

UK profits up at Lavendon

LAVENDON GROUP has reported a 4 per cent increase in operating profits for its UK business for 2002, despite an overall drop in its profit performance.

Following the release of the group's 2003 preliminary results, a 12 per cent increase in its UK sales revenues was reported to £60.7 million for 2002, compared to £54.3 million in 2001. This was helped along by the expansion of the group's active UK customer base which last year increased by 6 per cent to 14,367. Its UK operating profits, before exceptional costs, also showed a 6 per cent increase to £13.3 million, compared £12.5 million 12 months earlier. The group's operating margins, before exceptional costs, reduced to 22 per cent, compared with 23 per cent in 2001, while after exceptional costs, operating profits increased by 4 per cent to £12.4 million. Its operating

margins were reduced to 21 per cent from 22 per cent over the corresponding periods.

Lavendon plans to increase utilisation levels and said that it will not be adding to its UK rental fleet in 2003 because it believes that its growth objectives for the period can be achieved through its existing fleet and network. The group also said that it remains encouraged by the continued growth of powered access generally in the UK in spite of considerable current weakness in the manufacturing sector, one of its major markets.

The report also confirmed that the executive directors of the company had considered launching a management buy-out but that these plans had now been shelved.

The executive directors of Lavendon Group plc are David Price, Kevin Appleton and Alan Merrell. **Visit www.Vertikal.net for the full story**

Liebherr crane additions

C&A was among an enthusiastic crowd at Liebherr-Werk Ehingen's recent open day, where an impressive display of around 100 models from the company's latest crane range were presented.

Among the army of machines was Liebherr's brand new 90 tonne capacity, LTM 1090/3 all terrain mobile crane and the 400 tonne capacity, LTM 1400/1. Newer still was the preliminary presentation of the 50 tonne capacity, LTC 1050 compact crane which is yet to roll off the Ehingen production line. Scheduled for an official Bauma 2004 launch, the "city" type crane will feature a seven-section, 36 metre telescopic boom, a two-section, 5 to 8 metre swing-away jib with an extension comprising three intermediate sections of 2.4 metres each. All this will amount to a maximum lifting height of 56 metres.

The larger LTM 1090/3 is set for a public debut at this year's Intermat exhibition in Paris, as is the LTM 1400/1. Compared with the previous model, the LTM 1090/2, of which some 600 were built, the LTM 1090/3 can lift up to 15 percent higher load capacities at the telescopic boom and up to 30 percent more at the fly jib. The available lifting height has been increased by up to 20 percent.

Liebherr claims that with 22 tonnes of ballast the new unit is currently the most powerful four-axle mobile crane on the market. Up to 85 metres lifting height is achieved by a combination of the 90 tonner's 52 metres long, six-section telescopic boom, a 14 metres long boom extension and a 19 metres long double-folding fly jib.

Liebherr also says that LTM 1090/3 is the company's first all terrain mobile crane to include active rear-wheel steering. This intelligent steering concept matches the lock angle of the fourth axle to that of the two front axles when the crane is in motion. Accelerating the vehicle automatically reduces the steering lock angle at the rear, and when road speed rises beyond 30 kilometres per hour the fourth axle is set to a permanent straight-ahead running position.

Moving up the capacity chart, Liebherr has closed the gap between its six-axle, 300 tonne all terrain crane and the eight-axle 500 tonne model, with the introduction of the new seven-axle, 400 tonne capacity LTM 1400/1. Liebherr says that it is the most compact model in the 400 tonne class, with an overall length of just 18.5 metres and a turning radius of 14.5 metres.

A whopping 124 metre lift height is achieved by the LTM 1400/1's 60 metre telescopic boom and additional jibs, including a fixed or luffing lattice fly jib. **Full story on www.Vertikal.net**

Terex Cranes tops the bill

TEREX CRANES has reported a net sales increase of US\$226.9 million for 2002, despite Terex Corporation reporting a net sales loss of \$132.5 million. The company's net sales hit \$700.8 million for 2002, compared with a figure of \$473.9 million reported in 2001.

Terex Cranes reported a net sales increase for the fourth quarter of 2002 to \$267.4 million compared with a figure of US\$88.7 million for the same period of 2001. Its core activities accounted for 30 per cent of the increase. The group said that extended shutdowns in the US hydraulic crane business in the fourth quarter of 2001 had a major impact on the year-over-year comparisons.

Fil Filipov, president Terex Cranes said: "The full year 2002 performance for the Terex Crane group benefited from the geographical and product diversification of our group. Our hydraulic crane business in the US continued to experience

double digit revenue declines in line with industry trends, which impacted margins in this business, while our hydraulic crane business in Italy had a very strong year.

Meanwhile, Bob Wilkerson is pleased with the fourth quarter performance of the Terex Aerial Work Platforms group - representing the results of Genie Holdings and its subsidiaries since their acquisition by Terex in September last year. "Historically, this is our weakest quarter of the year, but the aggressive implementation of our integration plan and relentless focus on cost control is beginning to show up in the results.

Wilkerson reported sales for the quarter of \$96.2 million which represents a slight increase compared with the corresponding period of 2001. "However, our margins improved significantly over the prior year," said Wilkerson.

More information on www.Vertikal.net

Safety culture

MORE THAN 200 access industry professionals attended the Access Summit which was organised by IPAF at Heathrow Airport's Marriott Hotel in the UK recently.

Dominating discussions at this year's Access Summit was the theme 'Marketing Safety is Profitable', which formed the basis of the day's speeches from a broad range of industry delegates. Among guests listening to the presentations were two of the men that run two of the world's largest manufacturers – Billy Lasky, president of JLG and Pierre Saubot his opposite number at Haulotte.

Starting the ball rolling was Bill Callaghan, chair of the UK's Health and Safety Commission (HSC), with a narrative on the progress of the HSC safety programmes. He stated that although the programme is only in its second year of its ten year structure, there are already plans to change its agenda.

One major change will be the EU's 'Temporary Work at Height Directive' (2001/45/EC). The HSC is currently overseeing preparation of UK draft regulations and guidance concerning falls from height and warns that there is a European-wide deadline of July 2004.

In the meantime, it may serve companies well to take note of the current health and safety guidelines was the message from Ron Reid, a partner at Shoosmiths Solicitors and head of its Occupational Safety Unit. In the UK, fines for failing to comply with them are now issued in relation to a company's turnover rather than its profit. Reid explained how in one such case a UK company was fined its entire annual turnover. "Think about it, not many companies can survive such a fine" he warned.

A "pre-emptive" approach to safety rather than a "reactive" one was managing director of Loxam UK Bernard Fournier's strategy in creating a safer industry, none more so than in the UK where, according to Fournier, 73 percent of accidents involving MEWPS are the result of a lack of adequate and regular maintenance. "High levels of communication between all parties involved in the access business, from senior management through to the end user, are imperative," said Fournier. "A company has a duty to the customer to ensure a job gets done quickly and safely, with minimal risk. "This may be expensive in the short term, but it is an investment for the long term."

Germany and Italy, along with countries throughout the whole of Europe, were warned by Gerhard Hillebrand, international marketing consultant and a pioneer of the European Powered Access Industry, about the impending Directive 2001/45/EC, to be implemented in the next two to three years. Hillebrand said that the Directive will govern the safe use of construction equipment working at height and will impose adequate training to all personnel involved in operations.

Directive 2001/45/EC will be arriving through company letter boxes across the whole of Europe in the not too distant future. "It's not a case of 'if' it will come into place, said Hillebrand, "more a case of 'when'. Companies should start thinking about that."



Palfinger world premiere

AUSTRIA-BASED knuckle boom crane manufacturer Palfinger used the Transport 2003 exhibition in Denmark last month to stage the world premiere of its latest knuckle boom model, the PK 29002 Performance. The unit is available with up to eight hydraulic extensions, capable of a 21.3 metre outreach, 27.4 metres with the second knuckle boom, and features Palfinger's power link plus system which allows the boom to angle upwards through 15 degrees. Maximum load moment is 28.3 tonne/metres.

An endless slewing mechanism is offered as standard on the crane along with the Paltronic 50 system, the electronic High Power Lifting System (E-HPLS), oil cooler and an additional external 200 litre tank. The PK 29002 has also been designed with a considerably smaller installation width than its predecessor, the PK 27000.

GSL scissors dangerous

Germany's GSL, manufacturer of innovative and specialist scissor lifts, has ceased trading and issued a safety alert affecting most of the models delivered in the last ten years. Nearly 2000 units are thought to be affected.

Companies that have sold used GSL scissors to other companies are asked to urgently advise the new owners of the potential dangers. The company also said that the extensive modifications needed to rectify the problems would require the machines to be re-certified.

GSL's former UK dealer, PJ Allan Sales, has written to all known customers in the UK and Ireland advising them of the problem. "We would advise anybody with one of the affected GSL models to immediately stop using it and to contact us for advice" said Phil Allan, managing director of PJ Allan Sales. **More info on www.Vertikal.net**

News highlights

ABNORMAL LOAD ENGINEERING has completed the purchase of the Brambles Heavy Contracting Group of Companies for \$15.4 million (UK£10 million). The deal includes the purchase of Brambles Heavy Contracting UK, Brambles Heavy Contracting (US), Brambles Heavy Contracting (Malaysia), Lastra Iberica and Lastra Breda.

KONECRANES UK has won a contract worth over £600,000 to supply five overhead units to

Va-Tech Hydro's new build power station at Coolkeeragh in Northern Ireland. The largest capacity unit is a 90/10 tonne SMD Spacemaker crane with a 29.25 metre span, followed by a 80/10 tonne Spacemaker with a span of 29.3 metres. The remaining three units are CXTS cranes with capacities of 10, 8 and 5 tonnes. All cranes will be delivered in July this year.

THE ASSOCIATION OF EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS (AEM) in the US

has elected Ron DeFeo, chairman and CEO of Terex Corporation, as its new chairman. The position became vacant following the resignation earlier in the year of David Woods from Charles Machine Works.

HEWDEN has appointed a new "executive team" to replace its previous executive board for 2003 to take full responsibility for the strategic and operational management of the group.

The new team consists of Paul Jarvis, Bob Netherway, Fred Batho, Allan Bowie, Brian Sherlock, David Shaw and Helen Sidaway. Full story on www.Vertikal.net

A-PLANT has placed a £1 million order with JLG, which includes a mixture of JLG 450AJ, 600AJ and 800AJ articulating boom lifts. The new machines will be distributed among A-Plant's 14 powered access depots throughout the UK.

Access Machines Ltd warning

THE HEALTH and Safety Executive has advised all owners of mobile elevating work platforms made by Access Machines Ltd to check their machines for poor quality welding. The warning follows an incident in which the work basket on a 1998, 0.12 tonne capacity Micro 95 trailer mount, class A1, became detached from its supporting boom.

The HSE said that the basket of the MEWP that failed was bolted to a round plate by four bolts and in turn the plate was welded to a pin or stub axle on the main boom. In this instance the pin to plate weld failed allowing the basket to fall off the end of the boom. Although there was some evidence of fatigue in the weld, the HSE said that it was concerned that poor quality welding may have contributed to the failure.

Intermat winner

C&A WOULD like to congratulate Clive Elsbury who is the lucky winner of The Vertical Press' Intermat 2003 competition.

Mr Elsbury started in the lifting industry back in 1975, when he was involved in his father's crane trading and refurbishment business, Don Elsbury Plant Sales Limited. Mr Elsbury senior passed away in 1996, but the name was kept alive and the company remained.

Today the company operates as Elsbury Powered Access and Clive Elsbury is the managing director. He has since turned his attention to truck mounted platforms, scissor lifts and self propelled platforms. Mr Elsbury and partner will be travelling to Intermat courtesy of Air France, Intermat and The Vertical Press.



INTERMAT
CRANES
& access

ukforks in £2.5m telehandler deal

UKFORKS HAS completed a £2.5 million deal to bring the first Dieci telehandler hire fleet to the UK. The company, already Britain's largest hirer of telehandlers, has invested in a fleet of 9 and 12 metre Runner telehandlers and the 16 metre Icarus telehandlers.

Following joint development between Dieci and ukforks, all machines come complete with a JCB headstock for the fitting of JCB quick-fit attachments. The 9 metre machines also include stabilisers, which said ukforks: "is a feature that it has consistently lobbied manufacturers as part of its construction site health and safety initiative launched last year."

The machines are now available from all ukforks regional depots and, as part of the deal, all ukforks engineers and internal fitters have undergone specialist Dieci training in Italy.



Manitou adds to telehandler line



MANITOU HAS expanded its range of heavy-duty telescopic trucks with the introduction of the MHT 10120 L Turbo. The 10 tonne capacity unit sits midway in Manitou's existing four-strong heavy-duty line with capacities ranging from 6.5 to 16 tonnes. The 9.8 metre working height MHT 10120 L is fitted with a 170 horsepower Mercedes Turbo engine and features hydrostatic transmission, four drive and steerable wheels and crab steering.

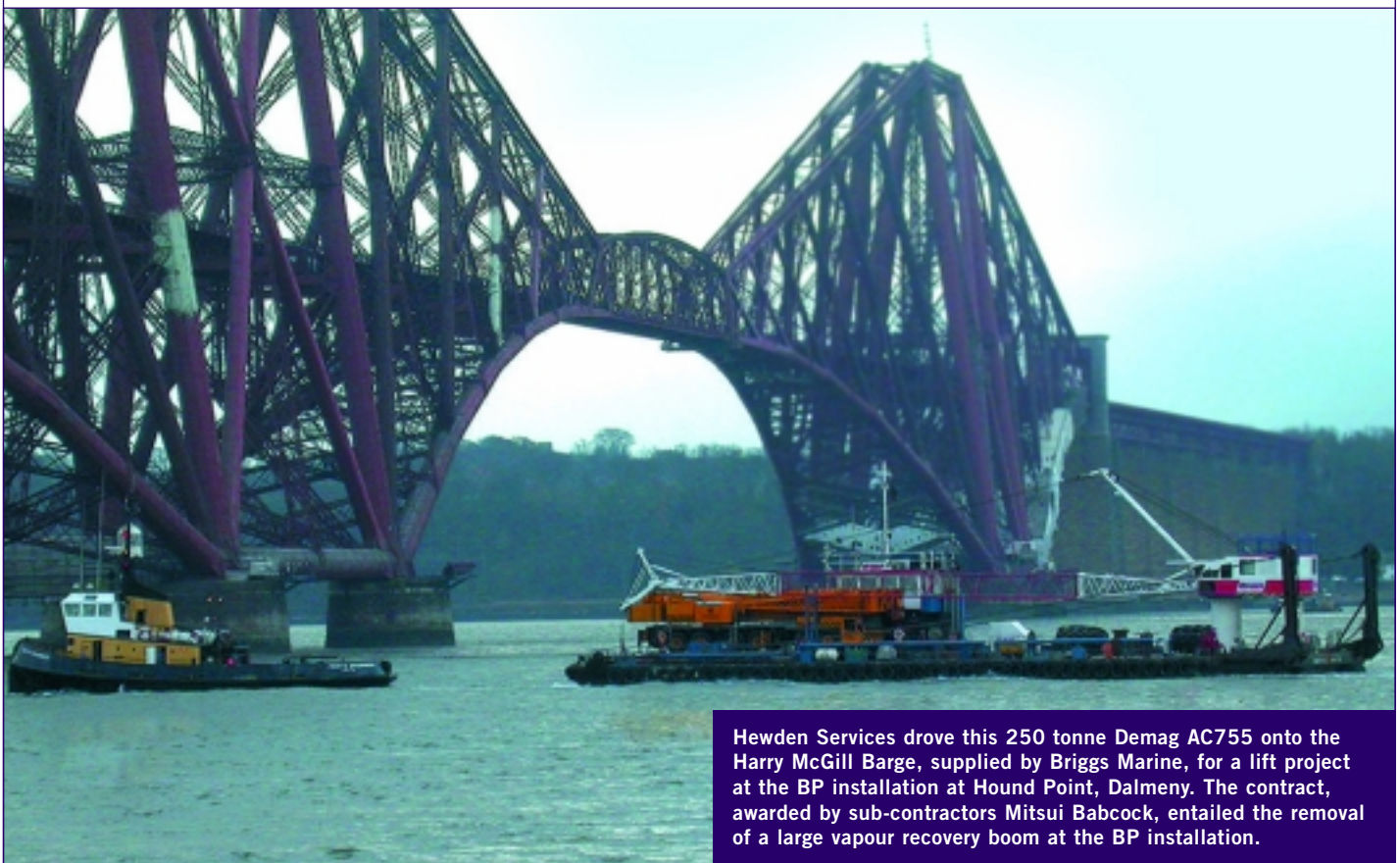
Manitou says that the heavy-duty Maniscopics have the advantage of a wide range of attachments that are specially adapted for heavy loads, including TFF + 1500 to 2500 forks, 14 and 16 tonne winches, 14 and 16 tonne crane jibs, 5000 and 6000 litre CBR buckets and tyre grabs.

Basket goes big

ITALY-BASED aerial platform manufacturer, Basket, says that it has produced the world's highest self propelled aerial platform ever to be built.

The 50 AJT is capable of a massive 50 metre working height and an outreach of 26 metres. The unit is equipped with extendible automatic axles with a maximum width of 5.6 metres. A 78 horsepower, turbo powered Iveco engine feeds two pumps with variable capacities for smooth and precise control.

The machine has already been sold to a Spain-based company belonging to the Roxu Group, who bought the platform through Basket's Spanish dealer, Iberbasket. The machine was designed and produced at Basket's headquarters in Italy and will be on show at the Intermat exhibition in Paris next month.



Hewden Services drove this 250 tonne Demag AC755 onto the Harry McGill Barge, supplied by Briggs Marine, for a lift project at the BP installation at Hound Point, Dalmeny. The contract, awarded by sub-contractors Mitsui Babcock, entailed the removal of a large vapour recovery boom at the BP installation.

Kobelco UK reports strong crawler sales

KOBELCO UK has reported strong new crawler crane sales to the UK and Ireland for the last 12 months. Several significant sales were made during 2002, including a number of new units to the UK's leading crawler crane rental company, Weldex. The company purchased five new machines including a 55 tonne capacity BM500 and no less than four 70 tonne CKE700s. The new hydraulic cranes will replace older mechanical units in Weldex's fleet for civil engineering, piling and foundations work. The purchase follows the recent acquisition by Weldex of seven 200 tonne capacity Kobelco 7200s from the ex-Baldwins fleet, which now makes Weldex the UK's largest operator of Kobelco crawlers.

■ Kobelco Cranes' export manager Jos Verhulst told C&A that Kobelco Cranes will not be affected by the relocation of Kobelco Construction Machinery (Europe), announced recently. "Sales and service of Kobelco cranes will be not be affected in any way whatsoever by the relocation," he said. "However, Kobelco crane operations based in Almere, The Netherlands, will be moving to a new location in the same area later in the year."



Ainscough has embarked on a massive paint work programme that will see all the cranes it acquired in the Baldwins deal last December re-painted in its own blue and yellow livery. The first crane to roll off the painting line is the ex-Baldwins 1000 tonnes capacity Liebherr LTM1800, which is now Ainscough's new flagship machine.

Ownership change for SMS

SCOTLAND-BASED offshore crane and lifting engineers Specialist Maintenance Services (SMS) has sealed a deal which sees ownership change to its management. The company's joint managing directors Bert Middleton and John Morrison purchased the shares held by 1W Group.

SMS said that apart from the appointment of Jim Sutherland as the new finance director, the company's structure will remain unchanged. SMS provide personnel and support to oil and gas platforms and offshore drilling rigs in UK and foreign waters. Approximately 60 staff are employed out of Aberdeen with another 50 employed through a joint venture in Malaysia.