

# SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

JAN / FEB 19

## INSIGHTS FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS

Service Dealer's conference looks ahead for the network - plus celebrates the Dealers Of The Year

### Silent City

Husqvarna believe the future is quiet

### Life begins at 40

STIHL dealers gather in Liverpool

### Show reports

What's new from SALTEX and EIMA



**DEALER Q&A WITH  
MIDLANDS GROUNDS  
MACHINERY**

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## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

**W**elcome to the first issue of *Service Dealer* for 2019. In this edition you'll be able join us in congratulating the winning dealers who scooped our 2018 Dealer of the Year honours, as well as read a full report on the *Service Dealer* Conference which took place back in November.

Held at the Oxford Belfry Hotel for the fourth time, the day was packed with insight and information that our dealer delegates could take away and use. One of the more popular sessions of the day proved to be a jointly-hosted presentation from Pete Harding of UK training company PFW Associates and Sara Hey of the American specialist dealer training firm, Bob Clements Inc.

Pete and Sara went into detail about how dealers might look closely at their various departments, to make sure they are always achieving the greatest profitability possible. It was fascinating to hear just how similar dealerships on either side of the Atlantic can be, but also the marked differences.

We're lucky that starting in this issue Sara Hey will be contributing a regular column to the magazine, offering a transatlantic perspective on advice for running a successful dealership. Also joining us anew is Briants Of Risborough, which will be taking over the *Diary Of A Season* feature for 2019. I want to thank Chris and Rebecca from Briants for agreeing to document the ups and downs of the coming season, as well as extending great thanks to Emyr Jenkins for writing so candidly throughout 2018.

As ever this year, we want to hear from you, our readers, so please always feel free to contribute to surveys, leave comments on the *Weekly Update* or drop me a line. It's your magazine.



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

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## DEALERS

# DEALER OF THE YEAR WINNERS RECOGNISED



## Honours presented at the Service Dealer ceremony

In a prestigious ceremony at the Oxford Belfry Hotel on 15th November, following the *Service Dealer* Conference, dealers from across the UK came together to honour their peers who had been selected as recipients of this year's Dealer of the Year titles.

The awards, organised by the team behind *Service Dealer* magazine, are now in their 15th year and recognise outstanding sales, service advice and support by dealers in the garden machinery, professional turfcare machinery, farm machinery, forestry equipment and ATV/quad industry.

The awards were judged by an expert panel who were

greatly aided in their unenviable task of separating the very high standard of entries by both nominations from supplying manufacturers and from customer feedback.

Steve Gibbs, Editor of *Service Dealer* magazine, said, "The extremely high quality of all our winning dealerships and individuals this year is clear for all to see. Customers across the nation have inundated us with incredible feedback regarding the levels of service they have received. This end-user experience is only possible when using your local, specialist machinery dealer."

The awards presented to dealerships and individuals on the night were:

## GARDEN MACHINERY DEALER OF THE YEAR

*Sponsored by Husqvarna. Presenting Award: Ken Brewster, UK Sales & Marketing Director*

### Winner: Gayways, Harrow, North London

Gayways, the garden machinery and service business based in Harrow, North London, won the 2018 Garden Machinery Dealer of the Year Award.

The judges said, "In a very competitive category, Gayways took over a struggling business 10 years ago and have completely turned around the fortunes of this dealership by engaging with the local community, utilising technology like WhatsApp, video and imagery."

High praise received from customers included, "Totally amazed by the level of service provided by this dealer. Very different retail experience from the mass chains. The showroom is really engaging with all sorts of machinery, product demos, workshop buzz – all very exciting."

Finalists: Briants Of Risborough,  
Princes Risborough; C&C Machinery, Preston



Amar and Rajiv Parmar with Ken Brewster plus Duncan Murray-Clarke, *Service Dealer* owner (l) and Charlie Baker, comedian host (r)

# FARM MACHINERY DEALER OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Kramp. Presenting Award: Andrew Herring, Account Manager

**Winner: RBM Agricultural, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire-based**

RBM Agricultural, the farm machinery and service business with five branches across Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, won the 2018 Farm Machinery Dealer of the Year Award.

The judges said, "This year's winning farm machinery dealer supplied a strong category entry with comprehensive customer feedback. They support training and education in the industry and have recently celebrated their 80th birthday."

Customer feedback for RBM included, "The advice on what size of equipment I needed to carry out my required tasks was exemplary. RBM



Peter Arrand, Bob Tindall and Steve Plewes receive their Award from Andrew Herring plus Duncan Murray-Clarke (l) and Charlie Baker (r)

then delivered the machine and carried out operator instruction, plus conducted a health & safety briefing for safe operation of the equipment. An outstanding team."

Finalists: RVW Pugh, Montgomery, Powys; Vincent Tractors, Fraddon, Cornwall

# FORESTRY EQUIPMENT DEALER OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by STIHL GB. Presenting Award: Robin Lennie, Managing Director

**Winner: Gustharts, Blagdon, Newcastle Upon Tyne**

Gustharts, a family-run forestry machinery and service business based in Blagdon, Newcastle Upon Tyne, won the 2018 Forestry Machinery Dealer of the Year Award.

The judges said, "This business started off, like so many, as a father and son team. Supported by excellent customer feedback, the founder of the dealership, Rob Gusthart, is a well-known character in the industry. His product knowledge is superb and the showroom and website are a shining example to all."

Praise from customers included, "I've shopped at Gustharts for over 10 years and have always received first-class service and product knowledge. They moved into a fabulous new showroom a few years back and have continued to grow from there. The only place I buy my forestry machinery from."

Finalists: Buxtons Ltd, Stafford, Penkrigde; Winchester Garden Machinery, Winchester



Rob Gusthart with Robin Lennie plus Duncan Murray-Clarke (l) and Charlie Baker (r)

# PROFESSIONAL TURFCARE DEALER OF THE YEAR

*Sponsored by Etesia. Presenting Award: Les Malin, Managing Director*

**Winner: RT Machinery, Nether Winchendon**

RT Machinery, a professional turfcare machinery and service business based in Nether Winchendon, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, won the 2018 Professional Turfcare Machinery Dealer of the Year Award.

The judges said, "This family business clearly specialises in machinery targeted at professional users with extensive groundcare knowledge and a strong website. In case we needed confirmation of the quality they offer, they have just been awarded the Royal Warrant."

Customers' comments in favour of RT Machinery included, "Good advice



Tom Bailey, Richard Taylor and Scott Reynolds with Les Malin plus Duncan Murray-Clarke (l) and Charlie Baker (r)

on machinery and helpful without being pushy. Quick back-up and support. They feel like an extension of my team. Having their back-up gives me confidence and ability to carry out my work knowing I have support when needed."

Finalists: Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd, Essex; Thomas Sherriff & Co Ltd, Borders

# ATV/QUAD DEALER OF THE YEAR

*Sponsored by Honda Power Equipment. Presenting award Steve Morris, Sales Manager*

**Winner: Llyn ATVs And Garden Machinery, Pwllheli, Gwynedd**

Llyn ATVs And Garden Machinery, the ATV and garden machinery sales and service business based in Pwllheli, Gwynedd, won the 2018 ATV/Quad Dealer of the Year Award.

The judges said, "Llyn ATVs And Garden Machinery has been selling ATVs in North Wales for over 25 years and now the family business is expanding with a second branch in Derby. The dealership received many, many great customer feedback comments."

Customer feedback for the company included, "Very knowledgeable and friendly staff. I've always experienced excellent, quick service at Llyn ATVs – plus they have a very well stocked, new showroom."

Finalists: Stratton ATVs, Perth; Ark ATVs, Minehead



Huw Owen with Steve Morris plus Duncan Murray-Clarke (l) and Charlie Baker (r)

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# STAR OF THE DEALERSHIP

*Sponsored by Catalyst Computer Systems. Presenting Award: Mike Cameron, System Sales Manager*

**Winner: Jess Parks, Parts Manager at AF Wiltshire, Dunsfold, Surrey**

Jess Parks, Parts Manager at Dunsfold, Surrey-based farm and garden machinery dealership AF Wiltshire, won the 2018 Star Of The Dealership Award.

Laura Brown, Managing Director of AF Wiltshire, said of Jess, "In the two and a half years Jess has been with us, she has completely thrown herself into the job and become a fantastic all-rounder within the dealership. Never phased, she happily gets involved in all aspects of the business and has become a driving force within Wiltshires. She's an absolute star in our business!"

The judges said, "Our winner this



Jess Parks with Mike Cameron plus Duncan Murray-Clarke (l) and Charlie Baker (r)

year has shown rapid progression in her relatively short time at a highly respected dealership. She has quickly

learnt the complex world of parts ordering and has become an integral part of the business."

# OVERALL DEALER OF THE YEAR

*Sponsored by Kramp. Presenting Award: Des Boyd, Sales Director*

**Winner: Gayways**

Returning to the ceremony this year once again was an honour for Overall Dealer of the Year, which was presented to Gayways.

The judging panel considered all the entries and finalists on a range of qualities including: quality of the premises; customer testimonials; online presence; and supplier endorsements.

In announcing this 'winner of winners', Gayways scored very highly and stood out to the panel as a most worthy champion.

The judges said, "Gayways received a huge amount of positive customer feedback forms in support of their business. In addition to this their online reviews are very strong with a 4.7 Google rating from 262 reviews."



Amar and Rajiv Parmar with Des Boyd and Duncan Murray-Clarke (l) and Charlie Baker (r) celebrating their Overall Dealer of the Year win

# APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

*Sponsored by Kubota UK. Presenting Award: Martin Tyler, Field Service Manager*

**Winner: William Dart, Hayes Garden Machinery & ATVs**

William Dart, an apprentice at Hayes Garden Machinery & ATVs based in South Moulton, Devon, won the 2018 Apprentice of the Year Award.

Dealer Principal at Hayes Garden Machinery & ATVs, James Hayes, said of William, "Will joined us when he was studying agricultural engineering at Bicton College aged 17. He got on extremely well from the outset and proved his worth very early on. He was clearly so keen and eager to learn."



**William Dart and Martin Tyler plus Duncan Murray-Clarke (l) and Charlie Baker (r)**

The judges said, "William possesses qualities that are crucial for our industry. A very strong and honest application to all his roles, including

his participation in the Honda Apprenticeship Programme, have demonstrated some real determination and initiative."

# OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD

*Sponsored and presented by Chris and Trish Biddle*

**Winner: Patrick Vives, recently retired MD of Etesia UK**

The *Service Dealer* Outstanding Contribution Award was presented to Patrick Vives who recently retired as MD of Etesia UK.

Chris Biddle said, "Patrick Vives has a strong connection with the timeline of *Service Dealer* having launched the UK side to the Etesia business at around the time I started the magazine. Since then he has been instrumental in building a successful UK franchise in parallel with the history of our magazine.

"In 1988, the Wolf company developed a machine for tough conditions and decided on a separate brand, Etesia, entrusting its launch and development to Patrick. Although strong in France and Germany, Wolf had a lower profile in the UK where Patrick saw great potential.

"Initially, the Wolf family thought



**Chris and Trish Biddle with Patrick Vives plus Duncan Murray-Clarke (l) and Charlie Baker (r)**

they could handle everything from France, but Patrick along with Tania Wolf saw it differently. They knew that UK grass conditions and operator requirements were unique to this country – and they needed to have a base here in order to succeed.

"When he first came to the UK in 1990, Patrick only had a rudimentary grasp of English. In the years following, he was an integral

part of the UK operation, conversing easily with dealers and customers at shows and demo days.

"I am sure Patrick is proud of all that the Etesia UK dealers have achieved and the impact they have made on the turfcare market in the UK, and I know that they recognise the commitment, the quiet authority and the sense of direction that he has provided over the past nearly 30 years."

## DEALERS

# DEALER CHANGES FOR DEERE

## *In North-West England and South-West Scotland*

John Deere Limited has announced changes to its agricultural dealer organisation in North-West England and South-West Scotland.

Johnston Tractors Ltd at Carlisle, Appleby and Dumfries no longer holds the John Deere franchise and has been replaced by the Cornthwaite Group.

According to a post on its Facebook page, Johnston Tractors Ltd has taken on the Valtra franchise, introducing it at the Borderway AgriExpo 2018 in November.

Cornthwaite Group has secured new premises in Dumfries on the Heathhall Industrial Estate, which are currently under construction and will open in the near future. In the meantime it has an interim facility on the same estate, to provide ongoing parts and service support.

The group has also secured an outlet just off junction 43 of the M6 at Rosehill Industrial Estate, Carlisle, to provide continuing support to John Deere customers in the region while it constructs new bespoke premises in the area.

The Cornthwaite dealership group also includes established outlets at Kirkby Lonsdale in Cumbria, Bispham Green in Lancashire and Nantwich in Cheshire, and employs more than 100 staff.

“This change is part of John Deere’s ongoing Dealer of Tomorrow strategy, which is designed to strengthen the European dealer network and provide long-term stability for both dealers and customers,” said John Deere Limited Division Sales Manager Chris Meacock.

Cornthwaite Agricultural Dealer Principal Stuart Cornthwaite added, “We are very pleased to have been asked by John Deere to expand our business to cover this new trading area. We focus on and specialise in all John Deere agricultural product lines, including tractors, combines, greencrop equipment, sprayers, Gator utility vehicles and AMS FarmSight precision farming systems, as well as support programmes such as PowerGard maintenance and protection.

“We invest heavily in customer support, employing more than 40 service technicians in the group, and pride ourselves on providing industry-leading parts support. We are committed to delivering the best possible machinery sales and service support to existing and new customers alike.”

In addition to John Deere equipment, the group’s other franchises include Bailey Trailers, Maschio, Kramer, Redrock, Standen, Vaderstad and Spearhead.



Cornthwaite Agricultural's premises near Kendal

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## DEALERS

# GREENMECH REARRANGES DEALER COVER

## *For Devon and Somerset*

GreenMech has announced a rearrangement of its dealer cover in Devon and Somerset.

As of 14th November 2018, Andrew Symons Ltd has been handing sales and support for Devon, with dedicated GreenMech specialists operating out of three depots.

Stocking a wide variety of equipment for agricultural, construction, gardening and groundcare applications, family-run Andrew Symons Ltd has over 30 years of experience offering sales and support for a number of leading brands. The groundcare team, headed up by Simon Newsome at the Crediton depot, alongside Lee Hatter at South Molton and Dave Daniel at Holsworthy, will become GreenMech product specialists. Their knowledge, backed up by a fully trained service department, will see the GreenMech product reach a range of customers including holiday parks, golf courses, municipal areas and much more.



Commenting on their appointment, Dealer Principle Andrew Symons said, "We are extremely proud to be appointed the new GreenMech dealer for the Devon area. We feel GreenMech offers a superb range of products that complement our portfolio and will suit both professional and domestic users."

Completing the rearrangement, current GreenMech dealer New Forest Farm Machinery will be extending its territory to cover Somerset. Having picked up the GreenMech franchise in May 2017 for the Hampshire and Dorset areas, it will now offer sales and support for customers in Somerset, operating out of its new dealerpoint in Sparkford, Wincanton.

## INDUSTRY

# £4M EXPANSION FOR FLEMING AGRI PRODUCTS

## *In Northern Ireland*

Fleming Agri Products in Newbuildings, near the City of Derry in Northern Ireland, a manufacturer of agricultural and groundcare machinery, has announced an investment of £4m and 34 new jobs as it targets new markets including the US.

The family firm makes equipment for farming and grounds maintenance including landrollers, muck spreaders and hay makers, which it sells mainly to machinery dealers.

The investment comes after the company's annual report said an upturn in the farming industry helped lead to an increase of nearly 21% in sales for 2017, from £8.6m to £10.4m. Pre-tax profits also rose from £1.1m to £1.3m.

As well as heavy equipment, the company has developed a range of merchandise such as bodywarmers, coast and fleeces, which it sells on e-commerce website [www.farm-wardrobe.com](http://www.farm-wardrobe.com).

Now Chairman and Founder George Fleming has

announced a £4m spend to further its growth plans and boost its sales in external markets.

Economic development agency Invest NI has offered £220,000 of support towards the new roles, which include production operatives, sales executives and managers.

The 34 staff will be in place by 2020, and 15 of the jobs have been filled.



## DEALERS

# EXTENDED DEALER SUPPORT FOR KUHN

### *Via newly formed Hunt Forest Group*

Following the recent merger of R. Hunt Ltd with KUHN dealer, New Forest Farm Machinery, KUHN UK has appointed the newly-created Hunt Forest Group as an approved supplier of its full range of agricultural and amenity equipment.

The appointment extends the manufacturer's coverage in the South and South-West of England: in addition to the existing KUHN stockists at New Forest Farm Machinery's depots at Sparkford in Somerset and Ringwood in Hampshire, its products will also be available from the R. Hunt depots at Chilbolton and North Warnborough in Hampshire, Tilshead in Wiltshire and Rookley, Isle of Wight.

"The amalgamation of R. Hunt and New Forest Farm Machinery to form Hunt Forest Group has been met with a huge amount of positivity from our customers in Berkshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Somerset, Dorset and Isle of Wight," explains Tim Hunt, Managing Director of the new business.

"Hunt Forest Group specialises in a range of key sectors

including agricultural machinery, professional turf machinery, construction equipment, and homeowner machinery. Our affiliation with KUHN enables us to extend this offering and gives our customers access to a much broader range of agricultural and amenity equipment.

"We look forward to extending KUHN's technical sales advice, aftersales support and specialist parts expertise to our growing customer base."

Sian Pritchard, Managing Director of KUHN UK said of Hunt Forest Group, "Their expertise and professional approach to sales and aftersales support in the farming and groundcare sectors perfectly complements and strengthens our existing network of approved distributors in southern England.

"Their appointment demonstrates our commitment to both sectors within the region and we look forward to a long and successful partnership with the staff at all six of their depots."



# SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY  
SINCE 1988

CONFERENCE + AWARDS

2018

## REFLECTING ON THE PAST, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

*The fourth Service Dealer conference marked 30 years since the magazine's first incarnation was founded. Speakers and attendees reflected on three decades of ag, turf and outdoor power equipment progress, and debated how the next three may pan out, reports Martin Rickatson*

**N**o-one could say *Service Dealer* isn't rooted in its agricultural, turf and outdoor power equipment subject. Just over 50 years ago, founder Chris Biddle was working as a demonstrator for Ford's tractor operations. From 1965 until 1988 he worked for agricultural dealer A Brewer and Co, ultimately becoming the four-branch business's Managing Director. And when the firm was then bought-out, he used his industry experience to start his own venture, providing news for lawn and garden equipment dealers by, in 1988, founding *Garden Machinery Retailer*, which ultimately broadened its coverage to include turf, outdoor power and agricultural equipment and become *Service Dealer*.

It was with this in mind that the third annual *Service Dealer* conference took the title *Insights For Our Industry > 2048: Helping You Prosper Over The Next 30 Years*. An introductory discussion between Chris and current Owner/Publisher Duncan Murray-Clarke set the scene with some reminiscences regarding changes in the machinery dealer sector during recent decades, and a few thoughts about the qualities that set dealers apart from ordinary retailers, including pragmatism and the ability to react quicker than large national firms.

### THOUGHTS ON A CHANGING WORLD

Ed Gillespie, a consultant on the sustainable development of businesses and industries, kicked off the speaker



Ed Gillespie

sessions by pointing out that humankind tends to be poor at working out what the future will look like.

“It’s easy to think things will be simply an extension of what they are today, but throughout history that’s led to some famously bad predictions,” he said.

“Look carefully and it’s possible to see where we’re likely to be heading, but it’s how we handle and manage the transition that will determine our success, in whatever field. We are a curious, intelligent, creative species, and our reactions when we bump against the limits we find are key to our survival and development. If we want to change the world, we first have to imagine a better one, perhaps using more than GDP to measure quality of life. Production and output are mentioned when talk turns to feeding a growing population, but we don’t actually have a food production issue – first we need to address the fact that half the world’s produce is wasted either before reaching the marketplace or after reaching the home.

“In many areas of life it often takes us a while to find solutions to solve problems we’ve created. The tin opener was invented 38 years after the tin can. But predicting and planning isn’t just about solutions to problems – it’s also about perceiving how things may progress. The area of mown grass may fall as gardening ideas change, but there is increasing focus on creating more verdant city environments with greater green space.

“That may require adaptation. When Edwin Budding invented the lawnmower in 1830, he probably upset a lot of goat graziers, but he helped create the lawn and turf industry, with their other developments and jobs. The advent of technology such as robot mowers may mean some garden owners take themselves further

from natural pleasures of gardens and lawns. In the ag business there’s the prospect of light, mobile machines with lesser environmental impact replacing tractors. And in ag, groundcare and forestry the potential uses of drone technology continue to develop in areas such as precision treatment. Widespread adoption of some of these game-changing technologies may seem distant, but the industry needs to be prepared. And while machines can disconnect us from nature and from the problems we face, freeing up staff from the seat may have other benefits by putting them back closer to the natural environment they are working with.”

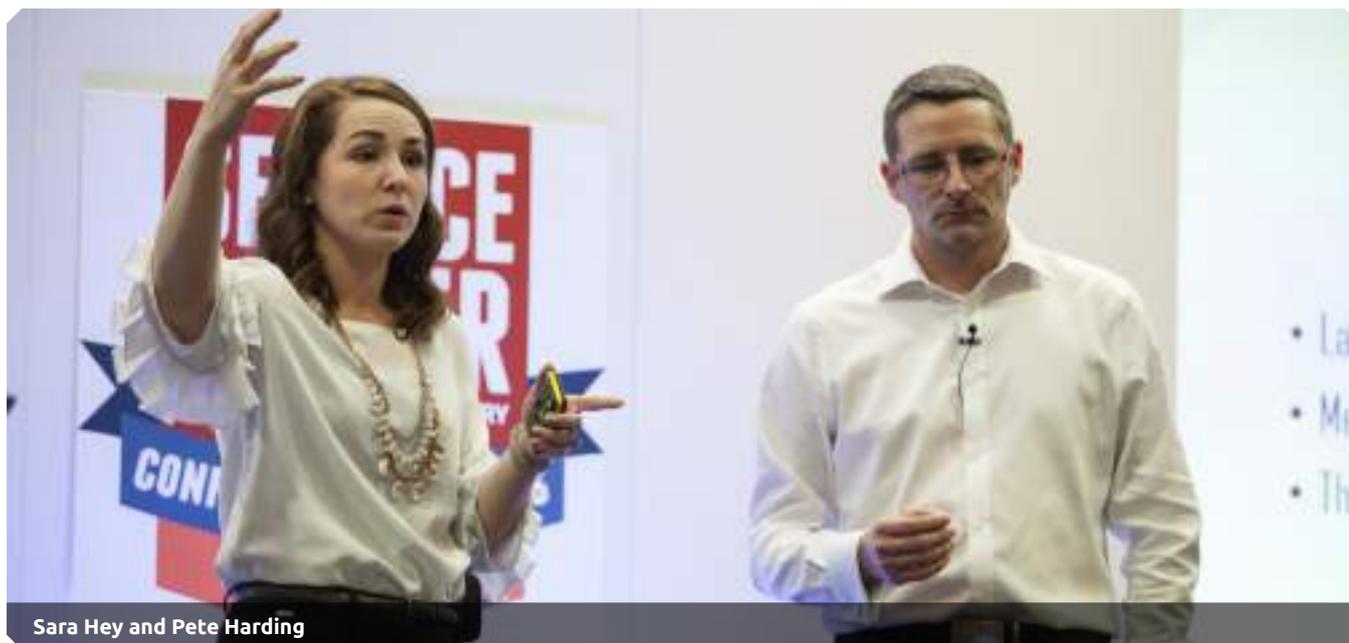
He urged the industry to also be alert to trends such as machine sharing, something that, in agriculture, is already becoming evident.

“Platform capitalism – the ‘I need, you have’ principle – is slowly developing in wider society. It’s calculated that 90% of cars sit idle for 90% of the time. Car club schemes are becoming more popular and transport as a service is being reimagined. Machine investments in your sector may take a similar path, based on different transactional systems built on efficiency and trust.

“Similarly, we already have the resources required to produce more food, but perhaps just need to share it in a more efficient way. Farming as a service may be, in the future, not necessarily provided by big firms, but by co-operative groups.”

## PLANNING FOR SUCCESSION

Sara Hey, who works with her father’s dealer sales and management training organisation, Bob Clements International, focused on the subject of succession in



family dealership businesses, and transferring a legacy, whether by handing a business on or selling it.

“Engage your children early and often in conversations about the business, to help pique their interest, and don’t just talk around the dinner table about the bad things that happen in a day’s work,” she suggested.

“Remind them why you or your family started or joined the business, and as they grow older find some ‘entry-level’ things for them to do to start joining in. Talk openly and often about what your succession plan is.”

She stressed the importance of ensuring everyone in a family dealership knows their roles and responsibilities, with the owner needing to cast the vision of where the company is going and the strategy of how it will get there, while helping staff develop to help the business do so. She also suggested removing family familiarity from within businesses when working as a team with employees, ensuring conversations are conducted and disagreements addressed in the right manner, and the adoption of an employee handbook containing business guidelines that apply to everyone.

“If selling to others is the way to pass on your business, carefully consider its value. A common measure is twice its earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation. Many owners put all their time, money and energy into their business and therefore the only plan for retirement funding is a business sale. But consider that if someone wants to buy your business they are likely to want good management and processes as part of the deal so it continues to function successfully. Consider the

staff management necessary to achieve this, and how the transfer will be overseen. Valuation and emotion need to be separated, so intermediary advice is essential. Non-family members who can speak frankly with you are extremely valuable in business development.

“Whether you’re passing on your company or selling it, consider how you can effectively transfer its legacy and values. Succession planning is an integral part of two bigger conversations: business planning and training planning. A unified plan should address these interlinked subjects.

“As part of the training plan, performance reviews with two-way feedback provide the ability to communicate both ways about how things are going, what needs development and any miscommunication or differences. Treat family and employees equally.”

She also urged dealership owners to be aware of management flaws before handing over a business, particularly in an inheritance situation.

“Established customer relationships won’t automatically transfer easily, while employees may be more loyal to the people who started the dealership rather than the business itself. Ensure there is a handover plan in place: if there isn’t this can be one of the most challenging aspects of transferring a business.”

## WHAT A FARMER WANTS FROM A DEALERSHIP

The third main speaker of the day was Oxfordshire arable producer James Price, who gave his take on what a farmer looks for from a dealer. He noted that, while he dealt with a number of dealerships, not all were local to him.

“While the salesman makes the sale, service and parts back-up sustain the dealer relationship, and I will happily go further afield on the basis of good support,” he said.

“But that can take many forms, from sales advice to service, and phone support to knowledgeable parts staff. The latter in particular are the most common customer contact going forward, and can make or break future deals. And while I want knowledgeable service staff, I also want engineers who aren’t afraid to, where possible, repair and make good rather than replace at higher cost.

“When seeking a deal on a new machine, as well as these standards of support I want the specification that fits my needs, and finance options to match my cashflow.”

Apart from good adverts and websites with clear photos, responding to enquiries and following up leads was the best way to secure customer interest, he believed.

“But I find it often doesn’t happen. I recently not just called but visited three dealers looking at a used tractor, expressing full interest in one. I don’t want to be



James Price



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pestered, but none came back to me.

“When it comes to doing a deal, make things clear and transparent. I appreciate dealers need to make money. That transparency should extend to things like service engineer time, and focus when on warranty jobs versus regular work.”

## WHAT A GREEN SERVICES COMPANY WANTS FROM A DEALERSHIP

Angus Lindsay, Group Head of Assets and Fleet Management at 90-depot national grounds management company Idverde, which invests an average £2.8m/year in machinery, echoed earlier speakers when he suggested that smarter working is the key to maintaining productivity and efficiency.

“When looking for new equipment from a dealer our list of criteria includes safety, versatility, reliability, training, dealer and manufacturer support, before cost.

“With the serious skills shortage and small margins in our sector we need dealers who can supply and support products offering greater productivity, which make the people operating them more productive too.

“So what I need from a dealership is good communication and openness to discussing ideas. It’s not always about the initial cost of the equipment. Demonstrations must be done for the right reasons – don’t simply expect an order at the end.

“After-sales support must live up to the ‘front of house’ – avoid conflicting franchises you can’t support, and concentrate on doing well those you can. Selling the machine is the easy part, and good service and parts

support is key to further sales. We should all be working towards the same goals in an effort to make our industry better for all involved.”

## THE EFFECTS OF URBANISATION

Ed Gillespie returned to the stage to address the development of urbanisation and the effects this may have on the industry and the wider world, pointing out that 1.5m people are added to the global urban population every week, and by 2030 some 60% of the world’s population could be city-dwellers.

“The expected increase in urban land cover in the first three decades of the 21st century will be greater than urban expansion in all of human history. That’s likely to further the human disconnection from nature.

“City development is changing, though, with greater regard to transport efficiency and green spaces. In the UK, 56.7% of the country is farmland, while 34.9% is ‘natural’ land and only 5.9% is actually built on. Even London is 47% green space, so urbanisation is not going to concrete you out of business.”

## DEALERSHIP EFFICIENCY

Sara Hey also spoke again, this time comparing notes with Pete Harding, formerly involved with service and aftersales at AGCO and now running his own PFW Associates dealership consultancy.

She suggested that healthy dealer businesses were averaging around 60% of gross margin from wholegoods, a quarter from parts and 15% from service, while Mr Harding proffered respective comparable UK figures of 70%, one-fifth and 10%, both agreeing these would vary slightly depending on the proportion or inclusion of ag, professional turf or homeowner franchises.

“There’s a big disparity in service labour rates across the UK, and I often find no great calculations have gone into figures,” noted Mr Harding.

“The average hour’s labour costs a dealer at least £25/hr, yet 25% of that isn’t recovered.”

Sara Hey suggested most US dealers were charging out at \$80–120/hr (£62–94/hr), and setting labour rates based on what it cost to hire a good ‘B grade’ technician.

“To attract them, the benchmark is local car dealers, rather than ag ones, although ag rates are around 10% lower.

“Target business retention of 20% of each billable hour. Ensure technicians are at least 85% efficient, and are precise with hour recording to the quarter hour. Match this against payroll – business management software soon pays for itself here.

“Remember, you’re buying time from your technicians



Angus Lindsay

through their salaries and then selling it. A good service co-ordinator will help service technicians to do their jobs properly.”

Figures suggest UK dealers employ roughly 3.75 technicians to one employee who does not directly perform sellable work, said Mr Harding.

“More than 5.5 and the service co-ordinator/manager’s plates will start to wobble, while somewhere from three to five is comfortable.”

He calculated the national ag branch average for parts sales to be £423k, while Sara Hey said many large US dealerships worked on the basis that one person could handle \$700k (£548k) of ag or \$400k (£313k) of turf/ outdoor power equipment parts business annually.

“Educating your staff in cross- and up-selling can help to achieve more, by selling a solution to the problem and not just replacing a part. The ‘other people who bought this also bought this’ internet idea can also help here.”

Turning to inventory management, Sara Hey suggested

ensuring all staff, particularly service technicians, understand its importance, and making its administration a role for retiring family members or new ones coming in to the business. She then focused on sales improvement.

“In the most successful businesses, 20% of turnover comes from conquest sales. Staff shouldn’t wait for the phone to ring. Twenty contacts a day should generate \$400 (£315)/week basic income.

“When trying to seal a deal, negotiate with parts and service packages, which tend to cost around 50% of their value, rather than price discounts, which cost 100%.”

Wrapping up, Mr Harding urged dealers to keep tabs on work in progress, which he suggested should span no more than 30 days.

“If jobs are on the books for longer, take the service manager away from work to sort them. And check staff timesheets are being completed accurately – the same colour pen often indicates hasty, one-time completion rather than regular filling.”

## WHAT THE DEALERS SAID

*Thoughts from dealers who attended the Service Dealer Conference*



“I thought the Conference was very well balanced, with a thought-provoking split of speakers. The session with Sara Hey and Pete Harding really hit home with some genuinely beneficial content which we can use in our dealership. I also appreciated hearing from the customers, especially from farmer, James Price. It was a fascinating insight, as do we as dealers really know what goes on inside the mind of our modern customers? It proved to me how the younger business customer can be much fickler and how we cannot rely on the so-called ‘traditional customer’ any more.”

**Richard Taylor - Managing Director, RT Machinery**



“I’ve attended every Service Dealer conference and awards day since they began, along with a small group of others from our business, and each time have come away with something we can put into practice to help push our company forward.

It’s an excellent event not just for learning from speakers, but for sharing ideas with others from across our industry – and outside of it too.”

**Phil Gregg - Group Operations Manager, Ripon Farm Services**



“The conference to us was definitely a step up from last year. The speakers I think were correctly picked. The breakout session from Sara was the highlight for us.

The other main takeaway point I would say is that it is great for all dealers to congregate at an occasion where there is no sole manufacturer controlling the day and everyone can freely chat about the industry and current trends that they are experiencing. It’s also held at the correct time of year where most dealers’ seasons have now completed, giving them time for reflection on what was in 2018, a very different year.”

**Pete McArthur - Director, Strathbogie Forest & Garden Limited**

# THE MGM GRAND

*Having worked extensively in the industry, Dave Tullett started up his own dealership, Midland Grounds Machinery (MGM) in 2015. Here he talks to Laurence Gale Msc, MBPR, about the challenging conditions faced last season and looking ahead by embracing new technologies*

**M**idland Grounds Machinery specialises in providing sales, service and support to the groundscape industry from its premises in Knowle, Solihull.

Headed by Dave Tullett, who has over 27 years machinery dealership experience, the company prides itself on offering an extensive selection of products for sale or hire, as well as sourcing machinery to match its customers' budgets, backed by an exceptional level of customer care.

I met up with Dave and the team at the end of November to discuss how they run their dealership and how 2018 had panned out for them.



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

**Dave Tullett:** I previously worked for Parks & Grounds in Bideford on Avon before starting up Midland Grounds Machinery in 2015. I felt it was time to move on and take the opportunity to start up a family-run business, thus taking on my two sons Ben and Josh. The business is run from a small shop premises on Knowle High Street with the repair and workshop situated four miles away at a local farm.

I employ several members of staff. My son Josh helps me with the professional groundscape sales side of the business while my other son Ben is in charge of domestic sales and spare parts. I have also enlisted the help of an old colleague of mine, Miles Atkinson, who used to work in the car sales industry, to oversee all the servicing and spare part reporting using a combination of PC software packages Zoho and Excalibur to help record all business transactions and sales.

I find these software packages are essential tools to help keep the communication channels and business transactions between us and our clients up-to-date and accurate.

I also employ one delivery driver, Rob Swift, who collects and delivers mowers, whilst also selling relevant sundries to customers. As well as this we also have two full-time mechanics, Paul and Dean Wren, employed to help with PDIs, repairs, servicing and maintenance of machines under warranty.

I'm currently looking to appoint another mechanic as soon as possible to help cope with our current workload and develop the scope of the workshops. This week alone we have over 100 mowers scheduled in for repairs and servicing.

I also employ Dave Kirby part-time who works for us three days a week to help Ben manage the parts and domestic sales side of

# SELLING MACHINERY PRODUCTS WITHOUT APPROPRIATE TRAINING AND AFTERSALES WARRANTIES AND SERVICE IS WRONG IN MY OPINION

the business. I'm personally really pleased with the team at MGM and how well we treat our customers. I believe the key is to build on those personal relationships and ensure our customers are given the right information and advice on our products and services.

I have a great, dedicated team who in three short years have helped grow the business to serve a broad spectrum of customers in our West Midlands area.

In the short time we've been operating, we've also been recognised by Etesia, who awarded us with a much coveted Partner in Excellence Award during their 2016 Awards ceremony.

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

**DT:** As company Owner-Director I currently oversee the complete running of the business and spend time on working with our sales team in the shop on both the domestic and professional sales.

Our shop is open six days a week, generally from 8.30am – 5pm and 8.30am – 3pm on Saturdays during the summer months. Once the clocks go back, we reduce our

winter opening times to 9am – 4.30pm weekdays and 9am – 1.30pm on Saturdays.

We get a lot of foot traffic via the shop and carry a wide range of stock in the showrooms coupled with a good selection of sundries, such as Aspen Fuel, strimmer cord and PPE clothing and spares.

## **SD: What do you stock in the store?**

**DT:** Products range from ride-on mowers and compact tractors to chainsaws, log splitters, mulchers and shredders. We're an authorised dealer for many major brand names, including Mountfield, Brill, Atco, Bosch, Pellenc, Scag, Dormak, Etesia, Scag, Dennis, Sisis, Charterhouse, Blec, Weibang, AL-KO, Mitox, Stiga, Dr Products, Elite, TS Industries, AS Motors, plus more upon request!

We also hire out a wide range of professional mowers and machinery.

## **SD: Who is your customer base?**



Front counter staff Miles, Dave and Ben

**DT:** A mixture of domestic home gardens really, plus commercial customers such as professional and amateur sports clubs including cricket, bowls, football and rugby; a lot of local golf clubs, local authorities, schools and private estates.

We like to pride ourselves on offering a diverse range of machinery and equipment to suit a wide and varying clientele. Our trading area is potentially very lucrative, with a large population of wealthy home and land owners, plus businesses and large estates that pride themselves on having a neat and tidy landscape.

We see it as our duty to ensure these customers are given the right advice and support to ensure they can meet their aspirations and maintain their facilities in the most cost-effective manner.

**SD: How did you find the 2018 season went for you?**

**DT:** I would say 2018 was hard work, not only with the weather but also the uncertainty of Brexit. Add into this the threat from internet-only retailers supported by manufacturers and conditions in 2018 were most definitely challenging.

Like most dealers, the weather dictated our sales. Initially our spring sales looked promising, but once the hot weather kicked in, demand for new and used machinery stalled.

Even late at the end of the drought period, customers were slow to react. Just like fellow dealers, we must move on, make the best of a poor season and hope demand picks up.

I'd say Brexit is still affecting sales to a degree. I'm sure many are awaiting the outcome of whatever happens to settle nerves and promote some future sales.

**SD: What do you do to market and promote your business?**

**DT:** We task ourselves with an annual marketing plan that sees us taking out some local magazine advertising plus some direct mailing to our customer base. We also have an interactive website and we carry out some direct calling on key customers.

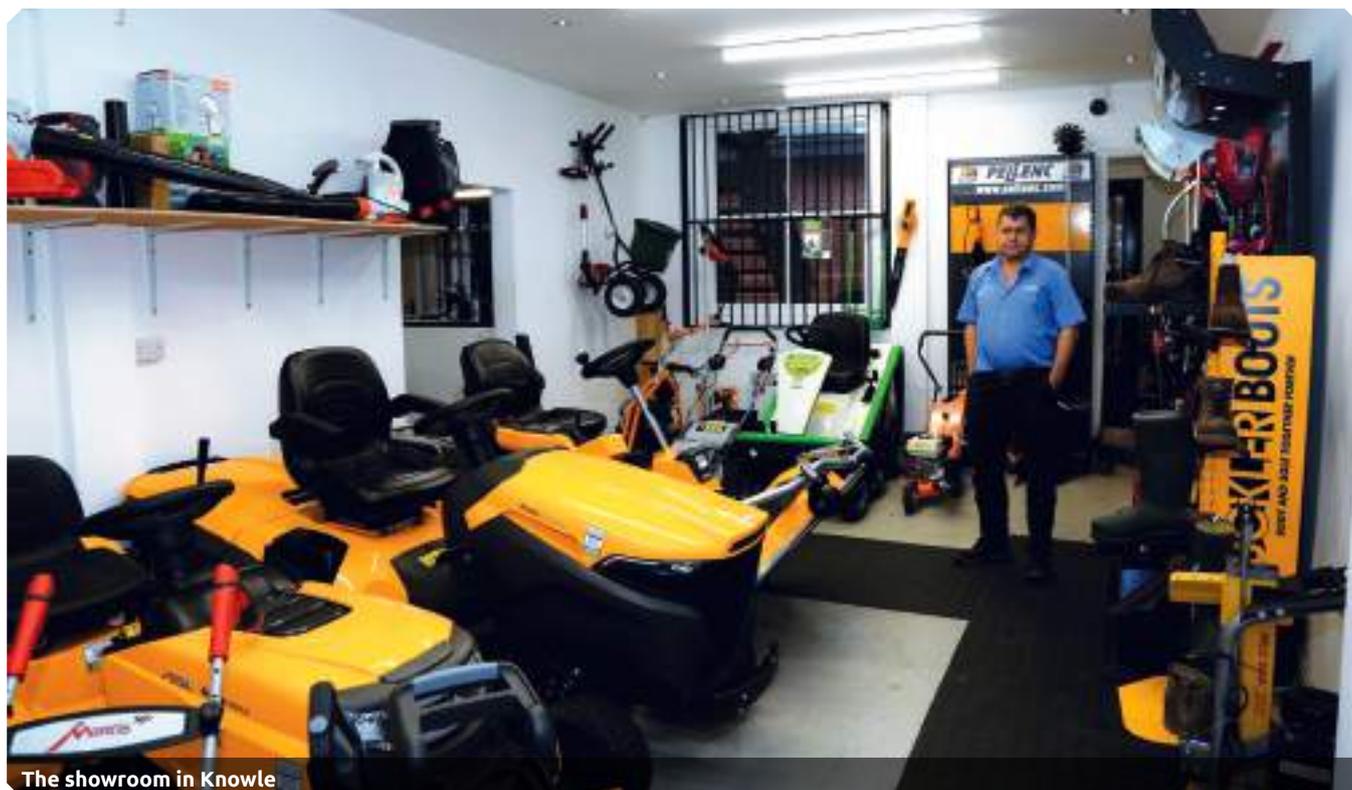
I'm personally not so keen on using social media platforms for advertising our business, as I believe it only takes one idiot to ruin your reputation.

We also during the spring and summer months arrange several seminars at local clubs and venues to attract potential customers to see our machinery in situ.

**SD: Are you happy to demo machines for customers?**

**DT:** Yes, we're more than happy to demonstrate machinery to our customers. The key is to build up a good working relationship with the customer and find out their specific requirements and then help them make the right choices of which machines to demonstrate to secure a sale.

**SD: Do you see value in attending trade shows and exhibitions?**



The showroom in Knowle

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**DT:** I would say we try to attend shows when time permits. However, our primary time is better spent on direct calling and keeping in touch with our customers.

I personally think our shows have become a bit bland. Quite often I find the end user already knows what he wants, and what he can afford, so he just comes to me first.

I'm usually kept up to speed with industry changes by our manufacturers and fellow associates. Quite often we are too busy to attend both the IOG and BIGGA shows as they take place at a very busy time for us, with our end of season servicing and meetings with manufacturers to secure next year's product offering.

**SD: What training do your staff undertake to help them in their roles?**

**DT:** Throughout the year our staff attend several training days organised by manufactures, coupled with a number of product update and training days.

I myself will be doing some machinery assessor training to keep me up-to-date and able to ensure our customers get the appropriate information on the machinery and products we're selling them.

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

**DT:** The three key ones for me are battery, robotics and artificial turf products.

Battery technology is driving our industry at a fast pace. We need to keep up with it and start selling more cordless products. Most if not all manufactures are now embracing these technologies and bringing out a greater choice of this equipment.

Robotic mowers are also now becoming more popular,

with greater numbers of customers showing an interest in these products. And it's not only domestic users who are keen – we're now seeing a number of professional end users utilising robotic mowers to save labour time and to be more eco-friendly.

Our sales of robotic mowers are growing steadily. We are not in the same league as our European neighbours yet, but no doubt the pendulum will swing as more and more of these robots come to market.

However, one of our biggest growth areas has actually been in the sale of artificial turf maintenance products. Equipment such as brushes and hoovers for our range of Charterhouse artificial specialist tools have been gaining in popularity.

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

**DT:** I feel this is one-sided to benefit the manufacturer with the discount structures etc. All dealers should be on a level playing field. I feel all products should be correctly registered and then a commission paid back to the suppliers, whether it's Amazon or whoever.

Like most dealers, we experience a lot of hurt from this practice. Selling machinery products without appropriate training and aftersales warranties and service is wrong in my opinion.

There is a need for all dealers to come together and voice their concerns collectively to our manufacturers to get some definitive outcome on this poor practice. With this in mind we really need to get the message out there that we are all in this together and as long as we sell our services as much as we do our products, then there is still a future for us all in this industry outside of the 'box moving' practices that are currently causing so much hardship to many of our bricks and mortar dealerships trying to make an honest living.

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

**DT:** As we are a young company, we are still growing and have still to find our level.

I'm quite optimistic going forward. We need to keep with the trends and look after our customer base by offering them that little bit more, keeping their expectations high. If we achieve this they will have no need to go elsewhere, as the experience with MGM should be second-to-none in all departments.

We also must embrace new technologies and bring new products to market. Above all we shall continue to demonstrate the benefits of what we offer in ensuring the customer gets value for money and an exemplary aftersales service.

**SD: Thank you.**



Family ties; pictured l-r Josh, Dave and Ben



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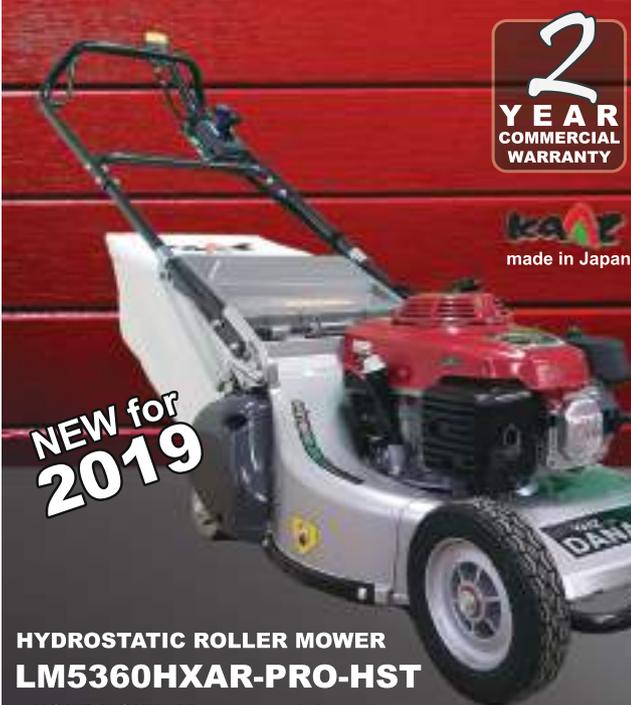
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# SICK OF NOISE?

*Husqvarna certainly was at the fourth edition of its Silent City Conference. Editor Steve Gibbs reports from Hamburg*

**B**illed as “an ongoing project about the future of sustainable landscaping”, Husqvarna’s fourth annual Silent City event, which this time took place in Hamburg, continued the discussion which the previous editions had raised – namely how can the maintenance of parks and open green spaces be maintained in greener, healthier and more ecologically sound ways in the future? This time around particular emphasis was placed on the effects of noise from green space management.

The agenda was set by Sascha Menges, President of Husqvarna division, who said the company was “solidifying our commitment to the environment, but also to health”. He said this wasn’t just an intent, but rather this commitment has been “validated and calibrated” with external agencies, with very specific carbon reduction targets set by the manufacturer.

Sascha explained that, for Husqvarna, the most significant impact it has as a company, in terms of both carbon footprint and noise emissions, is not through the manufacturing process or

component delivery, it’s through customers’ use of its machines. In order to mitigate this, the company is continually working on technological solutions.

“Robotics and automated systems are a fantastic opportunity to reduce emissions and become environmentally friendly, but also healthy,” said Sascha. “Also, battery products, an emission-free solution, are much better from a noise perspective but also from a carbon footprint perspective. Digital solutions can also reduce the carbon footprint of the products in use.”

Sascha concluded that the message had to be strongly conveyed and shared that there can be much smarter ways we think about green maintenance.

## *An unhealthy noise*

One of the great aspects of the Silent City conferences is that the audiences there, who are predominately made up of custodians of green spaces from across Europe and the wider world, are not simply sold to for the duration. Thought-provoking expert speakers are invited to give their take on how they believe the future of professional landscaping in public places should be shaped. Hence this time around we heard from representatives from the WWF, from an organisation that quantifies the value of trees, called Treeconomics, from a landscape architect, and academics.

One speaker who provided quite a powerful message and one which, for me, summed up what the entire conference was about, was Dr Jamie Banks from a non-profit organisation based



in the US called Quiet Communities. Dr Banks explained that the organisation she represented has as its mission to “transition landscape maintenance to low noise, zero emissions practices with positive solutions to protect the health of workers, children, the public and the environment”.

A fact which she discussed, which frankly I had no idea about, is that quite simply “noise makes you sick”.

Rather than just hearing loss, prolonged exposure to noise from say, a petrol-powered leaf blower, said Dr Banks, can lead to various health problems, most significantly cardiovascular disease.

Dr Banks believed that so far, in the US at least, legislation against noise levels from outdoor powered equipment had been largely ineffectual, mostly because the rules are not enforced stringently enough and are therefore widely flouted. She argued that with technological developments in battery-powered machines manufacturers were in a wonderful position with a real opportunity to improve the health of users.

With this in mind, the conference allowed Husqvarna the opportunity to launch several new products which have at the forefront of their development this desire to keep noise and emissions at a minimum.

## Quiet launches

Launched with an impressive practical demonstration of its abilities was a new all-wheel drive robotic mower, the Automower® 535 AWD. The unit is designed for professional use and manages 70% inclines and rough terrain, with zero direct emissions. It operates at 62dB and manages lawn sizes of up to 3,500 square metres. The machine is also equipped with a remote object detection feature, Ultrasonic, which means it reduces its speed as soon as it senses a nearby object. Wheel brushes and a rubber bumper have also been added to the body.

Conference delegates were bussed out to Baaken Hafen Park in Hamburg to watch the new machine at work on a very steep man-made grassed slope. The unit’s all-wheel drive system and articulated steering coped with the conditions admirably.

Sascha Menges described the mower as “a game changer for professional lawn care”. He said it enabled landscaping teams to work safer and smarter, while contributing to city health by reducing noise and carbon emission to minimum levels. The unit will be available in spring 2019.

Also demoed in the park was a new backpack battery blower, the 550iBTX. Described by the company as one of the first professional battery backpack blowers in the industry, it has close to zero vibrations due to an embedded fan system.

Previewed also in Hamburg was a new Carbon Footprint Calculator addition to Fleet Services, the company’s



data-driven software system. Via machine sensors or built-in connectivity, the new calculator works out the carbon footprint from a landscaper’s entire machinery fleet and gives them the tools to analyse trends over time and identify improvement areas. The carbon footprint is broken down into application area, product category, engine type and location.

Finally, a vision of the future was presented with the delegates viewing Husqvarna’s design concept known as ZERO. Described as an “autonomous and sustainable green space solution”, the concept combines robotic mowers with solar power, artificial intelligence, induction charging, virtual boundaries, and multiple sensors.

The idea of the system is that during the daytime, the solar-powered charging hub generates electricity from sunshine through photovoltaic cells. When low on energy, the robotic mowers automatically return to the charging hub, where they can be sealed in by sliding doors and recharged via induction charging plates. The LED light tubes on top of the solar hub provide by-passers with information about energy levels as well as creating an atmospheric glow during the night.

Rajinder Mehra, Design Director at Husqvarna brand said, “To reduce cities’ carbon footprint, we have to explore new and untested ideas. Design concepts like Husqvarna concept ZERO, is a great catalyst that energises us to develop new people and planet-friendly solutions.”

Silent City proved once again to be an incredibly thought-provoking and fascinating two days for all who attended. Husqvarna should be applauded for organising a conference which is so much more than simply a vehicle to sell machinery.

With its programme of speakers, it has genuine intent to ignite a dialogue regarding how the future of green space management will need to evolve.

I’m sure the decision-makers who were in attendance, who have responsibility for the upkeep of our parks, will have left with some serious food-for-thought running through their minds, which will most likely influence their machinery purchasing decisions in the years to come.

# FIRST INDOORS LAMMA SET FOR NEC

*Organisers promise a new experience for visitors – but several big players are missing*

**A** new era for LAMMA begins this month (January 2019) when the show opens its doors at the NEC Birmingham for the first time.

The organisers say the move will deliver a new experience for visitors, with all stands being fully under cover for the first time in its history.

LAMMA '19, which continues to offer free entry and car parking, will cover all sectors of the farming industry under one roof.

Organisers say the 11 halls at the NEC are set to host more than 700 exhibitors – however, big names including, John Deere, CLAAS, Kubota and New Holland have chosen not to exhibit.

The organisers addressed this, saying in a statement, "The event will stay true to its roots, attracting not just large machinery manufacturers, but also smaller agricultural engineering and machinery firms from across the UK.

"Between them they will be showcasing the latest tractors,

combines, drills and cultivation kit, some of it on view for the first time, as well as a wide range of products and services, and every type of tool imaginable."

Also at the show the LAMMA Innovation Awards will be relaunched. This competition champions agricultural machinery, equipment and services innovations, with the medal winners announced in December. A new guided LAMMA Innovation Trail will enable visitors to find out more about the gold and silver medal innovations that will be showcased on exhibitors' stands.

To ensure visitors can track down exhibitors and areas of key interest and make the best use of their time, organiser AgriBriefing has released the LAMMA '19 floorplan – which can be viewed at [www.lammashow.com/event-layout](http://www.lammashow.com/event-layout)

Elisabeth Mork-Eidem, Group Events Director at AgriBriefing, which owns LAMMA, said, "We're excited by the opportunities that the NEC creates for the LAMMA show. The new venue provides a professional,

comfortable indoor venue that is appropriate for this key event in the agricultural calendar.

"Both visitors and exhibitors' feedback has been incredibly supportive, with a real sense of excitement regarding this important development for the UK agricultural industry. We're thrilled that such a large number of exhibitors are making the move with us and continue to view British farmers as their key market.

"It remains the case that no other show in the UK has such a diverse mix of cutting-edge innovation, which covers all farming sectors, new machinery and equipment," Ms Mork-Eidem added.

"Above all, the show will retain its informal, friendly atmosphere, which has helped make it such a draw with farmers from across the UK and beyond. We will ensure that it continues to build on its enviable reputation in the years to come and continue to claim its place as the leading UK agricultural show."

## Event info

**Dates:** Tuesday 8th January, 8.30am - 5.30pm  
Wednesday 9th January, 8.30am - 4.30pm

**Location:** Birmingham NEC

**Register for Free at:** [www.lammashow.com](http://www.lammashow.com)



# DEALER ACQUISITIONS TO A SUPPLIER GOING DIRECT

2012-2015

Moving into the modern era of *Service Dealer* magazine, our continuing trawl through the archives brings us to the mid-2010s.

We start with a couple of stories about dealerships

coming together to form new companies, and end with a supplier choosing to distribute their products directly to the GB market.

## 2012

### TUCKWELL BUYS BUCKLE BUSINESS

Two long-established dealers that operated across the Eastern Counties announced that they were to become one company in March 2012.

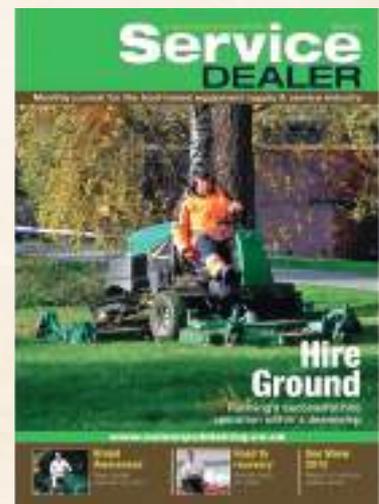
P Tuckwell Ltd bought the trading area and assets of J E Buckle Ltd who operated branches at Maulden in Bedfordshire and Cromer, in Hertfordshire.

Together with Tuckwell's existing branches at Worlingworth, Ardleigh, Dunmow, Ryleigh and Sudbury, the expanded company was to consist of seven branches and a likely turnover

of more than £40 million.

The intention was that Tuckwell and Buckle branches would operate as before with staff and franchises remaining in place, and the Buckle name would continue to be used with Managing Director Gary Buckle becoming a member of the Tuckwell board.

Speaking to *Service Dealer*, James Tuckwell said, "This move puts the company into a very strong position, and we are delighted to be working with Gary and his team."



### DEERE DEALERS MERGE

John Deere dealers Chris Tallis Farm Machinery Limited and Alexander & Duncan Limited joined forces on 1st May 2012 to create one new agriculture and turf business, Tallis Amos Group Limited.

Following the merger, both dealerships continued to trade under their existing names at their respective branches.

The new company was owned by the Tallis and Amos families, with Managing Director Ben Tallis based at the Evesham head office and

Sales Director Simon Amos based at Leominster running the company as partners.

"Both companies have a rich and long heritage and a strong commitment to retaining a family ethos, backed up by high quality customer service," said Ben Tallis, when the merger was announced.

"This is a good fit for both dealerships, and by coming together in this way we'll be better placed to meet the challenges that lie ahead."



2013

## KAWASAKI EXITS HAND-HELD MARKET

In spring 2013 Kawasaki announced that it would exit the handheld power products business category at the end of that year.

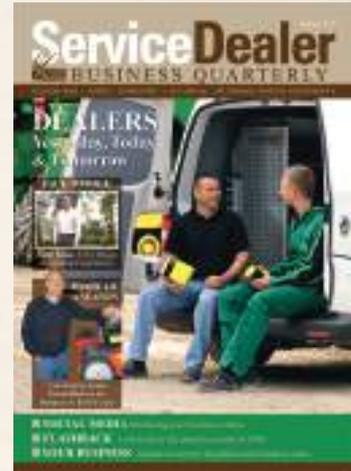
Jack Ford, Senior Product Manager at Kawasaki's European Engine & Power Products Division told *Service Dealer*, "To succeed in today's highly competitive marketplace, a business must adapt to the ever-changing and challenging market conditions.

"For Kawasaki, in the branded power products business, we have had the added challenge of the strong Japanese yen which

has compounded the problems of the global business downturn.

In response to these significant challenges we have needed to carry out a serious review of our business activities to maximise our sales efforts.

"For these reasons we have decided to gradually phase out the production and supply of our Kawasaki branded power products range, allowing us to concentrate all our efforts on our core business: the sales and service of our two and four-stroke petrol engine ranges."



## HYUNDAI POWER EQUIPMENT LAUNCHES IN UK

September 2013's IOG Saltex Show marked the formal UK launch of Hyundai Power Equipment, which encompassed a growing portfolio of power products distributed exclusively in the UK and Ireland by Genpower, based at Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire.

Newly-appointed as Head of Sales and Marketing for Hyundai Power Equipment was Mark Osborne, whose initial task was to extend Genpower's network of Hyundai dealers.

"The move into the wider garden,

estate and professional grounds maintenance sector is an exciting and important step for Genpower and for Hyundai," commented Managing Director, Roland Llewellyn. "We're delighted to have secured the knowledge, experience and commitment of Mark Osborne to help us move our expansion plans forward.

"Mark's understanding of the industry is second to none and this will be of immense help in building a sound, profitable and growing customer base."



# 2014

## AL-KO GOES SOLO

AL-KO acquired the SOLO range of garden machinery, forestry machinery and sprayers in early 2014.

As part of an asset deal, AL-KO acquired the complete SOLO range as well as the associated trademark rights.

"The quality of SOLO products perfectly matches our philosophy," said AL-KO board member Stefan Kober, "and now with the integration of SOLO, we will be strengthening our specialist dealer network."

It was announced that from mid-2014, the gardening and forestry equipment from SOLO would be

produced at the AL-KO production plant at Obdach in Austria. SOLO would continue with the development of sprayers and cut-off saws from its facility at Sindelfingen.

In the UK, the SOLO range had been distributed by Lely UK since 2009. It had already been announced that Handy Distribution would take on the UK distribution of SOLO sprayers. In a letter to UK dealers David Jackman of Lely UK confirmed the transfer of the sprayer product group to Handys but added that Lely would continue to support the range until further notice.



## RUTH BAILEY TO HEAD AEA

The Agricultural Engineers Association appointed Ruth Bailey as its new Director General and Chief Executive officer in September 2014. She succeeded Roger Lane-Nott, who retired after eight years in the post.

Ruth Bailey was the first woman to head up the AEA, representing more than 150 companies involved in the manufacture and import of farm and outdoor power equipment.

Ruth said, "I'm absolutely delighted and thrilled to be coming back to my roots.

"Britain's farming and land-based

engineering industry is one of the most technically innovative and productive industries in the world, working with and adapting to the application of diverse conditions with environmental and productivity ratios in fine balance.

"Succeeding Roger Lane-Nott will be a very tough act to follow.

"My focus will be on building on Roger's legacy and taking the Association forward from its current position of strength, promoting its core interests in the relevant sectors to a wider audience and continuing the advance of the professional aspect of the industry,



encouraging skills development, young technicians and engineers and the expansion of professional qualifications."



2015

## GODFREYS APPOINTS DAVID STURGES AS CEO

John Deere turf equipment dealer Godfreys announced that David Sturges had joined Godfreys (Sevenoaks) Ltd as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in June 2015.

David was responsible for the delivery of the company's strategic plan and would oversee all operational matters. Peter Bateman assumed the role of Executive Chairman and was to actively support David in his new role.

Following two acquisitions of other John Deere turf dealerships over recent years, Godfreys said it

was looking to integrate and further optimise the business.

David Sturges said, "I'm delighted to have the opportunity to join Godfreys. The company stands out as one of the most professional dealer organisations for outdoor power and professional turf care equipment in the UK. Expansion over the last few years has seen the business grow into one of the most significant dealer organisations in the industry.

"As the company continues to look for new opportunities for growth and development, I look forward to



working with the team at Godfreys at this exciting time."

## GARDENCARE TO GO DIRECT IN GB

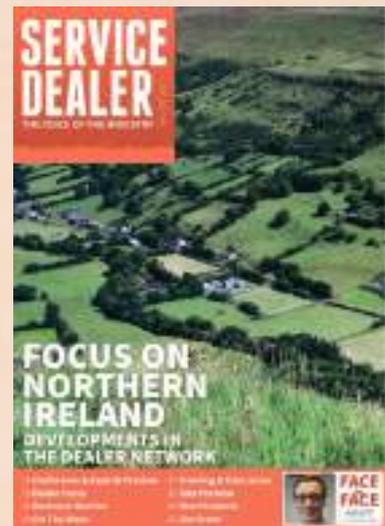
The Gardencare range from Belfast-based Cyril Johnston was to be distributed directly to dealers in England, Scotland and Wales from 1st October 2015.

Cyril Johnston said that its four-year-old distribution arrangement with Henton & Chattell would end on 30th September 2015, after which Gardencare dealers in Great Britain would be managed directly by Cyril Johnston.

At the same time, Cyril Johnston confirmed that the five-year customer warranty on machines that currently existed in the Irish

market will extend to the whole of the British market.

Announcing the change, Cyril Johnston Managing Director David Beck said, "We have made this move in response to a demand from dealers for a direct relationship with key machinery suppliers, and it comes at a time when we are expanding our business across the whole of the British market, and means that dealers across Britain will benefit from the same best-in-class service and support enjoyed by dealers in other markets."



# REVAMPED BTME TO BE 'DRASTICALLY TRANSFORMED'

## Completely new layout for Harrogate commercial turfcare show

**D**uring BTME 2018 last January, the event's hosts, BIGGA (British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association), promised that the annual exhibition would be drastically transformed for 2019.

With the event upon us this month (January 2019), the organisers have revealed that the show has expanded by 25% and that it will feature a host of new conferences, forums, exhibition platforms and more opportunities than ever to network and gain knowledge and experience.

Utilising a new hall layout at the Harrogate Convention Centre, BTME will feature 4,800sqm of exhibition space and will include Golf Course Construction Live!, a golf simulator competition, a new product and innovation area and a TED Talk-style theatre, where short presentations will be delivered by some of the industry's leading names.

As always, Continue to Learn will kick off the week, with the education programme evolving to better suit the needs of BIGGA's greenkeeper members. Taking place from Sunday 20th to Wednesday 23rd January, the association's Learning & Development team has put together its largest-ever package of education with more than 250 hours of education.

Last year, 50% of Continue to Learn workshops and seminars sold out within five weeks of registration opening, so BIGGA members have been encouraged to

get their places booked to avoid missing out.

BTME 2019 itself begins on Tuesday 22nd January with the Welcome Celebration taking place on the opening evening. Housed in a new location in the HCC's main auditorium, television presenter Naga Munchetty will once again host the event, which will see a number of BIGGA members recognised for their achievements throughout the year, including the announcement of the winners of the annual BIGGA Awards, revamped to coincide with the new, expanded BTME offering.

Throughout the show itself, which runs from Tuesday 22nd until Thursday 24th January, there has been an increased offering for visitors, including more social space for networking and a larger BIGGA stand featuring a Wellness Area where skin cancer screening, hearing screening and mental health advice will all take place.

In terms of machinery exhibitors of interest to specialist dealers, Husqvarna, John Deere, Kubota, Jacobsen and Toro will all be returning, while making its first appearance at a Harrogate show for quite a number of years this year will be STIHL.

BIGGA Chief Executive Officer Jim Croxton said, "The expansion of BTME arose due to the exhibition's incredible popularity among our exhibitors, of which in 2018 there were more than 140, and we're due to expand on that number this year. In providing more space, we were presented with an incredible opportunity to create a greatly improved visitor experience, further enhancing BTME's position as the premier turf management exhibition in Europe.

"We anticipate BTME 2019 being our most popular event ever. By registering early for BTME, you can ensure you skip to the front of the line and increase your BTME experience to the limit, ensuring you won't miss a single part of what promises to be a historic event for the greenkeeping industry."



### Event info

**Dates:** Tuesday 22nd January, 9am - 5pm  
 Wednesday 23rd January, 9am - 5pm  
 Thursday 24th January, 9am - 2.30pm

**Location:** Harrogate International Centre

**Register for free at:** [www.btme.org.uk](http://www.btme.org.uk)

# BUSINESS MONITOR

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## BUSINESS PROSPECTS 2019

### Robust response from dealers following difficult 2018

**A**s you might imagine, there was a robust response from many dealers to our Business Prospects 2019 survey which we ran at the end of November 2018.

Following what was clearly a difficult season for many, when asked how they felt about their business prospects in 2019, the majority of dealers who responded described themselves as 'confident' (53%). That compared with only 7% who said they were not confident.

When responding to how they felt the various aspects of their business would fare in 2019 compared with 2018, most believed that they would not see a downturn.

In terms of machinery sales those who responded were

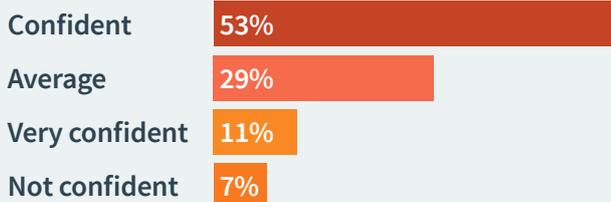
split between those who felt they would see an increase this year and those who thought it would stay the same (42% each).

Both for service and for parts & accessories, most dealers who answered the survey felt these would remain constant in 2019.

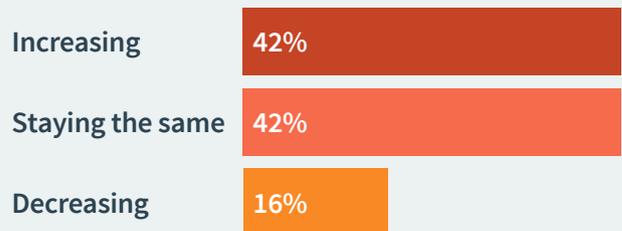
In terms of taking more people on in their dealerships, be it new employees or new apprentices, there were not many indications that this would be particularly likely in 2019.

Finally, the big three threats to business, according to those who took our survey, are felt to be the weather, erosion of margins and Brexit.

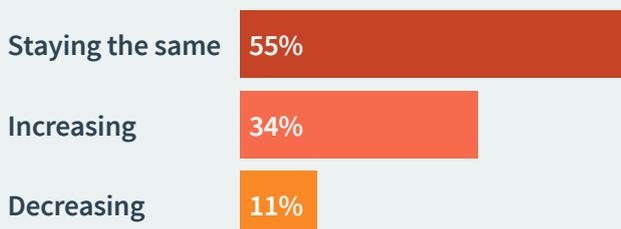
#### In general, how confident for your business do you feel going into 2019?



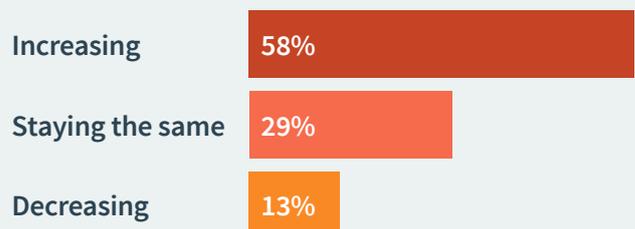
#### Do you see your machinery sales for 2019 . . .



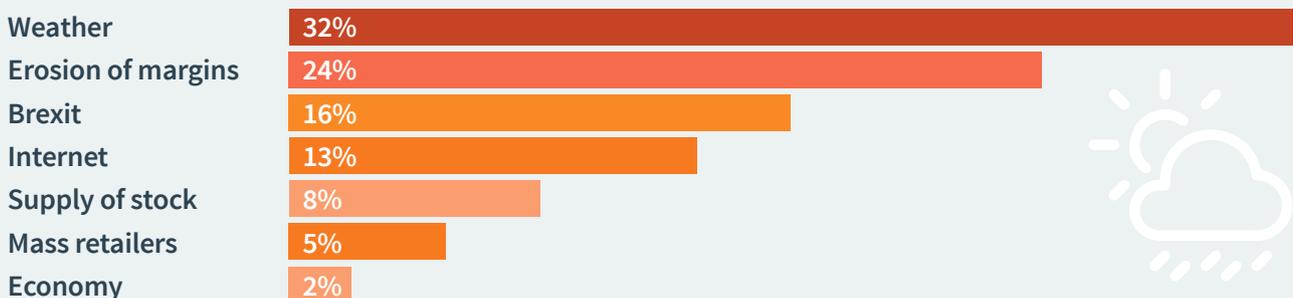
#### Do you see your parts & accessories sales for 2019



#### Do you see your service work for 2019 . . .



#### What do you anticipate as being the biggest challenges to your business in 2019?



# YOUR SAY

## We asked you what was giving you cause for concern, or making you feel optimistic going into 2019 . . .

- One has to hope that 2019 is better than 2018 but it is starting to feel like there is a lack of confidence in the economy and consumers are tightening their belts. Hopefully this won't run into next season. A big concern is the ever-increasing demand from manufacturers for greater and greater volume, which is driving prices down. The only people who benefit from lower prices are the consumers, and the dealers are losing margin. The continued shortage of skilled staff is also an ongoing concern. It is getting harder and harder to get decent staff, which is partly down to lack of margin holding wages lower than we'd like to pay to attract good staff.
- We won't have any answers until this whole Brexit muddle is resolved, as this will override anything else we do. If the outcome is bad, and the value of the pound falls, everything gets more expensive, and buyers shy away. This leaves retailers with too much stock which generally can only be shifted (weather permitting!) by yet more discounting. If buyers stopped to think about where their purchase might be serviced or repaired it would help, but they don't, do they?
- We're feeling reasonably optimistic as we are focussing more on robotics and battery product lines where margins are still retainable to a degree. Other machine lines are depreciating quickly with customers prepared to carry out maintenance work themselves.
- After a slow 2018 we are feeling slightly apprehensive going into 2019 mainly because of competition on sales with the internet and the big DIY stores with all machinery, including ride-on mowers (in some cases delivered on pallets for customers to assemble) being offered at low costs. We have seen people come into our store, look at the price and disappear, never to be seen again. We have even had customers walk in to measure a ride-on mower then disappear even when we have asked them kindly if they would like a price on the machine. The other thing that fuels this fire is the manufacturers offering the cheaper-built and cheaper-price competition mowers to the ones we sell. We can buy these but only usually on a bulk load of pallets of eight – but not all dealers have the luxury of buying this amount of stock on top of the machines that we would like to sell which are better quality.
- We just cannot compete any more with huge discounts given online. The manufacturers are increasing pressure to sell more stock from the showroom, yet they're promoting their own websites and direct selling – plus putting machines in mainstream shed stores. Also, they expect us to back up machines sold on the internet by our competition for no money.
- We are worried by the press and the opponents of Brexit talking down the economy when we do leave the EU.

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# LIFE BEGINS AT 40!

*That was the positive message out of STIHL GB's anniversary conference. Editor Steve Gibbs reports from Liverpool*

**H**undreds of STIHL dealers from all across the UK made their way to the Exhibition Centre in Liverpool's Kings Dock for the company's 40th Anniversary Conference and Awards Dinner back in October 2018.

The event kicked off with a welcome from STIHL GB Managing Director **Robin Lennie**.

Robin began by looking back – honouring those individuals who initially set up STIHL GB in 1978. He said that while he couldn't speak on their behalf, he did know what Peter Baker would've said, were he there today: "We're here to sell bloody chainsaws!".

Robin then delegated the introduction responsibilities to **Wayne Stone**, the company's National Sales Manager. Wayne thanked the dealers for travelling from all corners of the UK to be in Liverpool. He spoke about the challenges which everyone was facing – principally among them consumer awareness and visibility of the dealer network. He said that with their increased product offering, every home in the UK now had the potential to afford a STIHL product. "We at STIHL will be working with you," said Wayne, "to offer you our support every step of the way.

"Change is coming quicker than ever," he continued, stressing the importance of dealers making their business as visible as possible and suggesting that opening hours might be an area which dealers may want to consider looking at.

Next up to address the gathered dealers was Head of Marketing, **Simon Hewitt**, with a presentation entitled Marketing for the Future. Simon spoke about how 20 years ago the professional customer was pretty much STIHL's prime focus. Now, however, he said the company

sees the domestic consumer as its biggest growth opportunity, while still, of course, catering for the professionals. However, marketing to these domestic buyers is a very different challenge. "The average consumer doesn't know they need a servicing dealer," Simon told the delegates. "But this is a challenge we shall face together."

Simon went on to detail the myriad ways the company is now choosing to market its range of products to its ever-widening customer base. He talked about how customers are "quality seekers" who want to put their trust and emotional connection into premium brands such as STIHL. As such, sophisticated marketing takes place across many fronts including printed media (both trade and consumer), outdoor billboards, at shows and events, on the company's website and digital platforms, plus ongoing sponsorship of Leicester Tigers and visibility during the Six Nations Championships.

Simon promised more marketing to come from the company to help drive customers through dealers' doors. New initiatives included clever, targeted marketing through smartphones which push out notifications to users who have shown they are beginning their purchasing journey, as well as teasing a brand-new TV advertising campaign that is due to launch in 2019.

Following Simon was **Thomas Elsner** who is the Head of Global Product Management and Services at STIHL Group with his talk entitled Changing World – New Opportunities.

Thomas talked about what's to come from the company, which will, of course, be turning entirely orange from 2019 with the phasing out of the Viking product lines. He said that while there will be many new petrol products to come, a particular focus will be on battery



STIHL GB's National Sales Manager Wayne Stone, addressed the conference



Prizes were awarded to the company's top performing dealers

technology. "Our battery technology is advancing fast," he said. "Within the next five years we will more than double our battery range."

As well as physical tools, Thomas also previewed the new STIHL Connected digital fleet monitoring system, plus a new digital workshop organisational tool.

The daytime conference session was concluded with a keynote speech delivered by global business speaker **Hamish Taylor**. Hamish is an award-winning CEO and now an inspirational speaker/broadcaster whose career has taken him from international consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble, consultancy firm Price Waterhouse and British Airways to become CEO of Eurostar, and then Sainsbury's Bank – appropriately for STIHL's conference, all before he was 40!

In all cases he left behind a record of significant business growth triggered by a willingness to challenge the normal way of doing things, and this is what he was encouraging dealers to think about doing in their businesses.

Hamish's principal message was that for all companies, putting the customer at the centre of their business was key.

He talked about what he saw as four key leadership challenges, which if implemented could lead to real turnaround in a company. He said dealers could think about changing the way they viewed customers, they could change everyone's job description, they could change where they look for ideas and they could change how they engage with customers. He stressed that if changes are indeed made within the business, don't just implement them – get the message out there that you have.

Robin Lennie closed the daytime session, with everyone returning to the conference centre in the evening for the Awards ceremony. Robin welcomed the dealers back,

telling them that they are the shop window for STIHL and he wanted to thank them for all their hard work.

"Savour the past, enjoy the present and look forward to the future," Robin told the crowd.

The audience was then privileged to hear from a member of the family whose company bears their name, **Dr Nikolas Stihl**. Dr Stihl said his family very much believe in Robin Lennie, his committed team and their UK dealers. "I would like to thank you, our STIHL employees and our dealers on behalf of my family and our executive board," said Dr Stihl.

Despite his regret for Brexit, he stressed that STIHL will not be reducing its commitment to staff and dealers in the UK – in fact the company is investing heavily in a new headquarters for the UK next year.

He went on to say, "Smart battery products are the future for our customers – without disregarding our gasoline products."

The business end of the evening of honouring STIHL dealers then commenced, hosted by comedian John Moloney.

Prizes were handed out to dealers in the following categories:

**Best Business Growth:** Farol

**Best Local Marketing:** Mole Valley Farmers

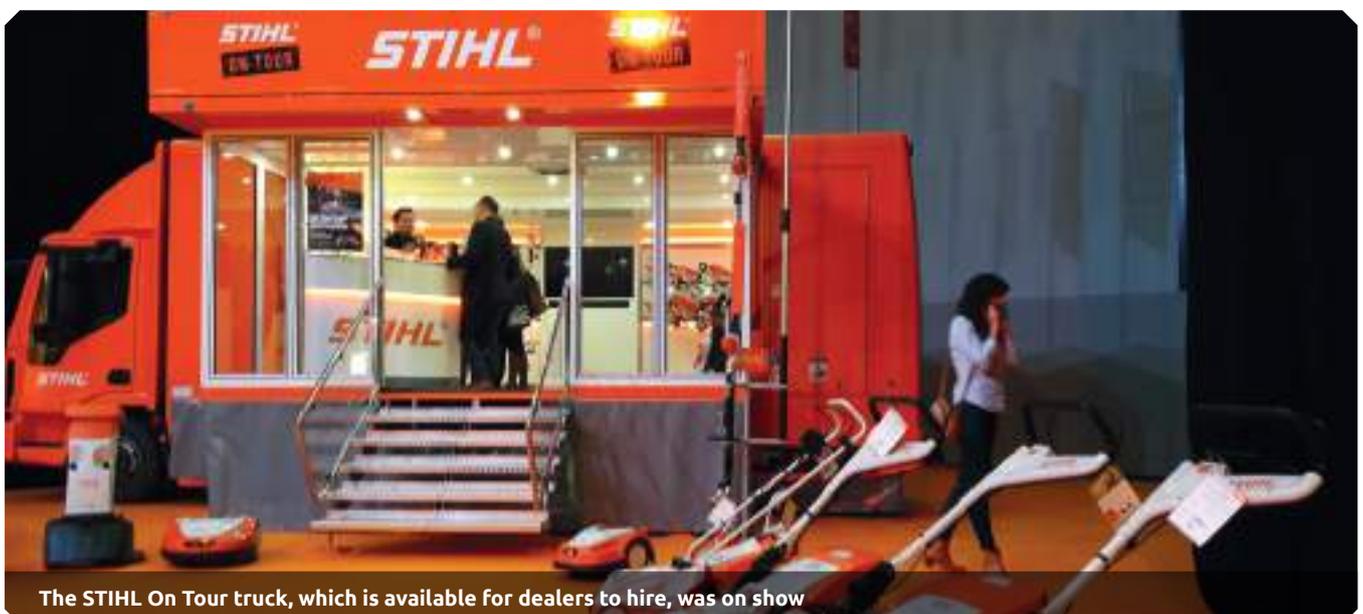
**Best Digital Marketing:** World Of Power

**Product Expert:** Emily Waterman from Garden Tools & Engineering

**Best Customer Service:** Briants Of Risborough

**Lifetime Achievement:** Rob Gusthart

A great day was rounded off with music from a tribute act to a quite popular local band, *The Beatles*. With socialising continuing in the hotel bars until the early hours, it really was a *Hard Day's Night!*



The STIHL On Tour truck, which is available for dealers to hire, was on show

# LAUNCHES APLENTY AT ITALIAN SHOW

*Attracting more than 300,000 visitors over its five-day span, November's EIMA farm machinery show in Bologna, northern Italy, was the launchpad for a number of new products. Martin Rickatson was there*

**W**ith 317,000 visitors calculated to have passed through the gates, there were plenty of farmers from throughout Italy, around Europe and across the wider world using EIMA 2018 to seek out new equipment ideas. Organisers of the show, one of the European 'big three' alongside France's SIMA and Germany's Agritechnica, calculated that visitor numbers were up 11% on the previous event in 2016, with the number from overseas up 15%, and coming from 150 countries. Some 1,950 exhibitors occupied 375,000 sq m of covered hall space.

EIMA is a particularly important show for those who manufacture in Italy, with the likes of New Holland (and, to a lesser extent, sister business Case IH), Landini and its stablemate McCormick, Same Deutz-Fahr and multiple makers of smaller machines all having a strong tractor-making presence in the country. AGCO now has its main combine factory there, while firms such as Merlo are particularly strong in materials handlers, and the country has specialisms in areas such as power harrows.

But as usual with the large-scale international shows, it was the tractor makers that grabbed the limelight. From four-wheel steer technology to aid orchard farmers to high-tech transmissions coming further down the power scale, and from new Chinese-funded brands to retro liveries that hark back to colour schemes of old, there was something for everyone among the aisles of the halls.

## CVT COMES LOWER DOWN THE SCALE AT NEW HOLLAND \*1

A century of tractor manufacturing since the first Fiat 702 model was made in 1919 was New Holland's central theme for its EIMA display. Fast forward to 2019, and its dealers will have a wider range of tractors with CVT transmissions to sell, with the introduction of an AutoCommand option for the 110-140hp (max) T5 models.

For dealers with diehard old Fiat loyalties, there will also be Centenario Limited Edition tractors in a Fiat-inspired terracotta livery. The commemorative tractors will be available in six utility, specialist and crawler models: T5.120 EC, T5.115, T4.110F with cab, T4.110LP ROPS, T4.110FB ROPS and TK4.110 ROPS. Each tractor bears a numbered plate identifying it as one of the 100 limited edition models within the six ranges.



## NEW LIVERY BRINGS REVISED HANDLERS INTO LINE \*2

New Holland agriculture dealers have had available to them the light/compact range of New Holland construction equipment, including backhoe loaders, skid-steer loaders, wheel loaders and mini 360-degree excavators, for some time now. With the latest revision of the marque's telehandlers, it has been decided a livery switch from blue to yellow will help identify the machines as part of the same pack. Built in-house in Italy, the six-model 6-9m TH range can be specified in any one of four levels. Updates include a new transmission with electronic modulation for smoother shifting and shuttling, while lift capacities are up slightly on most models, and there are new automatic steering alignment and automatic lubrication options.

## ARGO AIMING HIGHER IN UK AND WORLDWIDE \*3

ARGO's UK business, AgriArgo UK, has new management in the form of Managing Director Adrian Winnett and Sales Director Ben Agar, and both UK and global bosses from the business were in bullish mood at EIMA, with the latter targeting a doubling of its current €500m turnover in the next five years. To do this one of its key plans is to develop its McCormick offering in particular to target demands from large farms for higher horsepower and more advanced technology. That's likely to mean more brand differentiation, a wider CVT offering and more horsepower at the top of the line – the X8 range offers a maximum 310hp. The Landini brand will also gain new technology, but further down the power scale. The Advanced Driving System for the Landini Rex 4 aids handling, manoeuvring and responsiveness by reducing steering stiffness at lower (field) forward speeds, and returning the wheels to the central position automatically after a turn.

Meanwhile, AgriArgo UK promises one of the largest tractor stands at LAMMA 2019, a new dealer recruitment drive and plans for investment in its UK HQ.

## KUBOTA REFRESHES MID-MARKET MODELS \*4

Kubota chose EIMA to unveil its upgraded mid-range 104-143hp MGX tractors, which provide a slightly simpler specification alternative to its top-spec M5, M6 and M7 models. Key among the new features for the MGX-IV machines is a three-range, eight-step semi-powershift transmission with automatic shifting capability. An updated hydraulic system offers a maximum 143 l/min of oil flow and helps the rear linkage hoist up to 6.1 tonnes. Other improvements include a new 150-amp alternator to ensure strong worklight performance lighting, an enhanced right-hand console that is claimed to be more intuitive to operate, and an upgrade for the cabin interior materials.



## SAME DEBUTS SPECIALIST 4WS TRACTOR

**\*5**

Although the majority of UK dealers for SDF sell the manufacturer's Deutz-Fahr brand, there remains a select group who sell Same machines, particularly in the West and the North, and most smaller machines of all the group's brands come from the Treviglio factory in Italy. Speciality tractors remain a Same forte, and to this end the brand showed off a novel new range at EIMA. The new Frutteto line not only brings a CVT transmission to the sector, with potential benefits for speed-critical tasks such as tree spraying, but also incorporates a four-wheel steer system featuring a rear axle with 18-degree steering angle, helping create a 2.8m turning radius. Proportional, delayed proportional, crab and manual steering modes can all be selected.

## MAKERS REVEAL FIRST STAGE V MODELS

**\*6**

With the next Stage V level of emissions legislation due to take effect from 1st January 2019, for machines above 174hp, manufacturers were revealing revised models to meet the next set of reduced-emission rules. For the first time, Stage V limits the number of particulates permissible in exhaust gases, meaning the key focus is on greater efficacy of diesel particulate filters, as well selective catalytic reduction. Case IH revealed its three-model 250-300hp Optum CVX tractors will use an enhanced version of maintenance-free SCR technology, while also extending engine oil service interval by 150 hours to 750 hours, and the interval for transmission oil changes from 1,200 hours to 1,500 hours. Meanwhile, Case IH's AccuTurn Pro, which combines HMC II headland management and AccuTurn automated headland steering, is now an Optum option.

## PRODUCTION UNDERWAY AT ARBOS \*7

Three years on from its world debut at Agritechnica 2015, where it revealed its first tractor prototypes, the Italian-based Arbos business, owned by Chinese company Foton Lovol, is now in the business of tractor production. The first 100-130hp 5100 series tractors began coming off the line earlier this year at the former Goldoni plant in Italy,

which Lovol purchased after it hit financial difficulties. Production of the three-model 200-260hp 7000 tractor range will commence later next year, followed by the 140-200hp 6000 models. In Italy, retailing is being developed via the Goldoni dealer network, while Arbos has opened subsidiaries in France, Spain and Russia and appointed agencies in Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania and Turkey. Among news at EIMA was that Maternacc precision drills, which are sold through selected dealers in the UK, will now adopt the Arbos livery. The firm is keen to talk to potential UK tractor dealers.

## MF PUTS SHOW PLANS INTO PRACTICE \*8

The Massey Ferguson arm of AGCO has announced that it intends to restructure its show attendance plans and focus more resources on supporting other marketing initiatives such as dealer open days. Its new approach was evident at EIMA, where there were just two MF tractors on an AGCO stand that otherwise comprised the full range of Fendt equipment and five Valtra tractors. Visitors seeking more details on MF's product offering were able to use a virtual reality terminal to experience the brand's product offering in more depth. The money saved on a major show presence throughout the year is being re-invested in what MF terms a 'European experience tour', which will include UK dates next year where dealer and customer attendees will be able to gain in-field experience with the full line of MF tractor, harvest, forage and handling products.

## TURKS TARGET BROADER MARKET \*9

Turkish tractor makers such as Armatrac are gradually becoming established in wider European markets, and Basak may be next. Like many other firms in the country, it has focused on markets with lesser emissions standards than those required in Europe, but is now seeking a slice of the potential business in western Europe and beyond. Its aim is supported by the launch at EIMA of its first Stage IV tractor line, the 5100 series. There are four models from 95-120hp, all powered by a Deutz four-cylinder engine with DEF/AdBlue after-treatment. Transmission is a four-speed/three-range unit incorporating a two-step powershift plus powershuttle.



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# A SWITCHED ON SALTEX

*Another buzzy and vibrant show at the Birmingham NEC, says Editor Steve Gibbs*

**H**alloween 2018 saw, what I felt, was another buzzy and vibrant IOG SALTEX at the Birmingham NEC.

At the time of going to press the official numbers haven't been made public yet, although rumour had it that Day 1 was decidedly up on last year. Day 2 felt busy from around 10am until just after lunch.

Most exhibitors seemed to agree though, that Day 1 was pretty much non-stop. Many told me they were having their first conversations on the stand by 9.10am and then didn't have a chance to even look at their watches until 3–3.30pm. Some even had that concern that their stands were so busy, they worried some visitors weren't being seen to straight away.

Crucially again, these visitors were deemed as being the right ones – quality people, making genuine enquiries. Most were reporting a decent mix of customers they already knew, plus good new leads.

In terms of dealer attendance at the show, I heard mixed reports. It's difficult to categorically state one way or the other whether the network turned out in force at the NEC. One major manufacturer told me that on Day 1 at least, they had seen an estimated 95% to 5% split in visitors to their stand in favour of end users over dealers. A fair few of the others I spoke to said similar.

That said, I had several tell me how pleased they'd been with dealer turn-out. Clearly certain areas of the country are always going to be better represented with dealers at a show which takes place in the midlands. But without a doubt, some exhibitors I spoke to were very pleased with the number of dealers they'd been able to speak to.

Those dealers who did attend would have very quickly picked up on a theme across the machinery manufacturer stands – that of robotics and battery power. It seems that

as a supplier, if you don't have a cordless offering, you are very much behind the curve. End users appear to now be demanding these products rather than them being a niche, curiosity item.

Kevin Ashmore, UK Manager of Husqvarna Professional, told me the vast majority of conversations they had on their stand on the first day of the show were regarding their battery and robotic machines. Interestingly it was the end users who were instigating these conversations, as opposed to just a few short years ago when it would've been the manufacturer introducing the concept into the discussion. Kevin described the shift in the attitudes of these professionals as a real "sea change".

These thoughts were echoed on the stand of battery specialist Ego. Vince Brauns, European Product Manager told me they'd seen a complete phase shift in customers' feelings towards these machines over the past few years. This change in perceptions by many, he said, had come about remarkably quickly.

One interesting reason which I heard repeated several times from various manufacturers as to why attitudes to this new technology were changing so fast among end users, was that they are talking to each other so much more about their positive experiences of using them; and not just talking face-to-face obviously, but in specialist internet forums and social media groups. People are using and liking this equipment and are then becoming trusted advocates among their peers.

These word-of-mouth recommendations are seemingly



Central Spares was promoting the Gardencare range



STIHL's stand

becoming more significant than ever before, although to be fair, this idea isn't just limited to battery products. Mark Rochford, on the Rochfords stand, was telling me they are seeing tremendous success with the professional petrol Weibang machines via end users enthusing about them to each other online. Indeed, he said he'd had guys on the stand doing his salesman job for him, promoting the benefits of the machines to their fellow professionals.

So all in, it felt to me like another successful show at the NEC.

In terms of quibbles, once more I have to say that I felt the outdoor demonstration area was somewhat of a non-event. It always appeared quiet and a bit forgotten about by most visitors.

Also, I did hear a couple of people mention that they didn't feel there was any particular stand-out 'wow' innovation at the show to really capture the imagination – although to be fair, it's probably a bit much to expect something like this every edition.

I personally thought the show achieved what any good trade show should, in that it appeared to satisfy the demands of both its exhibitors and its visitors. So congratulations are in order to the IOG, the show organisers and the exhibitors for staging another truly worthwhile industry showcase.



Mark Rochford demonstrates the strength of the Weibangs



The *Service Dealer* team: L-R: Nikki Harrison; Duncan Murray-Clarke; Steve Gibbs; Michelle Elford

# NEW AT THE SHOW

## SMALLER SPIDER SPOTTED AT SHOW

### *Prototype of Crossline model on T H White's stand*

Visitors to the TH WHITE Machinery Imports stand were among the first in the UK grounds care industry to see an advanced prototype of Dvorak-Spider's new and compact slope mower, the Spider Crossline.

With its compact design, the company said it complements the current Spider ILD01 and Spider ILD02 remote-controlled mowers and features a terrain-following mowing deck, integrated stabilising winch, a skid-steer option and is powered by a Honda GXV390, four-stroke petrol engine.

Like the bigger machines it can mow slopes of up to 40 degrees and then with the stabilising winch attached to a ground anchor it can mow at 55 degrees.

Constructed for full commercial use, the model has a cutting width of 65 cm (25.6 inches) and a cutting height ranging from 4–12 cm (1.6–4.7 inches), while fuel consumption is between 1–2 litres per hour depending on the terrain, with a maximum speed of 6 km/h.

Commenting on the new mower, Nick Penn, Spider's UK Sales Manager said, "We have been asked by end users for a smaller, but equally robust mower for some time and the XLINER, as it will be denoted with decals on the body

panels, is our response. It is slightly different from the larger models in that it has an articulated frame, which enables the mowing deck to follow ground contours more precisely. The proven technologies inherent in the other machines have been further developed and we feel we have 'crossed the line' in terms of our development strategy, hence the name."

Pricing in the UK will be approximately £15,700 when the mower is launched this spring, compared with £19,700 for the Spider ILD01 and £31,400 for the flagship machine, the Spider ILD02.



## ALLET'S ELECTRIC EVOLUTION

### *Large-area, walk-behind, battery cylinder mower*

Allett launched the C34 Evolution, large-area, battery walk-behind cylinder mower.

The company says the latest lithium-ion system battery technology in the C34 will power the 86cm mower without a reducing performance, for over

six thousand square metres (1.5 acres) per charge and changing batteries takes less than 30 seconds.

While the battery drive and chassis design are brand new, the mower is fully compatible with Allett's turf maintenance system. There's plenty of power to drive interchangeable cartridges



to scarify, rake, aerate, brush and verti-cut and it takes less than one hour to recharge the batteries.

There is variable speed control and touch-button control to give half-speed reduction for turning and manoeuvring. Built-in back-lapping gives the ability to keep blades sharp for cleaner cutting and quiet operation.

Four batteries clip out of the machine to be separately charged. The mower will run with one, two, three or four batteries if required at full performance, but proportionately reduced running time.

Using lithium-ion technology in the C34 Evolution, with the latest brushless motors and controllers, gives extended discharge times. The batteries from this mower can also be used to power other equipment such as brushcutters, chainsaws, blowers and long-reach hedgecutters.

# LARGE RANGE OF ROBOTS FROM MAGIC

## *20 different models available across two brands*

Magic Distribution showcased what it described as the largest range of robotic lawnmowers available from any single supplier with 20 different models of robotic lawnmower available across two brands; Robomow and Ambrogio.

Managing Director, John Hall, said, "This year's SALTEX was an extraordinarily successful show. With the introduction of Ambrogio, we are now able to offer a second complete range of robot mowers to our dealers.

"As Ambrogio has platforms that offer unique capabilities in the market, we can offer mowers that allow our dealers to cater to customers whose lawns may not have been suitable before, including commercial applications.

"Across both days we noticed a substantial attitude change this year towards robotic lawnmowers from all sectors of the industry and we're looking forward to building

many new strong relationships with businesses across the country."

The Ambrogio range was showcased at the show for the first time this year with 11 models in the 2019 range.

New models on show included

the 4.0 Elite which comprises two models. These feature a six-year warranty as standard, as well as all the latest Ambrogio technology, with GPS-assisted navigation and tracking, a contour-following twisting deck, and Flex-Grip tyres.



# HAYTER REVEALS NEW HARRIER PROS

## *Additions to the rear roller range*

Revealed to the public for the first time on Hayter's stand were its new Harrier 48 and 56 Pro – both additions to the Harrier rear-roller mower range.

The new designs feature an all-new cast aluminium cutter deck and the Crank-Safe Blade Brake Clutch (BBC) system, which combines the ease of use of a BBC and the reassurance of the Friction Disc system, providing the customer with a lifetime warranty against crankshaft bending through impact.

Another exclusive reveal

at the show was Toro's two new Grandstand mowers, available in either 91cm (36") and 122cm (48") cutting widths. The company says

the mowers combine the speed and comfort of a zero-turn mower with the benefits of a professional walk-behind.





### CUSTOMER RIGHTS ACT

# GUARANTEEING FUTURE BUSINESS



Edited by Adam Bernstein

**T**he Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA) lists many of the statutory rights granted to consumers, writes *Matthew Gough, Partner in the commercial group of the international law firm Eversheds Sutherland.*

Under the Act, consumers have the right to expect, among other things, their goods to be of satisfactory quality, fit for purpose and as described. If the goods do not fulfil these standards, consumers can ask for a full refund, a repair or a replacement of the product from the retailer.

But in addition to these statutory rights, many traders and manufacturers extend an additional layer of protection in the form of a guarantee.

While there is no obligation on traders or manufacturers to offer consumer guarantees, once offered they must comply with certain legal requirements. Guarantees must be set out in plain and easily understandable language and state that the consumer has statutory rights in relation to the goods and that those rights are not affected by the guarantee. Simply including the words "your statutory rights are unaffected" cannot be relied upon to achieve fairness.

Additionally, the guarantor must ensure that the contents of the guarantee are clearly set out, including the essential details for making claims under the guarantee, the name and address of the guarantor, and the duration and territorial scope of the guarantee. If the goods are offered within the UK, the guarantee must be written in English. The guarantee takes effect, at the time the goods are delivered, as a contractual obligation owed by the guarantor with the conditions set out in the guarantee statement and in any linked advertising.

Guarantees should not be confused with extended

warranties. These are an arrangement under which a customer pays a fee to receive services and spare parts for goods purchased over a specified period of time. These arrangements legally amount to a separate contract, subject to consumer legislation in the normal way.

Those giving guarantees must make sure that the level of protection offered under a guarantee ensures at least the same protection as that recognised by law.

The guarantee must not limit or exclude the consumer's statutory rights and remedies or contain terms which are otherwise unfair; consumers must not be misled into thinking that statutory rights have been removed.

According to the CMA Unfair Terms guidance, a guarantee which offers more restrictive rights than a consumer has under law may be challenged as unfair, and therefore potentially unenforceable. This would include guarantees which offer lesser protection, either because the benefits are less, or because their availability is made subject to special conditions or restrictions.

Many manufacturers offer a guarantee for the lifespan and quality of their products. This guarantee creates a legal obligation between the manufacturer and the customer, even where that manufacturer is not directly selling the goods. However, the trader who sold the product would still owe the consumer their statutory rights under the contract for the sale of goods.

If a consumer has rights under a guarantee provided by either the manufacturer or the trader, it is up to the consumer to decide whether to exercise their statutory rights against the trader, or their rights under the guarantee against the provider of the guarantee.



## DISRUPTION PLANNING

# BEING POSITIVE ABOUT THE UNTHINKABLE

The Buncefield oil depot explosion, the flash floods in Kent last May, the failed TSB systems, and Novichok in Salisbury; the UK is not immune from threat and firms need to plan for disruption, writes *SME Digest Editor, Adam Bernstein*.

The first step is to understand the potential threats to normal operation. With staff, look at every aspect and think about the people employed, what you need to operate and how you serve customers.

The threats to your business are many and while some of them seem improbable, you should consider: natural disasters; theft or vandalism; fire; power cuts; fuel shortages; IT or telecoms system failure; restricted access to premises; loss or illness of key staff; outbreak of disease or infection; crises affecting suppliers; crises affecting your business' reputation; or terrorist attack.

However you approach it, ensure the plan is written simply so that all can understand it. Guidance on planning is available via free software called ROBUST. <https://robust.riscauthority.co.uk/>.

Contemplate where you can build redundancy into the business without adding much cost. Whilst there's no point renting a spare building or equipment just in case, knowing where you can turn to may save the day.

Equipment – especially IT – can fail. The hard drive in your computer, for example, has a 'mean time before failure' rating – how long it should operate before it fails. But it may fail sooner. You need to back up your data regularly, at least once a day, and keep the backup offsite.

Communication is critical. This is especially acute if your telephone system is VoIP (internet) rather than a traditional line. Plan to use alternatives. Is there someone with a wireless connection with whom you can agree a reciprocal piggy-back arrangement if the broadband fails?



Consider a 4G mobile phone plan that comes with plenty of data. Have phones on different networks in case one fails.

Look at filing documents electronically. Fast double-sided automatic scanners will turn paper into PDF files that can be backed up and placed in a searchable archive on your computer. You'll also be able to store the originals elsewhere at a less expensive location and further spread the risk of loss.

Never skip on insurances and don't forget to note down the policy details, keeping them offsite. Apart from the obvious insurances – premises, stock, vehicles, public and employer's liability – also look at cover for directors and officers, business interruption, keyman, critical illness, and income protection.

Having good policies and risk assessing threats may help you lower your insurance premiums on the basis that you present a lower risk to the insurer. Further, everyone will know what to do.

Also draw up a list of emergency contacts that includes key staff, the utilities, employment agencies and key suppliers. Work out how you can divert your calls if you cannot access the building to do so. Remember details of your accountant, solicitor and the tax / VAT office (with tax references). Don't leave out neighbouring businesses and surgeries in case they need to be informed.

Finally, both test the plan and keep it up to date. See if the plan falls over; remember that it's a live document that needs regular updating.

The BCI: [thebci.org](http://thebci.org) (look for the Good Practice Guide).

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# DIGITAL TAX WILL BE TAXING

By the end of March 2019, businesses will need to have prepared for what many consider to be the biggest change for years in how they deal with HMRC, says *Adam Bernstein, SME Digest editor*. It comes from what HMRC calls Making Tax Digital – MTD.

Jason Piper, senior manager for tax and business Law at the ACCA, an accounting body, says that “the underlying goal is to transform the whole UK tax system, both HMRC’s internal IT infrastructure and the way that taxpayers engage with it.”

The initial plans to force virtually all businesses to keep their records for profits taxes digitally from 2018 have been abandoned; now all but the barest bones of MTD have been put on hold to free up resource for Brexit.

From April 2019 MTD will apply to VAT for all businesses above the compulsory registration threshold of £85,000, whether they report monthly or quarterly or whether they are net payers or reclaimers of VAT. Income and Corporation Tax will follow eventually. VAT registered need to prepare as MTD alters how online filing works and makes a huge change to how businesses prepare for that submission. HMRC’s existing web portal will close for MTD filers and instead they’ll need to use specialist software to create and submit their return.

“But the biggest, unprecedented, change,” explains Piper, “is in how much control HMRC’s processes will have over how you run your business. Under online filing, you submit your VAT return to HMRC in their prescribed digital format so it’s easy for them to process. But you’re in control of how the records are kept that help you work out the nine numbers you need for the return. Under MTD, it’s not just how the nine figures reach HMRC that’s legally regulated; it’s how they’re calculated, and the



format (electronic) of the records that support it which is laid down in law.” Every transaction will need to be recorded digitally (on a spreadsheet or in accounting software) and those records have to automatically drive the return calculation.

If the business already uses an accounts software package, then it will probably support MTD filing and record keeping, but that needs checking. Some suppliers are asking customers to move from desktop licenses to cloud subscription services which will be more expensive.

“If you don’t use any digital tools” says Piper, “then you’ll need to quickly do your own research to find a suitable product.” He reckons that there will be an official HMRC tool, but businesses might do better to search out resources that accountants use.

Spreadsheets will be fine for the basic record keeping Piper advises, “but you’ll still need access to a filing package as well, known as ‘bridging software’. Firms could post their accountant a USB stick, or email a spreadsheet with all their records once a quarter. Their software could do the rest, but it’s likely to cost more than the current equivalent.” Of course, doing this means that there’s scope for things to go wrong, and it will mean an accountant will charge more.

MTD is not going away and it will disrupt how a business reports its VAT. Those that don’t prepare will find themselves sitting on a cliff edge once the present online portal closes next April.

## SME NEWS

### New guidance on workplace health and wellbeing published

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has published guidance for employers and employees in order to better prioritise health and wellbeing, after finding that the scale of the UK’s mental health challenge is growing. Recommendations include creating a culture where

both physical and mental health have equal focus in the workplace and taking targeted action through early interventions. The CBI said there are firms who do not yet know how to realise the “full potential of taking action” and must adopt the “good practice that is already out there”.

In a survey, the CBI found that 63% of businesses see workplace health and wellbeing as an important

business issue; 52% of business leaders recognise the need for prevention, not just a cure; yet, 71% of firms say they find it hard to take “practical action” as they are unclear on what is effective, and they cannot see the benefits for others that have invested.

*Please take proper advice before acting on anything written here.*

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# CREATING A MARKETING BUDGET THAT WORKS

In the first of a new regular series, **Sara Hey**, Vice President of Operations and Development at Bob Clements Inc, the dealership development company based in Missouri, will be sharing insights she offers US dealers with Service Dealer's UK readership.

First up, how to think about setting your marketing budget . . .

What does a marketing budget look like for a dealership?

If you're like most people I talk with, you're having one of two reactions. The first reaction I get is that when I say the word "budget" the first group says, "No! Not a budget!" However, when I mention a budget to the second group they say "Yes, a budget! Where has this been my whole life?" A budget is simply giving us permission and a strategy to spend our marketing money. We work with about 4,000 dealerships across the US and we have found that a well-rounded budget isn't rocket science but can be broken down into five categories.

## Store – 20%

If I woke up in your shoes, I would spend 20% of my marketing money on my store. This may mean repaving your parking lot or putting a fresh coat of paint on your dealership. Maybe it means upgrading your interior displays. Whatever it looks like for you, the rule of thumb is that we want to be right around 20% on our store.

Statistics say if a customer comes in and has a positive experience at your store, but your store doesn't look pleasing from the road, one out of three of them will not recommend you to their friends. They will not give

you the word of mouth advertising that has the biggest impact. Walk outside your dealership with a fresh set of eyes and identify one or two things you can do to make the curb appeal of your dealership better.

## Customer Retention – 10%

It costs five times as much to get a new customer as it does to retain an existing customer. Depending on your situation, your percentage might be different, but we typically encourage dealerships to spend 10% of the marketing budget on customer retention.

Now, I don't want you to send out a Christmas card to all your customers. Everyone else is already doing that. I want you to think about times that you can be in front of your customers when no one else is. Think about off-holidays like St Patrick's Day or National Ice Cream Day. This last year, we celebrated National Ice Cream Day with all of our Dealer Success Group members by sending out a \$5 McDonalds gift card and telling them to have ice cream on us. How many other companies do you think did that? Not many. Find a holiday that resonates with you and be creative on ways that you can be in front of your customers for those holidays.

## Online – 25%

Online is a broad topic that typically takes up a lot of the marketing budget in a dealership. Things like websites, social media, Google ads, and YouTube videos all fall into this category.

One of the best things I have seen in recent years in regard to making the most of social media marketing was a dealer who came up to me last year at the GIE+EXPO and said



that they had started taking a picture of every new customer with their equipment. Then, they would post it on their Facebook page and if they could share it and get 100 likes on it, they would send them a \$100 prepaid gift card. Not only are you solidifying a relationship with an existing customer, but you are utilising word of mouth advertising.

## Advertising – 25%

If I woke up in the shoes of a dealer, I would plan to spend 25% of my marketing budget on advertising. This would include radio ads, billboard, tv, print ad and direct mail.

## Events – 20%

Many dealers we work with find a lot of success using events as marketing for their dealerships. Everything from open houses, state fairs, and VIP events would go into this category. Some of our dealers have also been doing charity events over the last few years, with great success.

Every marketing plan will be unique based on your location and your plan.

# DEALING WITH THE YEAR AHEAD

*We are delighted to welcome this issue our new Diary of a Season contributors, Briants Of Risborough. Here, General Manager, Chris Starling, considers what 2019 may have in store and what steps an independent dealer can take to make sure they're best prepared for all that it might bring*

**H**aving worked with Steve Gibbs on some previous *Service Dealer* content, we were delighted when he approached us at Briants of Risborough to take on the mantle for *Diary of a Season* throughout 2019.

As a little introduction, Briants of Risborough remains a family-owned retailer operating from a single depot in Buckinghamshire. We are now three generations and 54 years into our campaign of offering garden machinery, forestry equipment and fencing supplies to both the trade and domestic markets. Over the years, we've continually fine-tuned our products and services, with our current product line-up heavily weighted towards the chainsaw and pedestrian lawnmower market. Alongside this we run an extensive fencing timber-yard to give us some helpful product diversity, helping to differentiate ourselves from the local ag and large multi-depot groundscape businesses.

2019 will see us continuing to work with and adapt to the ever-changing trends in technology. Cordless is not a new thing, but the battery life, run times and capabilities are now such that even the professional market is able to enjoy the benefits. We've committed to getting the products



**Chris Starling, general manager of Briants Of Risborough with Rebecca Briant, managing director**

into the hands of customers, so for early 2019 we'll be expanding on our programme to loan and demonstrate additional models, to show off their potential and dispel any of the misconceptions that still remain. Not only that, but it helps to build trust with customers and forms a close customer relationship.

In tandem with this, it is of course necessary to evolve our staff training in all departments to deliver expert advice on both existing and new technologies. We'll be ensuring as many staff in all departments are genned up prior to the season kicking off, whether that's by means of manufacturer-based robotics training, or sticking the product in the hands of our staff so they better understand it.

With the High Street faltering and the sheds exhibiting signs of unease, it's more crucial than ever to sell our expertise in a bid to steal back and re-educate the customer. The Homebase stores in our two nearest large towns are closing – a prime opportunity to target those localities with social media campaigns. There's an element of guerrilla marketing about it, but where we can't

outspend them on advertising, social media allows incredible specificity to at very least get our name in front of new potential customers.

The impending months see the enticing prospect of STIHL's re-branding exercise of the Viking mower range which had an instant, albeit momentary, impact when the cordless models switched over prior to the dry weather abruptly spoiling the party. Hayter's new Harrier 48 and 56 models triggered great optimism when we tested them in October's dealer meetings, and last but not least, the release of Honda's latest engine is due for introduction on its high-end core models. It's promising to see manufacturers adapting to market and environmental challenges.

In other news, this year's challenge will inevitably come in the form of the Brexit finale of 'Deal Or No Deal'. In some ways as an industry we're accustomed to dealing with unpredictable and turbulent times – though generally it's the fault of the weather. On that basis we're hopeful that we'll be better prepared than many other industries at dealing with the year ahead.

# PRODUCTS

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DOMESTIC / COMMERCIAL

## TORO EARNS ITS PROSTRIPES

### *560 striping mower*

The Toro Company has launched the new ProStripe® 560 striping mower.

The company says the model is designed with premier sports venues, municipalities, resorts and golf clubs in mind, combining the benefits of a precise cut and clean striped finish with the simplicity of a walk power mower. Its compact, lightweight design is suitable for striping smaller areas of turf, be able to manoeuvre into tight areas.

Key features include a two-piece ribbed roller designed to create a perfect finish and crisp stripe, without marking and damaging turf. It has a three-speed transmission system to adapt to all weather and turf conditions and users can adjust the speed from 2.9 to 5.0km/h (1.8 to 3.1mph).

The mower is also equipped with exclusive MatchCut™ technology, allowing users to quickly and easily fine tune the cutting height. It features seven half-increment (3.7mm) settings.

The unit also benefits from an 80-litre high capacity grass bag and Blade Brake Clutch transmission system. The front fins lift the grass for a clean cut and optimised airflow ensures efficient

collection of clippings while directing dust away from the operator.

Other operator-friendly features include an ergonomic reinforced handlebar, as well as the Blade Brake Clutch (BBC) transmission system. When the handlebar is released, the BBC system stops the blade without stopping the engine, allowing the operator to empty the grass bag or move from site to site without shutting down the machine.

Built to withstand demanding professional applications, the ProStripe® 560 has a heavy-duty cast aluminium deck and a commercial-grade Kawasaki® engine. It's also backed by a Lifetime Crankshaft Warranty.

An optional groomer brush

attachment to help promote a healthier turf and a finer cut by reducing lateral blade growth and removing surface debris is also available for this model.





# JOHN DEERE LAUNCHES NEW PROSERIES OPENER

*For the 750A All-Till drill*

John Deere's new ProSeries opener for the 750A All-Till drill is available from this month (January 2019) and can be retrofitted to existing machines. This replaces the 90 Series opener that has been a feature of the drill since its introduction in the mid-1990s.

The new opener is designed to provide even less soil disturbance, more consistent seeding depth, better seed to soil contact and improved slot closure, and features only one grease point for minimal annual maintenance.

In addition for 2019, John Deere will have new, fully ISOBUS-compliant software available for both the 750A All-Till and 740A Min-Till drills.

A key benefit of the 750A is the extremely low soil disturbance created at the point of drilling, which fits well with cultural methods for controlling grass weeds, particularly blackgrass.

The ProSeries opener further reduces soil movement by utilising a narrower seed boot that fits tighter to the disc, creating less soil throw and providing 40% more consistent seeding depth. Wear life is increased, as the seed boot is hidden more behind the opener disc and subjected to less soil contact.

The flexible press wheel is both narrower and larger in diameter, so it fits in the seed trench better, and now features a double-row bearing for twice the service life. The company says this redesign helps to improve seed to soil contact and keeps each seed at a consistent depth, for more even crop emergence and potentially higher yields. Better emergence is also provided by a more aggressive serrated closing wheel, which has improved the closing function by 50%.

The seed boot mounting bolt is now replaced by a flag pin which keeps the boot from moving, to increase accuracy and reduce wear.

The seed tab, which prevents seeds bouncing out of the trench, has been redesigned to better fit the trench and provides twice the wear life of the previous version.

Discs can be changed 45% more quickly to further reduce time spent on maintenance.

The new, fully ISOBUS-compliant software works with both John Deere and third-party displays. As well as managing features such as section control, the software prevents overdosing in tramlines and provides a predosing function.

# TWO NEW ATTILAS UNVEILED

## *New brushcutters from Etesia*

Etesia UK has unveiled two new Attila pedestrian brushcutters.

The company says the new AK60 and AH75 machines effectively deal with clearing vegetation from a wide variety of sites – long grass, weeds, bracken and brambles on woodland paths, orchards, holiday parks and road verges. Ease of operation and manoeuvrability ensure total efficiency and high output.

The company says efficiency benefits include:

- **Heavy-duty brush cutting (up to Ø30 with AH75 and Ø20 with AK60)**
- **Mowing on difficult slopes (up to 20°) due to the hydraulic transmission with a differential lock**
- **Two idlers that can be locked without a tool for improved stability on slopes in the AH75**
- **Possibility to fit two wider rear wheels as an option**
- **Cutting height adjustment with three positions from the handle**
- **Handle offset control from the operating position with three working positions and one transport position**

Comfort benefits include:

- **All operating controls are available from the operating position**

- **High manoeuvrability thanks to the hydraulic transmission and three forward speeds and one reverse speed**
- **Differential lock can be engaged without interrupting movement**
- **Protection for controls and hands with the guards incorporated into the handle with a three-position adjustment facility**
- **Central handle that allows easier access to low controls (parking brake, forward transmission bypass, engine starter), with full protection for cables**

Ruggedness benefits include:

- **Machine can be moved into vertical position to gain access to the cutter blade for maintenance and cleaning**
- **Maintenance-free hydrostatic transmission with forced-air cooling, integrated expansion vessel**
- **Flail blades: reversible, protect the blade transmission system, low maintenance costs**
- **Rugged and reliable engines: Engine crank shaft mounted on bearings.**

The AK60 model is fitted with a Kawasaki FJ180 OHV engine with a 60cm cutting width, while the AH75 is fitted with a Honda GXV 390 engine with a 75cm cutting width. A full two-year commercial warranty comes as standard.



DOMESTIC

# ONE BATTERY, MULTIPLE TOOLS

*New Echo 58V range*

ECHO has launched a new range of 58-volt battery products.

The range includes a battery hedgetrimmer, trimmer, lawnmower, power blower and chainsaw for semi-professional and domestic use.

The company's interchangeable battery system is available with two

options, 2Ah and 4Ah. The hedgetrimmer, trimmer and power blower come with a standard 2Ah battery but for those looking for a longer run time there is the option of a 4Ah battery. Recharging via the Quick Charger requires 30 minutes charging time for the 2Ah and 60 minutes for the 4Ah. The chainsaw

or mower come with a 4Ah battery as standard.

ECHO says its battery products are built to the same professional standards as all its products. The 58V lithium-ion units come with a two-year domestic or one-year professional warranty and there is a two-year warranty on the batteries.



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# Grillo

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- Excellent margins available
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- Wide and varied product range



01889 569149 [www.grilloagrigarden.co.uk](http://www.grilloagrigarden.co.uk) Grillo Agrigarden Ltd

# EVENTS 2019

## JANUARY 2019

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

## FEBRUARY 2019

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

## MARCH 2019

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

## APRIL 2019

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

## MAY 2019

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

## JUNE 2019

- 2 Rutland Show  
[www.rutlandcountyshow.com](http://www.rutlandcountyshow.com)
- 6-8 Royal Cornwall Show  
[www.royalcornwallshow.org](http://www.royalcornwallshow.org)
- 6-8 South of England Show  
[www.seas.org.uk/south-of-england-show](http://www.seas.org.uk/south-of-england-show)
- 12-13 Cereals 2018, Boothby  
Graffoe, Nr Lincoln, Lincs  
[www.cerealsevent.co.uk](http://www.cerealsevent.co.uk)
- 13-16 BBC Gardeners'  
World Live – Birmingham NEC  
[bbcgardenersworldlive.com](http://bbcgardenersworldlive.com)
- 14-16 Three Counties Show, Malvern  
[www.royalthreecounties.co.uk](http://www.royalthreecounties.co.uk)
- 18-19 Cheshire County Show  
[www.royalcheshireshow.org](http://www.royalcheshireshow.org)
- 19-20 Lincolnshire Show  
<https://lincolnshireshow.co.uk/>
- 20-23 Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh  
[www.royalhighlandshow.org](http://www.royalhighlandshow.org)
- 23 Derbyshire County Show  
[derbyshirecountyshow.org.uk](http://derbyshirecountyshow.org.uk)
- 26-27 Royal Norfolk Show  
[royalnorfolkshow.rnaa.org.uk](http://royalnorfolkshow.rnaa.org.uk)
- 30 Cranleigh Show  
[www.cranleighshow.co.uk](http://www.cranleighshow.co.uk)
- 30 Royal Isle of Wight County Show  
[www.riwas.org.uk/](http://www.riwas.org.uk/)

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# STIHL®

# WHAT'S THE PLAN?

*How are you going to face up to the challenge of change in 2019?*

**D**o you have a plan? That is the question everybody was asking of Theresa May regarding Brexit at the time this magazine went to press.

Hopefully she, or whoever is in the hot seat, will deliver the answers by the time you are reading this edition of *Service Dealer*. Perhaps we will all feel much more confident too. Perhaps the following column will be meaningless, and we will all be back to just 'getting on with it', waiting for the grass to grow. Only time will tell.

There is a danger of turning this *In My View* into politics – which is the last thing we need! However, I believe it is difficult not to blame Brexit on the negative view of many people in our industry – especially dealers who have had a raw deal during the past season due to adverse weather conditions. Adverse to the requirements of rain at night, sun during the day, which is every dealer and manufacturer's utopian dream, each grass cutting season! But has a season like that ever actually occurred?

At the time of writing, I feel there appears to be a sense of gloom in the industry. Not doom, but a feeling of depression after a very difficult and trying 2018 season for many dealers. Ordering for the 2019 season has proven to be an arduous task, tinged with some fear. Although there has perhaps been some relief that manufacturers have not been threatening 'no order, no stock'!

Reports have suggested that some manufacturers have been off-loading product that is soon to become obsolete, at prices way below their original dealer net price level. The strong, 'well healed' retailers are revelling in this situation and there are going to be some attractive profits being made during the 2019 season.

It appears those manufacturers who rely on winter stock orders to enable them to forecast product requirements for the following season, have struggled to gain the commitment they require to fulfil the needs of their factories. Thus, some are even holding back on their pricing policy until they see how the Brexit deal or no deal pans out. So, don't be surprised to see some hefty price

increases in-season. Who knows, if you have ordered early, your stock could become beautiful again!

Many believe the situation the trade finds itself in today is becoming a time of unprecedented changes, where dealers are faced with the unstoppable trend towards robots and battery power along with dramatically changing weather patterns and turbulent financial conditions.

With regards to weather and the economy, we have been here before. Talk of 1976, 1993, 2008 must be boring now as we enter a new season with new opportunities. It is important to re-build confidence and optimism, for whatever happens, the grass will grow again, Brexit or no Brexit.

The question of 'am I going to be in business in 2019?' must have been answered by now? Therefore, the question then becomes, how am I going to sell myself? What am I going to sell? How am I going to face up to the challenge of change?

**So, what do you do?  
How do you do it?  
How can you do it better?  
Do you have a plan?**



# JIM GREEN



WELCOME TO 2019

## FRESH STARTS

*The new year kicks off with two established shows, out to convince in their new formats*

**W**elcome to the bright new world of 2019! I'm sure many of you reading this will have been glad to see the back of the year just gone.

We've seen extreme weather seasons before and we will no doubt see them again, but that summer took the biscuit! And coming off the back of all that snow! What a perfect storm of terrible conditions.

Anyway, the dealer network is famed for its resilience. In all my years writing for this esteemed journal, I've seen bad seasons and I've seen good seasons. What's common across the lot is the stoicism and adaptability of the guys and girls on the front lines.

A comment that the editor received for the recent Business Prospects 2019 survey summed up the whole indomitable ethos of our readers for me.

"We will plod along," this dealer said. "Weather determines type of machinery sales; price determines whether you sell or not; margins determine whether it is worth selling. However, your integrity and service decide whether you make more sales to the same customer and his friends and neighbours."

Couldn't have put it better myself!

So, we look forward to this new season and all that it might throw our way. Yes, we can add Brexit into the mix of unknowns to contend with this year, but like the weather, it's (seemingly) unavoidable at this point. It'll just be something else which dealers will negotiate their way through with aplomb, ingenuity and good humour.

### Show time

To kick off this new year, dealers of both agricultural machinery and professional turfcare equipment can visit a couple of major shows this month, perhaps to gain some fresh inspiration for 2019. Both LAMMA and BTME are well-established fixtures in the industry calendar – albeit both are taking risks this year, changing their formats.

LAMMA firstly is taking the biggest plunge into the unknown – risking upsetting both its exhibitors and



visitors with a quite radical upheaval. The first edition of the ag machinery show to take place indoors at the NEC has a lot of doubters to win over.

These sceptics clearly include a bunch of the farm machinery big boys who have opted not to support this inaugural edition. I'm sure these chaps will have their eyes and ears on the NEC to see what those who are exhibiting think of the new style – and more to the point will be assessing visitor numbers and feedback to see if it's worth their while returning in subsequent years.

BTME also has some convincing to do. At least the show is still in the wonderful confines of Harrogate. However, this time around it's taking place in a completely new configuration in a different section of the International Centre.

I realise that doesn't sound too revolutionary, but murmurings on the grapevine have suggested that some exhibitors aren't too happy with where they have been allocated stands. Apparently, it wasn't always simply a question of picking a favoured spot off a floorplan...

Word also suggests that there will not be a hall with the big machinery guys all in together as was previously standard. The organisers are keen for those guys to be spread around to make sure visitors travel to all corners of the halls. It'll be interesting to see if this plays out the way the organisers intend and to the satisfaction of both visitors and exhibitors.

That said, I always feel that if circumstances in the business allow, a visit to a major trade show is well worthwhile – and at least these two have managed to sort out their timings so they don't clash anymore!

# COMMITTED TO 2019

**At Honda we value the importance of our UK network of dealers.**

We have already re-committed to the 2019 Service Dealer conference and awards, as best practice and dealer innovation are always a priority.

We would like to congratulate our award winning appointed Honda dealer – Owens ATV & Garden Machinery. We look forward to working with you this year and continuing the innovation and support you would expect from a leader in lawn and garden products and of course the world's largest manufacturer of built-for-purpose ATVs and UTVs.

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