

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

JULY / AUG 2015



CORDLESS MOWERS COMING OF AGE?

- ❏ Hire For Profit
- ❏ Dealer 2020 Event
- ❏ Business Monitor
- ❏ Credit Licences

- ❏ Training & Education
- ❏ Billy Goat goes to B&S
- ❏ New Products
- ❏ Jim Green



FACE
to
FACE

KEITH CHRISTIAN
BAGMA DIRECTOR



COBRA

New Li-ion Cordless Lawnmowers From Cobra

Cobra are proud to be launching their new cordless range of Lithium-ion powered lawnmowers in 2015. The two new 40v cordless models are designed for instant starting with no petrol or oil required.

These feature rich lawnmowers have cutting widths of 16" or 18", include single lever height adjustment with cutting height ranging from 25mm - 75mm, battery power indicator built into the handles and the option of mulching or side discharge cutting systems.

These lawnmowers are ideal for medium to large gardens.
Promotional prices start from just £289.99 including VAT



For more information please visit: www.cobragarden.co.uk or call: 0115 986 6646

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

This month, we feature an interview with BAGMA's Keith Christian. The trade association has a long and proud history, and is now embedded within a much larger umbrella organisation along with half a dozen other specialist trade associations.

This provides BAGMA members with a range of benefits that would be unobtainable were it still an independent stand-alone trade body. But against that, it appears to have lost its voice. And whilst BAGMA perform a valuable role in representing the industry on countless committees and working groups, it needs to have its say on the issues of the day. It needs to champion the dealers' cause publicly. Something which is lacking at the moment. The BAGMA Symbol of Service is one of the most recognisable logos in the industry. But what does it mean, what does it stand for? Only that a company is member, but it provides no information or clue to the competence, facilities or services provided by that dealer.

Here's a thought. Countless dealers, BAGMA members or not, could benefit from an industry-approved symbol to support their franchises. At a time when dealers need all the marketing clout they can get, perhaps BAGMA ought to develop such a scheme - which dealers could buy into.

Chris Biddle, Editor



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APPOINTMENTS

GODFREYS APPOINTS DAVID STURGES AS CEO

Peter Bateman assumes role of Executive Chairman



John Deere turf equipment dealer Godfreys has announced that David Sturges has joined Godfreys (Sevenoaks) Ltd as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a main board position.

David will be responsible for the delivery of the company's

strategic plan and will oversee all operational matters. The management team will report to him and he in turn will report to the board.

Peter Bateman will assume the role of Executive Chairman and will be actively supporting David in his new role.

Following two acquisitions of other John Deere turf dealerships over recent years, Godfreys says it is looking to integrate and further optimise the business. David will be leading this optimisation plan along with the management team, maximising the market opportunities and ensuring quality and consistency across the business.

Experienced

David's career started after being awarded a degree at Silsoe, as a Product Designer at Beaver, which was subsequently merged with Hayter. He rose to the position of Sales Director for Hayter and latterly was Managing Director of Countax and International Vice President of the Ariens Company. He has just served out his year as President of the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) and so is well informed and connected. David holds an MBA degree from Cranfield University.

"David is well known and respected within our industry and we are delighted he has joined Godfreys. His appointment clearly sets out Godfreys' ambition to continue to grow in the turf equipment sector and allows me more time to support David, focus on strategic opportunities and promote the business with customers and suppliers alike," commented Peter Bateman.

David Sturges added: "I am delighted to have the opportunity to join Godfreys. The company stands out as one of the most professional dealer organisations for outdoor power and professional turf care equipment in the UK. Representing John Deere and other significant brands in the industry, the experienced team at

Godfreys has developed a fantastic reputation for the highest levels of customer service.

"Expansion over the last few years has seen the business grow into one of the most significant dealer organisations in the industry. As the company continues to look for new opportunities for growth and development, I look forward to working with the team at Godfreys at this exciting time."

DEALERS

RICHMONDS OPENS NEW SHOWROOM

Expansion for dealership

Established for over 30 years, Richmonds Groundcare has been supplying groundcare, forestry and arboriculture professionals, as well local domestic customers, with top-quality products and machinery.

The company has now opened a new showroom and offices in Haslemere, Surrey, and has expanded its workshop facilities.

"We all have a strong focus on customer satisfaction and great service," commented Adam Greenslade, Richmonds Groundcare's General Manager.

"We're looking to make it a great year for both our customers and the business. The new showroom and workshop is fantastic and will be displaying the latest Etesia and Pellenc range of products as well as the other brands we work with.

"There have been a lot of changes over the years, but we feel this is the best one yet. We are all looking forward to seeing what the local community and loyal customers think of it, particularly the next-level service we can now offer."



DEALERS

GODFREYS ACQUIRE TYLERS

Business will continue to operate under the Tylers name

Godfreys (Sevenoaks) Ltd has announced the transfer of the assets of Tylers, the Sussex based garden machinery distributor.

Godfreys say Tylers enjoy an excellent reputation for service within the garden machinery dealer network, and recently it has strategically focused more on developing the Windmill Feeds business.

The acquisition of Tylers provides Godfreys with an established and well respected distribution vehicle to supply John Deere homeowner and other complementary brands within its area of responsibility. Additionally, through the Tylers parts portal, dealers will be able to access parts stock lines that currently are unavailable.

The business will continue to operate under the Tylers name and Tylers staff directly engaged in the garden machinery business will transfer over. Russell Kelly, formally Sales Director of Tylers Ltd, will be returning to head up the Tylers team, and, along with Mel Burch, Parts Manager and Andy Woodhams, Sales Office Manager, will be looking to re-engage with loyal customers and seek out new business.

Shared values

Commenting on the acquisition, Peter Bateman of Godfreys said: "As a Tylers customer of many years, we have always appreciated the company's first class service matched with its honest and genuine approach to business. We share the same values and believe the Tylers team will fill a regional requirement; supplying quality brands to dealers, supported by excellent service.

The business transferred on 1st June 2015, with parts distribution continuing to operate from the current location at Blackboys during 2015.



L-R: Andy Woodhams (Tylers)
Ann Gutheridge (Tylers), David Sturges (Godfreys)
Marcus Funnell (Tylers) and Mel Burch (Tylers)

APPOINTMENTS

NEW HOLLAND PROMOTE JAMES ASHWORTH



New UK and Ireland Marketing Manager

New Holland Agriculture has announced the appointment of James Ashworth as New Holland Marketing Manager UK and Ireland, following a successful three years as General Sales Manager for England and Wales.

In his new position, James will be responsible for overseeing the marketing and promotion of all New Holland products in the market. Additionally, James will take on the management of the New Holland sales administration team, with responsibility for ensuring factory production is able to fulfil sales targets and objectives.

James has almost twenty years of experience in the agricultural machinery industry, having started his career working for another major manufacturer and then working in a machinery dealer business before starting his own dealership. Commenting on his new role, James said: "Having been in the industry for a number of years, the last three here at New Holland, I'm looking forward to putting plans in place to grow the business even further. In the past, I've been both a dealer and worked for manufacturers, this gives me a great understanding of the needs and the processes on both sides which will allow me to develop the marketing tools the dealers need to help them deliver business growth"

James's past role as General Sales Manager for England and Wales has been fulfilled by Rob Howles.

DAVID WITHERS UNVEILS BUDDING PLAQUE

Specially commissioned tribute to lawnmower inventor



Ransomes' President, David Withers, unveils the specially commissioned plaque

David Withers, President of Ransomes Jacobsen, formally unveiled a Blue Plaque on Wednesday 22nd April 2015 to commemorate the vision and achievement of Edwin Budding, the inventor of the lawnmower in 1830.

The plaque is mounted on the wall of the Stroud Brewery which stands on the site of Budding's original workshop at the Phoenix Iron Mills at Thrupp, near Stroud.

David Withers was accompanied by David Hagg, Chief Executive of Stroud District Council. Also present from the local Stroud community were council officials from Stroud District Council, Stroud's Museum in the Park and representatives of Thrupp and Brimscombe Parish Council.

Debt of gratitude

Welcoming the guests, *Service Dealer* editor Chris Biddle with his wife Trish, said that the Blue Plaque had been specially commissioned to mark the 25th Anniversary of *Service Dealer* magazine. "We should never forget the debt of gratitude the industry should have for the extraordinary engineering skill of Edwin Budding. His original machine when viewed today is remarkably similar to present day mowers."

David Withers, who had travelled over from Jacobsen headquarters in the US for the event, said: "At Ransomes we are proud of our history which dates back to 1789, and our association with Edwin Budding having taken one of the first manufacturing licences in 1830. That mower making tradition continues today in Ipswich, none of which would have been possible without Budding."

David Hagg said: "Locally, we like to think that without Stroud, there would be no Wimbledon! Not only did the lawnmower originate here, but the material for the tennis balls is also made locally."

Guests

Joining the crowd for the unveiling, which was covered live on the BBC Radio Gloucestershire *Drivetime* programme, were members of the grass machinery industry including Roger and Karen Blanch from another part of Stroud's manufacturing heritage Danarm, Keith Christian (BAGMA), Ian Small (Briggs & Stratton), Austin Jarrett (Allett), Steve Campbell (Countax), Peter Hampton and Nick Brown from T H White who loaned a present day Ransomes machine.

Andrew Hall and Mike Duck from the Hall & Duck Trust brought along a Budding machine manufactured from the exact specifications of Buddings Original Patent by Brian Radam. Also present were Clive Gravett and Lawrie Stevens of the Budding Foundation.

Greg Pilley and his team at the Stroud Brewery kindly hosted the event, and put on a specially brewed barrel of Budding Ale for the guests.



L-R: David Hagg (Stroud District Council), Chris and Trish Biddle, Greg Pilley (Stroud Brewery) and David Withers

APPOINTMENTS

RICHARD SPENCER JOINS C&O

Joint roles of Group Sales & Depot Manager



Richard Spencer has joined dealer C&O Tractors from its major supplier, New Holland Agriculture – taking up the joint role of Group Sales & Depot Manager for Blandford.

After growing up on a dairy farm in Wiltshire, Richard began a 31-year career at New Holland. Starting out as a Product Demonstrator, he experienced many roles, travelling extensively, including work in Southern Europe, Latin America and the Asia Pacific Region. His work in the UK and Ireland included technical, service and warranty support, product management and for eight years he was the Commercial Manager for the North of England and Scotland. For the past nine years he was based at New Holland's Basildon HQ in the role of Marketing Manager and then Dealer Business Development Manager.

First class service

Speaking of his new post Richard said: "I'm really excited to have the opportunity to put into practice the knowledge and experience I have gained working with New Holland dealers and customers across the world. I have a lot to offer C&O and its customers and plan on making us the best dealer in the South-West, with a reputation for great customer service. Whilst we are able to provide fantastic products from New Holland and our other major suppliers, the most critical requirement is to provide first class service every time. From what I have seen so far the team at C&O has a great wealth of knowledge and experience and is ready for the challenge ahead."

Welcoming Richard to C&O Tractors, Managing Director Andy Coles said: "It's great to have Richard join the team at C&O. His years working for New Holland and alongside other dealers means that he is coming to us with unrivalled experience."

Richard's appointment comes ahead of the retirement this summer of current Sales Director George Ayres, who has been with C&O for seven years.

APPOINTMENT

IN-HOUSE PRESS OFFICE FOR STIHL

Rebecca Rassie joins from NZ

STIHL GB has announced the appointment of PR and Communications Manager, Rebecca Rassie.

With several years of PR and journalism experience, Rebecca hails from New Zealand where she worked for three years with STIHL New Zealand's PR agency. She then spent two years leading the PR function for Specsavers Australia and New Zealand in Melbourne, before taking up the newly created role at STIHL GB.

STIHL®



Simon Hewitt, Head of Marketing at STIHL GB, said: "This important new role has been developed in response to STIHL GB's considerable expansion over the last few years. Rebecca's experience with STIHL New Zealand and her PR and journalism background will make her an asset to the growing team."

EXHIBITIONS

SALTEX ADDS LEARNING LIVE

Education programme will be free to attend



SALTEX 2015 has announced an enhanced, all-encompassing and free to attend education programme called *Learning Live*.

Organisers say this programme is set to cater for all sectors of the grounds care industry and will offer a more extensive information-sharing experience than that offered at previous Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) conferences.

Three seminar theatres

A packed timetable will see three dedicated seminar theatres, featuring programmes running from 10am until 3.30pm each day of the show.

The seminar theatre next to the IOG Hub on the show floor will feature sports turf management panel debates with high-profile industry professionals taking centre stage. Visitors will be able to learn from those tasked with preparing the pitches for some of the world's major international sports events such as this year's Ashes and the Rugby World Cup. While visitors with interests in fine turf and a variety of sports surfaces

will be able to choose from a range of informative seminar sessions presented by some of the industry's national and international experts.

Two further theatres will feature dedicated seminars relevant to those working in the school, play, amenity, parks, arboriculture and forestry environments. The Parks Alliance will give an update on the state and future of the nation's parks and green spaces, while other sessions will include an update on industry grounds care regulations, a question and answer session on pests and diseases while the inspection and safety standards in the play industry will be explored.

For young people looking to advance their career in the grounds care industry, the Rigby Taylor/Top Green Young Groundsmen's Conference, organised by the IOG's Young Board of Directors, will offer information on educational opportunities, a guide to what some of the top grounds managers are looking for in a young recruit, and a day in the life of the 2014 Young Sports Turf Student of the Year.

APPOINTMENT

KUBOTA APPOINTS KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER

Kubota UK has strengthened its sales team with the appointment of a new Key Account Manager.

Leana Horton joins from construction plant hire specialist Hewden, where she looked after national accounts including civil engineering contractors Murphys.

As Kubota's Key Account Manager, Leana will be responsible for maintaining and developing strategic partnerships with fleet customers throughout the UK, focusing mainly on the range of mini excavators, but also offering the breadth of products across the construction, tractor and ground care product ranges.

Dave Roberts, MD at Kubota, said: "Leana's appointment is all about adding value to the service we provide our key account customers, working closer with them to provide support and a first class service offering to ensure they get the best out of their Kubota fleet."

Leana said: "Kubota has an excellent reputation with dealers and the end-user operators for providing machines that offer outstanding performance and efficiency. I'm really looking forward to working with our key account customers and developing these relationships further."



World Class Commitment



With a machine leaving the production line every 50 seconds, World Lawnmower is a global leader in the development and manufacturer of horticultural equipment.

The World range is now available in the UK. A range, which comprises scarifiers, lawnmowers and cultivators. And a range, which is accompanied by unbeatable dealer support too.

- Two year consumer warranty, conditional upon annual servicing by an approved dealer to boost dealer service revenue and footfall;
- Responsible product distribution. World products are available only from independent machinery dealers. We don't supply sheds or boxshiffters;
- Guaranteed parts availability, with same day dispatch on orders placed before 3pm*;
- Customer support which is only a call or click away, via our dedicated UK based Customer Contact Centre and Customer Support Team*;
- Equipment powered exclusively by EU specification Briggs & Stratton engines with an unrivalled reputation for reliability and longevity.

To find out more about World UK's commitment to independent, garden machinery dealers, call Gary Tully today on +44(0)7980 715 122 or e-mail g.tully@worldlawnmower.co.uk

* Excludes weekends, Public and Bank Holidays.



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PEOPLE



NICK ROSAM BOWS OUT FROM B&S

Briggs & Stratton's Service Manager Nick Rosam retired at the end of March. Nick had worked at Briggs & Stratton for 28 years, and had been looking after service advice and service issues for the engine maker for most of those.

B&S UK's Ian Small said: "Nick has done a tremendous job in dealer support and we will miss him, but wish him a very enjoyable and well deserved retirement."

Following Nick's retirement, service matters have been handled by Sam Fletcher and Rick Clutton.

DEALERS

DAVID SCOTT RETIRES

After 39 years at TH Whites

David Scott, Managing Director and CEO of T H White, has retired having served the company for 39 years.

David joined the family-run business on 20th April 1976, his 26th birthday. Having spent eight years gaining experience by working directly in all areas of the business, he was appointed Managing Director in 1984 and additionally CEO in 1989.

During his tenure he has presided over a more than six-fold increase in turnover, developing the business and expanding into new areas including grasscare equipment and renewable energy.

Speaking at a staff reception in Devizes to mark his retirement, David said: "The thing that has given me most pleasure over the years has been watching people develop their careers within the company. A successful business relies on the efforts and hard work of every person in it and the credit for what has been achieved rests with all of you."

Loyal staff

T H White is well regarded in the communities in which it operates and commands high degrees of loyalty from its employees who presented David with a beautiful hand-bound book recording their gratitude.

A second reception was held on Tuesday at the Corn Exchange in Devizes for several hundred T H White's customers and suppliers, including representatives from key franchise partners such as New Holland, Case IH, DeLaval, Palfinger, Ransomes Jacobsen and Fiat.

David is succeeded as Managing Director by his son, Alexander Scott.



DEALERS

SGM BECOME GKB DEALERS

SGM Contracts Ltd are working in conjunction with The Grass Group and will now be the main distributor of the GKB Machinery range in Scotland.

GKB are based in Holland and have been manufacturing machines for many years for the world market. They focus on specialised turf maintenance machinery but also offer a full range of kit for maintaining artificial grass sports pitches.

SGM's Managing Director, Steven McInroy said, "With a great focus on maintaining artificial sports fields, we are pleased that we will be able to meet our customers needs with the new range of GKB specialised machinery. The machines will allow our customers to improve or maintain the high standards that are required for playing surfaces."



INDUSTRY

POLARIS PARTNERS STATUS GRAND PRIX



Polaris has announced a new partnership with Status Grand Prix.

The company will support Status by supplying the team with a top of the range Polaris Sportsman 850 ORV. The vehicle will be used by the team at all European GP2 rounds to transport pit equipment and personnel between the F1 pitlane and GP2 paddock.

Polaris says the two parties are also exploring some innovative activation plans which may well include Status' drivers swapping their GP2 and GP3 cars for some off-road activity.

Polaris Marketing Specialist, Sarah Johnson, said: "Polaris is delighted to become an official partner of Status Grand Prix, especially with our shared involvement in the sport, with the Polaris factory racing team taking the lead in promoting off-road racing this year."

Status Grand Prix Head of Operations, Dave Stubbs, commented: "It's clear that we speak the same language when it comes to speed, reliability and being the best. Alongside the Polaris ORV that we will be using at the GP2 race events we are keen to explore joint promotional activities and look forward to attending some of the Polaris off-road racing during the season."

DEALERS

THREE NEW DEALERS FOR ETESIA

Etesia has announced a further three dealerships for its professional network.

Midlands Grounds Machinery (MGM), based in Solihull, will be Etesia UK's recognised dealer for the West Midlands area. Offering professional support, sales and servicing for a wide range of lawnmowers and groundscape equipment, MGM was seen as a perfect fit for Etesia.

Managing Director, Dave Tullet, said: "Having been in the industry a long time now, I'm confident that the Etesia range will be a great addition to MGM's range of machinery and services."

Revill Mowers, recently formed by Russell Revill and his nephew Jason, is the newly appointed Etesia dealer for Gloucestershire. "I've been dealing with Etesia for the past 20 years now and I used to sell the very first Hydro 100s, which became the industry trend setter," said Russell. "A lot of our customers have dated machines, so I'm hoping to convince them that they should be replaced with Etesia machines."

Allans of Gillock will be covering the expansive area of Northern Scotland, offering Etesia machines to customers as far as the Orkney and Shetland Islands. The company, which has built a great reputation since being founded in 1980, believes that becoming an Etesia dealer is a step in the right direction.

"Up until now it is fair to say that we have mainly catered for the domestic market, but we're looking to reach more into the commercial side of things," said General Manager Alan Gair.



KEITH CHRISTIAN

Uniquely, Keith Christian has headed both the manufacturers trade association and the UK dealer trade association, which gives him a rounded view of the industry. Chris Biddle reports



There has been a changing of the guard at the helm of two industry organisations in recent months, which leaves BAGMA's motorcycling, rugby playing director, Keith Christian as the old hand. Possibly much to his surprise, having often described himself as the 'new boy' since joining the dealer trade association (British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association) in 2007.

Hardly new though to the industry, nor to trade associations. Keith 'crossed the tracks' to represent the dealers' cause barely four years after being appointed President of the manufacturer's trade association, AEA (Agricultural Engineers Association) while he was with Claymore Grass Machinery.

He will claim, however, that his industry roots lie at the 'sharp-end'. Having spent his early years working for Pickfords and Lloyds Bank in Gloucestershire, he sought a change and joined H Burlingham & Son, the Evesham-based builders merchant with a specialist garden machinery branch at nearby Teddington Hands. Burlingham held the Ransomes franchise among other leading brands and Keith joined as a Commercial Salesman with a 'patch' that stretched from Wales and across the Cotswolds.

After a couple of years, he was approached to join Spear & Jackson, the garden tool supplier, which was in the garden machinery business at the time, importing and distributing the Stiga product line. When Spear & Jackson decided to exit the machinery business, Stiga moved to Heron Power Products and left Keith seeking another post.

"The garden machinery business does hook you in," he says, "so I was keen to stay in the business."

He 'stopped-off' briefly at Trenchex, before he was approached to set up a brand new importing and distribution business by leading Scottish farm machinery dealer and manufacturer, Reekie Engineering. The company, based in Arbroath with a

number of branches, was accustomed to diversifying, and saw an opportunity to get into the garden machinery business in England.

In 1985, Keith was hired to head-up the fledgling Claymore Grass Machinery operation, initially operating out of the old Wolseley Webb headquarters in Birmingham. The company soon acquired a clutch of well-known products to distribute. First Bolens, from the soon to be closed Howard Rotavator company. Then brands such as Roberine, Simplicity, Masport, Sabo, Gloria, Solo and Yanmar. Claymore quickly outgrew its Birmingham base and a new site was built at Bidford-on-Avon, in Warwickshire.

The company expanded steadily under the stewardship of Keith, and with the support of Simon

HOWEVER SUCCESSFUL WE WERE, DISTRIBUTORS ARE STILL AT THE MERCY OF CORPORATE ACQUISITIONS

Reekie who had taken over the running of the Reekie operation. The founder John Reekie retired in 1995, and died in 2013 at the age of 103.

"However successful we were," says Keith, "distributors are still at the mercy of corporate acquisitions, so we were 'disappointed' to put it mildly, when after all our hard work, Sabo and Roberine were snapped up by John Deere."

In 2006 the Reekie family decided to refocus their business on engineering and accepted an offer from Dublin-based Farm & Garden Machinery to take over Claymore. It was a deal that made some sense,

PERSONAL FILE

LIVES

Evesham with wife Katie

EDUCATION

Cheltenham Grammar

FIRST JOB

Lloyds Bank in the Cotswolds

BIGGEST INFLUENCE

My father (Jack) who taught me to look after myself

BOOK

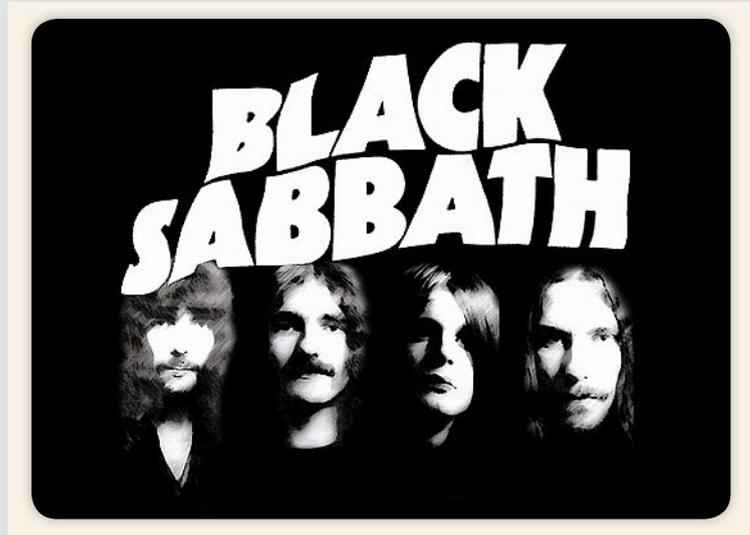
Adventure, anything by Clive Cussler and *Lord of the Rings*

FOOD

Most things, especially Chinese/Indonesian

MUSIC

Black Sabbath, *Led Zepellin* and blues

**FILM**

Lord of the Rings

HOBBIES

Motorcycling, trials riding, rugby, skiing

PLACE

Cotswolds, Holland, Auckland

and provided the Irish distributor with a common platform in both their home market and in the UK.

Keith remained with the company for nearly a year, then one day spotted an advert seeking someone to head up BAGMA. He applied and was appointed General Manager in May 2007 to replace former Director General, Ian Jones.

BAGMA TROUBLES

The origins of BAGMA date back to 1917 with the formation of the National Association of Agricultural Engineers and Implement Dealers, which later morphed into AMTDA (Agricultural Machinery and Tractor Dealers Association).

With the growth of the complementary grass machinery sector, AMTDA became BAGMA in 1972. Based in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, the dealer body was an effective and important champion of dealer causes, much of that time under the control of Director General Jonathan Swift, whose father Dean had been AEA President in 1965. Jonathan left BAGMA in 1986 to become Director General of the British Hardware Federation (BHF).

A succession of short-term appointments were made to replace Jonathan, but during the early 1990s

fractious tensions within BAGMA were coming to a head as finances worsened.

After a series of crisis meetings in the early months of 1994, Jonathan offered to take BAGMA under the wing of the British Hardware Federation. At its AGM held in Perth on 18th May 1994, BAGMA members unanimously agreed to transfer all assets and liabilities to BHF. The following month, the first joint BAGMA/BHF Conference was staged at Stratford-upon-Avon and 24-year old Ian Jones, a former Young Farmer of the Year, was appointed BAGMA Director General.

Ian had a productive 12 years at the helm, but left in 2006 to set up his own consultancy. It was also a time of change at BHF. Jonathan Swift had stepped down in 2005 to be replaced by Alan Hawkins, the Federation's former Financial Director. He and his colleagues could see that the future for small, niche trade associations was the establishment of a 'super-Association', an umbrella-body serving the interests of a number of complementary trade bodies.

UMRELLA FOR INDEPENDENTS

The BHF was already in a strong position. For a start it was, and is, the only trade association in the UK to ►



Keith (right) at 2014 Service Dealer Awards



With Mike Hughes at Royal Cornwall Show

own a bank, offering both lending and saving facilities to members. It has its own buying group, payment clearing service and strong tie-ups with insurance companies and service providers. In short, benefits that BAGMA simply could not hope to provide on its own.

The 'super-Association' concept was further strengthened when the British Shops and Stores Association (BSAA) decided to join forces with the BHF, which prompted the formation of a new umbrella group bira (British Independent Retailers Association) which now represents over 7,500 independents in a six-strong family of trade associations. In addition to BAGMA, the bira represents retailers in the hardware, fashion, pet products, cookshops and home decoration sectors.

"There are obvious and tangible benefits to BAGMA membership which stretches far beyond industry issues," says Keith. "Oddly enough, even though there are something like 48 different bira member services, we still find it hard to persuade members to take full advantage of what we have to offer.

"The fact is that a small dealer can join up for as little as £200, and could soon save that in member's benefits."

Keith believes that BAGMA could, or should, be doing more for the smaller garden machinery dealer. "The ag dealer with a major franchise generally has a strong support infrastructure via the manufacturer, something that few multi-franchise GM dealers enjoy – and that's where I think we could do more.

"As it is, we run a series of training courses focussing on niche areas and compliance which unlike manufacturer or most external training, is carried out in-house at the dealership, so saving time and money. Again, we need to shout louder about what we can deliver to dealers to truly be considered that 'extra member of staff'."

On an industry level, BAGMA is an effective dealer voice working behind the scenes with other trade

associations, colleges and industry groups. A role that includes developing apprenticeship schemes, the promotion of careers within the industry and working as part of the team to promote the LTA (Landbased Technician Accreditation) scheme.

"These are the unseen areas we work in as a trade association that few know about – yet all benefit from," says Keith. "It's not all about the provision of services and training, but like an iceberg, 90% of what we do is below the surface.

"And it's not just our members that benefit, the whole industry does."

That is undoubtedly true, so perhaps BAGMA needs to shout louder about its actions. To those

WE STILL FIND IT HARD TO PERSUADE MEMBERS TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE

outside, BAGMA has lost some of its voice. This could be because the message is often delivered from a central source rather than from the 'sharp end' of the industry. BAGMA should be providing its opinion on a range of day-to-day issues that affect dealers. Being within bira has given the trade association stability and strength; what is possibly needed is more 'bagmification' of the message!

However, this industry has always been all about people. With Keith Christian at the helm, BAGMA has someone who knows the industry, lives the industry and has the interest of the industry fully at heart. He will sometimes feel the frustrations of not being able to do everything on his 'wish-list' all at once. There always have to be compromises, particularly within a large organisation.

But with Keith, as most people know, what you see is what you get. And that is generally a smiling face, a quizzical look and an approach that is both spot-on and relevant to our industry. ●

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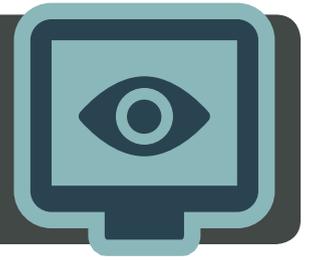
Email: sales@handydistribution.co.uk

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STAFF LEVELS GROWING

We had a record response to our half-year dealer survey, thank you to all who participated.

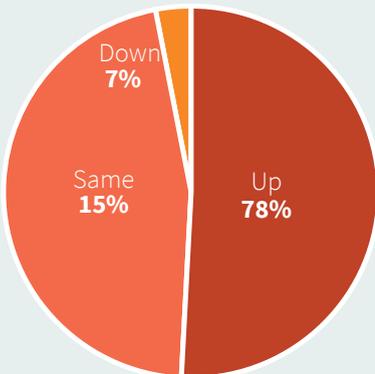
Once again, there has been a strong start to the season with 78% of dealers reporting business up on last year, with 24% of these describing the season as being 'well up'. Whole good sales have seen the strongest growth (74% up, with 22% saying 'well-up').

Parts and service appear to have recorded a lesser increase, described as up by 58% and 51% by respondents.

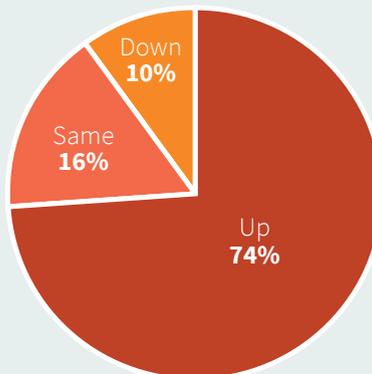
Business confidence for the second half of the year (which was recorded after the general election) was up on last year with 81% saying they were confident or very confident, compared with 78% at the same period last year.

Staffing levels appear to be growing with 32% reporting that they had taken on more staff compared with 21% at the half year in 2014.

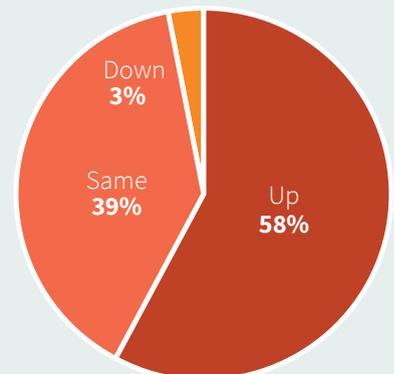
OVERALL BUSINESS



MACHINE SALES



PART SALES

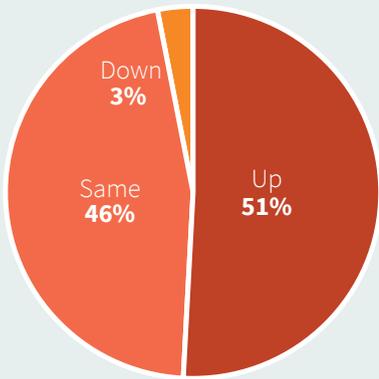


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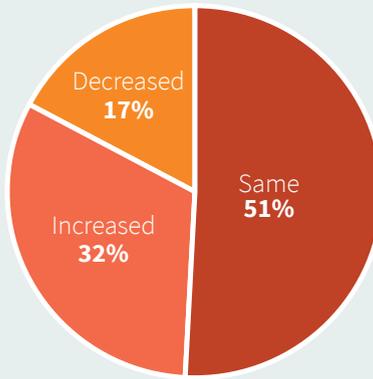
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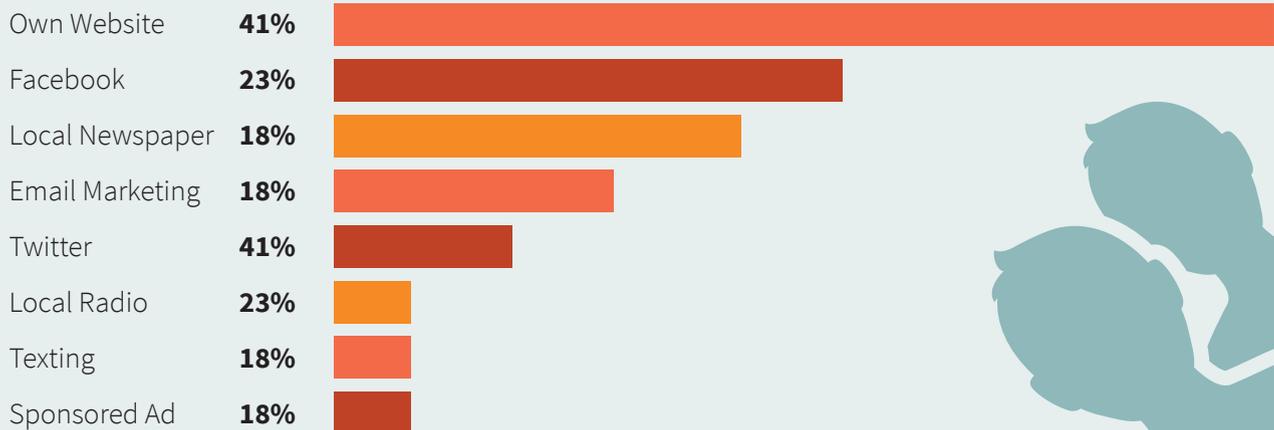
SERVICE SALES



STAFFING LEVELS



We asked what methods of communication the respondents used to connect with the customers.



YOUR SAY

What are today's big issues?

- Litigation and HR issues
- Farming in the UK is living on the never-never and we are going to all suffer when it goes bang, unless we move out of the EU and stand together as Great Britain, in the way Norway, Sweden and Denmark do.
- Manufacturers continually adding more dealers.
- Pleased that it doesn't look like VAT will rise in the near future.
- Manufacturers and distributors stock levels unable to keep up with demand- be it spares or whole goods.
- Internet pricing is still a major issue and also having to carry out warranty work on machines purchased over the internet on which we make no money - but have to support in the interests of good customer service.
- Profitably levels on some machine sales often dangerously low because of certain suppliers allowing their products to be "dumped" on the internet.





WOULD YOU **CREDIT** IT?

Trouble ahead for dealers who have not embraced the changes in consumer credit licencing By Chris Biddle

Just over a year ago (April 2014), the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) took over the regulation of the consumer credit market from the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

The transition has created what has been described as a ‘ticking time-bomb’ as dealers struggle to understand the requirements. BAGMA Director Keith Christian says, “We have been contacted by dealers unsure of where they stand, what they should do and totally at a loss to understand the complexity of the forms they are asked to complete.

“As a result, many are burying their head in the sand and deciding that they probably don’t need to comply. However, virtually every dealer will at some time be asked to provide finance options on a machine or piece of equipment. But without the correct authorisation from the FCA, they simply will not be able to discuss finance, let alone pass it on to a finance provider.”

SO WHAT’S THE CURRENT POSITION?

All consumer credit licences were cancelled when the FCA took over regulation from the Office of Fair Trading and ‘interim permission’ was granted to all those who held them and applied for it. Interim permission allowed companies to carry on trading until their ‘landing slot’ with the FCA was given.

A dealer that held an Office of Fair Trading (OFT) licence and registered for interim permission could continue carrying out consumer credit activities. Interim permission would then last until the date of the ‘landing slot’, at which point, the dealer has three months to complete the required authorisation. The FCA has staged the ‘landing slots’ between October

2014 and March 2016.

If a firm held an OFT licence and did not register for interim permission, it cannot legally continue carrying out consumer credit activities.

There is an exception where a dealer might not need a licence, but this would only be the case where he was only dealing with incorporated businesses; if they discuss finance with any individuals, sole traders or partnerships who have less than three partners, they will require authorisation.

Then there are two categories of authorisation issued by the FCA:

- **LIMITED PERMISSION** Most dealers would generally fall into this category as limited permissions apply where credit broking is secondary to the business’s primary activity. For example, a dealer selling a machine, but utilising finance as a tool to aid the sale.
- **FULL PERMISSION** This applies to a more complex business where its primary activity is credit broking and it also offers a debt counselling or debt adjustment service in relation to trade-ins or refinancing of existing finance.

Dealers wishing to apply for limited permissions need to complete a form that is currently 36 pages of detailed information to include a business plan and comprehensive information about the company.

Mr Christian says, “We are constantly asked for help because dealers are being asked for information about their company that is proving difficult to answer

accurately, but ultimately we can't complete the forms for them."

HELP AND ADVICE

A number of specialist companies have emerged that can help in the process. Asset Finance Solutions (AFS) formed in 2005, has recently appointed a specialist to focus on the agricultural and grounds care market. Lee Simms was Head of Agriculture at Lombard and will be responsible for establishing the new AFS Agricultural Finance brand across the UK. He says, "There seems to be lots of confusion in the market place at the moment with regards to who needs what and how long these things take. I've spoken to manufacturers and funders of equipment both of whom are extremely worried for similar reasons.

"Manufacturers are worried due to the fact that if the dealerships that hold their stock are not compliant, they can't mention finance at all, which could impact on sales. The manufacturers themselves are reluctant to help with the



the FCA and the many dealers who will need authorisation in order to offer any form of credit to a consumer – or even simply refer the matter to a third party.

"At AFS we're able to assist in two ways," says Mr Geddes. "First we are a principal business so we are able to offer authorisation to dealers by making them appointed representatives, an alternative to direct authorisation by the FCA.

"Second, AFS works with a panel of 58 different lenders so that we can provide the dealer with a range of finance options for the dealers' customers.

"All of the above applies even if the dealer's main franchise has its

If the dealer decides to opt for appointed representative status through AFS, there is a relatively simple process whereby AFS undertakes an audit of the dealer's finance activities. It then puts together a compliance plan for the dealer and applies for them to be registered on the Financial Services Register under AFS's principal permissions. "The length of time varies depending on the dealer; we've been able to obtain authorisation in a week for a straightforward application, but it could take up to two months.

"Funders are now starting to get worried as they need the dealers to be compliant if they introduce business to brokers or funders directly. If a customer gets into difficulty or has a complaint – and it can be proven that the deal was introduced to a funder through a dealer who wasn't fully compliant – the deal could be unenforceable."

The FCA is also clear about its role. It says, "We have the power to make rules that are legally binding on firms. If the rules are breached, we can take enforcement action and you may be subject to a claim for redress from a customer."

No wonder many in the industry are worried. Financing equipment has always been part and parcel of the dealer's offering to customers. It will be in the future, but the rules and regulations have become much more detailed.

Remember, without the right level of FCA authorisation, a dealer cannot even mention finance in most cases. ●

THERE SEEMS TO BE A LOT OF CONFUSION IN THE MARKET PLACE AT THE MOMENT

compliance as they could then become responsible for it and be held accountable if a dealer acts outside of the compliance framework".

Mike Geddes, Commercial Director for Asset Finance Solutions, says, "By our reckoning there are 50,000 UK companies currently going through the process of applying for limited or full permission having held the old OFT-issued licence – and another 50,000 who will need a licence but don't realise it!"

All this will put time pressure on

own in-house finance house or a preferred finance supplier."

REFERENCE

<http://www.fca.org.uk/firms/firm-types/consumer-credit>
www.assetfinancesolutions.com
www.afscompliance.com
www.bagma.com

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Our industry is no different, writes Service Dealer editor Chris Biddle, "But we do have advantages that others cannot match, and it up to us to tell customers again and again, why they should buy from those with the 'know-how' and with the service support".

Those challenges of a changing market, changing technology, changing buying habits – and their impact on sales and service dealers in the garden, turfcare and agricultural machinery sectors - will be at the forefront of the Service Dealer conference programme, titled DEALER 2020, to be held at the Oxfordshire Belfry Hotel on Thursday 19 November 2015.

The conference programme has been compiled as a result of research and feedback from dealers and the industry – and will consider the evolution of the specialist dealer network over the next five years.

There will be three key sessions:

SESSION 1

DEALER 2020

How will specialist dealers set themselves apart from other retail channels over the next five years?

SESSION 2

SERVICE: TECHNOLOGY CHANGES

What will be the impact on dealer service departments of new technology being introduced by manufacturers?

SESSION 3

COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS

How best to connect with existing and potential customers, consistently and effectively.

Each session will feature dealers & experts with a story to tell and an experience to share. The programme will also feature a Keynote opening address, as well as a concluding Question Time, chaired by Chris Biddle with a panel considering pre-submitted questions and also questions from the audience.

In short, the DEALER 2020 Conference is designed to be informative, inspirational and interactive.



2015 SERVICE DEALER AWARDS DINNER

Now in their 12th year, the annual Service Dealer Awards provide an opportunity to recognise outstanding performance by dealers during the past year. The 2015 categories include Garden Machinery Dealer of the Year; Professional Turfcare Dealer of the Year; Forestry Dealer of the Year; Farm Machinery Dealer of the Year and ATV Dealer of the Year as well as an Apprentice of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Award.

The selection process is based around nominations from manufacturers who provide a shortlist of dealers from their dealer network who have performed exceptionally during the past 12 months.

NEW FOR 2015

This year, we will also be providing all dealers with the opportunity to enter any of the categories themselves, irrespective of whether they might be included on a nomination form by one or more of their suppliers. Nomination forms will outline the criteria for exceptional performance

TIMETABLE

4 August 2015:

Nomination and Entry Forms published and circulated.

11 September 2015:

Nominations close.

The judging panel will meet during the first week of October to decide on the Award winners.

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CONFERENCE & AWARDS SPONSORS

We are pleased to announce the latest organisations to confirm their sponsorship of the 2015 Service Dealer Conference and Awards in November. We also look forward to announcing additional sponsors in the coming months through the Service Dealer newsletter.

At the time of going to press with the July/August issue of Service Dealer, the following organisations have confirmed their sponsorship of the 2015 Service Dealer Conference and Awards and we'd like to welcome them on board and for their support and input.

LEAD SPONSOR: (Conference and Awards) BRIGGS & STRATTON

Briggs & Stratton is the worlds largest supplier of petrol engine, primarily for garden and outdoor power equipment, manufacturing around 10 million engines a year.

Founded in 1908 by Stephen Briggs and Harold Stratton, the company's familiar red, white and black logo is one of the world's best known brands.

Well-known for its innovation and continual product development, Briggs and Stratton engineers have recently announced a number of ground-breaking advances such as the new InStart system launched in 2015 which does away with the traditional rope pull

and uses a rechargeable lithium-ion battery to provide push-button starting.

Briggs & Stratton engines are supported by a world-wide network of servicing dealers, and Ian Small, UK Briggs & Stratton sales manager says, "It is clear that there is a pressing need for such a conference as DEALER 2020 to address the burning issues and challenges that face dealers in the coming years, and we are delighted to support the event as the Lead Sponsor."



**PLATINUM SPONSOR:
(Conference and Awards)
KRAMP UK**



Kramp have been at the forefront of selling parts and accessories since the 1950s. When asked to define their business, it is as a technical wholesale business, supplying over 325,000 products in the UK to a dealer network covering agriculture, forest and grasscare machinery and OEMs. But in order to help dealers turn parts into profit, Kramp offers a vast array of added value services, innovative concepts and dedicated technical expertise.

Kramp, whose UK Sales and Distribution Centre is at Biggleswade in Bedfordshire, are Europe's leading parts wholesaler, present in 22 countries.

Richard Kendrick, UK Marketing Manager says, "We strive to be an essential business partner for our dealers and this Conference provides an ideal opportunity for Kramp to support their efforts and plan for the future."

**AWARDS SPONSOR:
STIHL UK**



There can be few more familiar names in outdoor power equipment than STIHL, a family company founded in the 1920s. Throughout the years the STIHL name has stood for revolutionary technology and innovative ideas. Now, more than 80 years later, STIHL employs more than 14,000 staff worldwide and sells

product in more than 160 countries globally, providing support for STIHL which has become the preferred choice of many professionals and gardeners worldwide.

STIHL GB is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the global STIHL Group. In Great Britain, STIHL products are available from more than 650 specialist Approved Dealers who offer expert customer service. Simon Hewitt, Head of Marketing at STIHL GB says, "These are exciting and challenging times for retail in Great Britain. STIHL GB is delighted to support this event which will bring dealers together to consider the future and what prospects it will hold."

**CONFERENCE
NETWORKING SPONSOR:
ARIENS COMPANY**

Ariens is another company still



in family ownership. Founded in 1933, the company has grown steadily over the years through a loyal following in its US home market, and subsequently through acquisition of brands such as Gravely and Parker commercial equipment and complementary businesses including the Stens Corporation. In 2010, Ariens purchased Oxfordshire garden tractor brands Countax and Westwood. Jef O'Riley, Marketing Manager for Ariens in the UK says "Ariens is a family company to whom a strong dealer and profitable network is central to its success. We are delighted to be associated with this exciting event"

**CONFERENCE NETWORKING
SPONSOR: BAGMA**



**British Agricultural
and Garden Machinery
Association**

The British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association (BAGMA) is the Voice of the Dealer. Its members range across the garden machinery and farm machinery sector, and benefit from extensive support services such as banking, insurance, direct buying group and employment advice through its parent body, BIRA (British Independent Retailers Association). BAGMA director Keith Christian says, "We are really pleased to be associated with this landmark conference which promises to be a highly constructive and useful day for dealers, whatever the size of their business."

**AWARDS SPONSOR:
ASSET FINANCE SOLUTIONS**



There can be few more familiar names in outdoor power equipment than STIHL, a family company founded in the 1920s. Throughout the years the STIHL name has stood for revolutionary technology and innovative ideas.

There are over 35,000 are over 35,000 are over 35,000 are over 35,000 are Dealers in more than 160 countries providing support for STIHL which has become the preferred choice of many professionals and gardeners worldwide. Simon Hewitt, Head of Marketing at Stihl UK says, "These are exciting and challenging times, and STIHL is delighted to support this event which is ideally timed to bring dealers together to consider their future."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Julie Gill, Conference and Awards Event Director at:
The Ad Plain, Pipe House, Lupton Road, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 9BT
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CORDLESS MOWERS COMING OF AGE?

With Bosch deciding to kill off ‘noisier, dirtier’ petrol mowers, could there finally be a breakthrough for cordless lawnmowers?

CHRIS BIDDLE REPORTS

It is one of the industry’s biggest mysteries. Why have cordless mowers not taken a larger share of the market? Speaking to this magazine back in the 1990s, Black & Decker’s Richard Sanderson predicted that “cordless mowers will soon account for 15% of the UK mower market”.

Twenty-five years on and they are still regarded as something of a niche product. Which is strange given that hardly any tradesman, builder or plumber will use a corded power tool today.

There are two reasons of course: cost and perception. The cost of the machine is often much higher than a corded or petrol model, and

the cost of a replacement battery can be eye-watering. And the perception remains that the range – the cutting-time – could be limited and the user stranded if the battery goes down in the middle of mowing (not often the case because many models come with a spare battery).

Let me say straightaway that I have a very modest-sized lawn and have used a cordless mower at home for over 10 years – and swear by it! (A Bosch Rotak for the sake of transparency.) Two batteries came with it, with one always kept on charge.

Perhaps disappointing sales means that the industry has not done a very good job of

promoting cordless mowers. Also, possibly, a reluctance by dealers to sell them because of a lack of follow-up service work?

Cordless garden equipment aside from mowers has grown in both the homeowner and now commercial sectors, with a raft of new machines from the likes of Stihl and Pellenc.

So has the time come for a boost in cordless mower sales?

Cordless the future, says Bosch

Bosch recently announced that it is so confident in its new battery-powered lawnmowers and brush cutters that it is killing off its petrol mowers, saying it won’t build any more of the “noisier, dirtier” models.

The company says that products in its new battery-charged range are built in Britain, start at the touch of a button, don’t involve trips to the garage for petrol and are not affected by rain or cold weather.

It also points out how the absence of oil or petrol is a boost

**I HAVE USED A CORDLESS
MOWER FOR OVER 10 YEARS
– AND SWEAR BY IT!**

to the environment. Bosch quotes a Swedish study which found that the emissions from a petrol mower used for one hour is equivalent to the emissions released by a car on a 100-mile journey.

Joao Barufi, who leads the Bosch Garden Tools division in the UK says: “*Top Gear’s* Jeremy Clarkson has been famously sniffy about electric-powered cars. If he could experience the power of our electric mowers he would be amazed. It’s a shame he doesn’t present a programme called *Top Shear*.”

Bosch says its new cordless Professional Garden tools match the performance of petrol equivalents and are built around heavy-duty batteries. They feature brushless motors that remove the need for servicing. Moreover, it says, the fuel savings that flow from battery powered technology mean that the mowers and brushcutters could effectively pay for themselves in a few years.

Dealer reaction to the news



Joao Barufi

has been mixed. Some question the ‘greenness’ issue of battery technology, others the limitations of using a battery powered product in remote conditions.

However, a spokesman for Bosch says: “The true fact about the emissions is the efficiency in the conversion of the energy, for example from the combustion of petrol to mechanical force to move the blade in a lawn mower. The efficiency in producing energy in large scale creates a lot less impact to the environment compared with isolated generation.”

Lithium-ion batteries are 100% recyclable which reduces the use of new raw materials. Bosch recycles all the batteries which are returned to it, converting them into new batteries.

And in regard to its comment on dirtier engines, it added: “Research from Stockholm University, in Sweden, found that over 1.5 million gallons of fuel are spilled every year from managing fuel, ▶

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for example when you top up the oil on the engine of your car and you miss a couple of drops from the opening, or the last few drops of petrol at the fuel pump. The same applies when you're managing petrol on site and there's always some contamination to the local soil.

"The combustion engine produces a large number of undesired consequences, such as noise, vibration and fumes. The alternative of a machine that performs equally as powerfully as a petrol that can be used all day every day is now available. And similarly to cars, it's only a matter of time until the conversion takes place."

New entrants

Whatever the argument the move towards cordless mowers appears to be growing.

Another new entrant to the market is EGO Power, which has announced the launch of

its new 56V lithium-ion battery powered lawn mower.

The 4.0Ah 56V lithium-ion battery powered cordless lawnmower has a cutting width of 49cm (19"), and a three-in-one function of mulching, rear bagging, and side discharge which provides myriad options when it comes to mowing your lawn. The powerful battery, which can also be used in all products from the EGO Power+ range, provides 45 minutes of mowing from a re-charge time of just 30 minutes using the EGO Infinity charger.

On just one charge the lawnmower has sufficient power to cut up to 800m² of lawn, making it as powerful as a petrol powered machine, but without the fuss, fumes and noise.

Steve Roskell, EGO Europe's Marketing Director, who has wide experience in the power tools sector, says that in terms of cordless, the gardening sector is where the power tools

market was eight or nine years ago, "but it's been a difficult message to get across".

He says: "We've been working towards overcoming the perceived drawbacks to cordless for over 10 years. Yes, cost is an issue, but so is reliability and power.

"In order to compete with petrol powered products, we had to have the battery power which we are now able to achieve with a new generation of lithium-ion. We like to describe EGO as having 'Power Beyond Belief' and it really does have to be experienced to fully appreciate what we are saying.

"We believe our lawn mower is a direct challenge to petrol, electric and other cordless garden products and we're confident consumers will see and feel the difference."

The lawn mower is sold complete with a 4.0Ah battery and infinity charger and retails at £499 including VAT. The EGO Power+ range is available nationally through Henton and Chattell. ●



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*Bosch recommends that the user has four batteries and two chargers. When tested the run time of the Bosch GRA53 did not drop below 45 minutes. When fully charged the Bosch GRA53 is able to cut grass from 60mm to 40mm up to a distance of 1500sqm

BRIGGS & STRATTON: SURVIVAL AND INNOVATION

BILLY GOAT GOES TO BRIGGS & STRATTON

Briggs & Stratton has bought Billy Goat Industries to add to its Power Products portfolio.

Incorporated in 1969 and based in Lee's Summit, Missouri, Billy Goat is well known in the UK for its range of vacuums and sweepers, but also manufacturers turf equipment such as aerators and turf cutters.

Billy Goat has annual net sales of approximately \$30 million, and Briggs & Stratton has acquired all of the outstanding shares of Billy Goat for approximately \$26 million in cash. The transaction was effective from 20th May 2015.

"Billy Goat's products complement Briggs & Stratton's already strong commercial turf brands and further increase Briggs' market access to the rental market," said Harold L Redman Sr, Vice-President and President, Turf and Consumer Products.

Todd J Teske, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Briggs & Stratton Corporation, added: "We welcome the management team and the employees of Billy Goat to our team and look forward to building upon the strong foundation that has made them a strong and successful company."

Billy Goat employs around 100 people and will continue to be run by its former owners, Will and Drew Coates. The company had been planning to build a new manufacturing facility but those plans have now been put on hold according to Will Coates. Briggs & Stratton have also confirmed that it will retain all Billy Goat's employees.

Will Coates said: "It was clear to my brother, Drew, and myself, that partnering with Briggs & Stratton gives us the best opportunity to continue with the Billy Goat brand that we care for so deeply and to focus on what this company does well."

The Billy Goat product line is distributed in the UK by Henton & Chattell.



▲ Will Coates is pictured (centre) with H&C's Jim McGlinchy (l) and Peter Chaloner at SALTEX.

REMAINING RELEVANT

By Chris Biddle

The Briggs & Stratton story continues to fascinate. I can't decide whether the company is one of the industry's great survivors or an inspirational innovator? The truth is, both, because that is always the only way forward.

The B&S DNA lies in making engines for outdoor power equipment – millions of engines over the years – the familiar red and black logo adorning lawnmowers and power equipment to the extent that many homeowners think they own a Briggs & Stratton mower.

It will seem strange to many consumers that their piece of kit will have two brands clearly represented, so this was always Briggs & Stratton's strength – and problem.

Until Honda, Kubota – and for a while Yamaha – came along, manufacturers generally had to rely on a third-party supplier of the power pack, whereas Honda *et al* could use a unifying brand for engine and machine.

I well remember Fred Stratton telling a group of UK distributors and press during a visit to Milwaukee some 25 years ago: "We will never make a Briggs & Stratton branded mower!"

The temptation must have always been there; after all, the B&S brand has been one of strongest industry brands worldwide for many years.

But how would that impact on the customers? The company's

bread and butter relationship with OEMS was central – and yet the market was changing. Chinese companies that had nothing like the brand awareness of the Japanese would make anything to order.

Manufacturers could fit a Chinese-sourced engine and integrate it with their own brand, there was no need to mention a different brand of engine. It was their machine, fitted with their engine.

Complacency

From its origins in 1908. B&S has never been afraid to test the market. Over the early years it dabbled in automotive components, washing machines, radios and refrigerators before in the 1920s settling into its core competency of manufacturing small engines for lawn and garden machinery.

The 1950s saw the real breakthrough with the introduction of light-weight aluminium alloy engines at the very beginning of the new age of consumerism. For years it rode the crest of that wave to become a manufacturing powerhouse and instantly recognisable brand. Success brought its own problems of industrial unrest and debilitating strikes, all of which had to be overcome.

But perhaps the turning point came in 1989, when the company lost money, over \$20 million. This in part was due to a severe drought in 1988 which saw engine sales fall by over 25%, but also that the company realised that it had become too insular, and not reactive enough to the growing competition from Japanese companies.

Companies like Toro and John Deere were asking B&S to develop engines compatible with new

machine development, but B&S was saying: “Our engines are as good as they get” – and kept defending the existing product line.

Fred Stratton said at the time: “This is a wake-up call. We’re too dependent on whether the grass grows or not. But also we had

relevant to consumers?

Gone are the days of complacency that was evident in the 1980s. More and more, B&S realises that pulling the chord on a lawnmower or getting it serviced is a ‘turn-off’ for many consumers today. They want

THE PAST 25 YEARS HAS SEEN A CONSIDERABLE SEA-CHANGE IN OUTLOOK AND STRATEGY BY BRIGGS & STRATTON

become so good at the old way of doing things, that we weren’t alert and responsive to new techniques. It’s taken this shock to shake us out of complacency.”

The past 25 years has seen a considerable sea-change in outlook and strategy by B&S. It has the continuing issue of maintaining its position as a leading small engine manufacturer, squeezing as much leverage as its can out of its brand, while facing mounting cost and technological challenges from the Far East.

Its game changed with the failure of volume mower maker Murray Ohio in 2004, when B&S became its new owner, rather by default because it was probably the largest creditor.

Since then the company has added Snapper, Simplicity, Victa and now Billy Goat, as well as diversifying into generator and lighting sets. But still, there is no B&S branding of the machines – nor is there likely to be. What the company has done is secured a customer base for its engines.

But there is another challenge: how does B&S remain

ease of use – and no hassle.

I remember a Briggs distributor saying at one of our conferences a few years ago: “Our service department was doing well, until some clown



▶ Battery from the new InStart System

invented electronic ignition!”

So the pace of B&S evolution shows no signs of abating. Push button starting is now available, virtually maintenance-free engines are being developed – and there are plans to enter the robotic mower market.

For old-established companies in particular, there can be no standing still. Briggs has virtually seen off its established competitors such as Tecumseh. New challenges now come thick and fast. So how they marry heritage and tradition with fast moving technological change and consumer trends will be fascinating to watch in the coming years. ●

BRIGGS AND STRATTON IS THE LEAD SPONSOR OF THE 2015 SERVICE DEALER CONFERENCE AND AWARDS

HIRE GROUND

Dealers are in the ideal position to provide short-term hire of specialist outdoor power equipment



One of the more surprising results of a *State of the Industry* report published in *Service Dealer* a couple of years ago was that more than 50% of dealers did not hire equipment, either formally or informally.

The grounds maintenance business lends itself ideally to hire, either short-term hire of specialist machines which a customer might need for a specific operation, or long-term hire (typically a 32-week period covering the grass cutting season).

But a hire operation has to be set up with care and operated professionally if it is to be a valuable profit centre. There is little doubt that a casual approach can lead to real problems unless the dealer is careful.

TH White

Ransomes dealer, T H White Ltd, operates four specialist grasscare

branches at Reading, Redditch, Timsbury (Hampshire) and at Knockdown (Tetbury).

The company, who recently won the Ransomes Dealer of the Year Award, has operated a hire division for over 23 years. During the last year, it has appointed a dedicated hire manager, with the hire operation now centred at the Knockdown depot.

“However,” says T H White’s grasscare Divisional Manager Tim Lane, “we have no ambition to be a national hire company and only hire equipment within our Ransomes territory – and then hire



Tim Lane (right) with Knockdown branch manager Nick Brown

equipment that we normally stock and sell.

“We normally hire to customers we already know and look on the hire operation as an added-value service to existing or potential new customers.” Although T H White only tends to advertise short-

HIRING FROM US GIVES THEM AN INSIGHT INTO THE EQUIPMENT WE SELL

term or spot hire, Mr Lane says the company will accommodate customers who want to hire on a long-term basis, possibly a 32-week hire covering the whole of the grass cutting season.

“It’s not something we advertise or seek,” he says, “but today we have to offer a range of hire options to meet the needs of customers who are often operating under tight financial conditions.”

The range of equipment hired by T H White extends through outfront mowers (probably the most popular piece of equipment in the hire fleet), to utility vehicles, compact tractors, mounted cylinder mowers and specialist machines such as overseeders, scarifiers and top dressers.

This latter group of machines are those that are most regularly requested by local authorities and golf clubs wishing to carry out specific renovation jobs. “Of course,” says Mr Lane, “having a hire fleet does give us the opportunity to place machines from our range into customers to whom we don’t normally supply equipment.

“Hiring from us gives them an insight into the equipment we sell and the service we provide, thus a hire might often turn into a sale if the customer or his operator particularly likes that piece of kit and decides he can’t do without it.”

Machines are kept in T H White’s hire fleet for one to two years, after which they are renovated and sold on. “We like to think that our hire

fleet reflects the machines that are most likely to be requested by customers,” says Mr Lane, “but we keep a keen eye on the makeup of the fleet and often will add equipment if we’re asked to by customers.” The key to running a successful hire operation is in the detail, he adds. “You’ve got to get the documentation absolutely right.

“It’s essential that you leave no stone unturned when hiring out expensive equipment,” says Mr Lane, “so that both you, as the hirer, and the customer is fully aware of the details of the hire and the commitments of both parties. Neither want any nasty surprises.

“Whilst you can track the profitability of each piece of equipment quite accurately based on hire revenue, less cost of upkeep through to its ‘wash-out’ at the end when it’s sold, you can’t easily quantify the hidden benefits of a

hire department, such as the ability to get machinery into customers who might not normally deal with you.”

GGM Groundscare

Hire is also a hugely important facet of GGM Groundscare’s business.

Managing Director of the Colne, Lancashire dealer, Chris Gibson, says he is finding that complementing direct sales with a range of attractive and flexible hire packages is what today’s commercial customer is looking for. They can operate machinery at a fixed cost with the full support of the dealership’s service team.

“We’re finding that we’re doing more and more on this side of the business,” says Mr Gibson. “For instance, we have contracts with Manchester City Council and Blackburn Council which are of a long-term nature.

“But we’re also seeing more ▶



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L-R Martin and Malcolm

growth and opportunities in short-term and spot hire with professional customers who might need a particular machine for say, a month or six-weeks.

“Machines like Amazone Profi-hoppers, shredders, ride-on brush-cutters; this sort of equipment is proving the most popular. Machines which the guys don’t feel the need to own all year round, but which they have a specific requirement for during a couple of months of the year.”

Duxford Hire & Supply

Another dealership who have specialised in hire are Duxford Hire and Supply.

Founded by Malcolm Evans in 1969 they have for over 46 years,

successfully mixed the availability of a small, specialist fleet of hire machines, with a dedicated sales and service operation for leading brands.

“As I see it, a hire fleet and retail operation fit nicely together,” says Malcolm.

“There are certain machines that customers are never likely to buy as they only need them for a weekend or two during the year - and we might as well have their business than drive them to the larger hire companies”.

The art says Malcolm is to keep the equipment in good condition, well-maintained, and hired out with plenty of instruction on use.

“I think the fact that we are a small family business means that the machines are not used

means that customers trust our judgement and knowledge. That’s our principal selling point – we are a specialist who sells, services and hires garden machinery.

“We used to be more into the commercial hire side of things, with machines such as mini-diggers and the like – but we’ve deliberately moved away from that.

“In fact if I’m being honest over the last couple of years we are in fact seeing more sales than hire. But hire is still an invaluable part of our business. Customers often hire a machine which they will find invaluable and then come back to us to buy.”

Like most companies who hire, Malcolm will put into the fleet, machines which are proven to be suitable for hire. “There is little

A HIRE FLEET AND A RETAIL OPERATION FIT NICELY TOGETHER

recklessly as might be the case with the larger national chains,” says Malcolm.

“Also, the fact that we are a specialist in garden machinery,

doubt that certain machines are more popular than others as hire items. Stump-grinders and turf cutters are something we do a lot of business with. And the Camon tiller



range from Tracmaster are built to withstand heavy usage - and as a result are probably one of our most successful hire items.”

Sharrocks

There is little doubt that hire in general can be a major part of a dealer’s business, if it is being taken seriously.

Turfcare dealership, Sharrocks, which operates three branches in the North-West, is turning increasingly to hiring equipment as opposed to outright sale.

MD James Sharrock says: “In this current climate, local authorities in particular want to get a job done and the make of equipment or the ownership is unimportant to them. The line between outright sale and hire is now getting very blurred.

“We deal with several Metropolitan councils in the Manchester area, and the key is total openness and flexibility. They all talk to one another so know the deals on offer from us or anyone else.



“By hiring equipment we are effectively a service provider, solving problem areas for them with the minimum amount of fuss.

“There is little doubt that dealers can be at the forefront of hire in the future, but they have to be professional and a lot more inventive than they are at the moment,” says Mr Sharrock. ●

10 REASONS TO HIRE



1 With his extensive knowledge of the product the dealer has a head start over most of the conventional hire outlets that are dealing with a vast number of items for hire.

2 Hiring increases sales opportunities; a number of customers hiring may then consider purchasing.

3 If an end user owns a different machine, hiring a recommended brand will enable him to see the advantages over his existing make.

4 Some customers will only purchase if they can hire first (treating hire as an extended demonstration).

5 Owner/operators will, from time to time, have additional work exceeding their existing capacity.

6 A hire machine can earn a substantial sum for a short period – say three months – and then be sold at a reasonable discount. This helps against competitive pricing.

7 Hire machines can be used as demonstrators if there is a shortage.

8 Hire machines can be used as a back-up system for breakdown/ servicing/ warranty.

9 Machines out on hire increase brand awareness.

10 A machine working in a hire environment is a powerful selling tool. It is backing up with actions the message the dealer is using to sell it. ●

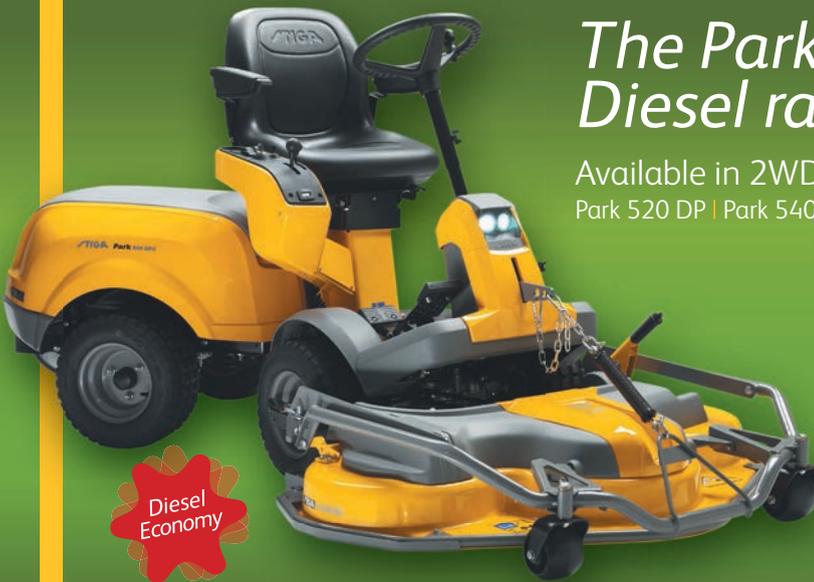


HIRE CHECK-LIST



- Identify specific machines for your hire fleet.
- Make one (or more) person(s) responsible for maintaining your hire fleet.
- Keep a record card for each machine showing hire history as well as details of service and maintenance.
- Check machine ahead of hire and after return.
- Set out clearly your hire terms, rates and hire periods.

- Either provide manufacturers' instruction manual with each machine, or prepare your own operating and safety leaflet for each machine.
- Use a pre-printed hire/rental agreement and ensure that the customer signs to the effect he/she has received operating instructions.
- Always include safety clothing, helmet, ear plugs, gloves, goggles with chainsaws with each hire (either included in hire rate or as an extra).



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HARPER STUDENT TRAINS IN FRANCE WITH KUHN

International perspective with machinery manufacturer

Harper Adams third year student, Sam Green, is learning about agriculture from an international perspective during his placement year working in France for machinery manufacturer, KUHN.

The 20-year-old says he couldn't resist taking up the role at the company's headquarters in Saverne and now works alongside managers to complete marketing projects as well as hosting visitors and delivering technical training.

Through his job he has also been able to travel – working at SIMA in Paris, LAMMA in the UK and Denmark to provide product training.

Product knowledge

Sam, who studies BSc (Hons) Agri-food Marketing with Business Studies, says: "Aside from learning a bit of French, my product knowledge is improving every day, you don't stop learning.

"I'm meeting people from all over the world, so learning how to

communicate technical information to them can prove challenging and is a skill that takes time to develop.

"Being 1,000km away from home isn't the easiest, but I'm experiencing a different culture and a completely different view on agriculture which I know will help me no end in the future."

With farming firmly embedded into both sides of his family, Sam found his interest in agriculture naturally led to him enrolling on a degree at Harper Adams.

But by choosing to study agri-food marketing with business studies, he has been able to apply his university knowledge to his placement job in a different way.

Sam, from Bilsborrow in Preston, says: "My course choice was perhaps a little different to some, but I've found that working for a machinery manufacturer isn't just about big kit.

"When meeting new clients and liaising with colleagues you need to know the current food markets, the

economic situation and business terminology; my course has helped with this.

"Plus being at Harper Adams, I'm spending time with like-minded people and learning about the industry through both lectures and living with my housemates."

Future prospects

After being offered a new job role, Sam now works at the KUHN Blanchard factory in Chéméré on the West coast.

Considering his future career, the former Runshaw College student says, "Like most, my dream is to work on a farm.

"However, I want to try my luck elsewhere in the industry first as it's an opportunity to gain a vast amount of knowledge, experience and contacts that will be useful in the future.

"I'd ideally like a job in the agricultural machinery industry so that I can expand on my year in France and really get stuck in."

ERNEST DOE SEEK APPRENTICES

Looking to recruit 17 this year

Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd is currently looking for 17 apprentices in agricultural, construction and groundcare machinery for the 2015 season as part of its continuous investment in people, the future and the industry.

Apprentices are required in both its service and parts departments. The company already has 30 apprentices in its programme spread across its 19 branches in East Anglia and South-East England.

The apprenticeship scheme at Ernest Doe combines four years on-the-job training with a four-week block release course at college in each of the years. The company's founder, Ernest Doe, started the business in 1898 when he bought out a blacksmith's shop having completed his own apprenticeship.



Angus Doe

Career progression

Service Director Angus Doe says: "As a company we like to 'grow our own' employees where we can. The majority of the apprentices we take become highly skilled and professional service technicians operating from a fully-equipped service van which the company provides. They are a vital part of the relationship we have with our customers who will often buy from us again because of their confidence in our ability to react promptly and keep their equipment performing in the way it was designed to work."

"We offer a wide range of career progression opportunities throughout the company. Service technicians can move on to service management jobs, sales positions and departmental and branch management roles. In fact five out of the company's seven-strong senior management team started as apprentices with the company.

"We continue to invest, not just in people, but also in the latest tools and equipment for our workshops. It's an investment that benefits our customers, the industry, our employees and the company."

Anyone wishing to be considered for an apprenticeship at Ernest Doe should visit the company's website at www.ernestdoe.com/jobs for further information.

GREENMECH HOST YOUNG ENGINEERS COMP



GreenMech hosted this year's Institution of Agricultural Engineers' (IAgrE) Young Engineers Competition. Engineering apprentices and students of all disciplines at land-based colleges, sixth forms and technical colleges nationwide converged at their manufacturing facility in Kings Coughton, Warwickshire.

The aim of the competition was to raise awareness among young engineers as to the width and vibrancy of the industry.

The competitors were all provided with a set of standard wheels, a battery and maximum dimensions, then given the challenge to create a remote or radio-

controlled vehicle that was capable of reaching the highest point on a curved ramp.

To add to GreenMech's successful hosting of the event, its own apprentice, William Baker from Warwickshire College, finished a close second overall, just missing out to a team from Easton & Otley College.

GreenMech Managing Director Jonathan Turner spent a lot of time helping the students and talking to them through the factory tour. "It was a great day," he said. "The level of competition was very high and it was brilliant to see our own apprentice William coming a close second. Congratulations to all involved."

JCB'S DAN DOES THE DOUBLE

At engineering awards ceremony

JCB apprentice Daniel Biggs is the toast of the company after scooping two top awards in a national competition.

The young engineer and fourth year apprentice, who works for JCB Transmissions in Abenbury Way, beat stiff competition to scoop the Outstanding Performance by a Final Year Apprentice Award at the EEF Future Manufacturing Awards, held in London.

Judges said Daniel "demonstrated an immense knowledge and passion for engineering, allowing him to perform at the very highest level" and that he was an "exceptional apprentice role model".

Daniel, aged 21, from Wrexham, was also named Manufacturing Student of the Year at the same awards ceremony. Judges of that award said Daniel "demonstrated a tremendous level of professionalism and commitment to being an engineer, and the industry as a whole" and that his "absolute passion and dedication to engineering shone through".

The award showcases the two major routes – an apprenticeship and a degree – available to people wishing to pursue engineering-based careers.



Daniel said: "To be named manufacturing student of the year and an outstanding apprentice is a real honour. I've learnt valuable skills that have set me on the path of an interesting and rewarding career and I would have no hesitation in urging other young people to pursue a career in manufacturing, either as an apprentice or university student." ●



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DOMESTIC

DON'T GIVE AWAY YOUR LEGACY

New roller mower range offers profits

Rochfords says specialist dealers can profit from its new Weibang Legacy roller mower range.

Designed in the UK, the new mowers are premium quality machines for both domestic and professional use, so there is wide potential for dealer profits from the eight rear roller models in the range.

The Legacy boasts a revolutionary roller ratchet, which is an industry first, and a new, fully adjustable handle for extra comfort in use. Power comes with a choice of Briggs & Stratton or Kawasaki engines coupled with the durability of CPS crank protection. The grass collectors are up to 85 litres capacity.

The new Legacy machines are backed with a five-year domestic warranty and three-year commercial warranty on PRO models.



DOMESTIC

GET SMARTSTOW

Toro launches first vertically storable petrol mower

Toro has launched the SmartStow – a 55cm Recycler mower that folds up and can be stored vertically, reducing its storage footprint by up to 70%.

The company says this steel deck, variable speed mower offers durability, reliability and quality of cut. Customers can choose to collect the cuttings in the large grassbag or engage Toro's Recycler cutting system so that grass clippings are repeatedly re-cut into a fine mulch, leaving an excellent finish and promoting a healthy, lush lawn.

Storage

When finished, the handle simply folds down and locks and the machine can then be lifted up on its end to store against a wall. This is made possible by the



breakthrough Mow 'n' Stow engine technology from Briggs & Stratton which ensures no petrol or oil leaks when the mower is stored upright. Vertical storage also offers customers easier access to clean under the deck and check the blade.

The SmartStow® has a recommended price of £599 with the launch receiving substantial marketing support in the national press, specialist garden and general interest consumer media.

RANSOMES LAUNCH TWO NEW MACHINES

Exit the Commander

Ransomes Jacobsen, has launched the next two machines in a series of new mowers manufactured at their European headquarters in Ipswich. Primarily targeted at the municipal sector, the MP495/MP655 range provides yet more options from a single medium platform and are replacements for the Ransomes Commander, the stalwart of municipal wide area cylinder mowers launched back in 1993.

Following on from the launch of the MP493 and MP653 wide area rotary mowers last Autumn, these new five unit cylinder mowers are powered by the same 49hp and 65hp Kubota diesel engines and use a standard platform, enhancing the commonality between each machine for ease of production, operator use and maintenance.

The choice of cutting units remains with Magna 250 fixed head cylinders for general maintenance work and Sport 200 fixed and floating head cylinders for high quality turf maintenance.

The operator controls are common to the other Ransomes ride-on mowers – Highway 3, Parkway 3, HR300 and MP493/MP653 wide area rotary mowers, making it simple for operators to transfer between machines in multiple fleet applications.

An ISO-mounted operator platform reduces noise

and vibration levels for the operator, with or without a cab fitted and Q-Amp speed reactive steering matches steering response for the operator. All round visibility from the ISO-mounted operator's platform is excellent with positive sight lines to each cutting unit and a comfortable suspension seat ensuring long days of productive mowing.

Lee Kristensen, Ransomes Jacobsen's Product Manager said, "The first machines in the MP series, the MP493 and MP653, launched last autumn have been met with tremendous acclaim. Using the same common platform we are providing fleet operators commonality of parts within a mixed fleet format, which will help drive down the cost of parts they need to stock."



New MP495 and MP 655 use common platform

Replacing Cushman Truckster

Jacobsen launched the all-new Jacobsen Truckster XD heavy-duty utility vehicle at the Golf Industries Show in San Antonio, Texas this year and is a replacement for the venerable Cushman Turf-Truckster. The all-new Jacobsen Truckster XD sets a new standard for capacity, power, strength and comfort. It has a 1,610 Kg standard payload capacity. Two power units are available: the 24.8 hp diesel version, more commonly used throughout Europe, and the 32.5 hp petrol model, which is used predominantly in the Americas and Asia-Pacific. Jacobsen engineers have put a priority on comfort, giving the operator area 25% more room than the competition.

"When we started this project, the first thing we did was ask hundreds of superintendents, greenkeepers and sports turf managers what they wanted from a heavy-duty utility vehicle," said Richard Comely, Director of Global Product Management at Ransomes

Jacobsen. "The feedback was unanimous: they told us they wanted a truck with more capacity, power and comfort, so we've delivered exactly what they asked for." The first units will be available in the UK and Europe in the second half of 2015.



New Jacobsen Truckster HD

CUB CADET LAUNCHES ‘POWER-SHOP’

New showroom concept

EP Barrus has introduced a new Cub Cadet showroom concept to support its dealers in the promotion of the brand.

The new Power-Shop has been designed and developed by MTD to promote a consistent brand image throughout Europe. The company says its “innovative, modern look and feel” aims to help dealers create a strong Cub Cadet presence within their showrooms.

The Power-Shop system features a raised platform with graphics and logos to provide definition for the machines, a logo banner, a graphic backdrop and an interactive touch screen to show videos and product images.

“Our aim is to provide our dealers with every possible tool they need to successfully promote the Cub Cadet brand and increase their sales,” explains Nick Hills, General Manager of the garden division at Barrus.



“The cost of the Power-Shop has been subsidised by Barrus making it an extremely cost-efficient option. Dealers have been monitoring the effectiveness of the display, helping us to identify ways in which we can improve this highly successful and valuable sales tool,” adds Nick.

Any dealer wishing to discuss introducing a Power-Shop display to their showroom in the future, should make contact with their Area Sales Manager.

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COMMERCIAL

RED DOT AWARD FOR STIGA

Park Pro 740 IOX honoured

Stiga, a brand of the GGP (Global Garden Products) Group, has won the prestigious Red Dot Award with its Park Pro 740 IOX front mower.

Established 60 years ago by the Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen creative hub in Germany, the Red Dot Awards have now become widely recognised symbols of excellence in the design industry with their iconic red spherical shaped logo.

Every year the world's top firms compete to win the award by submitting their products to the judgment of an international panel of designers, academics and journalists. A total of 4,928 applicants from 56 countries took part in the 2015 competition, divided into 31 product categories spanning from fashion to accessories, electronics, cars and furniture, as well as machinery for personal and professional use.

The latter group included the Park Pro 740 IOX front mower, which won the jury over with its streamlined design and unique features – flexibility and innovation, comfort and driving safety, precision and ease of use on any terrain and in every season – making it one of Stiga's top-range products.

“This award fills us with excitement. It further motivates us in the pursuit of efficiency combined to beauty and acknowledges the excellent work of our staff,” said a spokesperson for GGP.



COMMERCIAL

DANARM MOVES TO MITSUBISHI

Transition from Kawasaki engines

During this season Danarm will be making the transition from Kawasaki to Mitsubishi engines on all of its Kaaz professional hand-held machinery.

Danarm have been associated with Kawasaki for over 40 years, however they say they are sure that a change to Mitsubishi at this time will be beneficial.

The Mitsubishi brand is well proven and still predominantly manufactured in Japan.

The range

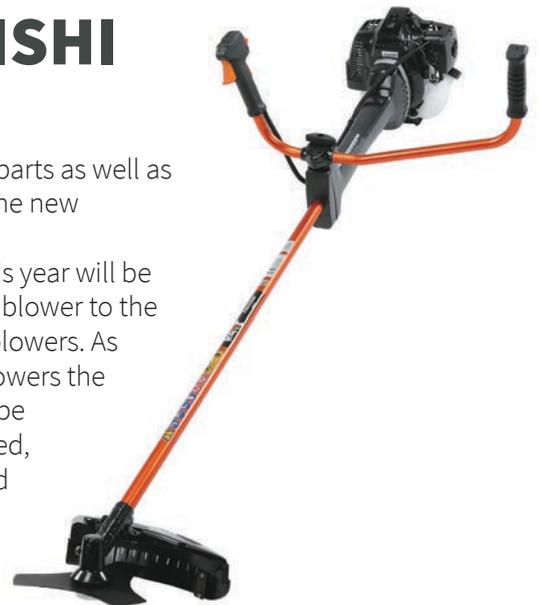
The range will consist of Kaaz professional hedgecutters, leaf blowers and brushcutters from 26cc to 48cc. The Kaaz Danarm 19" Lawnmowers will be fitted with the Subaru EA190 engine and the 21" will remain unchanged with Honda GXV160 engines. Danarm will continue to supply

Kawasaki two-stroke spare parts as well as keeping all of the parts for the new Mitsubishi range.

Also new from Danarm this year will be the addition of a hand-held blower to the current range of backpack blowers. As with the current range of blowers the new hand-held version will be Japanese Kaaz manufactured, with a Mitsubishi engine and robust design.

The Kaaz Corporation is also working on the development of a hydrostatic variable speed roller mower and a low vibration version to complement its range of heavy duty professional machines.

Danarm hopes to have samples of these new machines later in the year, in time to display on its stand at SALTEX.



AGRICULTURE

CLAAS LINER UP NEW ADDITION

Road transportable rake



In order to achieve an even, consistent swath for high output foragers and balers, Claas has introduced a new rake, the Liner 3600, on which the working width can be adjusted from 9.90m up to 12.50m, but is designed so that it is compact to transport on the road.

The Liner 3600 succeeds the Liner 3500 and uses well tried and tested components from the rest of the Liner range, including the continuously lubricated and hermetically sealed cam track. Each of the tine arms has four dual tines, which are secured using the Profix quick-change system.

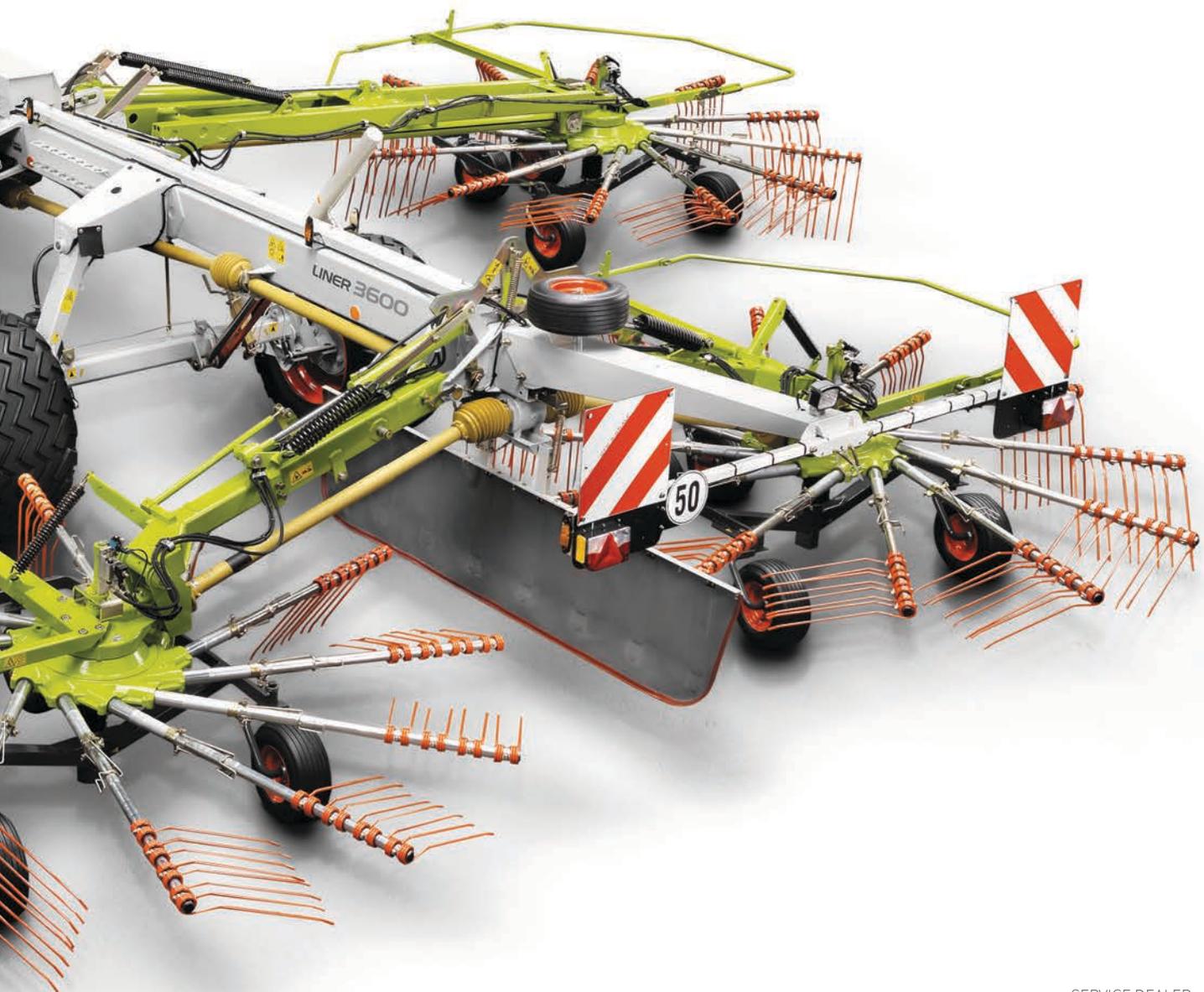
For accurate ground following and to avoid crop contamination, each rotor is equipped with a large four-wheel chassis. In addition, the contour wheels are positioned extremely close to the tines, so that the rotor can accurately follow ground contours.

Control

The Liner 3600 is controlled using the new Operator control terminal or the Communicator II. Using these terminals, the delay between the front and rear rotors lifting or lowering can be easily set, and the unit also has an optional Load Sensing system. Alternatively, the Liner 3600 can be controlled using an ISOBUS cable via an ISOBUS-compatible control terminal.

Between fields, the new running gear is designed so that transport height remains below 4.00m, allowing it to be safely transported on the road without having to remove any tine arms. If necessary the transport height or ground clearance can also be simply adjusted while on the move, without needing to use the control terminal. The new running gear also makes it possible to fit large-volume, ground-protecting 620/40 R22.5 tyres and still keep the machine within 3.00m for transport.

While its low centre of gravity ensures that the new Liner 3600 can be quickly and safely transported on the road, this also has the advantage of ensuring that it is safe to use on hills.



MAKITA EXPANDS PETROL RANGE

For grounds maintenance professionals

Makita has expanded its petrol engined range of grounds maintenance equipment, with three new machines entering the range.

The additions are the four-stroke PLM4817 mulching lawnmower which has a 48cm width of cut; the two-stroke ER2600L, clean emissions, bent-shaft linetrimmer and the PM7651H back-pack mist blower, that is designed for efficient delivery of chemical fungicides for tree and brassica crops.

Mower

The new Makita PLM4817 push-type lawn mower is powered by a 140cc four-stroke Briggs & Stratton 500E engine that meets all emissions regulations with low running costs and low noise output. This easy-start engine drives the offset blade layout for a 48cm width of cut. A mulching kit is standard equipment for this side discharge mower with single-lever height control for eight cutting depths between 25-70mm. With a steel deck for longevity, folding soft-grip handle for compact storage or transport, the new PLM4817 is suitable for lawns up to 1,400m².

Trimmer

The latest Makita two-stroke engine in the new ER2600L 25.7cc 1.2hp linetrimmer is equipped with a catalytic muffler to fully comply with EPA and EU Stage 2 emissions regulations. The bent-shaft configuration enhances the balance and control of this trimmer, which weighs just 4.3kg, and has a low vibration D-style forward control handle. The new design of compact line-head protector provides a better view of the cutting area without loss of clippings control.

Mist blower

Primarily designed for use in orchard and vineyard operations, the new Makita PM7651H 75.6cc back-pack mist blower has a 15-litre chemical tank capacity. With the high performance Makita Mini four-stroke engine delivering up to 14.1 m³/m maximum air volume at a maximum velocity of 85m/s the spray range will reach 13 metres vertically and 16 metres horizontally. The chemical/air mix is automatic. Weighing just 14.1kg this powerful mist blower is easy to use in operation with an exceptionally comfortable and fully supporting back-pack harness.



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EVENTS FOR 2015

JULY 2015

- 1-2 Royal Norfolk Show
www.royalnorfolkshow.co.uk
- 4-5 Smallholders Show, South of England Showground, Ardingly
www.smallholdersshows.co.uk
- 5 Malton Show
www.maltonshow.com
- 6 Cumberland Show
www.cumberlandshow.co.uk
- 8-9 Livestock Event, Birmingham NEC
www.livestockevent.co.uk
- 10-12 Kent County Show
www.kentshowground.co.uk
- 11 Newport Show
www.newportshow.org
- 14-16 Great Yorkshire Show
www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk
- 18 Camborne Show
www.camborne-show.org.uk
- 20-23 Royal Welsh Show
www.rwas.co.uk/royal-welsh-show/
- 22-26 RHS Flower Show – Tatton Park
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events
- 24-25 Border Union Show
www.buas.org/show/index.html
- 25 Mid Devon Show
www.middevonshow.co.uk
- 28-30 New Forest & Hampshire County Show
www.newforestshow.co.uk
- 31-1/8 Dumfries Agricultural Show
www.dumfriesshow.co.uk
- 31-2/8 CLA Game Fair, Harewood House, Leeds, Yorkshire
www.gamefair.co.uk

AUGUST 2015

- 1 Garstang Show
www.garstangshow.org
- 1 Emley Show
www.emleyshow.com
- 5 North Devon Show
www.northdevonshow.com

- 6 Honiton Agricultural Show
www.honitonshow.co.uk
- 5-6 Bakewell Show
www.bakewellshow.org
- 8 Chepstow Show
www.chepstowshow.co.uk
- 9 Ripley Show
www.ripleyshow.co.uk
- 12 Vale of Glamorgan Ag Show
www.valeofglamorganshow.co.uk
- 11-12 Anglesey County Show
www.angleseyshow.org.uk/anglesey-show.html
- 14-15 Shrewsbury Flower Show
www.shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk
- 16 Mid-Somerset Ag Show
www.midsomersetshow.org.uk
- 18-20 Pembrokeshire County Show
www.pembsshow.org
- 19 Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show
www.gillshaftshow.co.uk
- 21 Cranleigh Show
www.cranleighshow.org.uk
- 27 Monmouthshire Show
www.monmouthshow.co.uk
- 27 Bucks County Show
www.buckscountyshow.co.uk
- 30-1/9 Spoga-gafa 2015
www.spogagafa.com

SEPTEMBER 2015

- 5 Alresford Show
www.alresfordshow.co.uk
- 5-6 Dorset County Show
www.dorsetcountyshow.co.uk
- 6-9 Autumn Fair, Birmingham NEC
www.autumnfair.com
- 10 Westmoreland County Show
www.westmorlandshow.co.uk
- 12 Usk Show
www.uskshow.co.uk
- 12 Romsey Show
www.romseyshow.co.uk
- 14-16 Glee 2015
www.gleebirmingham.com

- 19-20 Royal Berkshire Show
www.newburyshowground.co.uk
- 28-30 Golf Europe 2014, Ausburg, Germany
www.golf-europe.com

OCTOBER 2015

- 3-4 South of England Autumn Show & Game Fair, Ardingly
www.seas.org.uk/autumn-show/
- 7 The Dairy Show, Bath & West Showground
www.bathandwest.com/dairy/96/
- 17-18 Countryside Live, Harrogate
www.countrysidelive.co.uk
- 21-23 Green Industry & Equipment Expo, Louisville, USA
www.cgje-expo.com/gieexpo/

NOVEMBER 2015

- 4-5 IOG Saltex 2015, Birmingham NEC
www.iogsaltex.com
- 10-14 Agritechnica 2015, Hanover, Germany
www.agritechnica.com/home-en.html
- 14-15 Anglesey Winter Show
www.angleseyshow.org.uk
- 19 Service Dealer's Dealer 2020 Conference & Awards, Belfry Hotel, Oxfordshire
www.servicedealer.co.uk
- 30-1/12 Royal Welsh Winter Fair
www.rwas.co.uk/winter-fair/



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SPACE ODDITY

COULD ROBOTIC MOWERS HINDER THE SPACE RACE?

Claims of galactic inference



Astronomers at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in the US are worried that radio-controlled robotic lawnmowers could interfere with their sensitive radio telescopes.

Spokesman for the observatory, Harvey Liszt, told news source Bloomberg that the radio waves will be seen by their instruments. "It's a distortion," he said.

One of the companies currently manufacturing robotic lawnmowers, iRobot, says the claims of interference are overblown. The company has also pledged to take steps to ensure its robomowers won't cause interference with space exploration.

The proposed radio frequency for the lawnmowers, which don't rely on wires for guidance as is the case with current robotic lawnmowers, is the same frequency that scientists use to track methanol. Discovering the presence of methanol usually points to regions of star formation.

To counteract worries scientists have about interference, iRobot has offered to put a notice in the manuals and on the robots that reads: "Consumer use only; use must be limited to residential areas."

FANCY THAT!

WOMEN FANTASISE THE MOST ABOUT SEDUCING THEIR GARDENER!

We get many press releases here at Service Dealer Towers, but I can honestly say this is the first time we've had one come in from IllicitEncounters.com (honestly!).

Apparently a recent study conducted by the married affairs site has revealed that gardeners are the top seduction fantasy for women. The website surveyed 1,500 female members asking them who they would most like to seduce, and gardeners came out on top with 37% of the vote.

The question posed was: "Out of the following seven professions that you may come in contact with in your house at some stage, who would you most like to seduce?":

- Gardener – 37%
- Electrician – 16%
- Locksmith – 7%
- Plumber – 3%
- Milkman – 4%
- Postman – 14%
- Window Cleaner – 19%

The press release goes on to claim: "A-lister Eva Mendes brought the gardener fantasy into popularity when in *Desperate Housewives* her character enjoyed an illicit encounter with John Rowland, the gardener." Now, as any self-respecting fan of American trashy soap operas will tell you, Eva Mendes wasn't even in *Desperate Housewives*. It was Eva Longoria. Which begs the question, if you can't even trust a website encouraging extra-marital affairs, who can you trust?!

Spokesperson for IllicitEncounters.com, Claire Page quotes herself in the press release saying: "Everybody knows the uniform of choice for a gardener is topless, mowing your seemingly endless lawn in the sunshine." This, of course, doesn't take into account that most gardeners today would be fully versed in the dangers of prolonged exposure to direct sunlight and thus would be more likely to pop a top on.

She also says: "Move over horticulture, it's all about hottie-courier," which I don't think even begins to make sense.



CHARITY TREK

ROCHFORDS TEAM TAKES ON THE THREE PEAKS

To raise money for Bowel Cancer UK



Marking two years since Peter Rochford's passing, a team from Rochfords Garden Machinery is taking on the Three Peaks Challenge on 4th July.

The challenge

Seventeen members of the Rochfords team will be taking on the challenge of trying to climb the three peaks (Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon) within 24 hours, including travel time.

They will start the ascent to the summit of Ben Nevis on Saturday 4th at 5pm, a walk of around 19km (11.8 miles) up to the summit at 1,344 metres (4,409 feet). Then it's back on the bus just after 10pm to drive to Scafell Pike to start the second walk/climb around four o'clock in the morning as the sun rises over the Lake District.

The second ascent to the 978-metre (3,208-foot) summit is

via a 14km (8.7-mile) walk. They will then return to the bus by 10am on Sunday 5th July to allow time to drive to the third and final summit of Snowdon. In order to achieve the target of three peaks in 24 hours they will have approximately four hours to finish the final walk of 11km (6.8 miles) to the top of Snowdon at 1,085 metres (3,650 feet) and back to the base before 5pm on Sunday 5th July.

In total the team will be walking 44km (27.3 miles) and climbing to a total height of 3,407 metres (11,267 feet) – hopefully within the 24 hours target they have set themselves.

Background

Lewis Anderson of Rochfords told *Service Dealer*: "For most of the team this will be the first time they've done any hill walking and they would never have dreamed of completing this type of challenge.

"We have representation from all six of our Area Sales Managers, Parts Department, Accounts, Operations, Warehouse and our own Retail Showroom, meaning we have a great mix of characters and backgrounds on the team with an age range from 21 to 63! All the staff signed up to the event before they were aware the date would coincide with Peter's passing, showing their dedication to the challenge.

"This industry means a lot to our company and meant a huge amount to Peter. We realised by having a national challenge visiting all three parts of mainland Britain we could hopefully raise awareness and support from the whole industry.

"We have set up a dedicated Just Giving page for the event – www.justgiving.com/RGM3Peaks – where we hope to raise as much as possible for Bowel Cancer UK."

HELLO DEERE

MARVEL-IOUS PUBLICITY

One of the more unexpected product placements in the recent Marvel blockbuster, *Avengers: Age Of Ultron*, was a John Deere tractor.

In its starring scene, technology genius, Tony Stark, otherwise known as Iron Man, seemed in his element in Hawkeye's barn when he thought he was on the verge of a little downtime, tinkering with the vintage machine. "Ah hello Deere," he says, before being rudely interrupted by head of SHIELD Nick Fury who needs him to defeat an evil robot bent on destroying the world instead.

Andrew Bryant, a Marketing Professor at Drake University, spoke to *USA Today* about the value of product placement in major motion pictures. He said:

"Studies show it can increase returns on the stock market."

He continued: "Putting a tractor in a movie won't make someone decide, 'Oh, I want a tractor'. But when they're thinking about buying a tractor, they already have a reference for John Deere."



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