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CLASSIC INDUSTRIAL PICK & CARRY CRANES

Traditional industrial pick & carry cranes have been popular although relatively niche lifting products that have basically remained unchanged for more than 60 years. Globally sales have had their good years and bad but have hardly changed in the past few decades at around 500 units. However, there may be signs of a resurgence.

This is in spite of a growing range of other types of machines capable of lifting and carrying a load. However, none offer the same range of benefits and versatility offered by the classic industrial cranes produced by Italian manufacturers including Valla, JMG, Galizia and Ormig.

SO, WHAT IS A CLASSIC INDUSTRIAL PICK & CARRY CRANE?

The pick & carry or yard crane as it was sometime known can be credited with kicking off the mobile crane revolution during and after the second world war. The simple concept involves the ability to lift a heavy load, possibly from a delivery truck and travel some distance with it to the point where it is needed.

The traditional models are now built mostly in Italy although they first took off in the USA with companies like Grove building them initially to handle components around its factory and then finding there was a substantial market for them with other manufacturers. This resulted in a transformation of its business from farm wagons to cranes.

The North American market soon began to shift towards carry deck versions that allow a load to be placed or rested on its deck for travel pioneered by Drott.

In Europe the history is different. The UK for example was always a major market for yard

cranes with Coles, Jones and others building swing cab, solid or cantilever lattice boomed industrial cranes for material handling, while in Germany, Demag and later Krupp began making products similar in concept to what Grove was doing in the USA, followed by Ormig in Italy and later Valla. In Japan Kyoei Kaihatsu - which morphed into Unic and later Tadano - was instrumental in building such cranes in the late 1950s.



A Broderson carry deck crane



An early Grove pick & carry crane



A typical industrial pick & carry crane application

The UK market took a significant turn in the 1960s with the introduction of the transformative Iron Fairy followed by the Coles Speedcrane. The general concept of these machines had a different

interpretation in Australia where articulated 'Franna' type cranes took off while the Indian subcontinent adopted a cost effective articulated tractor based alternative.

But that is all history. Massive changes in industrial material handling saw the fork lifts take off as the wooden pallet became popular in the 1960s along with overhead cranes. Today we see robotic transporters and other automated systems, while outside telehandlers and off slab forklifts do much of the material handling. This has tended to push the pick & carry crane towards construction or big yard related applications.

Over the years the industrial yard crane or rather pick & carry crane has evolved into a more versatile compact lifting machine, with a range of attachments such as forks and jibs. The have also become simpler to operate, and increasingly have dispensed with the cab to become pedestrian controlled machines, that do not require a dedicated operator.

ITALIAN MANUFACTURERS

As we have touched on the late 1940s and early 1950s post war Europe faced a massive rebuilding programme, which helped spur mobile crane development. In Italy this saw the establishment of Valla in 1945 and Ormig in 1949.

Valla however didn't introduce its first industrial type pick & carry crane until 1961 however since then the company has been involved with some key developments including the first all-electric pick & carry crane - the 30E - in 1972 and the first hybrid crane in 1999.

Over the years it has developed a full range of mobile cranes from two to 90 tonnes including electric, diesel, hybrid, wheeled and tracked fixed frame or full slew. In late 2013 it was acquired by Manitex International which launched its own product for the USA in 2018, for the USA, the 10 tonne CD110 carry deck crane with 10.7 metre boom. The crane includes two position out and down outriggers and has been designed with refineries and more regular manufacturing facilities. The crane compliments the existing line up of Italian built Valla cranes and appears to share components.

The Valla range currently includes 11 models from the 1.8 tonne 18E through to the 40 tonne 400E. However, it is the five model V range - the first of which launched in 2020 - that is creating most interest. It now includes models with capacities of three, six, eight, 11, and 21 tonnes.

One of its key distributors is UK based sales and rental company Hird.



A 1957 three tonne Coles Speedcrane



Manitex International launched the 10 tonne CD110 carry deck crane in 2018 for the USA market



An early Ormig 75m industrial pick and carry crane

Carl Cooper, Hird's sales and aftersales manager said: "The new V range delivers the maximum lifting power in the most compact space and designed to handle dynamic loading with the capabilities that help control the additional risk involved with a suspended load."

There is however a view that pick & carry cranes lack versatility, but Cooper disagrees. "The Valla V range cranes have a range of options, with forks, hydraulic luffing fly jibs, winches and specialist hook blocks to handle different types of lift and maximise productivity. All models apart from the 21 tonne V210R are designed without cabs, using wireless remotes for drive and lifting functions, although they can be supplied with a wired remote if preferred. Full wireless control allows the operator to stand away from the crane, giving the very best view of the lift from a safe location

while taking a more active role with rigging etc." "One important factor of the V range is that they are second skill machines and don't have to be operated by a dedicated crane operator, but rather by a fitter or a forklift driver. A key attribute of these units are their compact dimensions, for example, the V210R is just 4.49 metres long, 1.98 metres wide and two metres high, and yet can lift eight tonnes to a height of 12 metres, or 3.6 tonnes 8.1 metres out from the front axle. In fact, its footprint is 14 percent smaller than 18 tonne 180ES."



Three models in the Valla V range - the V36R, the V80R and the V110R



The largest in the Valla V range - the 21t V210R

FIRST V210R IN UK

Hird sold the first V210R into the UK late last year to industrial services company AIS Vanguard. It features a 12 metre three section boom plus a three metre hydraulic swingaway extension which can handle three tonnes at a height of 15.2 metres. It can handle 21 tonnes 1.35 metres in front of the machine or a height of 7.5 metres. Features include remote controls, non-marking tyres, a hydraulic winch and self-levelling forks, and optional front stabiliser bar.



UK-based AIS opted for the optional front outrigger bar, operators cab and remote controls. (L-R) Carl Cooper of Hird with Ian Hargreaves and Stephen Edge of AIS

Based in Wigan, Ainscough Industrial Services (AIS) Vanguard specialises in machinery moving and installation as well as wind turbine installation and maintenance. It operates a fleet of Valla pick & carry cranes from five locations across the UK. Hird itself runs 78 Valla cranes in its rental fleet and is adding more as demand increases. It is currently waiting delivery of an 11 tonne V110R

with full remote control and a 25 tonne 250E with fork attachment. Its most popular units are between two and 12 tonnes although the company is seeing growing demand for larger models.

“Pick & carry cranes over 50 tonnes may be useful for specific contracts but are just too big for general rental,” says managing director Phil Hird. “And for those looking for something like a Versa-Lift machine, we can offer a Valla with fork attachment.”

LOW RENTAL RATES

“The main problem with the crane rental market is the low rates,” says Hird. “For example, in



A Valla 120E lifting a vessel in a brewery

2013 we were getting £473 a week for a two tonne Valla, today it is £475 - just £2 more after 13 years!”

The company has also added eight tonne Valla V80Rs into its rental fleet, which features a three section boom plus a short hydraulic swingaway extension with a three tonne rating. As with the V110R, it can extend the distance between the counterweight and front axle by up to 600mm for extra capacity and stability, while the stabiliser bar boosts capacities by up to 40 percent.

In its normal configuration the V80R can take two tonnes to a height of nine metres and 1.3 tonnes to a forward reach of 5.5 metres. With the counterweight extended and stabiliser bar deployed, this increases to 2.5 and 1.9 tonnes respectively. Features include remote control, non-marking wheels, front wheel drive with 180 degree rear steering, removable counterweights and a self-levelling fork attachment. Power comes from an 80 volt/640Ah battery with an onboard charger.

COMPACT

Launched last year the 3.6 tonne V36R can handle 800kg at a height of 7.5 metres and 500kg at a forward reach of 4.75 metres. An optional hydraulic swingaway extension provides a tip height of 8.6 metres with a 450kg capacity up to six metres forward reach with 250kg. Powered by an 80 volt/300Ah battery pack, it features remote controls, 180 degree rear steering, front wheel drive, electro-hydraulic brakes and removable counterweight. Unlike the V80R and V111R however the V36R has a fixed chassis. Weighing

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Launched last year the 3.6 tonne V36R can handle 800kg at a height of 7.5 metres



The Valla V110R

The JMG MC 250.09 FL can lift eight tonnes to a height of 7.5 metres and has a maximum reach beyond the front of the machine of 3.5 metres



JMG delivered this 16 tonne MC 160 to UK heavy moving company Joseph Merritt group

3,650kg, it has an overall width of 900mm, an overall height of 1.56 metres and a chassis length of 2.46 metres giving a three metre overall length.

Valla said: "The primary goal that we set ourselves in the design of the V36R was to combine maximum performance and versatility of use while keeping it as compact as possible. This new model is our latest solution to the growing need to handle loads in confined spaces, that meets safety and performance expectations while respecting the environment."

Dutch aerial lift and telehandler group Collé Rental & Sales distributes Valla cranes for Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. When appointed at the end of 2020 it placed a €2.5 million order for 30 electric pick & carry cranes including V80Rs, V110Rs, V36Rs and V200Rs. It remains the largest single order in Valla's history.

General manager Frits Collé said: "We believe that market demand for industrial electric pick & carry cranes will remain strong in the years to come, and our partnership with Manitex Valla will enable us to provide a product line that is well known throughout our customer base and meets their increasing demand for electric equipment. It is one of the several investments we are making to offer lifting solutions which are both productive

and help them achieve their environmental and sustainability objectives."

JMG CRANES

A more recent addition to the industrial pick & carry sector was JMG, which was founded in 2007 by former Valla general manager Maurizio Manzini and Emilio Berti. A legal battle kicked off in 2010 with Valla seeking to protect its business and goodwill in respect of unfair competition, with JMG countering. The battle was resolved with the help of arbitration in 2012. JMG went on to acquire Lige, a pick & carry crane manufacturer with 70 years of history in 2015. In 2019 JMG opened a new 16,000 square metre facility in Cremona which is home to the only pick & carry



The 25 tonne JMG MC 250.09 FL forklift type crane was launched last year

crane museum in Europe. More recently the company has completed another 8,000 square metre production facility in Sarmato (Piacenza) costing €10 million with the first crane - an MC100S - coming off line in October and delivered to Vecchiato Autotrasporti.

JMG has the widest line up of pick & carry cranes with 40 models ranging from the 2.5 tonne MC25S to the 70 tonne MC700MT. In a relatively short space of time the company has become one of the world's leading pick & carry crane manufacturers with a distribution network covering most of Europe and a good many countries around the world.

Its latest product, launched last spring, is the all-new forklift type crane - the 25 tonne MC 250.09 FL. The unit is similar in concept to the American built Versa-Lift industrial forklift/lifting machine - such as the 40/60 - and features a choice of 2.49 metre forks and/or a four section telescopic boom mounted horizontally to the top of a three section vertical box section mast which sits within the mast between the forks. It can lift eight tonnes to a height of 7.5 metres and has a maximum reach beyond the front of the machine of 3.5 metres. Tilting the mast forward extends the horizontal reach to five metres with a capacity of 5.6 tonnes, although the lift height is reduced to just over seven metres. The maximum 25 tonnes capacity is available at up half a metre in front of the machine and, as with all capacities, is available at full height.

The capacities referred to above are with the telescopic chassis extended by its maximum of 1.2 metres giving it an overall length of 5.3 metres, when retracted to 4.1 metres it has a maximum capacity of 17 tonnes at 500mm and up to 5.7 tonnes at the 3.55 metre forward reach.

The mast offers a forward tilt of 12 degrees and rearward tilt of eight degrees, while the horizontal boom can luff from five degrees below horizontal to 15 degrees above. When used as a heavy duty forklift the unit is equipped with 2.5 metre forks which can remain in place along with the boom. Lift height on the forks is 2.7 metres.

Weighing 25 tonnes, the MC 250 has a stowed overall height of 2.78 metres and an overall width of 1.8 metres. We understand there are plans for a 35 tonne version.

16 TONNE CAB CRANE

JMG has delivered a 16 tonne MC 160 to UK based heavy moving company Joseph Merritt group, which has previously taken a 58 tonne JMG MC 580 as well as a 27 tonne Versa-Lift 40/60 heavy duty forklift.

Director Richard Merritt said: "Over recent months, we have experienced a significant increase in demand for heavy machinery moving services in 'clean' industries such as food and pharmaceutical manufacturing where hygiene and cleanliness are of paramount importance. JMG's electric pick & carry cranes are state of the art. The crane's unique componentry enables it to perform tasks which would otherwise require larger and more expensive lifting equipment, and its compact dimensions allow access to congested factory sites with ease."

The MC 160 offers a maximum tip height of 12 metres at which it can handle seven tonnes. It

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The 58 tonne JMG MC 580 sold to Merritts

can also lift 3.4 tonnes at its maximum forward reach of 7.5 metres. Power comes from a 96 volt/1035Ah battery pack, while features include a two section telescopic hydraulic luffing jib, non-marking tyres and 180 degree rear steering for a near zero turning radius. The crane weighs 19.7 tonnes, although 4.96 tonnes of counterweight can be removed.

GALIZIA

Located in Castello di Annone, near Asti, Galizia began making pick & carry cranes at the end of the 1980s although the company dates back more than 100 years. The current line up runs from 2.5 to 60 tonnes and includes the six tonne Multi 636, pick & carry crane/telehandler/work platform, the two tonne G20 available as a three wheeler or on tracks - the GK20. Features include a twin electric motor front drive system that can counter-rotate through an electronic differential gear and an electronic joystick coupled with proportional distributor allowing precise, gradual and simultaneous movements of the boom. The cranes also feature radio remote controls, brushless AC motors, a very low centre of gravity for improved stability and reduced overall height, a modern cab with sliding door and customised booms and jibs.

The unusual Multi 636 can lift six tonnes on its main hook or 3.5 tonnes with its fork or bucket

attachments making it a real multifunction machine. What makes it different from other cranes with fork attachments is its overall height at just two metres and more importantly its low boom pivot point.

The unit has a chassis length of 3.3 metres and an overall width of 1.73 metres with a turning circle that matches three wheeled cranes - thanks to the 90 degree crank angle steering on the rear axle. Drive is via twin AC electric wheel motors on the front axle that can counter rotate for tight turns. A separate AC motor is used to drive the crane hydraulics.

The telehandler tool bar can take a wide variety of attachments including forks, with or without side-shift, buckets, an integrated work platform, winch, searcher hooks and jibs etc.

42 TONNE GF 420

A recent product launch is the 42 tonne battery electric GF 420 which features a four section main boom and can handle 25 tonnes at a height of 13.8 metres and 5.5 tonnes at its maximum forward reach of 9.6 metres. The crane can pick & carry its maximum capacity at a distance of 1.5 metres from the front bumper and take it to a height of five metres. Optional outriggers provide a 30 percent boost to the load chart.

Features include 180 degree rear steer, one metre



A Valla 90E helping install cladding



A Valla 250E working on a construction project in Battersea, London



The Galizia rear wheel steering



A Galizia GF 420 at Bauma



The unusual Multi 636 can lift six tonnes on its main hook or 3.5 tonnes with its fork or bucket attachments making it a real multifunction machine

of chassis/counterweight extension and a choice of cabs. The boom nose can pivot from 90 to minus 30 degrees for greater clearance height when lifting in low head room environments. Optional features include radio remote controls, front outriggers plus a range of attachments, including a 3.8 metre hydraulic luffing swingaway extension, auto-levelling forks and a winch.

Overall length is 4.6 metres with a width of just over two metres and a height of 2.2 metres. Total weight is 32 tonnes, however 10.5 tonnes of counterweight can be removed for transport. Power comes from a 96v 1395Ah battery pack, powering two 12kW motors. ■



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