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Vertikal Days

Just a month or two ago this year's Vertikal Days was looking as though it would be a straightforward third appearance at Donington Park and was shaping up to be the best so far. The crane exhibits were particularly strong with several new manufacturers attending while the access line up was as solid as ever with a good number of new products due to be displayed for the first time in the UK.

And then the global outbreak of the new Coronavirus - Covid-19 - began to gather pace causing repercussions that the world has not seen in modern times, if ever. Initially discussions centred around a number of issues, the first being whether the event would go ahead or not on the original dates. However it was not long before the mid May schedule started to look increasingly risky, even though it came well after the normal flu season has usually ended and the closure plans of organisations such as the Premier league had ended. The problem in making a decision was that it had to be taken at least four weeks in advance in order to avoid unnecessary costs and expense for exhibitors and the organisers alike.

The organisers sought a wide range of advice from a variety of sources - including the UK government and its independent scientific advisors - while looking at what other larger event organisers were doing, including one of the largest public

events in the UK - the Download Festival - which was due to be held a few weeks after Vertikal Days at the same location. Another consideration was the ability of overseas exhibitor staff to travel to the UK and their desire/willingness to do so. As the outbreak became a pandemic and the dreadful events in Italy panned out it became clear that it would need to be postponed until after the summer.

September was already well endowed with crane and access events, with JDL in France and Platformers Days in Germany, along with the rescheduled Spanish exhibition Smopyc. A few weeks later this was compounded when APEX was moved to piggyback with the JDL dates. While these would not have affected too many visitors - if any - it was already looking highly challenging for exhibitors, especially those coming out of the severe restrictions imposed by Covid-19 measures. The Vertikal Days' organisers therefore took the decision to avoid any clash with those events and have reserved

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Vertikal Days



two dates in September and one in October. At the same time it felt it would be best to hold off fixing a final date until the situation looks a little clearer... by mid to late April there should be a good deal more clarity. In the meantime exhibitors and regular visitors will be consulted on the alternatives.

So what might you expect to see when the event finally goes ahead later this year?

Well to start, as we have said, the event is back at Donington for the third time, in the same location on the venue's 'Tarmac Lake' although the layout has been tweaked in order to improve on last year, incorporating a number of changes to solve minor glitches experienced last year and to improve the visitor experience and traffic flow. One possible difference might be fewer flights from nearby East Midlands Airport, given the drop off in holiday traffic. Other changes include a larger Marketplace pavilion, and the opening of the passage from the entrance run to the Organiser's Office area. Plus for the first time, visitor badges will be fully scannable for easy exchange of contact details.

In terms of catering Bobby is back for the third time, and promises an even better selection than ever before, while the networking event has changed to a combination of a cocktail party and early dinner and jazz music in order to make things easier for everyone and introduce a freshness that we felt was required after almost 14 years.

That aside numerous companies had fully signed up by the time the decision to delay was taken, while many others were in the process of booking and will hopefully go ahead as soon as the new date is announced.

One thing is for certain, when everyone is convinced that the worst of the outbreak is behind us, there will be enormous pent up demand for people to meet, exchange ideas and thoughts about what happens next, look at the latest new products and catch up and exchange stories. Vertikal Days 2020 will aim to provide that service in its usual easy going, relaxed atmosphere, something that we will all need in a big way by then.



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