

TALKING TAKEUCHI

Issue 8

Takeuchi Reaches New Heights

Have you ever wondered whether a mini excavator could get to work on some of the highest mountain peaks in the UK?

Well one specialist plant hire firm had to do just that.

O'Malley Groundworks and Plant Hire put a 3-tonne Takeuchi to work in the Lake District, at a height of 773m/2,536ft. This involved a major airlift to site and some very special engineering skills.

O'Malley based in Penrith are one of Cumbria's best known plant hire and civil engineering contractors with a strong reputation for groundworks and plenty of Takeuchi's in their fleet between 1-8t tonne.

The Lake District National Park needed vital repairs to Sail Fell one of the best known and well used hiking paths in the Lake District. For Tom O'Malley the challenge was simple, how to get a digger on top of the fell, an area only accessible by foot or air.

Tom O'Malley MD "We knew we had a machine to do the work. The big question was the engineering skills to dismantle and reassemble an excavator on top of a mountain and the logistics of the airlift"

The National Parks Authority regularly use air services to reach some remote parts of the Lake District. Inverness based PDG Helicopters are the largest onshore operators of helicopters and provide frequent air deliveries to remote mountain regions of The Lakes and Scotland.



"Takeuchi's TB125 machine design is relatively easy to break down into modular parts" so says Bill Hodgson Takeuchi's dealer in the North.

"We have put mini excavators down mines but never on helicopters"

With Bill Hodgson providing machine engineering advice, O'Malley's were able to organise the machine break down into critical weight loads; boom arm, tracks, engine, sprockets, idlers and cab.

Stripping the machine to get under the airlift weight of 1000kg was critical. With this maximum load weight it took some significant flying skills to slowly gain altitude to ascend the fell.



PDG completed the job with 5 air lifts in just 1 hour. For the machine operator the 2 month ground works job involved a daily quad bike ride up the fell followed by a steep 1 mile hike, a fitness regime suitable for the toughest athletes.



The path excavation involved sod removal and ditch excavation for improved drainage control. The drainage channels were re-directed away from the path to avoid repeat wash-outs and gradual zig-zag climbs were introduced.

The fell path repairs were completed in record time before the start of the autumn and wet weather. An excavator used in this type of application proved essential and saved valuable time.

Richard Fox from the Lake District National Park commented that "looking after the Lake District for the enjoyment of millions can be challenging. But even challenges like this one can be successful if you have the right people, with the right skills and with the right tools."

The Takeuchi was air lifted down with a similar machine breakdown to be reassembled and put back into O'Malley's hire fleet for plenty more work at ground level.

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