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COMMENT



Welcome to the July/ August issue. If you, like me, had envisaged a summer slow-down and some time to assimilate the industry's spring clear out, forget it! The acquisition of Demag by Terex is major news, and it was only a couple of issues ago that we were considering Manitowoc's purchase of Grove.

We now have two powerful, full product range crane groups that have appeared in the last few months. Both see Liebherr as their natural competitor. But, as Tim Whiteman points out in his industry focus on page 13, Liebherr is a rather different animal. It has never bought other companies and has always grown by starting its own subsidiaries to create a successful European powerhouse.

To you and I there is one simple question about the crane trade's consolidation – what does it mean to the British and Irish markets?

Manitowoc had only recently consolidated around Potain's UK operation, and now it has acquired Grove's European sales and support operation, based in Sunderland. Grove has no service operation in the UK, as that has been sub-contracted to Samuel Walker. Someone, somewhere in Manitowoc must be wondering how to best make use of these resources – a merger would not be easy, but don't rule out the possibility. The access industry will also be affected. Soon, probably this month, Liftflux (and TDK), Grove Manlift and Grove Delta could all become part of the same group.

Terex and Demag, which compete with each other in the small to mid-range capacities, also have separate operations in the UK. What happens now? As you will read on page 15, Fil Filipov of Terex is playing his cards fairly close to his chest at the moment – but don't expect his usual slash and burn.

With shark fins circling on the surface, down below things are not much calmer for the crane business. Legislation lurking about could take a few small fish out of the food chain before long. Peter Oram says 'ignore it at your peril!', in his focus on the proposed loader crane directive on page 33.

Speaking of food chains – this issue we publish our annual Top 10 survey, on page 16. We have asked crane and access hire companies all over the UK and Ireland to give us details about their fleets, staff size and investment – it's a kind of *Cranes & Access* 'who's who?'

Enjoy issue 4.4 – and have a great summer.

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Rosie Gordon
Editor

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