



# MERLO

WORLD LEADER IN HANDLER DESIGN

## Lincolnshire flyboys

Edward Panton's 1949 purchase of 28 chickens was the start of one of Lincolnshire's most modern poultry enterprises – F & H Panton Brothers. Based at East Kirkby, this three unit group now houses 850,000 birds at East Kirkby, Willow Wood Farm and Hagnaby. These units comprise state-of-the-art single span buildings with computerised heating, ventilation, lighting, feeding and watering, as well as weighing – enabling an instant evaluation of actual cost basis.

Integral to such a production system is removal of the massive amounts of waste products. For several years now, the backbone of the operation has been two Merlo compact telehandlers. Now, Director David Panton (Edward's grandson), has decided to replace them with three brand new P32.6 L Plus machines, supplied by TRP of Sleaford.

"The speed is impressive" says David "Because we use single span buildings, we have clear access with these low profile machines and it's common to load 14 lorries in a shift. Adding an extra machine is a vital part of our current expansion plans"

The East Kirkby base also houses the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre and one of only three surviving working Lancaster bombers from WWII. The museum was set up by David Panton's Father and Uncle (Fred and Harold Panton), as a tribute to their eldest brother, Christopher, who was lost over Nuremburg on 30/31st March 1944. This is the only opportunity to see a live, taxiing Lancaster bomber actually on a reconstructed wartime air base. Lancaster NX611 'Just Jane' is the star, of course, and was built by Austin Motors in April 1944. After finishing service in 1964 she did little flying and ended as 'gate guardian' at RAF Scampton, North of Lincoln.

It's plain that the three drivers are intensely proud of their new mounts and the new formation already has their 'handles' in the front windows;

'The King' - Neil Toulson  
'Full throttle' - Mark Wallace and  
'The Old Boy' - James Panton

Both Neil and Mark say that they wouldn't want anything but a Merlo for this operation, pointing out the speed and visibility as major advantages. All the new machines are low-profile (2m wide and 2m high) machines with turbocharged Perkins engines. Like all Merlo handlers, they have a hydrostatic transmission and, as 'Plus' models are capable of 40 km/h. To suit them for roading operations, each has a hydraulic pickup hitch for trailer use.

Loading a 28 tonne truck in 7 minutes, and often working in tandem, these Compact Merlo machines are the mechanical mainstay of this growing business. "And" says David Panton "Absolutely vital!"

