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# Pick and mix?

Industrial Pick and carry cranes, once a major sector in the UK, seem destined to be niche players in the global crane market. In spite of a recent resurgence in the last few years, they are 'always the bridesmaid and never the bride'. Cranes & Access takes a look at the developing but still relatively small pick and carry crane market.

The vast majority of pick and carry cranes are now manufactured in Italy and the USA, with the USA producing diesel powered models with 180 or even 360 degree slew and carry decks, while the Italian producers tend towards DC battery power and fixed booms. It might surprise you to know that 40 odd years ago the UK was one of the world's largest producers of this type of crane, although in those days the market was

But after decades of decline, the market and product has once again been growing and developing, albeit slowly. With many industrial plants finalising plans to carry out work during the annual summer shutdown, this is traditionally a busier time of year for pick and carry equipment. It is odd to note that modern UK industrial plants have still not grasped the full benefits of this type of equipment, which at one time was so commonplace.

## Curtain walling a new trick

Clearly industrial pick and carry machines are indispensable in congested areas where, height and width are restricted and



A large Ormig doing what it does best



substantially larger than it is today. The very fact that the Japanese or Chinese manufacturers do not produce such cranes in any numbers is testament to the relatively small global market - total production figures are thought to be in the hundreds rather than the thousands. Some of this is due to an overall reduction in material handling in production, although legislation and the strong development in the fork lift market has also taken business away from pick and carry cranes.

gaining access to and moving a load is difficult. However, the machines can also be a much more efficient lifting tool during other construction processes and should not just be seen as purely an industrial plant shutdown tool. The problem, as usual, is customer education - knowing and appreciating the capabilities of these machines over alternative equipment or manpower.

"We supplied one curtain-walling contractor in the Middle East with a machine to help install exterior



glazing panels," said Peter Hird of leading pick and carry distributor Valla UK. "The productivity rose from installing four panels per hour to 26 in two hours, allowing the building to be closed to the elements quicker and allowing the services to be installed sooner." "Making customers realise the productivity benefits of using a pick and carry crane is very difficult," he says. "However, once they have seen the machines working and their operators have acclimatised themselves to the slightly different way of operation, then they are more than happy with the results."

Peter Issitt of Crowland Cranes and also Universal Cranes - UK distributors for Ormig pick and carry cranes - agrees.

"We don't have a hire fleet of these cranes, but have been using our demonstrator - a 10 tonne Ormig - to rig and de-rig a new 70 tonne Zoomlion crawler crane in our yard," he said. "There isn't another crane of its size that would have been able to unload and then lift and carry 10 tonne slabs around the site. It is a great machine for jobs such as this."

Perhaps this is the main reason holding back companies from buying or renting this type of crane. For specific tasks they get by with

(perhaps very inefficient or unsafe?) the method or equipment they have always used. However, with increased legislation and risk assessments, companies are more willing, if not obliged, to look at 'other' safer methods of working. In such cases it can come as a pleasant surprise that they make productivity gains as well. There are also several other factors that will help raise the profile of this type of crane.



One of the Galizia machines now available from GGR-Unic



**More choice more variety**

The first is selection and availability. Spider crane dealer Unic-GGR has started to distribute the Italian Galizia range of pick and carry cranes in the UK. And rather than worrying about the increased competition, both Valla and Ormig see the move as a positive, helping increase the awareness of the products and giving customers an alternative product.

Another is the growth of the spider crane. Again one would think that this may reduce the pick and carry

now modular - designed to fit into containers and be narrow enough to be transported on the road.

Hence many plant components break down to two to three tonnes. Even the larger 40 and 50 tonne items will often be installed in three or four pieces allowing 25 tonners to generally cope with most installations in the UK. This leaves the larger Ormig machines (up to 60 tonnes maximum) and Valla (up to 90 tonnes maximum) for use by the rest of the manufacturing world.



*The Grove YardBoss range covers capacities from 8-20 tonnes*

crane's potential market, by fragmenting it with yet another lifting alternative. But for most jobs involving steel and glazing, they will invariably need both a pick and carry crane and a spider crane (not to mention access equipment). Hird thinks that many access rental companies will soon be adding these small cranes to their fleet to offer customers a complete installation package.

In the UK the market is divided into two distinct sizes - up to 12 tonnes and 12 to about 25 tonnes. Above this there is currently very little demand, possibly due to the fact that the UK has lost most of its larger manufacturing processes coupled with the fact that the larger items of industrial equipment are

Other pick and carry cranes sold in the UK - but not in any significant numbers - include the Grove YardBoss range and fellow American producer, Broderson. Manitowoc acquired the Shuttlelift industrial crane line from Marine Travelift, early last year and offers both the Grove YardBoss and Shuttlelift lines. Both are now built in Shady Grove, Pennsylvania although sold through separate distribution channels. The ranges are very similar offering lifting capacities from eight to 20 tonnes. The Galizia range includes seven models in all, with lifting capacities ranging from 2.5 to 25 tonnes and maximum lifting heights of up to 15 metres. Like Valla and Ormig, the cranes are available with either

diesel or battery power sources and options include fly jibs and hydraulic hoists. Distributor GGR Unic says that it has added the first two units, shown at the recent SED, to its rental fleet which it plans to build as well as offering them for sale.

Gill Riley, GGR managing director, said: "Galizia will allow us to offer customers an all-round restricted-access solution. There are some applications where a crane needs to be able to lift and move with a load. For all their reach and

manoeuvrability compared to other makes. Galizia is currently working on a new two tonne electric model - its first and at GGR-Unic's request. With 10 on order the first units will arrive at the end of August or early September.

**Two tonnes and some**

Talking to the manufacturers and distributors, the two tonne sector is obviously the one with most volume potential. At this month's Vertical Days show at Haydock Park, spider crane specialist Jekko

*The new Jekko MPK20W can be seen at Vertical Days*



capacity this is something outriggered mini cranes can't do." "A compact, counterbalanced crane with a short boom like the Galizia is ideal for this sort of job. We see them coming into their own in workshops, marinas, factories and aircraft hangars, places where a forklift doesn't give you the capacity or the reach you need and where the ability to move quickly about site is important."

According to GGR-Unic, one of the key features of the Galizia cranes is the 180 degree rear steering which gives them the edge on

is also launching its first ever pick and carry machine. The new two tonne capacity Jekko MPK20W will be distributed in the UK by Valla UK. Its sister rental division has recently taken delivery of six Jekko spider cranes with vacuum manipulators (mainly 265 and 360's) and has a further six on order. Another Hird group company



*A 60 tonne Ormig*





A Valla crane fitted with a fork attachment

- the Compact Lifting Equipment Company is also the Jekko dealer in the Middle East.

While the MPK20W is Jekko's first pick and carry crane Hird thinks that there will be other models. "The two tonne machine is the most logical size to produce first. Once established, I am sure the range will be expanded. This crane will have a variety of attachments including hydraulic winch, fixed hook, forks and it will be easy to retro-fit these items, adding to the machine's versatility. It has a good performance and specification and

should come out on top in a head-to-head situation."

Although this new Jekko crane is in direct competition with the small Valla machine Hird and Valla appear to accept the situation.

"For the past four years we have sold every machine that Valla could give us," says Hird. "However the smaller machine supply tends to slow when Valla receives orders for the bigger cranes. We will still buy the same amount of Valla equipment going forward, however the Jekko crane gives us the opportunity to satisfy the larger multi-machine orders."

Hird sells between 30-40 Valla cranes in the two to 12 tonnes range per year in the UK. However in the USA it is now selling about 75 a year, again predominantly the smaller units. It also has about 40 units in its UK hire fleet, although if more were available, this figure would probably expand to 60 or more.

### DC rules

"The biggest trend we have noticed over the last year or so is the shift to DC powered machines in the States primarily driven by the link



Pick and carry cranes are ideal in restricted work spaces



In the UK Valla sells about 30-40 machines up to 12 tonnes per year.





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with workplace emission liabilities," says Hird. "North America has always had the pick and carry crane but now it is no longer diesel or LPG. Europe has been fume-free since the late 1990's. The trend towards DC powered machines is such that 95 percent of our sales are now DC powered."

Valla UK was originally part of the Hird Group but split into a separate company a few years ago when Peter Hird's father retired. The business is going well and has doubled its revenues over the last two years. The addition of the Jekko machines can only add to this success.

**Big is not always best**

Ormig machines have been available from Universal Cranes for several years. The Italian manufacturer has a wide range of machines but tends to concentrate on the larger models and currently starts at 10 tonnes with its biggest crane, a 60 tonner. Whilst it has had some sales success, the current growth of the small electric crane market is not spilling over into the larger models. "We asked Ormig to look into manufacturing a smaller crane two years ago and it looks like our requests have been answered," said Peter Issitt. "By the end of the year we should see a five tonne model - a smaller version of the 10 tonne crane we currently offer -



which should at least allow us to get into the more buoyant sector of the UK market."

Sales of the larger cranes are difficult in the UK although it has had some success in the past with rental companies such as Ainscough.

"We are currently in talks with a large rental company which is interested in taking the 16 tonne model to replace older Jones Iron Fairy cranes," said Issitt.

The 16 tonne Ormig is available in electric or diesel variations with the electric version being slightly longer (at 4.8metres) and heavier at 14.4 tonnes. However the main feature of all Ormig machines is that they can carry their maximum load at one metre in front of the front bumper. The unit is also able to lift four tonnes to about 11 metres and when fitted with the fork attachment, carry six tonnes



American manufacturer Broderson (here seen at Conexpo) has a few machines in the UK

at 2.45 metres from its front edge going on to 500kg at eight metres horizontally."

"The main problem in trying to sell these cranes is that people dismiss them as expensive and also cite that they don't have a slew capability. Most people who look to buy are crane operators and they are the worst customers initially because they are used to using the slew function. The best operators tend to be forklift drivers who place the machine where it is needed and don't even consider the slewing function."

Fitted with a set of heavy duty forks, an Ormig 10 tonne pick and carry machine is still capable of lifting 4.5 tonne on the forks making a small, compact telehandler-type machine.

"These cranes have to be viewed as longer term investments," said Issitt.

offer new cranes. Based 10 miles south of Gatwick airport director Sean Preston said that it is quoting for an IF260 and IF300 to an overseas customer which may prompt new units to be made available. These cranes offer 10 tonne and 12.5 tonne pick and carry capacity as well as boasting a good road speed - still unusual in today's market even though they were last produced about 30 years ago.

In a way - this sector of the market is stuck in a time warp. There is little that can be done to improve the basic design of the cranes - "it does what it says on the tin". The problem like other niche products - including trailer cranes and spider cranes - is that customers still do not realise or appreciate the efficiencies that these machines can bring. Yes they have been around for decades, but that does not mean they do not have a place in today's market and



**The Fairy returns?**

Another alternative - and perhaps one of the original pick and carry type cranes in the UK - the Jones Iron Fairy - may soon be making a comeback. Jones Crane Parts and Iron Fairy part of Southdown Engineers is in the process of making a decision on whether to

not just for plant maintenance. Quite the opposite in fact. Used for modern curtain-wall construction they offer huge time and therefore cost savings. If you need to lift and carry loads don't automatically think forklift - check out a pick and carry crane - you may be pleasantly surprised!