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On the cover:

UK rental company Panther recently supplied a 22 metre Omme 2200 spider lift for maintenance and cleaning work on Salisbury Cathedral's internal ceilings.



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SKAKO

LIFT

Platform Basket enters trailer lift market, Terex sells Atlas, Filipov returns, Bronto to launch 112 metre boom, Omme launches 37 metre spider, Jekko enters the spider lift market, the end of the road for Winterlift, Tanfield receives takeover bid for Smiths, Sany unveils 1,000 tonne AT, JCB announces new telehandlers, Merlo unveils new AT Platform, Lifterz acquires C&G Platforms, H.A.B unveils 100ft boom, Socage appoints new UK dealer, Broshuis and Vestas team up, First glimpse of new Terex AC100/4L, Mechan takes on Gruniverpal mini cranes.

Spider lifts 17

The spider lift appears to be the saviour of the access industry with demand generally outstripping supply, particularly above 30 metres - providing rental companies with relatively good returns. We visit Worldlift Industries, or Skako as it is to be known, the inventor of the spider lift and discover how it has transformed the business and is introducing the world's largest spider along with more mainstream models. We also do a follow up visit to spider specialist Higher Access which has just taken delivery of the UK's first Leo 50GTX.



Spider and mini cranes 27

The Spider crane market is one of the few crane markets that is still in its infancy. Even though numbers are growing steadily, it is still relatively unknown. We speak with a number of rental companies, including JT Cranes and Coppard Plant Hire - as well as looking at recent product developments.



The Bauma preview 37

Bauma is huge and Bauma 2010 - the 29th - looks set to be the biggest yet with loads of exciting new products. We kick off our coverage with a special for those with limited time at the show, by compiling our 'Top 50' products not to miss. If you are not going you can see what you will be missing.

Artic Raptor articulating tower crane 41

Is this the future of confined space lifting? The world's first Artic Raptor 84 articulated tower crane is currently working on its first contract in North London and could be the answer to contractors lifting problems on tight inner city 'infill' job sites. Mark Darwin saw the crane in action with Bob Jones of City Lifting Raptors UK sales agent.

The thoughts of president Ball 62

Outgoing IPAF president and managing director of Easy UpLifts/Height for Hire makes an impassioned plea to the powered access industry as a whole to face up the mess that industry is in and adapt to the modern world.

He also reflects on his two years as president of IPAF.



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In the next C&A April 2010 issue we look at last minute Bauma announcements, Truck Cranes, Mast Climbers and Hoists and Access for Aborists.

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c&a
comment

What's the yield?

Why has the equipment rental industry become so pre-occupied with physical utilisation rates? Surely the objective of any business is to make a profit. For a rental company that means buying, maintaining and renting machines of a good standard - and making a profit to continue the cycle all over again.

It matters not one jot if a machine is only used 20, 40 or 60 percent of the time - so long as it is profitable. Several companies interviewed this month said they do not even record physical utilisation - it is how much money each machine makes. About time too!

For far too long, utilisation has been the rental companies' Holy Grail - and it has been generally true that if the utilisation is right the rest will generally come good, but that assumes some discipline in the rental rate structure. The problem comes when the utilisation mantra holds total sway over the rates and the idea of making money is lost. There is no point giving equipment away - even in tough economic times.

John Ball, the outgoing president of IPAF, acknowledges his company's errors and makes an impassioned plea to his rental colleagues for discipline and a shift of focus away from physical utilisation towards yields (see page 62). If a company is losing money from a lack of rate discipline leading to poor yields, surely it is the senior management of the company that is to blame, rather than the lowly salesman? The challenge for larger players is to implement pricing discipline without killing off the entrepreneurial spirit, a tough task.

It is also true that in the recent past some manufacturers and financial institutions have exasperated the situation with easy credit terms, which has led the more desperate to focus purely on generating enough cash to cover the repayments and dangerous creditors - in such cases the need for a cash fix is so strong that rates and yields are long forgotten. The market has ways to rectify such problems, but inappropriate payment holidays and bankruptcy codes that are 'not fit for purpose', is slowing the market's natural correction processes.

It is time that the industry as a whole learns from those that manage yields well, such as car rental, airlines and hotel operators and possibly more importantly, rekindle a respect for the benefits that our products, knowledge and services provide. Providing a crane to lift an awkward load or a platform to reach a job in complete safety while shaving days off a contract surely has more value to it than ordering something like the office stationary?

Mark Darwin

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