

AFI STEPS UP THE PACE OF EXPANSION

AFI has stepped up the pace of its expansion programme by opening new depots in London, Birmingham and Peterborough, relocating the Hull depot to larger premises and more than doubling the size of the company's rental fleet during the past six months.

London West – AFI's latest and eighth depot – opened on July 1 and is being overseen by Graham Osmond who has joined the company as Regional Director after over 20 years in the powered access industry.

Based near the Pinewood Studios in Ivor, Buckinghamshire, the new depot gives AFI a centre stage location for business in London and the surrounding area.

Peterborough depot, which opened in February, and Birmingham, which came on stream recently, give AFI a strong presence in the Midlands. Combined with the company's existing depots, they are providing AFI with national coverage.

Strong Demand

Corporate Development Director Nick Selley said: "These new depots are all in areas where our research has identified strong demand from both existing customers – through our AFI Direct operation – and from new customers. With these depots now in operation we will be able to meet more of our customers' requirements on a national level.

In line with the depot expansion programme, AFI has increased its fleet numbers to 850 units, most of which are new machines. At the same time, AFI has doubled its turnover to



At your service: AFI has backed up its depot and fleet expansion programme by also making substantial investments in its service support operations.

approximately £4.4 million and has increased the number of its customer accounts by 42 per cent. The company is also dedicating a high level of resource to its smaller

customers by forming a sales support function based at its Wakefield head office to maintain and develop business relationships with this sector of its growing customer base.

Upright appoints AFI as end user distributors for full product range

AFI has been appointed as end user distributors for sales of Upright's full range of products in the North of England.

AFI Sales and Marketing Director Malcolm Bowers said: "We are delighted to have been appointed by Upright. It represents a further diversification of our business and gives us access to a broader industrial customer base which will also be able to take advantage of our rental and training services."

AFI will be responsible for end user sales of the complete Upright range, from the Instant, Zip-Up and Spandeck scaffolding ranges through to the company's extensive line up of powered access equipment.

As part of its service, AFI will arrange site visits to end users to help them assess their powered access needs. For more information, contact the company on 08707 511005.

Boom lifts help pod concept to get off the ground

Boom lifts from AFI have helped contractors to erect a futuristic-shaped retail building on the banks of the Humber in Hull.

The 'Pod', constructed at the St Andrew's Quay retail park, is the first of 16 Pods planned across the country.

The buildings will create a space for customers to 'shop, meet, eat and play' by providing facilities which complement those of the retail parks.

In Hull this will include a Starbucks coffee shop, an indoor climbing wall, cash machines and essential customer services.

Steelwork erection and cladding for the Hull Pod were carried out by Trevor Brown (Nordan) Ltd for steel and glass structure designers and engineers Mero UK.

Trevor Brown said: "The Pod is an awkward shape so it would have been very difficult to erect scaffolding around it. By using AFI boom lifts we had the flexibility and versatility to be able to gain easy access to all areas of the building."

The company hired an AFI 800AJ articulating boom and a four-wheel-drive S85 straight stick boom to erect the steel structure and then clad it with 278 aluminium and glass panels ranging in size from 1.8m x 1.8m to 3m x 0.5m.

Mr Brown said the S85 straight stick boom was particularly efficient because, once in position, it took personnel quickly and directly to the area of work.

The S85 has a 27.7m working height and 23.4m outreach, and the 800AJ has



a working height of 26.3m and an outreach of 15.7m. Both booms have an articulating jib which enables

the operator to gain better access by manoeuvring the cage into different positions in relation to the boom.

WHERE TO CONTACT AFI DEPOTS:

**BIRMINGHAM, HULL,
LIVERPOOL, LONDON WEST,
MANCHESTER, PETERBOROUGH,
WAKEFIELD, TEESIDE**

**To contact any of our depots,
telephone 08707 511005**



AFI expansion bucks the trend

AFI's continued expansion of its depot network is taking place despite strong competition in the powered access industry.

Sales and Marketing Director Malcolm Bowers said the expansion highlights how AFI is 'bucking the trend' in the industry.

"Morale and confidence is low within some of our competitors but our employees are highly-motivated and we are benefiting from this. We are pushing the business forward aggressively and are in discussions with several companies who wish to dispose of their powered access operations."

In **Hull**, AFI has relocated to purpose-built, larger premises close to the city. The Hull fleet currently

numbers 60 machines but is set to rise to 100 during the year.

The new **Peterborough** depot is being run by Jeff Letch, Regional Sales Manager, who was previously Regional Manager for Nationwide Access.

Over in **Birmingham**, additional sales, service and administration staff are currently being recruited for the company's new depot at Garretts Green and, as reported on Page 1, a **London West** depot has now opened. AFI is also planning to open a further depot in the South.

Operator training: your legal obligations



Did you know that any member of staff using any form of access equipment must – under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) – receive adequate training? Did you also know that as an employer the responsibility rests with you?

Failure to provide this training could, in the event of an accident, lead to an employer being prosecuted and in extreme cases, where a death occurs, being sent to prison for corporate manslaughter.

Insight Access Training – the training arm of AFI – offers a comprehensive range of training courses covering everything from ladders and scaffolding, through to powered access equipment.

The legal requirements for training go back to 1974 with the Health & Safety at Work Act. Further safety obligations were introduced

with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER '98) the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulation 1998 (LOLER '98).

These regulations require employers to provide staff with adequate training on the use of access equipment and they also make the employer responsible for carrying out a pre-use check of equipment to ensure that it is safe to operate.

By sending their operators on courses offered by Insight Access Training, employers will not only be ensuring that their legal obligations are being met but they will also be taking positive steps towards making sure that the contracts they are working on run smoothly and cost-effectively.

For example, machines will be better looked after

by trained operators because their training will have made them familiar with basic but essential checks on aspects such as the battery, engine oil etc.

Machines that have been charged correctly will operate for much longer periods than those which have been charged by using an extension that is too long or a transformer that is too small.

Operators will learn to get the best out of their machines whilst at the same time they will be aware of all the safety features and guidelines.

One of the most popular courses on offer from Insight Access Training is that of **IPAF certification**.

This covers all types of mobile elevated work platforms and is one of the few accepted and recognised by the Health and Safety Executive and the Major Contractors Group (MCG) on all sites.

IPAF recognises that there has not always been the need for a formal qualification in the past, and candidates have previously used machines without this.

In these circumstances, training can be undertaken on two subjects in the same day, as opposed to just one subject, where the trainee has no prior machine knowledge.

If someone is working within a factory environment, for example maintenance personnel, then the **Insight Card** is widely accepted in this area. The course follows a similar

content to the IPAF course but can also be tailor-made to cover specific machines.

Insight Training also offers **PASMA Certification** for people using tower scaffolds, and a seven hour supervisors' course covering the legislation and erection techniques for all tower scaffolds. The course also covers the inspection of tower scaffolds and the paperwork required – copies are included as part of the course.

Ladder training, which is also available from Insight, is a three to four hour course that explains the regulations covering ladders and offers practical advice on the correct use of ladders and steps.

Safety Awareness training is a full day course on the safety regulations and must be taken as part of the IPAF Demonstrator course.

Insight have also recently introduced an **Abrasive Wheel Course** which covers the correct use and changeover of abrasive wheels for all types of applications.

The line up of courses also includes the **Safe Use and Inspection of Harnesses**.

Training can take place anywhere in the UK or at the customer's premises, providing adequate facilities are available.

For more information on any of the courses listed in this article, please contact Karen Proctor, Training Supervisor, on **01924 877815**.



On site at Dixons

The double extending deck scissor lift shown opposite was one of 15 machines supplied by AFI to contractors working on a new warehouse for Dixons Mastercare at Newark.

AFI's service package went far beyond simply supplying booms and scissor lifts to Axima Building Services who were carrying out the £2.3m mechanical and electrical installation work for main contractor Norwest Holst Construction.

AFI also provided on-site certificated operator training to Axima employees and also ensured that a service

engineer visited the site daily to check the machines and minimise any possibility of costly downtime.

AFI gave a full day's training session to 15 Axima employees, in groups of five at a time.

Axima Site Construction Manager Carl Voss said the company had the further benefit of being able to call off machines at very short notice from AFI to meet changing workloads.

Axima used diesel-powered scissors with platform heights from 30 ft to 53 ft and 4WD boom lifts to install lighting and power at the warehouse.



Nick Selley joins the AFI Board

AFI has strengthened its Board with the appointment of Nick Selley as Corporate Development Director.

The move highlights the company's commitment to acquiring further businesses and developing new markets.

Nick previously spent almost seven years with Lavendon Group plc, initially as Marketing Manager for Nationwide Access and then as Business Development Director with Zoom in Germany.

He said: "I am really pleased to have joined the AFI team and I am enjoying

the challenge of working in such a dynamic company. The opportunity to invest in the business at such an early stage was simply too good to miss."

Nick has joined two former Lavendon colleagues on the AFI Board – Managing Director David Shipman and Geoff Gibson, Commercial Director.

Nick will work closely with David Shipman on the strategic development of AFI, evaluating business opportunities. He is also working very closely with Malcolm Bowers, Sales and Marketing Director, to develop new powered access

rental markets. Nick said: "There is great potential to further develop the AFI business. Powered access still has significant growth potential and the next 18 months to two years will prove to be a testing time for powered access companies – that is when the replacement cycle will dictate that they must either re-invest or divest."

David Shipman said: "I'm delighted that Nick has joined the AFI team. Our strategic plans include acquisitions but these will be interwoven with Greenfield site openings and new equipment purchases."

Win £100 of wine vouchers

Please send me information on:
(Tick as appropriate)

Training

Hire/Sales

Please ask an AFI representative to contact me on the telephone number below:

Telephone

Read through the stories in this newsletter and you'll find the answers to the questions in our competition. Put a circle around (A), (B) or (C) as your answer and return your entry to the address below. The first two correct entries drawn after the closing date of 29 August 2003 will be the winners.

1. The number of units in AFI's fleet is now:
(A) 750 (B) 800 (C) 850
2. The AFI telephone number for training course enquiries is:
(A) 01924 877815 (B) 01924 877744 (C) 01924 877631
3. How many AFI machines were on site at the Dixons warehouse?
(A) 9 (B) 12 (C) 15

Please return to: Marketing Department, AFI Aerial Platforms Ltd, Main Street, East Ardsley, Wakefield WF3 2AP.