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JCB unveils access



The biggest news so far this year is the entry of JCB into the powered access market. The worldwide launch of its aerial lift plans at the beginning of this month came as no surprise, given that an increasing number of people in the industry were aware of it in general terms. What we all lacked was confirmation of specific facts. So at the start of the month the company unveiled a nine model range of electric scissor lifts which will soon be followed by a line of articulated and telescopic booms to create a range of 27 lifts in all.

During the latter months of the two year product development programme, rumour of the impending launch grew, particularly as word of high profile access industry characters such as ex-Genie vice president Phil Graysmark - now JCB Access sales director - started seeping out.

Given the scale of the new division and operation, JCB did very well to keep the lid on the launch details, considering its dealers were told about the products in November and almost 1,000 signed nondisclosure agreements. The press



launch preceded the customer event by a day and included a product introduction from JCB Access managing director Richard Butler - a 28 year JCB veteran - and Lord Anthony Bamford who appeared





very excited about the prospect of entering the access market.

"We are continually developing products - in many cases leading products - and this is the life blood for the future of the company," he said. "This year alone we will launch 58 new products into the construction and agricultural markets, last year it was 54. Compare this to a car manufacturer which may have five or six model ranges. We have 18 totally new products this year and 300 basic product ranges with most designed in the UK and in India."

"We have no problem recruiting engineers mainly because we have exciting products. We also educate engineers with 690 pupils at the JCB Academy between the ages of 14 to 18 who can then either join us or our Core Challenge Partners including Rolls Royce aero engines, Toyota, Rexroth or go on to university. People are trained to be practical, to ask questions and to find a solution."

"Much of what we see in engineering has been done before. This access product has been done before but you will find lots of little features which are intelligent solutions - that is what I am looking for. Success depends on customers buying our products and our bigger rental customers have been telling us that they would like us to be in the access market - we will have products and the service and parts backup so we can compete very well with the established manufacturers such as JLG and Genie. Parts and service is an area in which we excel."

Chief executive Graeme Macdonald added: "We are suppliers to the two biggest rental companies in the world - United Rentals and Ashtead (owner of Sunbelt Rentals



electric scissor lifts



in the US and A-Plant in the UK) so we see a nice access business growing very quickly. The dealers are all very enthusiastic but in this sector the vast majority of the market is rental which is a direct sale. Our differentiation is service back-up with more than 20 parts warehouses all over the world."

"We have customer events over

the next few days, with a North American event to be held just before the ARA at the end of the month. At Conexpo we will have an articulated boom on show as well as the scissors. It will be interesting to gauge reaction of customers and competitors. The product is being manufactured in China - like many competitors - because of the factors of capacity, supply, capability and cost. The scissor lift sector is a very price sensitive market with rental companies buying thousands each year. One customer told me last week he will be buying 15,000 scissors in the next five years. Exciting times!"

Advantages of being late

Entering late into any sector can have its advantages, such as sizing up competitor products with the aim of benefiting from their learning curves and using customer feedback to see what needs improving. The main reason JCB cites as to why it has entered this market after avoiding it in the past, was that its customers said that they wanted a credible alternative product with good product support. JCB may not know the access market but it



does have strong relationships with rental companies, along with 770 dealers worldwide operating from 2,200 locations to provide back for its products.

JCB chief innovation and growth officer Tim Burnhope said: "The access market is a truly global market and offers immense opportunities for growth for JCB. It's a market that is ripe for a new supplier with the ability to offer industry leading, round-the-clock product support."

Product range

The initial product line - which JCB says it has designed itself comprises nine slab electric scissor



lifts in three families with platform heights ranging from 15 to 45ft - or 6.5 to 15.5 metres working height if you prefer metric. The new range comprises the 15ft S1530E and 19ft S1930E 'elevator scissors', the 20ft S2032E and S2046E, 26ft S2632E and S2646E, 32ft S3246E, 40ft S4046E and finally the 45ft S4550E. The S2046E and S2646E are rated for outdoor use, with the rest are indoor only and all have a 900mm





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roll-out deck extension as standard. The JCB access range uses classic American nomenclature and specifications, the S1530E and S1930E have an overall width of 30 inches/762mm with an overall length of 1.78 metres, stowed height with folded guardrails of 1.84 and 1.86 metres, and platform capacities of 280 and 230kg respectively.

The 20 and 26ft models are available in 32 inch/810mm narrow versions, or with the wider 46 inch/1.15 metre overall width, with capacities ranging from 250 to 550kg. The higher S3246E and S4046E are currently only available with the 46 inch/1.15 metre width, and both offer a 320kg platform capacity. All six models have an overall length of 2.39 metres.

The new product line is topped by the more unusual 45ft S4550E with it is 55inch/1.25 metre overall width and an overall length of 2.76 metres. Platform capacity is 227kg and total weight 3,366kg.

The new scissors are typical of the type, with traditional hydraulic front wheel drive and steer, 25 percent gradeability (30 percent on the S1530E), swing-out battery and component trays, power to the platform and a hinged gate. Other features include six harness points, electrophoretic paint and



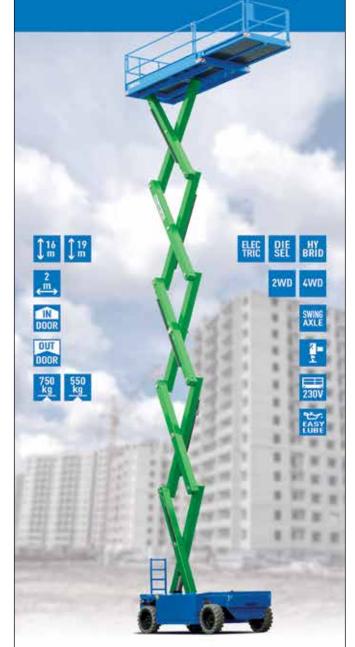
encapsulated scissor pivot pins. JCB's LiveLink telematic system will be optional on the scissors but standard on all boom lifts.

The company says that it has set up a dedicated production line at an existing aerial lift factory in China, which is run by its own dedicated management team, and that it owns the intellectual property rights - as you would expect if it designed the machines itself. It also says that it is in the process of entering into a deeper partnership with the manufacturer of the new range but is remaining exceptionally tight lipped over its identity. Certainly the serial number/CE plate does not reveal either the manufacturer or even the country where it is made. JCB will show the new scissor lift range along with an articulated boom lift at Conexpo next month, adding further models by the end of the year. These will include three diesel scissor lifts, one electric articulated boom lift - the 45ft AJ45E - four Rough Terrain diesel articulated boom lifts and 10 telescopic booms ranging from 67 to 136ft - 27 models in all. Boom capacities will be 227kg and 250kg. Dealers have already undergone sales and service training to provide back-up for the product range, which will initially be marketed in the UK, France, Germany and North America, with deliveries beginning at the end of March. All machines have been CE certified by TÜV and comply with the latest ANSI and CSA standards.

So how do they stack up?

The new models use a traditional design that has changed little in more than 20 years. JCB has chosen to keep it simple, rather than risk innovations such as the direct electric drive that is becoming

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electric scissor lifts

increasingly popular in western markets. It is a formula that has worked well for companies like Skyjack, and JCB clearly hopes to match the Canadian manufacturer for cost-effectiveness and being easy to deal with.

The JCB name has a strong reputation in some market sectors but it is an unknown quantity when it comes to aerial lifts. It will not be the first western manufacturer to build platforms in China, although few if any use China as a global source. With a new more protectionist regime in the White House it will be interesting to see how this pans out in North America. The models that the company has launched or announced, account for the majority of the market. Having a reliable traditional product with good service back-up has the potential to succeed, while its good working relations with some major rental companies is also a major advantage. Whether those customers are ready to place more eggs in the JCB basket, and switch away from suppliers and products

The nine model JCB scissor range

that they know well and understand is another thing and certainly not a 'given'. One has to assume that JCB already has some substantial commitments from a few big customers to have pressed ahead with the launch. If so the ongoing success will depend on how well the new products perform in the field and just how well its dealers adapt to the peculiarities of the access market.

JCB is not a company to be underestimated and it certainly knows how to enter a market late and make a go of it. It has its eyes on grabbing a slice of the growing access market from others, but it is also quite possible that the addition of another major manufacturer to the sector could boost powered access market penetration. Interesting times ahead.

How do JCB's two largest scissor lift models stack up?

The most interesting model in JCB's nine model scissor range is its largest - the 45ft platform height S4550E. This is a relatively new sector for high volume electric

The JCB S4046 v the competition

| | | - | | | |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------|-----------------------|
| Make Model | Haulotte Compact 14 | lmer IT12122 | JCB S4046 | Genie | Skyjack SJIII 4740 |
| Work Height | 13.85m | 13.9m | 13.9M | 13.89m | 13.8m |
| Capacity | 350kg | 350kg | 320kg | 249kg | 350kg |
| Width | 1.2m | 1.22m | 1.15m | 1.19m | 1.19m |
| Length | 2.49m | 2.47m | 2.39m | 2.44m | 2.40m |
| Stowed Height* | 2.08m | 2.11m | 1.98m | 1.88m | 2.21m |
| Weight | 3,175kg | 3,085kg | 2,996kg | 3,260kg | 2,985kg |
| Battery | 340Ah | 300Ah | 300Ah | 300AH | 300Ah |
| Deck ext | 920mm | 1.4m | 900mm | 910mm | 900mm |
| Raise/lower | 61/50 sec | 75/60sec | 75/60sec | 71/41sec | 71/41 sec |
| Gradeability | 23% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| Travel speed | 2.7kph | 4kph | 3.2kph | 3.1kph | 3.2kph |

* Guardrails folded

scissors with very few companies offering lifts capable of almost 16 metres working height. MEC recently launched its 15.7 metre 4555SE and surprisingly Dingli has two platforms of similar height but in two different widths - 1.25 and 1.4 metres.

The main scissor players in the market - Genie, JLG and Skyjack and Haulotte - only have products with 14 metres working height. Haulotte has its new Compact 14 - a 14 metre working height, 350kg capacity scissor. On paper the JCB acquits itself very well against the other 14 and 16 metre machines as the charts clearly demonstrate. However in this category of machines the specification only needs to be in the general ball park - after all if performance is the key then the heavy-duty Holland lift knocks all of the competition into a cocked hat, but check its weight and the price! Distribution, reputation, price, availability, and of course finance are all more important. As is being easy to deal with of course. Watch this space.

| | S1530E | S1930E | S2032E | S2046E | S2632E | S2646E | S3246E | S4046E | S4550E |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Working ht | 6.6m | 7.8m | 8.3m | 8.3m | 10.1m | 10.1m | 12.0m | 13.9m | 15.8m |
| Platform cap | 280kg | 230kg | 380kg | 550kg | 250kg | 450kg | 320kg | 320kg | 227kg |
| Overall length | 1.78m | 1.78m | 2.39m | 2.39m | 2.39m | 2.39m | 2.39m | 2.39m | 2.76m |
| Overall width | 760mm | 760mm | 810mm | 1.15m | 810mm | 1.15m | 1.15m | 1.15m | 1.25m |
| Stowed height | 1.84m | 1.86m | 1.83m | 1.83m | 1.96m | 1.96m | 1.86m | 1.98m | 2.20m |
| Weight | 1330kg | 1526kg | 1834kg | 2134kg | 1972kg | 2528kg | 2646kg | 2996kg | 3366kg |
| Deck extension | 900mm | 900mm | 900mm | 900mm | 900mm | 900mm | 900mm | 900mm | 900mm |
| Indoor/outdoor | Indoor | Indoor | Indoor | Outdoor | Indoor | Outdoor | Indoor | Indoor | Indoor |
| Gradeability | 30% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| Max speed | 4kph | 4kph | 3.2kph | 3.2kph | 3.2kph | 3.2kph | 3.2kph | 3.2kph | 3.2kph |

The JCB S4550E vs MEC 4555SE vs Dingli JCPT 1614/1612 HD vs Holland Lift HL160 E12

| Make Model | JCB S4550E | MEC 4555SE | Dingli JCPT 1612HD | Holland Lift HL160 E12 |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Work height | 15.79m | 15.72m | 15.7m | 16.0 |
| Capacity | 227kg | 227kg | 200kg | 750kg |
| Width | 1.25m | 1.4m | 1.25m | 1.20m |
| Length | 2.76m | 2.8m | 2.84m | 3.74m |
| Height o/a | 2.6m | 2.6m | 2.59m | 3.1m |
| Height stowed | 2.2m | 2.0m | 2.05m | 2.43m |
| Weight | 3,366kg | 3,260kg | 3,130kg | 7,550kg |
| Battery | 300 Ah | 300Ah | 300Ah | 420Ah |
| Deck ext | 900mm | 900mm | 900mm | 1,500mm |
| Raise/lower | 80/63 sec | 88/60 sec | 88/60 sec | 70/74 sec |
| Gradeability | 25 % | 25 % | 25% | 25% |
| Travel speed | 3.2kph | 4 kph | 3.5 kph | 2kph |









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