

# cranes & access

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October/November 2021 Vol.23 issue 6

**Spider  
cranes**

**Spider lifts**

**Glass  
handling**

**Vertikal Days  
review**





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## On the cover:

Heavydrive installs a new glass façade to the Grand Théâtre de Québec, Canada in freezing conditions using its 900kg VSGW 900 KS equipped with a winter package.



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Spider cranes 17

It is just over 40 years since Maeda introduced one of the world's first spider cranes. Since then, the market has gone from strength to strength in North America and in an increasing number of European countries. The original concept of combining a telescopic loader boom with spider leg outriggers has expanded over time with the latest trend involving ever larger articulated models.

Spider lift 27

The spider lift market has just about reached the stage where it's changing from a niche product to a mainstream form of powered access. Leigh Sparrow takes a look at its history along with the latest products and trends for this ever growing market.

Glass handling 38

Over the past 20 years, the introduction of significantly heavier glass panels combined with stringent manual handling rules has seen a vast array of specialist glass handling equipment developed. Nick Johnson takes a look at the very latest products from glass handling and lifting specialist GGR.



Vertikal Days review 44

Veteran editors Nick Johnson and Will North provide their thoughts on this year's



Vertikal Days, which accompany a pictorial round up of one of the most successful shows to date.

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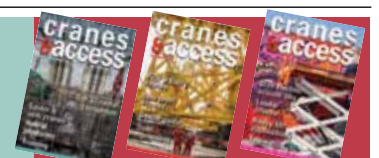
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## In the next C&A

Scheduled for early December, the next issue of Cranes & Access will include features on telescopic crawler cranes and truck mounted platforms and also include our annual look at outrigger set up, mats and pads. If you have any contributions or suggestions to make, or are interested in advertising in this issue, please contact us today.

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## The Tree Of Knowledge

People are injured or killed at work every day. And for each of those tragedies, there are hundreds of 'close calls' or 'near misses'. We've all experienced a slip or narrowly avoided slamming into the car in front.

Ideally, we learn from it and try to avoid a repetition. I've had dozens of 'near misses' over the years.

One of the first was in my late teenage years. A friend and I had a weekend business bringing down dangerous trees. One job involved removing several large trees alongside a busy road. It looked easy, as we could bring the trees down whole into the overgrown grounds of a big house. I climbed the first tree, attached a rope which I then tethered to our ancient Land Rover.

Once in the driver's seat, I put a little tension on the rope and waited for my partner to cut through the trunk, all ready to drive forward when the rope slackened as the tree began to move. My colleague had cut right through the tree trunk, and nothing happened. He gave me a frantic signal to pull, and I let out the clutch.

The Land Rover's wheels spun, and it failed to move. I had visions of the tree falling the other way, across the busy road onto the buildings opposite where an audience had assembled. I made the agonising decision to back up, let the rope go slack and take a run at it, knowing full well that the rope might break from the shock load and ...? But the rope held, and the jolt was enough to bring the tree down safely.

What did we learn? Not that I needed to take a 'run at it' or buy a stronger rope. No it was that we needed a different technique. We stopped work, returning the following weekend with a Tirfor rope winch. The second tree was so highly tensioned it almost catapulted into the grounds before the saw was halfway through. We fine-tuned the process and completed the job without incident.

This was a classic example of how valuable a near miss can be, leading to safer working practices. However, aside from the aviation industry, reporting 'near misses' is almost unheard of, and more often than not they are covered up. Imagine an operator telling his employer: "I had a close call today my machine began to tip and almost fell on a group of nuns at a bus stop, but settled back on its base." Most likely he would be branded a liability and 'moved on' instead of documenting and sharing the valuable lesson with others.

We see the same incidents repeated over and over again, lifting trees from backyards, getting too close to power lines, or overloading platforms on film shoots.

Just such an incident occurred in the UK last month, when a Blade Access operator was pressured into overriding his platform for a little extra reach. Mark Bell of Blade agreed to share details of what happened, to set the record straight and alert others. Earlier this month, an almost identical scenario occurred, but the operator said "No!". Bell sent us the details so others might also benefit.

If only more companies would follow this example our industry would be a safer place.

For more information see Bell's correspondence in the letters section.

Leigh Sparrow

Comment and feedback is most welcome via post, email, fax or phone stating if we may publish them or not: editor@vertikal.net

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