the M 060. With an overall retracted width of 780mm extending to 1.1 metres, an overall length of 1.78 metres and an overall stowed height of 1.44 metres, the M 060 has a three section hydraulic boom capable of 50 degrees slew - 25 degrees either side of centre - with a maximum 580kg capacity at 1.3 metres. Maximum radius is just over three metres at which point it can handle 240kg and maximum tip height is 4.3 metres with a 320kg capacity. The standard diesel powered crane weighs 720kg to which 200kg of additional counterweight can be added, along with options such as the 230V electric plug in motor and a 500kg capacity winch which take the overall weight up to around a tonne. A lithium ion battery powered version - the M 060 Li-ion - is also available, as is a Scanreco radio remote controller with display. ■

The XC-270 has a capacity of 950kg at a radius of 2.7 metres to the front and 500kg at five metres. With the optional 1.2 metre manual extension it can lift 350kg at six metres. Maximum payload on the deck is 1,000kg.

The XC-270 has an overall length of 2.05 metres, is 775mm wide and 2.25 metres high. It weighs 1,300kg and has 229mm of ground clearance. Options include a portable winch and capstan.

Movex says the crane is ideal for moving pad mounted transformers, as well as plant maintenance duties in the mining sector, transporting and installing components such as pumps, motors, conveyor parts etc in factories, moving generators in confined spaces or moving structural beam, doors and glass for installation. Both models are battery powered and wireless remote controlled.



Movex Innovation XC-270

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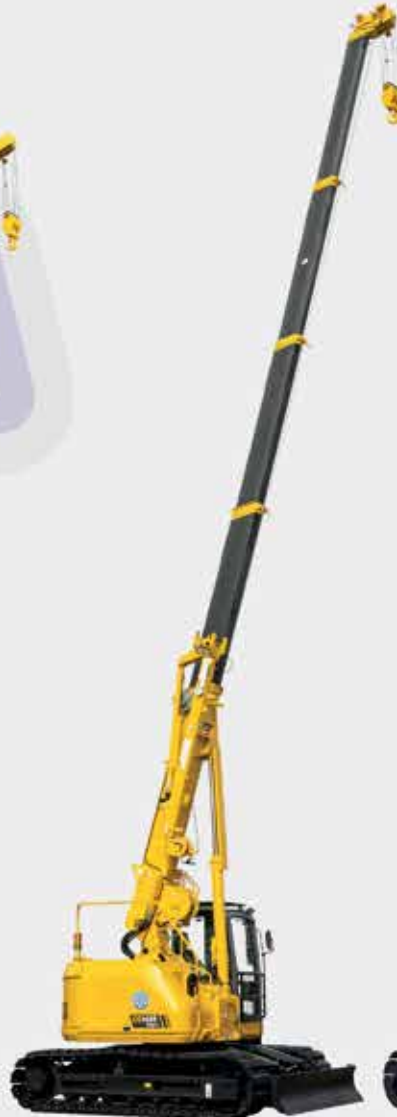
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*Hird's first electric MK3053-C proved very effective for steel and screen installation work*



*Hazlewood Trailers has produced a two axle trailer specifically to carry a MK3035-C*

# NEW MAEDA MK3035-C PROVES POPULAR

The latest Maeda spider crane was given great prominence at Vertikal Days by European master distributor Kranlyft. Nick Johnson reports.

**The new Maeda MK3053-C spider crane received its UK exhibition debut at Vertikal Days 2024 with three units prominent on the Kranlyft stand. The buyers of this trio were AMC (with bases at Knowsley, Liverpool and Heathrow), Lift Assist of Northfleet and Lift Micranes of Leicester.**

The 2.98 tonne maximum capacity MK3053-C is a new addition to the range of Maeda spider cranes from Japan, slotting in above the popular MC305C-3 to provide a higher maximum lift height and new features.

The MK3053-C can lift up to 12 metres on its fully extended five section telescopic main boom and up to 16.95 metres using its articulated, three section telescopic fly jib which can be stowed under the main boom to minimise transport width or be easily removed by one person to maximise main boom duties.

Maximum capacity on the retracted jib is 1,000kg at a hook height of 12.5 metres when the main boom is fully extended and elevated. All lifting duties are with the crane supported on its four variable position outriggers, and to provide safe lifting the crane is supplied with Maeda's own Load Moment Indicator.

With fully proportional remote controls the crane folds to provide overall stowed dimensions of 780mm wide, 3.2 metres long and overall height of 1.95 metres. The rubber tracks can be extended to a maximum width of 1.05 metres providing more stability when travelling. The unit features variable outrigger settings and a one button set-up feature as well as a self-stow function.

Customers have a choice of three power options - diesel, diesel/electric and lithium battery - with operating weights of 2,880kg, 2,900kg and 2,880kg respectively. These use a 7.2kW Kubota Z482-E4B diesel engine, a 4kW electric motor and a DC55V-135Ah, 7.4kWh lithium titanate battery pack. The battery powered crane can be charged during operation and there are various charging options. Coming soon is an additional standalone wheeled battery pack which doubles battery capacity.

The first company to buy a new MK3053-C in Europe was Hird Mini Crane Hire of Doncaster, Hull and Redhill in England. A notable first job for this landmark unit was at the 13,780 seat First Direct Arena in Leeds.

The battery operated MK3053-C successfully lifted steel frame elements weighing 150kg to support an LED screen above an entrance at a height of 12 metres. The crane then lifted the screen over a safety rail and onto a mezzanine deck. Good use was made of the machine's reach and its non-marking tracks, which avoided leaving black scuff marks on the arena floor.

Hird now has two battery powered MK3053-Cs in its extensive hire fleet and has two more on order. Lift Assist has one battery and one diesel electric MK3053-C, AMC has two battery versions - with two more on order - Reach Access has a battery powered unit, SGS Plant Hire is buying a diesel unit and KDM Hire has a diesel/electric version on order.

To add to the MK3053-C's appeal, Kranlyft has



*The three MK3053-Cs at Vertikal Days had been bought by AMC, Lift Mini Cranes and Lift Assist*

worked with Hazlewood Trailers of Rous near Evesham to develop a trailer specially for the new spider crane. Based on Hazlewood's proven 3500ACD plant trailer, the new two axle carrier is designated the 3500ACK. It has a gross weight of 3500kg and internal bed dimensions of 3,050mm long by 1,370mm wide.

The 3500ACK Maeda spider crane trailer has been made with a shorter drawbar than a general plant trailer. It also has sockets welded into its corners to take a support frame for a machine cover being offered by Kranlyft. This cover will have the option of incorporating customer names and logos - a good way for crane hire companies to advertise themselves to potential customers. ■





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*Having an underslung fly jib rather than a side folding fly contributes to a narrower travel width*



*The new UM325 Pop-Up (right) offers greater up-and-over lifting capability than a URW-295-2*



*The Pop-Up feature of the new UM325 allows the lower pivot point of the main boom to rise up over the central slew ring*

# LATEST UNIC REARS UP

Called the Pop-Up, the latest Unic spider crane features a rising boom pivot point to provide greater operational flexibility. Nick Johnson reports.

The highlight of the GGR Group stand at Vertical Days 2024 was the new battery powered Unic UM325 Pop-Up spider crane. As the Pop-Up name suggests, the feature that sets this model apart from existing Unic spider cranes is its substantial base boom riser. This articulating section enables the main boom pivot to be elevated up over the centre of the chassis in order to increase lifting height and provide a more extensive lifting envelope with a greater up-and-over capability. When the riser is fully lowered, the main boom pivot moves towards the rear of the chassis allowing longer main boom sections to be carried without increasing the machine's overall length.

Having a central slew ring and articulating base boom riser allows the UM325 to have its fly jib stowed under the main boom rather than being carried on one side. This neat arrangement means that there is no obstructive side projection.

The crane's development has resulted from the very close cooperation between the Japanese manufacturer and its UK based distributor Unic Cranes Europe, part of the GGR Group. The machine was first seen in prototype form preliminarily designated as the URW345 and following extensive testing is now available for sale from Unic Cranes Europe whilst GGR is putting units into its own hire fleet.

The compact crane has a maximum capacity of 3.2 tonnes on its five section, 10 metre main boom at a radius of 2.2 metres. Extra height and reach can be obtained by using the newly introduced four section telescopic luffing jib that extends from 2.0 to 5.7 metres. There is also a searcher hook attachment and the articulating jib provides offsets from -10 to +80 degrees. This wide angular range allows loads to be picked up close to the crane's chassis or placed at a maximum working height of 17.5 metres or at a maximum radius of 15.7 metres.

Maximum capacities are obtained when the UM325 Pop-Up is supported on its four 'spider' legs which come with auto levelling. Each stabiliser can be positioned in any of five angles

and with three different extensions. This flexibility allows two legs to be positioned in-line with the chassis so that, aided by the minimum rear tailswing achieved by use of base boom riser, the crane can work safely beside a wall or other vertical obstruction.

Complete with 360 degree continuous slewing, the UM325 weighs 3,830kg and its non-marking rubber tracks extend to a maximum width of 1,110mm. In transport mode the machine is 750mm wide, 3,130mm long and 1,945mm high.

Power for the UM325 is a 159Ah lithium-ion battery and it can continue to operate whilst being recharged. Full recharge times are up to 6.2 hours on 110V and three hours on 240V.

An important feature is its advanced Rayco Wylie i4500 load moment indicator. Utilising a nine load chart system, this indicator detects the selected operational configuration of the crane allowing for min, mid and max extension for each of the four individual outriggers.

The high-resolution i4500 colour screen shows each setup as well as working zones, lifting capability and diagnostics information. Additionally there are warning lights and audible warnings and an motion cut-out to prevent the crane from being over loaded. In restricted areas the crane has selectable slew and height limitation as standard.

The crane can now be supplied with a latest Scanreco radio remote control unit which can operate for up to eight hours before recharging. The controller can be stowed in a special cradle on the front of the crane and there is a place for the controller's charger on the side of the crane.

Setting up the machine for maximum lifting capability using the outriggers is aided by the deployment of the



*The UM325 Pop-Up can now be supplied with this Scanreco radio remote control unit.*

standard auto levelling system. Raising the base boom riser increases the main boom pivot point from 1.28 to 1.90 metres above the ground. This original feature provides a greater lifting envelope as well as greatly reducing the rear overhang to allow the crane to be used closer to walls and other vertical obstructions.

The articulating fly jib can be conveniently angled back towards the base of the crane so that loads can be raised or lowered close in. Another useful bonus is the ability to lift and move loads free on tracks at reduced travel speed in order to carry out pick and carry work.

With the Pop-Up concept being well received by potential customers it is certain that other Unic models will adopt it in the future. Meanwhile, Unic Cranes Europe has launched two new versions of the URW-546-2 and URW-295-2 spider cranes that each gain a new telescoping luffing jib and a searcher hook attachment. ■



*The machine's well protected 159Ah lithium-ion battery pack is completely demountable*



*There is secure stowage on the crane for items such as the different hook blocks*



*The advanced Rayco Wylie i4500 load moment indicator has a very clear display screen*