

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

NOV / DEC 19

2020
EVENT PLANNER
ENCLOSED

ONE YEAR IN...

We speak to Stiga UK's Gary Whitney and Kubota UK's David Hart, who reflect on their first year in the hot seat and look forward to the future

Bobcat

Company seeks to be better known for telehandler products

Spraying & tillage tech

Pre-Agritechnica preview demos

SALTEX 2019 preview

What to see at IOG's groundcare show



50 NOT OUT

Q&A WITH BARRIE WARD OF WM PLANT AS DEALERSHIP REACHES HALF-CENTURY MILESTONE

INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE

THE
WORLD LEADER
IN ROBOTIC
MOWING

COPYRIGHT © 2019 HUSQVARNA AB (PUBL). ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

SHAPING THE FUTURE TOGETHER IN PARTNERSHIP

Husqvarna has a history of innovation and has adapted and evolved for 330 years. Legislation, battery technology, robotics and digitalisation are bringing about rapid change in our industry. As a company we are driving change, having invested in future technologies for over 20 years, positioning us as technical leaders and innovators. Investing in partnerships with our authorised dealer network allows us to meet the challenges and demands of an ever-changing industry.

To find out more and to enquire about opening an account please contact us at [HUSQVARNA.COM/UK](https://www.husqvarna.com/uk)


Husqvarna
READY WHEN YOU ARE

CONTENTS

- 4 NEWS**
- 12 CONFERENCE & AWARDS 2019**
Agenda of the day confirmed
- 14 ENGAGING THE ENGAGERS**
STIHL GB hosts college lecturers
- 16 DEALER Q&A**
With Barrie Ward of WM Plant
- 22 ONE YEAR IN**
Stiga's Gary Whitney and Kubota's David Hart speak
- 32 BOBCAT**
Seeking dealers to raise telehandler ante
- 36 BUSINESS MONITOR**
Autumn 2019 dealer survey results
- 38 CROP ESTABLISHMENT & PROTECTION KIT**
German and French firms reveal spraying and tillage tech
- 42 SALTEX 2019 PREVIEW**
What to see at IOG's groundcare show
- 48 SME DIGEST**
Latest news for small businesses
- 52 VIEW FROM ACROSS THE POND**
Sara Hey offers advice from a US perspective
- 53 DIARY OF A SEASON**
With Briants of Risborough
- 54 NEW PRODUCTS**
- 60 EVENTS**
- 61 IN MY VIEW**
With Chris Biddle
- 62 JIM GREEN**

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to November/December 2019's edition of *Service Dealer* magazine. As this is the final issue of 2019, there's something of a looking back and a looking forward feeling to this edition.

The results of our latest dealer survey, which you can find on page 36, see dealers reflect on what has been for many an up and down season. The consensus appears to be that while an improvement on the well-documented problems faced during 2018, no one is claiming that we're fully out of the woods just yet. With the ongoing Brexit saga still unresolved, many dealers are finding consumers are continuing to play a cautious game. But with exciting new products coming to market, hopefully 2019 will see business continuing to move in the right direction.

Also in a reflective mood this issue, we speak to two men who have been in their senior roles for just over a year now: Gary Whitney at Stiga and David Hart at Kubota. They tell us how they feel this past year has fared for the domestic, professional and agricultural machinery markets from their perspectives – plus they look ahead to what issues they feel dealers need to be mindful of in this upcoming year.

Finally, with the end of year event season in full swing now, we preview the IOG's SALTEX show and, of course, look ahead with excitement to the *Service Dealer* Conference & Awards. The event on 21 November will be packed full of valuable content for independents of all sizes, with a superb line-up of international speakers. I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.



www.servicedealer.co.uk

OUR PEOPLE

PUBLISHER
DUNCAN MURRAY-CLARKE

EDITOR
STEVE GIBBS
steve@servicedealer.co.uk

AGRICULTURAL EDITOR
MARTIN RICKATSON
jmr.agriculture@gmail.com

SME DIGEST EDITOR
ADAM BERNSTEIN
adam@adambernstein.co.uk

CONTRIBUTOR
LAURENCE GALE
laurence.gale@btinternet.com

PRODUCED BY
THE AD PLAIN LTD
Pipe House, Lupton Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 9BS, UK
01491 837 117
www.theadplain.com
Service Dealer is produced by The Ad Plain on behalf of Land Power Publications LLP

DESIGN & LAYOUT
IAIN ROBINSON

ADVERTISING SALES
NIKKI HARRISON
nikki@theadplain.com
01491 837 117

The acceptance and publication of advertising in *Service Dealer* magazine implies no representation or warranty on the part of *Service Dealer* or The Ad Plain Ltd (TAP) as to the reputation or standing of advertisers' products or services. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form whatsoever without the written permission of *Service Dealer* and TAP. The information contained in this publication is published in good faith and every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy. The publishers can accept no responsibility for any error or misrepresentation. All liability for loss, disappointment, negligence or other damage caused by reliance on information contained in this publication or in the event of any bankruptcy or liquidation or cessation of the trade in any company, individual or firm mentioned is hereby excluded.



DEALERS

DOE BUYS BARTRAM MOWERS

Norwich and Ipswich branches to relocate

It was announced on 29 August that Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd has purchased the business of Bartram Mowers. The company announced it would trade from Bartram's Norwich premises for three months before being incorporated into Doe's North Walsham branch. The Ipswich branch has already been moved to Doe's Framlingham branch.

As part of the deal, Ernest Doe has also acquired Bartram's established Lawnmowers Direct e-commerce platform.

It appears that Mark Bartram approached Ernest Doe to buy the Bartram Mowers business following notification that Ransomes Jacobsen was expanding Ernest Doe's territory for its franchise to incorporate Suffolk and Norfolk.

Ernest Doe's Managing Director, Colin Doe, said: "The Bartram Mowers business is a good fit for Ernest Doe. We have three branches in Norfolk and three in Suffolk from which to support customers in the area. With our network of established branches in Norfolk and Suffolk, we are focussed on building on



Colin Doe (left) and Mark Bartram

the high level of service Bartram has provided to its customers and are looking forward to fresh challenges as we enter this exciting new phase of our business."

Bartram Mowers was founded in 1972 by Barry Bartram with an initial staff of four. In the early days the business focussed strongly on the distribution of Flymo products, but in recent years has added a wide range of domestic and professional turfcare machinery franchises. In 1979, the company acquired its present 20-acre site in Norwich, and in 1988 added a branch sited on the Ransomes Industrial Park at Ipswich. In 1999, Bartrams added a direct selling division, Lawnmowers Direct.

Founded in 1898, Ernest Doe claims to be the UK's largest groundcare, agricultural and construction equipment dealer operating out of 19 sites. Current Managing Director Colin Doe is the fourth generation of the family to run the business, with his son, Angus, the current Service Director.

DEALERS

CHARTERHOUSE APPOINTS CYRIL JOHNSON & CO

As new Northern Ireland dealers



Charterhouse's Ian Lauder (left), with Cyril Johnston Professional Sales Rep Ian Ellis

Cyril Johnston & Co has become the latest pin in the dealer map of Charterhouse Turf Machinery.

Operating from its Carryduff depot, it is now responsible for the sale and service of the Redexim range of products, for both natural and synthetic surfaces, in Northern Ireland.

Established over 60 years ago, Cyril Johnston stocks a wide range of leading machinery for the amenity, golf and landscape sectors. With a team of over 40, it is well placed to offer professional support to a range of customers throughout Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and a number of the border counties.

Commenting on the appointment, Sales Manager Brian Mitchell said, "We

are over the moon to have been appointed as a Charterhouse dealer and to have added such a varied selection of equipment to our portfolio. The performance of the Redexim products is outstanding and, as such, we are expecting fantastic uptake with professional users in our area, both old and new."

Northern Territory Manager for Charterhouse, Ian Lauder, added, "Cyril Johnston is a well-respected dealer, with a reputation built on providing excellent customer service to a broad range of customers. With so many years of experience and knowledge under their belts, we look forward to working with them to offer a more localised service across this area."

PEOPLE



John C May

DEERE & COMPANY ELECTS NEW CEO

John C May to succeed Samuel R Allen

The Deere & Company board of directors has elected John C May as a member of the board and to the position of Chief Executive Officer, effective 4 November, 2019.

May has served as Deere's President and Chief Operating Officer since April 2019.

"John's record of success and proven leadership skills make him highly qualified to lead Deere and guide its success in the years ahead," said Samuel R Allen, who will continue as Chairman of the board of directors after he steps down from the CEO position. May becomes the 10th chief executive in the company's 182-year history.

May joined Deere in 1997 and became part of the senior management team in 2012 as President, Agricultural Solutions and Chief Information Officer. Last year he was named President, Worldwide Agriculture & Turf Division, with responsibility for the Americas and Australia, the global harvesting, turf & utility and crop care platforms, and the intelligent solutions group.

INDUSTRY

ARIENSCO TO MANUFACTURE ZERO-TURNS IN BRITAIN

At factory in Great Haseley, Oxfordshire



AriensCo has announced that production of Ariens brand zero-turn mowers will commence at the company's factory in Great Haseley, in Oxfordshire.

It is believed these will be the first zero-turns to be manufactured in Europe.

AriensCo reports seeing an exceptional growth in demand for zero-turn mowers in the UK and Europe. This follows similar trends in the US, where it says sales have more than tripled since 2003 as the popularity among users has soared.

In an official statement, AriensCo said, "According to industry analysis, zero-turn sales in Europe have grown more than 30% over the last four years, making them the fastest growing category of ride-on mowers and third fastest in the lawn and garden power equipment sector."

Darren Spencer, Vice President – EMEA and Asia added, "Sales of zero-turns in Europe have experienced exceptional growth over the past three years.

"AriensCo has experienced this growth in numerous markets and, based upon extensive research with our distribution partners, we expect the growth to continue. This industry analysis points to the many opportunities to be met by producing zero-turns at our Great Haseley plant. We currently sell into 10 different

countries within Europe and aim to increase our European footprint in 2020. Future growth will accelerate as the benefits of zero-turn mowers are understood by customers. Zero-turn users are experiencing increased speed of cut and greater versatility over tractors and out-fronts."

During 2019 AriensCo says it continues to make significant investment in the Oxfordshire factory in preparation for zero-turn production, including a new production line, fixtures and tooling. The UK will be manufacturing CE zero-turns for European markets only, and will initially be producing the IKON, APEX and ZENITH models. Close collaboration with the US will be maintained to ensure products match up to Ariens' reputation for manufacturing quality.

Zero-turn production in the UK is seen to offer significant advantages, allowing for rapid delivery and improved availability throughout the year. There is also potential for zero-turns to be adapted with features and benefits to meet local market needs. Increased utilisation of the manufacturing facility at Great Haseley will provide operational cost benefits and will generate a number of new jobs for the area.

The first zero-turn is due to come off the production line at the end of October.

INDUSTRY



Alamo Dixie Chopper

ALAMO ACQUIRES DIXIE CHOPPER

From Textron Outdoor Power Equipment

Alamo Group Inc in the US has acquired the assets of the Dixie Chopper business from Textron Outdoor Power Equipment Inc, a subsidiary of Textron Inc.

Dixie Chopper manufactures a wide range of commercial and high-end residential mowing equipment. The business, which is currently based in Greencastle, Indiana, has been serving this market for nearly 40 years.

Ron Robinson, Alamo Group's President and Chief Executive Officer, commented, "We're pleased to have completed the acquisition of Dixie Chopper. It is an iconic brand in the zero-turn mowing industry and provides both a range of products and channel coverage that will complement and enhance our platform for

growth. It will become part of Alamo Group's Agricultural Division."

The American trade publication *Rural Lifestyle Dealer*, reported that Rick Raborn, the Executive Vice President of Alamo Group's Agricultural Division said in a memo to their US dealers, "Moving forward, Alamo Group Inc will continue to manufacture, sell and support Dixie Chopper products as part of its Agricultural Division. The future manufacturing of the products will be located in our Gibson City, Illinois factory, where the company also produces the RhinoAG implement line. We are committed to keeping our Dixie Chopper dealers informed and engaged during this transition."

NEW

Workwear that fits.

**Introducing
Kramp Clothing**

Years of experience, combined with the latest fashion trends and strong fabrics are combined into 4 brand new collections. Tailored fit for the job you and your customers need to do.

Discover our range on kramp.com/clothing

ORIGINAL
KRAMP

TECHNICAL
KRAMP

PROTECT
KRAMP

ACTIVE
KRAMP

KRAMP

It's that easy.

INDUSTRY

EMAK UK TO CEASE DISTRIBUTING EFCO IN FAVOUR OF OLEO MAC

Gradual transition beginning for UK dealers

Starting from October 2019 Emak UK will be gradually transitioning from distributing EfcO to Oleo-Mac products through its UK dealership network.

Emak UK are following the path of Emak Group in ceasing to sell EfcO as their main brand. All European branches, except UK and Germany, already actively sell the Oleo-Mac brand. The company say this transition will allow them to gradually concentrate on European-wide business and, most importantly, focus marketing investments on one brand.

Specifically, for the UK, one of the main focuses of the brand transition will be a significant increase of marketing resources at consumer level to make the brand more familiar with domestic and professional users with the intention of driving customers to Oleo-Mac stockists.

Emak UK have also said they need a

strong web presence to give them the ability of delivering brand awareness campaigns as well as giving the consumer the ability to purchase a product online, get it home delivered or collected at their local stockist. Oleo-Mac UK's new website is designed for this.

Neil Turner, Emak UK's Managing Director said, "The support of our dealer network will be crucial throughout this company change as they will be the ones who speak directly with our customers. For this reason, we have initiated other added incentives to encourage our stockists to fully back the Oleo-Mac brand by featuring the whole product range, with more attractive commercial conditions, proper signage, merchandising and literature.

"Technical support and training will be offered throughout the year to make all our dealers comfortable with the new



Emak UK managing director, Neil Turner

products. Digital advice will be on hand so that our Oleo-Mac dealers are able to increase their own company exposure through channels they haven't utilised before.

"This era indicates an exciting chapter in Emak UK's history," continued Neil Turner, "by continuing to provide Italian made products that deliver high performance, no matter the job.

"We intend to be one of the leading players at a worldwide level, by offering innovative products and services, making the activity for our consumer and professional customers efficient and enjoyable, whilst providing them with the best value."

PEOPLE



Cath Morris

BAGMA APPOINTS TRAINING & ADMIN ASSISTANT

Cath Morris joins

BAGMA has recently welcomed Cath Morris to the team as Training and Administrative Assistant.

Keith Christian, BAGMA Director said, "Cath has a background in leading and development and a Masters in Personnel Management and Business Administration. She brings a wealth of experience to the role in business administration and her experience in learning and development will add valuable support to BAGMA's training offering. She'll also act as a secretary to

our many committees and our new President, Peter Arrand.

"One of her main roles will be running the administration for the industry Landbased Training Accreditation Scheme (LTA) which is owned by LE-TEC, the Landbased Training and Education Committee and administered by BAGMA.

"Cath has come into this role at an exciting time for LTA which will see the LTA scheme being refreshed with added value and communications."

PEOPLE



Stuart McClimont

TECHNICAL & STANDARDS ENGINEER ROLE AT AEA

Stuart McClimont joins

The Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) has announced the appointment of Stuart McClimont who has joined the organisation as a Technical and Standards Engineer.

The Association says Stuart's vast wealth of knowledge and experience in both the agricultural and outdoor power engineering sectors will enable him to get involved in its critical work on technical standards and legislation issues right from the get-go.

Joining from Kubota (UK) Ltd,

Stuart previously managed the company's Tractor Assembly, Inspection and R&D Departments. Within his R&D role Stuart followed legislation for tractor engines, ride on mowers, excavators and side-by-side products.

He has regularly attended the European Garden Machinery Federation's (EGMF) Technical Committee meetings and was Chairman of its Engine Emissions Working Group.

Stuart will be working alongside

the AEA's already experienced Technical team, covering the breadth of subjects under its remit, including taking on a role in Europe and with BSI from an early stage.

"Having been greatly helped by the AEA's Technical Department over the years while working for a manufacturer, I look forward to expanding my knowledge by spending 100% of my time on legislative and standards work for the benefit of the members," commented Stuart

INDUSTRY

COBRA SUPPORTING BREAST CANCER NOW

Producing pink mower

Cobra says it is proud to have teamed up with the Breast Cancer Now charity to produce a limited edition pink GTRM38P electric lawnmower with the aim of helping to fund the future of breast cancer research.

Peter Chaloner, Managing Director of Cobra said, "We have colleagues, family and friends who have been affected by this life-changing illness, so we decided that this would be a great idea to raise money for this excellent charity.

"Breast Cancer Now is the UK's largest breast cancer research charity and is dedicated to funding research into this devastating disease."

The company donates £25 from every sale to the charity and the entire stock will be sold, making a total donation of £5,000.



Cobra pink

"We have been delighted with the customer support for our pink mower and plan to offer it for sale again in 2020," says Peter. "We hope to make even more money for Breast Cancer Now."

DEALERS



Duncan Hood, Group Sales Manager, Sharmans Agriculture Ltd

CLAYDON DRILLS FURTHER EXPANDS DEALER NETWORK

Appointment for the Midlands

Claydon Drills, the direct strip seeding crop establishment technology manufacturer, has further expanded its UK dealer distribution network in the Midlands by appointing Sharmans Agricultural Limited.

Sharmans is a family-run agricultural machinery dealership which has expanded progressively since coming under the guidance of the Barclay family in 1981.

The company's head office at Gonerby Moor, near Grantham in Lincolnshire, is complemented by four other branches, at Easton on the Hill near Stamford in Lincolnshire, Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire, Lowdham in Nottinghamshire and Pytchley in Northamptonshire. All except Pytchley will sell and service the full range of Claydon Opti-Till products.

"Sharmans only takes on new product lines after considerable consideration, investigation and preparation, but having done so commits fully to developing their potential," Duncan Hood, Group Sales Manager states. "We are therefore delighted to be working closely with Claydon Drills, another family-run, customer-focused company with an excellent reputation."

Rob Dunk, Claydon Drills' Sales Manager for the UK and Ireland, said "The appointment of Sharmans Agricultural Limited is another key step in expanding our UK dealer network. This will ensure that existing owners of Claydon products in these areas and customers who are new to our brand benefit from first-class sales and service support."

DEALERS



Predator, Lister Wilder

LISTER WILDER TEAMS UP WITH PREDATOR

Appointed as a main dealer

Lister Wilder has been appointed as a main dealer for the Predator range of tree stump grinders, offering a supply and servicing network across a wide area of southern England.

Lister Wilder says the Predator machinery fits well into its Groundcare & Arb Division, which operates from branches in Wallingford, Reading, Cirencester, Ashford, Devizes and Bristol. Each has highly-equipped mobile servicing teams and parts back-up to support its sales experts. Reading-based Lee Hatton will act as brand champion for Predator.

Groundcare Sales Director Phill Hughes says he is delighted to add to the company's brand portfolio. "Predator has a big reputation for well-designed and reliable grinders that suit the often difficult access conditions in the UK," he says. "We already have a very successful relationship with Timberwolf in the chipper sector, so this is a very good addition for us."

Experience
EGO AT SALTEx
 30 - 31 Oct 2019. Stand No. J062

WHEN CHOOSING BETWEEN A, B, OR C, MAY WE SUGGEST D?

$$P = \frac{F \times D}{T}$$

56V
 1568 Wh

VIBRATION **1.7m/s²**
 NOISE **LpA 80dB(A)**



1014m³/h
 AIR VOLUME

AIR SPEED: 212km/h

FORCE: 19.2N



LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	BOOST
350mins	210mins	140mins	100mins	70mins

Times have changed. So have tools. And our new commercial range is all the proof you need.

Take the EGO Power+ blower. It's powered by the most technologically advanced, petrol-matching, Lithium-ion battery system out there. It's built tough to withstand all-day use in any weather. Its impressive airflow beats every other handheld blower on the market, and while it packs all the power of petrol, it's significantly quieter, vibrates less and gives off zero fumes.

So don't stick to what you know. Switch to the power of EGO.

**THE NEW EGO 56V COMMERCIAL RANGE.
 THERE'S NOTHING ELSE LIKE IT.**

#powerreimagined



Visit egopowerplus.co.uk to find out more.

EGO™
 POWER BEYOND BELIEF™

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY
SINCE 1968

CONFERENCE + AWARDS

2019

AGENDA SET FOR 2019 SERVICE DEALER CONFERENCE

Turning A Profit theme to benefit dealers of all sizes and specialisms



Service Dealer has confirmed the day's agenda for this year's Conference, which takes place at the DoubleTree by Hilton Oxford Belfry, on Thursday 21 November 2019.

The theme of the event is *Turning A Profit*, which is set to offer valuable insight of benefit to businesses large and small and of all machinery specialisms.

Service Dealer Owner Duncan Murray-Clarke said, "*Turning A Profit* is at the heart of what all independent dealers must be about. Be they large or small companies, domestic, professional turfcare or agricultural specialists, maintaining profits in all areas of the dealership is essential.

"To help our delegates in this regard, we have a superb international line-up of speakers in place to offer real, practical nuggets of information which dealers can take away and put into practice in their businesses.

"Subjects such as recruitment, marketing and business structuring, among others, will be discussed, all with the underlying theme of how best practice can lead directly to profitability."

AGENDA

The agenda for the day is as follows:

- 09.15:** REGISTRATION & COFFEE
- 10.00:** WELCOME by *DUNCAN MURRAY-CLARKE*
- 10.10:** DR ELIZA FILBY: *Communicating with the Different Generations*
- 11.10:** COFFEE BREAK
- 11.30:** BREAKOUT SESSIONS (*Attend one in the morning and the other in the afternoon:*)
 - A – *Turning your service department into a cash producing Machine (Bob Clements/Sara Hey)*
 - B – *Recruitment, Retention and Client Engagement (Dr Eliza Filby)*
- 12.30:** LUNCH, NETWORKING & SPONSOR SHOWCASE
- 13.30:** BOB CLEMENTS: *Structuring Your Dealership to Maximise Profit*
- 14.30:** BREAKOUT SESSIONS
 - A – *Turning your service department into a cash producing Machine (Bob Clements/Sara Hey)*
 - B – *Recruitment, Retention and Client Engagement (Dr Eliza Filby)*
- 15.30:** COFFEE BREAK
- 15.50:** UK vs USA: *Pete Harding of PFW Associates and Sara Hey of Bob Clements Inc - discussing Recruitment Issues and Best Practices in hiring*
- 16.50:** PANEL DEBATE AND QUESTION TIME
- 17.30:** CONFERENCE CLOSE
by *DUNCAN MURRAY-CLARKE*
- 17.40-18.15**
POST CONFERENCE NETWORKING DRINKS

For more information regarding this year's *Service Dealer* Conference & Awards, including ticket booking visit www.servicedealer.co.uk/2019-awards



CHARLIE BAKER TO RETURN!

Comedian to compère evening once again

Service Dealer is pleased to confirm that stand-up comic, singer and actor Charlie Baker will make a triumphant return to the evening Awards dinner this year.

Charlie hosted the evening for the first time last year, and went down a storm with everyone in attendance. You can watch his set from last year on our website at www.servicedealer.co.uk/2018-awards-videos

Service Dealer Editor Steve Gibbs said, "We are delighted that Charlie will be joining us again. His style of comedy suited the evening perfectly last year so we can't wait to hear what he has in store for us all this November."

As well as being well-known on the stand-up circuit, Charlie has been seen on TV as himself on *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*, *The Rob Brydon Show*, *Let's Dance For Sport Relief* and *The Great British Bake Off: An Extra Slice* among many other things.

He has also acted in *The IT Crowd*, *Miranda*, *Doctor Who* and *Eastenders* – plus appeared in the film *The Boy In The Striped Pyjamas*.



DEALER OF THE YEAR WINNERS SET TO BE REVEALED

The countdown to the presentations has begun

The nominations have now closed for 2019's Dealer Of The Year competition, with the winners set to be revealed on the evening of 21 November at the DoubleTree by Hilton Oxford Belfry Hotel.

Once again, our core awards will shine a light on dealer excellence across the categories of Garden Machinery, Professional Turfcare, Farm Machinery, Forestry Equipment and ATV/UTV sectors.

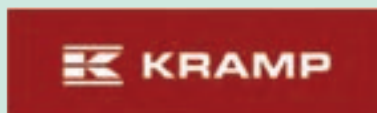
Our expert panel has been assessing the deluge of positive feedback we received this year from nominated dealers' customers up and down the country. It's proved a monumental task, as the standard of entries has been as high as ever. However, a shortlist has been compiled with the winning dealerships in each category being announced 'Oscars style' on the night.

Also to be presented during the Awards dinner will be:

- 2019 Star Of The Dealership
- 2019 Apprentice Of The Year
- Overall Dealer Of The Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award

OUR 2019 SPONSORS

The following organisations have confirmed their sponsorship of the 2019 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

ENGAGING THE ENGAGERS

STIHL GB recently held an event at its Camberley HQ, introducing new machinery to college lecturers, with the intention to ultimately instil a loyalty to its products among new, young users.

Editor STEVE GIBBS went along to observe

Back in the summer I attended the first of what STIHL intends to be a series of events, designed to engage with college lecturers.

Entitled *Discovering STIHL*, representatives of land-based courses from educational establishments around the country were in attendance to learn what the manufacturer can offer their colleges and students. There were lecturers at Camberley for two days, from seats of learning including Sparsholt, Mysercough, Warwickshire, Newton Rigg, Shuttleworth, Writtle, and SRUC Oatridge – a real geographical spread. Importantly all the guys in attendance (and they were all men) had direct, student-facing roles at their respective colleges.

STIHL's intention in introducing the company and products to this group was to ultimately get its products in the hands of the young people coming through their courses. It was very much a brand awareness exercise. The company believes that if a young person picks up a chainsaw for the first time and it's one of theirs, it's quite likely that a bond will be formed with the brand. STIHL is hoping that students who graduate, having been exposed to their products during their learning period,

once they are out in the workplace, or in their own lives, they will be entering the premises of STIHL dealers with very specific knowledge and desires for certain products.

I suppose the effect that STIHL is hoping for is akin to the feeling of loyalty or fondness people can have towards the make of car that they learned to drive in.

The event was shaped around a day at STIHL's HQ based in the training room plus tours around the facilities, followed by a day out at Merrist Wood college, with an opportunity to get hands-on with a selection of the latest equipment.

STIHL Product Trainer, Tom Eadie, who was running the course alongside Product Training Team Manager Ben Beaumont and Technical Trainer Mark Helliwell, explained why the company felt now was a perfect time to be talking to these lecturers.

"We're hearing that a lot of the technical information out there in some colleges can be something like 20 years out of date," he said. "We want to make sure that these guys are fully informed about the latest machinery and techniques which are available to them and their students."

As this was the first event of this type, STIHL was always very keen to receive feedback from the lecturers



The college lecturers group with the STIHL trainers at Merrist Wood

that the days were delivering the information most useful to them. As such, one of the first tasks of day one was for the lecturers to write down a subject they specifically wanted to hear about. Interestingly, most either mentioned diagnostics or future products, with several listing battery technology as an area of interest.

This idea that what would be delivered could be tailored to the interests of those in the room was reiterated by Nick Burroughs whose remit, as well as being STIHL's Finance Director, also covers Learning and Development. Nick addressed the attendees, saying, "We want to hear what you want from us, what you need from us. We're interested in what you think about the future – because we think we've got some pretty exciting stuff coming up, but we need it to land with you guys and your students for it to be successful out there in the market."

Nick went on to explain that one of the things the company has developed over the past few years is the Learning and Development team. They have field-based product trainers and technical trainers who get around the colleges introducing the new kit.

"We want to work with you guys, closely," Nick said, "to develop our business to help you develop the workshop technicians of the future – and the users of the future."

Before new products and technologies were explored in detail, to give the lecturers in attendance a flavour of how STIHL GB works, tours were given around the Camberley offices and the huge warehouse. A sense of scale of the operation was conveyed, witnessing the vast array of products being readied to be distributed to STIHL dealers around the UK.

Also thrown into the mix of day one was a trial of the new STIHL VR system which has been seen on tour around the country recently. As well as a bit of fun, the virtual reality chainsaw simulations, attendees were told, should one day be a sales tool seen in dealerships. While quite basic right now, there's no resistance given when virtually sawing something for example, the feedback in the room was that this had potential to develop into something quite useful. It was suggested by more than one attendee, that with some refinement the system could prove a great learning tool and a genuinely helpful aid to use before placing an actual chain saw in someone's hand for the first time.

The significant portion of day one though, was taking

the lecturers through some real deep dives on latest products and technologies. As requested, a significant period was taken up with demonstrations of the latest computerised diagnostic systems which the company can offer. Mark Helewell went into detail about the working of the company's M-Tronic system verses conventional technology. There was high engagement, with questions on best practice and maintenance techniques. Mark explained the online diagnostic tools which the company offers that the colleges can have access to.

Tom Eadie and Ben Beaumont then introduced several new products, some of which are not available in dealerships yet. More than just a series of sales pitches, these introductions were detailed technical workshops. Breaking the machines down into their component parts, the lecturers were able to ask in-depth questions of the product specialists, to really get a sense of what new developments could be available to their students.

Machines considered included the BR 800 backpack blower; MS 462 and MS 500i chainsaws; the MSA 220 C and MSA 161T cordless saws and the new AR 200L and 300L backpack batteries. Alongside these, considerable interest was generated in the explanation of the new STIHL Connect digital tracking system.

What these sessions also engendered was a dialogue, both between the colleges and STIHL, but also between the representatives of the different educational establishments themselves. These were knowledgeable guys, who knew their machinery, swapping ideas and getting into serious conversations about where the industry is heading and what part manufacturers, and significantly, dealers will play in that.

After all the theory, day two saw everyone bussed out to Merrist Wood to test the machines discussed in the classroom, in a practical setting. Mowers, chainsaws, blowers – all were thoroughly put through their paces by experts in positions to act as significant influencers of upcoming users.

Discovering STIHL was a well organised, timely and detailed event. I certainly got the impression that the lecturers in attendance were engaged and given plenty of valuable information which they will be able to pass on to their students.

Eventually this bank of knowledge should find its way back through the doors of your dealerships, in the guise of the next generation of informed customers.



Mark Helliwell explains the workings of a new pro mower



Getting to grips with new saws



50 NOT OUT

WM Plant, based in Carlisle, Cumbria, is celebrating reaching its 50th year in business, serving the local people of the North-West. Owner Barrie Ward talks to Service Dealer's Laurence Gale Msc, MBPR about how the company reached this milestone and the plans it has in place for a further half century of success

WM Plant is a local, family-run business providing sales, hire, spare parts and servicing of a vast range of horticultural, construction and forestry equipment and accessories in the North-West of England from its Carlisle base.

The company says its business ethic is to give good old-fashioned personal service to its local community, clients and customers. Its mission is to do its utmost to give the customer a pleasurable buying experience and after sales service. It likes to say that it does not just sell or hire machines, but rather it is renowned for providing solutions to customers' requirements and problems. It is proud of its motto, "the company that cares".

Service Dealer recently caught up with the company's owner, Barrie Ward.

Service Dealer: When did you start trading and what inspired you to get into this industry?

Barrie Ward: I can tell you exactly. It was Monday 11 August 1969, operating a Shawnee Poole dump-truck on the new M6 between Penrith and Carlisle. I had a realisation that there was a market for hiring out non-operated machinery from STIHL Cutquiks to JCBs. The business started as B R Ward Plant Hire when I was 21, after graduating from Sheffield University with a degree in Fuel Technology and Chemical Engineering. I bought a



COBRA

cobragarden.co.uk

Why Not Become a Cobra Garden Dealer Today?

With over 130 products in the Cobra range including the largest range of lawnmowers in the UK, Cobra is fast becoming a market leading brand in garden machinery. Contact us today to join the growing number of Cobra Dealers across the U.K.

A Few Reasons to Become a Cobra Dealer:

- Increase your business and bottom line profits.
- Exclusive special offers on selected products.
- Extensive local & national Cobra marketing support.
- An evolving range of over 130 gardening products.
- No unreasonable Cobra stocking commitment.



Kawasaki
ENGINES

Expertly Powered By

COBRA KOHLER

Petrol Mowers

From Just £86.70*



Chainsaws

From Just £89.90*



Blower Vacs

From Just £81.40*



Brushcutters

From Just £95.60*



Cultivators

From Just £99.87*

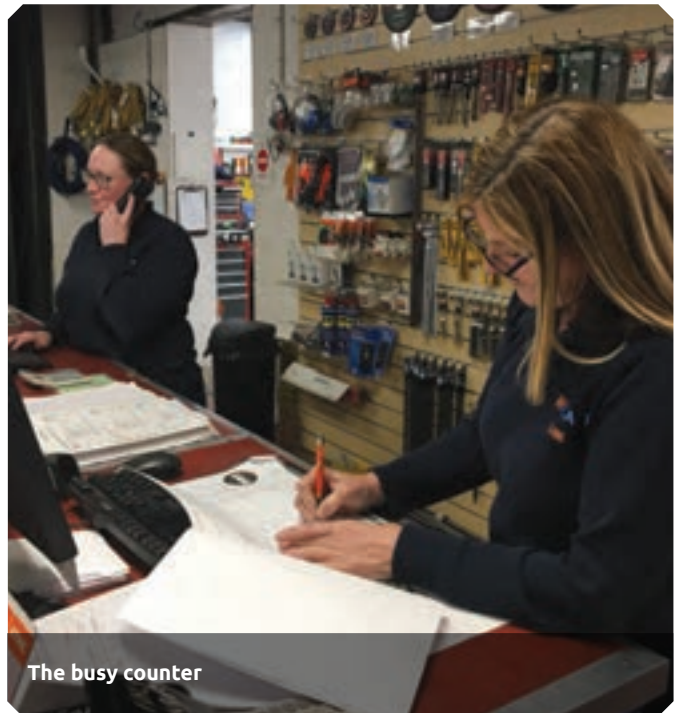


*Stocking Dealer Price ex VAT

For information on becoming a Cobra Dealer contact Andy Marvin: 07771 581 296 or call : 0115 986 6646 today



Barrie with his daughter Rosie who has recently joined the business



The busy counter

second-hand dump-truck and went to work on the new section of the M6 between Penrith and Carlisle. This hire lasted for 18 months and during that time I identified the potential in hiring out small, non-operated plant.

I purchased several STIHL 08S Cutquiks with worn-out engines. These were overhauled at night after work and put out to hire on the same site. On the termination of the dump-truck hire, enquiries were coming in for more non-operated plant and equipment was purchased such as chainsaws, mixers, even second-hand JCBs and International Loaders. All were hired on a non-operated basis. Customers' own machines, especially Cutquiks and Master Heaters, were serviced and repaired.

We began working from a workshop in the village of Aglionby, but it became clear that larger premises were required. A plot of two to three acres was acquired on the new Rosehill Industrial Estate at Carlisle and we started work on the construction of what was to become our current premises. The original building of 3,600 square feet was self-built and funded by the business, which kept running at the same time.

On the completion of the building in 1974, I was joined in the

business by my stepfather, William Meadows, who was working for local firm Rickerby's as Manager of the construction machinery department. A limited company was formed with equal shareholdings and hence Ward Meadows Plant Limited, trading as WM Plant, was born.

Our first supplier was Thomas Niven and Son, a Carlisle timber merchant who was the importer for STIHL products for the UK. This was run separately from the timber mill by a staff of three – Mr Niven Senior (admin), Mr Niven Junior (spare parts stores) and a mechanic. Machines and spare parts could be obtained immediately with 100% availability on visiting the premises.

As the business grew, further staff were engaged and the building was extended to its present 10,000 square feet. In 1996 Bill Meadows wanted to retire and move to Australia and I subsequently bought his shares in the company and premises, making me the sole shareholder.

SD: What is your role in the company and how has that role changed over 50 years?

BW: 50 years ago I was a one-man-

band doing everything – hire, sales, repairs, spares and admin. On top of this I was overseeing the building of the first stage of our premises.

Nowadays my role has changed to one of mentoring and thinking of ways to stay ahead in an increasingly difficult market of competition, statutory requirements and costs.

SD: How many staff do you employ and do you find it difficult to recruit when required?

BW: We have 10 staff now, not including myself or my wife. It is as hard to recruit good staff as it has always been! Fortunately, half of our staff have been with the company for around 30 years. My wife Jill has worked in the business with me for 38 years and has always been a great support. I'm proud of the great team that we have and appreciate their efforts. We find new recruits don't stay long if they can't stand the pace required in today's business environment, or don't offer the standards we expect. In a business of this size there is no place to hide. Everyone plays a vital role and overlaps when necessary. It's teamwork and we all thoroughly enjoy it.

TO GET YOUR WORK DONE IT'S GOT TO BE KIOTI!



SEE THE
KIOTI RANGE AT
SALTEX
STAND A190

4 YEAR

**3,000 HOUR
TRACTOR
WARRANTY***

*ASK FOR DETAILS

New! DK6010CH mechanical and Hydrostatic transmission

- Cat 2 linkage with 1360kg lift at link arms.
- 540 PTO
- 3 cylinder turbo engine 1826 cc
- Economic tier stage IIIB CRDI engine
- 3 range HST or 16 fwd. 16 reverse on mechanical.
- Spacious Cabin with air conditioning
- Mechanical Linked pedal and Cruise speed control.



WWW.KIOTI-UK.COM

Southern England	Dan White	07557 154300
Wales and Central England	Patrick Desmond	07881 013044
Scotland and Northern England	Patrick Desmond	07881 013044



KIOTI UK, SUITE 10, BELLINGHAM HOUSE, 2 HUNTINGDON STREET, ST NEOTS PE19 1BG



WALKER
Mowers UK Ltd.



Model **T25i**

See Walker Mowers at
SALTEX and FutureScape
Exhibitions

- Collection and Non-Collection models available
- Versatile attachments available allowing for year round productivity
- Beautifully cut lawns by design
- Design that is compact, balanced, and agile with precision steering, a close trimming radius, and superior reach and operator view allowing for maximum productivity

Contact us for a demo today!

01482 534470

sales@walkermowers.co.uk

Finance options available! Subject to status.

SD: What range of products and services do you provide?

BW: We cover construction, horticultural and forestry machinery. Our main franchises are STIHL, Husqvarna, and Timberwolf. Like most dealerships, we offer a complete package of sales, hire, repairs and spares.

STIHL is our oldest dealership spanning the past 50 years and I'm pleased to say it has always provided us with great service. Support is always there if we need it, from staff training and technical help, to the company attending our shows and open days.

STIHL also gives financial contributions to certain promotional items such as display units, photographic wraps and signage. We believe you can still see evidence of support of the principles of its founder, Andreas Stihl, which is to sell through specialised local dealers, giving great personal customer service. We are shielded from online competition, to an extent, as STIHL GB will not allow the sale of certain important machines over the internet – chainsaws being the main one.

We have been a dealer for Husqvarna since the early '70s when it was the chainsaw of choice for the Forestry Commission. Since then it has expanded into horticultural and construction equipment, giving us a useful addition to our range. Like STIHL, the company provides promotional assistance.

Timberwolf produces a very popular range of chippers and shredders and we have the dealership for Cumbria and South-West Scotland. It regularly attends our shows and accompanies us on customer visits.

SD: Who are your customers and how have their demands changed over 50 years?

BW: We sell to contractors, builders,

landscapers, councils and members of the public. They want what they always demanded, which is great service, but with more discount! Which is clearly very difficult.

SD: So how has business been during these past two, demanding seasons?

BW: 2018 was too dry and 2019 was too wet! Both adversely affected business. But like most dealerships, we take the rough with the smooth and over time hope to catch up with sales.

SD: During your 50 years of trading, what particular products or innovations do you believe have had an impact on the industry?

BW: Advances in diamond tools as well as mowing, stump grinding and log splitting machinery have brought these activities to a wider market. Diagnostics have also increased business, as have battery tools and automated mowers. There's no doubt we're going to see a lot more robotics coming into the marketplace along with ever-improving battery technologies.

SD: What other milestones or issues have stood out in your years of trading?

BW: Across our anniversary milestones of 30, 40, and now 50 years in business, we've always remained an expanding, single-outlet, local business presence – which we're very proud of. As for issues we've faced, increases in business rates and government requirements always have to be considered and, of course, competition from the internet will be our next challenge.

SD: Do you think the new emission legislations will have much impact on your business?

BW: Recent emission regulations

have had no significant impact on sales. If someone needs a machine, they will buy it. Increased service times and fuel additives have increased our business, but come at a cost to customers.

SD: Is demo-ing machinery an important part of your sales process?

BW: Absolutely, and it's something internet sellers aren't generally able to do but customers appreciate.

SD: Speaking of which, what are your thoughts regarding online selling?

BW: If you want to buy something that you need to put fuel in, or that has something inside that goes up and down or round and round, don't buy it by online distance selling!

We've always maintained that a good local personal service is what is required in our industry to solve customers' problems by selling them the correct machine for their job in what is a pleasurable buying experience. The internet reduces margins, but we know we must match or come close to internet prices and we strive to do this whilst maintaining our business ethic of a personal, local service.

We address this challenge by making the business as efficient as possible and providing things for the customer that the internet can't provide. We pride ourselves on traditional dealer traits such as our knowledgeable staff, our investment in diagnostic equipment, try-before-you-buy schemes and trade-ins. We also provide spare parts and repairs, all in-house, and a chainsaw clinic where customers can get free advice to solve their cutting problems – you can't buy these remotely!

And, all machines sold are assembled, inspected, run and adjusted prior to sale.

We like to think that we make it easy for the customer to do business with us. To facilitate this many of our helpful



Barrie is proud of his loyal, professional staff



In the workshop

staff are long-serving. At a recent staff meeting we calculated that five team members sitting at the table had a total of 181 years of service in our business.

We encourage Cumbrians to 'think local' so that money pours back into the local economy rather than go to Glasgow or London, or even abroad.

SD: Have you made any changes recently to boost trade?

BW: We've expanded internally to give a 30% larger showroom. This has been necessitated by taking on new franchises lately, such as Timberwolf forestry equipment, Rock heavy-duty log splitters and log saws plus Hi-Sun 4x4 ATVs for forest and estate use.

A particularly important reason for expansion of the showroom though, was the ever increasing sale of STIHL products and the expansion of its range, in particular the cordless machines.

Our expansion has effectively doubled the floor area previously available for STIHL. It's now displayed in an atrium with stunning photographic wraps on the high walls. Within this dedicated area is comfortable seating where complimentary refreshments are available.

Also, more Husqvarna construction products are now stocked, and they have a dedicated area with photographic wall wraps.

The external signage required a fresh new look as well, as we have recently changed our logo. Also the previous sign proudly boasted that we were 40 years old, and we are now 50!

SD: In terms of promoting and marketing the business, how do you go about that?

BW: We still use the local newspaper but to a much lesser extent than we used to. Social media now plays a much greater role, but I leave that to my daughter Rosie.

SD: How have you been celebrating your 50th year of trading?

BW: STIHL treated us to a very enjoyable 50th celebration which all our staff were invited to. Other manufacturers are in the pipeline. The local paper and several trade magazines have run articles. We had an in-house celebration on 12 August where the staff presented me with a model of a Shawnee Poole and reminisced over the many years they had worked for me.

My wife and I are taking the staff

and their partners to a hotel/spa in the Lake District for a dinner and overnight stay soon, where there will be a few 50-themed gifts handed out. Jill and I have been fortunate to surround ourselves with such professional and knowledgeable staff for all these years, who are very loyal to us.

SD: What plans do you have in place to ensure another 50 years of success?

BW: We want to continue the growth of the business by maintaining standards of good old-fashioned, quality local service. As part of this we intend to continue offering exciting new products and innovations.

The business will advance into the foreseeable future via family succession. I'm 72 now and still enjoy going into the office. However, being practical, my daughter Rosie, alongside her husband Michael, have recently joined the business and will succeed me. Rosie has a degree in Economics and Management Studies and is remarkably technically minded (especially getting the correct chain to fit on a chainsaw) so I'm confident the business is safe in her hands.

SD: Thank you.

SPECIAL FEATURE

ONE YEAR IN...

In a special feature, Service Dealer talks to two men who have just completed their first year in the hot seat at their respective companies. One involved in the domestic machinery market, one in the professional groundcare and agricultural supply side of the industry. Editor Steve Gibbs and owner Duncan Murray-Clarke, visited Plymouth and Thame to discover how they got on and what their future plans are.



TAKING ON THE FAMILY

Stiga UK's Gary Whitney tells us what it's been like, taking on responsibility for the 'family' in Plymouth, since he became Managing Director



Service Dealer's Steve Gibbs with Stiga's Gary Whitney

Service Dealer: How do you feel your first year in your new role has gone?

Gary Whitney: It was a learning year for me. The most important thing I could do was sit at the desk and just watch, rather than come down and start playing with things too much.

SD: What were the major challenges you were facing?

GW: During this period, we were preparing for the initial Brexit deadline of March 2019, whilst at the same time moving out of our mass channel and Atco warehouse in Doncaster, so in terms of one of the most important business activities for me, it would be leading the realignment of where our warehousing activity was.

It took us some time, but it's now all resolved, and I think we're in a better position than we've ever been regarding that.

During that time, we've come out of two locations and we've moved into two completely different ones. One facility in Exeter, which houses ride-on and bulk stock for our traditional dealer customers, and one in Bristol, which takes care of stock for

our mass channel customers.

In the process of making that change, we also took the opportunity to reinvent the way we store inventory at our head office in Plympton where we keep and distribute spare parts and all walk-behind and hand-held stock.

SD: Would that be an element you'd cite as having gone particularly well for you in this past year?

GW: Yes, but I don't think that our dealers have necessarily seen the output from that yet. That was about us getting our internal systems in order. Now we've turned our attention to the people who get the products to the dealers: the hauliers.

We're now working with three companies here in the South-West who we have good relationships with.

My aim is to get our products to our customers quicker. It's a simple aim, but it's an area where I believe we can improve.

SD: Did you experience any disappointments throughout the year?

GW: Sure, we set out our objectives

for 2019 back in the heady days of May 2018. When it was crazy busy, with it looking like it was heading for another record-breaking year. We planned on building on that picture into 2019. Therefore, our biggest disappointment was the drought and the consequences of that – meaning that realignment with reality which we were forced into.

It truly was disappointing because our traditional dealer business has been on the up for many years, and last year meant we had to cope with a plateau.

SD: What then, has been the most satisfying element of taking over as MD, from a personal perspective?

GW: If anything, the responsibility of taking on Duncan Martin's 'family' here in Plymouth. Duncan saved this business; it was disappearing when he and Andrew rescued it – and there are many people here in this office today who were working for him at that point. So, for me the biggest emotional feeling was taking on the responsibility for that family.

SD: Did you launch any new products during this past year which you felt had a real impact?

GW: It was nothing too radical, but a couple of years ago we put together what we call the Classic Range. A sort of price-fighter, petrol walk-behind range that only really came to completion at the beginning of this season.

Over the previous few seasons we'd concentrated a bit more on other price points, leaving somewhat of a gap in what's really our heartland – the average guy's mower. I felt that we'd slightly moved away from this, so I wanted to regain that territory.

The Classic Range absolutely did that to the point where we were running out. We were re-forecasting, trying to react and it affected both dealers and consumers.

The primary driving force behind the Classic Range was to put our dealers in a competitive position with the all sales channels, because I fundamentally believe consumers should be able to go into one of our dealers and buy a machine at a competitive price, which is profitable for the dealer.

SD: What is your relationship like now with your dealer network?

GW: I feel that we've got a good relationship, but I'm definitely not complacent about it. We're judged by every decision; we're judged in every moment.

I believe that the industry is conservative, but also a very forgiving industry. We've had our problems in the past, but our dealers do forgive. If we have problems, we face up to them and use it as an opportunity to show how much we do care about their businesses. What you save financially by ducking and diving these things, costs you reputationally. That always has been and will remain our philosophy.

We as suppliers need dealers. Dealers are essential to our growth, they're essential to our existence.

As a business, Stiga is fortunate that we do have other customers, but those customers don't have service. Every effort must be made to keep dealers profitable.

Service is what differentiates them from other sales channels – and it's crucial to the industry. It's a big responsibility that their viability is assured and one which we're happy to take on.

SD: How do you feel you've dealt with the element of risk since taking over?

GW: My instinct is that I'm not a risk taker. I'm entrepreneurial, but I'm not a gambler. Empathetic, I think, would describe my approach to business. Also, I'm lucky in that I don't have to take too many risks as we're well supported by a Group that is willing to invest in what we do.

SD: What sort of feedback have you received from the dealer network this past year?

GW: We were actively encouraging our dealers to send us their feedback at our conference this September. Some ideas referring to the conference itself, we even put into play during the three days at the Motorcycle Museum – specifically to do with making the event more valuable to their business rather than just an event where we showcase our products. This is a long game, we're going back to the same customers every year, some of them father and son, some grandfather, father and



Moutfield mowers on display at this year's conference

Bringing you online access to Bosch Rexroth Quality Drive and Control technology from Kramp UK

Expert support from Kramp product specialists

For all your agricultural hydraulics



son, so we need to be listening to them. And to be fair, we haven't had much of a way for people to voice their ideas in the past, so I think we'll take this idea of a 'suggestion box' which we launched at the conference, further. Some sort of open forum where they can offer their ideas and we can periodically review them.

SD: Looking ahead, what do you hope to achieve during the upcoming year?

GW: We plan to grow and believe there's still opportunity for us to do this. There's still opportunity for us to move more premium product for example, both in tractors and walk-behind ranges.

We also certainly see potential in professional products, because we're not in that sector yet. We will only make a firm statement on that though, when we feel that we have the products that deliver what's required, because you can't push

into that sector.

I've found that in this industry you can't push into any sector – you get pulled. If you try to push, dealers resist. Dealers will know what their professional customers want. When we're confident that we've got a professional range that dealers know will deliver for their customers, at that point we will start to make inroads.

In general, I've found that dealers often don't tend to think commercially predominantly – rather they think reputationally; they think about their reputation in their local area, within their customer base. It's not all about the profit that they make, it's about the equity of their reputation. So that's a concept which we must hold dearly and be acutely aware of when we ask them to stake that reputation on something new.

SD: What do you foresee coming up which could prove challenging for your company?

GW: What is difficult now is the uncertainty. It makes it so hard to plan. This uncertainty impacts on consumers and their confidence. It also impacts on dealers' confidence. What I was really assured by though, during that period up to the first March Brexit date, was how up for supporting us our Group was. The investment it made in making sure we had stock ready was incredibly significant.

SD: Do you perceive any threats to the dealer network which they should be mindful of?

GW: I think they must continue to focus on service. They need to find people to man their workshops. They must never lose being a service dealer because that's their USP. Finding the resource for delivering that service is crucial. Be good at what you are – be the most knowledgeable, the most helpful and the most pleasant for consumers to deal with.

SD: In general, how is your outlook for your company?

GW: We feel good. We enter any new year with optimism, and we remain focused on our core offering throughout distractions of new technologies – which of course we need to be involved with and develop – tractors and mowers have always paid our wages, and indeed our dealers' wages too.

So, when it comes to the adoption of new technology, yes, we should keep on top of things, but I believe you don't put all your efforts into what's new and forget what's your bread and butter. Let the changes happen naturally, because I think they'll happen slower than predicted.

SD: Thank you.



Dealers trying out new Stiga ride-ons at the company's recent conference

BECAUSE WE CARE...

ABOUT QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS MACHINES WE CHOOSE THE RIGHT FUEL.



The number 1 best selling and original alkylate fuel since 1988
www.aspenfuel.co.uk



The SZT275 fitted with the 48" CentreCut™ deck allowing you to change from Mulch to Rear discharge, complete with front and rear suspension resulting in 25% less impact when operating.

More than just a zero turn mower, the SZT is a versatile workhorse in a category of its own.



SALTEX

STAND D012



Distributed by FGM Claymore
01 789 490177
info@fgmclaymore.co.uk



RESETTING THE CLOCK

Having spent 28 years at a major manufacturer with a well-established agricultural machinery dealer network, David Hart, Managing Director of Kubota UK, tells us how he's enjoyed the challenge of building a new network from the ground up

Service Dealer: How do you feel your first year in your new role has gone?

David Hart: A change is as good as a rest, they say. Even though I was with a great company in John Deere for 28 years and in their dealer network for six years before that, you sometimes find yourself getting a little too comfortable. You find yourself looking at things on the periphery, rather than at the core. So, the great thing about moving to a company which is so structurally different to my previous one, is that you start looking at the core stuff again. You begin asking questions such as: How do we order it? How do we sell it? How do we assemble it?

Another thing that has happened with Kubota is its had exponential

growth, doubling its volume in Europe in 10 years, doubling in the UK in seven years, with our headcount increasing from 88 to 140. So, what may have worked in the past, doesn't necessarily do so today. It's made us re-look at some of our processes and procedures. It's about managing growth.

SD: Has this change management gone well?

DH: For some people who have been in the business for a long time, it's been very different for them. I, however, came in having been involved in a couple of reorganisations at my previous company, so I had experience in this. One of the things we've implemented here is to have change management

training for every member of staff. There are still people who may be finding it frustrating, but it must be done. We've been consistent in our approach and it's now all about how we're joining our European entities together.

SD: Was this lack of centralisation one of your big challenges this past year?

DH: Yes, and it's going to take five years to get it all working smoothly. I would say for myself personally, it's actually been quite interesting to go back to square one. Kubota is at less than 10% market share, so for me, considering the company I came from, it's a little like re-setting the clock. It's been interesting to think back to consider what we did to build up

certain aspects of the business.

What we need to do now, and it's our Chairman's wish, is to become a global, major brand. Which is, of course, easy to say, but very difficult to do. We're raising our profile through putting ourselves out there with things like sponsorship of events and attendance at shows. Perhaps some of the other major brands feel they're a little beyond that now, but for us, we think it's necessary. We're going back to LAMMA next year, for example, in a slightly bigger way than before, but that's because we feel it's important and we absolutely need to.

We're also going back to BTME in January with a bigger presence. We're going to be next-door to Baroness, which we're going to be working a bit closer with from a marketing point of view. We realise that in the golf market, packages are increasingly important, so if we can align a bit more with Baroness, we feel that could be good for us in terms of getting into that business.

SD: How do you feel the balance has been between your groundcare and ag businesses?

DH: Well the ag side is only half the volume of the groundcare business at the moment. The opportunity for us, therefore, is to keep growing that ag piece. The thing which we're chasing a little bit is the growth in horsepower. The average horsepower in the UK last year got up to 180 and, of course, our largest is 170.

SD: Kubota has larger horsepower tractors than this in the States though, so will you be bringing those over to the UK?

DH: In North America they've got a strategic alliance to build Kubota-designed tractors with Buhler Industries. They build our tractors there and they go up to 190 and 210 horsepower. We'd like a tractor of that sort of horsepower here, but again, from past experience, the

North American-type built tractors aren't often what we're looking for in Europe. In Europe we want more of what they call 'power density' – which basically means we want a lighter product with higher horsepower. We need a tractor that is smaller, lighter, but which you can put more weight on.

I think what will probably happen is that we will work closely with the Americans in understanding how to build bigger tractors. We've got an R&D centre just north of Charles de Gaulle Airport and we've got 90 engineers already employed that are purely focused on building high-horsepower tractors for the European market. So, it's going to come, it's just a question of how long it will take.

SD: What is your relationship like now with your dealer network?

DH: Coming from a business which had many so-called 'super dealers', to one working with more family-owned and run dealerships has been a change for me.

We've got some interesting scenarios within our network. We've got some large dealers on the groundcare side – dealers who may have another agricultural tractor brand, but who sell Kubota groundcare machinery. We've got

all the country covered from a groundcare point of view, so that's in pretty good shape.

Then we've got this ag product that we need to sell and we're trying to build a dealer network from the ground up. There are so many super dealers in the UK, we're having to find the ones who aren't part of one of those large networks. It's difficult and we still do have some gaps to fill on the ag side in the UK. The plan, though, isn't to give everyone ag and groundcare. I believe there is a place in the UK and Ireland for separate dealer networks, but of course, where it does work, we will put them together.

The same would also apply for implements. At the moment we've got Kubota-branded implements, we've got Kverneland and we've got Vicon. Again, where it makes sense, if a dealer is a good fit, they can have the lot. It's a bit of a mix and match.

Plus added to that, we've got some dealers who have also got the Kubota construction equipment – with the whole country pretty much covered. Indeed, where it makes sense, with a dealer such as Vincent Tractors in the South-West for example, they can have the entire portfolio – groundcare, ag and construction.

SD: What message have you been giving to the dealer network?

DH: Be on the bus at the start and then you won't regret it when we're on the journey with extra products coming. But don't expect us to be adding new goodies every year – sometimes we're just going to have to consolidate, keep building on what we've got and then something else will come along. I'm trying to make a commitment to them that we're not suddenly going to jump ship and go with another super dealer. We don't want to become just another 'me-too' big company. What I want to do is grow a more touchy-feely, caring dealer network – where customers don't feel like they are merely a number.



The manufacturer is looking to build on its tractor market share



Kubota has been building its agricultural machinery dealer network, with appointments such as Colchester-based, Hosplant Sales, with Aaron Graves, Sales Director, pictured

SD: What sort of feedback have you had from the network, are they appreciative of your approach?

DH: Yes, but also, I think we're pretty generous when it comes to the terms that they get. And I'm not just talking about discounts, I'm talking about length of time to pay and things like carrying the costs of doing shows with our dealers.

SD: How have you found it personally, taking the reins here?

DH: I've had 14 months of living out of a suitcase down here during the week, which has been a challenge – but bearing in mind in my previous job for seven years I had 26 weeks of the year travelling out of the country, I've certainly preferred being more local.

Also, I've enjoyed silly little things. For example, because I'm on my own down here without my wife during the week, I can sit at my desk in the office until late to get everything done. I'll have all day of meetings until five o'clock, then after that for a few hours I can quietly get all my emails and work completed.

Also, it's quite interesting, they do these personality profiling activities here and they've discovered that I'm more of an innovator than I am a dictator! What I'm definitely not, however, is just a numbers cruncher,

doing the same thing day in and day out – that drives me to despair. So, having this new challenge, I've found refreshing.

SD: Looking ahead, what trends do you feel your dealers might see?

DH: The smart dealers are selling on monthly costs to their customers, not on how much horsepower something has. They really need to act as an adviser for their customers, more so than just a salesman. They only need to have that one advisory win, because the next time that customer comes back to their dealership, they will be saying: 'Tell me what you think I want?' Once the customer has that good experience, the relationship becomes more of a partnership, rather than just a vendor and a buyer.

SD: Do you perceive any threats to the dealer network which they should be mindful of?

DH: It's definitely online – in both ag and in groundcare – because the billion-dollar question for me is: How many bricks and mortar outlets do we actually need in the future? I think some dealers will start to reduce the size of their premises as more and more of their spare parts will start to be sold online. You start to ask yourself, do you need say, 130 dealerships across the

country all with spares departments and workshops? Can some of that be done online and on site?

There are also threats in finding good quality people to come into the workplaces. We need the right staff to do the dirtier jobs in our industry.

The other thing, which I also believe strongly, is that we don't want to lose the soul of the countryside. I worry that in some rural areas that sense of community is just getting lost.

SD: What are your thoughts looking ahead?

DH: In the UK and Ireland I'm a bit worried to be honest, what with all this uncertainty around. On the construction side, for example, we've seen a decrease in digger volumes for this year of about 1,000 units – which I put down to so many building projects across the country being mothballed.

From a personal perspective, I want to continue growing the company. During my time here, I've found that I want to make some changes, but I'm conscious of not ruining the Kubota culture. That's a really difficult balance to achieve. You want to take the best practice that you've known in the past, but you don't want to take away the soul of your new company.

SD: Thank you.

DO YOU NEED A DIESEL MOWER IN YOUR PRODUCT RANGE?



CONTACT US AND APPLY TO BE A DEALER TODAY

The ISEKI SXG range of mowers enable cutting and collecting in the wet without clogging up, ideal for the homeowner requiring the next step up in garden maintenance machinery.

ISEKI compact tractors and mowers are designed and manufactured in Japan with over 90 years experience for quality that lasts.



ISEKI UK & IRELAND

3-5 Foxtail Rd, Ipswich UK IP3 9RT
Telephone 01473 599266
sales@iseki.co.uk www.iseki.co.uk

CR REVELATION WITH INTELLISENSE™ SYSTEM

HARVEST SUPREMACY, *Redefined.*



New Holland prefers AgriStar lubricants

Introducing the latest New Holland CR Revelation combine with IntelliSense™ technology, the ultimate in combine automation. Optimize your harvest every 20 seconds from 280 million possible choices. Experience continuous real-time adjustments for the best grain quality and capacity possible, the fastest way possible. It's harvest supremacy at your fingertips.



EASY SETUP



CONSTANT CHECKING



OPTIMIZATION EVERY 20 SECONDS



INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Let's get it done. Download the official New Holland apps: **Harvester Excellence** and **Grain Loss Calculator**.



DEALERS SOUGHT TO RAISE BOBCAT ANTE

Under South Korean parent firm Doosan, materials handling specialist Bobcat is seeking to become better known not just for its skid-steer machines, but also for its telehandler products. Service Dealer's MARTIN RICKATSON joined its UK dealer days earlier this summer to learn more

By expanding its product range further up the capacity scale, while not neglecting its well-established compact and mid-range machines, Bobcat – owned since 2007 by South Korean firm Doosan – says it is seeking to boost its offering to all sectors of agriculture with a range of telescopic handlers that now reaches right into the heart of the market, spanning seven models and 21 versions. And for that reason, it is also seeking to broaden its dealer network in a sector where, with a trio of long-time market leaders plus the growing presence of handlers from the tractor suppliers that dominate many dealers' activities, the market is already highly competitive.

One of the routes by which Bobcat aims to attract customers and dealers is through its support guarantees, with a standard three-year/3,000-hour warranty and the option of an extension to five years/5,000 hours. Another is by encompassing more of the key lift capability, lift height and machine dimension categories that are in demand by different types of farm business, and to this end it is expanding its range. With manufacturing taking place in-house at the company's plant near the French town of Pontchâteau, Brittany – a legacy of the purchase some years ago by Bobcat's former parent of the FDI/Sambro business – a third customer and dealer selling point is experience, claims the firm, with the telehandler line having more than 40 years' heritage behind it as a result.

NEW FLAGSHIP FOR TELEHANDLER RANGE

The latest addition to the Bobcat telehandler range is the TL43.80HF (list price £76,804 ex VAT), now the flagship of a seven-model line for the agricultural market covering maximum lifting capacities from 2.6-4.3 tonnes and maximum lift heights from 6.0-8.0m. Like others in the two sub-ranges of Bobcat telehandlers – the TL26.60, TL30.60 and TL30.70 Compact machines and the TL35.70, TL34.65HF, TL38.70HF and TL43.80HF Productivity and High Flow models – the designation describes the lift capacity in tonnes (first number) and lift height in metres (second number), minus the decimal points. Previously the largest available machine was the TL38.70HF, so the new model takes Bobcat into new territory above 4.0 tonnes and 7.0m.

Bobcat produces three specification levels, Agri* machines feature what Bobcat describes as all of the mandatory equipment to work in a farming environment, including a reversible fan, steel-belted radial tyres, 40km/hr maximum transmission speed, trailer hitch and lighting socket.

Meanwhile, extra specification on Agri** models includes an air suspension seat, the ability to change direction and select neutral via a shuttle button on the joystick that works in tandem with the conventional shuttle lever, full halogen work lights, a mirror for the trailer hitch, and a



Bobcat is targeting more of the telehandler market, with the introduction of a new 4.3t/8.0m flagship

radio-ready kit including speaker.

Lastly, top-spec Agri*** models add to the aforementioned features air conditioning, LED worklights, hydraulic attachment locking and new auto boom suspension that engages automatically at speeds over 5km/hr.

Parent firm Doosan provides the standard power units for all Bobcat handlers, in the form of its D34 Stage IV engine, developed and manufactured internally specifically for use in the company's new-generation telescopic loaders sold in markets where machine sales are governed by EU emissions rules. Machine compactness was a key design trait, says Bobcat, and as part of this there is a newly-styled low-profile engine hood to improve right-hand side visibility. In the new TL43.80HF

there is a turbocharged 130hp power unit producing a maximum 500Nm of torque, with emissions taken care of using selective catalytic reduction, a diesel oxidation catalyst and diesel exhaust fluid/AdBlue injection after-

treatment technologies. The same Doosan engine is also used for smaller models in the range as a 75hp variant producing a maximum 325Nm torque and using only a

DOC as after-treatment technology, without DEF injection. There is also a 100hp/430Nm version which uses DOC, SCR and DEF emissions systems.

All engine variants use similar electronic fuel injection, high pressure common rail technology, turbocharged air management and cooled exhaust gas recirculation to meet Stage IV without the use of a diesel particulate filter. An automatic fan inverter allows a cycle time to be set for cleaning radiators and the air intake grille.

Meanwhile, in the transmission department, Bobcat handlers put their power to the ground via a Danfoss two-range

hydrostatic, incorporating a Speed Management System that allows travel speed to be adjusted independently of engine speed. The transmission drives through new heavy-duty Dana Spicer axles with limited slip differential.

“WE’RE KEEN TO WORK WITH BOTH TRACTOR AND FARM EQUIPMENT DEALERSHIPS AND WITH MORE SPECIALIST DEALERS”

Built around a box-welded frame with a low load centre and a long wheel base, the new model has a width of 2.30m when the machine is specified with 400/80 R24 tyres, rising by 6.0cm when fitted with 460/70 R24 rubber. Length to the headstock is less than 5.0m, and turning radius is 3.71m.

As on the TL34.65HF and TL38.70HF, the new TL43.80HF is fitted with Bobcat's High Flow technology. A load-sensing Casappa-sourced pump, supplying oil on demand to prevent unnecessary oil heating and power loss, provides up to 190 l/min of oil flow, and 150 l/min at the auxiliary line, figures claimed to lead the class among comparable machines. The primary benefit, says Bobcat, is that the operator can work the machine at significantly lower engine speeds, consuming less fuel and yet still minimising working cycle times, which it claims are the shortest on the market.

Where there is instant demand for maximum oil flow, the firm's Quickstart system helps provide this, while a flow-sharing distributor helps to allow multiple actions to be performed together, said to particularly suit hydraulically-powered attachments such as feeder buckets, bale unrollers and straw blowers.

"With a maximum lift capacity of 4.3 tonnes and a maximum lift height of almost 8m, the TL43.80HF is aimed at users with intensive loading demands, such as those with large amounts of grain, silage and muck to move," says Olivier Traccucci, Bobcat telehandler senior product manager. "To meet the requirements of such users, we have designed the new model is to be the only machine in this sector of the market that has a capacity compatible with a 3,500-litre light material bucket. Combined with a tilt angle for the Z-bar headstock of 152° and a breakout force of 7,000kg, this gives the machine a potential increase of up to 40% in loading productivity, suiting tasks such as rapid grain truck loading."

Like others in the range, Bobcat fits a number of standard productivity features. Auxiliary Flow Management allows hydraulic output to be adjusted to match attachment requirements and to set a continuous flow, while a Power Lift function is designed to optimise hydraulic flow division between telescopic boom cylinders

to maximise lifting performance, and an Eco mode maintains optimum hydraulic performance without using the engine's full power, adjusting key component features to produce the best performance/fuel consumption ratio. A Boom Cushion Retract feature automatically slows down the boom speed when the boom is nearly fully retracted or at min/max angles. Bobcat's Smart Handling System allows boom movement speeds to be adjusted to suit the task in hand, while its Fast Connect System incorporates hydraulic pressure-release to speed up hydraulic attachment changing.

SEEKING TO FILL DEALER GAPS

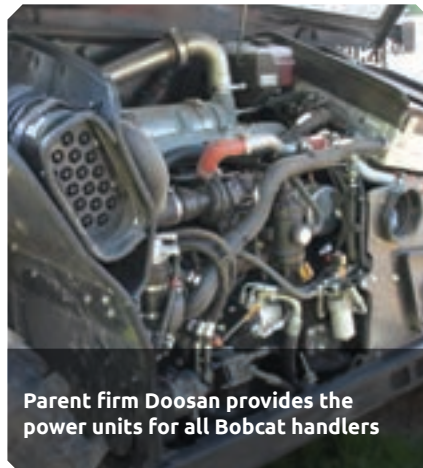
Ewen Gilchrist, UK dealer development manager for Bobcat, says the company is pleased with the increased recognition over recent years of the brand's agricultural telehandler products and believes this has helped to attract new customers and dealers. There are still gaps to fill in the UK dealer network, he notes, but suggests that with the expansion in the range, plus the potential availability to some dealers of complementary products including skid-steer loaders and mini excavators, the brand has something extra to offer in a competitive marketplace.

"With the telehandler product range we now have, we're catering for almost every agricultural application," he says. "We have some long-standing dealers who have developed a strong following in their local market for telehandler sales and support, but there remain a number of areas where we still need to fill gaps in our dealer coverage."

"We're keen to work with both tractor and farm equipment dealerships and with more specialist dealers. Although we recognise that the agricultural telehandler market is very competitive, the Bobcat name is one of the best-known in materials handling, and in Doosan we have one of the largest industrial equipment groups behind us, to support both dealers and customers. In recent years, we've achieved considerable UK market growth, but there is a lot more we would like to do, and while our current dealers are doing a great job, we need to further develop our network in order to fill some gaps and compete in every area of the UK."



Bobcat's telehandler range now spans models from 2.6t/6.0m up to 4.3t/8.0m



Parent firm Doosan provides the power units for all Bobcat handlers



Bobcat still needs to fill gaps in its dealer coverage, says Ewen Gilchrist



B BERTOLINI

Oleo-Mac

efco

Made in Italy

 **Emak**[®]
our **power**, your **passion**

Exhibiting at **SALTEX**
on **STAND J124**

With over 250 garden products in our range,
there will be plenty to see on the stand.

New Website Now Launched
www.oleo-mac.com



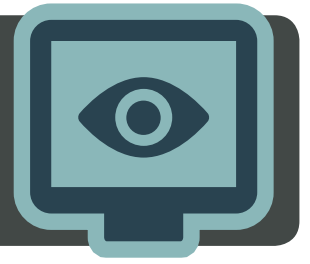
The futures looking bright...orange

Need more information? Tel:01543687660 or E-mail: jmilford@emak.co.uk

@EfcoUK1

BUSINESS MONITOR

SPONSORED BY CATALYST COMPUTER SYSTEMS



IMPROVEMENTS OVER 2018, BUT STILL A ROCKY ROAD

Dealers report an up and down season

The results of our Autumn 2019 Dealer Survey reflected the mood which seems to have prevailed this year – that the season has proved to be somewhat of a roller-coaster, with real highs and lows. However, the impression received from our dealer respondents is that 2019 must be seen as an improvement over the difficulties encountered during 2018

Last year at this time when we conducted a similar survey, most dealers who responded were reporting

downturns across all aspects of their business. This year that picture has improved.

When asked how their overall business compared to 2018, the most popular answers were split between 'up on last year' and 'about the same', both at 40%.

Concerningly, dealers who answered the survey when asked about how machine sales have fared this year, made 'down on last year' the most popular response at 45%. Hopefully, though, this aspect of the business has been mitigated with the other areas of the dealership showing improvements.

Parts sales, according to the responders, have achieved better results for most this year, with 45% saying sales were up on 2018.

Also, possibly the saving grace of many dealerships, the service departments of the dealers who answered the survey seem to have had a better year; 55% said their workshops has been busier this year than last, with only 10% saying they saw a downturn in this area.

Finally, those who responded overwhelmingly said their staffing levels had remained constant in 2019 (85%).

How has your overall business compared to 2018?

Up on last year

▲ 40%

About the same

▶ 40%

Down on last year

▼ 20%

How have your machine sales (whole goods) performed this year against 2018?

Up on last year

▲ 35%

About the same

▶ 20%

Down on last year

▼ 45%

How have your parts and accessories sales performed this year compared with 2018?

Up on last year

▲ 45%

About the same

▶ 40%

Down on last year

▼ 15%

How has your service department/workshop performed this year compared with 2018?

Up on last year

▲ 55%

About the same

▶ 35%

Down on last year

▼ 10%

YOUR SAY

We asked you how the 2019 season had been for your business and how are you feeling about the prospects for the year ahead?

- For us, the early part of the season was poor. The dry start followed by cold weather well into May depressed demand in the first half of the season. When grass-growing conditions turned more favourable, we were into a change of Prime Minister, threats of votes of no confidence, prorogation of parliament and seemingly endless twists and turns in Westminster that are seriously damaging consumer confidence in ours and other industries. We are hoping that the Brexit mess will be resolved one way or another to bring some stability into 2020.
- Reasonably happy that at least there hasn't been a decrease in turnover on the previous year. Looking to 2020, we are lucky to have a loyal customer base and have service work booked through to March, so next year is looking promising.
- Given the better weather patterns we would have anticipated a better season in our area for this 2019 season. There is no question the political uncertainty has affected customers' buying decisions, as it has affected mine. 2020 depends on Brexit and its final outcome.
- Just awful! Still at the bottom of the cliff with small sorties to a staircase to another cliff edge. Always having to go in a new direction.
- In the agri sector, first six months all OK. Business is slowing down and latest figures are very much down on last year.
- It's been a season of ups and downs as Brexit has affected how customers want to spend money. We have had more sales as people have been using machines and have broken them or wanted to change them. The issue has been though, due to business rates, vehicle expenses, staff wages and stock purchasing, some of our costs have had to go up and be passed onto the customer by either raising labour charges or charging for transport in the local area. All this makes the cost of the customer's service and repair jobs more expensive and usually worth more than a new machine.
- The 2019 season has been a much more even season for us with good sales in July and August almost on a par with April and May, which were well down on the big spike at the start of the 2018 season. The Brexit question still hangs over us and seems to be affecting consumers making large purchasing decisions. If this is settled one way or another in October, then next season should be positive. However, if it's delayed again I suspect the uncertainty over it will continue to have a knock-on effect on larger domestic sales.
- We have lost staff this summer to better wages/ career prospects and have struggled to replace them. It's disappointing that we can't keep the good young people we have trained, and we are not getting the right applicants to replace them. I hope this is temporary or it will affect us next year. Despite this business has been good and will hopefully continue into next season.

CATALYST
COMPUTER SYSTEMS
"Your Success is our Priority"

Capture and upload
machinery images to your
Catalyst system in seconds!

Just one of the many must-have features of Catalyst DMSI

0116 230 1500 • www.catalyst-uk.com • sales@catalyst-uk.com

**A Better
Solution
For Your
Dealership**



GERMAN AND FRENCH FIRMS REVEAL SPRAYING AND TILLAGE TECH

Among a number of pre-Agritechnica preview demonstrations over the past summer were large-scale European events held by Horsch and by Kuhn to show off new crop establishment and protection equipment. Service Dealer's MARTIN RICKATSON reports from both launches

With concern mounting over the long-term future of glyphosate, the non-selective herbicide so central to modern non-inversion crop establishment systems – the German government has already announced it will ban the product from 2023 – machinery makers are seeking to help farmers find new non-selective ways of controlling weeds to clean-up land ahead of crop establishment. With resistance issues, plus the cost to herbicide manufacturers of regular product re-approvals, affecting the usefulness and potential availability of in-crop selective herbicides, and a trend towards wider row spacings to allow better crop light penetration, manufacturers are also looking to develop inter-row weeding technologies for the early growth stages of combinable crops.

But, of course, the sprayer hasn't had its day just yet, whether for weed, disease or pest control. Manufacturers are continuing to develop machines not only with greater capacity, enabling more work to be done in short weather windows across larger acreages as average farm sizes continue to grow, but also with new technology that aims to boost accuracy of application and the efficiency of the products applied.

These topics were central to two of the big pre-Agritechnica European launch events held by major German and French implement manufacturers earlier this summer. Among the new products from French firm Kuhn were products designed to maximise weed seed burial and others to enhance stale seedbed creation, plus new spraying technology.



New mounted folding models have been added to Kuhn's range of secondary/stale seedbed Prolander four-row tine cultivators

For the min-till market, new mounted folding models have been added to Kuhn's range of secondary/stale seedbed Prolander four-row tine cultivators. Like others in the range, they use 70 x 12mm S-shaped vibrating tines designed to work at 30-50mm, with various levelling board, levelling tine, harrow and roller options at the rear, with hydraulic adjustment. To minimise power requirement (25-35hp/m is required to achieve 12km/hr in 'average' soils on the flat), the new models have been designed so the centre of gravity is close to the headstock. Both roller and levelling board are hydraulically-adjusted, while single-bolt fixing for the straight or duck-foot shares is claimed to cut changing time by half.

With the Optimiser L disc cultivators, the range extension has been in the other direction, with new 9m and 12m trailed versions added to the top of the line, offering a claimed potential workrate of 18ha/hr working at 15km/hr. Ground contour-following at such speeds is said to be aided by independent chassis sections, forming what Kuhn calls its Steady Control ground tracking system. Discs are independent 510mm units with working depth hydraulically-assisted, and they are followed by a double-U roller.

For those remaining committed to ploughing as a seedbed starting-point, particularly for weed control reasons, earlier this year at SIMA Kuhn previewed new technology designed to ensure that, once buried, weed seed stays buried. By using GPS-recorded headland marking and a plough design incorporating bodies that are automatically lowered sequentially into work one at a time, and raised the same way when meeting the headland, Kuhn claims its Smart Ploughing technology means all soil is moved – and moved once only.

While this means neater ins and outs at the headland, the bigger selling point is that it ensures land isn't re-ploughed – and hence stubble and weed seed remain buried. As a result, Kuhn sees the system as having significant potential as a weed control measure, particularly for combinable

crop farmers seeking supplementary ways of controlling difficult grassweeds.

The Smart Ploughing system also includes auto-width adjustment and the ability to lift a rear furrow out when ploughing uphill in difficult conditions.

Compatible with four-, five- and six-furrow Vari-Master L on-land fully-mounted ploughs with either shearbolt or hydraulic reset protection, the Smart Ploughing system is said to enable the plough to match other implements in a precision farming system. All functions can be controlled via ISOBUS and/or through Kuhn's joystick controller. Individual job and field settings are storable for recall.

The standard Smart Ploughing package essentially provides full ISOBUS control of the standard Varimaster L plough features. When the Lift element is specified in addition, GPS-automated sequential raising and lowering of the plough bodies becomes possible, with reversing of the plough beam also automated once the last body is raised and the plough fully lifted. Individual bodies can also be controlled manually – lifting one, for example, when working close to a boundary or ploughing uphill in difficult conditions. There is also a Line component to Smart Ploughing, which uses GPS guidance to automatically adjust overall working width, suited to working irregularly-shaped fields.

NOT ALL ABOUT MIN/NO-TILL

Kuhn also presented some news for those farmers whose preference is for a power harrow combination drill, with the launch of a high-capacity unit. The 6m folding machine marries the new BTFR 6030 coulter bar to Kuhn's HR 6040 RCS power harrow and 1,500-litre (extendable to 2,000-litre) TF front hoppers.

The firm's Seedflex seeding units are parallelogram-mounted with individual depth control and press wheels. Coulters are 350mm discs with a 41mm offset, and seeding depth can be adjusted hydraulically. A covering harrow follows. The drill features the new Kuhn Vistaflow



Kuhn's Smart Ploughing system automatically lowers plough bodies sequentially into work one at a time, and raises them the same way when meeting the headland

intelligent tramlining valve, which monitors the seed flow inside each tube and allows the use of any tramlining pattern, even if seeding and spraying widths are incompatible, suiting contractor and contract farm customers, suggests Kuhn. Half-width left and/or right side shut-off are options.

Also new at the simpler end of the market is a 3m Sitera mechanical box-type drill available with Suffolk, double-disc or parallelogram-mounted Seedflex double-disc coulters. Specification includes a new VT30 3.5in colour touchscreen display for hopper level, metering rotation and automatic tramlining management. ISOBUS-compatible, the drill can also be managed with Kuhn's SeedSet smartphone app. A patented quick-release interface matches new 3.0/3.5/4.0m HR power harrows and 3.0/3.5m CD disc cultivators, also suitable for the firm's Venta drills.

There's also news in the precision drill sector, with a software development allowing Kuhn's Maxima

3 precision drill with electric metering to modulate seed rates row by row according to ISOBUS terminal-loaded soil variation/seed rate maps. When coupled with automatic row shut-off, Kuhn calculates potential seed savings of 2-3%. Adjusting rates in lower potential areas reduces water stress and improves plant access to resources, and modulating application rate can generate about 5-8% additional yield, depending on soil characteristics, suggests the firm.

MECHANICAL WEEDING FOCUS FOR HORSCH

With non-selective herbicide glyphosate use under the microscope, and other selective herbicides under pressure due to re-registration costs and resistance issues, many of the new products from Horsch for 2020 are focused on mechanical weed control and stubble destruction. The German firm's first weed harrow, the 6-15m Cura ST, is aimed at organic farmers and the increasing numbers of conventional producers who are

looking to supplement herbicides with physical weeding, particularly if using wider row spacings or band-sown combinable crop rows. Pressure for the six rows of harrow tines is adjustable hydraulically from 0.5kg to 5.0kg, and individual securing of the tines keeps them on course.

For mechanically weeding between row-sown crops such as maize and sugar beet, the company's new Transformer VF is a toolbar designed for various inter-row hoeing applications. It features an integral lateral sliding frame and can be fitted with a range of parallelogram-mounted tools, adjustable for different row widths and spacings. Manual or ISOBUS-operated camera guidance is possible.

The 9m and 12m models fold in five sections, while 6m and 8m versions are three-section implements, all folding to 3m wide x 4m high. On all versions the wings lift automatically when the implement is raised at headlands, to aid turning without fouling hedges/fences etc.

With a below-frame clearance of 660mm, relatively late use in spring-sown crops is possible, claims Horsch. The Transformer VF can cover row spacings from 25cm to 90cm, with working depth controlled by a simple lever on the cultivator frame. Units can be hydraulically pressured for hard ground and individually lifted via section control.

Options include covering discs for the hoeing tools to protect young crops from damage.

Offered in 3m front- or rear-mounted and 12m trailed formats, Horsch's new Cultro TC stubble processor is designed for processing tough stubbles such as maize, and incorporating increasingly-popular cover crops when their job is done.

A compact roller diameter is used to attain a high number of both revolutions and cuts per revolution, with vegetation processed by six knives on each section, arranged crosswise.

The 3m model features five sections, while the 12m trailed uses a chassis design which transfers machine weight onto the roller. Individually-suspended 3m roller segments are designed to aid contour following.

Rear-end options include packer alternatives or a grass-type harrow. There is also a Horsch Crossbar option up front where seedbed creation in one pass is the aim.

Meanwhile, although many of its 2020 developments concern mechanical weed control, there is some significant sprayer news.

After Germany, the UK is the company's second-largest market by turnover, and it is aiming for more of both the trailed and self-propelled sectors.

The new Horsch Leeb 6.300/8.300 PT has up to 2.0m clearance and 2.25-3.00m adjustable track width. There's a new Claas-sourced cab with new ErgoControl armrest, while a 6.7-litre/6-cyl FPT Industrial Stage V engine produces 310hp and drives through a hydrostatic transmission. The 8.300 PT has an 8,000-litre stainless steel tank and the 6.300 PT a 6,000-litre polyethylene unit, taking the firm into the popular 5-6,000-litre

self-propelled sector for the first time.

Horsch's CCS Pro continuous inside cleaning system and automatic washing programme are standard, as is a 1,000 l/min stainless steel rotary pump. Steel booms up to 42m feature up to 42 individual sections.

Finally, due to be unveiled at November's Agritechnica is a 12,000-litre tandem-axle trailed sprayer, to add to its current line-up of 4-8,000-litre models. The company showed only a graphic of the prototype at its pre-show press meeting, with full details under wraps until the official unveiling at Agritechnica in November. It is expected, though, that many of the key features will mirror those found on the spraypacks of the new Horsch self-propelled models.



The Horsch Cura ST is aimed at both organic farmers and conventional producers looking to supplement herbicides with physical weeding



Sprayers for 2020 from Horsch Leeb include two new self-propelled models and a 12,000-litre capacity trailed machine

MAKE A DATE FOR SALTEX

Significant timing for IOG's groundscre show this year

There may be extra frisson in the air at IOG SALTEX this year, with it not only taking place across Halloween for the first time, but also Day 2 is scheduled to be the day that the UK leaves the European Union (although at the time of writing, who knows about that?!).

Since moving to the Birmingham NEC a number of years ago, the show has found its feet and has arguably moved from strength to strength. *Service Dealer* believes it has become a truly valuable day out for specialist dealerships of all sizes, affording the opportunity to meet with suppliers, colleagues and fellow dealers – plus the team from the magazine will be in attendance on Stand M181 throughout the show, so do come over and have a chat.

The organisers boast that 2019's edition will feature over 300 exhibitors, including some of the biggest names in groundscre. The two-day event, says the IOG, will offer visitors an opportunity to experience the latest industry trends and innovations, enhance their education and learn from industry experts.

The exhibition is described as the longest-standing event of its kind in the world, having been held almost every year since 1938, and the organisers say they are proud that the show is continually evolving with the people of the industry in mind.

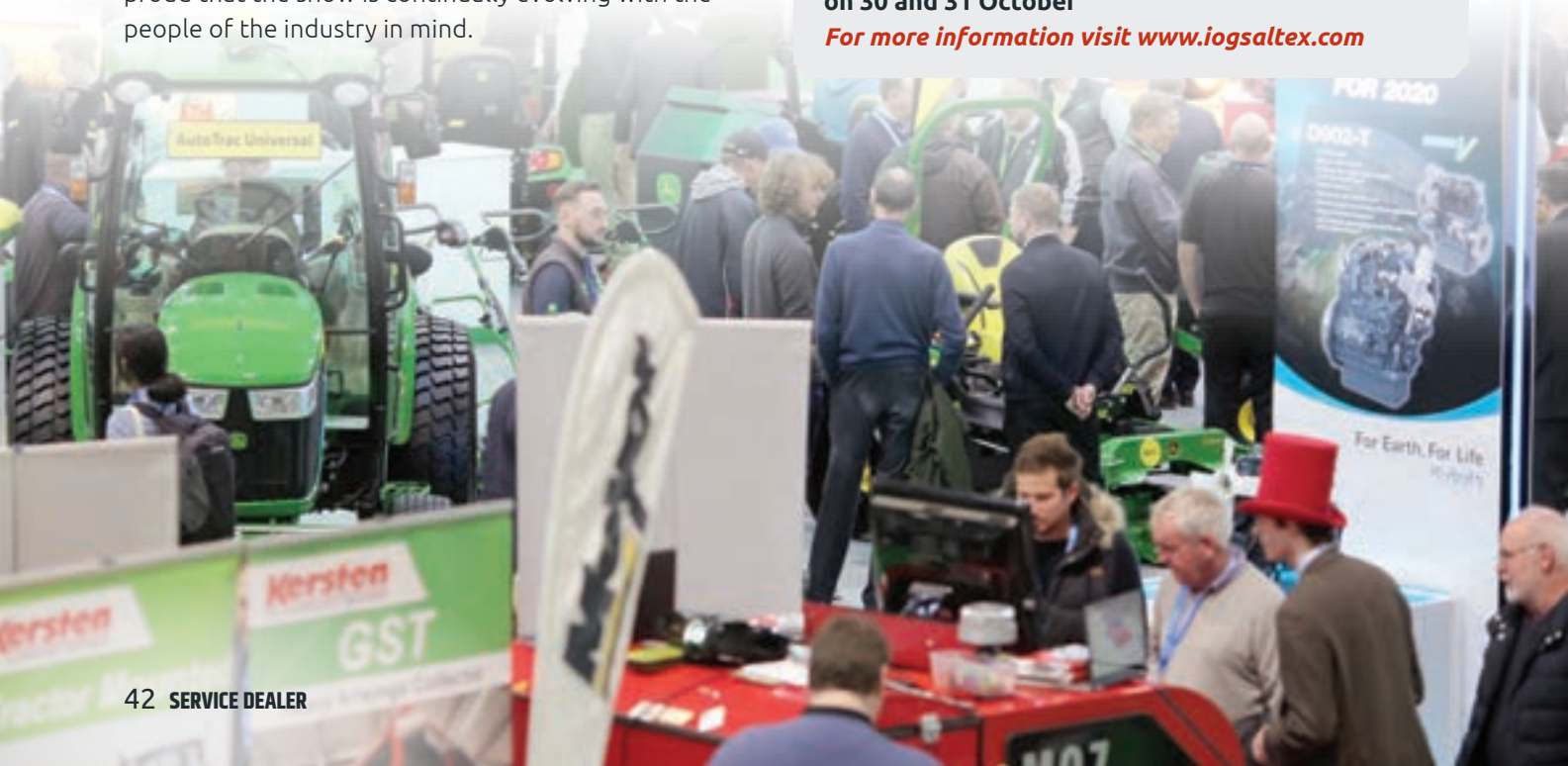
This year the attendees can expect features such as:

- **Eco Village** – New for this year, live demonstrations purely dedicated to environmentally-friendly products;
- **Learning LIVE** – SALTEX's free educational programme;
- **Pathology and Soil Science LIVE** – a look in detail at the symptoms of turfgrass fungal disease problems;
- **SALTEX Innovation Award** – celebrating the best in new groundscre technology;
- **Ask the Expert** – free face-to-face turfcare advice;
- **Outdoor Demonstrations** – the latest products in action in an area directly outside halls 6, 7 and 8;
- **SALTEX College Cup** – land-based colleges compete in an academic test of turf management knowledge;
- **Lawn Care Legends LIVE** – a networking opportunity for landscapers and gardeners;
- **Job Clinic** – free one-to-one sessions covering CV writing to interview techniques.

Registration is accessible through the SALTEX website and visitors can simply bring their email confirmation (on a phone or a printed copy to the registration desk) which will be located at the show entrance.

SALTEX 2019 takes place at the NEC, Birmingham on 30 and 31 October

For more information visit www.iogsaltex.com



gardencare
your pathway to a beautiful garden

CHAINSAWS
BUILT FOR PERFORMANCE

Find out more at...
cyriljohnstrade.co.uk

LST65558 LOGSPLITTER

Central
Distributed by
Central Spares
throughout
mainland UK

SAFETY CAGE INCLUDED
5T SPLITTING FORCE
2200W ENGINE
45KG WEIGHT



CS3800
37.2CC ENGINE
4.7KG DRY WEIGHT
35CM CUT LENGTH
EASYSTART RECOIL



CS4100
40.1CC ENGINE
4.7KG DRY WEIGHT
40CM CUT LENGTH
EASYSTART RECOIL



CS5000
49.3CC ENGINE
5.4KG DRY WEIGHT
45CM CUT LENGTH
EASYSTART RECOIL



CS5600
56CC ENGINE
5.2KG DRY WEIGHT
50CM CUT LENGTH
EASYSTART RECOIL

Wide range of handheld
machinery including
hedgecutters, grass
trimmers & more



EVOPOS.com
business software
holding you back?
MTD
Compliant

SALTEX Show 2019
Birmingham NEC
Stand K122

LAMMA Show 2020
Birmingham NEC
Hall 18 Stand 18.108

01202 795900
sales@evopos.co.uk

simply and efficiently help
sales, improve customer

WE'RE GROWING
WANT TO BE PART OF IT?

our partners of choice

NFU
BASC

**BECOME A CAN-AM
DEALER NOW!**

<http://www.brp.com/en/become-a-dealer.html>
Paul Wood - paul.wood@brp.com - 077 7054 4576

can-am

- Competitive range of ATVs & UTVs
- Excellent range of accessories
- Good profit margins



©2019 Bombardier Recreational Products Inc (BRP). All rights reserved. ®, TM and the BRP logo are registered trademarks of BRP or its affiliates.

WHAT TO SEE!

STIHL SHOWING LATEST PRO PRODUCTS



Mowers, chainsaws and blowers to feature

STIHL says it will be showcasing an array of new professional products at this year's exhibition.

Taking centre stage will be a preview of the new RMA 765 V PRO mower. The new cordless mower is designed with a 63cm magnesium twin-blade cutting deck, height adjustable front wheels for zero turn, and variable speed, controlled via the digital cockpit. In addition, the solid mono handlebar ensures users can empty the tough fabric 80-litre grass catcher box with ease.

Visitors to the stand will also be able to see up close the new MSA 220 C-B, described as the most powerful cordless chainsaw in the STIHL range. Powered by a 36v lithium-ion battery, the new saw comes as standard with the company's exclusive 3/8" Picco Super 3 (PS3) full chisel saw chain with a guide bar length of 35cm/14". The company says the saw makes quick work of any

task and guarantees consistently high-quality cutting performance for felling, snedding, firewood processing and more, regardless of the battery charge level.

The new BR 800 C-E will also be on display, the latest addition at the top of the range of blowers. Producing a blowing force of 41N, the 80cc STIHL 4-MIX engine runs on a fuel-oil mix just like a two-stroke model and offers the benefits without the compromises of four-stroke power. The company says the engine provides fast acceleration, more power, added torque, and lower noise during operation. In addition, the engine offers reduced emissions and increased fuel efficiency.

To make getting up and running even easier, the BR 800 C-E is designed with a convenient starting system featured on the side of the machine, allowing users to re-start the blower while wearing it. **Stand: H070**

LIGHT-FOOTED ROBOCUT ON PATROL

*Developed by McConnell for
fine turf applications*



ROBOCUT RC28

McConnell is set to expand the ROBOCUT range with the launch of the RC28, a mower developed for fine turf applications where a light footprint and minimal surface disturbance is paramount.

The mower has been specifically designed for the amenities, landscape, and ground-care sectors.

Now entering full production, the unit is designed to allow remote-controlled mowing of level land and is suitable for tackling slopes of up to 55°.

Key features include:

- Fuelled up and ready to mow, weighs under 500kg;
- Bi-directional 1.10m mulching deck delivers high quality cut;
- Safe working on slopes of up to 55°;
- Automatic tracking for straight mowing on lateral slopes;
- Full proportional remote control at distances of up to 150m;
- Electric track motors & deck raise / lower eliminates hydraulics;
- Operates at speeds of up to 7.0kph;
- Mowing heights of 30 to 180mm;
- GPS enabled and Autosteer ready.

Powered by a 28hp/21kW fuel-injected Vanguard petrol engine, the Robocut RC28 is purpose-designed for maintenance mowing.

Also on the stand will be the larger RC56 and RC75 ROBOCUT models. **Stand: A095**

KEEP TRACK OF NEW GREENMECH WOODCHIPPER

New EVO 165 range

GreenMech is returning to the NEC to showcase its new woodchipper series, the EVO 165, which will be on display in petrol, diesel and, for the first time, in tracked format.

The company says the EVO combines a wealth of new features, together with some proven innovations such as disc blade chipping technology, twin horizontal hydraulic rollers and 'No-Stress' controls. Its large in-feed chute makes it quick and simple to input large quantities of brash and branches, with reduced snagging and increased productivity.

The company boasts its new heavy-duty flywheel delivers unparalleled processing power, optimised from a 25hp Kubota diesel or 37hp Vanguard petrol engine option, while a new one-piece fabricated chassis has increased the machine's durability.

Aspects of safety and ease of maintenance have



also come under the spotlight, with a new safety bar system to minimise nuisance tripping, while a new centralised greasing point and more accessible vertical and horizontal shear bars make routine maintenance easier.

Visitors will also be the first to see the EVO in tracked format. The new EVO 165DT shares the same diesel engine as the road-tow version, with the addition of a horizontally expanding track. GreenMech says the horizontal extension system provides the operator with optimal manoeuvrability for transportation and site access, together with maximum stability during operation. **Stand: J052**

LANDINI TRACTORS RETURN TO THE SHOW

Highlighting turf and grounds maintenance capabilities



Landini tractors, which are new to the turf management and grounds care sectors, will feature at this year's event.

The company says the compact and mid-range models are well-suited to turf care, grounds maintenance and related applications, providing productivity and fuel efficiency, and a safe and comfortable working environment for operators spending

long hours at the controls.

While the complete Landini range extends to tractors with up to 225hp for agricultural tillage operations, the focus at Saltex will be on the smaller models in the range, mechanical drive compact tractors from 54hp to 75hp, and full-sized mid-range tractors from 70hp to 113hp.

"These products are well suited to grounds care and turf management

applications thanks to a choice of specifications and features that enable buyers to find the best build for their needs," says Adrian Winnett, UK & Ireland Managing Director at the Argo Tractors group.

"You can go for a simple unit for light grounds maintenance duties or one with heavier-duty build and more comprehensive transmissions and implement drives to handle larger implements or equipment with greater demands for power and hydraulics."

Argo Tractors says it decided to return to SALTEX as part of a campaign to raise the profile of its Landini range, show new models added to the line-up and engage face-to-face with potential customers and prospective new dealers. **Stand: K120**

LANDSCAPING RANGE SHOWN BY PSD

New products from multiple brands

PSD Groundscare will be launching a range of landscaping equipment from the various brands the company represents.

Showcasing on the stand will be a range of machinery to manage long grass and banks mowing including the new Taurus two-wheel tractor with optional remote-control functionality from German manufacturer Koppl. This addition to the range is capable of operating on slopes up to 120% (50°) and is equipped with the Köppl Easy-Drive as standard. A new feature is the finger joystick control on the handlebar, which can be used to control the shift of the implement's centre of gravity (both forwards and backwards).

Visitors will also be able to

view the AS Motor AS 1040 Yak ride-on flail mower with benefits including a flail rotor drive which diminishes the need for path overlap and guarantees high work rates, reaching 6,800 m²/h.

For lawn and turfcare maintenance, PSD will showcase a number of machines that expand the Eliet range; including the Turfaway 600 turf cutter. This allows the user to quickly loosen a complete layer of turf with precision, into 60cm-wide sods. In addition, visitors will be able to view the new Eliet self-propelled C550 scarifier, with a collection feature which gathers discarded material into narrow rows for easy disposal, plus the DZC600 Pedestrian overseeder



PSD says it also offers a comprehensive range of debris clearance machinery including the lightweight AS30 E battery-powered weedbrush from AS Motor. With a quiet rechargeable battery drive, the machine is effective in areas where noise can be a concern.

The company also offers a range of green waste shredders, capable of dealing with material up to six inches, with wheeled, tracked and trailed models. **Stand: G120**

TURF SEEDER TAKES CENTRE STAGE FOR BLEC

Alongside other specialised machines

Blec says the Turf-Seeder will be a particular highlight on its stand. Alongside other machines from the specialised landscaping and turfcare range, visitors can also find out about the recently launched 4m BLECavator.

The company says the Turf-Seeder utilises one of the most proven methods of seed incorporation. The front notched ring rollers crush lumps, level the soil and create small pockets in the ground ready to accept the grass seed. Offering accurate and adjustable rates of between 5-50gms/m², the seeds are then distributed the full width of the worked area and are incorporated evenly into the top 12mm of the surface. The rear set of rollers then split the shallow ridges formed by the



BLEC Turf-Seeder

front rollers to maximise germination, while keeping surface disturbance to a minimum.

The Turf-Seeder is available in three different working widths: 1.8m, 2.1m and 2.4m. It's 300-litre hopper capacity and ability to seed up to seven acres per hour makes it a popular choice for turf farms.

Also to be shown, the new BLECavator 400HD is the latest addition to the heavy-duty stoneburier range. The machine features large-diameter tines to screen and bury stones, debris and overgrowth. The adjustable spacing and optional vibrating screen makes it suitable for use in most weather conditions and on a variety of surfaces, including heavy and damp soil. **Stand: M080**

FROM START ■ TO ■ FINISH™



FROM DIGGING



TO PLANTING



FROM GROWING



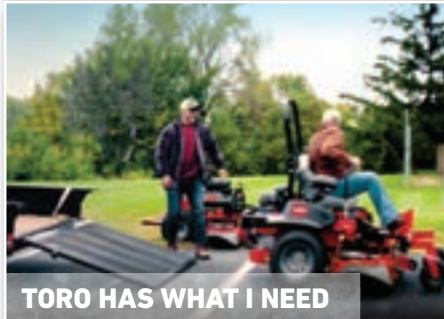
TO CUTTING



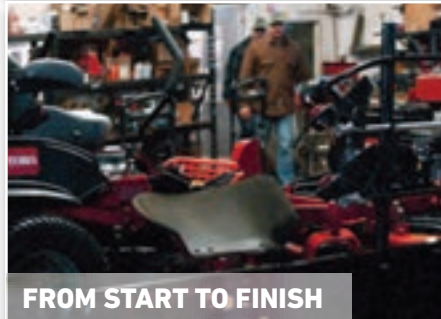
FROM MOWING



TO CLEARING



TORO HAS WHAT I NEED



FROM START TO FINISH

See us at Saltex

Showcasing exciting
new products on
Stand E065

From hardscape to landscape to mowing, Toro® has you covered with a full range of solutions for the jobs you need to do.

With over 100 years of expertise in innovative solutions for the outdoor environment, Toro continues to develop equipment designed with input from grounds professionals.

Our agronomists and engineers are always hard at work developing new solutions to deliver what matters most to professionals – increased productivity, reduced fuel consumption, ease of use, durability and reliability.

From start to finish, tradesmen know they can count on Toro to get the job done.



SME DIGEST

ADVICE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES



Edited by Adam Bernstein

TAX INVESTIGATIONS

WHY HMRC MIGHT INVESTIGATE

According to HMRC's *Annual Report and Accounts for 2017-18*, the tax authority brought in £605.8 billion in tax revenue for the government that year. More importantly, and of interest to taxpayers with a mind to play fast and loose with the tax rules, HMRC's staff "protected more than £30 billion that would otherwise have been lost to UK taxpayers through tackling error, avoidance, evasion and organised crime," writes *SME Digest* Editor, Adam Bernstein.

Checks and investigations are a key part of HMRC's armoury. Indeed, investigations and penalties are, by definition, the backbone of any state-run organisation, for without a punitive regime there would be minimal compliance.

HMRC tax investigations are, reckons the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), time-consuming and stressful. They can last 16 months on average and cost from £5,000 in accountancy fees plus management time and penalties if they find anything wrong. Fee protection insurance can cover the cost of an HMRC investigation.

Surprisingly, most investigations can be avoided easily:

Avoid simple mistakes

One small error, especially if voluntarily corrected by the taxpayer, is not going to raise the hackles of an investigator. But a series of regular mistakes will suggest to HMRC that the taxpayer is either keeping poor records or is unable to follow processes set down by law. It may also suggest that the taxpayer is attempting to commit fraud or evade tax.

Be consistent

Some businesses, but not many, will see wildly fluctuating figures over a period of time. However, most will see peaks and troughs over time. But if one year the profits are reported at, say, £200,000 but the following at £20,000, HMRC would be within its rights to ask why there's such a variation. To forestall the chance of an investigation, the taxpayer would be advised to tell HMRC via the notes box in the tax return why profits fell so dramatically.

Note sector norms

With HMRC having a long and storied history, it's obvious that it's going to have statistics on what the average business in any given sector should be declaring in terms of expenses and profit. Clearly, if the business's declared numbers are well off the mark of the sector norm the HMRC might seek answers via an investigation.

Earn more than staff

Management and owners should be earning more than those that they employ. While the super rich can afford to give away shares or work for a token £1, the majority in business can't so to declare an almost non-existent income is likely to lead to interest from HMRC; it will suspect that some form of tax avoidance scheme is being employed.

Taxpayers should aim to not rock the boat; they should maintain the employment hierarchy which is best illustrated by expected pay structures.

Don't hide income

HMRC doesn't just look at taxpayers or businesses in isolation, it's actively comparing and linking records of anyone via its Connect database that's linked to taxpayers too. Any temptation to 'forget' payments or receipts should be resisted as transaction records, by definition, have two sides – payer and payee. Whether a customer, supplier or bank, HMRC can trace these through.

Whistleblowing to HMRC

HMRC does, from time to time, receive information about dishonest taxpayers breaking the law. While it hasn't the resources to investigate everything it is told, situations considered serious will merit attention.

In summary

Using just a modicum of common sense is key to having inspectors give a taxpayer the benefit of the doubt. But ultimately, complying with the law is the safest way to avoid an investigation.



THE FINANCIAL OMBUDSMAN SERVICE WANTS YOU

Hacked off with banks' over charges? Angered by an insurer's refusal to pay an insurance claim? These are all matters for a well-established but not necessarily that well known government body, the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS), which gained new powers on 1 April 2019, says SME Digest Editor, Adam Bernstein.

The service

The FOS is a free service set up by parliament to deal with complaints against financial organisations and its costs are borne by the financial services sector.

It's these costs that make the FOS interesting because depending on the claim, an institution may settle a case that it might not win. This is because as it presently stands, each institution is permitted 25 investigations a year without charge. Beyond that they pay £550 per case, added to which will be its own internal costs and time in dealing with the case; a fee per case is chargeable by the FOS whether the institution wins or loses.

Primarily aimed at helping the individual, the FOS has been able to help certain businesses and charities. However, from 1 April 2019 more firms came under its protection. Now

assistance can be given to firms with less than £6.5m turnover, that have fewer than 50 staff, and have a balance sheet of less than £5m.

As the FOS points out, it can resolve complaints about most financial products and services including debt collection and repayment, mortgages, pensions and investments, PPI insurance, bank accounts, payments, cards, loans and credit.

The process

Before the FOS can step in a complainant has to give the institution an opportunity to investigate and fix the problem. This means making contact, outlining what the issue is and what is required to make amends.

The institution then has eight weeks to respond with an offer to fix, or alternatively, a 'deadlock' letter where it denies the claim. After that the FOS can intervene.

There are strict time limits placed on the FOS's investigations. It cannot examine matters that happened more than six years prior to the claim or which happened more than three years from when the matter first arose (or should have been noticed).

Further, the FOS cannot investigate matters where the complaint is made more than six months after the deadlock letter has been issued.

Where the decision goes against the complainant, it's possible to appeal to the Ombudsman itself. Beyond that, if the decision is held in favour of the institution, it's still possible to move the matter to the courts. But if the decision is accepted there is no further recourse. Either way, the decision is binding on the institution. The FOS cannot take on the case if the matter has already been through the courts.

Decisions

When investigating, the FOS will make contact with the institution, seeking its side of the story. If the decision goes in the complainant's favour the FOS can require the institution to either apologise, pay an award to cover loss, refund fees and charges, or pay compensation.

But just as the FOS gained new powers to help more businesses, so the limits on compensation rose. Complaints made before 1 April were limited to £150,000. But complaints relating to periods before 1 April but referred to the FOS after 1 April are limited to £160,000. However, complaints relating to periods after 1 April have an upper limit of £350,000. Beyond those limits the FOS can only recommend that the institutions pay more.

In summary

While fighting a large financial institution puts a complainant in a David and Goliath situation, the FOS can level the playing field.

Make contact

complaint.info@financial-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 023 4567



FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS

There are myriad trade bodies, associations and organisations that can help member firms prosper, writes Adam Bernstein, *SME Digest* Editor.

Linda Cavender, Chief Executive of the Trade Association Forum, thinks that all businesses should join an association because, quite simply, “in the long term it is in their financial interests to do so”. She says that associations “sit at the heart of their industry and offer many benefits to members including money-saving activities such as free advice on many issues, access to special rates through affinity services and regulatory cost-avoidance which can often cost a significant sum of money on the open market”.

Take the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC). Hannah Essex, Co-executive Director, considers “chambers [to be] the voice of their communities, helping companies, places and people to grow and thrive”. Chambers of Commerce offer a range of business services to members. Essex explains that the BCC “works with a small number of partner organisations with the expertise to deliver services nationally and has exclusive deals which can only be accessed by members”.

Then there’s the Forum of Private Business (FPB). Matthew Walker, Business Development Manager, notes that while the FPB offers much of what other organisations do, it can also help with general business advice and can signpost towards business information including legislation and regulation. Specially, the FPB offers legal expenses insurance cover. Walker says that it covers employment disputes, health and safety prosecutions, tax protection, debt recovery help, data protection and even

offers a jury service allowance.

Yet another body to consider is the Institute of Directors (IoD). Euan Holmes, Press Officer, reckons that aside from the advice services the IoD provides, “our market intelligence is worth the annual subscription alone”. Here members can search sources, undertake research and seek out expert help to gather information that can take a business forward.

It’s also worth pointing out that trade associations can be of significant help to start-up businesses. This is something that the FPB expressly recognises – it offers up to 25% discount across membership levels.

Grassroots work is one thing, but how do organisations interact with officialdom?

For the IoD, Holmes says it runs monthly Policy Voice surveys, where “we listen directly to the views of our members, using them to help shape our campaign priorities”. Recent wins he mentions include the increase in the Annual Investment Allowance and action on late payments.

It’s notable that others can claim the same victories.

As with anything in life, those who participate gain the most. The BCC has 53 accredited chambers “so firms in

every part of the country can join their local chamber... [they’re] at the heart of a network of chambers in every region”.

Essex says that chambers “host everything from networking events, to seminars and award ceremonies”. She says that businesses can participate in the policy work of the network through roundtables, feeding into surveys and sharing their views on the issues affecting their business environment.

The FPB, according to Walker, also encourages participation and it too holds events regularly in local areas. His view is that as a ‘not for profit’ organisation “the FPB does not expect anyone to pay to network”. And for those unable to attend an event, they can see everything online, as all events are filmed.



FINALLY...

At the end of the day, apart from networking and information exchange, having the back-up of services is rather like having insurance – it’s nice to know that it’s there, but you really don’t want to have to use it.

(There are other organisations to consider.)

Please take proper advice before acting on anything written here.

uni-power

ENGINES • TRANSMISSIONS • PARTS

Kawasaki Engines - New product line for uni-power

New UK Distributor for Kawasaki Engines

Kawasaki

— ENGINES —

To complement our other Official Dealerships, we are very proud to announce the addition of Kawasaki Engines, which are used in a wide range of applications across many industries.

As well as supplying the complete range of Kawasaki Engines & Parts, we also offer full Service & Warranty back-up support via our dedicated Service Division.



ENGINES



HONDA

ENGINES

KOHLER

Engines

Kubota



LOMBARDINI

A KOHLER COMPANY

VANGUARD

COMMERCIAL POWER

YANMAR

TRANSMISSIONS



HYDRO-GEAR

PEERLESS

TRANSMISSIONS



MACHINERY PARTS

HONDA

POWER EQUIPMENT



Simplicity



MURRAY

Kubota



SNAPPER



TEL: 01371 875331

info@uni-power.co.uk

www.uni-power.co.uk





DETERMINED TO DELEGATE

Sara Hey, Vice-President of Operations and Development at Bob Clements Inc, the dealership development company based in Missouri, shares the insights she offers US dealers with Service Dealer's UK readership every issue. This issue, handing off tasks can help your dealership grow, but you must train and equip your staff

**“ IT'S JUST EASIER TO DO IT MYSELF
BECAUSE I KNOW IT WILL GET DONE RIGHT ”**

Chances are you've had that thought, even if you've never said it out loud. Though this may be true, it's not a sustainable approach to running your dealership. As your business grows and changes, you're not personally viable – if only from a time standpoint – to be in charge of everything. What's more, that approach stunts growth. In fact, by delegating 20% of your tasks to others, you can actually grow your dealership by 20%. You must remember, though, that delegating tasks is not the same as dumping tasks.

BUILDING TRUST

Trust is the foundation for successful delegation within the dealership. Employees must trust that you won't give them something they can't handle. You must trust them to perform the new tasks to the best of their abilities.

Empathy, logic and authenticity form the basis for that mutual trust.

Convey empathy by expressing your willingness to listen to employees' problems and find solutions. An easy way to do this is to put down your mobile phone when talking with an employee. This shows that you're fully focussed on them. It also sets an example of how they should interact with others.

Logic is another aspect of delegation to which many take the wrong approach. For instance, before you ask an employee to perform a task, you may provide reasons as to why the request is being made. You might talk about how your schedule is overloaded or how it's time for them to take on more responsibility.

The problem with that approach is that it may muddle your request or might cause the employee to become suspicious. You also may only have a few minutes before you are interrupted. Instead, start by explaining the task you need to hand over. If additional background is needed, then you can fill in more details.

Authenticity, the remaining component of successful delegation, is based on your commitment to the employee's success. Give them the training or tools they need for their added responsibilities. Don't leave them

stranded or it's likely the job won't get done or the employee will feel resentful.

FOLLOWING THE INCA PRINCIPLE

Delegation is really about decision-making, and sometimes you need to seek support outside the dealership. Keep the INCA (which stands for Immediate, Negative, Concrete and Accountable) principle in mind in those situations.

For instance, an expert can help if you lack certain expertise and there could be negative consequences following a wrong decision. Or, your decision could influence future policies, making it 'concrete,' and you or your dealership could be held accountable for the outcome.

Employee issues, such as harassment claims, immediate terminations or health insurance often meet the INCA guideline.

FACING REALITY

A good way to identify tasks you can assign to others is writing your own job description. Then, compare those duties with these three things a dealership leader should be responsible for:

- Casting the vision (Where are we going?)
- Creating the strategy (How are we going to get there?)
- Developing the people (Who do I need to make this happen?)

Consider starting slowly in handing off tasks, and for each task you delegate, be sure to provide tools and training. Then, regularly check the employees' progress to see if they require additional tools or training, or are ready for another assignment.

By incorporating delegation into your management approach, you can help avoid burn-out and find new ways for your dealership and your employees to grow.

AND FINALLY

In his final diary entry, General Manager of Briants of Risbough, Chris Starling has concerns over the design and production quality of some high-end products, muses on winter stocking and ends on a positive note

Our year's diary comes to a close in this issue. Firstly, a big thank you to Steve Gibbs for inviting us to take part. The whole process has been very enjoyable and has prompted us to look inwards at our own business as much as watching the market around us.

Throughout 2019 our service department has been one of the most stable and predictable areas within the business. September's stream of new jobs remained buoyant and we're consistently still working at around 14-day lead times for domestic customers. Where possible we turn our regular trade customers around well within that period so they can continue working with minimum downtime or inconvenience. The floodgates have opened in the second half of 2019 on warranty work due to issues discussed further on, but needless to say, that's added to the incoming numbers.

Regarding sales, the last 7-10 days of August saw a cliff-edge drop in footfall due to a mass exodus of families heading away on summer holidays. It was quickly counteracted by a significant upturn the moment the schools returned in early September, and has plateaued at a steady level since. We were excited to see some new product, with STIHL releasing both its professional MSA220 cordless chainsaw and BR800 backpack blower which were both crammed full of features and eagerly anticipated by the customers. Credit to the guys in STIHL marketing for building up a buzz around both machines well in advance. With cordless in mind, we're hopeful that with dealer conferences just around the corner we may see other brands offering professional cordless products – more specifically, lawn mowers!

Digressing back to an early comment on warranty, throughout the last couple of years and noticeably in the past three months, we've been concerned by the corners



Chris Starling, General Manager of Briants of Risbough, with Rebecca Briant, Managing Director

being cut on design and production of some high-end products. This results in more product recalls, re-works and off-the-cuff tweaks than we can remember in any previous period. The manufacturers are obviously looking to maximise profitability, but is this a false economy when you're having to re-tool, re-work or replace products that have failed in the marketplace – not to mention a dent to reputation and cheapening of the brand name? There are, of course, financial repercussions on us. Across our counters we toe the line to maintain a good trusting relationship between all parties by undertaking any of our manufacturer's warranty work. We're inevitably reimbursed at a far lower labour rate than chargeable to customers, but most galling is when the courtesy of reimbursing the cost of our mileage isn't covered, particularly when the mower concerned was purchased from the manufacturer's own website.

Despite what has been a reasonable year, we're once again faced with a machinery clearance (albeit less than in previous years) due to the perpetual winter stocking and forward ordering pressures. Our forecasting processes are as accurate as can be expected and agreed between a senior team, but it can't account for mid-season product launches, loss of confidence in a product, sudden changes in consumer buying patterns or the manufacturer creating 'interesting' new hurdles.

To end on a positive note, even though we're in possibly the craziest political, economic and environmental position in modern history, our industry remains close-knit and we're fortunate to be able to openly discuss many of our issues and indeed successes. Assuming the grass keeps growing and as long as the customers keep breaking their kit, we'll be here to repair or replace it.

Over and out for 2019.

PRODUCTS

CONTACT:
07929 438213
steve@servicedealer.co.uk



AGRICULTURAL

NEW GENERATION KNOTTER FROM NEW HOLLAND

Loop Master for BigBaler Plus

New Holland say that no matter what they are made of (and for), big bales all have something in common: they need to be tightly-packed for more efficient handling and storage. Quality of bales is at the heart of baling and knotting technology is key to preserve bale density and integrity during handling and transport.

The company say they have been pioneering double-knot technology for over 30 years, and based on this experience is now launching an exclusive improvement: the new patented Loop Master Knotter which will be introduced on all BigBaler models.

The loop-knotting process eliminates offcuts left loose on the bale (so improving forage quality) and in the field (so reducing environmental impact): in one season on 10,000 bales produced, New Holland estimate the elimination of close to 6 kilometers worth of twine offcuts per season, which are normally left to pollute the ground and crop.

The Loop Master allows the twine to retain 15% higher twine strength – and this, says the manufacturer, translates into efficient baling and considerable productivity benefit. Furthermore it reduces the twine cost for customers by using a lower grade of twine to keep the bales together.

“A strong, reliable knotter paired with clean crop: at New Holland we are extremely pleased to have fulfilled this request coming from our customers.” says Felix Ramuenke, Global Product Manager for Large Square Balers at New Holland Agriculture.

“The new LoopMaster knotter substantially reduces the risk of twine snapping or knots untying, that can cause a lot of trouble to the operator – at the same time it maintains the most appreciated features of our double-knot system, higher bale density with lower knotting strain and packaging performance.”

COMMERCIAL

MORE OPTIONS ON SPPS SPRAYER

Developments from Techneat



Techneat spps

The SPPS, a self-propelled pedestrian sprayer from Techneat Engineering, aimed at lawn care professionals is now available in a wider range of tank size and boom width options.

“We now have tank options in 80, 120 and 150L capacities and have recently launched a new 5m boom machine alongside the 3 and 4m options already available to professional ground staff,” said Techneat’s Technical Support Manager James English.

“The new 5m machine will still have the same folding boom option as the 3 and 4m machines offering easier access via narrow entrances and all booms have now been improved to increase their overall stability when the SPPS is moving with booms folded,” he added.

Recent specification upgrades to the SPPS also include a new pressure compensation control system designed to ensure that there is no pressure change on nozzle output even when some sections on the boom may be closed off individually. To improve application efficiency a handle mounted speedometer is now available as an optional extra on all machines.

COMMERCIAL

WATERER NEWEST ENTRY TO SCH RANGE

1200 litre capacity HBU1200ATE

The HBU1200ATE is the newest edition to the SCH waterer range.

The unit features a 1200 litre capacity polyethylene tank, which is internally baffled to safely minimise surge when braking and turning corners. The trailers road-legal steel chassis is fully galvanised, with over-run brakes, lights and a jockey wheel. Two trailer supports are fitted to the rear, to stabilise the trailer when it is unhitched from the towing vehicle. It can come with a twin axle as an optional extra.

The standard model features a choice between a petrol and an electric powered pump. The 12V DC electric pump



SCH waterer

has a flow rate of 18 litres per minute, and is powered by the towing vehicles power supply. The petrol option features a reliable 2” centrifugal Honda pump, with an adjustable flow rate up to 450 litres per minute.

This waterer features a short lance for tubs and beds, and a telescopic lance which can reach up to 6 meters. The telescopic lance is suitable for watering hanging baskets at a height. 6 meters of hose is supplied, and two steel stands are mounted to the side of the trailer, which can be used to transport a significant length of additional hose, if required.

TOP TILL FINISHER FROM KNIGHT

Works down and finishes any style of cultivation



Knight TopTill

Knight Farm Machinery has launched the TopTill - a new seedbed finishing cultivator.

The company says the implement can be used to work down and finish any style of cultivation, including over-wintered ploughing, and leave it ready for drilling with no further work required.

It features leading paddles running ahead of a front roller, which prepares the seedbed for the cultivating tines, with a final finish being applied by a double CrossKill roller. The machine uses a similar design of frame to Knight's successful M-Series cultivator.

All the working elements are mounted on independently floating sub-frames, with the cultivating tines mounted on an additional frame so their working depth can be adjusted separately.

The leading element is a row of sprung panels that loosen and break up the soil surface, breaking up clods so that the following roller can crush them and press them into the seedbed.

This creates a levelled and consolidated surface into which the five rows of tines can work efficiently, achieving a thorough soil and trash

mixing operation, before the seedbed is finished by the double CrossKill roller.

Key to the machine's effectiveness is the spacing of the working tines. These are set in five rows, with a 30cm gap front to back between the rows and a 45cm gap between tines on the same row, an arrangement that minimises blockage risks.

This means that – in work – there is a 9cm gap between tines, so the machine can work very shallow and still move all the soil in either a chitting or seedbed preparation pass. The tines are fitted with reversible points to offer extended working life.

The weight of the machine (800kgs/metre depending on specification) is carried on the front and rear rollers, with the working depth of the paddles and tines being adjusted via turnbuckles.

Operators have the option to raise the front of the machine slightly if they want to perform a progressive cultivation.

Partners in application solutions

- In-house Design and manufacture
- Full support and spare parts availability
- Good Margins and incentives
- Full product range
- 12 month Warranty
- Cereal/Turf/Potato applicators



www.techneat.co.uk | t: 01353 862 044 | e: info@techneat.co.uk

Techneat
engineering ltd

ROTARY OPTION LAUNCHED FROM INFINICUT

SM34 follows the same design philosophy



Infinicut SM34 rotary mower

Launched by MTD is the Infinicut SM34 rotary mower.

The company say the SM34 follows the same design philosophy as the rest of the Infinicut range, with an emphasis on a modern, clean power source. It takes its mode of traction from the manufacturer's reel mower, paired with a deck designed on the back of MTD's years of rotary experience.

By utilising stamp tooling, the company say users can be confident that airflow is optimal. The culmination, they boast, is a machine that ensures 'fit-for-purpose' application, but also necessary safety compliance that comes with rotary decks.

Designed for professional users, the SM34 can be used to mow grass in the traditional sense or used as a stand-alone vacuum. In cut mode, the new rotary offers a striping effect usually only achieved with a professional reel mower. The 34" cutting width combines better productivity and lightweight design, which negates the issues of tire rutting and wear of a larger ride on mower. The blades are made from premium-grade, high carbon steel and come pre-balanced to exhibit less vibration.

As with the rest of the Infinicut fleet, the machine offers the operator a number of parameters which can be tailored to their particular requirements. With the extreme accuracy of HOC that users often work to in mind, the SM34 has paralleling and deck pitch adjustment features as standard. It can be specified with either an engine generator or lithium battery as a power source. In battery mode the SM34 is quieter in operation, environmentally friendly and can provide significant fuel cost saving when compared to other rotary mowers.

Commenting on its launch John Coleman, Head of MTD Specialty Products UK, added, "The Infinicut Rotary was a natural product progression from our well recognised Infinicut cylinder mower range. The design of this machine is a combination of our own concepts and ideas but at the same time we've listened carefully to our customers feedback. The culmination is a machine that takes a known concept and places it firmly in the modern era by introducing wireless parameter adjustment via our proprietary InfiniApp."

COMMERCIAL

EGO CARRIER ON WITH PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTS

BHX1000 battery carrier

EGO has launched its new battery carrier (BHX1000), expanding its commercial range. This battery carrier allows users to carry and attach any EGO Power+ battery from the handheld range onto the carrier which connects to the commercial harness/hip belt (AFH1500).

With an RRP of £80, the company says this piece of kit provides a more comfortable gardening experience. It's suitable for customers that already have a BAX1501 (supplied with harness



AFH1500) and would like to use the standard batteries as well - the battery carrier connects to the AFH1500 harness/hip belt.

Alternatively, EGO offer the full backpack harness kit to buy for an RRP of £159. This kit includes the battery carrier (BHX1000), harness/hip belt and an adaptor which is suitable for customers who haven't yet purchased a BAX1501.

AGRICULTURAL

KUHN BOOST DRILLING FLEXIBILITY

Quick fix disc cultivator

A new disc cultivator designed for quick coupling with the Venta 1030 pneumatic drill offers significant drilling flexibility as an alternative to the power harrow combination, says KUHN.

The CD 1020, currently available in 3.0 and 3.5 metre formats, has two rows of 400mm diameter notched discs to create a fine seedbed to a shallow working depth in light soil conditions. The unit can be fitted with KUHN's new Megapacker 590mm diameter roller, or other roller options. Designed to operate in combination at up to 15km/hr, or up to 4ha/hour in the 3.0 metre format, the CD has the potential for high drilling outputs when conditions allow. The CD can also operate as a stand-alone cultivator.

The discs are supported by a single vertical arm, each holding two discs per arm. Together with a good under frame clearance and a notched disc design that creates a self-driving action in plant residues, this allows the CD to operate effectively in trashy conditions. The disc arms are fitted onto a cross-shaped profile, with polyurethane blocks providing both elasticity – to maintain a consistent



Kuhn Venta drill CD

working depth – and durability. Side deflectors, fitted on a parallelogram and extending as far as the roller, ensure a level finish between passes.

Linkage between the Venta 1030 drill and the tillage tool is via a specially designed roller frame, a patented concept that creates a very compact unit and ensures cultivation and drilling are fully independent functions. This increases the adaptability of the combination unit and allows optimum drilling performance to be maintained in the widest range of conditions. This design also helps facilitate quick interchange of tillage tools, with coupling estimated to take less than 10 minutes.

**Unbeatable
package for
enhanced
productivity.**



Kubota

SEE US AT
SALTEX

Stand No. C070



L2 Series: Maximum efficiency, comfort and versatility

An unbeatable package of class-leading features to make your day easier and more productive.

We put more into our L2 Series, so you get more out. Visit our website or your local Kubota dealer to find out more about our class leading engine, transmission, PTO technology, and our super-comfortable cabs. All combined with legendary reliability, service and reassuringly high residual values. Or carry on working harder. Your choice.



Contact your local dealer or visit our website for more details.

www.kubota.co.uk T: 01844 873190

*Conditions apply. See your Kubota dealer for details.

For Earth, For Life
Kubota

Invest in a powerful 36v (twin 18v) cordless system

**POWERFUL - QUIET RUNNING - LIGHTER WEIGHT
NO CABLES - NO PETROL FUMES - LONG RUN TIMES**

MAKE USE OF YOUR EXISTING BATTERIES

**Charge your batteries in under an
hour (22-55 minutes)**

**Use 2x 18v batteries to power our
36v tools and products**



Makita[®]

See more information on our 18v products: www.makitauk.com

EVENTS 2019/20

NOVEMBER 2019

- 10-16 **Agritechnica, Hanover, Germany**
www.agritechnica.com/en/
- 21 **Service Dealer Conference & Awards**
www.servicedealer.co.uk
- 25-26 **Royal Welsh Winter Fair**
www.rwas.wales/winter-fair
- 27-28 **CropTec 2019, East of England Showground**
www.croptecshow.com

JANUARY 2020

- 7-8 **LAMMA 2020, Birmingham NEC**
www.lammashow.com
- 7-9 **Oxford Farming Conference**
www.ofc.org.uk
- 21-23 **BTME 2020, Harrogate International Centre**
www.btme.org.uk
- 25-30 **Golf Industry Show, Orlando**
www.golfindustryshow.com

FEBRUARY 2020

- 2-6 **Spring Fair 2020, Birmingham NEC**
www.springfair.com
- 4-6 **Doe Show 2020, Ulting**
www.ernestdoe.com
- 5-6 **Executive Hire Show, Ricoh Arena, Coventry**
www.executivehireshow.co.uk
- 11-13 **World Ag Expo, Tulare, California**
www.worldagexpo.com

MARCH 2020

- 27-13 **Ideal Home Show, Olympia, London**
www.idealhomeshow.co.uk
- 21-22 **West of England Game Fair, Bath & West Showground**
www.westofenglandgamefair.co.uk

APRIL 2020

- 9 **CountryTastic, Three Counties Showground, Malvern**
www.countrytastic.co.uk
- 23-26 **Harrogate Spring Flower Show**
www.flowershow.org.uk/spring-show-2020
- 28-30 **The Commercial Vehicle Show, Birmingham NEC**
www.cvshow.com

MAY 2020

- 3 **North Somerset Show**
www.nsas.org.uk
- 9-10 **Nottinghamshire County Show**
www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com
- 11 **Scotgrass, Dumfries**
www.scotgrass.co.uk
- 13-16 **Balmoral Show, Belfast**
www.balmoralshow.co.uk
- 19-23 **Chelsea Flower Show**
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events
- 20-21 **Grassland & Muck, Ragley Estate**
www.grasslandevent.co.uk/
- 21-23 **Devon County Show**
<http://devoncountyshow.co.uk>
- 23-24 **Herts County Show**
www.hertsshow.com
- 25 **Surrey County Show**
www.surreycountyshow.co.uk/surrey-county-show
- 27-28 **Staffordshire County Show**
www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show
- 27-28 **Suffolk County Show**
<http://suffolkshow.co.uk/>
- 28-30 **Royal Bath & West Show**
www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show
- 29-31 **Gardening Scotland, Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh**
www.gardeningscotland.com
- 31 **Rutland Show**
www.rutlandcountyshow.com



Sponsored by

STIHL®



THREATS FROM DISRUPTORS? IT'S OLD HAT

Our history suggests we're well equipped to meet change

There is much talk these days about disruptors. It has become a buzzword topic at manufacturers' meetings to explain the onset of new technology. But you shouldn't get confused about the difference between innovation and disruption.

Innovation is seeking out better and more efficient ways to carrying out tasks, while disruptors tend to tear up the rule book and completely uproot and change the way we think and operate in various fields. There was much talk about disruptors at a recent Husqvarna dealer day, but in essence robotic technology is simply a different way of powering mowers, just as the invention of the Flymo was a different way of cutting grass.

The godfather of disruption for the turfcare industry was Edwin Budding, who completely usurped the use of the scythe to cut grass and overnight allowed sports such as cricket, tennis and golf to become mass-participation pastimes. His patent for a cylinder mower, first made by Ransomes in 1832, is highly recognisable today, although no longer popular for the mass market.

Likewise, in the 1890s a number of US engineers were working to replace the horse as the main power source on the farm. John Froelich is regarded as the first to come up with a design for a petrol-powered wheeled tractor. He opened up the Waterloo Gasoline Engine Company, but only made a few machines before his company folded. His ghost lives on though as the Waterloo factory has long been a key manufacturing plant for John Deere.

Neither Budding nor Froelich became household names, but there is little doubt that they were the influential disruptors of their time, allowing others to build on their rudimentary inventions through innovation as new technology came on stream.

But as the saying goes "the only constant is change". Those charged with presenting new technology to consumers have to be equally resourceful. Both the agriculture and turfcare markets fly below the radar in widespread recognition. Yet our industry is full of heritage dealerships with histories stretching back 100 years or more. Some were recognised at the Husqvarna day and other manufacturers can equally come with their dealer long-service medals.

Just think of the change that has happened in the last 30 years? Tim Berners Lee only invented the World Wide Web in 1989 – 25 years after the launch of the Flymo!

These long-standing dealers have adapted to an onslaught of disruption and changing technology. They have met the rise (and fall?) of the DIY superstores, they have reacted as electric products took over from petrol power, they have had to adapt their service provision to meet new technologies and adopt new sales and marketing strategies as the mobile phone took over from local newspaper advertising.

Each change has often brought cries of despair, to be followed by realisation that these were the new norms, so how do we adapt?

I well remember a dealer saying, "My bread-and-butter servicing has gone up the spout since some clown invented electronic ignition".

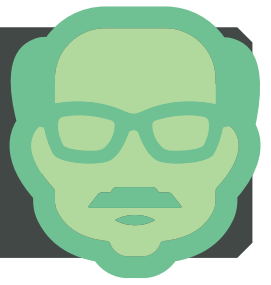
The same could be said about all the work that used to come in for regrinding and setting cylinders on mowers.

We are human and most of us don't like change, but we don't have an option.

The signs are though, that this traditional industry, this long-established industry, will find new ways of coping with change.

It has for over a century and will do in the future.

JIM GREEN



REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

ZEROS & ROBOTS ON THE UP

Developing product sectors generating cautious optimism – except perhaps in Honiton!

I was hoping to be able to progue my column this month as I fancied having a lovely, long sit down and a nice of cup of tea, without anyone challenging me on my opinions. But alas, the Editor put his foot down and made me return to my post.

Actually, it's quite an interesting time to be taking a look at the industry. It's probably not quite right to be talking about seeing the green shoots of recovery yet, but with this rollercoaster of a season which many seem to be talking about, the downturns have at least been followed by some upswings. Mostly.

Putting on my glass-half-full hat, signs might be there that the dealer industry does have reasons for some cautious optimism looking forward.

The news in this mag that AriensCo is starting to build zero-turn mowers for the domestic market is interesting, I think. Some bigwigs must believe there is potential for some serious money to be made with this bold development.

I do believe it's quite a big deal that the company has chosen this country, at this time and with this product to make such a significant move. It shows great confidence both in the manufacturing capabilities at Great Haseley, but also let's not forget, in the capabilities of the UK dealer network to sell these machines successfully.

Received opinion has traditionally suggested that zero-turns are not a product which does that well over here. The machines have arguably been thought of up until now as a peculiarly American tool. But AriensCo

must clearly believe that is changing. It's been said that more productive, less expensive products usually end up winning out in the marketplace. I guess all eyes will be on AriensCo to see if its punt pays off. If it does, it should be good news for its dealers – and presumably the zero-turn market in general in this country.

The other product sector which we're being told is only going from strength to strength is, of course, those little robotic chaps. When you hear suppliers talking about certain customers believing that their use is now a 'no brainer' you do start to accept that the sector is genuinely making inroads.

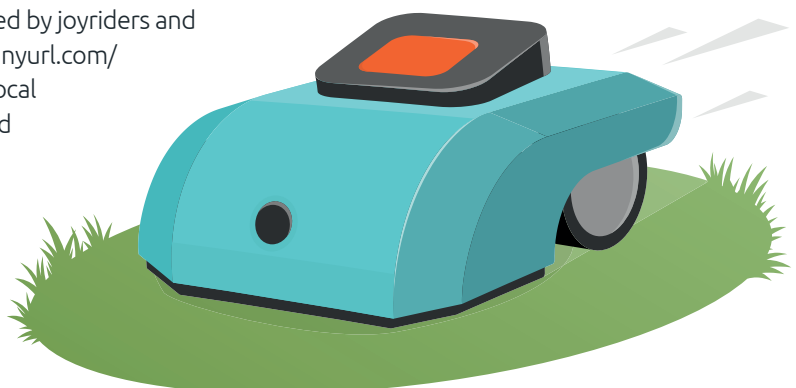
Fears which consumers may have initially had about the automated machines not doing the job as well as traditional cutting methods, or the units being targets for thieves and vandals, do appear to have been mostly assuaged.

On that latter point of ne'er-do-wells interfering with our robotic friends though, I do hope that not many of your customers read Devon's *Midweek Herald* paper on 4 September. Under the headline of "Wretched trial for 'robo-flop' mower in Honiton – which has been plagued by joyriders and interference" (tinyurl.com/yys9ydp0) the local paper recounted how terribly a trial of a robotic mower has gone for East

Devon District Council recently. Not mentioning the brand, a local resident is quoted saying that a "monkey with a pair of nail scissors" could have done a better job than this unfortunate machine.

What the local Honiton people have against robots I'm not sure, but according to this quoted resident the machine "wanders around the park like a drunk on a Saturday night". And the council itself confirmed to the paper that since the start of the trial "the mower has not yet been able to complete a whole night's cutting, due to interference". Oh dear me – not the publicity that the robotic manufacturers are wanting at all. To be fair though, there really haven't been many stories such as this since robots have started appearing in public areas. Perhaps the pictures in Honiton has been showing back-to-back *Terminator* marathons just lately, stirring up anti-robotic feelings?

Hopefully this can be put down as an anomaly, meaning the dealer network can indeed look forward to a year with zero-turns and robots as product sectors very much in the ascendancy.



PETROL LAWNMOWER RANGE

24 MODELS, EVERY PRICE POINT, EVERY SPECIFICATION, CHOICE OF ENGINES.

AL-KO

QUALITY FOR LIFE



HIGHLINE 42.7 P-A
42cm Cutting Width
AL-KO PRO 125 Engine
Push
SSP £229



HIGHLINE 46.7 SP
46cm Cutting Width
Briggs & Stratton 575 EX Engine
Wheel Drive
SSP £399



HIGHLINE 51.7 VS-H
51cm Cutting Width
Honda GCV160 Engine
Variable Speed Wheel Drive
SSP £569

COMPETITIVE PRICING FOR CONSUMERS, PROFITABLE PRICING FOR DEALERS

Call your local AL-KO Gardentech Area Sales Manager on 01963 828006 for more information.

**MORE POWER
MORE PERFORMANCE
MORE QUALITY**

MITOX®



SSP
From £159

SSP
From £159



SSP
From £99



SSP
From £99



From a small selection of handheld garden equipment, the range has over the last 10 years developed into a comprehensive collection of quality, durable and excellent value for money garden machinery which includes Chainsaws, Brushcutters, Blowers, Hedge Trimmers and more.

For more information about the MITOX range contact your area sales manager on 01963 828006



2 BRANCHES.
14 DEDICATED
STIHL EXPERTS.
10 METRES OF
STIHL DISPLAY.
2200 STIHL
PRODUCTS AVAILABLE.
18 TRAINING
COURSES.
1 SATISFIED DEALER.
STIHL LIFE.

Huw Owen, Director.
Owen ATVs & Garden Machinery Centre Ltd.
STIHL Dealer since 2016.

Retailers like Huw at Owen's ATV love being a STIHL Approved Dealer. And it's not hard to see why.

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.

Better still, we'll give you your own dedicated sales manager to help you develop your

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.

Put simply, when you become a dealer for the world's best garden equipment, including our legendary chainsaws, we think it's only right you get the world's best service too.

To find out more about becoming a STIHL Approved Dealer, visit www.becomeastihldealer.co.uk

STIHL®