

Trucks & tracks

Some of the earliest hydraulic platforms in this country were the truck mounted machines produced by Simon Engineering in the 1960s for street light maintenance and fire fighting duties. Today Simon has been consigned to the history books but vehicle mounted platforms form a significant portion in the UK powered access platform hire market and recently there have been some most interesting developments in this sector.

The long established platform hirer Universal Aerial Platforms went into administration in July after a diversification into the telecoms sector proved problematic. Universal was a significant hirer of truck mounted platforms and many of its 35 truck and van mounted platforms (including a Bronto S62MDT) have recently been acquired by Facelift Access.

As this issue of PHE went to press, Facelift Managing Director Gordon Leicester announced that he will be operating from the former Universal depots in Basildon, Essex and West Bromwich. The Basildon operation will apparently trade using the Universal name as a standalone operation within Facelift.

Meanwhile, Facelift continues to buy new vehicle mounted platforms and is just taking delivery of the first new A17/12 machine produced by Ascendant Access Ltd. Facelift has ordered 15 of these platforms mounted on Ford Transit 350 long wheelbase chassis with a 3.5 tonne GVW.

The A17/12 platform has a main telescopic boom that provides a maximum working height of 17.0m. Cage capacity is 250kg and maximum nearside outreach is 12.2m.

Ascendant Access has now delivered 20 of its original 22.0m A22/17 truck mounted platforms and repeat orders have recently been received from EPL Access and E S Access. This British platform maker has moved into a new assembly facility in Gateshead and it is busy designing a new 30.0m A30/26 model for launch next year.

A new name in truck mounted platform hire has appeared on the UK hire market. Mammoth Platforms Ltd has been established by Mark Butler (who ran Butler Powered Access before selling it to PTP) and Andy Ainsworth (who originally worked for Butler and now runs his own business AA Access). The first platform to appear carrying the Mammoth name is a 46.0m Bronto S46SXT on a MAN chassis and a second unit of this type has been ordered.

As its name suggests Mammoth intends to offer large truck mounted



platforms and it has ordered two 70.0m Bronto S70XDTs and one 90.0m Bronto S90HLA. At present the largest truck mounts resident in the UK are the aging 72.0m Bronto S72HLAs run by Loxam and Nationwide. So, when it arrives in June 2007, the Mammoth S90HLA is set to take the title as

the UK's highest and most modern of its type.

Spurred on by tall wind turbine installations, the UK market for high lift access platforms is clearly increasing. Interestingly, AA Access has recently cross hired the 100.0m Ruthmann platform owned by German hirer Gardemann. Now that Gardemann has been purchased by the Lavendon Group, this large unit could conceivably make more UK appearances through sister Group companies such as Nationwide Access or Panther Platform Rentals.

Jim Longstaff of SkyKing – the UK distributor of GSR and Wumag

truck mounted platforms reports buoyant business. He says that SkyKing has recently appointed Ted Williams (formerly of Alan Drew) as its new Regional Sales Manager for the South of England and the Midlands and that a new Northern England Regional Sales Manager will join next month.

Following success with the Sigma style 198PX platform on 3.5 tonne vehicles, GSR in Italy is developing a larger unit – the 290PX with a maximum working

height of 28.5m for mounting on 7.5 tonne trucks. Jim Longstaff also reports that the 22.0m GSR 228TJ on a 7.5 tonne truck which SkyKing introduced at SED 2006 is proving popular.

On the Wumag front, SkyKing is to supply a 53.0m WT530 on a 26 tonne MAN chassis to Wilson Access Hire Ltd of Brighouse during the second half of next year. SkyKing has also sold the first of Wumag's new 37.0m WT370 platforms in the UK. The buyers are First Platforms

of Motherwell and Winners Access of Liverpool and both units will be mounted on 18 tonne MAN trucks.

Brian King, the Commercial Director of CTE UK, reports good sales of vehicle mounted platforms in this country at present. Of particular note are sales of a second 32.0m Z32 platform to EPL Access Ltd together with another four 20.0m Z20s.

Having successfully run a sizeable number of the smaller Z20 platforms, EPL recently added its first Z32. Mounted onto an Iveco



Facelift Access is about to receive this first Transit mounted 17.0m A17/12 produced by Ascendant Access Ltd in Gateshead.



Mammoth Platforms Ltd has got started with this 46.0m Bronto S46SXT and it has two 70.0m and one 90.0m units on order.

EuroCargo 180E24 4x2 truck, this larger CTE platform provides 20.0m of 'up and over' outreach at over 11.0m clearance height from only a 3.2m jacking width.

EPL Business Development Manager Danny Cooper says, "We have demand for the Z32 for city type applications where its compact closed and operating dimensions will enable our customers to work more easily in that environment. We also see the Z32 with its unique 'up and over' boom configuration as an excellent solution to two and three storey roof work which cannot be accessed with traditional telescopic boom platforms – with and without fly jibs."

Now that Bizzocchi is part of CTE, the first 'joint venture' machine has been developed and examples are being delivered to Nationwide Access. This Bizzocchi S15 uses a CTE Z20 subframe and outriggers married to a Bizzocchi upper-structure. The result is a 15.0m straight telescopic boom platform which is mounted onto a 3.5 tonne Nissan Cabstar chassis.

Compared to vehicle mounts, tracked access platforms are a much more recent innovation. But the market for these machines is now growing rapidly in this country and they form the basis of many new access hire ventures.

One tracked access platform maker busy gaining sales here is Teupen from Germany. Its UK dealer is Ranger Equipment Ltd of Chesterfield and one interesting platform combination it has supplied early this year is a Teupen Leo30T tracked access platform complete with a Mercedes 7.5 tonne Vario truck.

The Mercedes/Teupen combination chosen by Aspect Access of Harrogate enables the platform to be used either as a truck or self-propelled track mounted unit for added operational versatility. The Leo30T offers a working height of 30.0m with up to 15.7m of horizontal outreach.

Steve Hadfield of Ranger Equipment reports that he is going to introduce the first of Teupen's flagship Leo 50GT tracked platforms into the UK hire market in April next year. He has negotiated a contract with an engineering company for intermittent use of the 50.0m machine and it will be available for cross hire during the intervening periods.

The hire demand for tracked platforms has



CTE UK Commercial Director Brian King (left) hands over the new Z32 to Business Development Manager Danny Cooper of EPL Access.



Aspect Access of Harrogate runs this interesting combination of a Teupen Leo30T tracked platform and Mercedes 7.5 tonne Vario truck.



Tracked Access Ltd has supplied two of its Palazzani tracked platforms to assist with the fit-out of the new Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport.



Powerlift is selling these Italmec tracked platforms under the Terrain Scout banner and a website is being set up to help hire company customers.

been recognised by Phil Lomax (the MD of Powered Access Sales and Service) and Tony Gettins (the former Sales Manager at Universal). They have established Tracked Access Ltd to hire and sell tracked access platforms and mini crawler cranes.

Based at Redhill, Tracked Access is the UK dealer for UK for Palazzani Ragno (spider type) platforms. The company's hire fleet already includes Falck Schmidt, Hinowa, Palazzani and RAM tracked platforms and some of its machines have been busy working on the new Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport.

The Italmec range of tracked platforms is now sold in the UK through van mounted platform maker Powerlift of Eaton Socon in Cambridgeshire. These Italian made platforms are being promoted here under the Terrain Scout name and a Terrain Hire website (www.terrainhire.com) is being established to help support and provide business leads for the hire companies buying the Italmec platforms.

Marketing Manager Ian Henderson says the aim is to establish a countrywide network of hire companies able to supply Italmec machines. He says that the most popular models are the 'entry level' R16 and the R19 which respectively provide maximum working heights of 16.0m and 19.0m. The Italian platform maker is likely to add a 12.0m model next year.

One hire company already successfully running an Italmec R16 tracked platform is Higher Level Ltd of Bourne in Cambridgeshire. It reports growing acceptance of this type of machine which is increasingly being specified as a replacement for scaffolding on small jobs.

Hinowa is another Italian plant maker vying for a share of the expanding UK market for tracked platforms. Its access range is sold here by Access Platform Sales Ltd of Upton, Huntingdon. Sales Director Lee Louder says that demand is high at present with much interest and good forward orders for the latest 19.0m Lightlift 19.65 model. He reports that APS recently had a delivery of eight 14.0m Goldlift 14.70 models and sold them all within two weeks – a good indication of how popular this type of tracked platform has become.