

Ainscough buys Baldwins' fleet

Ainscough Crane Hire has fought off rival bids from a European consortium and an internal management buyout team to clinch the purchase of the Baldwins fleet of mobile cranes.

The deal is likely to result in the rapid assimilation of the Baldwins Industrial Services crane fleet into Ainscough's fleet. Baldwins currently has about 270 cranes in its fleet and it is expected that Ainscough will purchase about 250 of them to give it a total fleet size of 650 cranes.

Sources at Ainscough said that the company was determined to keep as many of the

Baldwins operations staff as possible and stressed that this would not be a "carve-up". It seems likely, however, that there will be redundancies at Baldwins head office and that most of the Baldwins depots will be merged into existing Ainscough depots. The exception is likely to be in London where Baldwins has two depots that would complement Ainscough's existing network.

The price paid for the deal has not been revealed. Excluded from the deal is the Delta tower crane operation and the US crane rental operation. Both are still for sale.

Also still to be clarified is

whether all of the cranes in the Baldwins heavy lift fleet will be part of the deal, but it seems clear that Ainscough will soon have cranes with capacities of more than 800 tonnes. Senior staff at Ainscough stressed that although there had always been friendly rivalry with Baldwins "we are greatly looking forward to working with them and will keep existing teams together as much as is possible".

● The Baldwins fleet is much younger than the GWS fleet that Ainscough bought last year and it is therefore likely that less of the Baldwins fleet will be sold on than was the case with GWS. Ainscough's total workforce is likely to be more than 1200 people. Visit www.vertikal.net for more information and regular updates.

Taylor Crane acquired

The Taylor Crane Company has been acquired out of the Taylor Group of Companies for an undisclosed sum. The purchase was made by a management buy-out team consisting of the company's new managing director, Maurice Johnston, and finance director, Richard Dean, and included the trade and assets of Taylor Crane Company, Quigley Crane Hire and Duncan Crane Hire.

"We have acquired a fleet of over 100 cranes and have a network of 7 depots covering Scotland, the North East and North West of England," said Johnston. "The new company will operate as one business under the Taylor Crane Company for the immediate future and we will pursue a policy of upgrading the current fleet with immediate effect, building on the solid base of the current business in terms of customers and employees."

Johnston has over 30 years experience in the plant and crane hire industries and was formerly director of Amec Plant Services. He has been actively involved with major crane hire companies in the UK for the last 10 years.

Brandon Hire acquires Loadtite

Tool hire specialist Brandon Hire has acquired Loadtite from PricewaterhouseCoopers – the receivers of Baldwins Industrial Services. The acquisition includes Loadtite's four branches in Avonmouth, Cardiff, Hayes and Barking, along with its existing workforce of more than forty employees.

Brandon's finance direc-

tor Chris Simms said that the purchase is a major part of Brandon's expansion into the lifting equipment market. "We already earmarked four sites for lifting and other specialist equipment," said Simms. "Loadtite not only expands our network but, through its experienced and knowledgeable staff, brings a wealth of

expertise that would have taken us years to achieve."

Also commenting on the acquisition, Loadtite's managing director Mike Hughes said that he was delighted with the news. "The period of uncertainty is over and we can now look forward to growing the business rapidly in the next few months," he said.



The UK's biggest plant hirer, ukforks, has secured a deal

Safe handlers

with Laing Homes to provide the latest telehandler safety accessories to its telehandlers and forklift trucks. The latest deal compliments an existing contract to provide Laing Homes with telehandlers and forklifts to 30 Laing Homes sites across the UK. ukforks announced plans just two weeks ago to produce the latest safety accessories, which include boom mirrors, convex mirrors and hi-viz decals.

"Site safety is paramount to Laing Homes, automatically overriding any financial considerations," said Ken Chambers, Laing Homes health and safety advisor. "We have taken up the latest ukforks' safety accessories following a decision to eradicate all driver blind spots on forklifts and telehandlers." The company says that it is now considering extending its contract with ukforks and intro-



ducing safety accessories to a further 30 UK sites.

HSE revises platform Guidance Note



Users of working platforms harnessed to forklift trucks are the focus of the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) revised Guidance Note PM28. The HSE worked closely with the British Industrial Truck Association in developing the new regulations, which provide guidance on the legal requirements covering the use and thorough examination of platforms, the circumstances when it is appropriate to use working platforms on forklift trucks and the design requirements of the platforms.

A recent report published by George Williams, technical manager at B&B Attachments, states that lift trucks are involved in a high number of fatal accidents in the work place caused by either poor maintenance, lack of training or inappropriate use, and that the new PM28 guidelines are relevant to every person responsible for the safe operation of forklift truck platforms. The new

edition of PM28 replaces the previous versions published in 1981, 1985 and 1991. Copies can be obtained from HSE books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2WA Tel: 01787 881154 Fax: 01787 313995 quoting PM28 "Working platforms on forklift trucks" (ISBN 0 7176 1233 3) priced at £6.

● Meanwhile, B&B Attachments has signed a new long-term contract with one of Europe's leading forklift attachment producers, Kaup. B&B will continue the 22-year relationship between the two companies in supplying the UK and Ireland markets. The company said that the latest agreement not only underlines its commitment to the UK and Ireland markets, but also provides a solid base to further its infiltration of the paper handling industry with the upcoming launch of a new range of products produced in collaboration with key European manufacturers.

SMIE anti-collision for Bovis towers

Bovis Lend Lease is fitting SMIE AC 30 anti collision systems on all its tower cranes, currently at work on its UK sites, in a bid to overcome what it says is the biggest single cause of accidents in the construction industry – human error. Bovis' safety director, Peter Hobson, said that it is no longer sufficient for site workers to rely only on the banksman and that there has not been a single failure attributable to the SMIE AC 30 systems.

As the UK's construction sites become more and more congested, especially inner city sites, the use of such

equipment is becoming more and more popular where there is the potential for cranes working in close proximity of each other colliding. Sources at Bovis also said that it is developing a winch gantry that fits on the back of tower cranes that can be used to lower an operator to the ground quickly and safely in the case of an accident.

Hobson said that the use of such equipment may be considered an expensive way of guaranteeing safety by some, but believes it offers real value for money "certainly when you consider the cost in relation to total development budget, said Hobson."

JLG doubles telehandler revenue



JLG says that revenue from its telescopic handlers has doubled for the first quarter of its new financial year. New figures from the company show that revenue for sales of telescopic handlers has jumped to US\$27,6 million (UK£17,7 million) for the first quarter of the 2003 financial year. This nearly doubled the comparable figure for the first quarter of last year, which stood at \$14,1 million (£9,07 million).

The rise in sales was attributed to "share gains from new products, particularly the all-

wheel steer and European-design telehandler families." The rising sales helped offset disappointing sales of work platforms, where revenues were \$91,3 million (£58,68 million), 11 per cent lower quarter-over-quarter, "primarily due to lower sales volumes affected by economic pressures in North America and Europe, offset in part by stronger sales in other international regions. Pictured is JLG's 4013 from its new range of European Telehandlers.

HSE approves transport platforms

The Construction Plant-hire Association (CPA) has published important safety guidance to establish the best practise for transport platform use. When first imported from continental Europe in the early 1990's, transport platforms were condemned by many as unsafe and the HSE indicated that they probably contravened the requirements of Regulations 5(1) and 6(1) of

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER).

Speaking at the launch of the guide, Andrew East of the HSE's Construction NIG said, "The CPA's Best Practise Guide has been fully endorsed by the chief inspector of construction, Kevin Meyers. It has been sent to all of the HSE inspectors in the field." The guide provides the best prac-

tise for those responsible for the planning, safe installation, use, maintenance, inspection, thorough examination and testing of transport platforms.

Copies of the CPA Best Practise Guide are obtainable from the Construction Plant-hire Association, 52 Rochester Row, London, SW1P 1JU. Tel: 020 7630 6767; priced £7.50 incl. p&p.

Hewden buys 30 Demags

Hewden Crane Hire has just placed an order for almost 30 new mobile cranes from Demag. The purchase reflects the company's long-standing policy of replacing part of its fleet every year and will be financed from existing company funds, said Alex Lowe, Director and General Manager of Hewden Crane Hire.

The Hewden Group currently has a fleet of about 275 mobile cranes which makes it the second largest in the UK after the Ainscough fleet, which is expected to stabilise at about 550 cranes following the acquisition of Baldwins.

"We welcome the news that Ainscough Crane Hire has bought Baldwins" said Alex Lowe, adding that Hewden had submitted its own bid for the Baldwins fleet but was philosophical about being beaten to the final deal.

Lowe continued, "Some consolidation in the industry is essential and might enable us to bring the rates up to a sensible level. There is a strong drive towards more safety and planning coming from both the HSE and customers. Any increase would allow us to invest further in the latest technology and the key areas of safety which can only be good for our customers".



Ormig has expanded its "pick and carry" crane range with the introduction of its diesel/electric, 33 tonne capacity 33tmBP. Available in three-speed, diesel mode or two speed, electric mode, the unit complies with all noise and anti-pollution regulations for indoor and outdoor use. The unit's battery is constantly charged while the crane is travelling on the road by means of an on-board generator connected to the diesel engine.

Offshore competency programmes launched

North Sea Lifting (NSL) has joined forces with Emta Awards Ltd (EAL) to produce two new competence-based training programmes for the UK and International Oil and Gas Industry. The programmes are based on the original performance criteria of the Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA).

The most basic of the two programmes, Rigging and

Lifting Level 1, targets technicians and personnel involved in routine and simple lifting tasks and comprises a two-day Basic Rigging course which covers LOLER legislation and regulations, planning, risk assessment, pre-use inspection of lifting equipment, the safe use of lifting equipment, installation of lifting appliances, slinging of loads, and working at heights above 2 metres.

The main programme

designed for riggers, Rigging and Lifting Level 2, is for those personnel who may carry out complex rigging operations. In addition to the topics covered by Level 1, the three-day NSL course covers rotating loads, cross-hauling loads, lifting loads with an offset, and lifting in low headroom situations.

On completion of both courses, candidates are issued with a Certificate of Training

and a logbook, which is used to record all following rigging and lifting activities witnessed and signed by a qualified skills assessor. When completed, the logbook is then assessed and verified by NSL and EAL prior to the Certificate of Competence award. Successful candidates are then issued with the certificate, which is valid for two years after which time he/she must be re-assessed.

The Hiab/Vertikal challenge at SED 2003

Visitors to next year's SED exhibition will have a great opportunity to prove their skills with a state-of-the-art knuckleboom crane as Hiab and The Vertikal Press have teamed up to launch the Hiab/Vertikal knuckleboom challenge.

The challenge takes place in the SED Cranes & Access village over the full three days of the SED 2003 exhibition. It will feature one of Partek Cargotec's newest Hiab cranes from the "mid range" XS HI-PRO series. This will be fitted with the CombiDrive 5000 radio remote control system which also features a state-of-the-art slewing sector limitation

system. This will be used to make it impossible for operators to slew into dangerous or public areas.

"This crane is one of our most modern and it features the excellent CombiDrive remote control system. We offer two remote control systems and about 80 per cent of the cranes that we sell in Sweden are now fitted with remote control" said Ismo Leppanen, UK marketing and product manager with Partek Cargotec. "The Hiab/Vertikal challenge will give people a great opportunity to test this equipment while allowing them to show off their skills with the crane".



Entrants in the Hiab/Vertikal Knuckleboom challenge will have to prove their skills by positioning a load in specific positions while being timed. Each day the SED show organisers will present an engraved trophy to the winner while The Vertikal Press, publisher of *Cranes & Access* will give a £100 cash prize.

● SED 2003 takes place from April 29th – May 1st at its usual location on Fen Farm, near Milton Keynes. The Cranes & Access village is held in association with *Cranes & Access* magazine. More information on www.sed.co.uk or www.Vertikal.net

Access trio form industrial consultancy

A new business consultancy has been launched by three of Germany's better known access industry figures. Conmac International has been founded by Messrs Dahms, Metzner and Willenbrock and aims to advise companies on how to avoid the perils and pitfalls involved in doing business in Germany.

The three partners draw on a wealth of experience as Dahms and Metzner were until recently the senior management team at Bertram, while Willenbrock is the owner of Willenbrock Concept. Dahms and Metzner are also leading lights in the Ringlift organisation of powered access rental companies.

Conmac is not looking to become an importer or dealer but will act as a neutral intermediary to bring potential business partners together in any industrial sector.

Mobile tax

From February 17, 2003, and between 7 am and 6.30 pm on Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays, all vehicles crossing allocated zones in London will be charged a daily fee of £5. And, unless your crane is gas or electric powered, has two wheels, doubles as an emergency vehicle or a licensed minicab or alternatively holds a blue or orange dis-

abled badge, you will also be subject to the daily £5 charge.

Legislation states that if the vehicle is parked on, or driving on a public highway within the allocated zones, then it qualifies for the charge. But, what if the crane is on a long hire job and stays on the same site over a period of time? According to a Transport for London (TfL) spokesperson, if the crane is parked on the public highway while it is working, then it is

liable for the daily charge. However, if it is on a long job on private land, then it will only be liable for the £5 charge if it at any time crosses the boundary of an allocated zone.

Failure to pay the congestion charge will result in a £80 penalty, reduced to £40 if paid within 14 days. Failure to pay the penalty within 28 days will incur a further penalty of £120 – Happy lifting!

Palfinger to re-shape service ops

Palfinger is introducing a series of after sales service operations to boost its customer service capabilities. The company's E-Claim project, available from 2003 onwards, has been designed to provide the quickest possible information flow between itself and customers on a global scale. Customers with warranty claims will be able to enter any one of Palfinger's 1,400 service workshops or dealerships and have their requests processed instantly via the Internet to the relevant

Palfinger facility.

The company's own Salzburg and Bergheim service departments will be combined in 2003 to create a demonstration and training centre, while a new service centre, scheduled for completion in 2004, will be implemented for both pre and after sales needs. All Palfinger products will be available at the centre for practical and theoretical demonstration and training purposes.

A series of electronic sales aids will also be at hand for

Palfinger representatives and customers worldwide, including the PAC Calculation Program for exact axle load and stability calculations, the PATIS information tool for spare parts analysis and the PALDIAG for modifying equipment settings and diagnostic measurements. The dispatch of Palfinger products and free delivery will also be incorporated into the company's existing RAP Rapid Process system meaning that all product purchases will be delivered within a fixed delivery period – 15 days for loader cranes and 20 days for large cranes. The service will be available for January 1, 2003.

Gyda fatality

A crane hookman received fatal injuries last month on the Pipedeck, Gyda Platform, situated in Norway's Gyda offshore field. The victim was crushed between a chemical pod and an adjacent container after climbing onto the pod to hook the chain sling.

During the operation, the crane driver lowered the crane pendant too low and was instructed by the hookman to raise it by 20 centimetres. The pendant snagged the pod's frame and lifted one end clear of its stacking lugs. As the pod toppled, the hookman was pinned between the falling pod and a nearby container, receiving crushing injuries to his chest.

The Norwegian Petroleum Directorate reported that a combination of inadequate stacking design of the pods, inadequate lift planning and identification of job hazards and poor communication between the hookman, flagman and operator was blamed for the fatality.

Four-leafed crawler

Northern Ireland-based O'Kane Brothers has added to its existing nine-strong crawler crane fleet with the recent delivery of a 250 tonne capacity Kobelco CKE2500. The company said that it saw the need for a 250 tonner at the high end of the market and that prior to the delivery the company's biggest unit was an 80 tonne capacity machine.

Rigged with 57.9 metres of main boom and 18.3 metres of fixed jib, the crane is now the biggest unit in its fleet. The crane's first job will be a marine application on the West Coast of Ireland. Kobelco has also reported the recent delivery of a 180 tonne capacity CKE 1800



crawler unit to French contractor, Entreprise de Travaux Public de l'Ouest, where it will be used for piling, clamshell and general lifting duties.

Intervect acquires Hunnebeck Hungaria

Intervect has acquired Hünnebeck from TKS&S Hünnebeck for an undisclosed sum. The acquisition includes 5000 m² of the company's covered production area, where it manufactures scaffolding and formwork for ThyssenKrupp Hünnebeck and mast sections for HEK Manufacturing, and a 6000 m² external storage area, both located in Budapest.

The production plant comprises 12 welding stations with the capacity to process up to 2000 tonnes of aluminium per year and 10 stations for welding up to 1500 tonnes of steel. Almost 100,000 units can be produced at the plant annually. Tibor Schmidt has been appointed managing director of the new company, which will be renamed Intervect Hungária.

News highlights

- **Instant Training**'s new purpose-built training centre in the Midlands is now offering a full range of access, plant and technology courses for the plant and access industries. In addition to a range of health and safety plant and access courses, a specialist IT division also provides attendees with the facility to develop the latest relevant industry computer technology.
- **Mastclimbers** has been awarded the regional award for Scotland at the recent Inner City 100 Awards for the second year running. The Inner City 100 Index ranks the 100 fastest growing inner city companies in the UK. Mastclimbers reported a turnover growth of 670 per cent over five years on this year's index.
- We regret to announce that the wrong picture was used on the first page of the 'Used Equipment' article in the last issue of *Cranes & Access*. We would like to make clear that the Commhoist crane shown in the picture is not for sale. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

UK's first system scaffold course

The training division of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) – the National Construction College – has launched the UK's first system scaffold course in conjunction with the National Access & Scaffolding Confederation (NASC). The new three-week course, affiliated to the Construction Industry Scaffolders' Record Scheme (CISRS), is designed for trainees with more than six months experience as scaffold labourers.

Course attendees embark on a ten-day Scaffolding Basic Part 1

programme, aimed at providing a working knowledge of scaffold principles and methods of erecting and dismantling basic scaffolds. Following a further six months on site, attendees return to the college for a five-day system scaffolding course.

Chris Barrett, access manager at the National Construction College East said, "there has been a training gap in the market for many years. The new course aims to bridge the skills gap amongst operatives who haven't received formal training in using system scaffolding."

New scissors for Hewden

Hewden Instant Access has taken delivery of what is now only the fourth 28.3 metre scissor lift available for hire in the UK. The company says that its new Liftlux SL260-25 scissor will help boost its presence in the construction sector, particularly in the erection of exterior cladding in large steel frame buildings.

Commenting on the purchase, Richard Garner, depot manager at the Hewden Instant Access depot in Luton said, "the new buildings being erected today are getting taller and taller, and I think we will see a growing demand for scissors to reach greater heights. The new SL260-25 scissor is capable of reaching heights of up to 28.3 metres and our



investment in this area will enable us to develop new markets with this type of machine." Hewden has also purchased a Liftlux SL153-12 scissor lift, capable of working height up to 17.3 metres.