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YEARS  
1988-2018

# SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

NOV / DEC 18

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

Tony Scambler says his family management team enables his dealership to face the challenges which a demanding season places on a business

### Stiga UK Conference

Business as usual dealers told

### Flashback

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## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

**W**elcome to the November/December 2018 edition of *Service Dealer*.

We've come to the final issue of 2018 – and towards the end of a year which many dealers will be relieved to see the back of! As new Stiga MD Gary Whitney puts it in the report from its conference on page 26, this season was “.. a clear reminder that we're in the weather business”.

That truism was starkly apparent this year. With the cold period delaying the start of the season, followed by a manic period of ideal conditions, followed by a prolonged scorcher which turned out to be the hottest and driest spell since 1976 – dealers have certainly faced some trying times in 2018. The results of our Autumn Survey, which you can read on page 34, bear this out. Statistics are one thing, but when we receive comments like “We may have to make a member of staff redundant, purely because finances have been so poor,” – it's clear that circumstances truly have been tough. Hopefully most have made it through as unscathed as possible and perhaps this back-end of the year can offer something, so dealers have a bit of fat for the winter and we can look forward to less extreme conditions next year?

Also this time of year allows for a bit a forward planning and re-grouping. November sees both SALTEX and the *Service Dealer* Conference & Awards take place. The former a chance for dealers to take a look at upcoming machinery trends and the latter a superb opportunity to get together with peers and colleagues to take in some fresh ideas for running your business. It'll be great to see as many of you at the Oxford Belfrey on the 15th as possible.



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## DEALERS

# MERGER FOR DEERE DEALERS

## *Hunt and New Forest in agreement*

The family owners of John Deere dealerships R Hunt Ltd and New Forest Farm Machinery Ltd have signed an agreement to merge their two businesses under the new name Hunt Forest Group.

The agreement will take effect on 1st January, 2019 and until that time the two dealers will continue to trade as they do today.

Tim Hunt will become Managing Director of the new business while Ed Smales, the current Dealer Principal of New Forest Farm Machinery, will take a director's role. Hunt Forest Group will continue to operate from the same outlets across southern England, with the same staff.

R Hunt is a longstanding John Deere agricultural and homeowner equipment dealer with four outlets covering Wiltshire, Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey and the Isle of Wight. It has been a John Deere dealer since 1971 and currently employs 71 staff.

New Forest Farm Machinery is an agricultural, professional turf, homeowner and construction equipment dealer employing 43 people and trading from two outlets, one in Hampshire and one at recently opened turf premises in Somerset. It has been a John Deere agricultural dealer since 1979 and has held the company's

turf franchise since 1986.

"Both companies are well-established, profitable businesses that place a strong emphasis on customer service, and the merger is perfectly aligned with our Dealer of Tomorrow strategy," said John Deere's Division Sales Manager Joedy Ibbotson. "This will provide the new business with more resources for both customers and staff, more inventory, more product support capability and a greater knowledge base, all of which will help deliver an even more distinctive customer experience."

R Hunt Managing Director Tim Hunt said: "Both families feel confident that this merger will help to establish Hunt Forest Group as a frontline ag and turf dealer in the UK. The emphasis is very much on the ability for both companies to grow and have the opportunity to engage with more customers, with a more diversified product line-up for the entire business."

New Forest Farm Machinery Managing Director Ed Smales added: "We're excited about working with the Hunt family to further grow our business as Hunt Forest Group. Their experience in large ag machinery and precision farming will enhance the customer experience within our existing territory and help us create a more diverse and robust dealer business for the future."



Tim Hunt (left), MD of R Hunt Ltd and Ed Smales, MD of New Forest Farm Machinery Ltd

## DEALERS

# BURDENS GROUP ACQUIRES LINCOLNSHIRE MOTORS

## *Lincolnshire Motors depots and trading name to remain*

New Holland dealer The Burdens Group Limited has acquired Lincolnshire Motors Limited.

The deal increases Burdens' coverage to nearly the whole county of Lincolnshire and allows a greater range of New Holland machines to be offered to customers.

The former Lincolnshire Motors Limited territory in North Lincolnshire will be managed from the present Louth and Brigg depots, continuing to use the Lincolnshire Motors trading name, providing continuity of sales and service in the area. The Burdens Group will retain its depots in Sutterton, North Kyme and Wrangle.

John Southern, Managing Director at The Burdens Group, said of the acquisition, "The addition of Lincolnshire Motors to The Burdens Group brings new opportunities to

our business in a competitive industry. Customers across Lincolnshire will benefit from an expanded product range and continued excellent customer service.

"All staff at both businesses will be retained, and all are excited by the opportunity that this expansion brings."

Kevin Bell, previously Managing Director at Lincolnshire Motors Limited has joined The Burdens Group as a Director and will continue his involvement in the business. He says: "The Lincolnshire Motors business was 99 years old this year and becoming part of The Burdens Group marks the next chapter in its history. The move will provide security to staff and customers in North Lincolnshire and allow us to benefit from the scale of a much

larger combined business.

"We expect the Lincolnshire Motors depots to be able to supply customers with a fuller range of New Holland products, particularly tractors, including the T8 Smarttrax, and a larger range of combines, telehandlers and baler products."

Pat Smith, Managing Director at New Holland UK and Ireland, has praised the management and staff at Lincolnshire Motors Limited, saying:

"We offer our thanks to Eric Bell for his 61 years service to Lincolnshire Motors, and his son, Kevin Bell, who has managed Lincolnshire Motors Limited for the past 15 years. We look forward to the enlarged team at Burdens continuing the successful partnership between New Holland, The Burdens Group Limited, Lincolnshire Motors and all our customers across Lincolnshire."



## APPOINTMENTS

## AGRI ARGO APPOINTS NEW GENERAL MANAGER

### *Adrian Winnett joins from Amazone*

Adrian Winnett, has been appointed General Manager at AgriArgo UK Ltd, the distributor of Landini, McCormick and Valpadana tractors in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

He succeeds Ray Spinks, who has stepped down from the role after 40 years working in the farm equipment industry.

Adrian Winnett is no stranger to the Argo Tractors product line, having worked as Landini Sales Manager for seven years before joining the UK arm of implement manufacturer Amazone, where he was appointed General Manager in 2009 and then Managing Director in 2014.

He started his career in the family's Northamptonshire-based farm machinery dealership, which held the Landini tractor franchise, before joining the Landini sales operation in Britain.

Simeone Morra, Corporate Business Director, Argo Tractors, said: "Adrian brings invaluable experience of managing a successful agricultural equipment distribution company, which combined with his knowledge of our business and the Landini product range, will be a great asset. We welcome him back to the Argo Tractors family."

Adrian Winnett said of his appointment: "I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to work with Argo Tractors again and a product line that has been

transformed while I've been working elsewhere."

Commenting on Ray Spinks' decision to step down, Mr Morra said, "Ray has experienced many roles with us in manufacturing, sales and management, and he was pivotal in the re-introduction of the McCormick brand back in 2001.

"For the past 10 years, he has dedicated his knowledge and experience to the running of AgriArgo UK Ltd and he now deserves some well-earned downtime. On behalf of the Morra family and Argo Tractors, we thank Ray for his contribution and dedication over the years and wish him well for the future."



Adrian Winnett

## DEALERS

## GGM EXPANDS BARONESS COVERAGE

### *Territory expanded across Yorkshire*

GGM Groundscare recently signed an agreement to expand its current Baroness sales area across Yorkshire.

Chris Gibson, Managing Director at GGM Groundscare said, "At GGM

we believe Baroness is a long-term partner and is very much in our plans as we continue to develop and move forward. I'm delighted that we are able to offer our Yorkshire-based customers the

benefits of the Baroness range. The range, that ideally sits alongside our high quality fine-turf machinery including brands such as Kubota, Amazone, Dennis and Sisis ensures we can provide an unrivalled range of equipment for the fine turf market."

Adam Butler, Baroness Sales Director added, "Extending GGM's area was an easy decision for us. Their back-up and customer service is second to none and we're very excited to be working with a company that demands such high standards. Yes, our machines are great, but we must have great service to back them up."



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## DEALERS

# RW CRAWFORD RELOCATES TO NEW DEPOT

*State-of-the-art facility in Writtle*



RW Crawford has relocated to a purpose-built, state-of-the-art depot at Writtle, on the outskirts of Chelmsford, Essex, as the family-run agricultural machinery business said it looks to strengthen its commitment to customers and staff.

"We are a very service-oriented business and have built a reputation for delivering excellent customer service and support," explains Managing Director Wes Crawford.

"While we have the staff, the skills and the knowledge, our former base at South Woodham Ferrers lacked space and facilities to move our business forward.

"We had simply outgrown South Woodham and the location didn't offer any opportunity to grow," he said. "We've been looking for 15 years for a chance to redevelop our Essex operation and ultimately to own our site and premises."

Built on a three-acre greenfield site at a cost of around £3m, the new depot cements the family business' long-term commitment to customers and staff.

Taking four years from design to completion, the new building boasts a footprint of 1,765 square metres, of which over 800 square metres are allocated to a six-bay workshop.

With workshop space for 12 tractors and being tall enough to house combine harvesters, the workshop also offers room to support neighbouring Writtle University's engineering department.

"We have a long-standing relationship with Writtle University, and our new premises also provides an opportunity to further the education and development of young engineers," added Wes.

## APPOINTMENTS

## NEW CFO FOR HUSQVARNA

*Glen Instone assumes position from 1st November 2018*

Glen Instone has been appointed Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Husqvarna Group, assuming the role on 1st November 2018.

Currently Vice President (VP) Global Sales & Services, Husqvarna Division, Glen has been working at Husqvarna Group since 2006. He has held various positions within the Group including VP Finance of the Husqvarna Division, VP Finance Europe, Middle East and Africa as well as VP Finance of Manufacturing, Logistics & Purchasing.

Before joining Husqvarna Group, Glen was the financial controller of Electrolux Outdoor Products UK, BE and NL.

He holds an Accounting & Finance degree (BA Hons) of University of Teesside, UK.

Kai Wärn, President and CEO of Husqvarna Group said, "I'm very happy to welcome Glen Instone as our new Chief Financial Officer and I'm especially pleased that

we were able to find the best candidate internally. Glen has a broad and extensive experience within the company and the right personal and leadership skills to support Husqvarna Group's future journey towards market leadership.

"I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Jan Ytterberg for his contribution to the Group."





## INDUSTRY

# STANLEY BLACK & DECKER BUYS STAKE IN MTD

*20% being acquired with option for further 80% in 2021*

Stanley Black & Decker Inc has announced it is buying a minor stake in lawnmower maker MTD Products Inc for \$234 million, expanding deeper into the outdoor garden equipment market and adding to its diverse line of products.

Reuters reported the power tool maker had been expanding its portfolio over the past two years after buying Newell Brands Inc's tool business, Sears Holdings Corp's Craftsman brand and a tool unit in Brazil.

The company said it would buy 20% of MTD and will have the option to buy the remaining 80% of the privately held firm beginning on 1st July 2021.

Stanley Black & Decker's President and CEO James M Loree said in a statement, "This investment in MTD increases our presence in the \$20 billion global lawn and garden market in a financially and operationally prudent way. We've always viewed outdoor products as an attractive growth category for us to expand our presence beyond hand-held electric products. This transaction gives us the opportunity to do that with a world-class partner. MTD has a first-rate management team, talented employees and a mission, values and commitment to innovation that are very closely aligned with our own, and we're excited to move forward with them."

The transaction, which is expected to close in early 2019, is subject to regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions. In connection with the transaction, Stanley Black & Decker will appoint two representatives to MTD's 11-member Board of Directors.

Beginning in 2021, should Stanley Black & Decker choose to exercise its right to acquire the remaining 80% stake, the companies have agreed to a valuation multiple based on MTD's expected 2018 EBITDA (earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization), with a sharing arrangement for any future EBITDA growth.

Founded in 1932 in Cleveland, MTD makes brands including Cub Cadet, Troy-Bilt, Remington, Robomow, Rover and Wolf-Garten.



## DEALERS

# ISEKI EXPANDS DEALER NETWORK

## *MST switches franchises*

ISEKI has announced that Medland, Sanders & Twose (MST) are the latest dealer to switch from a competitive tractor brand and join the ISEKI family.

MST is a well-known and established dealer trading through Devon, parts of Cornwall and parts of Somerset, with depots in Tiverton, Lee Mill and Yeovil. ISEKI said its joining complements the current dealer network.

Nigel Godefroy, Director of MST Group commented, "We're delighted to have the opportunity to serve our

customers with the ISEKI product range.

"Having been with a competing brand for the last 40 years we were concerned that this might be a big upheaval for us and our customers, but the transition has been really smooth and we've already had customers change orders from our previous brand to ISEKI."

David Withers, Managing Director of ISEKI said, "It's great to have MST on board and we look forward to working with them in the future. Since launching the company in



January this year it's been very encouraging to see the volume of dealers that would like to represent ISEKI and benefit from our growing sales and share gain across the sectors we serve."

## APPOINTMENTS

# ARIENS MAKES SENIOR APPOINTMENT

## *Director of sales EMEAA*

Ariens Company has announced the appointment of Jackie Williams to the role of Director of Sales EMEAA. She will be succeeding John Horn who is retiring from the Ariens Company at the end of 2018.

Jackie, who will report to Vice President of EMEAA, Darren Spencer, brings a wealth of experience to the company and will assume responsibility for sales and distribution of Ariens products through Ariens subsidiaries located in the UK and Norway, and Ariens' 50-plus distribution partners worldwide.

Jackie joins Ariens having built a successful career over 25 years in international sales and distribution management.

"We're very pleased to have Jackie become part of the Ariens Company team," said Darren Spencer. "She brings vast experience of multi-channel product sales and distribution across all continents, at an exciting time in the development of Ariens' EMEAA expansion."

Reporting in turn to Jackie will be Ariens European Sales Manager, Massimo Caner, Matt Wilson, UK Sales Manager and Scandinavia General Manager Frank Brenn.



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## INSIGHTS FOR OUR INDUSTRY > 2048, HELPING YOU TO PROSPER OVER THE NEXT 30 YEARS

**S**ervice Dealer will be holding the unique and highly successful one-day Conference and evening Awards ceremony at the Oxford Belfry Hotel on Thursday 15th November.

2018 sees us celebrating 30 years of *Service Dealer* and we want to send attendees away with fabulous and practical ideas for pushing their businesses forward and growing them over the next 30 years.

We are including leading industry speakers and experts, panel debates and breakout sessions.

The Conference programme is based around the most commonly expressed concerns and issues identified by dealers from last year's conference and market research we carried out this year.

*Dress code: Conference – smart/casual*

## INSIGHTS FOR OUR INDUSTRY

# ▶ 2048

HELPING YOU TO PROSPER OVER THE NEXT 30 YEARS

## DEALER OF THE YEAR WINNERS WILL BE REVEALED

### ***Who will be honoured?***

The nominations have now closed with the winners of the Dealer of the Year Awards set to be revealed at the Oxford Belfry on 15th November.

Our core awards will recognise Dealers of the Year across the Garden, Professional Turfcare, Farm Machinery, Forestry Equipment, and ATV/Quad sectors.

Once again an expert panel has been assessing all the feedback received in favour of dealers from customers up and down the UK. This year has proved no easier than

before as the standard of entries has been extremely high as usual. However, a shortlist been compiled with the winning dealers in each category being announced 'Oscars style' on the night.

Also to be presented during the Awards dinner will be:

- 2018 STAR OF THE DEALERSHIP AWARD
- 2018 APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR
- LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



## AGENDA OF THE DAY

- 09.15: REGISTRATION & COFFEE**
- 10.00: WELCOME BY DUNCAN MURRAY-CLARKE**
- 10.10: 30 YEARS YOUNG** – A brief retrospective of the past 30 years from Chris Biddle & Duncan Murray-Clarke (founder and current owner of *Service Dealer*)
- 10.30: ED GILLESPIE – FUTURIST**  
What do the next 30 years hold? A look at the future and what our industry can expect
- 11.30: COFFEE BREAK**
- 11.50: BREAKOUT SESSIONS** (Attend one in the morning and the other in the afternoon):  
**A: SUCCESSION** – Sara Hey from Bob Clements Inc  
**B: URBANISATION** – Ed Gillespie
- 12.50: LUNCH, NETWORKING & SPONSOR SHOWCASE**
- 13.50: JAMES PRICE – Farmer at Perdiswell Farm**  
The inside track: What a farmer wants from a dealership
- 14.10: ANGUS LINDSAY – Group Head of Assets & Fleet Management at idverde**  
The inside track: What a green services company wants from a dealership
- 14.30: BREAKOUT SESSIONS:**  
**A: SUCCESSION** – Sara Hey from Bob Clements Inc  
**B: URBANISATION** – Ed Gillespie
- 15.30: COFFEE BREAK**
- 15.50: UK vs USA:** Pete Harding of PFW Associates and Sara Hey of Bob Clements Inc impart some helpful advice and tips
- 16.50: PANEL DEBATE & QUESTION TIME**
- 17.30: CONFERENCE CLOSE by DUNCAN MURRAY-CLARKE**
- 17.40-18.15 POST CONFERENCE NETWORKING DRINKS**



## SUPPORTING HELEN & DOUGLAS HOUSE

This year *Service Dealer* has chosen Helen and Douglas House as its charity. Owner Duncan Murray-Clarke says: "We are thrilled to be supporting such an important local charity. Helen & Douglas House helps families to cope by offering different forms of support when a child is terminally ill."

Helen & Douglas House is a home-from-home for local terminally ill children and their families. It provides round-the-clock care in a warm, loving environment. It is a comforting cocoon filled with laughter, a peaceful place where families can create happy memories in their last days, weeks, months or years together, making the most of the time they have left together.



## OUR 2018 SPONSORS

The following organisations have confirmed their sponsorship of the 2018 *Service Dealer* Conference and Awards. We'd like to welcome them on board and thank them for their support and input.

Sponsorship correct at the time of print

# SCAMBLERS: A FAMILY AFFAIR

*Tony Scambler talks to Lawrence Gale Msc, MBPR, about how his family management team enables his dealership to face the challenges which a demanding season places on a business*

A visit to Cambridge offered me the opportunity to call in and catch up with Tony Scambler, founder of the one of the largest grounds care suppliers in the country, A J & R Scambler & Sons Ltd. Better known as Scamblers, the dealership specialises in supplying compact tractors, bank tractors, mowers, utility vehicles and turfcare machinery.

## **Service Dealer: When did the company first start?**

**Tony Scambler:** I did a three-year apprenticeship in the dairy industry, aiming to become a sales person in agriculture. However, nothing came of it and I took a job working in sales for a high-class gents

outfitter to get experience in sales, before finding a job working as a sales representative for Choppens Ltd, a company selling grounds care equipment in Cambridge. I worked for Choppens from 1968 to 1971. It was while working there I met up with a haulage contractor, George Webb, who bought mowers from us. George Webb then approached me to establish a new grounds care and agricultural machinery business. Back in those days we were selling a range of garden machinery including Ransomes Auto Certees, Marquis and Honda mowers and some tractors, namely Universal, Bolaris and Ursus.

After three years of trading with George I decided it was time to set up my own business and managed to borrow a deposit from my father to

invest in some land and outbuildings to set up my own company, A J Scambler, in 1974.

A J Scambler initially sold and serviced mowers and tractors but quickly moved into importing products for distribution throughout the UK. At the same time, we identified a market for high-quality used equipment for customers not needing or wanting new machinery. This part of the business grew steadily and manufacturers soon became aware of the service and commitment we were able to give to our customers.

Scamblers is very much a family affair, my wife Rosemary is Company Secretary and Managing Director responsible, along with Dawn Scambler, for all the accounts, including payments, invoicing and credit control. Rosemary's role is crucial to Scamblers' smooth running. Her responsibilities mean that she sometimes has to keep other members of the family in check!

Ed is my oldest son and a Director of the company. He is responsible for the day-to-day running of the company, with a special responsibility for marketing, customer services and sales, specialising in bank cutting equipment like the Reform bank tractor.

Dan is my youngest son and also a Director. His training as a Volvo engineer on leaving school has equipped him well for his responsibilities, which include servicing and preparation of machines. Like all members of the



Scamblers took on the import of Grasshopper mowers in September 2017

# “WE HAVE ALWAYS INVESTED WISELY IN NEW OPPORTUNITIES, AND DO NOT SEE THIS STRATEGY CHANGING”

Scamblers team, he has to turn his hand to most things and often gets involved in pre-delivery inspections.

**SD: What is your role in the company?**

**TS:** Having built up and established the business I now leave the day-to-day running of the business to the rest of my family, while I concentrate on consultancy, buying and selling.

Like most businesses, you can't afford to stand still, you have to keep ahead of the game. There are always new opportunities to explore and we're always looking at finding new products to sell to an ever challenging and demanding industry.

**SD: What do you think has made your business a success?**

**TS:** Scamblers has always enjoyed a fine reputation for looking after our customers' requirements. With a wide range of new products to offer, backed up by an even larger supply of used products, we can cater for all our customers' needs, supplying the right tools for the job and backing them up with support and service. This in turn organically grows the business.

It was, without doubt, our second-hand sales in the early days of

the business that cemented our commitment to customers and gave us the necessary funds to invest in new products and develop our business model.

Working closely with our customers, we could see that there were gaps in the range of products offered by UK suppliers in the UK, so to satisfy our customers' needs we started importing suitable products from abroad. We now import and distribute a range of quality new and used products aimed at the groundscape market throughout the UK and we're continually looking for more machinery to grow the range.

We hold over 30 franchises for a variety of commercial brands, including Muratori,

Reform and Campey Turf Care, and we also supply many quality used tractors, mowers and turfcare implements.

Having well trained and experienced staff has been an



essential ingredient to our success. The team boasts a total of over 200 years' experience in the industry, so customers are guaranteed to receive a prompt, efficient and friendly service.

Our well-equipped workshop is staffed by factory-trained engineers who can carry out maintenance with maximum attention to detail and minimum delay. Our warehouse, meanwhile, houses large stocks of new and quality used products from complete machines to the smallest components to cater for all applications and budgets.

Finally, our fleet of modern, purpose-built vehicles includes service vans and trucks to enable us to meet our customers' needs.

**SD: What products do you stock and sell in your store?**

**TS:** We offer a wide range and choice of machinery catering for both private and public sectors with over 30 brands on offer. These include Amazone, Baroness, Bomford, Campey Turf Care, Club Cadet, Datatag, Dennis, ECHO, Etesia, Grasshopper, Iseki, Kioti, Lewis, Logic, McConnell, Multicar, Muratori,

Muthing, Oxdale products, Pellenc, Polaris, Ransomes Jacobsen, Rapid, Reform, Ryan, Ryetec, Shibaura, Simplicity, SISIS, Stim Zyne, Team Sprayers, Trimax and Ventrac to name a few!

Also taking on the role of sole UK importer for the likes of Grasshopper, Reform and Muratori has given us a unique opportunity to bring into the country some great products.

**SD: Importing the Grasshopper zero-turn machines was a fairly recent development?**

**TS:** Yes, in September 2017 we took on the import for the range of Grasshopper mowers for the whole of the UK. The Grasshopper product is aimed at the large garden, estates through to the commercial contractors. It is a top-end quality product with 21, 25 and 30hp Kubota diesel engines – possibly the best range of diesels on the market for zero-turn machines and 24hp B&S commercial petrols. It's also the only manufacturer that offers an upfront zero-turn machine which gives our dealers a very specialist machine. We are currently looking to extend our dealer network.

**SD: How has the 2018 season gone for you?**

**TS:** With it being such a dry year, domestic sales took a massive hit. However, we do offer a huge range of services so have managed so remain profitable. It's been a year when not having all your eggs in one basket has paid dividends. We also now offer a machinery hire service for people wanting to carry out sports turf renovations, thus providing the opportunity to hire a Vredo seeder, AirG2 Aerator, Dakota trailed top dresser, Baroness soil reliever tine aerator and the Stim Zyne Plus applicator.

**SD: Do you attend trade shows and exhibitions?**

**TS:** This year we will be having a stand (MO95) at SALTEX promoting our Grasshopper range of mowers. We used to attend a number of local shows, but in recent years found them not worthwhile. We need to be more targeted and as such appointed Danny White (Sales Representative) who is an ex-IOG pitch adviser, who is keen to set up a number of demo/ educational days working closely with



The Scambler family: L-R, Daniel, Rosemary, Ed and Tony



Tim Faulkner, one of Scambler's mechanics



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colleges and key customers whereby we can bespoke a number of our products to a dedicated audience.

**SD: What new technologies do you see having an impact on our industry?**

**TS:** I don't see many new products coming through that will radically change grass cutting. However, I can see changing the way the commercial grass cutting contractors price their work, with perhaps drones, GPS and robotic technologies coming into play more.

**SD: Are robotic mowers becoming a more popular sales item for you?**

**TS:** Robotic mowers have not really been a major sales area for us, doing the odd one or two. However, they are now becoming more popular with many manufacturers now offering a greater range of domestic and professional robots. So no doubt in the future we, like most other dealers, will more fully embrace this new technology.

**SD: What are your thoughts regarding online selling?**

**TS:** Selling online is something of a bug-bear to the trade. Some people seem happy to offload machines anywhere in the country, giving zero

backup and no aftersales service.

This is something I personally don't like. We're starting to see a trend of people willing to spend a bit more for that bit of extra support, backup and peace of mind.

**SD: How important is it for you to continue to offer aftersales, repairs and servicing?**

**TS:** It's fundamental to our business. We like to think that the end users can see the value of this service; that without doubt prolongs the longevity of their purchase. We, however, must continue to educate them in the benefits of carrying out these annual services.

Over the years we have purchased and invested in a lot of equipment and resources to ensure a quick and reliable turnaround on repairs and aftersales servicing.

We have two fully qualified mechanics, Paul Pickett and Tim Faulkner, who between them have over 65 years' experience and are able to fix most problems efficiently and quickly.

We also have Gordon White's 45 years' experience who backs myself and Ed by demonstrating and installing machinery, but also has tremendous technical abilities. To complete the team, we also have Andy Hudson as Parts and Showroom Manager.

**SD: How do you see the future for your business?**

**TS:** With the wealth of experience within the business both in sales, parts and the workshops, along with the imports of Reform bank tractors, Grasshopper zero-turn mowers and the Muratori range of attachments, coupled with the franchises we already hold, the future is bright.

We've always invested wisely in new opportunities and do not see this strategy changing. Our turf industry has changed dramatically since I started with the introduction of larger machines massively increasing productivity. However, there still is the need to cut grass on a regular basis. It's just that the standards and expectations are more demanding. We need to be able to meet these demands by supplying a wide choice and range of mowing solutions backed up with an efficient parts and repair service.

**SD: Do you ever see yourself retiring?**

**TS:** No, I love this industry. There are so many great people and challenges. I will continue to keep myself involved and support my two sons, who I know will continue the good reputation Scambler's has earned in the last 44 years.

**SD: Thank you.**



Tractors on display in the yard



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## FULL LINE, FULL CIRCLE

***Many major tractor manufacturers once offered a broad range of the key equipment a farm requires. Now some look to be returning to the idea of full-line. MARTIN RICKATSON looks at the new fields the major players are entering, and how this may impact dealers and their other franchises***

It seems some while now since many of the key names in the tractor sector offered supplementary lines of equipment to provide their dealers with a wide range of the main machines needed to equip a livestock or arable farm.

Until the 1970s and into the mid-1980s, many makers made available to their dealers a long line of products to try to keep customers loyal to the dealership's main franchise. From cultivators to drills, mowers to balers, trailers, muck spreaders and more, most offered either a few key ranges or a comprehensive line of machinery under the same branding and with the same backing, either built in-house or sourced from others.

During the 1990s and 2000s, though, most retrenched from categories beyond tractors, combines and balers, while some entered and then left new sectors in a relatively short time-span.

Now, though, it would appear that as the industry becomes focused on fewer, larger main players, in response to the same happening with farms themselves, the main tractor manufacturers are once more developing full lines of equipment to keep customers loyal to their brand, particularly as compatibility of electronic systems becomes ever more important.

The headache for dealers, though, can be created by commitments to other franchises, a common factor in areas such as forage and cultivation/drilling equipment and sprayers. And with some major names in all those sectors having recently been acquired by major tractor firms, it remains to be seen how much pressure the tractor manufacturers will put on their retailers to sell their new offerings over the dealers' current products from specialist spraying, tillage or forage firms.

Of course, not all dealers for

those latter companies have tractor franchises, and it also remains to be seen whether the industry could yet polarise into tractor dealers selling their manufacturer's full line, and specialist implement dealers staying out of the tractor sector and retailing crop establishment and treatment equipment from the manufacturers that remain independent.

So what are the new sectors the major names have entered in recent years? And where have their product developments come from? *Service Dealer* decided to round up recent happenings.

### **JOHN DEERE**

After toying with tillage equipment during its early years in the UK in the late 1960s and early 1970s, John Deere shrank its offering back to tractors, combines and forage and baling products until the mid-late 1990s, when it re-entered the drill market with its 750A direct drill.

Not long afterwards, it entered the sprayer sector, with the purchase of Dutch maker Douven, since when it has made a significant impression on the sector across mounted, trailed and self-propelled types. More recently, it has also bought Italian sprayer specialist Mazotti, which specialises in front-cabbed self-propelled models rather than the front-engined design Deere already had in its range.

The company has not been afraid to depart from ventures in which it has calculated successful returns are not being made. While it retailed seemingly healthy numbers here following its 1998 purchase of the design rights to Matbro telehandlers, in 2006 it decided to cease production of the machines, which by then it was building to new designs at its Zweibrücken combine factory. Its re-entry to the sector, announced last year, has taken a different tack, with an agreement to market Kramer materials handlers – formerly sold as Claas Scorpion machines – through John Deere dealers, though a number of Deere dealers remain connected to other handler franchises, such as JCB and Manitou.

## NEW HOLLAND

New Holland president Carlo Lambro had made no secret at various press conferences and dealer meetings in recent years of his desire to expand the brand's offering to a full line of tillage and forage products, and his promise came to fruition in 2016, when the parent company of Danish firm Kongskilde Industries decided to exit the agricultural implement business and focus on grain handling and drying equipment.

The 'original' New Holland business of old had been based on combines and grass equipment, but items such as mowers had been dropped from its offering to focus on harvesters and balers. With the acquisition of the Kongskilde ranges, New Holland has returned to the mower sector, with a full line to offer livestock farmers and contractors courtesy of Kongskilde's acquisition some years ago of Danish maker JF.

Cultivation and crop establishment machinery, though, was a completely new sector for the business. With Kongskilde having comprehensive lines of ploughs, cultivators and drills through its Overum, Howard and Nordsten lineage, New Holland

dealers are now able to offer a range of blue-hued soil engagement equipment, from ploughs to power harrows and cultivators. More recently, the business has taken a very different tangent by entering complimentary new precision farming equipment areas, with products which will be offered through New Holland dealerships under its Precision Land Management (PLM) banner.

Developed from a series of licensing agreements with key precision farming technology specialist firms, these include the front-mounted Crop Sensor boom from German firm Fritzscheier, which uses optical sensors to measure crop nitrogen need and alter accordingly the application rate of a rear-mounted fertiliser spreader.

There is also a range of in-field sensor-to-smartphone technologies from Dutch firm SmartFarm, which deliver real-time data on weather, soil temperature and rainfall from field sensors to the user's phone, plus the Top Soil Mapper (TSM) from Austrian company Geoprospectors.

New Holland dealers also now have access to a wide range of materials handling and earthmoving



New Holland has added tillage and more forage implements to its line, including ploughs, since parent CNHi purchased Kongskilde's ag business

equipment, since the decision to scale back the range of New Holland construction equipment, largely made in-house in Italy, and offer it through the brand's agricultural dealers. This includes a mini 360-degree excavators, skid-steer loaders and loading shovels, plus backhoe loader models, complementing its range of mostly in-house-made telescopic handlers and opening up new areas of potential business for many dealers.

## CASE IH

Fellow CNH Industrial business unit Case IH, meanwhile, remains more focused on its core competencies of tractors, right up to large rigid and articulated tracked models, plus single-rotor combines and round and large square balers. In 2015, however, it entered the telehandler market, with a similar range, labelled Farmlift, to that already sold by sister business New Holland. Aside from the entry-level machine, all models are manufactured at CNHi's factory in Italy.

Back when it was an independent business, it was also involved in the mounted, trailed and self-propelled sprayer market during the 1990s and early 2000s, through its acquisition of British maker Gem, but subsequently chose to exit the sector. As it stands,

parent firm CNHi has suggested that the Kongskilde tillage and grass equipment acquisition will have no effect on the Case IH product line.

## MASSEY FERGUSON

AGCO has been one of the more acquisitive firms of recent years, and its most recent purchases have led to significantly expanded lines for what have become its core brands, Massey Ferguson and Fendt. MF has a long history as a long-liner, with its catalogues of the 1970s listing every type of implement from disc and tine cultivators to trailers and slurry tankers, all offered alongside its traditional tractor and combine ranges. However, it exited many of these areas in the 1990s, retaining an interest in balers of all types, plus telescopic handlers through a deal with Bobcat.

Now, however, its line looks to be expanding again, particularly on the grassland side.

Parent firm AGCO's recent acquisition of the Lely forage equipment business means MF dealers can now offer a full line of round balers alongside the MF-liveried mowers, rakes and tedders they have had available since AGCO acquired German maker Fella, which came as part of its deal to buy Italian combine firm Laverda from

McCormick/Landini parent ARGO. It remains to be seen whether it will also be offering Lely's trailed forage harvesters and bale wrappers, which have yet to find a 'home' within AGCO's brands, particularly as the new US-based owner has said it will end production of Lely-branded grass equipment by March 2020.

## FENDT

The longer line within AGCO's two major brands is currently that of Fendt. Traditionally only a tractor maker, it inherited a combine range not long after becoming part of MF parent AGCO in 1995. Until fairly recently this was marketed only in a small number of European countries, but of late that has been expanded to cover the UK.

It's AGCO's recent decisions to simplify its European branding, as well as acquire the Lely forage business, that have really broadened Fendt's line, though. Changing the Challenger line of tracklayers and trailed and self-propelled sprayers over to the Fendt brand has widened its offering, particularly as the smaller 700 MT new crawler line now shares broadly the same tractor unit as the Fendt 900 models.

Meanwhile, in addition to Lely-based balers and the former Fella mowers, rakes and tedders, only



Massey Ferguson dealers now have access to a full line of mowers, rakes and tedders

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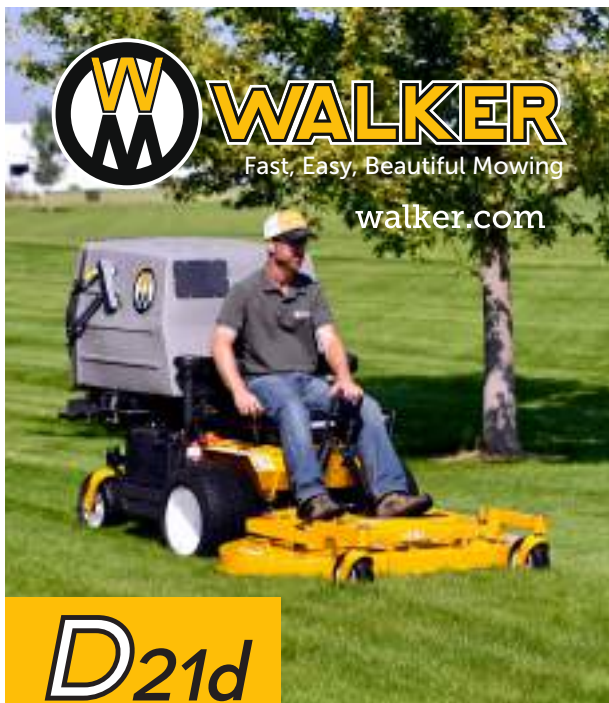
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WALKER MOWERS UK

Fendt dealers benefit from having the former Lely Tigo forage wagons in their offering. The Fendt network, though, doesn't get the telehandler line offered by MF outlets.

Meanwhile, AGCO's Valtra, although a full-liner in certain global regions such as South America, remains a tractor-only brand in the UK, with its machines sold mostly alongside those of Fendt.

## CLAAS

For a long time a combine and forage equipment specialist, Claas has now been in the tractor business for 15 years, since acquiring Renault's agriculture activities. Its involvement in the telehandler sector stretches back further to the mid-1990s, with a badging deal with Sanderson followed by a purchase of that firm's design rights, and latterly contract-building deals with Kramer and, since last year, Liebherr. That deal has given Claas the ability to expand its handling line to also give its dealers a range of 7.75-12.40-tonne capacity wheel loaders.

## KUBOTA

One of the largest recent implement company acquisitions by a tractor

maker has been that of Norway's Kverneland – whose brands include Vicon – by Kubota in 2011. The purchase was made prior to Kubota's underlining of its commitment to get into the mainstream ag tractor market by, in 2015, opening a new factory in France and launching its first full range in the 100-200hp bracket.

The Kverneland acquisition arguably gave Kubota one of the fullest implement lines in the industry, ranging from ploughs, cultivators and drills to sprayers, fertiliser spreaders and a full range of forage equipment, extending to feeders as well as field machinery. Adding US maker Great Plains – which had previously purchased Simba – to its stable in 2016 further extended its cultivation line. While certain Kverneland products have been introduced to the Kubota line as well as remaining in the Kverneland/Vicon offering for other dealers, currently these comprise only fertiliser spreaders, forage equipment, mulch mowers and round balers. With dealers in other European countries already receiving Kubota-branded tillage equipment, it may not be long before lines here are expanded.

## SAME DEUTZ-FAHR

While Deutz-Fahr, SDF's key northern Europe brand, was traditionally a long-liner, with a full range of forage equipment, since its purchase in 1995 by SAME it has focused mainly on its own Croatian-built combine ranges to supplement its tractor lines. In 2005, it entered the telehandler market through an agreement with US firm JLG and its Belgian factory. However, that arrangement came to an end in late 2017.

## ARGO

The Landini parent firm, which at the time also owned combine maker Laverda, created a long-line business when it first reintroduced the McCormick name to the UK, offering McCormick-branded combines and round and square balers alongside Doncaster-made tractors, and latterly developing its own reverse-drive telehandler. However, since choosing to relocate tractor manufacturing wholly to Italy, and disposing of its interest in Laverda to AGCO, it has focused on tractors alone, under both Landini and McCormick brands.



As well as the former Challenger trailed and self-propelled sprayers, Fendt now offers mowers, rakes, tedders, SP foragers and forage wagons



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# BUSINESS AS USUAL

*That was the message out of this year's emotional Stiga conference which paid tribute to Duncan Martin and looked forward to profitable seasons ahead.*

*Editor Steve Gibbs reports*

**T**he Stiga UK dealer conference, which took place across three days in September at the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham, had a dual outlook this year. The events were at once looking back at and thanking the contribution of the recently retired Managing Director Duncan Martin – combined with new MD Gary Whitney's message that with the company's renewed focus on power, there would be profitable times ahead.

Before the conference got fully immersed into its theme, which this year was 'Power', it was right that Duncan Martin's contribution not only to Stiga, but to the history of the UK garden machinery

industry, was recognised.

Gary Whitney paid tribute saying, "Today there is a really significant thank you. A personal thank you from me as well as a thank you from our friends and colleagues in Plymouth and our other factories. Also, a thank you from our industry which he's served for around 45 years.

"Duncan gave me an opportunity to grow my experience in this industry many years ago when I worked with him at Hayter," Gary continued, "and then once again 16 years ago when I joined the Stiga UK team. Duncan has encouraged and inspired me throughout that time. So I consider it a great honour to be chosen to take Duncan's place as Managing Director.

"Duncan has steered Mountfield,

then Stiga and now Atco on a very long and enjoyable journey to where we are now. But he's never forgotten his roots in the traditional trade. He's been an inspiration to colleagues, suppliers and customers alike in this industry that we all enjoy."

A clearly emotional Duncan Martin then took to the stage, taking his time to say a few words to the assembled dealers.

"I've met so many characters and made so many friends," Duncan began. "But most of all I'm proud of what we've achieved – to me that's the most important thing."

Offering some words of wisdom, Duncan said, "When you're managing a business I believe it's so important to be a team. A team



that must believe in and trust their management – and must support each other.

“The team at Stiga UK is a great team – and it’ll go on to expand and reach new heights under the leadership of Gary Whitney.

“I’ve known Gary for more years than I care to mention. He’s a real worker and full of passion for the business.”

Duncan went on to explain just how important he views the company’s relationship to its dealer network and the trust they have between each other. “We believe strongly in our orderly marketing and adherence to our marketing policies,” he said.

“This delivers a stable and profitable platform for our dealers to sell our products. Gary and the entire Stiga team believe passionately in this model which we’ve developed. And they will continue to manage the business in this way.

“As I move out of the picture and Gary moves in, the business will have Gary’s stamp on it, but the DNA will remain the same.”

Duncan signed off by telling the audience that through contact with Stiga he’ll keep in touch with the industry – but he won’t be back.

“Most of all though,” he said, “I really want to thank customers, past and present, for the tremendous support and business that you entrusted in me and our team. I’m most grateful and I feel privileged to have worked with you all.”

Once the warm applause had died down, and following a glowing tribute written by Duncan’s long-time associate and current *Service Dealer* columnist, Ron Miller, Gary Whitney addressed the issue of what a challenging season this current one has been for dealers.

In front of a slide on the big screen which read ‘It’s been a tough few months’, Gary acknowledged the difficult 2018 which most had experienced, saying, “It was such



L-R: New Stiga UK md Gary Whitney with retiring md Duncan Martin

a clear reminder that we’re in the weather business.”

He expanded on theme, explaining how at the start of this year the Beast from the East meant that we were all waiting for the season to start.

“It seemed to be so cold for ages and the start seemed so late,” he said.

“But in fact, it was more the contrast between this season and last season that was most significant. February and March 2017 were much warmer than usual – meaning we clearly had an early start to that year. It made the 2018 spring seem even later.

“But then it exploded into action in April when that month brought the warm and wet weather which we needed – and May just came and went in a blur of business.”

But the underlying signs were already with us by the end of May, explained Gary. He put a slide up on the screen which showed satellite images of the UK, just a month apart this summer, which showed how as he put it, “Our green and pleasant land was quickly becoming burnt and brown.” The illustration made clear how the drought started biting in June and by the end of that month the grass was burnt off.

Gary summarised it in quite simple terms, saying, “This year was definitely the shortest selling season that I’ve ever experienced.”

Looking ahead, the message was that the industry needed to get up, brush itself down and get ready for better seasons to come. “Because despite the difficult year,” said Gary, “your business with us was stable, meaning you kept the considerable growth that you’ve achieved with us over the last few years.

“Our green and pleasant land is back with most of us now,” he said, “there’s business to be done, deals to be had and profits to be made.”

Before getting into the new range of products for 2019, Gary first introduced a new range of Honda GCVx engines which will be included in the company’s walk-behinds during the spring and summer of next year. The reason for these changes was both associated with the conference’s theme of Power and Stage 5 emission compliance.

Presentations were given on new ride-ons, pedestrian mowers, the Stiga 500 Synchronised Battery System, robotic mowers, as well as new merchandising and display solutions for dealers’ showrooms.

Dealers were then able to head outside and get hands-on with the new machines, with positive words from Gary ringing in their ears.

“Season 2018 is nearly done,” he said. “Let’s get on with preparations for season 2019. It’s business as usual from now on.”

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2008-2011

Continuing *Service Dealer's* 30th Anniversary year, we look back at the late-2000s which saw some significant changes in the old guard of manufacturers.

We begin this month with the folding of a buying group

which had set up in the UK only a year previously and end with the promotion of a well-known figure in the UK industry to a top job in the States.

## 2008

### MOTORLAND PULLS OUT OF UK

Barely a year after expanding its operation to the UK, the German-based buying and marketing group, HBO Motorland closed its Sussex-based office – and at the same time drastically downsized its operation in France.

Scott Lelliott, who was taken on to build up the UK business, left the company, as did Eric Kamblok who ran the French arm of Motorland.

The company had signed up a number of UK dealers who were branded online under the Motorland banner.

One, Peter Bateman of Sevenoaks dealership Godfreys said that the website had generated a number of enquiries and said that from a marketing standpoint it had been 'relatively successful'.



### DEMISE OF AN ICONIC ENGINE BRAND

A year after acquiring the Tecumseh engine and transmissions business for \$51 million, new owner Platinum Equity decided to exit the engine business.

It was announced that the manufacturing plant in Tennessee would shut down in December 2010 so ending almost 50 years of the supply of Tecumseh small

engines to the OEM market.

The move would also see the closure of Tecumseh's long-established UK headquarters at Staines with the loss of seven jobs upon closure on 31st January 2009.

The worsening global economic situation, increasingly stringent emission laws and the growth of the Chinese manufacturing sector all contributed to the decision.



# 2009

## LELY TAKES ON SOLO

Lely announced UK distributorship of the Solo range of premium gardening and outdoor equipment in May 2009.

Kim Macfie from the St Neots-based company said the move was great news for dealers. He told *Service Dealer*, "This deal will open up opportunities to boost sales through a superb range of products."

Also in the news in May 2009, dealer Hallmark Tractors of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire was the victim of a break-in which saw £100,000 of equipment taken.



## HUSQVARNA CLOSES STONEHOUSE

Husqvarna announced towards the end of 2009 that it would close its long-time headquarters at Stonehouse by the end of the year with the loss of 18 jobs.

It went on to say that its new headquarters would be centred at Newton Aycliffe, with Clive Middlebrook assuming overall control of all the Husqvarna brands within the UK, Ireland, Netherlands and Belgium.

In other surprise news at the end of 2009, it was announced by Toro that Hayter MD Derek Boulton was to leave the company.

Meanwhile, in other personnel news, Countax appointed Clive Williams as Commercial Director and Steve Campbell to the position of UK Sales Manager.

Also, at Etesia UK and Ireland, Sales Manager Colin Plumb retired after 15 years of service.



# 2010

## PROPOSAL FOR NEW TURFCARE SHOW

Almost 70 companies were represented at a meeting staged at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham on 8th March 2010 to consider a proposal for a new unified show for the turfcare industry.

Convened by David Saltman, founder of the Pitchcare website, the meeting heard how a substantial number of exhibitors and visitors were in favour of a single turfcare show in the UK.

"In recent months, we have surveyed almost 900 suppliers to the turfcare sector and the 25,000 members of Pitchcare and it is clear that they want to see a new event," he said.

The yearly BTME and SALTEX had resulted in a number of leading exhibitors deciding to attend every other year.

"I think there is both a threat and opportunity here," said David Saltman.

"A threat because we could see the creation of a major pan-European event in France or Germany – and an opportunity for the UK to take the initiative and establish a fully comprehensive show at a leading venue."

There were no firm proposals on the table, except that Birmingham's NEC was being considered. The next step, said David Saltman, was for both BIGGA and IOG to meet a



delegation of exhibitors to explore future options.

## ARIENS BUYS COUNTAX

American manufacturer Ariens bought a majority shareholding in Countax in 2010.

The deal, signed by Ariens' President Dan Ariens and Countax's MD Harry Handkammer was completed on 25th May, just two days after the Oxfordshire tractor maker hit the headlines by building a lawn tractor that smashed the world land speed record for a lawnmower.

Harry Handkammer would remain as Managing Director and confirmed that the Countax brand

would be unaffected, as would the distribution arrangements for Echo, Shindaiwa and Bear Cat.

Speaking to *Service Dealer*, Dan Ariens said, "Over the years we have looked at a number of opportunities in Europe, but none have been a good fit.

"Our purchase of Countax, however, is ideal. Both of us are private companies, driven by a total commitment to excellence in the lawn and garden market. I have great admiration for what Harry and his team have done over the past 20



years in building the strength and awareness of the Countax brand."



2011

## GGP IN ATCO DEAL

GGP signed a licensing agreement with Bosch for the use of the Atco and Suffolk Punch brand names in September 2011.

"Atco is undoubtedly one of the most iconic names in the garden machinery market," said GGP UK Managing Director, Duncan Martin. "With nearly 100 years of heritage the brand has developed a valuable reputation.

"We have conducted extensive consumer research and this has

confirmed that there is still a strong recognition of the Atco brand.

"We feel that there is great potential in combining the Atco brand with Global Garden Products' technical and manufacturing expertise as Europe's largest lawnmower manufacturer.

"An exciting, new high-performance range is being developed that will firmly take Atco into the 21st century, and meet the requirements of the modern consumer."



## DAVID WITHERS PROMOTED TO PRESIDENT OF RANSOMES

Ransomes Jacobsen's Managing Director David Withers was promoted to President of Jacobsen, in October 2011.

David had been serving as Managing Director of the UK-based Ransomes Jacobsen division of the US turf maintenance equipment manufacturer since January 2005, overseeing international operations for all Jacobsen brands as well as the E-Z-GO brand in Europe.

"I'm very excited about this opportunity. Having worked in the golf and turf maintenance industry for over 25 years, 19 of those with the Jacobsen team, this appointment is what I have always aspired to.

"I look forward to working with the team, growing our market share around the world and continuing Jacobsen's leadership in turf maintenance products," he said.







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# BUSINESS MONITOR

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## WEATHER NEGATIVELY IMPACTS DEALERSHIPS

*Dealers report downturn in many aspects of their business*

**T**he results of our Autumn 2018 Dealer Survey confirmed what we had been hearing anecdotally – that the extreme weather conditions in the spring and summer have had a detrimental affect on many dealers' business this year.

Asking how has your Overall Business compared with last year, a clear majority of respondents this year answered that it was down on 2017 (45%). Last year we saw an even split between respondents who said it was up and those who had said it was down (38% each).

Considering the individual areas of a dealer's business, once again it was machine sales which had disappointed the most for people who answered our survey; 59% said sales were down on 2017 levels – which is almost the same as last year when 56% answered similarly.

Also down for many who responded this year, were

parts sales; 39% said these were below 2017's levels. Last year, most answered that numbers had remained pretty much constant on the year before.

The only area which most of our readers who answered the survey haven't seen a downturn in was the service department; 41% said this was about the same. Last year, half of respondents said their service department had improved.

Interestingly, for the first time most dealers who answered said their charge-out rate was up at £40-£50 (41%). Last year, only 19% answered with that amount – most were set at £30-£40.

Finally with staffing levels most had remained the same (62%). Slightly worryingly though, the number answering that they had been forced to decrease staffing levels had crept up to 21% (compared with 18% last year.)

### How has your overall business compared to 2017?

Down on last year

45%

Up on last year

28%

About the same

27%

### How have your machine sales (whole goods) performed this year against 2017?

Down on last year

59%

Up on last year

24%

About the same

17%

### How have your parts and accessories sales performed this year compared with 2016?

Down on last year

39%

Up on last year

32%

About the same

29%

### How has your service department/workshop performed this year compared with 2017?

Down on last year

38%

Up on last year

21%

About the same

41%

# YOUR SAY

## We asked you what have been your highlights and disappointments of 2018 for your dealership?

- 2018 started off like a rocket when general activity throughout the business exceeded all other years. Mid July was the breaking point of this trend where sales eased off, enquiries became a lot slower and installations proved difficult, all due to the very dry spell – which also coincided with the holiday season. The last quarter of August we saw the trend reignite and to date continuing with sales, enquiries, repairs and installations on the increase. Overall no complaints about the general picture but what was looking like a spectacular year will probably now be a slight increase on last year.
- Employment is still a concern that has not been solved this year. Robotics has doubled with battery going on a similar trend. Consumer confidence still seems to be there, but the Brexit word is still a topic of conversation for some clients!
- The good weather has been both the highlight and lowlight. It's been good for a customer feel-good factor but has impacted sales due to conditions being so good. However, this has not dented our own business much.
- Servicing numbers increased for April and May. The hot weather, however, had a dreadful effect on business in general. We may have to make a member of staff redundant, purely because finances have been so poor. We have been unable to build up fat for winter.
- Though the year overall has been fairly consistent, the effects on cash flow of snow in March and a heatwave in July has made this year very difficult.
- As a one-man band the early part of the season saw me inundated with service work – a good thing, to the degree that I was kept busy virtually to the end of the dry spell. However, now the weather is almost back to normal work seems rather slow to pick up.
- Sales of lower priced machines have decreased and accordingly brushcutter/trimmer sales and accessories have also dropped. Upside is Automower sales and interest has grown.
- Highlights are the fact that our company is starting to get widely recognised in the area and changing our computer system to Excalibur's. Disappointments are obviously the drought mixed in with the World Cup and holidays lowering customer footfall into the shop.
- Slow start and then the dry spell but we kept busy considering. It was quieter for us at the end of August as we did not have the backlog we would usually due to the dry spell. We now only have one branch but have turned over more this year than we did when we had two branches.
- Main disappointment is from the extreme weather conditions. Very poor March (cold) and poor July (hot).
- Highlights have been the really hot weather and the disappointments have been the really hot weather! Can't win can we?!

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# FIVE DECADES OF TRAILER MAKING

*Dealers don't need reminding how competitive the ag trailer sector has become since the advent of high capacity and high speed models to match modern tractors. Some names have come and gone, but others remain constant. MARTIN RICKATSON visits Richard Western in its 50th year*

**F**or more than five decades, the Richard Western name has been synonymous with the design and manufacture of trailers, at first sold locally around its Suffolk base and now retailed by dealers throughout the UK. From flatbeds to monocoques and dumpers to livestock trailers, alongside its high-output rear-discharge manure spreaders and side-discharge tanker types, plus grain chasers and drill fillers, its products have become a common sight.

Like many of the most successful names in farm equipment, the business of Richard Western has its roots firmly in agriculture, having started as an alternative enterprise on the family farm. Here, on the outskirts of Framlingham in the heart of Suffolk, in the 1960s Richard began to use the farm workshop to produce small numbers of steel items such as feed troughs, for sale to local farmers.

As demand grew, customers began asking for similar standards of engineering in larger and more complex items, particularly trailers, seeking strongly-built, well-finished, high capacity units as the industry began to move on from the sort of dropside universal types that had been farming's mainstay since the 1950s. Richard Western built his first trailer in 1968, and in 1976 founded Richard Western Ltd.

With expansion in demand, trailer production soon

became a full-time occupation for Richard, who began to develop the facilities at D'Urbans, the family farm, to enable the adoption of faster and more professional production methods. The company's trailer product range expanded further with the acquisition of the business of Weeks Trailers, a long-established UK company whose brand is still used today on certain models in the range.

During the 1980s the company then took the opportunity to purchase the Coleman ranges of manure spreaders and forage boxes. Just a few years, later Richard Western Ltd began to diversify its portfolio of products, with the acquisition of the Greenburner flame cultivation system of chemical-free weed control.

Over time, the firm built a network of UK dealers, gradually adding a number of high-profile names, to provide the link to sell and support the company's full range of equipment. Today the business has outlets across the country to advise on, sell and support its full range of trailers and spreaders.

"Our design philosophy is based on the principle of lightness with strength," says Mike Murray, the firm's sales director.

"When engineered with precise tolerances, these are compatible qualities. We've invested in manufacturing technology to help our designers and engineers create trailers, spreaders and other equipment with long service



life, robustness, fuel-efficiency and maximum possible payload.”

To achieve this, Richard Western design principles include pressed and folded steel bodies, with seams that run from front to rear, so the trailer’s load-bearing structure runs with the flow of the load.

“When potential customers come to dealers today, they are looking for things that have become more important as farms have become fewer and larger, such as turnaround time at harvest. That favours a tapered design, for fast and full emptying.”

When placing orders with dealers, larger farms and contractors are also increasingly seeking high-speed axles and hydraulic and air braking options, while a high standard of finish that protects steel over time and results in higher resale values is also expected, says Mr Murray.

“This latter requirement has been a key driver behind the recent £1.2m investment in new paint facilities at our Framlingham factory. We’re one of very few trailer manufacturers to shotblast our products before painting, with the final painting process being carried out only after

a two-pack undercoat has been applied.”

Today, trailers account for three-quarters of Richard Western’s business, with annual production of around 300 units. The bulk of those are silage or grain trailers, but others include flatbed models and livestock transporters. Tipping trailers, which span 10 to 20-tonne capacities, are split into premium Wellington models, with 60-degree tipping angle and 4mm-thick monocoque body, and the standard Suffolk range.

“The development among many large-scale farm enterprises to separate crop movement in the field from haulage to the store is what led us to also develop a line of chaser bins,” explains Mike Murray.

“The need to minimise soil compaction from field traffic and maximise output from high-capacity combines means it’s become increasingly important to both keep in-field equipment movements to a minimum and ensure that combines are kept as close to their hourly capacity as possible.

“But we are also trying to help dealers satisfy the growing trend on larger arable units for controlled traffic

**“OUR DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERS ARE CONSTANTLY SEEKING WAYS TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR TRAILERS”**



systems not only by keeping trailers of the field through the use of chaser bins, but also developing versions with conveyor-aided loading systems that enable the tractor to stay on track regardless of the combine header width and auger length.”

Almost a quarter of the annual factory output is made up of manure spreaders, the bulk of which are high-capacity Delilah and FBS rear-discharge machines. These are supplemented with the SDS side-discharge spreaders, giving Richard Western dealers a way into the dairy farm market, with a machine that can deal with semi-solid material from yard scrapings.

“With high-capacity rear-throw spreaders, technology is placing an increasingly important role when customers specify their machine at the point they place an order through their dealer, and we are increasingly supplying models fitted with features such as weigh cells, radar speed measurement and printing capability.

“Customers are also seeking ways of more accurately spreading a wider range of material, particularly as composting has become more popular. A spinning disc mechanism for rear delivery models of 10 tonnes and above helps improve accuracy and spread width in light, dry material such as this, while we offer both Delilah and

FBS spreaders with a vertical beater spreading unit for yard manure and a spinning disc for the lighter solids, with the systems interchangeable with the aid of a forklift or telehandler in around 30 minutes.”

With farmers and contractors travelling further and faster between fields and farms, and the need for high-capacity spreading operations to have minimal impact on soils, particularly with greater focus on soil management, the axles and wheel equipment fitted to spreaders has become significantly more important, says Mike.

“That means our design aim is also to blend maximum flotation in the field and maximum safety on the road, whilst ensuring sufficient robustness to handle the rigours of many hours’ work in both situations.

“Our design and development engineers are constantly seeking ways to improve the performance of our trailers, spreaders and other equipment, to ensure they work faster, smarter, harder and for longer.

“And our factory processes are constantly being upgraded and enhanced to ensure we produce our products to the highest possible standards, for the benefit of our customers and our dealers. We’re hoping to welcome as many as possible to our factory open days on 1st and 2nd November.”



Muck spreaders, including high-capacity rear-discharge and tank-type machines, are the firm’s second main product group

# SALTEX TO FEATURE GROUNDSCARE INGENUITY

*New area this year of interest to specialist dealers*

**S**ALTEX 2018 continues in its established home at the Birmingham NEC this year from Wednesday 31st October to Thursday 1st November.

Always well worth a trip for specialist dealerships of all sizes, the show affords the opportunity to meet with suppliers, colleagues and fellow dealers, plus the team from *Service Dealer* will be in attendance on **Stand M030** throughout the show, so do come over and say hello.

Of course, the show is most valuable as a means for dealers to check out which new products are coming through from their established suppliers, plus a visit affords the opportunity to check out equipment from brands not yet stocked, with potential for signing up for new franchises.

An aid in quickly ascertaining which new developments manufacturers are promoting this year is a new area of the show floor tailored to the latest in "groundscare ingenuity", which organiser the IOG says is "...purely dedicated to innovation and new concepts in grounds management".

The SALTEX 2017 visitor survey revealed that 97% of respondents said that their main reason for attending the exhibition was to see the latest innovations. Taking this feedback on-board, the event organisers have decided to host, for the first time, a dedicated area which they have called the Innovation Hub.

According to the IOG, visitors can expect to watch interviews with industry experts and those at the forefront of new groundscare innovations, and listen to research and trial work findings.

Furthermore, say the organisers, a number of key speakers will take to the stage to discuss and explore current groundscare trends such as cordless/ environmentally-friendly equipment, robotics and GPS-controlled machinery, among other topics.

In this new feature, delegates will be able to engage in conversation regarding key topics or seek advice while using the opportunity to network with industry business leaders and exporters.

The Innovation Hub will also play host to the SALTEX 2018 Innovation Award ceremony. Making its debut at last year's show, this award attracted a number of high-quality entries from across the globe spanning a wide variety of products, services and equipment.

The independent panel of judges, who based their decisions on a number of factors including what the entry offers the industry and how it makes life easier for the person using it, were unanimous in selecting four stand-out entries. In a tie for first place, Rigby Taylor's Intelligent One autonomous robotic line marker and Fleet Line Markers' MAQA line marking machine were announced as joint winners of the first ever award.

Second place went to Oregon's Gator Speedload and third place went to the Etesia Hydro 80 MKHP4 E-Connect.

Due to the popularity of last year's Innovation Award, organisers believe even more entries will be attracted this year.

Additionally, by referring to the show guide, visitors will be able to follow an Innovation Trail, enabling them to see every single entry on the show floor.



# WHAT TO SEE

## EGO TO SHOW EQUIPMENT NOT SEEN BEFORE IN THE EU

### *Plus products and accessories in its commercial range*

EGO will be giving visitors the opportunity to view what it describes as "exciting and revolutionary products" which have never been seen before in the EU market.

They will also allow people to view products and accessories that are included in the commercial range, such as battery backpacks.

Steve Roskell, Marketing Director EMEA at EGO, is looking forward to the event.

He said, "This will be our 4th time at SALTEX and we're making sure this year will be the best yet.

"Our new products launching in 2019 will debut exclusively at the exhibition, so make sure you come down and visit our stand.

"It will also give visitors the chance to ask any question they may have about our extensive offering and how cordless outdoor power tools can shape their lives, and their businesses." **STAND J062**



## PRICE RETURNS WITH VENTRAC & RYAN

### *Company says they've come a long way in a short period*

Price Turfcare, the UK and Ireland distributor of the Ventrac multi-implement compact tractor and Ryan turf maintenance equipment, is returning to the show this year.

With the business celebrating its second anniversary in January 2019, Managing Director Rupert Price says it has been an exciting time.

"We've come a long way in a short space of time," he said. "It's been a roller coaster ride establishing a network of dealers and doing demonstration tours across the UK, but it has worked. We realise that prospective purchasers of the Ventrac have to see the machine in action and we've travelled the length and breadth of the UK and Ireland establishing the brand's credentials. Also, the addition of the Ryan franchise last year has broadened our product portfolio, enabling us to offer customers a comprehensive range of turfcare equipment.

"What is particularly pleasing is that some of our early Ventrac customers are coming back to add further attachments or in some cases, buying another machine. For instance, Darren Baldwin, at Tottenham Hotspur Football Club has added a couple of Power Brooms for

maintaining the pathways, parking areas and synthetic pitches at their training centre, while Peter Pattenden at Carden Park has purchased a second machine.

"Chris Brook of The Club Company purchased two machines, one each for courses in the group that needed a machine with a light footprint in wet conditions. Angus Lindsay of idverde purchased a machine for a new contract with Northampton Borough Council, which requires considerable bank mowing; and we've been successful with several local authorities in the North of England."

**STAND B124**



**Angus Lindsay of idverde has invested in a Ventrac 4500 with ToughCut deck for the Northampton Borough Council contract**



# GRANDSTAND REVEAL FROM HAYTER & TORO

## *New mowers to be seen for the first time*

Hayter and Toro will be showcasing new products at the NEC, including a selection of mowers being revealed publicly for the first time.

The company says the new Hayter machines are designed to be hard-wearing and high performance, but also easy to use, so that anyone can create a professional finish to their lawn.

Toro will also be showcasing a multitude of products, with the newest reveal in the form of the Grandstand® stand-on mower with rear discharge.

There are two new Grandstand® models available, the 36" (91cm) and 48" (122cm), each with a rear-discharge rotary cutting deck. The company says they are also quick, comfortable and easy to use, offering higher levels of manoeuvrability in small spaces.

### **STAND E065**



## MAKITA TEAMS UP WITH BALI AGAIN

### *Exhibiting in zone dedicated to members*

Makita UK will be returning to the BALI Zone this year.

This area features and promotes BALI registered affiliate and contractor members. Also confirmed for this year are Boningale Nurseries, Green-tech, British Sugar TOPSOIL, EverEdge and YMCA Training.

The Makita UK stand will showcase its growing garden machinery range suitable for professional landscaping contractors, groundsmen and forestry workers.

Mark Earles, Business Development Manager, Makita UK, said of the stand, "There will be a focus on our expanding cordless range but visitors will be able to learn about the entire collection, including our petrol and electric models."

The company says its 18V battery platform makes it economically viable for the tool owner as there

is the option to purchase the 'body only' version for those who already own batteries for their other Makita power tools. This battery platform continues to expand with innovations such as the twin-18V technology which can power a 36V motor.

Makita says many of its groundscape machines offer a

considerable reduction in vibration and can be used all day without harm to the operator. Its battery-powered tools are significantly quieter than petrol machines, meaning teams can work around parks, schools, hospitals and cemeteries without causing nuisance and annoyance.

### **STAND K190d**



# CASE IH TO EXHIBIT FOR THE FIRST TIME

## *Showing off tractors suitable for amenity use*

Agricultural machinery manufacturer Case IH will be exhibiting for the first time at this year's event.

The brand produces a range of tractors from 55hp to 628hp, with the 55hp to 150hp models suited to many applications in amenity use. All these models can be specified with a range of implements including loaders, as well as tyres to match the demands of amenity applications.

Case IH tractors are supported by a network of 81 dealers across the UK

and Ireland, providing a guarantee of personal and professional after-sales support.

At the NEC the company will be displaying a Farmall 75C, fitted with a loader.

Commenting, Andy Whiley, Case IH Key Accounts Manager, said, "Our tractors have proven performance and reliability, offering best-in-class total cost of ownership, and our range offers the right machine for every task, backed up by an extensive

dealer network. We look forward to meeting customers old and new at SALTEX."

The Case IH range includes the following series of tractors suited to sports, amenity, snow clearing, municipal and landscaping use:

- **Quantum V/F -65 to 106hp**
  - **Farmall - 55 to 114hp**
  - **Maxxum - 116 to 145hp**
- STAND D032**



Case IH Maxxum

# DOUBLE ATTILA DEBUT FROM ETESIA

## *Two new pedestrian brushcutters*

Etesia UK has announced that two new Attila pedestrian brushcutter models will be launched in Birmingham.

The company says the AK60 and AH75 models effectively deal with clearing vegetation from a wide variety of sites – long grass, weeds, bracken and brambles on

woodland paths or orchards. Both

models will be fitted with a T3 transmission with differential lock and front wheel locking system with a simple height of cut adjustment from the new handlebar design.

The AK60 model is fitted with a Kawasaki FJ180 OHV engine with a 60cm cutting width, while the AH75 is fitted with a Honda GXV 390 engine with a 75cm cutting width. Both new models also feature a new handlebar system with central cable protection allowing movement into offset and storage positions.

Also available to view at the show will be a range of Etesia pedestrian and ride-on mowers.

New product brochures ahead of the 2019 season will also be available. **STAND C050**



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# REESINK TO LAUNCH TWO NEW MACHINES

## *Super-duty utility vehicle and a 12ft pull-behind rotary mower*

Reesink Turfcare will be debuting Toro's first super-duty utility vehicle, the Outcross 9060, and the brand's new 12ft pull-behind rotary mower at the NEC.

Jeff Anguige, National Sales Manager for Reesink, says: "The launch of the Outcross 9060 marks the first of its kind to be purpose-built for the management of fine turf. It combines the best elements of a tractor with a utility vehicle and delivers a machine that can do the work of multiple machines in one compact package."

Powered by a 59.8hp Yanmar liquid-cooled diesel engine, the Outcross can tow up to 16,000lbs and has an optional cargo bed that can hold 4,500lbs of materials.

The company says it simplifies operation, optimises power and brings the option of dozens of attachments to perform hundreds of tasks.

Also new, the Groundsmaster 1200 pull-behind rotary mower features a

12ft-wide cutting width with three decks which flow with the contours of the terrain, and dual full width rollers which leave a well-groomed after-cut appearance. The height of cut can be adjusted from 0.5 to four inches, and its wing decks folded up to create an 86-inch transportation width. Plus, the transport wheels feature a torsion axle and integrated torsion spring which means it can do its job smoothly and comfortably for the operator.

In addition, there will be a full line-up from Reesink and all its brands. From the grounds machinery range, for example, will be the LT-F3000 triple flail mower and the large volume direct collect ProLine H800, which launched at last year's show.

Reesink will also once again have two stands with H080 being entirely dedicated to TYM's range of compact tractors and accessories.

### **Stand H010**



## NEW RANGE COMING FROM PELLENC

### *Three new products under wraps until the show*

Pellenc, which is distributed in the UK and Ireland exclusively by Etesia UK, has chosen SALTEX 2018 to launch a new range of battery-powered hand tools.

Full details are being kept under wraps until the show opens but three new products will join the portfolio.

Other products on the stand will include the Airion 2 new generation hand-held blower and the Rasion Smart and Rasion Basic pedestrian rotary mowers. The Helion hedgecutter, Selion chainsaws and polesaws, and the Prunion and Vinion pruning shears will also be available to view.

The company's experienced and knowledgeable staff will also be on hand to offer advice, along with finance options, and all visitors to the stand will be able to get their hands on the new product brochures.

All Pellenc batteries and tools come complete with a

three-year commercial warranty as standard.

### **STAND E055**



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# COMMERCIAL ROBOTS AND NEW BATTERY KIT SHOWCASED

## *The focus of Husqvarna's stand*

Husqvarna will be focusing on both battery power and their commercial Automower® at the show.

New products on the stand will include:

Husqvarna hand held battery range –

- **New Backpack batteries (BLi950 & BLi540) with increased capacity**
- **New Backpack 550iBTX battery Blower**
- **Commercial Robotics**
- **Preview of AWD Automower®**

Petrol products –

- **Launch of new professional 522 series petrol Hedge Trimmers.**
- **New model 550 XP® MKII chainsaw.**
- **System Solutions**
- **New version of the Husqvarna Fleet Service management system**



Following several successful commercial installations with municipalities and private enterprises alike, Husqvarna will be speaking about how their Automower® has made an impact to commercial businesses.

Visitors to the stand can learn about this as well as the Fleet Services offering, including how to remote manage the Automower® fleet and identify exactly where each unit is live.

The company will also be showcasing how their integral battery management systems constantly maintain batteries in both use and storage to prevent damage by poor or lack of user care. "Husqvarna Connect" is the latest Bluetooth based system so that battery products are constantly in communication with the user's smart device showing battery status, hours run, accessories and spare parts information for the exact machine. This function also helps users to contact their dealer with the correct parts information for time sensitive support.

Also, being presented on their stand, Husqvarna Fleet Services 2.0 brings the latest in managing small or large fleets of equipment to desktop computers, tablets or mobile device - keeping information all in one place. Fleet Services reports where products are being used and allows the user to generate fleet audits at the touch of a button, alongside other features such as: maintenance monitoring, runtime and usage style for training. I

**STAND H040**

## LARGE STAND FOR GRILLO

### *FD900 out-front mower with collection on show*

Grillo will once again be taking a large stand and amongst the machines on display will be the FD900 out-front mower with collection.

The company says in its first season demand has far exceeded expectations and extra production capacity has had to be installed. Powered by a 3-cylinder Yanmar diesel engine with permanent 4wd it features a 126cm cutting deck with twin contra rotating blades, plus fans sitting on top for extra collecting performance. Its 900l hi-tip collector has an internal setting control for dry, damp or wet conditions.

Each time the collector is emptied twin scraper blades are activated on the grass chute to alleviate build-up of debris. Hydrostatic on the move height adjustment allows increased output.

**STAND KO80**



# AMS OFFERS A BIGMOW

*UK's official distributor for Belrobotics*

Automated Managed Services Ltd (AMS) is the UK's official distributor for Belrobotics robots and offers a contract-based robotic maintenance service solution for turf care.

Looking to build on its success in the golf industry, which incorporated automated outfield mowing and ball management into an all-in-one service solution for driving ranges, AMS has kick-started its expansion into sport pitch/field care with upcoming installations at Barking FC and Halesowen FC.

These football clubs will be home to the new BigMow Connected Line robotic mower. Released into the UK market in April of this year it will be showcased at this year's show.

Its features include a large working area capacity of 24,000 m<sup>2</sup>, up from the 20,000m<sup>2</sup> coverage offered by its predecessor the BigMow Classic.

Design improvements to the shell/body design contribute to low noise level output of 52db. It has five sonars used to navigate its surroundings and to perform effective obstacle avoidance.

A Belrobotics smartphone app has also been introduced to allow customers to programme mowing schedules and

monitor performance.

With 45-plus robot locations across the UK, a single BigMow robotic mower can mow a pitch five to seven times per week and imposes no stress to the grass due to its lightweight design.

It has 15 razor-sharp blades that trim the top of the grass into tiny clippings.



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# NEW MODELS FROM KIOTI

## *Including new CS2220 micro tractor*

Kiotti UK Ltd's stand will include some new models this year.

The new CS2220 mechanical transmission 21hp micro tractor is powered by a 3-cylinder diesel engine, which the company says features the highest cubic capacity for tractors of its class.

The chassis is based upon the hydrostatic CS2610 model. Kiotti says the driver has a comfortable and spacious working platform with well

laid out controls and power steering. The transmission features 6 forward and 2 reverse gears.

Also new is the DK6010CH boasting a 3-cylinder tier 3B 60HP engine giving a quiet and economic performance. The spacious cabin includes air-conditioning and the lift capacity is 1700 KG at the link arms.

Also being shown is the CK3310H hydrostatic 33 hp tractor, a luxury cabin option for the K9 2400



Mechron as well as a prototype zero-turn mower featuring a Briggs & Stratton 22hp petrol engine and a 48 inch deck.

### **STAND A190**

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# LAWN CARE LEGENDS LIVE MAKES DEBUT

## *Networking opportunity from Facebook group*

A new networking opportunity will be available at the show this year.

Lawn Care Legends, a Facebook group which was created in July 2016, is an online community with over 3,000 worldwide active members. It is primarily a group for all landscapers and gardeners to showcase their work and knowledge and ultimately support one another.

The majority of group members are based in the UK, Ireland, USA, Australia and Canada and the group sees, on average, 40-60 individual member posts and approximately 4,500 engagements every day from likes to comments.

"The kind of topics of conversation can be anything from recommendations on products, machines or brands, what people prefer to use – the pros and cons – or it could be to do with marketing your business or pricing a job. It is open to professionals and aspiring professionals and the group

encourages the positive aspect of sharing information," said group founder John Ryan.

John said that while he believes social media is an important aspect of the industry, the group is far more than just social sharing. "Social media is a way to feed on the passion for the industry but it's much more than just sharing pictures and talking about lawnmowers; it's a way of connecting with people who have the same interests as you, have the same passion as you, and ultimately face the same difficulties as you.

"One thing I have personally experienced and widely seen in this industry is mental health, and that has commonly derived from being a solo operator or a small business owner. The difficulties and the challenges we face can be overwhelming and if we don't have somewhere to turn to for advice or for some encouragement, then it can be really tough going. Social media

breaks down those barriers and can make you feel less alone."

Lawn Care Legends LIVE will take place on the first day of SALTEX with John hosting the event alongside other popular Landscaping 'YouTubers' Curtis Jones and Jason Groom.

"The event is open to everybody," continued John, "the solo operator, the small to medium business owner, anyone who is following what manufacturers are doing, or following what their peers and colleagues within the industry are doing. By bringing Lawn Care Legends LIVE to SALTEX, it creates a go-to event of the year that people, not just members of Lawn Care Legends, can look forward to in connecting with other likeminded individuals."

Lawn Care Legends LIVE will take place on 31st October at 2:00pm in concourse suites 22 and 23 by the SALTEX entrance.



A recent Lawn Care Legends meet up



### CUSTOMER RIGHTS

## CONSUMER LAW & RETURNS POLICY



Edited by Adam Bernstein

**D**ealers sell to the public with the risk that consumers want to exercise what they think are their rights, writes Adam Bernstein, SME Digest Editor.

However, consumer law has moved on and many – both consumers and dealers – misunderstand what the law now says.

Consumer law changed three years ago with the introduction of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA) in October 2015, and Matthew Gough, a Partner in the commercial group of the international law firm Eversheds Sutherland, says retailers need to ensure that they comply with their legal duties and responsibilities to protect their customers' rights set out in the Act.

In outlining the main changes, Matthew says that under the CRA, "customers may be entitled to a refund, replacement, repair and/or compensation where the goods they purchase are faulty, not as described, or don't do what they are supposed to do." These rules apply whether the goods are purchased at full price, at a discount in a sale, and even when goods bought second hand.

As for returns, Matthew explains that the CRA says that for goods purchased "the consumer has up to 30 days to reject the goods and get a full refund if they are of unsatisfactory quality, unfit for purpose or not as described." But what happens when a consumer returns a faulty item after 30 days but within six months of purchase, and it can't be repaired or replaced? Here he says that they would be entitled to a full refund in most cases, "with the onus being on the business to prove that the item was not faulty." Looking beyond that period, after six months and up to six years, if the goods do not last a reasonable length of time he says that the consumer may be entitled to some money back, "provided they can evidence that the fault was present at the time of purchase and the goods should have been durable for

the time period in which the complaint is made."

Notably, these consumer rights also attach to goods purchased online, over the phone or by post. In such instances of distance selling, Matthew says the seller is also responsible for covering the costs of returns. He adds that in addition, "the Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013 provide customers with the right to reject the goods for any reason and get a full refund during the 14-day cooling-off period after receiving the order. Dealers have an obligation to inform customers of this right to cancel; failure to do so could lead to the consumer's right to cancel being extended to up to one year instead of 14 days."

Of course, many retailers offer voluntary no-fault return policies. Such return policies often go beyond these minimum statutory requirements, but, as Matthew explains, they may not take away from them. But he makes a number of key points that benefit retailers: "Sellers need to be aware of the fact that, save for the cooling-off period applicable to distance selling, customers are not legally entitled to a refund just because they have changed their mind about a purchase. Similarly, there is no automatic right to return goods, for example, where the consumer has bought clothes in-store in the wrong size or where an item is an unwanted gift, unless provided for by the business's own returns policy."

In essence, if the item purchased is not damaged or faulty, is as described and does what it is supposed to do, the customer will not have a legal right to return it.

In addition, when buying online there are also a number of exceptions where customers are not entitled to return the goods within the cooling-off period unless they are faulty. These include goods that are personalised or custom-made, or sealed on delivery but have been opened.

# EMPLOYMENT STATUS – THE ONGOING DEBATE

The ever-evolving nature of the workplace has seen employers being thrown into the media spotlight over the past 18 months, says Chloe Themistocleous, Associate at Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP. Generating the most interest recently, has been a case involving a plumbing firm, Pimlico Plumbers and an individual, Mr Smith, who brought several claims after being dismissed following requests to reduce his working hours after a period of ill-health.

The key question for the employment tribunal to answer in the first instance was whether Mr Smith was, in fact, an employee, a worker or was self-employed, because his rights hinged on where in the three-tiered hierarchy he sat.

Following a sequence of judgments and appeals all the way to the Supreme Court, Mr Smith was ultimately found to be a worker.

## Costly mistakes

When employers get their assessment of employment status wrong not only can they get tribunal judgments against them publicly published and suffer the

related reputational damage that follows, they also risk a huge financial burden of other claims being made by the remainder of the workforce.

If an individual is deemed to be an employee, they will benefit from the greatest level of employment law protection and will have the right not to be unfairly dismissed. It is, however, more common for individuals who are thought to be self-employed to be determined to be workers which entitles them to be paid national minimum wage, receive holiday pay and pension contributions.

Unhelpfully, the law does not provide a clear definition of what an 'employee' or 'worker' is. Tribunals have to decide based on a number of tests around the following key areas: if an employee is required to carry out the work personally, or whether they are allowed to send a substitute to carry out work; whether an employer is obliged to provide work, and whether the individual in turn is obliged to accept it; the level of control exercised by the employer over the individual; to what extent the individual is 'integrated' into the

employer's business. Other indicators that might be considered are the level of financial risk incurred by each party, who is responsible for paying tax, working hours and pattern.

Disguising an employee or worker as a self-employed person can have serious tax implications. Self-employed individuals do not pay tax through PAYE and instead are responsible for handling their own tax affairs and paying their own National Insurance Contributions (NICs) by completing a self-assessment on an annual basis to HMRC. In some circumstances, they may even have to register for VAT. Employees and workers, however, do not have to worry about handling their own tax affairs, as they are taxed through the PAYE system which collects income tax and NICs at source through the businesses payroll (or via an agency for some workers).

If an individual is found to be an employee or worker as opposed to a self-employed person, the employer could find itself liable to pay for backdated tax and NICs, associated interest and penalties which could run back a number of years.



# COVERT MONITORING

There will be situations where employers consider covert surveillance appropriate – possibly where criminality is suspected says Mark Stevens, Solicitor in VWV's employment law team. However, employers do not have free rein, particularly in light of the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which became law in May.

A recent case considered the lawfulness of surveillance within the workplace. In *López Ribalda and others v Spain* a Spanish supermarket decided to install surveillance cameras after it uncovered theft at one of its stores. A number of visible surveillance cameras were installed, aimed at detecting theft by customers, as well as hidden video recorders to monitor supermarket cashiers.

Footage collected showed five employees stealing items from the supermarket. The employees were confronted and admitted to theft, after which they were dismissed. The employees pursued unfair dismissal claims through the Spanish courts, which were unsuccessful. The employees subsequently pursued claims at the European Court of

Human Rights (ECtHR) arguing that the use of the covert video evidence in the unfair dismissal proceedings had infringed their privacy rights under Article 8(1) of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The ECtHR agreed with the employees; it looked at whether the Spanish courts had properly balanced the employees' rights to respect for their private life and the employer's interest in protecting its property rights, and the public interest in administration of justice. The ECtHR determined that, whilst the employer was concerned about thefts and was entitled to investigate, the use of covert recording in this way breached Spanish data protection law and the guidance issued by the Spanish data protection agency.

In this case, not enough had been done to safeguard the employees' rights – for instance by targeting the surveillance only to those individuals who were under suspicion, or only recording for limited periods of time.

The ECtHR also noted that other safeguards might have included informing the employees of the recording and providing them with the information required under Spanish law.

In the UK, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidance states that "covert monitoring should not normally be considered. It will be rare for covert monitoring of workers to be justified. It should therefore only be used in exceptional circumstances."

An example of an exceptional circumstance might include an investigation into suspected criminal activity, where openness would harm the process.

Under the GDPR, employers must conduct data protection impact assessments when undertaking processes that are likely to result in a high risk to the rights of data subjects. Covert monitoring will fall within the scope of this obligation.

Employers who use video surveillance should ensure that they have a policy in place setting out what CCTV monitoring takes place; the reasons why it has been deployed; and how the recordings are used.

In addition, if the decision is taken to use covert monitoring, this action should be targeted to affect as few individuals as possible and undertaken for the shortest possible period necessary.

## SME NEWS

### New product safety body launches consumer protection strategy

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has launched its first ever strategy aiming to further enhance the UK's product safety regime. The plan is part of the government's Industrial Strategy and aims to deliver protection for consumers, help British businesses to thrive, and protect responsible businesses from unfair competition posed by unsafe products.

New measures in the plan include a new national incident management team for product safety incidents

capable of co-ordinating large-scale product recall and repair programmes; establishing a new website to support consumers with reliable information and advice about recalled products; increased support for local authority enforcement teams at ports, borders and points of entry to ensure the safety of goods that are entering the UK; closer working with manufacturers to ensure they are compliant with safety regulations from an earlier stage of the production process; and developing tools and guidance to assist local authorities in improving risk assessments, identifying mistakes before they happen.

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# RE-JIGGED GLEE FINDS ITS AUDIENCE

*An expanded show delivered the goods this year – although perhaps not for the specialist dealer. Editor Steve Gibbs reports from the NEC*

Once a mainstay of dealers' calendars, Glee is very much these days an event for garden centres and other domestic gardening retailers.

It must be said though, this year's show was very impressive in its re-jigged format, with a new hall configuration and clearly many more exhibitors than in recent times. As soon as one entered the exhibition it was obviously much, much larger, with plenty of exhibitors pushing the boat out with impressively elaborate and eye-catching stands.

Making the most of the redesign which encompassed a large central 'boulevard', located along which were many of the major players, was Handy. Once again effectively acting as 'machinery at Glee', Handy's stand brought together its brands such as Webb, Handy, Flymo, McCulloch, GreenWorks and Karcher, into one impressive space. Actually comprised of less square meterage than in recent years, through some clever

use of stand design, its presence felt bigger and more significant than ever. Handy's MD, Simon Belcher, was particularly pleased with the location, across from Smart Garden Products which is apparently the country's biggest-growing garden centre supplier – meaning its footfall had benefitted wonderfully.

"Our slightly smaller stand this year," Simon said, "means that we're saving money, but still giving the right impression."

I asked Simon why they continue to return to Glee year after year? "This show is always about quality, not about volume," he said. "The people that we meet here are all good quality buyers. We get all the key buyers right the way through from independents to supermarkets and the mass channels. It's not a show that's packed with people, but crucially for us it's the right people."

To make sure they can cope with what can prove to be a very busy three days for them, Handy commits

plenty of staff to attending the NEC. "We've got 11 or 12 staff members on our stand," Simon explained, "and we do that, so we've always got somebody free."

Handy's staff tend not to be meeting new customers for the very first time at Glee, they say, it is mostly people they already know.

And what are those buyers interested in? "Buyers are talking to us about both machinery and our ranges of accessories. Also, our presence here gives retailers the opportunity to look at our merchandising solutions too. For example, our wooden Webb mower stands are popular in garden centres. Their style is in-keeping with a lot of what you'll find in those stores, plus they get the mowers up to head height so they're easy to view and the boxes tuck in neatly underneath."

In terms of what products are doing well currently, Simon said GreenWorks has grown massively this past year. "The battery machines we



Handy's stand on the main 'boulevard'



Handy's Simon Belcher on the company's impressive stand

sell are clearly the biggest emerging product category," he said. One of the new products which had a prime display location on the stand, which is apparently proving extremely popular with retailers and consumers, is a new lithium ion pressure washer. "People can't get enough of this at the moment," Simon said. "Because users can take it anywhere, without being hindered by being near a power point or a hosepipe, it's selling remarkably well."

I asked Simon, what with the show having a refresh this year, whether he thought it was worth more specialist dealers returning to check it out – but he wasn't so sure. "Only if they're coming specifically to see us because there's not much else here for them," he said. "And to be fair some of the products we're showing like Flymo, McCulloch, Karcher, these are not the brands that the specialist dealer is buying. They're buying Webb mowers and the Handy products – but we've got eight guys out on the road, calling in to see them, taking those products to them. Frankly they're seeing those new products way ahead of this show. If your area manager is doing a good job, I'd say it's not really worth the trip for a specialist dealer anymore."

"The only way it really would be is if more machinery people start

exhibiting again – which I can't see happening.

"By us bringing all our brands together, it's perfect for the garden centre buyers. They want a one-stop-shop with a single supplier of garden machinery. For them it's a seasonal product which sits in certain windows. They want the spring products and the autumn products. Therefore, our stand is perfect for them because in half an hour they can see all the brands, talk to their representatives, make their decisions and move on around the show."

Speaking to Chris Slinger, Dealership Development Manager at STIHL GB, who were also at Glee once again to promote their domestic electric equipment, he agreed that the show wasn't really for specialist dealers anymore.

"To be honest, I think the show has moved on," he said. "We've seen some dealers come through the stand that have some crossover, but it's mostly just garden centres."

Chris also had praise for the show, which delivered the perfect audience for whom the company were wanting to promote their entry level, cordless machinery. "There is value in us attending this show because of what we're doing with our domestic range. We're attracting younger customers and increasing awareness

of our brand. That ties in with our TV advertising and our continuing sponsorship of Leicester Tigers.

"It's been a really good show for us," Chris confirmed. "I think what we now have in our battery products is a really appealing offering to retailers who might want the chance to sell some limited machinery without a servicing commitment."

Asked how they assess if Glee had a been a success for the company, Chris said, "We've made some excellent leads here which we'll follow up. Making further contact with the buyers from the type of retailers who attend this show is superb for the product we're promoting."

To be fair, Simon and Chris are completely right in their assessment that Glee isn't really for specialist dealers anymore. Without a doubt it's not what it used to be, but what it has become is a superb show for that specific sector.

I would say the only reason why a specialist dealer might consider returning next year is if that they are looking to diversify within their showroom. The array of differing gardening and related products from the huge number of exhibitors is quite staggering.

A wander around the halls for a few hours could perhaps strike previously unconsidered inspiration!



**This GreenWorks pressure washer is proving particularly popular for Handy**



**Chris Slinger, STIHL's Dealership Development Manager**

# WHAT A YEAR!

*Emyr Jenkins of Jenkins Garden Machinery, in his final entry as this year's diarist, looks back at a turbulent year and ahead to what the next 12 months may hold for the specialist dealer*

**W**hen I was asked by Steve Gibbs, over a year ago now, if I would consider writing an article per issue on how the season has gone, I never thought we as an industry would experience a season as turbulent as this one.

So, for my last *Diary of a Season* I thought it would be apt to look at the whole of last year and, importantly, ahead to what we may come to expect in the coming year.

Some may remember 'the Beast from the East' hitting the country like a ton of bricks. The country ground to a halt as people closed shops and didn't dare to venture out, although in this tiny little pocket of South Wales we had the faintest of snowfalls. A dealer to the North some 50 miles away was experiencing terrible snow. A customer of mine who also has a home in Bath 100 miles East sent me a video where the wing mirrors of his pickup were scraping the sides of snow walls along the farm tracks! At this point the beast really didn't seem like ever giving up.

Then came April and May. It's fair to say, and this goes for every dealer I've spoken to this year, that May was awesome. We had a record May and hit our budgets by the middle of the month. At the rate we were going we thought it would be the best year ever. The weather was warm and the remnants of the Beast were thawing throughout the country.

The season had finally arrived, and the warm weather was a blessing . . . and then it wasn't! The heatwave that ensued killed all the grass. June and July brought the heat and the summer was confirmed as the hottest on record.



August and September were better, although traditionally for us August is a quiet month. The second part of August was great and September did its bit to help us get back to an even keel.

Looking ahead at next year, the big concern I have is Brexit. The uncertainty puts a lot of people off. However, if there's one thing that this terribly fluctuating season has proven, it's that economics etc aren't really a big driving factor for our industry. What really matters is whether the grass grows!

Therefore I'm excited at the prospect of what the next season will bring. The three growth areas in our industry are battery, robotics and zero-turn. We're quite keen on zero-turn machines in our showroom and proactive in promoting them. We've not really put our energy into robots or battery in any large way but 2019 is the year we will be pushing them in a big way.

This brings its own concerns. Is there a place for a lawnmower service centre in a world of battery and robotic products?

The reality is that it's up to us as an industry to carve out that space and make ourselves the specialists in the same way we've done with petrol in the past.





# PRODUCTS

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**DOMESTIC / COMMERCIAL**

## NEXT GENERATION BATTERIES FROM STIHL

### *Higher capacity and new look*

STIHL has launched a new generation of PRO 36V batteries that it claims offer higher battery capacity and feature a new look orange front design for increased visibility.

Designed as a direct replacement of the current versions, the company says the new AP 100 and AP 200 allow for up to 25% more run time when used in conjunction with its PRO Cordless tools.

Both the new batteries remain the same weight as the previous versions (AP 100 0.8kg and AP 200 1.2kg).

The AP 300 will remain at the same capacity and weight but will feature the new design. Enhanced STIHL AP 300 batteries are expected in 2019.

As per STIHL's existing battery range, the company says the new generation of AP batteries can be used in the rain



due to its integrated humidity cell protection and has charging level indication with four green LEDs.

**COMMERCIAL**

## MAJOR UPGRADES FOR SWIFT ROLLER MOWERS

### *Available in working widths from 1.9m to 5.4m*

Major Equipment has announced a series of upgrades to its tractor-mounted Swift Roller Mowers.

Built lightly to allow them to be used on smaller compact tractors, the company boasts there is no compromise on strength with the use of Strenx™ 700 MC high-yield steel, which is stronger than steel traditionally used in machinery.

Now the mower bodies are galvanised using zinc hot-dip galvanisation for added protection from harsh exterior conditions. Hot-dip coating of the metal doubles the life span compared with painting and, Major says it will protect steel from corrosion in most atmospheric conditions for 25 to 30 years.

Major has also introduced a three-year professional warranty for all models in its Swift Roller Mower range and the custom-designed gearbox has been upgraded

for improved and consistent mowing.

The company also says that high speed blade tips on the roller mowers offer higher output with a professional cylinder mower finish.



# NEW HOLLAND MAKES QUITE THE REVELATION

*Takes automation to a 'new level'*



New Holland says its new CR Revelation combine range takes automation to a new level with the IntelliSense system as well as introducing a host of improvements.

The combines feature the company's IntelliSense pro-active and automatic combine setting system to address a combine operator's big challenge of maintaining maximum throughput while keeping losses and damaged grain to a minimum. The winner of the Silver Medal at the Agritechnica Innovation Award 2017, New Holland say this feature delivers significant advantages to the customers' productivity: increased daily output, reduced grain loss and improved grain quality. It also introduces important benefits for the operator: fewer decisions to take, better comfort and driver confidence, less fatigue and a simple user interface.

With IntelliSense, the operator can choose from four strategies: Limited Loss, Best Grain Quality, Maximum Capacity, or Fixed Throughput. The patented cleaning shoe sensors provide very precise measurements of the load and based on this data the combine will proactively constantly adapt Twin Rotor™ speed and vane angle, fan speed and the opening of pre-sieve, upper and lower sieve to automatically deliver the desired result.

The patented automatic rotor vane adjustment improves the rotor's power efficiency without impacting the threshing and separation settings, resulting in greater fuel savings and performance.

Meanwhile, the CR Revelation's IntelliCruise crop

feeding system, which automatically matches the forward speed to crop load, now features automated ground speed functions and offers a choice of three harvesting strategies, enabling the operator to achieve the desired result: the new Maximum Capacity strategy increases the combine's ground speed to reach maximum engine load or maximum ground speed; the Fixed Throughput strategy varies ground speed to maintain a pre-set load on the combine, so that productivity remains constant in varying yields; the Limited Loss strategy varies ground speed to maintain a set flow, but if losses become excessive, throughput is reduced to limit losses.

Three settings are available to adjust the boundaries of the IntelliCruise system with three settings: Maximum engine load, Maximum ground speed and Feed rate sensitivity setting, which enables the operator to define the responsiveness of the system.

The CR Revelation range has been expanded with a new entry level model, the CR7.80, powered by a new Cursor 9 Common Rail engine with 275 kW (374 hp) rated power and 305 kW (415 hp) maximum power. The new model features a cleaning shoe with single return. With a 750-litre fuel tank, a 9,500-litre grain tank and a high unloading speed of 126 litres/second, it delivers a highly efficient performance.

The new CR7.80 and the next model in the range, the CR7.90, are the first to comply to Stage V emissions standards.

## COMMERCIAL

# X-CELLENT OUTPUT FROM NEW CHAIN

## *Husqvarna introduces X-CUT C85*

Husqvarna describes its new X-CUT C85 as an advanced, high-performance 3/8" 1.5mm full chisel saw chain for full-time professional use in forestry and arboriculture applications.

The chain is designed and manufactured entirely by Husqvarna at its state-of-the-art factory in Huskvarna, Sweden. To optimise the overall package this is run alongside the development and manufacture of Husqvarna chainsaws – which the company says ensures that customers get the best possible output from their chainsaw.

X-CUT C85 has been designed and developed alongside the development of the new 565 and 572 XP chainsaws. The company boasts that the chain features "outstanding durability and cutting efficiency, a sharpness that lasts

and low stretch".

State-of-the-art technology and processes, along with rigorous control and testing, is said to make the chain extremely durable and efficient, providing users with minimum downtime and maximum results.

The new chain, when used in combination with the 572XP chainsaw, offers a 12% increase in cutting capacity compared with the 372XP® and H42 chain. The X-CUT C85 replaces the H42 chain.

X-CUT C85 is designed to be used on Husqvarna chain saw models: 560XP (3/8"), 562XP®, 565, 572XP, 576XP, 372XP, 390XP or 395XP.



## COMMERCIAL

# ALLETT LAUNCHES NEW CYLINDER MOWER

## *Addition to professional range*

Allett Mowers has introduced a new 27" cylinder mower to its professional mower range.

The C27 offers the Quick Cartridge options that effectively make these mowers eight machines in one. Powered by the Honda GX200 engine, the company says the 27" cylinder cutting system, with substantial front and rear rollers, ensures the user gets a superior cut, levelness of finish and longer lasting, more crisply defined stripes.

The six-bladed cylinder produces 111 cuts per metre (101 cuts/yard) while the eight blades will give 148 cuts per metre (135cuts/yard) irrespective of forward speed. Effortless mowing is equally assured, says Allett, with handle-mounted levers for drive and cartridge engagement and the adjustable handlebars have anti-vibration mountings.

Together with the six- and eight-bladed cylinders the optional accessories include a scarifier cartridge with tungsten-tipped blades, a Sorrel Roller, Turf Rake, Verticut and Brush. There is also the option of a trailing seat to turn the C27 into a ride-behind for faster cutting over large areas, and it benefits from a 3.1-litre fuel tank. A cut height of 8mm to 55mm (0.32"- 2.17") is featured.

With the front and rear rollers of a cylinder mower

close to the point at which the grass is cut, the user can achieve very low heights of cut without scalping. The rear roller on the C27 is a rubber-covered three-piece steel roller with steel spur end differential. The front roller is grooved aluminium with scraper and sealed end bearings, though there is an option of a plain roller.

The working width of the mower is 686mm/27", the overall width 900mm/38" and it weighs 135kg (297lb).

The grassbox is moulded plastic with a steel reinforcing strip.



# EVENTS 2018-19

## NOVEMBER 2018

- 31- IOG Saltex 2018, Birmingham NEC  
1/11 [www.iogsaltex.com](http://www.iogsaltex.com)
- 15 Service Dealer Conference & Awards  
[www.servicedealer.co.uk](http://www.servicedealer.co.uk)
- 26- Royal Welsh Winter Fair  
27 [www.rwas.wales/winter-fair](http://www.rwas.wales/winter-fair)

## JANUARY 2019

- 2-4 Oxford Farming Conference  
[www.ofc.org.uk](http://www.ofc.org.uk)
- 8-9 LAMMA 2019, Birmingham NEC  
[www.lammashow.com](http://www.lammashow.com)
- 22-24 BTME 2019, Harrogate International Centre  
[www.btme.org.uk](http://www.btme.org.uk)

## FEBRUARY 2019

- 2-7 Golf Industry Show, San Diego  
[www.golfindustryshow.com](http://www.golfindustryshow.com)
- 3-7 Spring Fair 2019, Birmingham NEC  
[www.springfair.com](http://www.springfair.com)
- 5-7 Doe Show 2019, Ulting  
[www.ernestdoe.com](http://www.ernestdoe.com)
- 6-7 Executive Hire Show, Ricoh Arena, Coventry  
[www.executivehireshow.co.uk](http://www.executivehireshow.co.uk)
- 12-14 World Ag Expo, Tulare, California  
[www.worldagexpo.com](http://www.worldagexpo.com)

## MARCH 2019

- 22- Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia, London  
7/4 [www.idealhomeshow.co.uk](http://www.idealhomeshow.co.uk)
- 16- West of England Game Fair, Bath & West Showground  
17 [westofenglandgamefair.co.uk](http://westofenglandgamefair.co.uk)

## APRIL 2019

- 18 CountryTastic, Three Counties Showground, Malvern  
[www.countrytastic.co.uk](http://www.countrytastic.co.uk)
- 25- Harrogate Spring  
28 Flower Show  
[www.flowershow.org.uk/spring-show-2019](http://www.flowershow.org.uk/spring-show-2019)
- 30- The Commercial Vehicle Show, Birmingham NEC  
2/5 [www.cvshow.com](http://www.cvshow.com)

## MAY 2019

- 6 North Somerset Show  
[www.nsas.org.uk](http://www.nsas.org.uk)
- 15- Balmoral Show, Belfast  
18 [www.balmoralshow.co.uk](http://www.balmoralshow.co.uk)
- 16- Devon County Show  
18 [www.devoncountyshow.co.uk](http://www.devoncountyshow.co.uk)
- 21- Chelsea Flower Show  
25 [www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events](http://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events)
- 27 Surrey County Show  
[www.surreycountyshow.co.uk](http://www.surreycountyshow.co.uk)
- 29- Staffordshire County Show  
30 [www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show](http://www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show)
- 29- Royal Bath & West Show  
1/6 [www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show](http://www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show)

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# STIHL®

# ARE ALL SPECIALISTS EXPERTS?

*Years of training and constant learning should be shouted from the rooftops*

**W**hat is an expert? Isn't an expert someone who is trained in a specific field or discipline and concentrates their efforts in becoming a true aficionado in that expertise? Years of training and constant learning can go into becoming a true expert, sometimes the cost of which is priceless.

Today media advertising and financial pressures have evolved the aspirations of consumers to a level at which expectations of service and buying price do not match. A little concern for our industry I feel, are some of the comments I've seen on social media where notes are compared regarding customers and their attitude towards dealers. Agreed, some customers can be infuriating but, whether we like it or not, the customer is king and most are decent bill paying people, so we must make sure they stick with the trade!

Customers receiving the correct advice and then being confident they will be looked after post-purchase is surely essential if they are spending good money? But do they really consider that or is it purely price, price, price?

Traditional engineers still exist in this industry, albeit they are not easy to find nowadays. Many are more skilled than today's auto-engineers and the cost of training an apprentice is not cheap. Many disgruntled customers who receive a bill for a £100 service on their mower, that only cost them £300, just don't understand the situation. Consumers may buy machines at prices out of keeping with their true value and that is what makes specialist service look out of kilter – but it's the time it takes to carry out repairs that is the true cost and even then, the hourly rate some specialist dealers charge is ridiculously low.

Workshops, spare parts departments and sales departments, along with all other administration departments, in many garden machinery dealerships can



cost as much as some car dealerships in overheads and stock.

Some dealers may benefit from inviting customers for a tour of their premises and introducing all members of staff that offer a great service. If a dealer is proud of their business, then why not flaunt it? Show it off, build customer confidence and show them there is more to a lawnmower than meets the eye?

Just like a washing machine, dishwasher, vacuum cleaner and many other household gadgets, lawnmowers, hedge trimmers, strimmers etc are all a vital part of making our homes beautiful, comfortable and pleasurable.

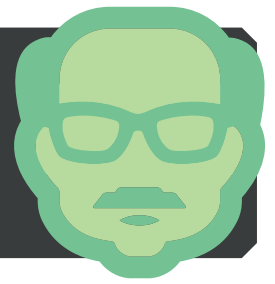
It's an old war cry by dealers, 'we are under charging and we're underpaid'! So why not stand up to be counted as an industry and shout from the rooftops that we are special and deserve recognition of our expertise?

Lawnmowers and many other pieces of outdoor powered equipment cost less today, in real terms, than they did 25 years ago. Is that why service pricing has got out of kilter? Not because non-specialists are carving the prices but because the volume of demand allows manufacturers to produce cheaper products selling through multi outlets in their quest to keep the assembly lines running and win that all important market share?

Can specialists control their prices? Can specialists fight their corner? Can specialists sell themselves?

Yes, many do. By being true EXPERTS offering EXPERT advice from EXPERT people.

# JIM GREEN



## CHARITABLE ENDEAVOURS

# IT'S NICE TO BE NICE

*More examples of the industry coming together to help those in need*

**W**hen you've been around as long as I have, it's good to know there're still plenty of people out there willing to help those less fortunate than themselves.

My old cockles have been warmed tremendously just recently hearing about various members of our wonderful industry offering up their time and efforts to raise funds for charitable endeavours.

First, dealer Doug Beattie of Farm and Forestry Equipment based in Ardersier, Inverness-shire, was planning to drive the North Coast 500 on his Massey Ferguson 135 just as this issue had to be at the press.

Doug was raising funds and awareness for MND and MS. His incredible journey was due to take him five days travelling at 20mph!

The trip came about, Doug says, following the sad news that a close friend had been recently diagnosed with MND and Doug's wife Helen has two sisters who unfortunately suffer from MS.

Doug had his Massey Ferguson 135 on display this past summer at Nairn and the Black Isle shows and had already raised £2,500 well before he had even set off.

He told my editor chum at *Service Dealer*, "I started as an apprentice mechanic with Hamilton Bros, Inverness in 1969 and the 100 series Masseys were selling in large numbers, especially the 135 and 165

models, so all things considered, this had to my tractor of choice! The one I have has got 2,074 genuine hours and came from a farm near Beaulieu."

Another amazing jaunt in an unusual form of transport for a superb cause took place at the beginning of September when four directors from CLAAS UK swapped their tractors for a £900 black London taxi and drove to Monte Carlo and back in just 48 driving hours.

Dubbed the CLAAS UK Monte Carlo or Bust challenge, the four were doing the challenge in order to raise money for the British Heart Foundation in memory of their colleague and friend Patrick Wells, who died unexpectedly following a heart attack a year ago.

The aim was to raise £10,000 for the charity and its cardiovascular research and work towards improving the treatment of heart conditions. But such was the support from within the industry and those that knew Patrick, the team considerably exceeded that target, with a total of nearly £30,000 raised to date.

The challenge departed from the CLAAS UK headquarters at Saxham on the evening of Thursday 30th August, the first anniversary of Patrick's death, and was started by his wife Karen.

The team of four was made up of CLAAS UK CEO Trevor Tyrrell, CFO Thomas Spiering, Retail Director Richard Vaughan and Property

Director Paul Butcher, plus their 16-year-old black cab.

In all, the team completed the challenge in 45 hours, so three hours ahead of schedule and covered a total of 2,021 miles.

Coming up soon we have the *Service Dealer* Conference and Awards on 15th November. This year the team has chosen Helen & Douglas House as the nominated charity who will benefit from fund raising on the day. This incredible charity helps local families cope with the challenges of looking after a terminally ill baby, child or young adult who will die prematurely.

Based in Oxford but supporting families from surrounding counties and as far away as London, Helen Douglas House is home-from-home for local terminally ill children and their families. It provides round-the-clock care in a warm, loving environment.

I'm sure all the attendees at the Oxford Belfry will once again dig deep to give this marvellous charity the support it truly deserves.



**Doug Beattie of Farm & Forestry Equipment**



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At STIHL, our goal is simple. To make sure our dealers' customers benefit from the ultimate sales and service experience. So, we support you with an industry leading

delivery and logistics network. We keep you up to date with all the latest service related developments. And we have a customer service team always on hand to deal with any enquiries.

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business and drive STIHL sales forward. There are also regular product training sessions and access to unrivalled marketing and promotional support, including the kind of instore merchandising support that has helped Huw create a hugely impressive STIHL display wall to wow his customers.

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To find out more about becoming a STIHL Approved Dealer, visit

[www.becomeastihldealer.co.uk](http://www.becomeastihldealer.co.uk)

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