

# Buyer's market

Try before you buy can make a lot of sense in all sorts of situations. But there are plenty of others where the shrewd option might well be plant hire. Brian Wall reports

Any plant manager tasked with buying or renting equipment will have noted, with some satisfaction, that prices are extremely competitive in both camps. Even where the label may still be high, a bit of hard bargaining will soon show that vendors are usually 'open to negotiation' in these more straitened times.

That said, nothing is quite so simple and it's likely that a combination of cost, usage and experience will dictate whether you should buy or hire plant.

Take inspection instruments. "The decision whether to hire or purchase will ultimately come down to how often it will be used," argues Cailean Forrester, managing director of hire specialist Inspectahire. "Inspection equipment can be expensive to purchase, especially if it will only be used once or twice a year for shutdowns or troubleshooting. On the other hand, some inspection equipment, such as thermal imaging cameras, has multiple uses, which can help to justify the investment."

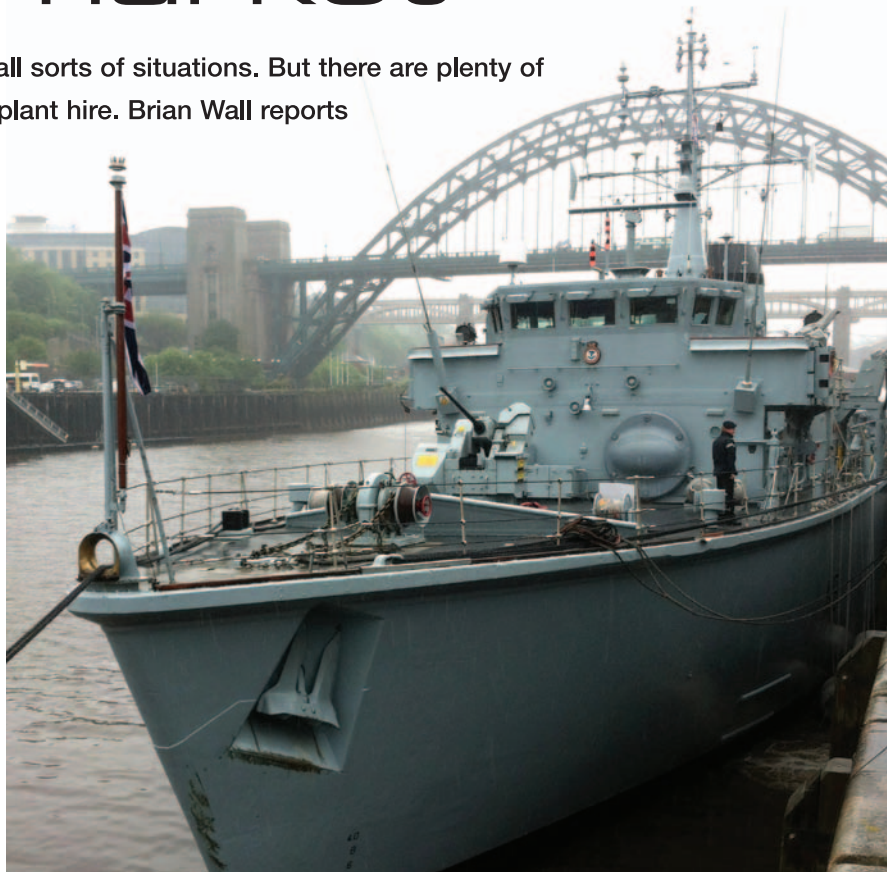
Along with the initial outlay, there is also the cost of training to consider. "Employees need to know how to use equipment, understand what it is showing and then be able to interpret the data," explains Forrester. "Although many equipment manufacturers will provide training for one or two staff, as part of the initial cost, if a company has a high turnover of personnel, the cost of training can rise significantly."

Inspectahire offers a range of NDT (non destructive testing) and RVI (remote visual inspection) equipment for hire – or it can be contracted to undertake an inspection. "Our rental equipment is accompanied by appropriate test certification and is also transit-cased to allow easy and safe transportation to any worldwide location," states Forrester. "If a company has personnel who can operate the equipment and interpret the information,

## Tower of strength

Specialist supplier of power generation and energy systems Shentongroup is now the exclusive UK distributor for USA-based Allmand Bros, which manufactures portable site support products and was the inventor of the first portable light tower (right).

Bison, a new Shentongroup division established to provide robust, quality and innovative products to the rental sector, will market Allmand products.



then rental could well be the most effective option to go for."

## It's a gas

When it comes to gas detection equipment, specialist Quantitech operates a 'Try Before You Buy' scheme, meaning that would-be users are able to rent high-value equipment before purchasing it.

Case Chemicals, for example, hired a multi-parameter gas analyser (FTIR) from Quantitech specifically so that its staff could become familiar with the technology, and confirm its value, before committing to the capital cost. Case provides gas testing services for organisations that require certification to BS EN 12021, the military standard DEF STAN 68-284 and others.

As Case's Sam Wray points out: "FTIR analysis of compressed air provides much higher levels of confidence than traditional techniques. That's partly because it is highly accurate and also because FTIR can detect almost any gas or vapour.

"However, the cost of the instrument is significant, so we were grateful for the opportunity to try it out. The equipment is now proving extremely effective in testing the safety of compressed air for clients with industrial, recreational and military applications." **PE**

**Case Chemicals provides compressed air safety services for the military**

