

## INSIDE

# £15m funding gives AFI's business a major Uplift

**AFI has made a significant further expansion by merging with the Northern-based company Uplift Power Platforms, in a move which sees the new enlarged business AFI-Uplift establish itself in the No 2 position in the market in the latest survey.**

The merger of AFI and Uplift follows AFI's acquisition in April of the Watford-based powered access company Alan Drew Ltd.

The merger has been made possible by a £15 million injection from Barclays Private Equity, one of the UK's leading providers of development capital.

AFI Director Nick Selley said: "The merger of AFI and Uplift is a further tangible demonstration of our confidence in the future of the UK powered access rental sector as a whole.

"We feel that there remain significant opportunities for growth, especially as a result of the new Work At Height Regulations and the resultant need for safer methods of access. We are experiencing strong levels of demand."

Uplift Power Platforms was formed in 2001 and has depots in Wakefield and Haydock. It has a turnover



**Going up: AFI-Uplift is now No 2 in the market.**

of £5 million, 40 staff and a fleet of 400 boom and scissor lifts. The company's management team led by Nick Higgins and Ruairi Duggan, have joined AFI-Uplift, together with Ben Hirst and Tony Havercroft.

AFI-Uplift has over 200 employees with 17 depots nationally and a combined rental fleet of over 3250 machines. Nick Selley said: "Uplift is a strong player

in the Northern powered access rental market and a business that we admire.

"This joining together of the two companies will enable us to build a stronger, enlarged business. We are also pleased that Barclays Private Equity has come on board to support this significant expansion."

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# AFI 'thinks small' in response

Reaching for a ladder may be a step too far...

**W**ith the new Work at Height Regulations now beginning to bite, contractors can no longer just reach for the nearest set of ladders or steps to gain access at height.

They must now carry out risk assessments and consider whether an alternative form of access would be safer.

And that's where smaller powered access machines are now really coming into their own – they're small enough to get into the tightest of spaces and at the same time they provide greater speed and versatility.

To meet this need for smaller machines, AFI has recently invested in a wide range of units, including the Genie IWP20 (right) and the Haulotte Star 6 (far right) and Star 10.

The **Genie IWP20s** bought by AFI are power assisted and have a gated ultra narrow platform which measures just 22inch x 18inch (56cm x 46cm) to provide access in very restricted spaces.

Four of the machines are currently on hire to three contractors working at the new Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport. They were the only type of machine that could meet the contractors' access needs.

The Genie IWP20s are particularly suitable for any work involving access to suspended ceilings because the platform will easily fit through a 600cm square ceiling tile opening.

There are no outriggers to deploy – so the machine can work within its own length and width and can be set up easily.



■ **Above:** AFI's new Genie IWP20s have ultra narrow platforms for access into the tightest of places.

■ **Right:** The Haulotte Star 6, pictured stowed and raised, has a very tight turning radius.



The **Haulotte Star 6 and 10** have six metre and 10 metre working heights respectively and are mainly used for fitting out work and internal maintenance.

Both models are compact, lightweight and versatile – for example, the **Star 6** weighs only 800kg and has an overall width of just 0.78m. This very tight turning radius offers high manoeuvrability in the most congested

areas. The Star 6 has a stowed height of only 1.65m, allowing access through standard doors and lifts.

The **Star 10's** positive/negative jib offers more flexibility throughout the working envelope.

The Star 6 and 10 have full electric drive which can be operated at full height, and both models are robust, reliable and easy to maintain.

# to Work at Height regulations

## Waitrose stores check out small machines

**S**ize really does matter when you're using powered access machines in retail premises, where there's plenty of narrow aisles and other obstacles to get past.

That's why electrical contractors T Clarke (Midlands) Ltd hired 20 small and compact machines from AFI to carry out work at two Waitrose stores which were being refurbished in Scotland.

AFI supplied 18 7.8m scissor lifts and two 10m booms to ensure that T Clarke would be able to get the work done efficiently and within timescales. With AFI's rental fleet currently undergoing a sustained expansion, the 20 units were delivered to the two Edinburgh sites as brand new machines straight from the manufacturers.

Chris Holttum, of T Clarke, said: "The AFI machines were small and compact enough for us to take them straight through the doors of the two supermarkets and to easily manoeuvre around the aisles. Boom lifts were also utilised in order for us to gain access to those working areas which lay above the generators that were supplying our power."



AFI supplied Skyjack 3219 electric scissors and Nifty Height Rider 10 bi-energy booms for quiet, fume-free operation. The Skyjack 3219 has a zero inside turning radius for

additional versatility and the Height Rider 10 boom provides excellent reach capabilities from a compact and very low weight base (less than two tonnes).



## AFI-Uplift merger

(Continued from Page One)

Barclays Private Equity Investment Director Steve O'Hare said: "We are delighted to be supporting the merger of these successful businesses. We are backing the leading management team in a fast growing niche of the UK plant hire market."

AFI began a programme of sustained expansion in 2002 following a buy-in led by David Shipman. This year alone – not taking into account the Uplift merger – the company's rental fleet has increased from 2,100 machines to now over 2,700 and several new depots have been opened. The company's current depot network takes in Birmingham, East Midlands, Hull, Liverpool, London East, London South, London West, Manchester, Milton Keynes, North East, Peterborough, South Wales, Southampton, South West and Wakefield.

# Spotlight on AFI's

In line with our on-going programme of expansion, to provide the machines and depot network to meet the needs of our customers, we now have 17 depots throughout the UK and are also relocating some of our existing depots to larger premises. In this article we focus on some of our most recent depot initiatives.

## Milton Keynes

Following the acquisition of Alan Drew Ltd, Milton Keynes has joined the AFI depot network and is performing strongly.

A significant number of former Alan Drew customers who use Milton Keynes are now taking advantage of AFI's resources throughout the UK by also using other AFI depots.

AFI has doubled the number of machines available at Milton Keynes to 150 and has also invested in new training and facilities, made improvements to the workshop and has brought in an additional low loader to further enhance the delivery service to customers.

Based on Summerson Road, Bleak Hall, Milton Keynes, the depot offers hire, sales and workshop facilities, together with IPAF accredited training.



*Pictured at Milton Keynes are three of the depot staff (l-r): Lee Williams, Sales, Tony Sabbatini, Senior Hire Desk Controller, and Matthew Cook, HDC.*



## South West

AFI is delighted with the progress made by its South West depot since the new depot opened for business for the first time in July.

AFI decided to open a depot in the South West as a result of increasing customer demand for machines in that area. Based at East Quay, Bridgwater, the depot has an initial fleet of 100 machines which is set to be significantly expanded during the next 12 months.

AFI Director Austin Baker said: "Bridgwater is an ideal base for our operations throughout the South West. The area has tremendous potential for growth."

The South West depot has a team of six people, three of whom are pictured above: (l-r) Kelli Preston, Hire Desk Controller; Ken Regan, Account Manager; and James Baker, Senior Engineer.

## Birmingham

Since moving to larger premises in Union Street, West Bromwich, during the Summer, Birmingham depot has experienced a 40 per cent increase in the number of machines on hire.

Regional Operations Manager Carlo Vinci said: "We have had a strong increase in business and the depot is more visible because it is now sited close to the M5.

A new addition to the team is Jon Chapman, Sales; Ian Haworth has recently been appointed as Senior Engineer, and John Hall has joined the Operations team. Customer contacts include Raz Khanom, HDC; Miles Griffiths, HDC; and Lee Burrows, Sales.



# UK depot network

## London West

At the time of Aerial View going to press, the London West depot was making the final preparations for a move to new and larger premises just one mile away from its existing Iver Heath location in Buckinghamshire.

Covering 0.8 of an acre, the new depot in Court Lane, Iver, will be four times the size of the existing premises. The move will take place in late October.

London West is AFI's biggest depot – from a standing start when it was opened three years ago it now has a fleet of 334 machines and has significantly outgrown its existing premises.

AFI Director Richard Saunders said: "The move to the new depot will enable London West to 'push down on the accelerator' and significantly further expand the fleet and the depot staff in line with the growth in business."

Machines from London West are on hire at the new Heathrow Terminal 5 building and the depot also has a growing presence at the massive White City Retail Development, as well as a continuing involvement at Wembley Stadium.

The main customer contacts at the depot are Regis Poncelet, Hire Desk Controller; Daniel Champion, Hire Desk Controller;



*Two of the customer contacts at the London West depot: Hire Desk Controllers Daniel Champion (left) and Regis Poncelet.*

and Andy Green and Ken Regan, Sales.

John Robertson, AFI Regional Operations Manager, said: "Our move to the new depot will also result in AFI expanding the transport operation by taking a new 7.5 tonne delivery vehicle and running a 24 hour transport service."

## Providing coverage throughout the UK

### **Birmingham**

Tel: 0121 525 7226 Fax: 0121 525 5547

### **East Midlands**

Tel: 01332 870113 Fax: 01332 874555

### **Haydock**

Tel: 01942 275111 Fax: 01942 274999

### **Hull**

Tel: 01482 341799 Fax: 01482 345099

### **Liverpool**

Tel: 0151 545 2190 Fax: 0151 545 2199

### **London East**

Tel: 01375 892174 Fax: 01375 892022

### **London South**

Tel: 01732 781034 Fax: 01732 887425

### **London West**

Tel: 01753 783744 Fax: 01753 650808

### **Manchester**

Tel: 0161 707 7895 Fax: 0161 707 7896

### **Milton Keynes**

Tel: 08705 275423 Fax: 08705 400162

### **North East**

Tel: 0191 569 1699 Fax: 0191 569 1698

### **Peterborough**

Tel: 01733 206638 Fax: 01733 205791

### **South Wales**

Tel: 01633 281527 Fax: 01633 280899

### **South West**

Tel: 01278 446580 Fax: 01278 445951

### **Southampton**

Tel: 0870 1126833 Fax: 0870 1126844

### **Wakefield North**

Tel: 01924 383833 Fax: 01924 383832

### **Wakefield South**

Tel: 0870 7871514 Fax: 01924 274391

# Check out AFI's website for machine sales

If you are looking to buy a new or used powered access machine then check out the Sales and Resale sections of AFI's website: [www.afi-uplift.co.uk](http://www.afi-uplift.co.uk)

AFI has recently updated the website to incorporate the larger range of machines that are now available for resale.

Tony Havercroft, who now heads up the Machine Sales division, said: "Sales are well ahead of our initial targets and we are selling to a wide cross-section

of dealers and end users, mainly in the UK but also overseas, particularly Spain and Sweden."

"This increase in demand for good quality used equipment is primarily due to a lack of availability of machines from manufacturers because many of



Some of the machines on the AFI website.

them are now reducing stock levels and are now only building to order." The used machines being sold by AFI have come from the AFI fleet. "We always have

good quality used equipment available due to our policy of keeping our rental fleet to an average age of just three and a half years," added Tony.

# Strong demand for AFI Pipe Stand

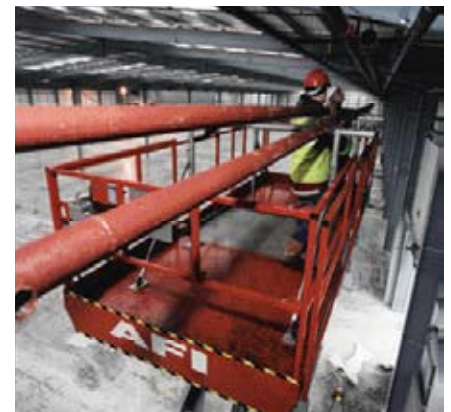
AFI is seeing a big increase in demand for scissor lifts from its fleet which feature a specially-adapted stand for holding pipes.

Increasingly rigorous health and safety legislation is leading to strong utilisation of machines with this safety accessory, because employers are now aware that they have to explore all options of ensuring safe working.

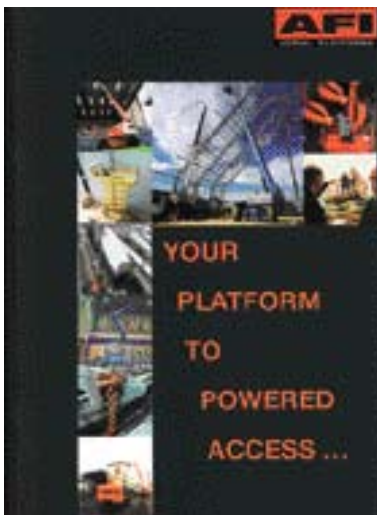
The AFI Pipe Stand is available for rentals of the following scissor lifts in the AFI fleet – Skyjack diesel and

electric models 8831, 8841 and 9250.

The Pipe Stand is simple and easy to load from a forklift or telehandler and it will safely hold a number of 2, 3, 4 or 6 inch diameter pipes. The pipes are then strapped into special grooves to stop any movement and to maintain the stability of the scissor lift.



# Get your copy of our new brochure



AFI's new Product and Service guide (pictured left) is now available, so to get your copy make sure you fill out the Faxback form featured on the competition insert included with this issue of Aerial View.

The brochure incorporates previously separate literature on machines, training and training aids, Resale and AFI all risk cover. It contains specifications of all the popular machines in our rental fleet, a handy feet to metres converter, and contact details for all our depots, including our newly opened ones.

You should by now have received our direct mail flyer entitled "Your Platform to Safe Working", which reminds you of your obligations and responsibilities under the law. This flyer has resulted in many enquiries about our training courses and safety equipment. AFI has also updated its specification sheet packs to cover all of the most popular machines in the AFI fleet and for ease of identification, the machines are now coded by height. To order copies of AFI's new brochure, log onto our website,

[www.afi-uplift.co.uk](http://www.afi-uplift.co.uk)

# Investing in our next generation of Service Engineers

**A**t a time when the government and the CBI are becoming concerned about the lack of young people entering into a career in engineering, AFI is currently investing in our next generation of Service Engineers.

We currently have five apprentices attending the National Construction College at Bircham Newton. They are studying Plant Mechanics through a combination of residential study at the college and "on the job" training under the supervision of their Senior Engineers back at the depots.

They spend 10 weeks at college each year broken into two blocks. By structuring the course in this way the apprentices are able to consolidate their new skills before returning to college to develop more.

Success has been abundant with Darren Cawley (North East), Craig Matthews (Wakefield), Gareth Cone (Hull), Daniel Piper

(Birmingham) and Martyn Taylor (Liverpool) all gaining their NVQ level 2 in Plant Mechanics, and James Skinner (Peterborough) beating an extremely strong field to win Plant Mechanics Apprentice of the Year.

AFI Director Richard Saunders said: "This is a fantastic achievement for James and the service team based in the Peterborough depot. The success of all of the apprentices has demonstrated that AFI are committed to the training and development of a whole new generation of skilled engineers."

With London West, London South, London East, Southampton, Newport, Peterborough and East Midlands all planning to start apprentices in the next six months, AFI is looking to provide a constant stream of engineers coming into the company to expand the service teams in line with the growth of the business.

Meanwhile in Manchester, Guy Barnet has begun qualifying for his Plant



**James Skinner (right) with AFI Director Richard Saunders.**

Mechanics qualification through the OSAT scheme which is also run by Bircham Newton. This scheme is designed for semi skilled tradesmen to complete their qualifications in the workplace.

Guy will attend Bircham Newton for specialised courses, but will do the bulk of the course at Manchester depot. This will include tasks and assessments laid out by college assessors as well as building a comprehensive portfolio covering the range of engineering tasks undertaken.

As Investors in People, AFI is committed to providing training and development for our staff in many different formats.

Guy Barnet's case demonstrates the company's ability to adapt training for the same subject to fit in with the requirements of the individual where possible.



**INVESTOR IN PEOPLE**

## Manufacturers help AFI to find fault!



**Mike Edwards.**

**A**s part of AFI's on-going commitment to staff through Investors in People, our Service Engineers have been visiting manufacturers such as Genie, Holland Lift and Upright to learn more about servicing and fault finding.

Mike Edwards, Regional Service Manager for the Midlands, said: "I can say from personal experience that these visits are extremely beneficial and have given us a better insight into fault finding. Every manufacturer has different methods of machine construction, particularly for wiring, so it was helpful to be given instruction on a specific manufacturer's method."

The AFI Service Engineers were provided with fault finding manuals and updates which, together with the practical sessions, has enabled them to identify problems faster. It has also given them a better understanding of manufacturers' new models.

The benefits have been two-way – feedback from AFI engineers has helped the manufacturers with further product development.

Mike Edwards added: "It was also very important for us to be able to meet the manufacturers' own engineers and to develop good relationships."

# SAFETY EQUIPMENT & TRAINING FROM AFI

## Safety Equipment

The following items of safety equipment are available from AFI:

**Restraint harness with 1.5m lanyard** £85.00

CE approved to EN361. Lightweight full body harness including lanyard. Stainless steel fittings. Adjustable leg loops, shoulders and chest. As recommended by IPAF, CPA and HSE through Technical Guidance Note H1/05/05.

**Lanyard only** £25.00

CE approved EN354. Adjustable restraint lanyard. Adjustable from 1.3m to 1.5m. As recommended by IPAF, CPA and HSE through Technical Guidance Note H1/05/05.

**Anemometer** £70.00

Pocket size 98 x 39 x 17mm. Windspeed in mph, km/h, m/s or knots. LCD back light. Auto power off. Neck lanyard. Water resistant.

**Hi vis vest** £5.00

**Safety helmet** £5.00

CE approved to EN397. Bold orange colouring.

**Suspension trauma safety strap** £20.00

Weighs only 91g and can be attached as two small zipped packs to most makes of harness.

To place your order  
please call:

**08707 871511**

or email:

[training@afi-uplift.co.uk](mailto:training@afi-uplift.co.uk)

## Training Courses

"...it is now a requirement for all employed personnel, both directly employed or self-employed... to select equipment for temporary working at height which gives adequate protection from falls."

*Temporary Working At Height  
Amendment (2001/45/EC).*

Through AFI Training we offer a range of training courses:

**IPAF Operator:** Based on IPAF's Operator Safety Guide and all relevant national and international safety standards, these courses cover Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWP's) such as scissor lifts, self propelled booms, trailer mounted booms, personnel lifts, van and truck mounted and some special categories.

**IPAF Harness:** Approved by the Main Contractors Group (MCG) this course covers the safe and appropriate use of harnesses.

**IPAF Safe Loading and Unloading:** This course covers the correct safety procedures for the transport of access and plant machinery to obtain an IPAF transportation licence involving loading/unloading and securing.

**PASMA Mobile Access Tower Training:** The PASMA training is a one day course. Upon successful completion candidates are issued with a PASMA identity card and certificate which is accepted and recognised by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and is valid for a period of five years.

We also offer our own recognised versions of these courses.

For more information please call **08707 871511**

