

MY STORY

WOMEN IN POWERED ACCESS

CLAUDIA ALBERTS

FORMER OWNER, ALSA BORN VERHUUR, NETHERLANDS

What is your role in powered access?

Alsa Born rented aerial work platforms with and without a driver. In 2019, we sold our company to **Gerken Hoogwerkersverhuur**, where I now work, while my partner is enjoying his well-deserved retirement!

How did you come into this industry and what attracted you to it? My father, together with his partner, started renting mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) with an operator in 1986, so I grew up with MEWPs.

While working as a client advisor at Rabobank, I'd occasionally help out in my father's company, first in admin and later, having obtained my operator licence in 1998, I could go on inspection or maintenance jobs using MEWPs. After obtaining my licence, the dam was broken and I enjoyed working at Alsa Born in evenings, weekends and holidays, mainly operating MEWPs.

My first real assignment was replacing lamps at the border crossing at Aachen. I was 25 years old. Blonde, wearing jeans and an Alsa sweater and work shoes, I arrived proudly with my MEWP. The customer took one look at me and called my father, to complain that he had sent a young woman. Oops... what a disappointment! Nevertheless, I put my best foot forward and finished my first solo job with pride. The ice was broken... and left a very satisfied customer!

What do you find inspiring about your role? As far as working with MEWPs are concerned, the experience is so varied! As a woman in a man's world, I work to earn the respect of men. I have also been put to the test by men, but if they notice you can hold your own, they quickly come around. I am quite spontaneous and friendly, which are my main strengths. Once, a customer called the shop to hire a MEWP, and got my mother on the line. She took the assignment, and minutes later the customer called on the phone again, asking if Claudia could be scheduled for the job! Those are the moments that really fill you with pride!

Where do you see yourself in five years and what do you want to achieve? I hope to be able to reflect on a career full of fun moments! There have been some less fun moments, but they don't outweigh the fun



ones. In the early years I was the only woman in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany to operate MEWPs. I hope in future more women will choose this profession.

What one piece of advice would you give to other women in/thinking of entering the industry? Working with an aerial work platform gives a certain freedom, that you can handle the whole world. It all comes together: Passion, technology, service, unburdening the customer. My motto is: "No is not an option that makes you passionate about your work."

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