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# What makes a rental telehandler

C&A

telehandlers



*Haulotte designed its latest telehandlers specifically for the rental market*

Earlier this year JLG announced the introduction of its RS - Rental Series - line of telehandlers for European markets. This is not the first time that a manufacturer has made an issue of introducing a telehandler that has been 'designed specifically for the rental market' nor is it likely to be the last. We take a look at the new JLG models and what the company has done to make it attractive for the rental market and discuss how much buyers really take note of these considerations.

## RS Rental not Rally

The RS badge is probably best known - at least in Europe - as the badge Ford uses to designate hot versions of its cars - standing for Rallye Sport it first appeared on a Ford Escort RS1600 in 1970. At JLG it means something quite different standing for 'Rental

Series. It first appeared in 2012 on a series of basic, no-frills slab scissor lifts such as the 1932RS and 3248RS (6RS and 10 RS in Europe).

Initially built at its plant in China they were intended to help rental companies make a decent return from competitive hire rates - thanks

to lower prices and fewer moving parts to reduce running and repair costs.

While JLG sells almost as many telehandlers - at least in terms of revenue - as market leaders JCB and Manitou, the vast majority are derived from North America, where it holds a market share substantially above 50 percent. In Europe however it probably struggles to achieve a five percent market share even when you include the Caterpillar and Same-Deutz-Fahr machines it builds.

With the majority of 'construction' telehandlers sold to rental companies, this market is a clear target for any telehandler manufacturer that wants to achieve any real volume. The problem is that the European market is dominated

by JCB and Manitou, with few rental company buyers interested in changing. This inertia is re-enforced by the fact that most fixed frame telehandlers are exceptionally similar in terms of specification, many even sharing the same key components. And lest any maverick engineer has grandiose ideas about designing a better mousetrap, there is little to no appetite among rental buyers for products that are radically or even slightly different for that matter. Pushing lower prices, good service and parts is also not going to cut much ice with this sector, as the two market leaders do pretty well at all of these. Even the all-powerful Caterpillar has given up on any ideas of being a leader in this market and appears satisfied to supply its dealers with a CAT branded product, built by JLG.



*JCB and Manitou dominate the telehandler rental market*







**Frills or bullet proof?**

The market leaders do not appear to consider any need for models specially configured for rental, as they already sell their standard products to this sector quite happily and would argue that they were designed that way from the start. The argument probably goes that if it's good for rental companies it must also be good for contractors and owner operators? That's not quite the case but then they both offer enough options and accessories that end users can add all the bells and whistles that would not survive in the rental market.

Haulotte was possibly the first company in recent years to publicly raise the fact that it had specifically tailored new telehandler models for the rental market, when it

introduced its mid-range HTL models in 2010. Its main thrust was to make the machines easier and more intuitive to operate and as fool proof as possible in order to make them safer in the hands of unfamiliar operators. It also included a high basic specification in terms of stabilisers and Powershift transmissions etc. JLG has also done this, but has also placed a strong focus on making its machines more resistant to abuse, and easier to maintain and to return to pristine condition after an operator has done his worst.

The first two models in the

new JLG RS range are the 3,600kg/14 metre 3614RS and 4,000kg/17 metre 4017RS, clearly the most popular full size models for rental companies. Compared to previous models the new machines have a lower boom pivot point and lower tapered machinery covers, all in aid of improved visibility and eliminate blind spots. Other features include a clean rubber cab floor - thanks to all foot pedals pivoting down from the console - that drains rapidly to the door and no exposed electrics or water sensitive materials below waist level, allowing the cab floor to be pressure washed. The lower panel in the door has gone from a glass panel to steel, avoiding breakages and grubby scratched glass, the top window opens, but is now mounted in a solid steel frame to help prevent damage, an additional grab handle has been added on the right to make it easier for operators to climb aboard without grabbing the steering wheel. The cab is however slightly narrower than that of JCB and Manitou or Merlo for that matter - but wider than some. The polyester mud guards have been raised to create a larger clearance over the tyres in order to prevent large stones from jamming and damaging them, lights are now mounted on substantial steel stalks, the Deutz engine is mounted longitudinally with all routine service points easily accessible from



The JLG RS.

**How they compare**

	JLG 4017RS	JCB 540-170	Haulotte HTL 4017	Manitou 1840	Genie GTH 4018
Height	17m	16.7m	16.7m	17.5m	17.6m
Outreach	12.8m	12.5m	12.85m	13.17m	13.36m
Capacity	4000kg	4,000kg	4,000kg	4,000kg	4,000kg
At max outreach	500kg	500kg	700kg	850kg	700kg
At full height	2,500kg	2,500kg	2,500kg	2,500kg	2,000kg
Weight	11,500kg	12,060kg	12,170kg	11,700kg	11,980kg
Power	74kW	81kW	70kW	74.5kW	75kW
Levelling	10		10	9	7
O/A length	6.08m	6.36m	6.7m	6.27m	6.57m
Ground clearance	430mm	400mm	500mm	420mm	350mm
Cab	870mm	940mm	960mm	890mm	780mm
Transmission	PS	PS	HS	PS/HS	HS

Comparing key specifications these new RS series telehandlers stack up very well with the other machines that rental companies look at, but whether this will be enough to encourage JCB and Manitou buyers to switch remains to be seen.

**JLG RS details**



The floor is clear, waterproof and drains easily



Mounted in line all routine service points are easily accessible



A lot of attention has gone into rear and offside visibility



locked access panels are provided for fuel, oil and inspection



the front. Inspecting the telescope chains is easy via a hinged door in the back of the boom. Access to the fuel and hydraulic oil filler are placed next to the cab behind locked covers.



# Keep it simple

For a relatively young plant hire company Haydock-based Plant Hire UK has invested heavily in equipment. This year it spent a total of £11 million and £10 million in 2013 adding telehandlers and other equipment but since 2008 has kept its fleet at around 600 machines. Since it was formed in 2005 it has spent £50 million on 1,500 telehandlers with its current 300 strong telehandler fleet less than two years old.

Although less than 10 years old, the company has plenty of managerial experience with managing director Graham Jones and financial director Wayne Illidge having previously worked together running a plant hire company in the West Midlands area. Plant Hire UK began slowly,

trading out of its first depot in Newton-le-Willows near Haydock.

"I started with an office girl, a driver and second hand wagon and van," said Jones. "However because of our past experience and history with various finance companies, JCB, Volvo and Terex gave us excellent credit lines which allowed us to

invest heavily in new equipment."

Using existing contacts the company grew rapidly and by the time the recession hit in 2008 it had a fleet of nearly 900 machines and had outgrown its premises. Despite the economic downturn, the company still decided to move to its current larger premises in nearby Haydock, but reduced the fleet to around 600 units 40 percent of which were telehandlers.

"Initially we looked at all of the leading telehandler manufacturers (and still like to keep abreast of current developments etc) but

chose JCB because we felt it had the best all-round package – a well-designed, good quality machine that is easy to operate, reliable and has the back-up and parts availability/infrastructure needed to keep the machines out working. We also like to support local and UK companies where possible."

With just one depot in the North West offering national coverage, parts backup and availability is critical. "We have a total of nine fitters between head office and out on the road, and so long as we order a part from JCB before 4.30pm it



Plant Hire UK has purchased 1,500 telehandlers since 2005

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Graham Jones

will be delivered before 7am the next day. With many machines still under warranty our local dealer Gunn JCB is able to cover our services on a national basis. However we are seriously looking to expand by opening a satellite depot in Birmingham."

"Our aim is simple - to provide the best machines and best support at the most competitive prices. JCB builds excellent machines, customers ask for them and are pleased to have them on site particularly as most are almost new."

Plant Hire UK offers a full range of fixed-frame telehandlers from the two tonne four and five metre lift height 520-40 and 520-50 to the four tonne, to the four tonne/20 metre 540-200 - it was the first UK company to add Europe's largest fixed frame telehandler purchasing it last year.

With a lift height three metres higher than the 17 metre 540-170, the new 540-200 uses a five section boom to keep the machine's overall length down, while the use of lighter, higher grade steels provide improved lift capacities. Stability is improved at the increased working

height by positioning the stabilisers further forward.

All of Plant Hire UK's equipment is self-drive and primarily rented to the construction sector. Its most popular models are the 12 metre and 14 metre lift height 3.5 tonne 535-125 and 535-140 telehandlers. It adds that it sees almost no demand for 360 degree machines and therefore has no intention of adding them to the fleet.

Having purchased 1,500 telehandlers since 2005, Plant Hire UK is in a good position to judge the product developments that have been implemented over that time.

"The main developments have been in the areas of improved visibility, ease of working on the machines, reduced engine emissions and reduced fuel consumption," he said. "The other major factor given the amount of equipment theft is security systems. All of the JCB Tier 4i machines have Thatcham accredited security systems including in-built immobilisers and chipped keys. The latest Ecomax Tier 4i/IIIB engine machines are the best yet, particularly when equipped with JCB's Livelink software system which allows us to manage the machines remotely. This means maintenance is easier with accurate monitoring of the hours and service alerts with real time data. It also allows geo-fencing which alerts us when the machines are moved out of a pre-set zone."

"We also constantly feed-back comments and ideas to

JCB, suggesting changes and improvements to make the machines better and over the years many have been included in the new product development.

#### Poor rates

Whatever the rental sector low rental rates are a major issue and telehandlers are no exception – even when the industry is very busy and machines are highly utilised.

"When I first started in the industry in the mid-1980s, a seven metre Matbro machine costing £24,000 was being hired out for £240 a week. We are not getting that rate now and the equivalent sized machine is costing £38k. The most popular sizes such as the 12 metre machines should have a hire rate of £350 plus per week because of manufacturers increasing equipment purchase prices but there are some companies supplying them way below this figure. All we can do is supply top quality equipment, back-up and service to customers which appreciate what we do."

With the vast array of attachments available, the telehandler has taken over as the essential machine on the construction site capable of unloading wagons, placing materials, lifting in roof trusses as well as keeping roads clear with a general purpose bucket and sweeper.

"We offer a wide array of attachments including buckets, tipping skips, sweepers and hydraulic jibs for transporting roof trusses around sites," he said. "So far we haven't added any hydraulic platforms, but if there is demand for them we will certainly add them in the future."



Wayne Illidge (L) and Graham Jones (2nd R) at the recent 200 machine handover



The new 20 metre JCB 540-200



# Record breakers...

Earlier this year there were two totally unrelated world record attempts at the unassisted distance travelled in a telehandler. In March Italian telehandler manufacturer Dieci and its Czech distributor Manatech CZ launched a combined attempt using a Dieci Agric Plus 40.7 EV02.

The telehandler left the Dieci plant in Montecchio and was monitored by official judges from the Guinness Book of World Records as it made its way to the Czech Republic. To set a new record the telehandler had to travel more than 840km in six days from Montecchio Emilia in Italy to the Techagro exhibition in Brno, Czech Republic, crossing Northern Italy, Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic.

The team was successful in its

bid, completing 878.5 kilometres in six days. Two men alternated the driving for both safety and speed. The only compromise to the record bid was the fitting of a non-standard tyres, with Mitas turf tyres used for lower rolling resistance and better fuel economy, even though it consumed 380 litres of diesel.

### Even further

However just a few weeks later there was another record-breaking attempt - this time by Leo 'Manne' Terqujeff, head of after-sales service at Finnish-based distributor Rotator, who planned to drive from Italy to Finland, smashing the record with a distance of more than 4,000km.

Rotator has been a Merlo telehandler distributor for many years and Terqujeff has 28 years' experience with the products.



(L-R) Dieci owner *Ciro Correggi* with *Milos Lesina* owner of Manatech CZ prior to the world record attempt



Record breaker *Leo Terqujeff* with his *Merlo P25.6*

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He is passionate about the green machines to the point where he has a large Merlo logo tattooed on his left arm. With retirement approaching he had the insane idea to mark the end of his career by driving a new machine from the factory in Cuneo, Italy all the way to Helsinki, Finland.

The idea was accepted and supported by both Rotator and Merlo, so preparations began and a travel itinerary and route worked out. Leaving the factory on April 28th Terqujeff chose a compact 2.5 tonne/ six metre P25.6 which has an overall width of 1.80 metres and is 1.92 metres high. However the main reason for choosing this model was that it has one of the largest cabs in

the Merlo range and is the fastest in the company's line up, achieving a maximum road speed of 36kph.

The trip from Italy crossed Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark and Sweden, before arriving in Finland and had several challenging stretches including mountain passes on the border between Italy and



The 4,300km route



**C&A telehandlers**

Slovenia and the sea crossings in Northern Europe. In each country he passed through Terqujeff visited the local Merlo importer. The trip was expected to take around two months but in just 33 days Terqujeff reached Pirkkala - about 200km north of Helsinki - to claim a new

world record as the longest trip in a telescopic handler having travelled 4,300km.

With such interest in the record one wonders any of the other telehandler manufacturers might look to challenge the new record?



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# Bigger and bigger

Over the past decade or so there has been growing demand within the telehandler sector for higher capacity machines. It was 2008 when Manitou launched its monster 21 tonne capacity MHT 10210. The world's largest telehandler at the time, it was targeted at special applications such as stone quarries or mining taking telehandlers into new markets, possibly even nibbling away at the bottom end of the crane market.

That forecast is now becoming true with telehandler capacities reaching 30 tonnes and set to go as high as 40 tonnes in the near future - if the rumoured new Manitou machines appear later this year. Companies such as Magni and Xtreme are already producing 30 tonne machines which are finding a niche in mining applications particularly when fitted with attachments such as wheel, tyre and cylinder clamps.

Manitou's two new MHT models are expected to have capacities of 35 and 40 tonnes and lift heights of around 14 metres. The largest model in the current MHT range is the 10225 - a 22.5 tonner with a lift height of just under 10 metres - so the new machines are a significant step up for the manufacturer.

Due to its size and specialist nature there are not too many MHT10225 machines in general rental fleets, as most are sold to end users, but a few months ago UK telehandler and access rental company Geoff Huntley Plant took delivery of an 18 tonne Manitou MHT 10180.

Weighing just over 24 tonnes, the MHT 10180 has a lift height of 10 metres and a maximum outreach of 5.5 metres. Outreach at its maximum height is 1.3 metres, at which it can lift up to nine tonnes.

Relative newcomer to the telehandler scene is Italian manufacturer Magni. Its initial range of heavy duty HTH machines consisted of two models - the 30 tonne capacity HTH 12.30 and 25 tonne HTH 11.25. At the time of their launch they were the biggest telescopic handlers in the world. However it has now extended the range to four machines, including the 15 tonne HTH 15.10 - available with a JCB or Mercedes diesel - the 27 tonne HTH 27.11, 30 tonne HTH 30.12 and the 35 tonne capacity HTH 35.12. The lift heights range from 10 to 12 metres.

A few months ago African mining company First Quantum Mineral took delivery of the first four Magni telehandlers in Africa. Destined for the company's mining operations in Zambia, the order included two heavy duty 30 tonne/12 metre HTH 30.12s equipped with a tyre clamp



A Manitou MHT10120 working in a quarry



Doosan DT160



The 30 tonne Magni HTH30.12 with tyre clamp attachment



16.63 attachment, which can handle tyres ranging in size from 24 to 63 inches (0.6 to 1.6 metres) and weighing up to 16 tonnes. They have also been specified with the company's hydraulic cylinder clamp attachment designed to replace damaged cylinders weighing up to 11 tonnes.

At Conexpo earlier this year Xtreme Manufacturing launched its largest telehandler to date - the 65,000lbs capacity (29.5 tonne) XR6538. Weighing in at 43.5 tonnes the XR6538 can lift its maximum capacity to 7.9 metres and it has a lift height of 11.6 metres. Powered by a 300hp diesel it has a long list of attachments and accessories, including an aerial work platform, sling mount, bucket, pole grab and concrete hopper.

Several of the other telehandler manufacturers have 'heavy duty' versions of standard machines but few have a lift capacity of 10 tonnes or more. One exception is Dieci with its heavy duty Hercules machines

which range from 10 tonnes to the largest, the 210.10 with a 21 tonne capacity.

In 2010 Doosan Infracore launched a four model range from seven to 21 tonne capacity in Europe, however these appear to be no longer available.

Skyjack has one heavy duty telehandler left from the heavy duty range it acquired from Carelift back in 2007 - the 9.1 tonne capacity, 13.67 metre lift height ZB2044. The specification has been improved recently with the addition of a Tier 4 interim compliant engine. Carelift had previously built models up to 13.5 tonnes capacity, although sales were far and few between.

These larger telehandlers are ideal for large loads in a wide variety of sectors, along with crane erection and other pick & carry or low headroom jobs. However it is very large capacity machines that currently appear to be the main growth area.



The 9.1 tonne capacity Skyjack ZB2044