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**ZOOMLION**

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# STACKS AND STACKS OF CHOICE

On the surface the self-propelled scissor lift appears to be the simplest of aerial work platforms to design and manufacture. The reality is not quite the same, however it is by far the world's most popular platform type, helped perhaps by the numerous versions - narrow and wide slab, compact and full size Rough Terrains, High capacity and crawler - with working heights from five to 37 metres, making it the 'go to' access platform for so many applications.

The basic design of the self-propelled scissor lift has changed little in 55 or so years since it made its early 1970s debut in California. It is relatively straight forward with only a few major components - a relatively simple wheeled or tracked chassis, scissor stack and deck - with very little to differentiate, at least visually, between most manufacturers. Hence, the reason why most new manufacturers begin with a scissor lift or very quickly add them to their range.

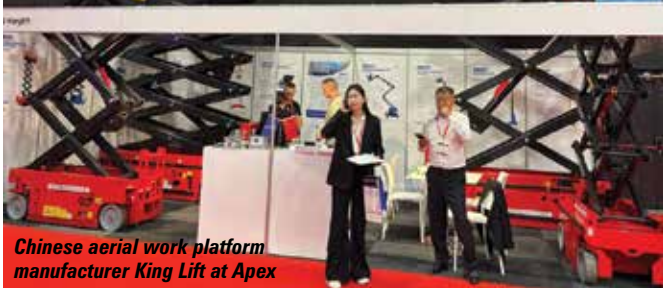
The latest Cranes & Access Source Guide (Vol 28.2) identified almost 60 scissor lift manufacturers worldwide - a number that has

grown significantly over the past few years with the addition of 'new' companies entering the market particularly from Asia.

At recent trade shows we have seen new entrants such as CFMG, Lemax, Kinglift, Kingda, Hangcha, Terlion, Anson and Ever Star, not to mention the slightly more established names such as Nobelift, Fronteq, Hered and Mote Lift etc. The choice is frankly bewildering with the vast majority of new manufacturers producing 'me too' products that only appear to tempt potential buyers with a more competitive price but in many cases they lack the necessary back up, support or residual values of the leading brands.

## TRENDS

Having just said that scissor lifts have changed very little over the decades, there have been some significant developments in recent years. These include motor controls, better batteries, AC drive motors, oil-free/oil containment, step-up platforms, attachments for carrying materials such as boards and pipes etc and the adoption of telematics... all of which are now fairly common. Another development is the growth in smaller tracked scissor lifts. Tracked machines have been around for many years, with the mini tracked scissors starting in Japan, while the mega tracked scissors began in the Netherlands for use in



Chinese aerial work platform manufacturer King Lift at Apex



Another new Chinese manufacturer - Kingda has a range of scissor and boom lifts as well as telehandlers



Turkish manufacturer Mote Lift launched its 12 metre SCL 1012 scissor

## SCISSOR LIFTS

*Netherlands based Omega Solutions and its 505TS tracked scissor at Apex*



soft reclaimed land for greenhouse construction and maintenance. Many of the new Chinese manufacturers are now also offering tracked machines, perhaps hoping that the much smaller niche market would be easier to crack? And more recently again, there is a move towards robotic attachments in the platform to aid working and productivity - more on that later.

### IN THE BEGINNING...

The scissor lift as we know it today has been around since the early 1970s, pioneered by Selma Manlift, UpRight and Mark Lift and then MEC in the USA and Skyjack in Canada. Since then, it has remained the same apart from changes/developments to the scissor arm connections in the scissor stack.

However, last year Genie changed this when it introduced a curved scissor arm design on its core slab scissor lift range, which it claims is lighter, yet more rigid and less prone to corrosion. Manufacturing the curved arms, was, says Genie, a real challenge. The redesigned scissor stack also features a new linkage design, which also helps save weight in the upper machine, significant enough to reduce the size and weight of components such as batteries and drive motors, which should also bring a lower replacement parts cost.

Other design changes include a new chassis

design that avoids water pooling, the use of reinforced steel on the roll out extension to help prevent damage or bending while also improving rigidity and steel reinforcement plates around the fork pockets - inset slightly from the side wear bars - to help avoid damage through fork tine misalignment when loading. Genie has also focused on increasing componentry and service parts commonality and consistency across the product line. It says that overall, there are fewer serviceable components than with previous generations and of the components that remain, at least 70 percent are common across the product line.

### ROBOTIC DEVELOPMENTS

One of the more interesting recent developments is the adoption by some contractors of robotic technology on site to combat labour shortages, productivity challenges and increasing demands for quality and safety. In the UK the adoption of job site robotics is in its infancy, however there are changes happening that may transform the deployment of construction robotics.

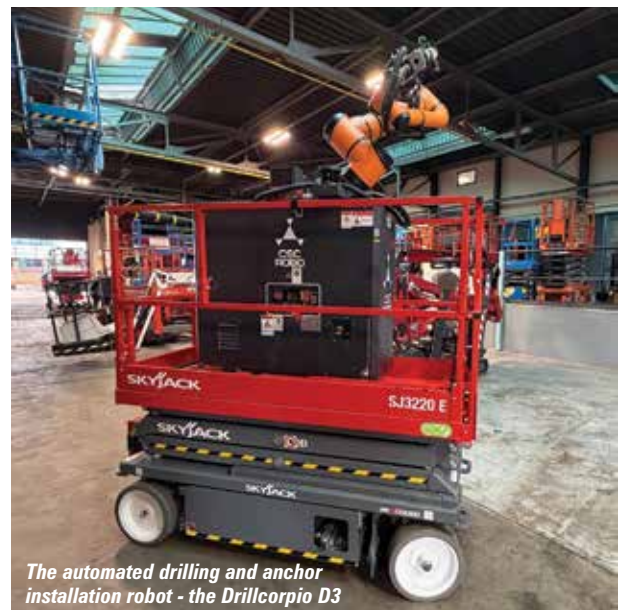
One of these involves advanced robotic workforce solutions company CSC Robotic Engineering, which has teamed up with access rental specialist GTAccess to form GTAccess Robotics, with GTAccess becoming CSC's official UK distribution partner for robotic sales and rental, to supply advanced construction robotics.

The new company says that this is "more than a distribution agreement, with the partnership looking to fundamentally change how contractors can adopt robotic technology".

The adoption of robotics in construction has, until now, involved lengthy procurement



*Anson AS4046HD slab scissor*



*The automated drilling and anchor installation robot - the Drillcorpio D3*

processes, specialist logistics and significant capital investment. GTAccess Robotics says it can supply the equipment in days rather than

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months throughout the country. It claims that it will provide a complete deployment network, from rental and logistics to engineering support, operator training and certification, enabling contractors to rapidly integrate robotics into live projects.

The first product is an automated drilling and anchor installation robot - the Drillcorprio D3 - for walls and ceilings, which can be used across construction projects as diverse as warehouses, bridges and tunnels.

The new system combines the robot with a Skyjack SJ3220 scissor lift to create a fully mobile solution to automate repetitive drilling tasks while providing accurate and repeatable results. The integrated access platform allows operators to safely position the robot at height, making it ideal for large scale construction and infrastructure projects. GTAccess has been working with CRC for the past 12 months to get the necessary approvals, all of which are now in place.

### BUT WHY USE A ROBOT?

Apart from the benefits of combating labour shortages, increasing productivity and improving quality and safety, automated drilling negates 'white finger'. In many countries there is a limit on how much time a person on site can drill each day, due to Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) which led to 'white finger' legislation which may mean a team of four may only achieve three hours of productive work per day, quickly creating a bottleneck in the construction process. The robot can operate continuously for up to eight hours a day!

### 'VIBRATION WHITE FINGER'

HAVS remains one of the most common occupational health issues associated with handheld power tools. 'White finger' falls under the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005, which doesn't specify a maximum number of minutes someone can drill, as it depends on the vibration level of the specific tool. However, employers must assess and manage each operator's daily vibration exposure with the HSE setting two legal thresholds:

- Exposure Action Value (EAV): 2.5 m/s<sup>2</sup> A(8) - once this level is reached, employers must introduce measures to reduce vibration exposure.

- Exposure Limit Value (ELV): 5.0 m/s<sup>2</sup> A(8) - this is the legal maximum daily exposure and must not be exceeded. Once an operator reaches this limit, they should not continue using vibrating hand tools that day.

In the UK most Tier 1 construction sites typically use technologies such as Reactec watches that monitor an individual's trigger time. By automating the drilling process, robotics can significantly reduce or eliminate an operator's exposure to hand-arm vibration, helping minimise the risk of HAVS while improving productivity and consistency.

However, the D3 automated drill does not just help with HAVS but also protects from the risks of working at height and work in confined spaces

as well as strenuous overhead work and dust - including silica and harmful toxin - exposure.

The D3 is fitted with a dust collection system which operates while drilling, reducing the cleanup time. It is compatible with various construction projects, including E&M (electrical and mechanical) installation and civils works. The system does not need any aerial work platform modifications and features rebar collision sensing and the ability to drill curved surfaces.

The standard drill size ranges from five to 20mm but can go to a maximum of 40mm. Drill depth is up to a metre with an accuracy to +/- 3mm - humans typically work to +/- 5mm! The overall weight of the robot is 245kg and is 700mm wide, 1.21 metres long, and 1.8 metres high.

## NEW FOR RENTAL

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Reactec watches are one way of monitoring HAVS exposure

## SCISSOR LIFTS



Battery duration is said to be up to eight hours, and the distance from the robot to the wall is 1.1 to 1.6 metres.

Whilst the company says there is no direct competition to the D3, similar robots do not include the dust suppression system, nor are they fully autonomous. The D3 has four drill positioning methods, including AI recognition and manual selection.

Jonathan Till of GTAccess said: "This is a significant move for the powered access and robotics industry, and we are pioneering the way forward just as we did with the move into powered access 38 years ago."

Charles Elton of CSC Robotic Engineering added: "This isn't simply about appointing a distributor, we are building the infrastructure needed to accelerate robotic adoption across construction, enabling customers to move from initial enquiry to live project deployment in days, not months."

"The system automates drilling and anchor installation, delivering consistent hole quality while reducing the physical demands placed on operatives. Key benefits include improved productivity, repeatable accuracy, and the ability to redeploy skilled people to higher value tasks. It also provides customers with a practical way to introduce automation into existing processes."

"There are millions of holes drilled every day, and a human can only drill for 45 minutes a day in 15 minute sessions. The robotic solution replaces 10 people over an eight hour shift with greater accuracy and can provide a full report and pictures for every hole drilled."

"We are currently working on another robot that will drill larger diameter holes which should be available early next year," adds Till. "We have started with a drilling robot as drilling is expensive, however, going forward, it is easy to adapt the robot to do other tasks, such as painting, once the price point comes down."

### HOW MANY WILL YOU ADD TO THE FLEET?

GTAccess Robotics has initially invested in a fleet of five units - two have been delivered - that will support demonstrations and customer projects, while demand is expected to grow rapidly.

"We currently have enough interest to add 38 units to the fleet!" says Till. "We fully expect to have more than 100 units in the UK in the next couple of years. The robotic systems will be available for both hire and purchase through GTAccess Robotics in the UK. We can also provide demonstrations, training, servicing and ongoing engineering support to ensure customers can successfully adopt the technology."

"Other companies are launching products across the world, but we believe our solution is the most advanced, requiring less human intervention and input, and this will progress further in a short space of time."

### FUTURE DEVELOPMENT?

"We believe robotics will become an increasingly common part of construction over the coming years as the technology continues to prove itself on site," said Till. "We see robotics following a similar path to powered access - initially adopted by forward-thinking businesses before becoming a standard part of the industry's toolkit. Our aim is to support that transition. We are currently looking at mounting the robot on other Skyjack scissors and are in consultation with another manufacturer to mount the robot on a boom lift."

Till thinks that further developments will be in the integration between the aerial work platform and the robot, allowing it to be controlled autonomously. GTAccess Robotics has also developed an operator training course and is waiting for approval for grant funding.

### GENIE ROBOTIC ARM

Another manufacturer that is heavily into robotics for its scissor lifts is Genie, and this was on display at Conexpo in March with a prototype

robotic arm with a vacuum lifting device for picking up and placing board materials.

The prototype three axis arm with 180 degree rotation was shown mounted on a Genie GS-3246 scissor lift, and while not yet able at the moment to reach down to floor level when in transport mode, it can reach a raised stack of materials. Lift capacity is 65kg and the overall weight of the arm is also 65kg. The vacuum attachment on the end of the arm allows it to pick up most smooth materials, such as glass, tiles, dry wall boards, plastics etc.

### ON THE BLOCK

Genie is currently up for sale, following Terex's merger agreement with the Rev and the announcement that it will divest the Genie business. Although a deal was hoped to be announced in the first half, nothing has yet materialised.

At Conexpo, Genie president Joss Gross emphasised that the company is in good shape, following a very good fourth quarter with improved order intake, after an average couple of years. "We have restructured and brought in a lot of new people from different parts of the industry," said Gross. "We got the whole thing started a couple of years ago, and have new data centre packages, hybrid products and at the ARA, launched our new reconditioning business based in Springfield, Missouri."

"We are spending time on how to grow the business, including using digital tools - launching an AI chat agent which gets info much quicker - and spending a lot of time on total cost of ownership optimisation with advantages when the equipment is being operated, followed by good residuals when you sell it."

At Vertikal Days last year Genie launched 'Zone Lighting' - a new safety related Lift Guard accessory. The system uses red laser lights to create a visible border at ground level to illuminate the machine's perimeter at about 600mm more



The prototype arm mounted on a Genie GS-3246 on show at Conexpo

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## SCISSOR LIFTS



than the edge of its scissors, providing a visual warning to anyone within the machine's work zone. The bright red beam is about 15mm thick and visible in any indoor lighting condition. Installation is simple and aftermarket kits - now available - are compatible with all Genie slab scissor lift models.

### NEW MODEL ROUNDUP - SKYJACK

Skyjack has been particularly busy over the past six months or so, launching numerous scissor lifts, including the compact Rough Terrain SJ6940 RT and its all electric sibling, the SJ6940 RTE, the narrow aisle slab SJ3232 E and its largest electric scissor so far, the 45ft SJ5545 E. It has also upgraded its 13ft SJ3213 and 19ft SJ3219 micro scissor lifts, which are now CE marked for European buyers.

*Skyjack's 13ft SJ3213 micro and 19ft SJ3219 micro scissors are now CE marked for European buyers*



The 40ft SJ6940 RT tops the company's compact RT scissor lift range, having a maximum working height of 14.19 metres and a maximum platform capacity of 363kg - three people indoors and two outdoors. With the 1.07 metre platform extension deployed, the machine has one of the longest decks on a compact RT at 4.52 metres and can be driven at full height with the deck extended.

An oscillating front steering axle and auto-levelling jacks are standard on the European and Australian versions, but optional on machines in North America. The Kubota diesel is HVO ready, while the four wheel drive system employs four hydraulic wheel motors with torque hubs and 'intelligent adaptive drive'.

Overall width is 1.8 metres, overall length when stowed 3.63 metres and overall height 2.74 metres, but just 1.91 metres when guardrails are folded down. Total weight is 5,135kg. The all electric version - the SJ6940 RTE - has similar



*Skyjack's all electric SJ6940 RTE*



*The 32ft SJ3232 E narrow aisle slab electric scissor*

### NEW MEC SCISSORS

Californian manufacturer MEC Aerial Work Platforms unveiled a raft of new Plus/+ slab electric scissor lifts at the ARA Show, with selected models also on display at Conexpo. The new 'Plus Line' includes eight models, the 19ft/800mm wide Micro 19+, the 19ft/800mm wide Micro 19-XD+, the 26ft/800mm wide Micro 26+, the 26ft/800mm wide Micro 26-XD+, the 32ft/830mm wide 3232+, the 33ft/1.2 metre wide 3346+, the 40ft/1.2 metre wide 4046+ and the 45ft/1.4 metre wide 4555+.

performance and specifications to the diesel version however, drive comes from high efficiency AC drive motors fed by a 414AH AGM battery pack, with universal smart charging technology.

At Conexpo Skyjack launched the 32ft SJ3232 E narrow aisle slab electric scissor lift with direct rear wheel electric drive. Maximum working height is 11.5 metres driveable at full height indoors or reduced to one person and 9.1 metres when working outside. Platform capacity is 249kg, with a 900mm roll-out deck extension as standard.

The SJ3232 E has an overall width of 810mm, while the overall length is 2.33 metres. Stowed height is 2.39 metres or 1.99 metres with guardrails folded and total weight 2,654kg. Skyjack says: "The intelligent adaptive variable speed rear wheel brushless electric drive system provides exceptional duty cycles and a smooth automatic transition from high to low speed on a grade."

The company has also launched its largest electric scissor lift to date - the 15.72 metre working height 55ft SJ5545 E, which can be driven at full height and has an outdoor rating of two people up to an 8.7 metre working height. Overall width is just under 1.4 metres, while maximum platform capacity is 350kg. The SJ5545E has a new scissor stack design with fully welded cross bracing that improves rigidity at height. The unit also features a 900mm roll out deck extension, while the guardrails fold to an overall height of just over two metres to pass below overhead obstacles and to ease transport.



*Skyjack's largest electric scissor - the 15.72 metre working height SJ5545 E*



*The MEC 19ft Micro 19-XD+*

The Micro 19+ and Micro 19-XD+ use direct AC brushless front wheel drive motors, improving duty cycles over its current products by eight percent according to the company. The remaining six models are fitted with PMSR AC+ motors, which recapture 30 percent of the lifting energy and reportedly increase duty cycles by 22 percent. All models feature higher maximum platform capacities, with deck extension and Xtra-Deck capacities increasing from 113kg to 136kg.

Engineering vice president Gary Crook said: "Scissor lifts earn their keep when they are stationary in the work position - that's when a



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The 26ft MEC Micro 26-XD+

tradesperson can get their job done. The MEC Plus line of electric scissor lifts is about allowing crews to get in position quickly and work longer without interruptions, with more usable capacity, more runtime, and fewer small frustrations that can slow a shift down."

## 26FT JLG MICRO

JLG has added a new 26ft ES2632M micro scissor lift with a maximum working height of 9.77 metres and a platform capacity of 272kg. It joins the companies micro scissor range, joining the 13ft ES1330M, 15ft ES1530M and 19ft ES1930M. It has an outdoor working height of 7.49 metres with one person. Overall width is 810mm, overall length 1.84 metres, and overall height when stowed 2.11 metres. Quick-Fold guardrails take the stowed height below two metres. An 860mm roll-out deck extension is standard, as is a leak containment system. The all up weight, however, is not so micro at just over two tonnes. Options include AGM or lithium-ion batteries and an integrated 560 x 580mm step-up platform, providing an additional 495mm of working height.



JLG's new 26ft micro scissor lift, the ES2632M with step-up platform

## NEW NOBLELIFT MICRO SCISSORS

Chinese/Malaysian aerial lift manufacturer Noblelift has added two 'New Generation' slab electric micro scissor lifts, the 12ft SC06E and

Noblelift's new SC06E and SC07E



15ft SC07E. The SC06E is made in China as its 5.7 metre working height does not attract tariffs being under six metres, platform capacity is 240kg/ two occupants, with an outdoor working height limit of 3.7 metres. The lift has an overall width of 760mm, is 1.52 metres long, with a stowed height of 1.91 metres with the guardrails up and an overall weight of 990kg. Platform dimensions are 1.36 metres by 740mm, with a standard 600mm roll-out deck. Standard features include active automatic pothole protection, drive at full height and automatic gate locking. Power is supplied by two 12V/100Ah batteries, powering twin front axle direct drive motors.

The specification on the 15ft SC07E is almost identical, except it offers a 6.7 metre indoor working height - 5.7 metre outdoors - has an overall stowed height of 1.99 metres and weighs 1,040kg.

## OIL FREE TRACKED SCISSOR LIFT

Chinese manufacturer Sinoboom has added the 14.7ft 0407ET tracked battery electric powered, oil-free scissor lift with a working height of 6.5 metres and 230kg platform capacity. Outdoors it is restricted to 4.5 metres. Weighing 820kg it features a 600mm roll-out deck extension and, when stowed, has an overall length of 1.45 metres, an overall width of 790mm and is two metres high. The lift uses electric actuators in place of hydraulic cylinders for lift and steer, along with direct drive AC motors to power the tracks, it therefore requires no pump, oil tank or hoses.

The new machine is aimed at work in environments such as clean rooms or data centres, or in applications such as food production or areas with sensitive floor surfaces with lower point loadings, thanks to the rubber tracks which are gentler on floors, at least when travelling in a straight line.



The twin electric track drive motors

Dingli's 500mm 'Extra Deck' step-up height extension



The Sinoboom 0407ET



## DINGLI 'EXTRA DECK'

Dingli's latest is the 500mm 'Extra Deck' step-up height extension for its slab scissor lift range, including models sold in Europe. The Extra Deck is permanently installed within the roll-out deck extension, giving an additional 500mm of working height that can reach above a beam or through a false ceiling tile space.

The Extra Deck has no impact on the main platform capacity, and the lift can still be driven while elevated, although when the lift is used outside, and the Extra Deck is raised, the maximum lift height is reduced by 1.5 metres and the rating is also reduced to one person.

The Dingli Extra Deck is designed by MEC - Dingli owns a controlling interest in the company - so it makes total sense to simply adopt a winning and well proven product.

For more information on Dingli's manufacturing facility in China go to the feature starting on page 57.

## MANITOU EXPANDS RANGE

Manitou has launched the new SE 1212, expanding its three model slab scissor range from eight to 12 metres working heights. The new model has a working height of 12 metres and a platform capacity of 350kg/three people indoors. Manitou says that its 5.76 kWh battery has an extended life and fast charging and is capable of working a full eight hour day on a single charge. The model will be available Q3 this year with further models on the cards.



Manitou's new 32ft SE1212, further models are on the cards

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