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ZHEJIANG DINGLI MACHINERY CO.,LTD.

Tel: +86-572-8681688 Fax: +86-572-8681690 market@cndingli.com export@cndingli.com

Add: No.1255 Baiyun South Road, Leidian Town, Deqing Zhejiang China

<http://www.cndingli.com>



On the cover:

On the cover: The 48 metre Palfinger P480 was one of three large two axle truck platforms launched in 2014.



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A look back at 2014



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Schwing to offer tower cranes, Terex expands Explorer range, Sinoboom Europe formed, New Bobcat 10/12m telehandlers, AFI acquires Altitude Access, First Jekko SPX 1275CDH, Wolf Haessler returns to access, Linden to replace 21LC290, Comansa Jie launches flat top, One million PAL cards, New Manitou mast boom for Oz, Peinemann platform exit system, Terex Cranes takes all of Topower, Big knuckle for Skaks, Altalink takes first Palfinger P650i in N. America, Changes at Tadano Faun, Carbon fibre jib and financials round-up.

Truck mounted

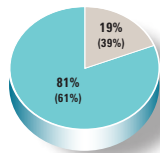
lifts 17



We take a look at the three manufacturers producing the largest platforms mounted on a two axle, 18 tonne chassis all of which were introduced in 2014, and interview Brian Stead, managing director of Loxam UK.

Annual rental
rate guide 25

With the best response ever, this year's annual survey reveals a positive year for both rates, utilisation and growth plans for the crane, access and telehandler rental companies. Almost 60 percent of companies increased rates last year and more encouraging still, 65 percent plan to further increase rates in 2015.



In the next C&A

The next issue of Cranes & Access, scheduled for mid-February, will feature Batteries, Self-propelled electric and hybrid scissor lifts and Mobile self-erecting tower cranes. If you have any contributions or suggestions, please contact our editorial team.

Crawler cranes 35



Two of the biggest crawler crane launches in recent years - the Terex Superlift 3800 and the Manitowoc MLC650 - are reviewed with the Liebherr LR1600/2's upgraded boom kit. We also take a look at the crawler crane sector and some interesting applications.

A look back
at 2014 45

We take a look at the major news reports and events of 2014, as well as listing those who sadly passed away, both in our industry and the wider world. Overall 2014 was a better year than 2013 for most but dogged by continuing uncertainty.

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back at
2014**

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Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage - to move in the opposite direction.

E. F. Schumacher

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Editorial team

Mark Darwin - Editor
Edward Darwin - Assistant editor
editor@vertikal.net

Associate editors

Rüdiger Kopf (Freiburg)
Alexander Ochs (Freiburg)
Leigh Sparrow

Sales & customer support

Pam Penny
Clare Engelke
Karlheinz Kopp

Production/Administration

Nicole Engesser

Subscriptions

Lee Sparrow

Publisher

Leigh Sparrow

Advertising sales

UK-based

Pam Penny pp@vertikal.net
Tel: +44 (0)7917 155657
Clare Engelke ce@vertikal.net
Tel: +44 (0)7989 970862

Germany-based

Karlheinz Kopp khk@vertikal.net
Tel: +49 (0)761 89786615

Italy

Fabio Potestà,
Mediapoint,
Corte Lambruschini,
Corso Buenos Aires 8, V Piano-Interno 7,
I-16129 Genova, Italy
Tel: 010 570 4948 Fax: 010 553 0088
email: mediapointsrl.it

The Vertikal Press

PO box 6998 Brackley NN13 5WY, UK
Tel: +44(0)8448 155900
Fax: +44(0)1295 768223
email: info@vertikal.net
web: www.vertikal.net

Vertikal Verlag

Sundguallee 15, D-79114,
Freiburg, Germany
Tel: 0761 8978660 Fax: 0761 8866814
email: info@vertikal.net
web: www.vertikal.net



A better 2015

Our annual rental rate survey confirms that 2014 was a positive year in terms of investments in new equipment and better rental rates, with indications of more of the same this year. The news review of 2014 feature also highlights how manufacturers have been 'pushing the envelope' in terms of wringing more height, capacity and reach out of the same base machine. But could these two trends conflict?

Manufacturers are always keen to develop equipment with a unique USP, such as the best working height or reach, the highest capacities etc... In the past this occasionally resulted in equipment being rushed to market, stretching the manufacturer's capabilities in terms of technical design, materials or production techniques. Accelerating equipment through the design and test stages just to rival a competitor's machine often led to disaster.

Fortunately most manufacturers today - at least in the west - only release new equipment when it is proven and ready to sell, resulting in safer, more reliable machines, satisfying our desire for equipment that offers new features, increased productivity and reliability as well as lower emissions and better fuel consumption.

This month's feature on truck mounted platforms highlights three recently launched lifts mounted on 18 tonne, two axle chassis, yet capable of working heights up to 48 metres. Like the 26/27 metre platforms on 3.5 tonne chassis they push the boundaries and it will be interesting to see how they perform over the coming year.

Truck mounted lifts are just one sector where this is happening. Other areas include 360 degree telehandlers - now up to 35 metres - big self-propelled booms with 58 metres work heights and the ever longer telescopic crane booms on increasingly compact All Terrain carriers.

It is all very well manufacturers ensuring that these 'extreme' machines are fully developed, tested and safe to use, but more importantly are the dealers and rental companies able to supply, maintain and operate them correctly and therefore safely?

For some rental companies the main reason for purchasing such breakthrough products is the publicity and to be the one to have the first, the biggest and best, rather than assessing whether the machine is suitable for its customer base, or if it has the ability to run it safely with its current staff, transport and facilities.

Bigger more complex machines create greater demands - from transporting to site, to maintenance, repair and operator skills - and with self-drive machines customers also need to be able to cope with the size, weights and loadings of the equipment.

The recession, coupled with the low rental rates over the past six years, has left many companies struggling to maintain older equipment. While the improving rates should eventually allow investment in more new equipment, it brings an additional requirement to raise the bar in terms of employee skills, facilities and procedures - at a time when there is a dearth of skilled people to recruit.

Having the biggest or best equipment is all very well, but without trained, skilled and experienced people it can be counterproductive.

Mark Darwin

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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