

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

July/August 2022

- News
- Industry
- Dealers
- Training
- Shows
- Reviews
- SME Digest

MUCH TO LOOK FORWARD TO

Merlo makes appointments, upgrades, and improvements to benefit dealer network

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY & PROFIT OVER TURNOVER

The mantra for all dealers

WHERE ARE THE NEW DEALERS COMING FROM?

Thoughts from the AEA Conference

A MEMORABLE & TRUSTED NAME

Gayways discuss lockdown growth, online retail, supply and diversification



LAMMA '22 REPORT

Crowds counter date move doubters



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Letter from the editor **Steve Gibbs**

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Welcome to the July/August 2022 edition of *Service Dealer* magazine. I'm writing this following the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend, which for an all-too brief moment, gave the country a lift that was so badly required following what seems like crisis after crisis. I do hope our dealer readers were able to capitalise in some way on that extra-long bank holiday weekend – but I fear the ongoing stocking situation would have continued to make trading conditions difficult?

Speaking to the guys at the Gayways dealership for this issue, supply is still clearly the number one issue that businesses around the country are finding a hindrance. That and recruitment.

You can read the results of our most recent survey on this latter subject, starting on page 42, where I assume it'll come as no surprise to anyone that attracting fresh blood into the industry is still a real struggle. Dealers speak about their recent experiences in finding any candidates at all as being "awful" and then holding on to staff as "very difficult", as they can be

tempted away by other sectors.

This perennially frustrating process will form part of the discussions at November's recently announced Service Dealer Conference. Called Sustaining Dealerships, the expert speakers on the day will consider many facets surrounding staff recruitment, retention and motivation. On top of this, the event will also look at just what dealerships need to be thinking about to guarantee they are still around in 20 years' time – as well as how they might begin planning succession.

As ever, the event will be a blend of keynotes, presentations and smaller breakout seminar sessions that allow dealer delegates to interact with each other and the speakers. I always think these sessions prove especially valuable, with delegates sharing their wisdom and working through concepts together.

If you are able to, do save the date of November 24th 2022 in your diary. If you can spare a day away from the business perhaps this year more than ever, a trip to the conference could offer inspiration that leads to the continued success of your dealership.

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SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY
SINCE 1998

CONFERENCE & AWARDS

2022

INDUSTRY

2022 Service Dealer Conference announced

This year's theme has been launched

Recruitment, Retention and Succession.

These three topics come up time and again when speaking with dealerships.

How can we get fresh blood in? How can we keep great talent? And, when retirement is pending, how do we best address the issue of succession in the family-owned business?

Our conference speaker line-up will offer new insights for employers,

supporting them in preparing for the future, and creating a motivated workforce.

We'll address the full life cycle of an employee from the start of a career at a dealership, right through to their potential takeover.

But not only this. As the conference title suggests, the day will consider just what dealerships need to do to make sure they are still around – and thriving – in 10, 15, 20 years' time. The programme will allow for scope for wider discussion on key topics.

Keep an eye out on the Service Dealer Weekly Update, published every Friday at noon, for details of the full speaker line-up and further information.



SUSTAINING DEALERSHIPS

This year's conference theme

DEALERS

RW Crawford to acquire neighbouring dealer

Purchase of Agwood Ltd to be completed this summer

RW Crawford Agricultural Machinery Ltd has announced the acquisition of neighbouring AGCO dealer, Agwood Ltd.

In a statement, Crawfords said the move represents "a continued commitment to providing a first-class experience for Massey Ferguson owners and users in Essex, East Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex".

Terms agreed by the Crawford family with Agwood owner and managing director Ian Wood mean that from early summer 2022 the three existing Agwood depots, at Swingfield and Linton in Kent, and Godstone in Surrey, will continue operating under the Agwood trading name. All the Agwood team members based at these depots will remain, ensuring continuity of service for their customers. Ian Wood continues his involvement in a senior advisory role, and general manager Phil Bush has been appointed MF dealer principal for the Agwood sales territory.

With the Agwood acquisition, Massey Ferguson will have group brand recognition in Essex, East Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, from four depots.

Crawfords also continues as the Fendt and Valtra dealer for Essex, East Hertfordshire, Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire, operating from its existing depots.

Ian Wood, who started Agwood in 1978 as a sole trader, commented, "The Crawford family has a very similar ethos to ours, putting customers and staff at the heart of their business, and making them a great fit. Succession has always been a key factor for Agwood's future and, as the dealer network adapts to the challenges ahead, Crawfords has proposed a pathway forward for Agwood Ltd and our staff.

"With AGCO's strategy for brand separation, the Crawfords head office in Essex will work alongside our



depot teams, continuing to provide the high level of support you have enjoyed from Agwood Ltd over many years."

Massey Ferguson national sales and business manager for the UK and Ireland, William Judge, said, "Bringing these two groups together under the Crawfords management will put Massey Ferguson in a strong and stable position to ensure that our customers get the best customer care long into the future."

Wes Crawford explained that acquiring the multibranch dealership will allow the business to develop within AGCO's brand separation policy – Route 66, while also bringing benefits for new and existing customers, including a large product stockholding and expanded demonstration fleet.

"I've had several discussions with Ian, and he feels the time is right to plan his future and succession plan," said Wes. "Our two businesses are staff and customer focused, which fits well with both parties. We are excited to be able to continue building on the teams' hard work, supplying premium products and backing them up with the very best after-sales service.

"Our acquisition of the Agwood business brings added benefits of economy of scale, without losing the local back-up that we know is so important to customers."



The Cornthwaite Group sales team with (left to right in foreground) Stuart Cornthwaite, Charles Bedforth (Opico Ltd) and David Lawson (Cornthwaite Group)

Cornthwaite takes on new range

Strautmann expands product lineup

Opico Ltd has announced the expansion of its partnership with Cornthwaite Group, which has added the German-engineered Strautmann range of forage and feeding wagons to its product lineup.

Cornthwaite Group is already an Opico dealer, selling and servicing the Maschio Gaspardo range. The dealership operates throughout the north-west and into south-west Scotland, with depots in Nantwich, Bispham Green, Kendal, Carlisle and Dumfries.

Commenting, Charles Bedforth, Opico sales director, said, "We couldn't be more delighted that Strautmann will be represented by the Cornthwaite Group and we are

confident that all our customers will continue to receive excellent support."

Stuart Cornthwaite, managing director of Cornthwaite Group, added, "The Strautmann range of forage and feeding wagons are a valuable addition to our machinery portfolio. Our sales and service team has already undertaken comprehensive training on the range and are looking forward to getting the machines out to our customers for demonstrations in the upcoming season."

Changes will enhance our after-sales offering and extend our reach to new clients across these counties."



GreenMech EVO 205D SURE-Trak

GreenMech makes changes to dealer network

Updates and additions around UK

GreenMech has announced a series of updates across its UK dealer network.

The changes will see an extension to the existing territories of Vincent Tractors and Burdens Group, together

with the appointment of B&B Tractors to provide new cover to the counties of Derbyshire and Staffordshire and Hopkins Machinery, which joins the network as a service support dealer for South Wales.

Effective immediately, longstanding GreenMech dealers for Cornwall, Vincent Tractors and Plant, will be taking on additional areas to accommodate new and existing customers in Devon. The dealers operate out of three depots across Devon and Cornwall – located in Fraddon, Holsworthy and Smithaleigh.

Also expanding their territory is the Burdens Group, which, in addition to Lincolnshire, will now be covering the counties of Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire.

In order to develop the sales and after-sales support across Derbyshire and Staffordshire, GreenMech has appointed agricultural machinery suppliers B&B Tractors. The family-run outfit will be supporting the franchise from its branches in Tideswell and Fauld.

Finally, and completing the reshuffle, is the appointment of Hopkins Machinery, which will be acting as a service support dealer for South Wales, based out of its branch in Wentloog, Newport.

Sales director Martin Lucas commented, "Service is a critical part of the GreenMech offering, meaning we are always reviewing our distribution partners to ensure the very best support for our customers. We are confident that these changes will enhance our after-sales offering and extend our reach to new clients across these counties."



Simeone Morra and Adrian Winnett of McCormick (left and right) present the Overall dealer prize to Terry Hughes and Dan Roberts of HJR Agri Oswestry

McCormick awards its dealers

Prizes presented at recent dealer dinner

The efforts of UK and Ireland McCormick dealers to support their customers, build their businesses and boost the brand's sales have been recognised at the brand's annual pre-LAMMA dealer dinner and awards, where new and long-established McCormick dealers were among the winners.

Held at Birmingham's Crowne Plaza NEC hotel, the awards recognised a number of dealers who have excelled in sales, service and parts provision. The awards were presented by Simeone Morra, director of corporate business at McCormick parent Argo Tractors and shareholder of Argo Tractors; Franco Artoni, director of parts and marketing; and Adrian Winnett, managing director of McCormick distributor Argo Tractors UK & Ireland.

Appointed just over a year ago, Dingwall-based **McLaren Tractors**, which covers the Scottish Highlands and Islands, was awarded the Sales Dealer of the Year prize. Reflecting the high number of units sold in its

inaugural year as a McCormick dealer, the dealership was praised not only for achieving a high local market share, but also for its commitment to stocking and pipeline orders, as well as a determination to conquer other brands and the development of its overall approach to consultative selling.

Recognising not only parts sales, but also dealer commitment to the ArgoTech parts support programme, the Parts Dealer of the Year award went to Devon dealer **RSM Beares**.

The McCormick Service Dealer of the Year award was given to Leicestershire firm **Catley Engineering**. Acknowledging commitment to high levels of after-sales support through the service department, the award also recognised use of the latest technology in fault diagnosis and repairs.

Commitment to building the McCormick brand was also recognised, with the award of Brand Ambassador of the Year given to **AB Wight Engineering**, based at St Boswells in the Scottish

Borders. An addition to the annual awards, the new award recognises the commitment of the dealer to market not only the McCormick brand but also their own dealership, through website, social media, branded premises and vehicles, as well as an overall approach to raising the profile of McCormick in its area.

The McCormick Dealer of the Year prize, recognising all-round commitment, was awarded to **HJR Agri Oswestry** from Shropshire. This award is given annually to the dealership that has excelled in all of the above areas and continues to be an excellent representation of the brand across sales, parts and service.

Commenting on the awards, Argo Tractors UK and Ireland MD Adrian Winnett, said: "Despite the challenges of the pandemic, our dealers continued to support our customers as localised food production became key to helping the nation during this challenging time."

DEALERS

New Holland honours top dealers

Ernest Doe takes overall prize

New Holland has announced the winners of its 2021 UK and Ireland Dealer of The Year Awards, which celebrate excellence in performance and service quality across its extensive dealer network.

In a statement, the manufacturer said, "In a year where the whole dealer network delivered fantastic results, the four main category winners, together with the product line category winners, should feel justifiably proud."

Main category winners:

- Overall UK Dealer of the Year: Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd
- Medium Dealer of the Year: Ravenhill Ltd
- Small Dealer of the Year: Hawkins Agri Ltd
- Ireland Dealer of the Year: Armstrong Machinery Ltd

Product line category winners:

- Combine Dealer of the Year: Lloyd Ltd
- Hay and forage Dealer of the Year: T H White Ltd



Angus Doe, managing director of Ernest Doe & Sons

Pat Smith, New Holland business director for the UK and Ireland, said: "The purpose of these awards is to acknowledge and reward the performance and effort that our dealers put into the service they provide to our customers.

"The past two years have presented a unique challenge, not just in the agricultural machinery sector, but to all of us. That 2021 was a very successful year for New Holland and our dealers shows the excellent teamwork across our whole dealer network."

Reacting to their win, Angus Doe, managing director of Ernest Doe, said: "We are delighted to receive this award, which is testament to the hard work and sustained efforts of our team, both customer-facing and behind the scenes. It is vitally important that our customers receive a good experience, and our team works hard to continuously improve this through every part of our business."

PEOPLE

IAgrE appoints new president

Steve Constable, managing director of Spaldings Limited



Steve Constable, MD of Spaldings, is IAgrE's new president

Steve Constable, managing director of Spaldings Limited, has been appointed as the new president of IAgrE.

Steve has worked for Spaldings for 32 years and was previously operations director before being appointed managing director in 2019.

He studied a degree in agricultural engineering at Harper Adams University and has an MBA in Business Management and Marketing.

Steve became president at an official ceremony at the Institution's annual AGM and award ceremony held this year at the Claas UK headquarters in Little Saxham, Suffolk. His presidency will last for two years.

Commenting on his appointment, Steve said: "I am privileged to be appointed president of the IAgrE at a time when the need for qualified engineers, researchers and academics has never been more important. Recent events such as Covid, Brexit and the conflict in the Ukraine have highlighted to all stakeholders the importance of producing food efficiently, effectively and with the least harm to the environment. I am committed to working hard in helping develop this Institution to remain at the forefront of this exciting industry."

President Elect is Dr Mark Moore FIAgrE. Mark is director, government affairs at AGCO.

PEOPLE



L-R: AEA's Gareth Ford; David Goodchild and Tom Edwards the winning BEng / BEng Honours Agricultural Engineering students; & Ruth Bailey, AEA CEO

Next generation of industry talent

AEA Scholarships presented

The Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) have announced the most recent recipients of their AEA Scholarship.

David Goodchild and Thomas Edwards, both BEng / BEng Honours Agricultural Engineering students in their second year at Harper Adams University, were selected by a panel of industry representatives and experts. They will now both have an opportunity to connect with key industry partners, and to work with them to promote careers in the agricultural and outdoor power equipment sectors. They will also work closely with the AEA to boost awareness of the opportunities and educational routes within the sectors.

Aiming to promote and support the industry through finding and attracting new talent, the AEA says it will collaborate with David and Thomas to develop social media content that inspires others to consider a career in agricultural engineering. This will focus on their time at university, as well as

during their upcoming placement years within industry.

On receiving the news of his win, David said: "This has given me an incredible boost, and redeemed my confidence in myself as an individual. It has inspired me to continue with commitment and dedication to both my studies and working in the agricultural engineering sector. I am looking forward to forming a close relationship with the AEA as an ambassador and student representative of the association. I have already put the funds to good use, purchasing additional tools that will aid my studies."

Thomas added, "Thank you very much for awarding me your prestigious AEA Scholarship! I am extremely grateful for this opportunity and look forward to working with the AEA over the coming months. The Scholarship funding is already helping me to fund several projects that will enhance my career in Agricultural Engineering."

AEA CEO Ruth Bailey, said: "One of

the biggest issues the agricultural and outdoor power equipment sectors face today is the accessibility of skills and attracting the next generation. The scholarship is a fantastic opportunity for an agricultural engineering student of any background to help promote and support the industry as it looks to find new talent and attract others who may wish to look to agricultural engineering as a profession.

"Both David and Thomas will be perfect Ambassadors for our sector, relaying a great message about how exciting a space this industry can be for anyone of any age or background to join."

Later this year, the AEA in collaboration with the Land-based Engineering Training & Education Committee (LE-TEC), says it will be launching a new website to drive awareness of both careers and educational routes within land-based engineering.



INDUSTRY

AriensCo purchases Thomas Equipment

Will now offer a new four-season product line under the Gravely brand

AriensCo has announced the purchase of Thomas Equipment from A-L Parts Inc.

The company says this development allows them to offer a new four-season product line under the Gravely brand to serve the rental and construction markets.

Thomas Equipment has been a manufacturer of outdoor equipment for 79 years, based in Beechwood, New Brunswick, Canada. Started in 1943 by the Thomas Brothers as an agricultural repair business, they expanded into manufacturing equipment for agricultural purposes, namely potato harvesting and handling. In 1969, the company introduced the world's first hydrostatic drive skid-loader. Thomas Equipment was purchased by A-L Parts Inc. in 2013.

AriensCo say they are partnering with Al Downy and Leon Butterfield, owners of A-L Parts Inc. to launch the production of the Gravely branded Mini Skid Steer line in their Canadian facility.

"We think this is a perfect extension of our Gravely product line," said Dan Ariens, chairman and CEO of AriensCo. "This multi-tool piece of equipment is great for hardscape work, with accessories like a tree auger, stump grinder, pallet forks, etc. It's a big tool but is small and compact so it can fit through a gate and can be hauled on a trailer with other mowers. We think it will be a great offering for commercial landscapers."

AriensCo is providing management support for the increase in production. It says five Gravely-branded Mini-Skid Loaders (three diesel and two petrol-powered models) are planned for the autumn.



DEALERS

Kerry Marven, owner of Quad Bikes R Us

Specialist dealer opens new premises

Larger showroom for Quad Bikes R Us

Quad Bikes R Us owner Kerry Marven was recently joined by representatives from Yamaha UK to officially open her new showroom in Heybridge, Maldon.

"We've been in business for 18 years and working with Yamaha for 16," explained Kerry. "We moved from our old site in Great Totham to establish bigger premises and become an exclusive Yamaha dealership selling the full range of leisure, sports and utility ATVs."

The new premises, with its new showroom, highlights the full range of Yamaha machines. "We're a family-run business, here to help anyone who wants to enjoy these exciting machines," Kerry explained. "We can advise on which are most suitable for their individual needs, and we have a workshop on site to help existing owners with spares and repairs."

"We've had so much support from the Yamaha team, and I feel we have really improved the business by making this move. The showroom looks amazing, and we have really enjoyed welcoming customers old and new," she added.

Demand for ATVs has risen since the pandemic, says Kerry, saying, "Since Covid hit we have noticed a huge interest in the junior machines with parents looking for fun activities at a time when holidays were not possible."

Kerry says she still has aspirations for the business in the future. "I have a fantastic team here and I would like to see that grow so we can one day open the first Yamaha superstore in the South East," she concluded.



INDUSTRY



Farmtrac range

Farmtrac dealer network doubles

Increase over the past year

Farmtrac's dealer network in the UK has doubled in the past year, according to its UK distributor Reesink Agriculture.

The reason the supplier is citing this growth is, as they put it, "the brand's quality and user-friendly technology".

Service Dealer has been told that dealerships taking on the franchise in the past year include:

- COMVEX GROUP
- FENTONS OF BOURNE
- OFF-ROAD ELECTRIC
- SHINNERS BRIDGE
- GAMMIES
- AJ MOWERS
- STAG MACHINERY
- ABA GROUND CARE
- CHICHESTER FARM MACHINERY
- OAKLEYS GROUND CARE

Steven Haynes, tractor sales manager for Reesink Agriculture, says: "Dealers are finding there is a growing market for great-value tractors that focus on the core customer needs, rather than overburdening with more complicated electronic features."

The company claims the popularity of the brand with dealers and customers has been unprecedented. Steven continued, "We knew the all-electric FT25G, which spearheads the range, would have a good launch but it's grown exponentially over the past two years and we've seen demand outstrip supply."

Expansion of the dealer network has been down to word of mouth, says Steven. "Dealers drive the success of the brand. So many tell us they've heard about Farmtrac from the dealer community, whether that's with a farming, agricultural, smallholding, domestic or landscaping focus. Or they've seen it on TV or social media. It's driving its own success."



DEALERS

Mean Green signs up another dealer

Ernest Doe takes on electric mowers

Overton UK has announced Ernest Doe Limited as their new dealer in the South East and London areas for the Mean Green electric commercial mowers.

Andy Turbin, sales manager at Ernest Doe, said many customers were asking for larger battery-powered mowers. "I have followed the Mean Green range since their introduction,

and after initial demonstrations to the sales team and customers, which provided excellent feedback, I felt that the time was right to move forward."

Stuart Rose of Overton added, "We are pleased to add such a well-respected and professional company to our growing list of dealers throughout the country."

INDUSTRY

Cobra backs RHS's ban

Of plastic grass at Chelsea Flower Show

Following the RHS ban of artificial grass from this year's Chelsea Flower Show, lawnmower manufacturer Cobra offered its backing to the Society.

"Here at Cobra, we're thrilled to see the RHS standing against artificial grass," said Peter Chaloner, managing director.

"We, of course, celebrate lawns and all the benefits they bring. A freshly cut lawn can't be beaten. It is the centrepiece of a garden and is aesthetically pleasing but the benefits go far beyond that; lawns can boost drainage and help prevent flooding,

they can boost biodiversity, absorb carbon dioxide and encourage nature and wildlife to gardens. Not to mention the mental health benefits that the feel and smell of freshly cut grass brings! Lawns and green spaces have been proven to reduce stress and improve mood, with the smell of freshly cut grass releasing endorphins."

Peter continued, "It's such a shame to see lawns being dug up and replaced by plastic alternatives. In a time when we're all trying to reduce plastic usage, it makes no sense for gardens that are meant to

enhance the planet, to be filled with unnecessary and unsightly plastic. Artificial grass is expensive, and not as maintenance-free as people first think as it can get damaged and will ultimately need replacing. Artificial grass creates a barrier to the soil, removing habits for burrowing insects and worms, starving them of food sources and creating a wholly inhabitable space."

Peter concluded, "We support the RHS's stance and hope to see an ongoing celebration of lawns for many years to come."

DEALERS

Changes to NH dealer network in Scotland

Shuffling of the pack

New Holland has announced a number of changes in its dealer network in Scotland.

- Agricar Ltd will expand its territory on the east coast to cover the Fife area.
- Bryson Tractors Ltd will expand its territory to Ayrshire and West Lothian.
- Lloyd Ltd will expand its territory to MidLothian and East Lothian

The manufacturer says Lloyd Ltd will move into the existing Lothian NH Ag depot at Macmerry industrial estate, Tranent, for an initial period, with a view to locating to a larger facility in the area in the near future. Staff have been offered employment

with Lloyd Ltd.

Lloyd Ltd continues to operate from its existing two New Holland Agriculture depots in southern Scotland and the Borders at Kelso and Dumfries.

In addition to its Lanark depot, subject to completion of contracts, Bryson Tractors will take ownership of the current Agricar depot in Dundonald, providing customers in the area with a continuity of service. Many of the staff in the depot will move to Bryson Tractors to further enhance this continuity.

Agricar will continue to offer the full range of New Holland products and parts from all existing depots in Forfar, Stirling, Perth, Laurencekirk



New Holland Agricar Forfar premises

and Blairgowrie and says it will open a new depot in the Fife area in the near future.

Ravenhill Ltd based in Elgin will continue to cover the north of Scotland.

Pat Smith, New Holland business director for the UK, said: "We are delighted that these three companies with a long trading history have each expanded to enhance our already excellent coverage in Scotland. It provides them all the critical mass to invest and grow their businesses fit for the future.

"Importantly it provides our many customers in Scotland with continuity and exceptional service for many years to come."



COBRA

Why Not Become a Cobra Dealer in 2022?

With over 150 products in the Cobra range including the largest range of lawnmowers in the UK, Cobra is fast becoming a market leading brand in garden machinery. Contact us today to join the growing number of Cobra Dealers across the U.K. For information on becoming a Cobra Dealer contact Andy Marvin: 07771 581 296 or call: 0115 986 6646 today.

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- Extensive local & national Cobra marketing support.
- An evolving range of over 150 gardening products.
- No unreasonable Cobra stocking commitment.



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Cobra reserves the right to change models, specifications & prices without prior notice. E & OE. *Warranty period based on domestic use.

*Stocking Dealer Price ex VAT



AEA Conference '22

Where are the new dealers coming from?

Back in April, the AEA Conference took place in-person for the first time since 2019. Service Dealer editor STEVE GIBBS reports on incoming President David Withers' address, that considered what the future might hold for the UK dealer network

Further evidence of our sector opening up again following two years of disruptions, was the return of the AEA AGM & Conference to London in April.

Back in the salubrious surroundings of the Institution of Civil Engineers' building at One Great George Street in Westminster, this event followed on from 2021's Zoom version and 2020's cancellation. The atmosphere amongst the representatives of manufacturers and the handful of dealers in attendance seemed to be one of satisfaction at being back together for what is always an enlightening and social occasion.

As ever, the event kicked off with a series of presentations by invited experts. This year there was a focus on the economy, on the efforts to achieve Net Zero, and a discussion on where the next generation of tech developments will take us. All fascinating stuff that engaged the delegates in the room and led to some interesting conversations over lunch.

What I found particularly interesting, though, were the thoughts of the incoming President, David Withers of Iseki, regarding where he thought our



David Withers of Iseki delivering his inaugural speech as AEA President

dealer network could be heading over the coming years.

An industry where people still matter

David began his address to delegates, saying, "It's truly an honour and a privilege to take on the presidency of the AEA. I'm very grateful to my colleagues in the AEA who've made this happen. I never thought when I came into this industry that I'd have this opportunity."

David continued, "Like so many others I came into this industry by accident. There aren't many kids that

leave school, begging to be a turf machinery salesman!

"But having got into this industry, I've never in 35 years considered leaving. It really is a great industry, where people still matter – and where the products make a difference to people's lives. Whether that's for growing food or for use in the beautiful environments that we maintain for recreational activities."

David then turned his attention to what the current situation is like for different areas of the dealer network and posed the question of what is going to happen to dealers in the future?

For example, he spoke about how some dealers have been consolidating

over recent years. How for certain dealerships this has been driven by their manufacturers, with the desire for them to be bigger and to absorb neighbouring dealers' areas, spreading fixed costs across larger territories.

"We have seen some of these larger dealers become importers and distributors in their own right – blurring the lines between dealing and distributing," he said. "I imagine this approach will only increase in the future."

David went on to say that much of what we do in our country follows on from what happens in the largest market in the world – the USA. "In the US," David explained, "the corporatisation of dealers is further forwards. Large venture capital outfits have been buying dealerships and then expanding their operations both geographically and in breadth of lines held. I think we will see more of that here."

An astute observation as we certainly have seen the creation of various so-called 'super dealerships' over here in recent years, with particular manufacturers clearly favouring this route.

David also spoke on an area we've touched on in this magazine, and will be devoting some time to at this year's

absolutely the million-dollar question) is where the dealers of tomorrow will come from.

He felt that those who started in the 19th century, in the pre-internal combustion engine age, were often blacksmiths before they became farm equipment dealers. 20th century dealers, he proposed, often came out of the automotive trade, and were still, at heart, internal combustion engine specialists and engineers, with hydraulics and diesel their core backgrounds.

"But where will the 21st-century dealer start-ups come from?" he asked. "Will they spin off from software developers? Mobile phone repairers? AI developers?"

"If the future products can be diagnosed and fixed remotely, with the key items in the toolbox a laptop and a mobile phone connection, rather than the more traditional spanner and a hammer, what does a physical dealership look like?"

I think David really did identify a key question here that the industry will need to address in the coming years. He didn't have a simple answer to the conundrum, but he did believe that for those companies that embrace these changes, they



The AEA Conference took place once again at the Institution of Civil Engineers' building in Westminster

Service Dealer Conference – that of dealership succession.

"As dealer principals age out and look to retire, succession plans are not always there for family members to continue the dynasty," he said. "And so to monetise the going concern, rather than simply close and liquidate, must be a potential way forward for some dealerships."

David acknowledged there will be divergence in dealers, though. As some move to become larger, more corporate, under-new-ownership structures, he believes others will stay family-owned, with low overheads – "Not wanting to be everything to everybody, but specialists in their niche," is how he put it. "Nurturing their relationships in their chosen customer base – which can be very successful."

New dealers?

But what really intrigued David (and I agree this is

will most likely succeed in this evolving world.

David finished by talking about what he hoped to achieve in his new role as AEA President. He spoke about what he called the "great progress" that had been made, particularly he felt with the acquisition of BAGMA.

"I think it's beneficial for all members," said David. "For so many years this has seemed like a great fit, so it has been wonderful to see it finally brought over the line."

One of the benefits that he saw from the AEA's acquisition of BAGMA was the ability to talk to stakeholders and the government - representing the entire supply chain rather than just parts of it.

"It will become even more important to keep talking to government as we move into further regulatory changes and possible divergence from European standards - as well as into new technologies in AI, autonomy, electrification and power sources," he explained.

A memorable and trusted name

Gayways has been located in Harrow in northwest London since 1975, supplying domestic and professional customers with a range of outdoor powered equipment. Editor STEVE GIBBS visited to meet new owners Rajiv and Amar Parmar to discuss lockdown growth, online retail, supply and diversification

Bought by brothers Rajiv and Amar Parmar in 2008, the new owners of London dealership Gayways always had as their goal the growth of the company to fulfil its obvious potential.

Turning the business around, Rajiv and Amar have successfully built on the dealership's reputation and fortunes, engendering a loyal clientele. In 2018 they won both Service Dealer's Garden Machinery Dealer of the Year and Overall Dealer Of the Year titles. This was helped in no small part by the overwhelming number of glowing customer testimonials received. I visited their prominently located, high-street store in early May to find out how they have been coping these past couple of tumultuous years, and what issues the dealership is currently facing.



Rajiv and assistant with a customer

Taking over

I was shown around the premises by older brother Rajiv, or Raj as he's known. Gayways' store has three rooms, with the mower showroom to the left, featuring double-level racking to lift the STIHL, Husqvarna, Mountfield and Allett machines up to eye level. The central space as you enter is home to the accessories and a prominent Aspen Fuel display, while the third area to the right contains the chainsaws and handheld tools.

Rajiv tells me he came into the garden machinery business from a slightly unusual entry point. "I had been in advertising for six years, working at Saatchi Group," he says. "Whilst my brother was a trainee plumber."

The opportunity to take over Gayways came across their radar by chance. Living nearby, they one day got chatting to Nigel Lack, the previous owner, who was interested in selling. It wasn't an area they had considered before, but Rajiv says: "When we saw the size of his customer database, we realised the huge potential. As kids we'd always done gardening, so it wasn't alien to us. But the business needed so much work to get it to where we are today.

"We had to ask ourselves, can we do anything with this, because there was so much to unpick. However, because the asking price was right, we knew it was a risk worth taking."

As soon as they began running the business, they could quickly see that the demand for what Gayways offered was there in abundance. However, there were some hangover issues with staff and suppliers inherited from the previous regime that meant changes had to be made.

"These things happen in business," says Rajiv. "They just need to be addressed correctly."

Also inherited, of course, was the dealership's unique



Brothers Amar and Rajiv Parmar, owners of Gayways

name. I asked Raj if they ever considered changing it, to make the new ownership clearer?

"No," he explains. "We wanted the heritage it had built up amongst its customers to remain. Also, I come from an advertising background, so I understand just how well slightly funny or unusual names work. It stands out and is nothing if not memorable."

Looking around the rest of the premises, there is a deceptively large workshop, storage, and yard space out the back for what is a suburban, London location. This area is in flux at the moment, however, with Gayways currently in the process of rearranging and rejigging.

"When you take over a business, it's operational," says Rajiv. "You don't have the privilege of shutting down for a while to change things and put on your own stamp. Developments must be an ongoing process alongside running the business."

Rajiv says they have grand designs to subdivide the areas out the back, to give them more working areas. There's even the potential to perhaps expand into other shops the brothers own alongside their current location – or even the option to move somewhere else, larger, locally. But those are just ideas being mulled over for now.

"We are mindful not to lose our visible position," points out Rajiv. "Our shop frontage is incredibly valuable to us, so we will make any decisions very carefully.

"We have always wanted a larger space, though. The decision now is whether to expand here or to move."

New custom

I get talking to Rajiv about what the past couple of years have been like for Gayways, what with the pandemic and lockdowns to contend with.

"Lockdown was probably the busiest we've ever seen the business," he confirms. "Turnover was probably around two and half or three times more than we've seen in recent years."

Rajiv attributes this partly to seeing a new generation of customers who may not have thought much about their gardens pre-covid, now wanting to take pride in them. "We're seeing a lot of people who are not greenfingering, who've never got into gardening before, big time get interested in looking after their outside spaces," he explains.

"The amount of people we've had, and particularly from the younger generation, who are coming to us is amazing. They've got allotments now, they're growing food in their gardens, they're looking after their lawns - they're getting involved. They didn't realise how much they'd enjoy it."

Of course, these first-time gardeners need the guidance that comes from buying from a specialist dealer. "They don't know what machines are available," says Rajiv. "They only know to go to the big sheds, or perhaps Amazon, to buy a product, not knowing if that product is suitable for the job. When they do come into our store, they discover a whole range of products and brands never seen before. Typically, I would firstly ask for a picture of the lawn, which will eliminate a lot of questions from me, and narrow what I feel would be a suitable product and brand to go for. From there we will work out what their budget is, and the pros and cons.



Gayways enjoys a highly visible, main road location in north-west London



“We are excited to be working with a few new brands this year, which are proving to be a good match for our company”

“Both my brother and I are very blunt when it comes to our product offerings. If it’s not suitable for the customer, for whatever reason, we would be straight and tell them. If they don’t buy from us, that’s fine – they will remember our advice and honesty. The younger generation of homeowners are keen to purchase since the pandemic, and having a knowledgeable salesperson of their generation in the store, really helps.

“I think that’s a problem that the dealer sector can suffer from, actually – that there’s not enough of the younger generation running businesses.

“Once I’ve sold them exactly what’s right for their needs, the confidence is built, and the relationship is established. Then they’re coming back to us, asking for what they need next.”

Online retailing

One area that Raj has strong views on is online selling. “It has certainly been beneficial to our business over the years,” he says, “and we continually invest into the platform. It’s a full-time job on its own and certainly not something for someone who cannot commit the time and add extra resources towards it.

“The thing about this trade,” he continues, “is that it’s being demolished by a few online retailers who are making everyone else’s earning life very difficult. Just like the DIY tool trade, it is very hard to retain margin.”

He continues, “On a positive note, I see the website as like another salesperson on the road, reaching out to potential customers. Being online has fantastic opportunities to showcase your brand, company, products and services, but to think being online is going to bring you new, instant fortunes is misleading as the work behind sustaining an ‘ecommerce’ website is very challenging in itself.”

Years ago, Raj says they briefly tried the aggressive online discounting strategy themselves with chainsaws. “Customers kept saying to us, ‘Oh, I can find that cheaper online,’” he recalls. “So we got angry and we thought, ‘Well, let’s see if

that works’. With hindsight, it was a stupid thing to do. We had all our chainsaws at rock-bottom prices – making something like a three or four percent margin. It was ridiculous – but we sold loads, with very little marketing. Price dictates everything. We did it for about three or four months, thinking we’d upsell to these new customers. I thought I’d be able to get on the back end of all these orders with additional sales of chains or oil.”

But this was not the case at all, says Raj. When the brothers took a step back and looked at what they had achieved, they quickly realised the business had been incredibly busy, but had made no money. “We’d literally just been busy fools,” says Raj, “and the rest of the business had suffered as we’d had no time to concentrate on it.”

Raj says he looks back on that period as an experiment. “We wanted to see what it was all about – and I don’t recommend it to anyone! At the end of the day, everyone in the business needs to take a pay cheque home, the bills need to be paid and then whatever’s left at the end of it, I can pay myself.

“So today, we are holding our prices big time. If a customer doesn’t want it at what we’re selling it for, fine, walk away.”

Raj is now adamant about retaining margin. He says he quite deliberately chooses to put his advertising spend behind manufacturers who are careful to manage their prices and who make sure these are maintained across the board. “If I put money into Facebook ads or whatever,” he says, “on a brand that, if a customer Googles it, they can find it super-cheap somewhere else, why would they buy from me?”

Also regarding their website, they are now strict about only selling to a limited geographical area. “We restrict garden tractors to only being sold within a 20-mile radius, for example – PDI’d by us, with a £249 charge for delivery. And that delivery charge is non-negotiable.

“It’s the same thing with the Automowers. We’ll go and install within a 20-mile radius.”

Raj explains that sometimes they have people contacting them from other parts of the country, saying they want to

purchase because they’ve seen Gayways’ positive Google reviews or the like. “But I’m honest with them,” he says. “I tell them I won’t be able to support their product and I try to point them in the direction of a dealer local to them.

“We’re doing fewer and fewer deliveries, to be honest. More and more it’s click and collect if a product is purchased online.”

Future diversification

Like dealers across the country, Raj says that the greatest hindrance to the smooth running of their dealership right now is the ongoing stocking situation.

“It’s a nightmare at the moment with stock,” he confirms. He says that demand among buyers is still high, it’s just the ongoing slog of chasing deliveries and having to explain to customers where their orders are that is the issue. “I’m having problems such as waiting four months for batteries and chargers – and then finally just the chargers arrive! I phone the supplier and say how long for the batteries? and they tell me ‘sorry, no ETA Raj!’

“So I would say communication from certain suppliers is pretty poor. I’m surprised, to be honest, how bad it can be.”

One of the worst aspects of the situation, he believes, is the lack of rep support. “Some of our suppliers’ reps haven’t come for two years,” he says. “They just aren’t readily

available for us to speak to.

“In a normal year, we used to see a rep come in maybe three or four times. Now it’s maybe once, if you’re lucky. I think there needs to be more reps on the road, going into dealers.

“When we first started, we had some terrific reps that would come in the store and help us out hugely, with elements like display and whatnot. They would get involved. But now no rep does that. They are just interested in taking orders.

“I don’t think they can keep hanging on to the excuse of the pandemic. You’d think they would be able to come out by now.”

To combat the gaps in supply and to grow the business for the future, Raj says the dealership is looking to diversify in certain areas.

He tells me they are considering expanding into professional arb products and new machinery brands, “We are excited to be working with a few new brands this year, which are proving to be a good match for our company. Again, the pricing structure is agreed on, margins are healthy, products in stock and communication is good.

“But right now, I’m not over-ordering,” he confirms. “I’m being cautious because we don’t know what’s coming up. I’m going to continue acting within our means. 2023 could be an extension of 2022, with stock problems persisting.

“Therefore my philosophy for the next few years, is just to work hard and do what we can.”



Chainsaw display



A dealer must sell their value in their showroom

Poundland customer. John Lewis understands the demographic of its customer, and the products and buying experience they expect. And it focuses on that. They are not a 'stack it high, sell it cheap' retailer, and they succeed without having every customer.

With mass DIY chains, budget supermarkets and websites selling cheap mowers, I would look at the product range I sell and focus on quality and building a loyal customer base that values service over price. The person buying a £99 lawnmower from a supermarket is most likely not the customer you want.

Sell your value

Having focused on the dealership and customer experience, plus understanding who the customer

base is, the next thing to consider is to 'sell your value'.

As I said, the customer who is buying a £99 lawnmower in a supermarket, I would argue is not a customer our industry should be chasing, unless they walk through the door, having had a bad experience and we help them to see the value we offer (without deriding them for going to the supermarket in the first place).

I see on social media as well as in workshops and showrooms around the country, dealers trying to have every customer and not selling their value.

Saying no is not a bad thing, and politely refusing to repair own-brand machines should save you money. How much time is taken trying to source parts for supermarket brands? Think of an egg timer, but instead of

sand, imagine it was money, and the hour you have spent trying to track down a part. Utilising your workshop effectively and focusing on jobs that pay well (robots, ride-ons and quality machines) will make your workshop pay its way and more profit can be drawn from it.

It's not just in the workshop where a dealer must sell their value, it's also in the showroom.

Some dealers are afraid of the value they bring to a customer and feel they must stock machines they really don't want to sell. If that customer has walked through your door, it is because they want to buy a mower, and the dealer needs to be confident in their experience and skill to take the customer on the right buying journey to owning a mower that suits their needs but is also profitable for the dealer. If the customer has come

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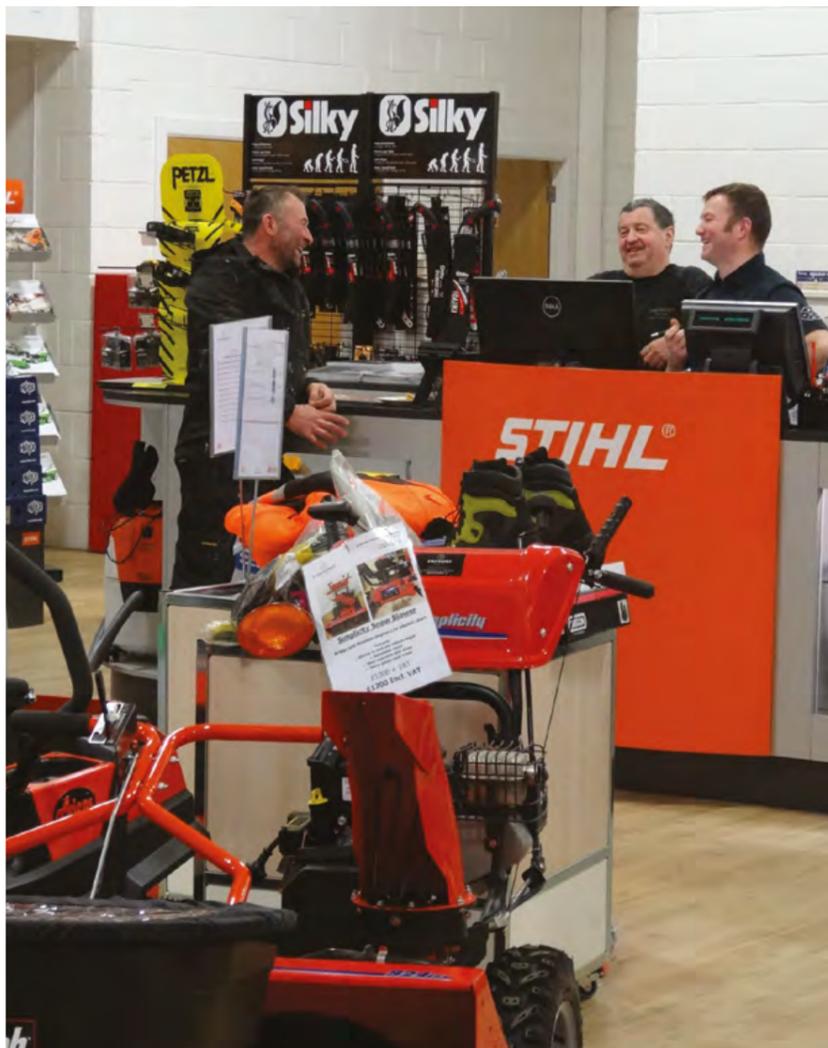
in for a 'supermarket mower', the dealer needs to help the customer understand the value in buying a quality machine and not selling them a cheap mower they make less money on.

You will only sell X amount of mowers a year, so make sure you make decent profit from each one and don't sell yourself short. If the customer is only price focused, are they the right customer? Will they cause the dealer problems, and what is the likelihood of them using the dealer for servicing?

Quality over quantity, and profit over turnover, should be the mantra of all dealers. Focus on the brands and products that bring value and profitability to your dealership. This will ensure the future of your business.

Too many dealers try to have every brand and be all things to all people, with multiple options in multiple brands, instead of focusing on a group of quality and profitable brands that add value to the dealership.

As the industry moves forward and there are more challenges to face, now is the time to make your dealership as strong as it can be and partner with the best brands you can to ensure a successful and profitable future.



The dealer needs to help the customer understand the value in buying a quality machine



Making sure you offer the best, most professional and customer-focused experience you can is essential to making a sale

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Much to look forward to for Merlo dealers

On the back of recent dealer appointments, upgrading of its UK premises and the introduction of some significant new products, including zero emissions models, telehandler specialist Merlo invited the press to its Italian HQ. **MARTIN RICKATSON** went along to learn more



Merlo's factories, centred on the north-west Italian town of Cuneo, cover approximately 330,000 sq m, and employ around 1,600 people, who produced 7,200 machines in 2021

While Merlo has been a significant player in the UK telehandler market for some time now, it is easy to forget that the company was a relative latecomer to these shores, setting up a UK business as recently as 1993. Yet soon after its arrival here it began to make a significant impact in the market, becoming one of a handful of key firms in the sector selling significant volumes into both the agricultural and construction sectors.

The business's roots stretch back to 1911, when Giuseppe Merlo opened a blacksmith shop in Cuneo, northern Italy. In 1964, his son Amilcare Merlo and wife Natalina founded their own engineering business. Within a couple of years they began producing site dumpers and self-propelled concrete mixers, and by 1970 had branched out into forklifts, launching the CEM four-wheel steer rough-terrain machine.

In 1974, Merlo made its first move into boom-based handlers, introducing a forerunner of its Roto 360-degree telehandlers by developing a telescopic construction crane. This led ultimately to the introduction seven years later of the first Merlo telescopic handler. The 1981 launch of the SM30 into its home market marked the debut of features that remain Merlo design principles today, including sideshift for the telescopic boom, a curved glass cab and hydrostatic transmission.

Speciality multi-function industrial tractors were added to the Merlo line in 1985 with the launch of the six-wheel drive Rambo for industrial, forestry and military use,

later leading to the development of the current Tremme models.

But the business's most significant development in the telehandler sector came in 1987 when it launched the Panoramic XS, the first telescopic handler with a side-mounted engine and a low-hinged boom at the rear of the chassis to make possible all-round vision. By 1996, the hydrostatic machine design had been developed into the TurboFarmer range, marking the start of the brand's growth in the UK ag sector.

While the idea of lifting lightweight implements using an add-on three-point linkage had been trialled by some handler makers, Merlo was the first to develop a machine from scratch with integral linkage, PTO and pick-up hitch, with the 2000 launch of the Multifarmer, blending many of the abilities of a tractor with the loading capabilities of a telehandler. Meanwhile, in construction, 2002 saw the addition of Cingo tracked pedestrian carriers to Merlo's product offering. The next decade would see the development of innovations including the TurboFarmer diesel/electric Hybrid models, CVTronic continuously variable transmission, BSS boom suspension system and EAS electronic active suspension, acting on the front axle of the Panoramic handlers.

Founded back in 1993 by John Iles as a 50/50 partnership with the Italian parent, which bought his share on his retirement in 2011, Merlo's UK operation – one of six global subsidiaries – is today headed by Shaun Groom. He took the top position as Merlo UK's general manager in January last year, following 15 years with the UK operation



Founder Amilcare Merlo remains actively involved in the firm he founded, although day-to-day management is now overseen by his son Paolo



Facilities at Merlo's factory headquarters include a dedicated test track for press and potential customers

of Austrian arable and livestock machinery maker Pottinger, the last eight as director and general manager. One of his main duties since taking on the job has been to oversee the completion of extensive development at premises that have been home to the UK HQ in Ringwood, Hants, since 1996. These cover not only the business's offices, but also parts warehousing and training facilities.

"These were officially opened back in April, part of a £750,000 investment the business has made in new buildings and infrastructure as Merlo upgrades the facilities at all of its global subsidiaries," explains Shaun.

"Although we have developed a distance-learning online training tool, practical training remains essential so our investment includes new workshops with everything necessary for training dealer service engineers, including features such as benches for transmission, hydraulic and electrical components and systems. As Merlo manufactures more than 90% of the components that make up its machines, including plastics, hydraulic couplings and electronics, this training investment is a key commitment.

"The training centre now occupies a dedicated new building, which has freed up space in our parts warehouse and enabled us to gain customs-bonded approval for the receiving facility within it, speeding up handling of parts from our Italy HQ and helping raise the percentage of parts we can distribute to dealers directly from Ringwood to 80%."

Headed by Nigel Perrin, a 25-year Merlo veteran, training commenced on January 10, and is on schedule to train 300 attendees this year. The new facilities are approved by BAGMA as a training provider.

The parent business remains family-owned, with Amilcare Merlo still actively involved in its management alongside other family members including his son Paolo, who now heads the day-to-day management. Its factories, centred on the north-west Italian town of Cuneo, cover approximately 330,000 sq m, and employ around 1,600 people. Of 7,200 total machines produced during 2021 (the firm is targeting 10,000 by 2025), around 80% were exported. The business is split into four units, with the agriculture and construction equipment division at its core, alongside one for commercial waste handling (Tecno), one for company technologies such as electronics and R&D, and one for company services such as training.

Developments for 2022

New products launched by Merlo for this year include an updated flagship Multifarmer, with the 40.9 replaced at the top of the four-model range by the new 44.9, or the MF 44.9 CS-170 CVT to give it its full title. Boom lift capacity rises 400kg to 4,400kg, while hydraulic system flow is 150 l/min and pressure 210 bar. Other stats, such as 9.0m maximum lift height, 7,000kg rear linkage capacity and 170hp FPT engine output, remain unchanged – as do the three smaller models.

The firm has also unveiled its first full-electric telehandler, the eWorker. Available in 2wd or 4wd, both versions have maximum lift capacities of 2,500kg and maximum lift heights of 4.8m. The transmission design incorporates two electric motors at the front on 2wd models, with a third motor, positioned vertically and flanged on the rear axle, on 4wd versions. Battery capacity is 960Ah/48V, and on an average



Tools for the Cingo tracked platform operated machines include dumpers, blades and telescopic booms



Merlo's Tremme tractors are designed for specialist applications in industries such as forestry and ground clearance



Merlo's first telescopic handler, made in 1981, incorporated many features which remain Merlo design principles today, including boom sideshift, curved glass and hydrostatic transmission

workload a single charge is reckoned good for eight hours' work. The firm says it will soon launch a lithium-ion battery option, which, although more costly, will offer the advantages of a quicker charge, more storable energy and less maintenance. A 100% electric Cingo dumper is in the pipeline for 2023.

A new entry-level handler, the TurboFarmer 27.6, lifts 2.7t to a maximum 5.9m. Developments are said to include faster hydraulic movement, reduced fuel consumption and enhanced comfort. At the opposite end of the scale, the firm has introduced a new 170hp TF65.9 model that lifts 6.5t to 8.8m. This uses the new HF hydraulic system, built with an oversized 72cc hydraulic pump with 160 l/min maximum flow rate, matched with a new electronically controlled flow-sharing hydraulic distributor.

The system integrates automatic descent by gravity to limit the demand for hydraulic power, and consequently consumption and noise, without reducing safety. A vertical elevation function synchronises boom raise and extension for fully vertical movement during loading and unloading, while a set-point feature reduces repetitive operations by setting the system to memorise working configurations and positions.



Owen Buttle, Merlo UK national sales manager points out some of the key features of the Merlo eWorker, the firm's first battery-powered telehandler



Laurence Gale using a STIHL hedge trimmer



David Jones testing an EGO 52cm rotary mower

Service Dealer contributor, TurfPro editor and professional gardener, LAURENCE GALE Msc, MBPR – along with some fellow professionals – has been trialling two companies' ranges of cordless outdoor powered machinery. Here he offers dealers his thoughts on where their commercial customers might currently stand regarding the technology

Having worked in the professional grounds industry for well over 50 years, I have had the opportunity to witness many new machinery innovations come to market.

When I started out as a propagator and greenkeeper in the early 1970s, the choice and selection of machinery available was limited. In essence, it comprised a few makes of tractors, gang mowers, rotovators and pedestrian cylinder mowers. It was not until the mid-80s that we began to see

the introduction of a larger range of labour-saving devices, including rotary mowers, chainsaws, hedge cutters and trimmers. And these were, of course, all powered by petrol/two-stroke engines – a primary power source that fellow professionals became accustomed to using.

However, with climate change now at the forefront of the agenda, the government has made a clear political mandate that by 2030 there will be a ban on selling new petrol, diesel or hybrid cars in the UK as part of the ten-point plan for a green industrial revolution.

Some groups, though, are demanding the Prime Minister go further and ban all petrol-powered outdoor gardening equipment as well. Challenge 2025, for example, says garden tools have a "significant impact on the environment" and wants them done away with by 2025.

With that in mind, many manufacturers have, in recent years, been developing a range of electrically powered products to offer an alternative means of powering our tools and modes of transport.

As we all know, electrically powered

products and machinery have been around for well over 100 years. Today we use cordless power tools as part of our daily lives, both at home and in the workplace, and without them the level of work simply wouldn't be possible.

For this article I, along with some other local professional end-users, have been privileged to be able to test several STIHL and EGO battery-powered products over the last 12 months. The aim has been to assess their performance, endurance and reliability in commercial settings.

The intention of this project has not been to directly compare the companies' products to each other, but rather to see how well they perform in comparison to their current, traditionally fuelled equivalents. I have also been interested to see how they have been designed to withstand the rigours and durability of working in our diverse and challenging professional environments.

On test

Over the course of the testing period, we had the chance to try out a range of different hedge trimmers, blowers, trimmers and mowers.

Ergonomically, both sets of tools received positive responses from the end-users and were praised for often being lighter and less noisy than their fuel-driven equivalents. As for safety features, all the machines tested had excellently designed ergonomic cut-offs and operating controls.

Myself and my fellow pro users agreed that all the tools tested delivered the expected standard of performance and cutting quality, being easy to handle and control. Also, the ability to own several tools powered from the same power source offered flexibility and savings on fuel.

We were particularly impressed with the mowers on offer. I'd say all were well-designed, easy to operate and

delivered a clean cut in both wet and dry conditions. I personally enjoyed trying out the EGO zero turn rotary mower – an impressive machine that could run on a single or multiple EGO battery configurations.

Both companies have invested a lot of money in battery technology and have developed their own unique battery systems. EGO claims their standard ARCLithium 56v battery technology delivers the industry's highest energy capacity in a portable handheld battery. They offer a range of battery sizes available, from 2.5Ah to 12.0Ah, allowing the user to choose their required power.

They also offer a backpack battery holder that allows the opportunity to reduce the weight of the hand tool being used.

STIHL offers the AP series of batteries with different power outputs, while also offering a larger backpack battery to enhance the running times of



Range of EGO batteries



STIHL's range of AP batteries

the user's chosen equipment.

Both companies offer a complete range of charging and battery products to help ensure minimum downtimes and faster charging times. They both offer multiple charging systems that can charge 1-6 batteries at a time.

Overall, myself and my fellow professionals were impressed with the build quality of the machinery being trialled. Crucially, they delivered on performance and operation, and were of course cleaner and quieter and benefited from much-reduced vibration compared with the fuel-powered equivalents.

Professionals' concerns

If there were any concerns, it generally centred around the battery life and the recharging times.

Battery run times are dependent on the choice of machine being used. Chainsaws, mowers and blowers were

the most power-hungry – and in the case of the mowers, the longer and wetter the grass, the more power required. Also, if we were using the motor to help propel the mower forward, again this would tend to use more battery power. The range of recharging devices offered, in most cases, can recharge a depleted battery in 25-40 minutes. Also, both companies offer multiple battery chargers, allowing the opportunity to charge up to six batteries in one go.

But what are some of the longer-term questions centred around battery life? As a professional user I am interested in how many times can a given battery be recharged. EGO says their batteries are estimated to last between 800-1000 cycles – meaning users may get around 800 recharges before we see a deterioration of the battery. Whereas STIHL says their AP batteries are deemed to last for around 1200 cycles.

However, it is also important for end-users to understand that these batteries need looking after and must not be mistreated. They like to run at optimum temperatures. Helpfully, they have built-in red warning lights that indicate if the battery is getting hot. Operating during extreme hot or cold temperatures will affect the battery performance. Dealers should impress upon their professional customers that they must read the manufacturers' instructions before use!

One of the key benefits stated by manufacturers is that battery-powered cordless tools are cheaper to run compared with petrol models. Whilst a petrol engine can have plenty of complex moving parts that require regular servicing, it's undeniably simpler with a battery-powered tool; typically consisting of a motor, wiring harness and electronic control module.

Also, when purchasing a battery-

powered product, users are getting future fuel costs built into the price. Energy costs are increasing rapidly in 2022 but it can still be considered good value when you weigh up the cost vs the discussed benefits of cordless tools.

However, at present, most battery-powered products do tend to command high prices. Over time I suspect these may come down, even for the professional-level tools, as competition increases and the cost of producing improved battery technologies reduces.

From conversations I have been having recently with grounds crews at local authorities, it is these high initial prices that are preventing some from investing in battery tools or replacing their current batch of petrol-powered tools. This is combined with another concern held about a lack of belief that the tools would stand up to the rigours of contract maintenance work schedules. Also, some see difficulties in establishing the appropriate facilities for recharging the batteries.

I am sure this will soon change once councillors start implementing many of the new green emission environmental policies authorities are being driven to in the coming years. Many councils are in fact now changing to greener initiatives, bringing in battery-powered vehicles and maintenance tools.

To sum up, we all thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of using these battery-powered products and we were certainly impressed with their performance in terms of how they handled and the quality of the finish. For most domestic end-users, these products would suffice their needs. However, on the professional front, some users are still questioning whether their petrol equivalents are superior in power and performance – especially in terms of running times compared with the new battery-powered compatriots.

For me, I believe these products are of excellent quality and can easily match the performance of any

domestic petrol-powered tool – and over time they will be accepted by the professional users. The key is changing the mindset of how some pro-users go about their business. In time, I'm convinced everyone will be using battery-powered hand tools, as they are much lighter, cleaner, less noisy and reduce hand vibration, making them a safer and more sensible way of working long hours.

As commercial customers, we now benefit from a plethora of well-known manufacturers selling a fine range of battery-powered cordless products – all of whom are vying for a fast-growing, developing marketplace.

And, most importantly, we are lucky to benefit from a dedicated specialist machinery dealer network, up and down the country, investing in these new products, offering expert advice and superb after-sales service to all their customers.



STIHL battery blower



Service Dealer's Laurence Gale has been trying out battery products from both EGO and STIHL

Is perfection the enemy of progress?



Ego Z6

Lithium battery power and its advocates continue to attract unfair criticism. But we shouldn't let critics stand in the way of progress, says Steve Roskell, sales and marketing director of EMEA, EGO



Steve Roskell, EGO's sales and marketing director

Across our lives, cleaner, greener energy resources are becoming more abundant and more cost-effective.

However, the legacy technologies that batteries replace are not giving up without a fight. Our media, new and old, is littered with examples of supporters of fossil fuels attempting to

stall change. This backlash usually presents itself in one of two ways: attacking the new technology or attacking its advocates.

EGO is a business focused on electrification of outdoor power equipment, because we fundamentally believe it is the best energy system for these applications. While we are a commercial business, we are passionate about electrification, and have created a campaign, Challenge 2025, to drive the entire industry forward.

The goal of Challenge 2025 is that, by 2025, batteries become the principal power source for outdoor power equipment, leading to significant reductions in emissions and noise, whilst increasing safety and user comfort.

There are some who have described our Challenge 2025



campaign as “disingenuous”. And some that make claims we have seen before – that battery power is not up to the job. Make no mistake, these are tried-and-tested tactics. You will see them used to criticise everything from wind turbines and electric cars to battery-powered lawn mowers and line trimmers. They are also hollow arguments that are easily pulled apart – and here's how.

Myth busting

Some of the most common refrains are “battery power still has a run-time?” and “what about the cost implication?” But these are no longer the issues they once were. Let's take cost first. The reality is that repeated studies show that, over the life of the equipment, lithium batteries deliver huge savings compared with petrol power.

In 2019, EGO investigated the total cost of ownership between petrol and battery-powered outdoor equipment. The study looked at the cost of a petrol brush cutter, hedge trimmer and leaf blower compared with their battery-powered counterparts. Researchers found that, initially, buyers would spend approximately £690 extra on battery-powered equipment in year one, but would already see a return on investment of £365 in their second year of ownership. In years three and four, the benefits of switching to electric really begin to manifest, with users saving a total of £1,430 and £3,500 respectively. After the fifth and final year, even with factoring in full replacement of the equipment, the total lifetime savings amounted to more than £4,500.

The study also factored in seasonal use of certain tools so that energy usage was based on four litres of petrol per day over a modest 170 days per year, and this was before the recent price increases we've seen in fuel. With more frequent use, the payback time accelerates. It is therefore clear to see that switching to battery-powered

tools will save you money. And, of course, this is without addressing the wider benefits to air quality and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Once this financial argument is breached, the naysayers retreat behind their next barricade: the claim that battery power is not up to the job. In some specific cases, this remains true, and neither EGO nor Challenge 2025 have ever claimed otherwise. But for the majority of applications in gardening and grounds maintenance, battery power is already meeting or exceeding the performance of petrol.

On a single charge, our new 12Ah battery can help users mow up to 1900sqm, use a line trimmer for up to 340 minutes, trim hedges for up to 360 minutes, saw for up to 720 cuts or leaf blow up to 480 minutes. Anyone who works in the industry will tell you, this is more than sufficient for the majority of jobs done by most professional gardeners, local authorities and landscapers. On top of this, EGO batteries are interchangeable, meaning the user can have one on charge while using the machine, and a quick swap enables them to carry on working. It's no different to having to refill the tank on a two-stroke tool. In fact, it takes less time and is not as messy.

Other traditional petrol-powered manufacturers recognise the performance capabilities of our battery technology, so we have created our Powered by EGO strategy to enable more manufacturers to electrify their products.

Furthermore, battery technology is improving all the time; what critics say is impossible today could well be possible in a few years' time. Battery technology is the best option for most applications, not all. To dismiss it because it is not perfect seems indulgently negative, whereas we believe that we cannot let an insistence on perfection be the enemy of progress.



Challenge 2025

With the aspects of new technology rebutted, we look now at our advocacy for it, as when someone can't find fault with your views, so they try to find fault with you instead. They call this the "shoot the messenger" fallacy.

A recent article branded us as 'disingenuous' and referred to our Challenge 2025 campaign as being a commercial activity. We are, of course, a commercial entity, so this is technically true, if a little unfair.

For example, this year, Challenge 2025's campaign includes activities for schools, by distributing education packs highlighting the impact of petrol tools on climate change and air quality. Obviously, it is not our commercial goal to sell equipment to children. This is a genuine campaign that includes changing the mindsets of the next generation. It is clearly not a sales-led commercial activity.

Secondly, while we are funding Challenge 2025, in order for it to be a success it would have to result in increased sales of battery-powered equipment for many other manufacturers, not just EGO. Challenge 2025 is our opportunity to drive the entire industry forward in terms of electrification, and we will be only one of many beneficiaries of this change.

Overall, the media is playing an integral,

positive role in helping to spread the word about Challenge 2025 and the benefits of electrification. I'm sure we all recognise that media companies are commercial entities, but can also be forces for good by advocating progress? Equally the same is true of manufacturers like EGO. It's not all about making money. We want to be at the forefront of driving a change that will benefit equipment owners, equipment operators, and the wider world.

EGO have published their Challenge 25 report



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LAMMA crowds counter date move doubters

After new organiser AgriConnect was forced to move LAMMA from its usual January date to May because of the pandemic, there was some disquiet among exhibitors who feared visitors would be too busy to attend. Ultimately, numbers were respectable and there was plenty to see, reports MARTIN RICKATSON

LAMMA looked all set to return to its usual January slot this year, until the Omicron variant of the virus necessitated a new plan for the annual farm machinery show that nowadays takes place at Birmingham's NEC. Keen to keep the show on track, new organiser AgriConnect, which, via parent firm Arc, only last year purchased the event and its associated publishing titles such as Farmers Guardian, announced just before Christmas they would delay the event by four months. Whilst admirable in its intentions, the key issue for many of those exhibiting was that this would place it in early May, at a time when many arable farmers are applying fertiliser and fungicides, and their livestock counterparts are busy making silage.

The organising team therefore faced a few problems, not least among those exhibitors who were not comfortable with the new dates, but were equally loath to pull out of the show. Some did choose to withdraw, while others slimmed down their stand sizes. However, LAMMA's organisers pushed ahead, using initiatives such as a dealer zone and other show features to fill the few gaps there were in the halls. And ultimately, while there may have been some quieter periods during the later hours of each day, there were healthy crowds on both mornings of the show.

Whilst the war in Ukraine has hiked fertiliser and fuel prices, and the winter/spring drought was also causing concern among both farmer visitors and the manufacturers and dealers who supply their machinery, Ukraine and consequent food supply concerns have resulted in climbs in commodity values – particularly those for grains and

oilseeds. For the coming harvest, given good yields and quality, there will potentially be good profits made on arable farms, alongside those of last year, suggested farm business consultants Andersons at a show briefing.

Prospects for dealers

"Some may therefore choose machinery investment as a tax-efficient way of dealing with this, at the same time as enhancing the efficiency of their businesses, which could be good for machinery dealers," said James Webster, senior agribusiness analyst at the firm's Melton Mowbray head office. "The £1m 100% capital allowances that are effective until March 31st next year will be an additional incentive to invest.

"But with the much higher working capital requirements of this season, not all profit will be available for investment," he warned.

"And it's next year that higher costs are likely to really bite, with variable costs potentially almost doubling, and gross margins falling by 60%, alongside significant increases in overheads.

"Farmers must accurately calculate the potential return on investment, although, if they are choosing to make a system change, such as a move to reduced tillage and thereby reduced costs, then this may be significant.

"There is still too much equipment on many UK arable farms, with every farmed hectare carrying a machinery depreciation charge of £180/ha. But what this does mean for both farmers and dealers is that there is still huge scope for savings through collaboration in more efficient equipment across larger acreages spread over neighbouring farms."

“The £1m 100% capital allowances that are effective until March 31st next year will be an additional incentive to invest”

But despite machinery price rises and sourcing difficulties, the most recent Agricultural Engineers' Association figures issued before the show indicated continued recovery from the Covid-induced downturn. During April, for the first time this year, the number of agricultural tractors registered for the month was higher than in the same month during 2021. At 1,152 units, the monthly total was 14% higher than in April last year, although it was close to the average for the time of year in the previous five years. The total for January-April 2022 was just 2% lower than January-April 2021, at 4,199 machines.

New show features

The new 'LAMMA365' dealer zone certainly helped to put on a good spread of tractors to replace those from manufacturers who did not attend in full – including John Deere, Valtra, Fendt, Claas, Deutz-Fahr and New Holland. Stand holders who did commit included Argo, with its McCormick and Landini brands, Kubota and, via local dealer Chandlers, Massey Ferguson. Case IH, meanwhile, supplied a suite of tractors for UK retailing partner Bednar's cultivation equipment stand. For those seeking tractors for

lighter tasks, such as grounds maintenance or horticultural work, makers such as Kioti and Farmtrac were also in attendance. While some big-name implement makers such as Kuhn and Kverneland were absent, there was a good number of importers such as Opico and KRM, plus plenty of UK-based sprayer and trailer makers.

But LAMMA isn't only about machinery itself, and visitors come to seek advice as well as see equipment. Presentation topics included servicing, maintenance, finance, farm safety, legislation and red diesel use, while the Farming 4.0 Trail showcased the latest advances in data capture and management, robotics and autonomous machines. Exhibitors showing products in this field included Opico, which has recently announced an agreement to retail and support the Danish-built Farmdroid FD20 solar-powered rowcrop precision seeder/weeder, more of which in a future issue.

There was also farm safety advice on offer from farm safety advisory specialists Safety Revolution, while a new theatre sponsored by Fendt and Valtra saw speakers from the AGCO brands and from McCormick and Landini parent ARGO discuss common issues surrounding how to best integrate



Machinery dealers may benefit from good prices and harvest prospects for 2022, but next year may be more challenging, suggested consultants Andersons



Manitou's ULM telescopic handlers are less than 1.5m wide. Merlo, meanwhile, debuted its electric E-Worker, which lifts 2.5t to 4.8m, and has an 8hr work time



Bobcat's R-series comprises seven models covering 2.6-4.3t and 6.0-8.0m maximum lift capacities and heights, with a new cab design including suspended armrest

data across working systems to ensure they can communicate effectively, via technology such as ISOBUS-capable equipment, which was examined in detail. AGCO's Charlie Rollason, aftersales training business development manager, also spoke on the opportunities available within agricultural engineering, in particular via apprenticeship schemes.

It remains to be seen how visitor numbers translate into trade down the line for manufacturers and dealers, with continued concern over high steel, fuel and fertiliser costs and the prospect of reduced farm support on the horizon. The next challenge will be to see whether sufficient support can be garnered for the next event, which, barring other unforeseen issues, should fall back into its usual January slot – only eight months after this show.

Plenty of new products

Meanwhile, LAMMA was the launchpad for new machines from a number of manufacturers, many of them UK-based. With the Sustainable Farming Incentive set to reward farmers for minimising soil erosion and carbon release through minimal cultivations and direct drilling, both **Claydon** and **Mzuri** unveiled developments to their direct strip-till drill ranges. The former's new mounted Evolution models span 3-6m, with 9-19 tines, and incorporate developments including hydraulic control of seed depth adjustment, improved access to the metering unit for easier calibration and the option of hydraulically controlled front-mounted discs for drilling in high residue situations.

Mzuri's news was the full launch of the iZona seed/fertiliser strip-till drill first shown in prototype form at last year's Cereals event. Built on the same principles as existing Pro-Til machines, the flagship drill features a 5,000-litre pressurised split hopper. Leading discs cut through surface residue, primary knife coulters clear trash and band-place fertiliser below the seeding zone, and a



Developments on Claydon's new mounted Evolution drills include hydraulic control of seed depth adjustment and optional hydraulically-controlled front discs

secondary seeding coulters follows on a unique ball joint system to allow the coulters to self-steer behind the path of the band placed fertiliser. Meanwhile, another implement looking to meet the trend towards shallower cultivations was **Dal-Bo's** Powerchain 800 disc cultivator. Designed to work at 20-40mm, optimal speed is 10-15km/hr, says the firm. The four disc gangs, carrying 132 discs in total, are arranged in a diamond formation, which Dal-Bo says ensures thorough soil movement and trash distribution.

Other innovations on show included a new control system for its flagship hedge trimmers from **Shelbourne Reynolds**. The new S-Touch package comprises a touchscreen and a choice of large or small joysticks to control the Suffolk manufacturer's 8000 series models, enabling the programming and storage of preferred settings. On the forage front, meanwhile, **McHale's** latest V8 variable chamber round baler range comprises the V8940 and V8950 models, both with 2.1m pick-up and 15-blade feed rotor, while the latter also has a 15-knife chopper. A double-drive system aids belt rotation and bale formation in damp grass conditions, says the firm. Maximum bale diameter on both models is 1.9m

New tractors included base-specification **Kubota** M6000 models targeted at the livestock market, with five versions from 104-143hp, all incorporating a three-range, eight-step powershift. **McCormick**, meanwhile, gave a UK debut to its X7 SWB tractors, which comprise the four-cylinder (2.65m wheelbase) X7.417 P6-Drive (165hp max) and X7.418 P6-Drive (175hp) with five-range/six-step powershift, plus the six-cylinder (2.76m wheelbase) X7.617 and X7.618 with the same power ratings. In addition, there are two VT-Drive CVT tractors, the 165hp/four-cyl X7.418 and the 175hp/six-cyl X7.618. All are FPT-engined, and feature common rail electronic fuel injection and a new engine brake.

There was also news on the handler front, with French maker **Manitou** showing off its ultra-narrow, sub-1.5m wide



Mzuri's iZona drill uses leading discs to cut through residue, primary knife coulters to clear trash and band-place fertiliser, and a secondary seeding coulters

ULM telescopic handlers, which lift 1.25/1.50 tonnes to 4.3m. **Merlo**, meanwhile, debuted its electric E-Worker, which lifts 2.5t to 4.8m and is battery-powered, with an eight-hour work time and nine-hour charge time.

Larger telescopic handlers making their debut included **Bobcat's** R-series, comprising seven models with Stage V engines, with maximum lifting capacities of 2.6-4.3t and 6.0-8.0m maximum lift heights. A new cab design features an upgraded interior, including new Grammer Maximo Dynamic heated air suspension seat, plus suspended armrest with joystick, incorporating shuttle buttons and bucket shaking feature.



Dal-Bo's Powerchain 800 disc cultivator features four disc gangs in a diamond formation. Designed to work at 20-40mm, optimal speed is 10-15km/hr



There are two McHale V8 variable chamber round balers, both with 15-blade feed rotor, one also having a 15-knife chopper. Maximum bale diameter is 1.9m



Shelbourne Reynolds' new S-Touch control system for its flagship hedge trimmers comprises a touchscreen and a choice of large or small joysticks



BUSINESS MONITOR

Taking the temperature of the dealer network, sponsored by Garden Trader

Recruiting into the dealership still a struggle

Dealers want to take on new staff, but are finding the process difficult

The message that came through loud and clear from the dealers who responded to our recent survey regarding recruitment into the dealership is that whilst the desire is there to expand the workforce, the process of finding new staff is still extremely difficult.

Interestingly, 58% of dealers who answered the survey said they had actually taken on new staff during these past 12 months – but a clear majority of respondents said they still wanted to take on new employees in this coming year (83%).

Almost everyone who responded described the process of finding new people for the dealership as either

Extremely Difficult or Difficult (92% in total). When we asked our readers last year, the top two answers given as to why it's so hard to find new recruits were a lack of appropriate skills (42%) and a lack of applicants (25%).

In terms of where to go about attempting to discover fresh candidates, this year an online job search site (30%) had taken over from Facebook amongst those who responded as the most favoured option.

Finally, again it was thought to be the responsibility of a combination of groups that have a vested interest in the health of the industry (such as manufacturers, dealers, trade associations, etc) to work together to try to improve the situation.



“Your say”

We asked for your thoughts on the current recruitment situation in the industry.

- The industry needs to be more joined up and not have so many fragments. All the land-based colleges need to get closer to manufacturers. We need to get into the secondary schools from Year 8 and above and build the interest from there.
- We have managed to get apprentices and workshop assistants recently, so hopefully they will progress into the company. We are struggling to get time-served engineers in agriculture but have managed to get a few groundcare engineers, which is helping the business.
- We advertised for a mechanic, £25k per year, in the north of England. After eight weeks, two applicants, both totally unsuitable.
- Our recent experience is awful. There are no suitable candidates, and if we are lucky to find one, wage expectations are too high. We've had to be more selective in the work we take on because we don't have the staff to cope with all the demand. For example, we don't take on warranty work now if we didn't sell the product.
- Warranty rates are so poor that we prioritise work we can charge a retail rate for and give priority to those customers who bought from us.
- We have just taken on a trainee. If we could somehow get the secondary education systems to promote or even recognise our industry it would help. Not all kids need tertiary education and those that don't go to university are not destined to warehouses or retail – there are other options, and with robotics and batteries and it's not even that grimy!
- Dealers selling their labour too cheap to the public, so devaluing the skill required, and in turn not realising realistic revenue to enable the dealer to pay a decent wage to small engine mechanics. I see no end of adverts from dealers requiring skilled mechanics offering 20k a year for a five and a half day week. Crazy - who with those skills would want that pay and those hours?
- We are finding it difficult to find both experienced mechanics and apprentices who are interested in moving into the industry. We previously used the Honda apprenticeship program but that has now been closed. We are struggling to find an apprenticeship program where the applicants will have an award / certificate at the end.
- Very difficult to find the level of experience and when successful it is difficult to compete with the level of pay in other industries. Young keen people are difficult to hold onto as they are always looking for increased wages.

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Cost of living crisis

BNPL

An acronym for success?

In a time of rising costs, individuals are especially keen to make purchases as affordable as possible, writes Adam Bernstein, SME Digest editor

Cheques are history, and cash is declining, leaving debit and credit cards to take up the slack. The problem is that the former card requires funds in an account to make a purchase, and the latter usually offers up to 56 days to pay – and requires a credit check.

But there is an alternative that the sector needs to consider, and it's known as 'buy now pay later' – BNPL.

An unregulated instalment payment option, invariably with no hard credit search, it seeks to make products more affordable, with interest and charge-free purchases.

BNPL has enjoyed explosive growth in recent years. As The Guardian highlighted last October (2021), UK consumers spent more than £4bn using BNPL, and an estimated 7.7m Britons have balances that average £538 for each borrower.

Labelled 'the future of millennial finance', it's very popular with the under 30s and those on tight budgets; it's thought that by 2026, this form of finance could be worth £40bn a year. There are many providers, including Klarna, Clearpay, Laybuy and PayPal.

Retailers – noted The Guardian – “happily pay lenders

generous commission in return for those higher sales. [An] investor said double-digit commission rates were not uncommon in the industry. For lenders, handling payments has shifted from a cost centre to a profit centre.”

But BNPL isn't without its problems.

There's a growing concern in official circles that the unregulated nature of BNPL is causing problems for many. Some, it appears, are racking up BNPL debts they cannot afford; those failing to keep up with payments are now accumulating charges, or, in some cases, seeing their credit file impacted, with loans or mortgages being denied, following debt collection action.

Notably, mid-February (2022), TransUnion said that from Summer 2022, BNPL transactions will start to appear on credit files. And in early May, Klarna said the same. The move will record missed payments, and conversely, help those with 'thin' credit files build up a credit profile as they make consistent payments.

But problems aside, BNPL has the potential to be a very valuable tool for firms looking to enhance their popularity among the buying public.

The benefits of BNPL

It's important to remember that BNPL seeks to promote a frictionless buying experience for users; the more 'stop' points there are in the buying process, the greater the likelihood of a shopping basket being abandoned.

For retailers, BNPL offers a way of selling more goods while being paid up front – all with protection from repayment risk and fraud.

It opens doors to more people, especially to those that do not possess a credit card. BNPL is a very convenient way to access financing; there are no separate application forms, no application fees, and minimal additional processing time, and most providers have simple-to-understand repayment plans and terms; customers can buy with ease in just a few clicks after first registration.

And, as is obvious, the ability to spread costs – especially if interest free – is a wonderful sales conversion tool, which makes customers more likely to make a purchase, especially a large one, if they can pay over time; it's the reason why interest-free credit appeared a few decades ago. But in contrast to that, as before, BNPL carries no hard credit check.

In practical terms, the consumer shops as normal. But when they get to an online checkout, alongside traditional payment options like credit/debit card and PayPal, they'll also see a 'Pay with [BNPL provider]' button. A quick eligibility check is run, often in the form of a surface inspection of the shopper's credit history, and the BNPL provider will either approve or reject the customer. Alternatively, for in-store purchases, some BNPL providers offer a digital payment card for a user's smartphone.

Choosing a BNPL provider

The question for retailers, then, if they want to offer this form of finance, is which BNPL provider to choose? The answer to that will depend on what is sold, its price, and the seller's customer base.

BNPL providers, like banks, offer different products with different repayment periods, from weeks and months to years. Those selling higher value goods will do better with a provider that offers payments over six or more months.

Just as customers carry different repayment risks and therefore different credit histories, so some BNPL providers operate minimum and maximum credit limits. This means, by definition, seeking to tie up with a provider that will offer customers enough credit for a purchase to be made.

And integration with e-commerce systems isn't an issue either. The two biggest operators, Clearpay and Klarna, offer integration and a bespoke service, if necessary.

clearpay

Klarna.

To finish

To an extent, anything that helps firms generate more revenue is a good thing. BNPL is going to see regulation in time. However, for the moment, it is an option that independents can not afford to ignore; rivals haven't.

Annual leave

Going back in time for holiday

Over the last few years, the landscape regarding workers' annual leave has been in a state of constant flux, writes Suzanne Wrench, associate solicitor at ESP Law

A number of cases have been brought against employers, and the most recent, at the start of February (2022), in the Court of Appeal, is yet another. This particular case decided the thorny issue of employment status and the ruling is likely to have employers paying attention.

In simple terms, Smith v Pimlico Plumbers dealt with two

questions – whether an individual who successfully argued that he was a worker rather than self-employed could claim for outstanding holiday pay when he took leave but was not paid for it; and if so, how far back could he claim outstanding holiday pay for.

This judgement could cause employers a headache.

Delving into the background

Smith v Pimlico Plumbers has been ongoing for several years. In essence, Gary Smith was a plumber and heating engineer who worked for Pimlico Plumbers between 2005 and 2011. He was considered by Pimlico Plumbers to be an 'independent contractor', and whilst employment status can be a legally grey area, it is an agreed principle that a genuine self-employed contractor is not entitled to holiday pay.

Mr Smith therefore did not receive any holiday pay for the time he worked for Pimlico Plumbers, although he did take periods of unpaid leave. He resigned in May 2011 and in a legal claim that went all the way to the Supreme Court, he successfully established that for the period he worked for Pimlico Plumbers he had been a 'worker.'

Having established his worker status, Smith sought payment of his outstanding holiday pay.

This separate case reached the Court of Appeal, which, at the beginning of February, found that leave that had been taken, but not paid (as per this case), and that leave that was not

taken at all where the worker has been denied the right to paid annual leave (as in a previous case, King v Sash Windows) were essentially two sides of the same coin. The court said that in both cases, the misclassification of employment status had denied the individual's their right to paid annual leave.

It also found that Smith was seeking a claim under the Working Time Regulations Act. This meant that upon the termination of his employment, his entitlement (and claim) to holiday pay crystallised and the three-month statutory deadline for bringing a claim commenced from the date of the termination of his engagement. His claim was therefore deemed in time, and valid.

As such, the appeal judges ruled that Smith was entitled to backdated holiday pay, said to amount to over £74,000 accrued over his entire six years' service. The next step, subject to the judgement being appealed to the Supreme Court, will be for an assessment of damages.

Potentially huge implications

This is a significant decision on the issue of holiday pay for several reasons.

The case will be particularly significant to employers

who engage individuals who are treated and labelled as self-employed, but who may actually be workers or employees. The general risk of a claim that the individual was actually a worker or an employee is now compounded by the risk of a legacy claim for holiday pay. It is no defence that the employer honestly believed that the individual was not legally a worker.

The government enacted a two-year backstop on unlawful deduction of wages claims in 2014. Smith's holiday pay claim was brought before this legislation came into force – and indeed, it was the case that his claim

was brought under the Working Time Regulations – so this legislation was not directly relevant to Smith. However, the court stated that damages for Working Time Regulation claims will not be limited to the two-year limit. If the claim is brought under the Working Time Regulations, and within three months of termination, the worker can claim back pay for the whole period of their employment.

Employer's mitigation

The Court of Appeal stated that a worker can lose the right to take leave at the end of the leave year, but only where the employer can prove that it specifically and transparently gave the worker the opportunity to take paid annual leave; it encouraged the worker to take paid annual leave; and informed the worker that the right would be lost at the end of the leave year.

This judgement confirms that if an employer cannot demonstrate that they have taken these steps, the right to paid leave does not lapse; instead, it carries over and accumulates until the contract terminates, at which point the worker will be entitled to a payment in respect of the untaken leave.

In summary

It also goes without saying that undertaking a review of self-employed contractors to assess whether there is any risk they could be deemed a worker is a reasonable approach. Unfortunately, however, employment status is an area of law which is also fraught with danger, so the recommendation is to seek clear legal advice.



The art of active listening



Sara Hey, vice president of operations and development at Bob Clements Inc, the dealership development company based in Missouri, shares insights she gives US dealers with *Service Dealer's* UK readership

THIS ISSUE: How to make the customer feel heard

Have you ever noticed that the more someone feels unheard, the louder they get? I have three young children and I see this every day. My kids are constantly competing for attention, and in the midst of trying to be heard, the volume in our house rivals that of Wembley Stadium.

It seems so counter intuitive, but my guess is that you see this same thing play out every day, not only with your customers, but with your employees as well.

As we think about both our employees and customers, we must understand this fundamental fact: people want to be heard. They want someone to acknowledge what they are going through and that their wants and needs are valid. In our sales training with our dealers in the States,

we talk about Active Listening. Active Listening is a skill that we have to learn, and when we put it into action, it allows our customers as well as our employees to feel heard.

So, how do you practice Active Listening?

Active Listening is not done by coming up with your rebuttal during the conversation – quite the opposite. Active Listening is about understanding what is being fully communicated through body language, verbal cues, and the words being said. This is a technique that hostage negotiators use during negotiations. I'm sure you sometimes feel like hostage negotiators in your dealership, so this may work for you!

Here's an example that you may run

into in your dealership:

Let's say you have a customer who has walked up to the parts counter to pick up a special-order part and it's not there. The customer might say, "I can't believe you don't have this part in yet." Active Listening would start by looking at the body language of the person. Are their arms crossed or uncrossed? Are they leaning on something? Find a way to match the body language of the person you are listening to – it will allow them to relax.

You can also stay engaged in what the other person is saying by looking at them directly. Other distractions in your environment, such as your phone or other customers walking in and waving, cause you to not fully listen. What verbal cues are being given to what is being said, and how can you offer verbal cues back? Respond with phrases like, "I see" or "uh huh."

The final part of Active Listening is the words that are being said. By clarifying what is being said in your own words, you allow the other person to provide any additional clarification to something that was not heard correctly. My guess is that you, as an owner or a manager, are already doing most of this without even realising it.

Our ultimate goal is to create an experience for our customers that makes them feel heard and understood in our dealership. We never want them to feel like an inconvenience for us, and one of the easy ways we can do that is through practicing Active Listening.



A warm feeling

Anthony Deacon of MKM Agriculture describes how it feels to see a major manufacturer recognise the work of a young apprentice the dealership has put its faith in



Here I am writing my fourth diary piece of the year, in another 12 months that is just flying by.

I would like to be able to tell you that our new dealership build is flying too, but that would be wishful thinking. Plans are moving in the right direction, but I guess like all these projects, there are hoops that we need to jump through to comply with the demands from local authorities. Provisionally, planners are on board with our application, however because our site is in a great crested newt red zone, there is additional work we need to carry out to ensure we do not harm these endangered species during the construction. We are currently working through this to hopefully get permission granted. Fingers crossed.

My main concentration recently has been to build our team, and I'm very happy to say we have taken on some very enthusiastic people in most areas of our business. We also applied to the Honda UK apprenticeship program to enrol a new apprentice on the ATV course at the Honda Institute in Bracknell. I was very proud to see some bright young talent apply and show interest in our business and industry. As a result, we have taken on not one, but two young men who will start their three-year program with us this summer.

I'm also immensely proud to tell you that our last apprentice, Carl Devonport, completed his three-year program with Suzuki at the Bosch training facility in Doncaster last September, and has just recently

been awarded Suzuki GB Apprentice of the Year.

Carl's journey is an inspiration, and one I would like to share with you. I first met Carl when he arrived at our Bedfordshire dealership on his bicycle, looking for some part-time work during the school holidays. We found a position for him in our parts department where his job was to sell off obsolete stock on eBay. Carl's aspiration was to be a technician; however, we had only just appointed a new apprentice, and we didn't need another.

At the time, this current apprentice decided the industry wasn't for him and moved on. A couple of days later there was a knock at my door and 16-year-old Carl asked to take the apprentice position. Carl was a looked-after child, which meant there was a process we had to follow to ensure what Carl wanted was the

best decision for his future. We had to pull extra chairs into my office to seat the advisory team that arrived for this meeting, and now nearly four years later it gives me a warm feeling that on that day the best decision was made for Carl and he is now a fully qualified (but still learning) ATV technician, with the added award of Apprentice of the Year under his belt. When the new apprentices Alfie and Jamie arrive this summer, they have some big shoes to fill.

Taking on staff in our industry, as you all know, has always been a struggle, and when you are trying to grow a small business, there is the added challenge of making your company look appealing to young and enthusiastic people. I have found good results by promoting opportunities on social media and at shows. The ATV apprenticeship programs on offer from some of our suppliers have also attracted some good young people. I would really like to see the same kind of apprenticeship programs available to cover groundcare machinery.

I was pleased to see many young people at this year's LAMMA show interested in agriculture, and I'm convinced TV shows like *Clarkson's Farm* have helped promote the industry in a positive way. Now all we need is a personality in the horticulture sector to match this.

I hope you are all having a successful summer season so far.



Apprentice Carl Devonport receiving his Suzuki GB Apprentice of the Year award

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DOMESTIC



Cutting with eMotion

New Gyro from Stiga with armrest mounted joystick

New from Stiga is the Gyro employing the company's eMotion technology, which is described as a unique electronic system providing steering and speed all delivered through an armrest mounted joystick.

The company says the precise, electronic joystick allows the mower to turn on a sixpence. Each rear wheel is driven by a self-contained electric motor, which, according to Stiga, is a combination that "guarantees a powerful cutting performance, superior ergonomic design, delivering unsurpassed driver comfort and mower manoeuvrability".

The Gyro is said to be suitable for large and complex gardens up to 8,000 square metres. The 360-degree turning radius enables close mowing up to lawn edges, even under bushes, while ensuring driver visibility.

"This is what lawnmowers will be like in the future," says Gary Whitney, managing director of Stiga UK. "Gyro establishes a completely new category of battery-powered sit-on mowers for challenging areas, unbeatable productivity, and are not just fun but comfortable to drive too"

Retail price from £7,131.

AGRICULTURAL



Icon-ic launch from JCB

New Fastrac 4000 and 8000 Series

JCB has launched its new Fastrac 4000 and 8000 Series tractors with an all-new electronics infrastructure that the company says delivers higher levels of performance and convenience while giving operators unprecedented choice in the way they operate their machine.

The new Fastrac iCON operator environment has three key features:

- iCONFIGURE – creating a bespoke control experience for every operator
- iCONNECT – integrating advanced precision agriculture technology
- iCONTROL – redefining operation through new driveline software

The 175hp to 348hp tractors feature the new iCON armrest console and touch-screen display that provides flexibility in control allocation and operator information, and a new transmission control strategy to deliver operator comfort and powertrain efficiency. The tractors are also available with fully-integrated ISOBUS, precise JCB GPS guidance, and implement control applications that minimise the need for additional displays.

The new JCB Fastrac iCON tractors feature:

- New iCON armrest console with position-adjustable 12in colour touch-screen display
- Optional integrated ISOBUS for efficient touch-screen implement control
- Fully integrated GPS guidance and precision farming application options
- Smart Transmission Control for added powertrain efficiency and operator comfort
- Unique choice of 'classic' and 'pro' joystick transmission control formats
- Multi-function auxiliary joystick with configurable buttons, rocker and x-y hydraulic controls
- Memory for up to 50 different control profiles for different machines and operators
- JCB Headland Turn Assist now has up to 50 individual sequences with up to 50 steps each
- New automatic climate control air conditioning with solar load and temperature monitoring

JCB Agriculture managing director John Smith said, "We had three major objectives with this important project for the JCB Fastrac: to create a bespoke operator experience; integrate electronics technology such as ISOBUS and GPS guidance; and redefine the already high level of operator control and driving comfort that the Fastrac offers.

"At the same time, we wanted to maintain a familiarity in terms of the controls and information displays to ensure existing users can quickly adapt to the new system. Feedback from our extensive development and testing work with evaluation customers shows we have achieved all of these objectives, making the Fastrac an even more attractive proposition in terms of performance, productivity and operator appeal."

5 SECOND INFO

- Higher level of performance
- All new electronics
- Touch-screen displays
- Fully-integrated GPS JCB guidance

COMMERCIAL

RG bargy for weeds

STIHL expand cordless brushcutter range

STIHL has extended its range of cordless brushcutters with the launch of the RGA 140, the first tool in the company's AP System dedicated for use with their RG cutting head, which the company says enables professionals to cut weeds and grass with ease in sensitive areas.

Taking inspiration from the FSA 135 brushcutter and RG gearbox, the new RGA 140 features oscillating disc blades with low rotational energy, enabling low-spin mowing on hard surfaces and around fragile obstacles such as cars or greenhouses. Not only does this reduce the risk of flicking stones, says STIHL, but due to its low spin mowing and tailored RPM, the new brushcutter also reduces the safety distances to 3m from objects and 5m from people, making the tool suitable for use in built-up areas.

The unit also boasts a 230mm cutting diameter and ergonomic controls. Featuring a quiet EC motor with three-speed settings and an LED display, users can continuously regulate the speed in order to work as

efficiently as possible. In addition, the new brushcutter utilises a bike handle for well-balanced operation.

Part of the AP System, the RGA 140 is compatible with the manufacturer's Smart Connector 2A and features a mounting point on the tool housing, facilitating effective maintenance, as well as increased productivity and reduced downtime. This model features sturdy motor housing, mesh air filter, and robust gearbox. Working time with the recommended AP 300 S battery is up to 100 minutes.



DOMESTIC

New saws caught in the Webb



Two-stroke lightweight petrol models

Webb has launched their latest range of two-stroke lightweight petrol chainsaws.

There are two models in the range: the Webb 40cm (16") two-stroke 45cc petrol chainsaw, and the Webb 45cm two-stroke 50cc petrol chainsaw. Both machines are supplied with the easy start recoil system. Each is equipped with an original Oregon guide bar and chain as standard.

Featuring the latest in EURO-5

technology, the company says these petrol chainsaws significantly reduce fuel consumption and exhaust emissions without compromising on speed or power. Each machine is fitted with a 600ml fuel tank, whilst the 260ml oil tank keeps the chain lubricated with its automatic pump with a manual adjuster.

The chainsaws come with ergonomic handles and initiative controls, plus an anti-vibration system that isolates the

handles from the engine and reduces operator fatigue. The two-stroke engine keeps weight low (5.6kg without guide bar and chain) while maintaining maximum output. The standard safety chain brake gives the operator peace of mind.

All Webb petrol chainsaws come with a two-year warranty (T&Cs apply). The company says a full range of accessories and spares are held in stock.

AGRICULTURAL



Bale handling improved

New GPS auto feature on the Krone BaleCollect

The new GPS auto feature on the Krone BaleCollect bale accumulator, according to the manufacturer, makes bale handling easier and more convenient, by allowing bales to be deposited automatically at right angles along pre-set virtual lines.

Krone says depositing bales in this way ensures efficient bale collecting, less field traffic and operator hassle. In the past, operators had to trigger the unloading function manually, which meant that not all bales were deposited along straight lines.

The GPS-controlled auto depositing feature is designed with contractors and large-scale farmers in mind, because it saves time and costs for bale transport by reducing fuel consumption, the number of tractor hours and working hours.

Another important benefit of this feature is increased work safety in awkward places and on the headland. Also, bales are no longer overlooked and accidentally left in the field. Field traffic can be significantly reduced too, leading to lower soil compaction issues, better field management and higher yields.

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DOMESTIC & COMMERCIAL

EGO increases run times

With new battery size and charging options

EGO has launched a new battery size and charging options to give increased run-time and no limits when it comes to battery power.

Addressing a common concern with battery power, EGO has launched its CHU6000 Professional Multi-Port Charging Case, which is able to charge any combination of up to six EGO portable batteries at the same time. Working with what the company describes as the industry's fastest charger, the new CHV1600E 1600W Multi-Port Charger, a typical 60Ah setup will charge in three hours.

The Multi-Port Charging Case uses an intelligent power management system that replenishes batteries with the lowest level of charge first, then brings all the batteries up to full charge at the same rate.

Also, part of the company's professional range, the new 12Ah BA6720T battery (pictured) is now the largest in its range and increases run time by up to 20 per cent across all EGO products. With this battery, the company says users can



mow up to 1900sqm on a single charge, while offering up to six hours of run time for selected hedge trimmers and line trimmers.

The battery is interchangeable with all the company's tools and uses patented 56V ARC Lithium technology to provide balance between required performance and usable power. It also makes use of their KeepCool technology to keep the temperature of battery cells lower for longer, preventing overheating. Internal microprocessors and software control every cell for delivery of optimal power, performance, and runtime.

Vince Brauns, European product manager at EGO, said, **"Our new 12Ah battery and multiport charger combine to resolve one of the biggest barriers to battery-powered tool uptake in the professional market – battery capacity and speed of charging."**

DOMESTIC

Cordless rollers join the Liner up

Two new models from Atco

Atco have announced they have launched two new battery-powered roller lawnmowers.

Atco have announced they have launched two new battery-powered roller lawnmowers.

Both of the machines have batteries that can also be used in all the STIGA 48V battery handheld tools.

The Liner 16s Li Rear Roller Lawnmower is a 48V-battery unit that runs for up to 60 minutes. It also has features such as a stripe producing roller, self-drive, 41cm cut and single-point cutting height adjustment. It is supplied with a 55-litre collector and batteries and charger.

The Liner 18S LI Kit has the larger 46cm cut option and all of the other features that the Liner 16s Li boasts too. They are both also fitted with ergonomic soft-grip handlebars for

comfort and also have anti-gouge skid plates. These plates enable multi-terrain transitions without harming the turf, whilst producing a classic striped finish.



DOMESTIC

Miimo 3000 goes Live

Now featuring 3G & 4G technology



Honda's HRM3000 Live will now feature 3G and 4G connectivity for remote monitoring and control of all features including GPS tracking.

Connectivity costs are included for the first six years of use, and users can connect from anywhere with an internet connection through the Mii-monitor app

Honda dealers can use the Live connectivity to provide efficient support – from checking and recommending settings to fault diagnosis, potentially saving a customer visit.

For customers with more than one Miimo HRM3000 Live, the My Miimo dashboard provides monitoring of all the machines simultaneously on one screen. This is especially useful for those using Honda's Multi Miimo system, which allows two or more Miimo's to work together in one continuous area.

The Live upgrade also adds GPS location information. The mower's current position can be viewed on the Mii-monitor app, and owners can also create a geo-fenced operating area for increased theft protection. If the HRM3000 Live leaves the location, then the owner receives an immediate warning through a push-notification.

The new robot can maintain grass areas up to 4,000m². Standard features include flexible docking, which allows the base to be installed in preferred locations, as well as electric cutting height adjustment between 20–60mm with an optional automatic mode. Bluetooth connection to a smartphone app provides set-up and monitoring, while any HRM3000K1 machine can also be upgraded to include the additional features and benefits of HRM3000 Live models, including control through the new Mii-monitor app.

COMMERCIAL



Helion 3 cuts in

Latest hedge trimmer from Pellenc

Pellenc has announced the launch of the new Helion 3 hedge trimmer.

Described as ultra-versatile by the manufacturer, with its three cutter blades, which can be changed in under a minute, the new Helion 3 allows operators to cut sections up to 3cm in diameter in safety. Key features include:

- A blade guard, an aluminium stiffener, carbon steel blades and a stainless-steel anti-kickback guard.
- Anti-locking blade system that reverses the direction of rotation if the cutting bar gets stuck in vegetation.
- Speed select button that makes it possible to adapt to the type of species to be trimmed or pruned.
- Quick switch system for changing blades
- New ergonomic design for safety
- Fast connector system

Pellenc UK offers a four-year commercial warranty for all its batteries and a three-year warranty for all its tools.

Mow-vember might be worth a shot

No-Mow May had an important message but was too blunt

Chris Biddle



No-Mow May? Was your very existence undermined during a peak trading month?

It seems that each month now has a tagline. Dry January and Go Sober for October are run by charities to boost awareness of their organisations and health benefits. Others such as Movember, Veganuary and so on tend to be more commercial.

If we got our skates on, it would be tempting to up-stage an existing campaign with Mow-vember. By then, Christmas trees rather than wildflowers might be on most people's radar, but as a late season garden tidy-up/servicing push, it might be worth a shot.

No-Mow May, run by conservation charity Plantlife, is a clever, powerful, and easily digestible message. It appeals to the press. It carries a very important message, and reinforces the aim of many of those in the turfcare industry that everything should be done to encourage wildlife diversity in the garden, in parks and open spaces. Walk round any golf course today and you will see areas left to grow wild, often with informative notices about what and why.

But it is too blunt a message. And of course, it directly appeals to those who loathe cutting the lawn – to whom it is a ready-made excuse.

In preparation for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in May, mowers would have been working overtime, making sure that our 'green and pleasant land' was looking its best.

In Britain, the 'hallowed turf' at Lord's, Wimbledon, St Andrews, Ascot, Wembley, etc is curated by teams of dedicated turf professionals, who are all acutely aware (as are their employers) of the importance of grass to the environment. It is absorbent, it cools the



atmosphere, the soil holds nutrients and plays a vital role in the earth's ecosystem. In urban areas, grassed open spaces are often referred to as the 'green lung of the city'.

Of course, there is one subject on which organisations such as Plantlife and those in the natural grass community are agreed. The answer is NOT fossil-fuel made plastic lawns. They may have a place in certain high-use commercial areas, but they have no environmental benefits going for them.

THAT was an extraordinary story of a fleet of John Deere tractors nabbed by the Russians from Ukraine, which were then immobilised remotely – apparently by the dealer.

But does this feel-good story not hide a scarier proposition? That Deere or any of its dealers could put any tractor out of action – at any time and for any reason.

It also plays into the current Right to Repair legislation being mounted by US farmer groups supported by non-Deere dealers who want the ability to service Deere equipment.

It was Deere who in 2017 proclaimed in an eye-catching submission to the US authorities that farmers do not own the tractors they have spent a small fortune on. How could they when the controlling

software is owned by Deere itself?

In the US, many farmers have resorted to installing illegal firmware bought on the black market – and most commonly developed in Ukraine!

There is an admirable organisation called Forces Farming that helps and encourages those leaving the armed services to find a place in agriculture. It is run by Jeremy Gibbs, who worked for John Deere and who is now a farmer in Hampshire. He acknowledges that working in farming or related industries is not for everyone. So, he ensures that each of those he helps transition from service life into a career like agriculture are aware of the challenges, warts and all.

That said, many former service-personnel, particularly those with engineering or logistics experience in the forces could be just the type of person that dealers (or manufacturers) look for in a difficult labour market.

Forces Farming has just entered into a partnership with AGCO under a scheme called Retrain which focus on the re-training of ex-military, reservists and non-agricultural engineers into its retail dealer network.

There is little doubt that ex-service personnel have many of the qualities that make them entirely suitable for a role in ag engineering. Resourcefulness, the ability to learn on the job, flexibility and not to be fazed by challenging situations.

So, congratulations to AGCO for making this initiative happen, but I'm disappointed that AEA/BAGMA didn't take the lead on this but left it to a single manufacturer.

It should have been right up the street of the industry trade associations in this difficult recruitment climate.

What's on?

Status of the events correct at the time of going to press, but we advise confirming with organisers' websites and social media channels.

JULY 2022

Sports & Grounds Expo, Three Counties Showground, Malvern www.sportsandgrounds.events	6-7
Newport Show www.newportshow.co.uk	9
Kent County Show www.kentshowground.co.uk	9-10
Great Yorkshire Show www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk	12-14
Royal Welsh Show www.rwas.wales/whats-on/royal-welsh-show-2	18-21
Mid Devon Show www.middevonshow.co.uk	23
New Forest & Hampshire County Show www.newforestshow.co.uk	26-28
Turfgrass Summer Show, Kinross, Scotland www.turfgrass.co.uk/tga-summer-show-2022	28
Border Union Show www.borderunion.co.uk/border-union-show	29-30
The Game Fair, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire www.thegamefair.org	29-31

AUGUST 2022

North Devon Show www.northdevonshow.com	3
Ripley Show www.ripleyshow.co.uk	14

SEPTEMBER 2022

Autumn Fair, Birmingham NEC www.autumnfair.com	4-7
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(September 2022 continued)

Romsey Show www.romseyshow.co.uk	10
APF Exhibition 2022, Ragley Estate www.apfexhibition.co.uk	22-24
Tillage Live, Dunbar, East Lothian www.tillage-live.com	28
Landscape Show, NEC www.landscape-show.co.uk	28-29

OCTOBER 2022

Equip Exhibition, Louisville, USA www.equipexposition.com	19-21
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NOVEMBER 2022

GMA Saltex 2022, Birmingham NEC www.gmasaltex.co.uk	2-3
SIMA, Paris Nord Villepinte, France www.en.simaonline.com	6-10
EIMA International, Bologna www.eima.it/en	9-13
AgriScot 2022, The Royal Highland Centre www.agriscot.co.uk	16
Midlands Machinery Show www.midlandsmachineryshow.com	16-17
CropTec 2022, East of England Showground www.croptecshow.com	23-24
Service Dealer Conference & Awards www.servicedealer.co.uk	24
Royal Welsh Winter Fair www.rwas.wales/winter-fair	28-29



Fantastic support shown

By generous industry partners

Ukraine initiative

ast issue I wrote about the industry generously coming together to support the Ukraine Initiative, which the magazine championed.

Well, this month I'm delighted to report on where some of the £4,000 that our industry partners so kindly helped raise, went to.

As well as contributing to the British Red Cross's Disasters Emergency Committee fund, we unearthed two locally based schemes, which we know from personal experience will directly benefit from the industry's generosity.

Firstly, a portion was given to Animal Couriers, which is offering resources to Ukrainian pet owners relocating to the UK, and to the UK sponsors of Ukrainian families.

Pictured here is our illustrious leader Duncan Murray-Clarke (right) meeting Ray from Animal Couriers at Dover docks recently, with a refugee family alongside their dog and cat.

Duncan said, "Animal Couriers made this collection free of charge, so we are making a donation out of the Ukrainian fund raised by industry members to support them. They are another organisation showing real kindness."

Also receiving a donation were Trowbridge Homes for UK, who are doing marvellous work with supplies for Ukraine and transporting Ukrainians.

In a statement, they said, "We are bringing back refugees on a weekly basis, as well as taking supplies out to the Ukrainian border. We are delighted with the donation through *Service Dealer* and *Turf Pro* and it will really help. Many thanks, Simon Beck and Christine Holden."

Further to these well-deserving organisations, a portion of the collected monies was also donated to Project Linus – a volunteer organisation that provides a sense of security and comfort to sick and traumatised babies, children and teenagers through the provision of new,

homemade patchwork quilts and knitted blankets.

The organisation's Ani Catt told us, "Many thanks for your lovely donation to Project Linus UK Oxfordshire – greatly appreciated! We provide free patchwork quilts to children 0-19 years old who are going through a difficult time and need an extra hug or two.

"We are proud to support the Ukrainian families arriving in the UK, with quilts for the children and also Welcome Bags for mums, grandmas, aunts and single women being hosted in Oxfordshire. Your contribution enables us to continue supporting families throughout Oxfordshire, so again, thank you very much!"

To all our friends and colleagues who supported the initiative – and indeed to all those companies we've heard of throughout our sector running their own schemes – we sincerely thank you.

And I must say, I'm so much happier being able to write about heart-warming endeavours this issue – for a while I thought I was going to get bogged down explaining to MPs the subtle differences in websites that can be visited when Googling for dominators and hoes.



A donation was made to Animal Couriers



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