

# shd

Storage ■ Handling ■ Distribution

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**CLARK**<sup>®</sup>  
THE FORKLIFT



# Brilliant ideas

**In the year that ShD marks its 50th anniversary, Clark, the “inventor of the forklift” celebrates 90 years of progress with history.**

In 1917, a genuinely simple idea tailored to meet their own local needs had been developed by an experienced engineer and fascinated visitors to the Clark axle factory in Buchanan, USA. Originally, the guests had only come to have a look at the production facility, but then there was spontaneous enthusiasm when they caught sight of the brand-new vehicle for in-plant material transport, built by Eugene Clark.

It featured such a great number of advantages that it did not take long until the first orders were taken. Whilst eight Clark



forklifts were built and sold in 1918, the number considerably increased to more than 75 units in the following year.

Today, Clark, often referred to as “The Forklift” due to its pioneering activities, ranks among the leading suppliers in the forklift industry and, in 2007, celebrates the 90th anniversary of the forklift.

### **Hydraulic lifting and lowering: Truclift (1920)**

Three years after the invention of the forklift, i.e. in 1920, Clark presented another practical innovation by launching the Truclift. With a lifting capacity ranging from 2,000 up to 5,000kg, it was the very first forklift to be employed by industrial companies featuring a hydraulic system for lifting and lowering loads. In 1923, Clark’s marketing strategists gave the first gasoline-driven three-wheel hauler with a tractive power of 750kg the smart name of Duat – “Do this, do that!”. This model served as the basis for the first

gasoline-driven forklift to be built in 1924.

### **Back to the future: Tructier (1928)**

Three years later, in 1927, another technological milestone was set: Clark developed the so-called Clarktor, i.e. the first gasoline-driven four-wheel hauler featuring a tractive power of 1,050 to 6,000kg. In 1928, the future of the forklift was anticipated when Clark introduced the Tructier that later turned out to be the precursor of today’s modern Clark forklifts.



### **Electric workhorse: Carloader (1942)**

1942 was the year when drive efficiency became a major topic as Clark started to build the Carloader. It was the first electric powered



forklift capable of working a complete work shift. Because of the Second World War, however, production was rescheduled

resuming from 1945 onwards. Despite this, Clark managed to cover 90 per cent of the US administration’s demand for forklifts between 1941 and 1945 almost single-handed.

### **A signal for safety: warning stickers (1943)**

The production capacity grew enormously from 1939 when Clark sold around 500 units through the first four years of war until 1943, when production peaked at 23,500 units. This

forced the factory to work a three-shift operation per day to keep up with demand. At the same time, this did not keep Clark from dealing with safety issues: in 1943, Clark was the first manufacturer in the forklift industry world-wide to attach warning, and safety stickers onto its vehicles.

### **Stability first: mast with double-I beams (1956)**

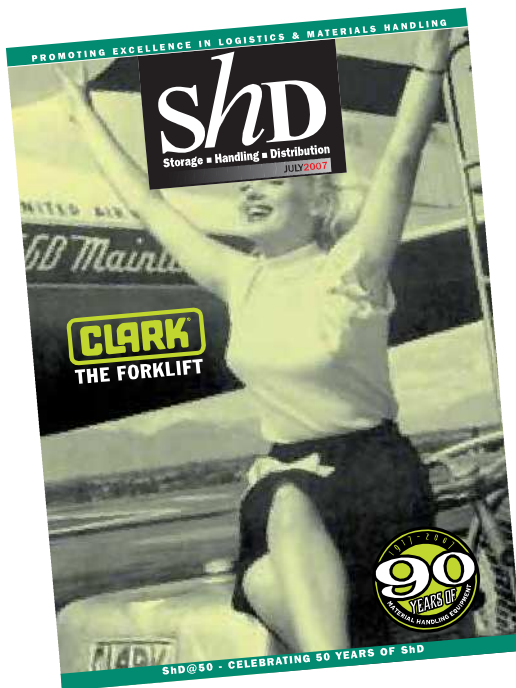
At the ending of World War II, Clark had already gained a foothold in Europe. The first Clark forklift arriving on the continent as early as 1945. In 1952, Clark broadened its portfolio by adding forklift operator training programmes. At that time, it was a unique idea. 1956 saw another major step in technology as Clark developed the first nested upright with double-I beams. This innovative design enormously improved the stability of the mast and the visibility range of the driver.

### **Three wheels and electric drive: TW (1967)**

Then, in 1967, the double hit: Clark is the first in the industry to introduce as standard equipment the driver’s overhead guard for all sit-down rider forklifts.

In addition, the TW was developed. The first highly manoeuvrable three-wheel electric forklift on the market. 1972 was another key year with the introduction of the first electric forklift with a switchable multi-voltage system featuring technology that allowed adaption of different power settings to the respective applications. In 1976, Clark proved its





continued success by reaching the magical number of 500,000 forklifts produced.

**Safety seat, restraints, and safety belt: safety in series (1983)**

In 1983, Clark managed to increase its technological advance by using its leading market position in the development of operator restraint systems. The safety seat with restraints and safety belt was designed to keep the operator safely inside the forklift in the unlikely event of tip-over.

This type of seat became a standard component with forklifts equipped with internal combustion engines. Clark correspondingly offered a retrofitting set for all units on the market and, for the sake of general safety, even agreed to make the

patented system available to all forklift manufacturers.

The safety issue remained on top of the list and, in 1990, Clark was the first manufacturer world-wide to add a safety guideline for forklift operators with every unit sold.



**A brand-new forklift era: GEN2 (2001)**

1997 was a very enjoyable year for Clark as the factory produced its one millionth forklift and again was the first forklift manufacturer world-wide in attaining the highest ISO 9001 certification for all its manufacturing plants.

In order to foster growth in Asia, Clark took over the South Korean manufacturer Samsung in 1998, to be renamed Clark Material Handling Asia, and consequently built a new 29,000 sq m plant at Changwon, Korea.

In introducing the new GEN2 series on the market in 2001, Clark heralded a new era of forklift technology by offering forklifts with lifting capacities ranging from 2,000 up to 3,500kg equipped with pneumatic and press-on cushion tyres. In 2002, the new electric four-wheel series EPG 20/30 with pneumatic tyres was launched by Clark in both Asia and Europe.

**Many years of progress based on history**

Founded as an automotive components manufacturer in 1903, Clark celebrated its

100th anniversary in 2003 as a part of its new parent group, The Young-An Hat Company of South Korea, and fully devoted itself to its main focus and expertise, i.e. the manufacturing of the most reliable and sturdy forklifts in the world, including sales, leasing, renting and, of course, service.



In September 2004, the company established the new Clark Europe GmbH at Duisburg Germany, which as since relocated to a new much larger site in Mülheim an der Ruhr, Germany.

2005 was another crucial year as the new smaller GEN 2 series (forklifts with lifting capacities from 1,500 to 2,000kg equipped with pneumatic and cushion tyres) as well as the TMX/EPX AC Electric series were introduced followed by the complete electric range converting to 100% AC Electric power.

To further enhance its product range, in 2006, Clark reactivated the production of selected models at its Lexington Plant in North America and thus can happily celebrate the 90th anniversary of Clark forklifts in 2007.

[www.clarkmheu.com](http://www.clarkmheu.com)



**ShD @ 50**  
**1957 - 2007**

**May 9 1957:** The Helvetica typeface, designed by Swiss graphic artists, was launched to the public. Its no-frills look has made it a firm favourite amongst publishers, signwriters and corporate identity designers. For example, firms such as Royal Bank of Scotland, American Airlines and Orange base their corporate identities on this popular font. For the record, ShD normally uses Times.