

2023  
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# SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

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

November/December 2022

## CHARGING UP THE BATTERY GAME

Don Gao, owner of Positec, tells us he is convinced its new tech will change the playing field for cordless equipment worldwide – with specialist dealers key to their vision.

### STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

The retiring Keith Christian's view

### AN AMBITION FOR GROWTH

STIGA hold dealer conferences

### SALTEX '22 PREVIEW

What's on and what to see



### FURTHER MOVES INTO OUTDOOR POWER

Milwaukee dealers hear  
more and test new kit

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Be The Change

## Letter from the editor Steve Gibbs

steve@servicedealer.co.uk



**W**elcome to the November/December 2022 edition of *Service Dealer* magazine.

Within these pages you'll find plenty of information regarding just some of the manufacturers who have been spending considerable time, effort and money this autumn promoting their latest wares to the dealer network. Kress, Stiga, Milwaukee and Claas are all featured, all wanting specialists like you to consider stocking their latest machinery.

It has been interesting speaking to some of our dealer readers recently, regarding the notion of loyalty in the dealer-supplier relationship. Some of these manufacturers who have been setting out their stall to the network can be considered traditional suppliers – whereas others might be termed 'disrupters' to the establishment; new kids on the block, who presumably want to turn dealers' heads away from where they have sourced product in the past.

A view I heard from a dealer that I found quite telling was that perhaps if this was 2018 or 2019 we wouldn't even be having this conversation about considering new suppliers. A reason why these disruptors may be finding some footing today in the

network is that during these past couple of years, decisions needed to be made to go with suppliers who could actually supply! Loyalty is a two-way street and conversations we've had with readers have brought into question how much loyalty certain manufacturers have shown towards members of their network just lately.

From conversations we've had, all decisions whether to stick or twist on suppliers will come down to questioning is it right for a dealer's business and, crucially, is it right for their customer base? Perhaps, though, these new suppliers do see the door being ajar with some specialist retailers who maybe feel let down by their established suppliers? It's unquestionable that specialist dealers add value to any brand they choose to represent, so I'm sure our dealer-readers will find themselves seriously courted over the coming months.

What's clearly the case, is that suppliers old and new need a healthy dealer network – just as dealers need reliable and trustworthy suppliers.

**Finally, I would just like to say I look forward to seeing as many readers as possible at the upcoming Service Dealer Conference & Awards – more information on this can be found on page 14.**

### THE TEAM

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INDUSTRY

# AS-Motor finds new UK distribution

Following from split with PSD

**AriensCo has announced it is the new distributor for the full range of AS-Motor's specialised machinery for high grass, slopes and mulching in the UK.**

This followed the news that the previous UK distributor, PSD Groundscare, had ended its partnership with AS-Motor after 12 years.

As part of its strategic international growth plans, AriensCo acquired AS-Motor in May 2021, saying it saw synergy with its family-run ethos, longevity in the market and desire to develop high quality and dependable mowing solutions.

AriensCo now distributes AS-Motor's full line up of products, including professional lawnmowers, Allmaher



high-grass mowers, ride-on high-grass mowers, remote-controlled high-grass mowers, and mulching mowers, as well as weed removers.

The company also now sells AS-Motor's growing range of electric products powered by EGO batteries.

Brad Stiles, vice president of sales at AriensCo said, "We're thrilled to be adding AS-Motor's products to AriensCo's extensive portfolio of grass cutting solutions for domestic, prosumer and commercial customers. For over a year now, AS-Motor has found a new home at AriensCo because it embodies our family values and puts customers first. With AS-Motor on board, AriensCo can continue its incredible growth throughout EMEA and even further afield."

DEALERS

# Oliver Landpower buys LQG Agri

All staff to transfer to new owners

**Dealers Oliver Landpower Ltd, whose head office is in Luton, have acquired the business of LQG Agri Ltd, the JCB Agriculture main dealer for Warwickshire and surrounding areas.**

LQG Agri Ltd, owned by the Lockwood Family, evolved from the origins of Lower Quinton Garages Ltd. Set up by Geoff and David Lockwood in 1972, over the years the business expanded to include sales, parts and service of a range of agricultural machinery and equipment. In 1997 the company moved into the current premises in Goose Lane Upper Quinton, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.

The Stratford based business will now operate under the new ownership and management of Oliver Landpower

Ltd. All existing LQG Agri staff will transfer to Oliver Landpower Ltd and the business will continue to operate from the existing premises.

In a statement, Olivers said, "This is yet another important step in Oliver Landpower Ltd's continued growth in order to support the needs of our customer base and to provide additional security for the future to the business and the staff alike.

"We look forward to the future, working with JCB and farmers in this new area."

Geoff Lockwood, director of LQG Agri, said in a statement to customers published on their website, "It is with sadness that I must advise you that after much deliberation, the Lockwood family have decided to sell the business

of LQG Agri Ltd to our neighbouring JCB dealer Oliver Landpower Ltd.

"I am now 76 years of age; I miss the support of my brother, David, who I set the business up with 50 years ago, and there is no family member to take over. The Lockwood family recognises that the future structure of agricultural machinery dealerships must change to reflect the changes in farming as a whole. Size and geographical area are critical to give a sensible return on the ongoing investment that is needed to meet the requirements of customers and manufacturers and to keep pace with ever rapidly changing technologies.

"We therefore see that this is a necessary and logical decision, as painful as it is after 50 years."

DEALERS



# Doubleday bought

By fellow dealers Ben Burgess

Ben Turner (left) with Ian Doubleday-Collishaw

**Long-standing John Deere dealer JW Doubleday has been sold to Ben Burgess in line with the manufacturer's Dealer of Tomorrow strategy.**

Doubleday had sold John Deere's agricultural machinery for more than 40 years, an anniversary marked in June 2022, but an agreement was reached with Ben Burgess to transfer all staff and sites. As this magazine went to press, a completion date was expected for the end of October.

The deal sees Ben Burgess, which has been a John Deere dealer since 1964, expand into Lincolnshire for the first time, adding four more sites to its existing seven. It will take over the sites at Holbeach, Old Leake and Swineshead in Lincolnshire, as well as increasing its footprint in Norfolk with Doubleday's depot at Kings Lynn.

It means that, from November, Ben Burgess will serve farmers and contractors in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, and Rutland.

John Deere Limited divisional business manager, Joedy Ibbotson, said, "I would like to express our

gratitude to the Doubleday-Collishaw family for what they have done, supporting and growing the John Deere brand since becoming a dealer.

"The agreement with Ben Burgess, which ensures the continuity of the Doubleday team and dealership outlets within the John Deere network, is great news as it brings together two outstanding dealerships, both with a long history of representing John Deere.

"The two businesses are closely aligned. Both have a strong culture of customer support, helping customers embed John Deere's products and cutting-edge technological innovations into their farming operations."

Ben Turner, director at Ben Burgess, said, "We are delighted to be able to confirm the agreement with the Doubleday group, which has an enviable reputation for being a strong, successful and customer-centric business for 50 years.

"Farmers and contractors in Lincolnshire and Norfolk have been served fantastically by the group's talented staff, and we are privileged to be taking on the outstanding legacy the Doubleday dealerships

have built in the territory.

"We are both family businesses and share the same values. We will uphold our high standards for sales and service moving into the future. Both groups are committed to business continuity as usual for customers and staff while the deal is completed."

Ian Doubleday-Collishaw, grandson of the company's founder, commented, "This decision has not been taken lightly, but the Doubleday-Collishaw family is determined to protect the future of its loyal team and the longevity of a reputable John Deere dealer across our trading area.

"The combination of our joint processes, dedicated teams and the infrastructure already in place at Ben Burgess will deliver the best value to both our team and customers. We are confident the level of service you our customers are accustomed to will continue uninterrupted.

"My family and I would like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated team and our loyal customers, many of whom we consider our friends who have supported us throughout our 40 years as a John Deere dealer."

INDUSTRY



# PSD announces new partnership with Grin

Italian-based, long-grass mowing specialist

**PSD Groundscare has announced a new partnership with Grin, the Italian manufacturer of long-grass mowing solutions.**

New to the UK market, PSD says the range of mowers can offer solutions for local authorities, landscapers, groundskeeping, contractors and private users.

Founded in 2005, Grin explains that its mowers benefit from a mulching system that operates without a grass bag. However, the company claims theirs isn't conventional mulching. It says with its system it is possible to maintain the same mowing height and mowing frequency as with a grass bag type mower. Grass is pulverised into very fine fragments, which are deposited on the soil and absorbed as fertiliser. It also claims with its machines it's possible to mow wet grass better than with a grass bag type mower.

PSD launched the new range to dealers at an exclusive event early in October, with the machines set to be unveiled to the industry at the upcoming SALTEX on the 2nd & 3rd November.

Managing director of PSD, Chris Gibson, said, "We're extremely excited to add Grin to our portfolio and to be at

the forefront in the UK distribution of this fantastic product line, and we look forward to being able to launch them to the UK market at Saltext."

Grin CEO, Franco Ghezzi, commented on the new UK venture, "Having developed the continental European market for over 15 years, I am very happy for the start of this new partnership with PSD Groundscare.

"Their professionalism, technical and commercial competence and the deep-rooted presence on the lawn maintenance market represent key features for the development of this collaboration and to support our company and our products on the important UK market."

Franco continued saying of PSD, "One of the most important services they will offer to every dealer and end-user will be the possibility to test the machines.

"All this together with the good feeling that was immediately created between our two teams and a very similar mindset, are the key factors that make me very satisfied with the agreement found between our two companies."

DEALERS

# Machinery and sustainability

At dealer RT Machinery's show

**Professional dealership, RT Machinery says it was delighted to welcome 300 people in person for its first full RTM Show Live since 2019 in September.**

Brackwell Farm in Nether Winchendon, Aylesbury, was once again alive with the hum of conversation and machinery as guests took advantage of the opportunity to talk with over 30 manufacturers, watch demos and enjoy ride-and-drive trials.

In addition to the machinery, customers and visitors were able to hear from five speakers in the dealership's new hay loft auditorium during the morning, including Jo Little from Planet Mark, one of the UK's leading organisations in sustainability.

Guests also enjoyed Colonel Dan Rex MVO from the Queen's Green Canopy. Set up to encourage people to Plant a Tree for the Jubilee, the QGC has already inspired over a million trees to be planted across the United Kingdom and is now extended to the end of March 2023, giving people the opportunity to plant trees in memoriam to honour Her Majesty.

Ed Charles from Perennial was able to give visitors more insight into how it offers support and financial assistance to all the workers in the industry. RTM says many had never heard of the charity before and were blown away to learn what help is available.

Managing director Richard Taylor said, "I'd like to thank all our customers, suppliers, speakers and colleagues who made the show such a great day, after the challenges of the last couple of years. Equally, we all have a responsibility to improve the sustainability of the industry, and the show created a perfect opportunity to explore machinery innovations and a lot more in this regard."



Managing director Richard Taylor



RTM's first full show since 2019

DEALERS

# Abrey expands portfolio

Into utility vehicle sector

**Boss ORV has announced the appointment of Abrey Agricultural Ltd as a Corvus off-road utility vehicle dealer.**

Founded in 1935, Abrey is based in Saffron Walden and will represent Corvus as dealer for the Essex and Cambridgeshire area.

"Abrey Agri has been substantially extending its product portfolio in the past few years," says Boss ORV managing director Phil Everett, "to support its further push into professional groundcare, estate management and general agriculture. The range of Corvus UTVs will add to

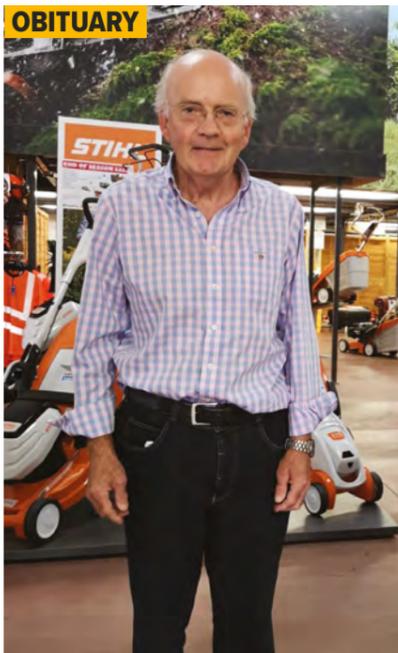
this massively."

Now in its third generation as a family business, Abrey Agricultural is farm based, so it says it's able to offer clients the opportunity to test drive machines on the premises. It sees this as especially important in the case of testing UTVs in the sort of terrain where they will be used.

"Its professional user base all have a requirement for UTVs, so the partnership is an obvious fit for us," says Phil. "We offer a big Corvus welcome to Toby Abrey and all the team at Abrey Agriculture."



Toby Abrey and Phil Everett



Barrie Ward pictured in WM Plant's showroom for a profile in the November / December 2019 edition of Service Dealer magazine on the occasion of the business's 50th anniversary

# Barrie Ward

Passing of WM Plant founder

**Barrie Ward of dealership WM Plant passed away peacefully on Thursday 1st September with his wife Jill and daughters Rosie and Sam by his side.**

Barrie completed a BSC Honours degree in Chemical Engineering and Fuel Technology at Sheffield University. Upon completion, he was offered a lucrative position with Shell working within the oil industry. However, he decided to start WM Plant instead. On Monday 11th August 1969 he began operating a Shawnee Poole dump-truck bought with savings building the M6 between Penrith and Carlisle in Cumbria. He quickly realised there was a market for hiring out non-operated

machinery from Stihl Cutquicks to JCBs. Initially operating out of his mum's house just outside of Carlisle, he went on to build the current premises, which WM Plant still occupies on Rosehill Industrial Estate in 1972.

The hire fleet grew overtime as well as the addition of sales and repairing construction and horticultural machinery.

Diamond drilling was a growing part of WM Plant's business in the UK during the 80s and 90s.

In 1997, Barrie and his wife Jill opened a similar business to WM Plant on the Isle of Man, having regularly travelled to the island to fulfil diamond-drilling contracts. The business was eventually sold to GAP, the national hire company.

Some 53 years later the business has grown and developed, weathering recessions and enjoying the boom times.

He will be greatly missed by the team at WM Plant.

INDUSTRY

# Briggs & Stratton confirm new partnership

On battery power solutions

**Briggs & Stratton has announced a new partnership with Canimex Group, a manufacturer and international trader in mechanical, hydraulic, electrical and electronic components and products.**

Canimex Group is made up of seven business units that include its mechanical and electrical division, which Briggs say will leverage Vanguard Lithium-Ion battery power solutions in applications for a variety of industries through this new partnership.

"As more OEMs look toward electrification, we are pleased to add Canimex Group to our list of impressive battery technology partners," said Chris Davison, senior marketing manager of electrification at Briggs & Stratton.



"Canimex's manufacturing expertise, combined with our cutting-edge battery power technology, will help set OEMs up for success as they pursue integrating electrified equipment."

Based in Drummondville, Québec, Canimex works across a range of industries that include electrification, forestry, construction, agriculture, industrial, mining, and snow and ice.

Dominic Bolduc, technical sales representative at Canimex, added, "There's no question that the future is battery power. As more of our customers pursue electrification, we are excited to be partnering with Vanguard to deliver ruggedly designed, powerfully built battery solutions that our customers can trust to deliver a solid performance."

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INDUSTRY

# Cobra reveals sum raised for Breast Cancer Now

Through charity pink mower

**Garden machinery manufacturer Cobra has announced it has raised over £20,000 for the charity Breast Cancer Now.**



Since launching the collaboration back in 2019, Cobra has donated £25 of each sale of its limited edition pink GTRM38P electric lawnmower to the breast cancer charity, and the total money raised will help make world-class research and life-changing support happen to those in need.

Peter Chaloner, managing director of Cobra, commented,

“We’re really proud of our four-year partnership with Breast Cancer Now. Not only do they provide vital research and support for those dealing with a life-threatening disease and the harsh reality of cancer, but they also offer hope and support for cancer patients.

“To have been able to donate over £20,000 to such a wonderful charity is a very proud moment for us here at Cobra. We hope our donation will help progress the charity’s tireless hard work and research so we can find ways to prevent breast cancer and help save lives.”

Breast Cancer Now is steered by world-class research, and powered by life-changing care. The charity works with hospitals and patients to improve breast cancer services, and makes sure anyone affected receives the best possible treatment and care. It is there for anyone affected by breast cancer, the whole way through, providing support for today and hope for the future.

PEOPLE



## Director of commercial operations appointed

By Redexim UK

**A well-known industry name has joined the team at Redexim to support its growth and spearhead the UK’s commercial activities.**

As the new director of commercial operations, Paul Langford will be leading the team of regional sales managers and will be in charge of the development of the overall sales and marketing strategies.

Formerly the managing director of TigerTurf UK, Redexim says Paul has a track record for building successful

B2B and B2C relationships and driving business change, which has resulted in over 20 years of experience in leadership and sustainable growth.

Alongside his position at TigerTurf UK, Paul held the role of manufacturing group chairman at The Sports and Play Contractors Association (SAPCA) for six years, during which he also represented the synthetic turf manufacturing sector on the FIFA Turf Advisory Group (TAG).

Paul said, “In Redexim, I have found a like-minded company that has a pedigree of high-performance products and ambitions to grow in what is an ever-changing marketplace.

“I’m a big believer that business should be approached with a strong sense of purpose, the right tools and the right plan to deliver excellence – but not forgetting to have some fun along the way!”

INDUSTRY



## New factory set for Joskin

Agricultural machinery to be made in Luxembourg

**The Joskin Group, which is based in Soumagne, 20km from Liège in Belgium, has announced a new factory to be based in Luxembourg.**

The company manufactures agricultural machinery, which it distributes in over 60 countries on five continents. It specialises in all trailers for transporting and spreading farm products. The Group has factories in Belgium, France, Poland, and soon the new brand-new unit, which will cover 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> on a 6 ha site in Sanem/Esch-sur-Alzette in Luxembourg.

Victor Joskin, CEO and founder, said of the new development, “Joskin’s current main challenge is the production capacity: the Group must be able to produce more. The aim is not only to be able to supply more of the existing models, but also to make room for new equipment

under development, so we can serve an ever-increasing number of customers.

“This objective requires an increase in production space and a rethinking of the production flow. Our factory project in the south of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is the first of a series of similar projects.”

Victor went on to explain that the Luxembourg project is specifically designed for the assembly of large agricultural trailers with a monocoque body - i.e. welded in one piece. “We will start with tipping trailers and will rapidly launch muck spreaders as well,” he said.

The company expects to break ground on the project in January 2023 and anticipates the construction to be completed quickly, so that the factory can start operating in the fourth quarter of 2023, ideally in October.

OBITUARY

## Martyn Davies Well-known industry figure



**The passing has been announced of Martyn Davies, who many will know as being a part of our industry for many years.**

Industry stalwart Colin Gale told Service Dealer, “Martyn joined Flymo Ltd as an area sales manager and his career saw him specialise in the chainsaw side of things, working with brands such as Partner, Jonserved, Sachs Dolmar and Husqvarna.

“Many dealers will recall Martyn’s support at their open days and country shows, demonstrating and selling products to produce incremental sales. He was committed to supporting his

dealers, often towing his caravan and taking his wife and family to spend the whole weekend at the various shows.

“His dealers for the various brands will remember his traditional style, visiting, training, demonstrating, with additional support at weekend events. He also gave regular dealer support at the Royal Welsh Show.

“After retiring from the industry, Martyn continued to live in the village of East Coker and embarked on obtaining his Private Pilots’ Licence.”

Martyn is survived by his wife Christine and children Ross and Kirsten, plus their respective partners.

PEOPLE

# Top garden designer joins Handy

Producing regular blogs and videos



**British garden equipment manufacturer Handy has announced the appointment of multi-award-winning garden designer Adam Woolcott as its new gardening expert.**

Handy says Adam will be producing regular blogs and videos for them offering practical advice to retailers and gardeners.

Adam has 30 years of experience as a professional gardener and has many accolades, but is probably best known for his four Gold Medals at The Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show and his three BBC/RHS People's Choice Awards at the show, which he won as one half of Woolcott & Smith.

Adam makes regular appearances on Gardeners' World and on BBC Radio, as well as on Channel 5's Great Garden Challenge. His gardens have also been featured in national media, including The Saturday Times Magazine and Daily Telegraph publications.

Adam will be providing gardening advice in the form of blogs and videos across all of Handy's brands – Webb,

Handy, Q Garden and Greenworks – which the company says is a first.

"With the expansion of product lines across our brands, and increased investment in marketing and sales support, the introduction of a recognised gardening expert to expand our customer reach and add further weight to our credentials as the UK's leading garden machinery supplier, was a natural next move," says Mark Moseley, Handy's sales and marketing director.

"Adam has a real connection with the gardening public; they love his garden designs as can be seen from his incredible three BBC/RHS Chelsea Flower Show People's Choice Awards. For us, he was a natural choice as our new gardening expert and we couldn't be more delighted."

Adam Woolcott added, "It's a joy and privilege to be associated with such an established, trustworthy, and professional company like Handy. Having used gardening equipment domestically and professionally for over three decades, I can't wait to share my expertise and passion with you all."



# COBRA

## Why Not Become a Cobra Dealer in 2022?

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

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# Service Dealer Conference '22

Thursday 24th November 2022



Jeremy Gibbs of Forces Farming

## Recruiting ex-forces into dealerships

To be discussed at the *Service Dealer* Conference

**S**ervice Dealer is delighted to confirm Jeremy Gibbs, founder of Forces Farming, as an expert speaker for November's Conference.

Forces Farming is an organisation established to support the transition and resettlement of ex service personnel and veterans into agriculture, engineering and other areas of the agricultural industry.

Jeremy says he has spent his life in agriculture, and most of this in agricultural engineering. Following on from a childhood of growing up on farms and working in the industry he then spent five years in higher education before working for John Deere for almost 10 years (seven of those in Germany and visiting countries around the world). Widening horizons and learning about the industry has given Jeremy a great insight into the 'people' side of the job.

Jeremy decided to return to the UK and work back in 'frontline farming' for a few years before starting Forces

Farming. Originally an idea to help guide people into the industry, Forces Farming now works with the industry to create career paths for service leavers and 'non ag new entrants' looking at changing careers.

A partnership with AGCO was launched in February 2022 to create a specific career path for people leaving the armed forces.

"Having a specific career path that works with veterans and service leavers makes a huge difference to the way we support new entrants as we recognise their existing skills and qualifications," said Jeremy. "This kind of focused support is a new way of recruiting and retaining engineers in the industry."

*Service Dealer* owner Duncan Murray-Clarke said, "I am excited about the speakers and content for this year and I know it will be informative, thought-provoking and enjoyable."

"Despite the issues we have all faced in the last year, many

manufacturers have chosen to support November's event. This year will see our highest level of support to date, and I think it is a reflection on how the industry is looking forward.

Thank you so much to our line-up of sponsors for their support and forward focus."

Taking place on **Thursday 24th November 2022** once again at the DoubleTree by Hilton Oxford Belfry Hotel, Thame, Oxfordshire, the theme for this year's event is Sustaining Dealerships.



For all the latest information regarding this year's Service Dealer Conference & Awards, keep an eye on the *Service Dealer Weekly Update* published every Friday at midday.

For the latest details, visit [www.servicedealer.co.uk/2022awards](http://www.servicedealer.co.uk/2022awards)



## Succession expert also confirmed

Heather Wildman of Saviour Associates

Heather Wildman of Saviour Associates, which provides agribusiness clients access to sound unbiased advice, coaching and mentoring, will also be addressing delegates at the conference on the hot topic of succession.

Heather says she is renowned for her straight-talking, no-nonsense approach, and for not being afraid of tackling difficult subjects. She has a fun, relaxed manner, and an energy that is contagious and inspiring. Soft skills with a sledgehammer, is how she describes herself!

She has more than 26 years' experience of working in the dairy and agricultural industry, both in Scotland and overseas, and has an enviable network and knowledge of global matters.

Heather specialises in providing independent advice, support and guidance for people and businesses to manage their own personal and business succession, through one-to-one discussions, workshops, seminars and conferences. She says of succession, "It's important to plan for as we never know how long we have - and we also never know how much we could or can achieve. **"Be bold, be ambitious, but own it and then make it happen."**

*Service Dealer* owner Duncan Murray-Clarke said, "We are delighted to confirm Heather for this year's Conference. We know that many of our dealer readers have real concerns regarding matters of succession. I'm sure Heather's matter-of-fact style will provide plenty of practical advice that will help to start conversations back in the dealership."

## 2022's Dealer of the Year Awards

Entries are in and judging is in full swing!

The categories that you, our dealer readers have been entering in your droves this year are:

- Garden Machinery Dealer of the Year
- Professional Turfcare Dealer of the Year
- Farm Machinery Dealer of the Year
- Forestry Equipment Dealer of the Year
- Overall Dealer of the Year

There are also four special award categories this year:

- Star of the Dealership Apprentice of the Year
- Leadership Award
- Best New Initiative Award

The prizes will be presented to the winning dealerships 'Oscars-style' by our returning host, comedian, actor and singer Charlie Baker at the Gala Dinner following the Conference.

## Our 2022 Sponsors

The following organisations have confirmed their sponsorship of the 2022 Service Dealer Conference and Awards\*. We'd like to welcome them on board and thank them for their support and input.

Our principal sponsor:



Our gold sponsors:



Our networking sponsors:



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## Conference Agenda

The first look at the schedule for the day's running order at the Service Dealer Conference has been released.\*

<b>10:00</b> Duncan Murray-Clarke - Welcome to the 2022 Service Dealer Conference	<b>Heather Wildman</b> - Planning for your future	<b>15:10</b> Coffee
<b>10:10</b> Robin Horsfall - Leadership & adversity	<b>13:00</b> Lunch	<b>15:30</b> Breakout sessions:
<b>11:10</b> Jeremy Gibbs - Recruiting and retaining long-term leaders from the Armed Forces	<b>13:45</b> Duncan Murray-Clarke - Welcome back	<b>Start Goodison &amp; Grace Nugent</b> - Great business or great people?
<b>11:40</b> Break	<b>13:50</b> Shaun Cooper - What is powering the UK's professional groundcare world?	<b>Heather Wildman</b> - Planning for your future
<b>12:00</b> Breakout sessions:	<b>14:15</b> Heather Wildman - Planning for your future	<b>16:35</b> Panel debate: Issues of the day
<b>Stuart Goodison &amp; Grace Nugent</b> - Great business or great people?		<b>17:15</b> Duncan Murray-Clarke - Conference close

\* correct at time of going to print

# An ambition to grow

Stiga UK held its first mass Dealer Conferences since 2019 at the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham in mid-September, with roadshow events also taking place in Wincanton and Edinburgh. Well attended, the days were an opportunity for MD Gary Whitney to speak to Stiga's sizable network of dealers, offering his thoughts on the current state of the industry. *Service Dealer editor STEVE GIBBS* reports on the events

**G**ary Whitney kicked off this year's Stiga Conferences by reminding everyone what a great year 2021 was, saying how the whole market had experienced growth in every category.

"For Stiga," he said, "thanks to the efforts that our dealers made, we had an exceptional year for ride-on mowers and petrol walk-behinds particularly. But we also grew in other categories like battery power."

With robot mowers growing as well, Gary said how this had resulted in a record year for many of their dealers, as well as a record year for Stiga and for the market.

"But," he said, "I'm sure you'll also remember that 2021 was also frustrating, and it was definitely hard work."

Gary explained that, despite this,

it had given dealers confidence to invest in Stiga for 2022 at "an unprecedented level".

"But even as we were closing a record-breaking pre-season order campaign in December 2021," he said, "none of us could have imagined that a few short months later the world was going to change again."

Gary listed the factors, including, "War in Europe; a cold spring, followed by the hottest summer and the driest on record; continuing trouble in the supply chain; and raw material cost increases. Land freight issues driven by driver shortages and escalating fuel costs has increased the cost of shipping lorries across Europe by over 50%."

He was also up front about how supply shortages on all-important components such as hydrostatic

transmissions for their tractors and engines had disrupted the company's manufacturing, creating unacceptable delays in fulfilling dealer orders.

"We're all feeling the effects of this cocktail of negative factors on the way the market is trading so far this year," he said. "And then, more recently, the growing cost of living crisis – driven by inflation, energy cost increases. It's affecting us, it's affecting our employees – and of course it's going to affect some of our customers too."

Gary acknowledged for everyone attending their conferences, the growing cost of just doing business is deeply concerning.

"But," he said, "this developing situation hasn't stopped Stiga from investing in a significant number of activities. We continued with our

billboard campaign. We achieved this by investing in the best buys that we wanted for our products. The marketing team worked hard, and succeeded in getting press coverage for the many new products that we launched – and we continued with our planned print and digital campaigns.

He went on, "I'm really pleased to say that the season's not over yet. The grass is green, it's growing and I know that it is that need that drives our business. We've all experienced seasons in the past that are tough economically – but we know if the grass grows, we'll do alright."

Gary also confronted the fact that 2021 saw the company have too many price increases for its dealers, pledging a more stable trading environment for 2022. He said they had acted early on 1st August to provide dealers with the greatest transparency they could for 2023.

## Plans for 2023

Liz Senior, UK sales director and head of international key accounts at Stiga, then addressed what Stiga pledged to do to remedy the issues that the company and its dealers had faced.

"It is really important that we future-proof the business in a changing environment so we can still achieve our ambition to grow," she said.

"So what did we need to do? First of all, with raw material and freight cost challenges, we need to look at supply improvements. The unprecedented growth we saw through 2021 – and in particular the winter stock season – meant we had to consider our factories, our capacities and our planning. And last, but definitely not least, we needed to listen to you, our dealers, and think

about dealer investment."

Liz explained the company is not just considering one isolated issue, but what she described as an "end-to-end picture" of the business and how they can improve their total value chain.

Areas she said they were addressing included critical components. "We had to understand where we needed to further invest and how we needed to change our supply route to make sure we had components in time for the season," she said. Stiga has apparently looked at areas where it believes it was too reliant on one or two suppliers. It says it's now bringing in new suppliers and balancing its supplier base between China and Europe.

Another area it's making changes in, Liz said, is the complexity of its range. Dealers were told they will see a simplified range of products for 2023 across all brands Stiga supply. "Focusing on key lines enables us to plan materials and capacity much better," Liz explained. She said doing this would enable them to better deliver to their dealers on time.

## TV debut

As well as making improvements to internal planning systems, the other big difference that dealers would see with Stiga next year is with marketing.

"I've heard some of our dealers refer to Stiga as the best kept secret in the industry – fantastic quality products, great service, but nobody knows about it," said Liz. "Well, that's about to change."

"We shall be going loud and proud in 2023 as we put Stiga on television for the first time. There will also be a national billboard campaign, digital marketing, and socials – we'll be taking

every kind of activity possible."

She continued, "We won't just be big and loud on TV, we're also investing in advertising materials to support our dealers' stores. We will run campaigns in partnership with our dealers throughout the year. For example, there will be a cashback promotion during 2023. We intend to go big with the campaign, to drive footfall to our dealers for the season."

Liz also said the company would be committing to further marketing investments, including putting a submission in for the Chelsea Flower Show, where they felt they would be able to talk to 200,000+ of their target consumers.

## Hands-on

As is traditional with these events, the dealer attendees were also able to spend some considerable time getting hands-on and practical with the new kit.

There were three stations encompassing lawn tractors, robots, plus front tractors and Gyros. I certainly got the impression that the dealers who attended these days enjoyed the opportunity to try out and ask questions of the company's machinery experts – something they haven't been able to do in quite the same way these past couple of years. Also, I did get the sense that the company was being honest and up-front regarding issues faced – and how they are addressing them, which was also very much appreciated.

Stiga illustrated that, as ever, communication between manufacturer and dealer is the bedrock of a thriving relationship.



Dealers assembled at the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham



Stiga md, Gary Whitney



Testing out a ride-on



Mountfield and Stiga walk-behinds



The new Gyro was available to demo



# Milwaukee moves further into outdoor power

Its power tools, hand tools and accessories have become a familiar sight in ag, turf and garden equipment dealerships. Now Milwaukee is moving into outdoor power equipment in a big way – and focusing on battery power. MARTIN RICKATSON learned more at its European dealer conference

**M**ilwaukee reckons to be the world's fastest-growing professional tool company, with year-on-year percentage sales increases in the low-mid 20s every year since 2015 – and last year it doubled that figure to record a 47% jump.

A common constituent of many dealer showrooms, its power tools, hand tools and accessories have been joined by an extensive range of outdoor power equipment, as the firm seeks to broaden its base in the professional OPE sector. Back in September, TTI Europe, the business behind the brand, held a European dealer conference and demo day near Heathrow to show off new products for 2022-23 – and visitors were left in no doubt of Milwaukee's ambitions.

"Our vision is to 'own' the pro user market," said Jason Chiswell, Milwaukee EMEA vice president for marketing and key accounts.

"We are so much more than a power tool and accessories company – we are a solutions provider for professional users. With our RedLithium system, now also available in HighOutput

format, we offer one package to power all M18 tools. With our M12 12V system that extends to 110 tools. And with our M18 18V system it's one system and 255 tools, while our MX Fuel system for light equipment is a single system for over 15 tools. Then we offer a line of more than 3,000 accessories, over 1,000 hand tools, in excess of 100 storage solutions and more than 350 PPE products.

"In 2021 the global outdoor power equipment market – excluding ride-ons, robotics and watering/cleaning products – was worth \$4.5bn. For our push for a greater portion of this, we've invested \$60m in R&D and engineering, with more than 200 dedicated engineers and over 25 staff focused on product management. And we're planning on putting a further \$100m into R&D over the 2022-25 period."

Mr Chiswell said the UK business foresees around 65% of Milwaukee outdoor power equipment trade coming via professional outdoor equipment dealers.

"These are not products we will be retailing via the big box stores. Although they will also be supplied via professional power tool dealers, builders' merchants, direct sellers and via the rental market, we anticipate 65% of sales to be made by



Jason Chiswell, Milwaukee EMEA vice president for marketing and key accounts: "We are much more than a power tool and accessories company"

our core dealer network in sectors such as agriculture.

"Our M12 and M18 battery power product lines are our focus for the agricultural and landscaping sectors, with products including chainsaws, brushcutters, blowers and more designed to handle the demands of these markets, backed by full lines of tools, storage solutions and PPE."

Oliver Lerch, vice-president EMEA product management, pointed to the success of Milwaukee's M18 (18V) product line, introduced only last year, which marked the brand's entry into the market for power equipment suited to the facility and residential maintenance markets. For the 2022 product year the focus has been on establishing new lines for the agriculture, arborist and rescue markets, while new products revealed for 2023 now take the brand more deeply into the garden maintenance and municipalities sectors.

"By 2024, Milwaukee will have an even broader line for forestry, landscaping, commercial management and winter maintenance," said Mr Lerch.

"The dominant manufacturers for these sectors can be broadly divided into OPE generalists, OPE specialists, pure cordless companies and those focused on battery power. Milwaukee is committed firmly to the latter, a bracket where we compete with the likes of Bosch, DeWalt, Makita and Metabo.

"Since we entered this sector with battery tools such as drills, we have sought to expand, excite and excel in our product introductions. Next we want to excel in OPE, and our M18 18V battery system is at the heart of this. We want to encourage those professional users whose initial experience of our power tools was with our core drilling and fastening products to experience what our saws, grinders, rotary hammers and hydraulic products can do. The same goes for the other areas into which we have expanded the M18 system, including high-output LED lighting, dust management solutions and wireless sound



Milwaukee's Oliver Lerch, vice-president EMEA product management, says wants to encourage professional users to experience what its saws, grinders and rotary hammers can do



Milwaukee's Red Lithium system, now also available in High Output format, is compatible across the entire M18 range



The M18 18V range includes a brushcutter and a power head with Quik-Lok interchangeable heads



Milwaukee's self-propelled pedestrian mower is powered by two M18 18V batteries, providing high start-up torque and auto blade speed adjustment



Quik-Lok interchangeable heads for the M18 18V attachment range includes rubber broom and bristle brush attachments to clean concrete of mud, slurry and leaves

systems. The technological enhancements of the latest M18 'breakthrough' tools deliver up to 50% more power and run-time in high-amp, high-current draw applications that are typically the domain of AC, petrol or pneumatic tools.

"Then there are our outdoor power equipment lines. Our pure focus on rechargeable battery power means users are attracted by – and benefit from – not just zero emissions, but also no fuel/oil mixing, no engine maintenance, no pull start and low noise levels. In 2008 Milwaukee was the first in the industry to employ microprocessors in our intelligent cordless drills and battery packs, a system for optimised performance and protection we call Redlink. Then in 2011 we introduced our Red Lithium-Ion battery technology. On the motor side, 2012 saw us unveil the first generation of our 'M18 Fuel' power system with the Power State brushless motor. We now have over 40 tool- and application-tailored Power State brushless motor designs in our M18 Fuel tools, delivering more power, longer life and greater efficiency.

"In 2016 we introduced the connected One-Key user and the industry's first wireless tool customisation and connectivity technology to unlock the digital jobsite. Two years later we began rolling out the third wave of M18 Fuel products, with high output tools and battery packs delivering up to 50% more power and run-time in high-amp, high-current draw applications where typically only AC, petrol or pneumatic tools are found."

### Entering the mower market

For the new Milwaukee self-propelled pedestrian mower, which is powered by two M18 18V batteries, this means high start-up torque, with full 3,300rpm blade speed reached in just one second, instant starting even in tall grass and 3,000 watts peak power, plus automatic blade speed adjustment to the required power. A five-speed dial allows speed-setting from 0.16-6.4km/hr, with an 'Active Speed Management Paddle' providing progressive speed control. Height adjustment of the 53cm steel deck is carried out with a single lever. Up to 2,000m<sup>2</sup> can be cut on fully-charged, 2 x 12.0ah high output batteries. Clippings can be mulched, bagged or rear-side discharged. Milwaukee took the opportunity of its demo day to pit the product against high-end competitors in long grass, with impressive results.

Other OPE for 2023 includes a dual-battery hand-held blower capable of producing up to 17m<sup>3</sup> of air volume at 233km/hr, with full throttle in just one second. Milwaukee's chainsaw range includes top-handle



M18 units with 30 or 35cm bars and a 20cm M18 hatchet pruning saw, plus conventional chainsaws with 30, 35 or 40cm bars. Also in the M18 18V range are 60/45cm hedge trimmers, a line trimmer/brushcutter and a power head with Quik-Lok interchangeable edger/line trimmer/chainsaw attachments. Milwaukee also demonstrated Quik-Lok attachments including rubber broom and bristle brush attachments with potential for farms and other enterprises needing to clean concrete of mud, slurry and leaves. Also new in the M18 system is a Switch Tank interchangeable hand-held sprayer which can also be set to supply/transfer water from one point to another.

"Over the past 13 years of development we have increased our system output capabilities from 300 watts to over 2200 watts, fully compatible with over 85 M18 Fuel and 215 M18 solutions, developed by completely revisiting the fundamentals of the proprietary Milwaukee fuel technologies," said Mr Lerch.

"Today we have a single system running on a common battery platform, a massive product development achievement and testimony to the Milwaukee vision of relentless investment into cordless technologies which allows users to maximise productivity and minimise cost of ownership.

"To underline our commitment to the professional outdoor equipment market, we have developed a global manufacturing footprint, dedicated 3,000 sq m to R&D, have a team of over 200 dedicated new product development staff, have 13 new OPE products ready for 2023 sales, and



Also new in the M18 system is a Switch Tank interchangeable hand-held sprayer which can also be set to supply/transfer water from one point to another

are expanding our M18 dual battery platform for OPE tools. All of this gives our dealers significant product offerings in the lawn care, tree/forestry, hedge/pruning, blower and sprayer, maintenance and agricultural/fencing markets."

With Milwaukee's move into outdoor power equipment will inevitably come questions about pricing policy, with the firm well-established in power tools, hand tools and accessories, where dealers buying greater quantities tend to get a better deal. With more costly outdoor power equipment tending to be wholesaled at a fixed price – and with these products requiring a greater level of customer service and support – Milwaukee's approach to pricing when retailing OPE via dealers will be interesting. But there's no doubt the business is extremely serious about the market, and very committed to it.

### More about Milwaukee

Founded in 1924 by Albert F Siebert as the Milwaukee Electric Tool Corporation, during the 1930s Milwaukee began producing tools for the US Navy, developing powered equipment including sanders, polishers and a hand-held hammer drill. Further technical developments included the incorporation of a spring clutch into the drive of hand-held sanders, grinders and circular saws to reduce recoil. In 1951, Milwaukee introduced the first portable reciprocating hacksaw, the Sawzall.

By the 1970s, the company's business volume was attracting investor attention, and in 1975 it was sold to investment firm Amstar, before coming under the ownership of Merrill Lynch in 1986. In 1995, engineering equipment business Atlas Copco bought Milwaukee, but it was in 2005 that it was purchased by its current owner, Hong Kong firm Techtronic Industries (TTI), becoming North America's largest supplier by volume of cordless power tools in 2016.

Founded in 1985 and listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange's Hang Seng Index in 1990, TTI posted 2021 worldwide sales of US\$13.2bn, and employs over 47,000 staff, of whom 17,000 work for Milwaukee, whose manufacturing, product service and distribution facilities span the UK, Germany, the Czech Republic, China, Vietnam, Mexico and the US, with outdoor power equipment made in the latter two.

TTI focuses on cordless technology in power tools, outdoor power equipment, floor-care and cleaning products for consumer, professional and industrial users in the domestic, construction, maintenance, industrial and infrastructure industries. In addition to Milwaukee, TTI's brand portfolio includes AEG and Ryobi power tools, accessories and hand tools, Ryobi and Homelite outdoor power products and Empire layout and measuring products, plus home/professional floor-care brands Hoover, Oreck, Vax and Dirt Devil.

# Charging up the battery game

Don Gao, owner of Positec, which produces Kress machinery, speaks to Service Dealer's Laurence Gale ahead of the launch of its new, fast-charging battery technology, which the company is convinced will change the playing field for cordless equipment worldwide – with specialist dealers key to that transition

**It is always intriguing to meet the people who are the innovators and drivers of new technologies and forward-thinking businesses.**

Recently, I was fortunate enough to be asked to interview Don Gao, owner of Positec, the manufacturer of the Kress brand of outdoor powered

equipment. He is the man behind a global ambition to change the way we go about our daily lives in terms of switching from using traditional fuel-driven powered equipment, to the more efficient and clean, battery-powered tools.

Don started his trading business in 1994. As he puts it, he was driven by his dream to develop a company that masters its own destiny. In 2004, Don launched his high-end brand of power tools and outdoor power equipment in the major western markets – something that had never been tried before by a Chinese corporation in consumer goods.

Over the past 28 years, Positec has been successfully turned from a trading company into an OEM manufacturer, and finally into a brand owner. Today Positec is a global player, with subsidiaries in American and European key markets, and known for its Kress brand as well as Rockwell and Worx.

## Cybersystem launch to dealers

I was able to interview Don, just before the company made a major technological launch

to the UK market. A launch for which both he and his company see the independent dealer network as key.

Described by the manufacturer as a “game-changing battery system for commercial gardeners”, the new commercial Kress 8-minute Cybersystem battery platform features both 4Ah and 11Ah battery packs, with the ability to recharge each 60v battery pack to 100% in only eight minutes, or 80% charge in five minutes.

Kress says this is the fastest recharge of any commercial battery system available. It also boasts how the Cyberpack battery system can be recharged thousands of times. With each battery pack being 60v, it says it can produce up to twice the power output of standard lithium-ion batteries.

In its pledge to dealers, Kress says it's committed to providing the independent network with additional benefits to help support the running of their businesses. By retaining tight stock control of the battery system and by not selling the product through online channels, for example, Kress believes it's able to eliminate the risk of forcing direct price competition between dealers.

The company has also removed the upfront cost of its products, meaning dealers will not be charged for stocking



The new Cybersystem



Dealers got hands-on with the new kit at demonstration events in the autumn

Kress products until the items are sold.

Focused on establishing long-term relationships, the manufacturer also says it provides PR, marketing, and advertising support to dealers.

Tony Macer, national sales manager for UK & Ireland at Positec, told me: “In my view, dealers are an essential part of our launch program. They are our key partners and we want to grow together with the Kress Partner Programme. We want to work with and support them as we truly believe that their customers are their customers, and we want to do everything to help.”

Tony continued, “We are now at a point where we believe we are ready to change the industry with our market-leading battery products and boundary-free robotic mowers.”

Dealers who want to know more can find out what the company has to offer at the upcoming SALTEX exhibition. In

the meantime, what follows is my Q&A with company owner, Don Gao.

## Service Dealer: What started you out on this journey?

**Don Gao:** To many, climate change is questionable. For me and Positec, doing nothing is out of the question.

We don't just talk about social responsibility, we live it. And we started living it when we launched our first owned brand. We were awarded the WWF award for low carbon manufacturing in 2011. The office building that houses our headquarters is a global benchmark for sustainability. While being kind to the environment, it creates a friendly environment for the people who work here. It was awarded the LEED Platinum award for sustainable buildings in 2017.

Our aim is to help tradespeople, landscapers and homeowners to reduce their carbon footprint. We design for minimum waste and maximum lifetime of the products we produce. The safe disposal of used electrical products is a growing problem. With the inclusion of brushless motor technology into our power tools, we have extended their service life and reduced the downstream waste.



Our batteries' extended lifecycle and number of charge cycles means they need to be replaced less often, reducing harm to the environment, conserving resources and saving money.

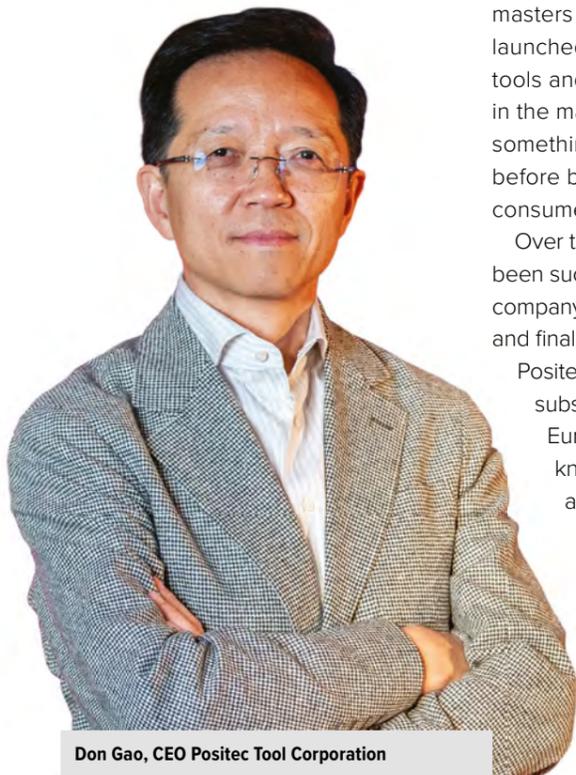
When we launched our first brand in 2004, we decided then to never manufacture petrol tools but rather invest in a cleaner future, by focusing our research into battery technology.

Small engines are big polluters. Many homeowners don't realise that a single petrol mower emits the same amount of pollutants as 11 cars; our extensive range of tools and robotic mowers have zero emissions.

Kress is our brand of professional and commercial cordless battery-powered tools, garden power tools and robotic lawn mowers – and we have only ever manufactured these as battery tools, choosing to shun petrol from the beginning. We knew there had to be a better way to maintain our outdoor spaces, sports pitches, homes and gardens without doing harm.

## SD: With regard to battery technology, what developments have you been making to improve the performance of your range of tools?

**DG:** We have for several years been



Don Gao, CEO Positec Tool Corporation

aware that if we want to change the mindset of the professional end users, we needed to develop a battery system and a range of tools that would run efficiently for 6-8 hours without the need for long recharging times. Many current commercial battery systems and tools can only run for about an hour – with the need for a fairly long recharging time of around 40 minutes to an hour. This, for many professional end users, has not influenced them to change their favoured petrol driven products.

We realised that for us to achieve our goals of meeting climate change targets, we needed to develop a more efficient battery power system that could offer reduced charging times. But more importantly offer a longer life span of the battery, effectively offering more recycling times for the end user.

I am very proud in announcing that we have launched, first both in Germany and France, but now to rest of the world, a completely new battery system that has the capabilities to be recharged in less than eight minutes and has a vastly longer battery



New Kress robotic mower

recycling life span of 3000 times – ten times more than most current batteries.

**SD: Will this new technology cost more than the existing battery systems?**

**DG:** Yes. We have spent a lot of time and money in developing these new technologies, redesigning the battery to last longer, recharge quicker, thus improving working efficiencies of the tools being powered. It will therefore cost more initially than current battery systems.

But the trade-off is we are offering an efficient battery system that charges exceedingly quicker than current systems and has an overall longer shelf-life, offering ten times more longevity.

We can see our batteries lasting up to eight-to-ten years, therefore offering a longer-term investment on your money. Effectively the machinery will pay for itself after two years.

It will dramatically bring running costs down during the last six-to-eight years of the product's lifespan. We are also offering two types of battery: a 4-amp and 11-amp, both offering 60 volts in power – giving the user 240 and 660 watt hours of power.

We are also providing multiple chargers, where several batteries can be charged at once. This is the ideal solution for commercial end users who need constant power supplies.

All in all, we have been working

on developing this technology since 2012 – and that is a lot of investment in time and energy. For me it has been an exciting journey to know we are meeting our targets of being petrol-free by 2035.

**SD: Where do you see the future for battery vs petrol outdoor powered equipment?**

**DG:** As for the future of electrical or battery powered technologies, they are going to be more in demand because it is proving to be a cleaner, more efficient way of powering our domestic and professional needs. I am very proud of what we have achieved in developing this new system. I refer to it as the energy system revolution.

**SD: Where does the specialist dealer network fit in with your plans?**

**DG:** The purpose of revealing this new technological development at the special dealer events we held was to build a diverse network with commercial dealers for building operational contracts across the UK.

The dealers are pivotal to the launch of this new product as they are specialised and valued by prospective customers for their credibility. We are also building long lasting partnerships with our dealers to help support them and grow together.

**SD: Thank you.**



One of the dealer launch events took place at the Majestic Hotel in Harrogate



# CLAIM A FREE PRODUCT



**BL1850B**  
1x LXT 18V 5.0Ah Battery



Claim a FREE BL1850B 18V 5.0Ah Battery with Selected 18V LXT Garden Products



**BL1850B**  
2x LXT 18V 5.0Ah Batteries



Claim 2 FREE BL1850B 18V 5.0Ah Batteries with Selected Twin 18V LXT Garden Products



**DMR110N**  
1x DAB+ Job Site Radio



Claim a FREE DMR110N DAB+ Job Site Radio with Selected 36V Back-Pack Battery Blowers



**BL4025**  
1x XGT 40V 2.5Ah Battery



Claim a FREE BL4025 40V 2.5Ah Battery with Selected 40V Max XGT Garden Products



## MAKITAUK.COM/REDEMPTION

**LXT 1x BL1850B Free:** DUB184RT, DUB186RT, DUC254RT, DUH502RT, DUH523RT, DUH601RT, DUH604SRT, DUH751RT, DUH754SRT, DUN461WRT, DUX18RT, DUN500WRT, DUN600LRT, DCU180PT2, DCU180PTX4, DCU180PTX3, DCW180RTE. **LXT 2x BL1850B Free:** DDG460T2X7, DUA301PG2, DUA301PT2, DUB362PG2, DUB362PT2, DUB363PG2V, DUB363PT2V, DUC256PG2, DUC256PT2, DUC305PG2, DUC305PT2, DUC306PG2, DUC306PT2, DUC353PG2, DUC353PT2, DUC355PG2, DUC355PT2, DUC405PG2, DUC405PT2, DUX60PG2, DUX60PT2. **LXT 1x DMR110N Free:** UB001CX2, UB002CX3. **XGT 1x BL4025 Free:** CW001GT101, DG001GD201, DG001GD202, UA004GD202, UA004GD203, UB001GD201, UB001GD202, UC002GD201, UC002GD202, UC003GD201, UC003GD202, UC014GT201, UC015GT201, UC016GT201, UH004GD202, UH004GD201, UH005GD202, UH005GD201, UH006GD202, UH006GD201, UH007GD202, UH007GD201, UH013GD201, UH013GD202, UH014GD201, UH014GD202, UX011GD201, UX011GD202.

Claims can be registered on-line from 1st October 2022 and must be registered within 28 days of purchase for qualifying models. Qualifying models must be purchased by 31st December 2022 to qualify and registered within 28 days.

# Strong, individual, and very capable

That's how renowned industry figure and director of BAGMA, Keith Christian, describes the UK dealer network – but the same could equally apply to him. On his retirement, *Service Dealer* editor STEVE GIBBS caught up with him to reflect on a storied career, and considers the state of the industry as he steps aside

**Service Dealer:** How, and importantly why, did you get started in the industry?

**Keith Christian:** I had left my job in the leisure industry because I had been misled. I needed a job and went to the local job centre who had a vacancy for a salesperson at H Burlingham, a large local garden machinery dealership. I got the job because of my technical knowledge and fantastic personality!

**SD:** What were those early days like?

**KC:** Great learning curve, fantastic people to work with and great customers – but it was tough selling equipment to commercial users.

**SD:** How did your career progress?

**KC:** Burlingham were a great company to work for and very supportive, giving me a lot of freedom. I will always be indebted to them for the opportunity they gave me and such a great start in an industry I have now been with for something like 45 years.

I moved to Spear and Jackson to sell Stiga around the South of England amongst other products. Another fledgling job that allowed me to learn from the older traditionally Spear and Jackson tool reps. When S&J decided to close their garden machinery operation we were able to start up Claymore with Reekie's who had been selling Stiga in Scotland.

**SD:** What was it like on the supplier side of the industry with Claymore?

**KC:** Claymore is a big story but I woke up one day working for a company that simply did not exist.

This business was created from the bones of an operation run by Reekie's in Scotland so there was a lot of work to get set up and find premises and get things going.

We created an import/distribution business from nearly nothing. Topically, our first order of equipment from the USA was made when the pound reached parity with the dollar in 1985/86.

It was hard work but great fun setting up new product distribution through a dealer network with brands like Bolens, Roberine, Gloria, Sabo, Hinomoto and so on. I was very lucky to work with colleagues from Burlingham's who were some of the best people in the industry and really good at what they did.

Rubbing shoulders with the great and the mighty was also a delight and a pleasure and so rewarding it helped me to get through some tough years in our start-up phase. Gaining experience from some of the icons of the industry at the time was enormously helpful.

One of the best things we did in Claymore was organise dealer trips, factory visits and get-togethers for dealers. We went to some wonderful places and enjoyed some very special trips around the world. With groups of around 50 people, we made friends and forged relationships that were



Keith conducting a BAGMA Connect meeting of dealers

strong and, dare I say, profitable for all. A very special way of getting to know and understand each other.

**SD:** What eventually tempted you to join BAGMA?

**KC:** Ha! I needed a job again. We had sold Claymore and I had stayed on to make the transition but when my time was done, and it was time to move on, BAGMA beckoned and I thought it may be a good idea to stay in the industry in a different role.

I had previously worked with the BAGMA team and Ian Jones but had also been very involved with the AEA, so going to BAGMA as the director seemed a good idea. A very different job from the Claymore days.

**SD:** What were the early challenges you faced at the Association?

**KC:** There were lots of challenges as BAGMA had not had a director for two years and there was a lot of sorting out to do and updating. Being a part of a bigger organisation also involved some internal politics, as well as the industry politics I had to learn about. Understanding the role of a trade association is always hard to explain and learn about, but my involvement

with dealers for so many years helped with that a lot!

**SD:** As you progressed at BAGMA, what are some of the achievements you are most proud of?

**KC:** There are lots of little things that work toward a bigger picture, but I think raising the profile of BAGMA and making it the 'go to association' would be one. Increasing our training portfolio and the numbers we train is one of the less obvious achievements, but goes a long way to equip dealers with the right training and help them tick the boxes.

More recently it would be the Covid years when we latched onto the government to make sure dealers could stay open as a necessary service industry and helped a few avoid prosecution from over-zealous enforcers of Covid rules. Another biggie was when the rules on who could use red diesel changed and dealers were being refused deliveries of red diesel. Working with the HMRC, AEA and NAAC we managed to get a turn around on these rules and a lot more clarity on what dealers could do. That was definitely a major achievement for the industry as a whole.

Having moved offices three times with BAGMA, the final achievement

would have been the sale and transfer of BAGMA to the AEA, ensuring BAGMA's future with a like-minded and progressive industry association.

**SD:** What have been the greatest challenges that dealers have faced in recent times and how has BAGMA helped with these?

**KC:** There have always been challenges for dealers, and they cycle around at different times – drought, availability, staff shortages, succession, consolidation, to name a few – but they are always there. More recently, Covid has created a new and unexpected set of challenges, along with Brexit, and now the invasion of Ukraine, which is affecting everyone, including manufacturers.

Dealers are resilient and innovative, as they have to be, but I think the greatest challenge and the hardest to overcome is the limited number of people coming into the industry, which has an aging workforce.

How does BAGMA help? Being there as a support in all manner of things is one way. What we do will benefit individual members if they use what we have to offer, but we benefit the industry as a whole in many of the unseen and unsung things we do





Keith with the AEA's Ruth Bailey in August 2021 when the news broke of the AEA buying BAGMA

behind the scenes.

Essentially, we represent the industry as a whole, and are instrumental in training and education. We are working with others on recruitment campaigns in the UK and across Europe to establish a campaign that will be recognised in many countries to promote our industry as a great career opportunity for new blood.

We are there to be used by the industry and support our members in various business ways, but it saddens me when I see online posts from people asking, "What does BAGMA do

for us?" Clearly, if they have to ask the question, they have no idea, so why don't they find out instead of belittling a 100-plus year-old institution that has pioneered much in the industry and helped many who have needed it?

**SD: Where would you say the dealer network stands today?**

**KC:** It is and always has been my view that the dealer network is strong, individual, and very capable. Privately owned and mostly independent, they are dedicated to what they do and

bloody good at it. They should be proud of that. Yes, the network, mostly in the ag side, faces more consolidation and mergers but it should be noted we are not losing outlets or people because of this. There are just fewer companies, but much bigger.

**SD: What will be the biggest challenges dealers will face over the next couple of years?**

**KC:** Recruitment will be a challenge for all, and the industry needs to pull together to address this issue.

Changes in business practice and consumer habits because of Covid will stay with us, and dealers will have to adapt to these changes. Supply channels are going to take time to settle down. It will be interesting to see if the practice of 'just in time' will change in any way to allow some flexibility in the supply channels.

I think there will always be issues with online selling, and because of this, increased pressures on margins. Margin retention has to be one of the biggest focuses for dealers, as suppliers sell more and more online, and the costs of running a business increase.

Securing supply and protecting franchises in the dealer network will require strong relationships and understanding with suppliers.

Just maybe, retention of staff may become a bigger challenge as the industry fishes for staff in a shrinking labour market. Salary demands will go up. There is always a need to help staff feel wanted and useful and keep them interested in what they do if you want to retain them. Lots of little things help with this that don't have to cost an employer a fortune.

Make sure your valued staff members don't have to come and ask for a pay increase or want to leave to get more money or benefits. Spend

time with them and make sure they are happy otherwise you may lose them and replacing them will take time and probably cost more than keeping them would have.

**SD: Looking ahead, what would you like to see BAGMA do to support dealers in the coming years?**

**KC:** We want to offer more relevant services and make sure our members and non-members know more about what we do and how we can help. We are working on recruitment issues and apprenticeships as always to help dealers. I hope we will have some things in place before I trot off into the sunset.

We are also looking at a Dealer Charter with some of our members to try and address some of the issues in the industry and create a more level and fairer platform for dealers to work from. Certainly, a work in progress and some way off but a good initiative.

Joining BAGMA and bringing ideas to the table will help us enormously and help to give the dealer network a stronger and better heard voice. It is good value for money despite what the doubters may think, but like all membership organisations you need to use it to benefit from it.

**SD: And what's next for you personally, Keith?**

**KC:** Sun, sea and sangria! It's a scary prospect retiring when you have worked for 50 odd years. I would like to stay involved in somethings and help where I can. Recruitment is a big issue for me and helping to get a national campaign going for the industry would be great. We badly need it but everyone needs to be involved, from the smallest to the largest dealers.

I look forward to all those things a full-time job stops you from doing. Spending time with the family, holidays, motorbikes on and off road, maybe the odd game of rugby still. I may even mow the lawn from time to time and think about the heady days in Claymore and the wonderful dealer trips we organised and the fantastic people that came on them. Those were the days!

**SD: Thank you.**



Keith pictured with Paul Buttery and Harry Leytham at an AEA Conference in London



At a recent Service Dealer Conference with magazine founder Chris Biddle and colleague Alasdair Straker

# Where are ATVs and SSVs driving to in 2023 and beyond?



Service Dealer spoke to Richard Gregg, district commercial manager UK North at Can-Am, to discuss what trends the company believes will be front and centre in 2023

**Service Dealer:** What trends do you foresee in power demands?

**Richard Gregg:** According to data collected by the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) there is a marked year on year increase in the number of 500cc plus ATVs being purchased by users in the UK. This segment of the ATV market has grown because

of a number of factors. The first is manufacturers across the sector are not producing the sub 400cc ATVs. The second is the increase in power, which allows the user to have the ability to tow and haul heavier loads than the lower cc models can handle. The third is the fact that the job requirements from users are constantly evolving and they want a vehicle that can handle multiple

tasks instead of having to switch vehicles depending on the job.

When it comes to SSVs, we continue to see an increase in demand for these vehicles because the power enables the owner to do more tasks, while being able to increase efficiency and productivity. The power of 500cc plus SSVs enables the vehicle to handle challenging terrain, while treading



Richard Gregg

lightly, and when it is combined with a user-focused vehicle design, it ensures a good balance between transporting people and cargo safely, which is what utility users are looking for. In addition, there is also an increasing demand for higher spec SSVs.

**SD:** Do you see the popularity of road-legal vehicles for both dealers and customers continuing to increase?

**RG:** Road-legal models, whether that be an ATV or SSV, have become more popular for some users and dealers because, since Brexit, T-category ATVs do not attract import duty. In addition, if the customer has to frequently travel on public roads, then something that is ready to go straight from the crate

offers a significant time advantage in terms of machine preparation. The sooner the vehicle starts working, the sooner it starts paying for itself.

It also provides peace of mind to the customer because they know that the machine they are using has been designed to be homologated for that specific usage and has the correct specification tyres fitted as standard.

It can also be advantageous when looking at it from a customer warranty perspective because a machine designed for off-road usage may not be suitable for sustained high-speed work.

**SD:** How is the market developing for electric ATVs and SSVs?

**RG:** With the cost of fuel, whether that be petrol or diesel, having steadily risen over the last 12 months and with the price constantly fluctuating, there has been a slight move towards electric ATVs and SSVs. As an industry, we know that the market for electric vehicles will continue to grow as fossil-fuel alternatives such as electric become more viable.

With electric vehicles, there is a caveat, and that caveat is no matter how good the EV revolution will be, it will take time for the industry to change. For some customers, the change may happen quickly, but for others it may take time because of the old adage of

'If it ain't broke, don't fix it!' and this will be the case for some time.

In addition, as an industry, we know that change is inevitable, but how long EVs take to be the dominant sellers is possibly too early to say. However, it will be exciting to watch the change take place and see how these vehicles keep up with the rigours of utility usage.

**SD:** Do you see the ATV and SSV product offerings constantly evolving?

**RG:** As the markets ATVs and SSVs continue to evolve, so will the vehicles themselves. At Can-Am the way we keep in stride with the changes is through constant communication. An example of this for example, would be the introduction of our Traxter 6x6 HD10 DPS. This is achieved by having an open dialogue with the customer and dealer network who are on the ground, to understand and anticipate the challenges users and specific industry sectors are facing.

These insights are collated by the R&D team themselves or sent through to them, which enables the company to develop innovative and versatile products that are suitable for multiple applications.

**SD:** Thank you.



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Be The Change

# New '23 kit for Claas dealers

There's a new cab for Lexion combines, and developments in control terminals, mowers, balers and handlers from Claas for next year. MARTIN RICKATSON learned more at the manufacturer's summer launch event in Germany

**W**hile there has been plenty of recent movement in ag machinery manufacturer-dealer franchise arrangements, Claas has arguably one of the more settled UK networks, with its blend of owned retail outlets and independent dealers having stayed largely unchanged for the past decade, save for some transfer in ownership of outlets. But while all is quiet on the distribution front, there is plenty of product news.

## Lexion gets cab introduced on Trion

When Claas last year introduced its Trion replacement for Tucano combines, with the new range came a new cab. It was widely expected this would also feature in the next

upgrades for the current Lexion machines introduced three years ago. For 2023, that's what has happened. The wider cab, with more glass and thinner A-pillars, provides more space around the operator's head and foot area, and a seat with optional leather upholstery and 30-degree either-way rotation, supplemented by footrests. Information and setting functionality are provided by a high-resolution 12in CEBIS terminal and optional CEMOS Dialog and CEMOS Automatic, both fully integrated here. Threshing and cleaning settings can also be accessed via buttons on the right-hand side of the operating armrest.

Further features include optional Dynamic Steering, well-established on Claas Arion/Axion tractors and Jaguar foragers. This can be set to reduce steering



The new cab introduced last year on Trion combines comes to the Lexion for 2023, and there are Montana versions of the Lexion 5500 five-walker and 7700 hybrid combines



Variant 500 variable chamber round balers now get more tyre options, simplified maintenance and an improved pressure control system



After the flagship Torion 1913 and 2014 gained higher lifting capacity and greater loading height in 2021, mid-sized Torion loading shovels now get similar upgrades for 2023

wheel turns by 40 per cent to ease headland turning. Meanwhile, the intake reverser now has a 'slow retraction' function that allows the reversing motor's rotation to be altered at the push of a button, to transfer crop slowly and more evenly to the threshing mechanism and avoid high loads after reversing.

A new 8600 entry-level wide-body model with 1,700mm drum joins the Lexion 8000 line, available in fully-wheeled (12,500-litre tank) or Terra-Trac (13,500 litres) formats. A 12.4-litre MAN D26 engine producing 549hp powers the 8600, which now sits above the largest narrow body/drum Lexion, the 7700 (1,420mm drum). Features common to other Lexions include Dynamic Power, which adapts engine output/fuelling to conditions. Meanwhile, the Lexion 8700 gains 41hp (now 626hp) and the 8800 model 47hp (700hp), the latter now benefiting from the same 16.2-litre MAN D42 engine as the 8900, plus optional 18,000-litre grain tank. There's also a new 15,000-litre option for the 8700. Both the 330 and 420mm diameter unloading augers can now have a spout with 60cm pivot.

For all combines with CEMOS, a new dialogue-based loss measurement in CEMOS Dialog enables greater loss sensor calibration precision, guiding the operator to help eliminate measurement and input errors. CEMOS Auto Header is also new for Lexion and Trion combines, said to automatically optimise header/reel settings based on crop height measured by the Field Scanner cameras in the cab roof. In addition, a sensor records layer thickness of the crop flow in the elevator.

Meanwhile, in addition to the six Trion models available with Montana hillside/slope levelling, Lexion 5500 five-walker and 7700 hybrid combines are now available in Montana specification. Lateral slope compensation of up to 18 degrees and longitudinal inclination of up to six degrees can be achieved via hydraulic chassis adjustment. Further specification includes rear-wheel drive, electrically selectable front axle diff lock and Auto Slope cleaning.

## Header developments

Where previously it was necessary to manually adjust table length and vertical and horizontal reel position on Claas's

Vario moveable knife headers to optimise intake, the new CEMOS Auto Header system automatically adapts cutterbar settings to harvesting conditions. Reel height is governed by the Field Scanner roof-mounted laser, while vibration data recorded in the feed channel governs table length and horizontal reel position.

New oilseed rape knives, and a new reel drive for the three widest Vario cutter bars, are now available on all Vario sizes. The knives feature an integrated overload clutch and 50 per cent greater cutting power, plug-in installation with quick couplers and 33 per cent less weight. A gearbox replaces the chain drive to power the reel. Meanwhile, all cutterbars now come with auto header recognition, automatically transferring basic data and settings such as working width and cutterbar type from the combine.

## Widest non-telescopic disc mower

At 9.7-9.9m, the new Disco 1010 Trend is the widest mounted mower without a telescopic boom on the market, claims Claas. The vector folding system, introduced in 2021 on the Disco 4400 Contour, features two booms suspended at the centre of gravity, and suits 4-cyl/150hp tractors, it suggests. The 1010 joins the Disco 8500 and 9200 in the firm's high-output, non-conditioner mower offering. Cutting width can be changed by two setting positions on the booms, and the Max Cut mower bed, which can be operated at 850rpm PTO speed, is reckoned to offer potential diesel savings of up to 20 per cent, or more when used with CMatic CVT tractors via the CEMOS for tractors self-learning, interactive optimisation system.

The Disco 1010 main frame and headstock have been redesigned, with the main gearbox moved slightly to the rear and the angular gearboxes facing the cutterbars slanted by two degrees, so the driveshafts work in a straight line to minimise noise and wear. Each mower bed on the 1010 has nine contra-rotating mower discs (there are eight on the 9300 and seven on the 8500). While the latter two machines are folded conventionally, on the 1010 the outriggers are first moved hydraulically into the 120 degree transport position, similar to the other models in the Contour series. They then



At 9.7-9.9m, the new Disco 1010 Trend is the widest mounted mower without a telescopic boom on the market, claims Claas

pivot slightly backwards via a ram combined with the hydraulic non-stop collision safety device and are automatically locked hydraulically. The double slanted position means the mower combination has a transport height under 4.0m, while lying diagonally behind the tractor on the headstock, shifting the centre of gravity to the tractor's longitudinal axis. Compared to mowers that swivel backwards, this aids steering behaviour, says Claas, particularly with short wheelbase four-cylinder tractors. In addition, when turning or negotiating tight corners, tail swing is minimised. Like the other large Discos, the 1010 can be parked in working or transport positions.

### Round baler developments

More tyre options, simplified maintenance and an improved pressure control system are among Variant 500 variable chamber round baler developments for 2023.

Bale pressure control upgrades include a new hydraulic control block with independent lines for both belt tensioning arms, meaning both position and baling pressure can be measured independently for both. New control software is said to boost bale density in outer bale layers and provide more precise soft core adjustment (dimensions and baling pressure) independently of each other where required.

The net roll now sits 25cm lower for easier changes, while there is a new net brake, independent of roll diameter, to ensure constant net tension, plus an improved feed plate and a new knife release system. Other upgrades include a maximum 560/45 22.5 tyre size, plus a new oil tank and a new mechanically driven oil pump for the central lubrication system.

The CEMIS 700 ISOBUS terminal, introduced in 2020 as the standard controller for Disco mowers, Quadrant balers and Rollant fixed-chamber round balers, is now standard on Variant variable-chamber balers. It features 10 backlit ISOBUS hard keys, a rotary/push control and 7in screen with automatic day/night switching. The camera input can accept feeds from up to two cameras, with auto or manual switching. As with all machines mentioned, Variant balers can alternatively be operated via other ISOBUS universal terminals or the tractor's ISOBUS terminal.

### Torion wheel loaders revised

After the flagship Torion 1913 and 2014 gained higher lifting capacity and greater loading height in 2021, mid-sized Torion loading shovels now get similar upgrades for 2023, with the new 1285, 1611 and 1611P.

A new Z-kinematic design features reinforced and lengthened lift arms with larger hydraulic rams and more powerful hydraulic pumps, boosting lifting power – particularly in the lower range – and transfer height, with 100% parallel guidance at the touch of a button. The Z-kinematics also raises holding power in the upper lifting range. To absorb the higher lifting and breakout forces, the new boom features extra lift arm and cross tube reinforcement. On the Torion 1611 and 1611P, the axles have also been reinforced, with respective operating weights increasing accordingly to 15,810kg and 15,200kg. Torion 1285 operating weight is 13,570kg.

In addition to the standard version with Z-kinematics, a high-lift mast option increases bucket pivot point by 52-58cm depending on model, to 3.85-4.52m. As well as bucket return, upper and lower positions can be saved for two attachments. All models can be equipped with a weighing option with additional memory and back-weighing function.

Power upgrades and larger drive pumps and hydrostats mean the 157hp Torion 1285 replaces the 137hp 1177 and 165hp 1410 models, while the Torion 207hp 1611 offers 23hp more than the 1511 it replaces, and the silage-focused 252hp 1611P provides 45hp more than the standard 1611, as well as higher torque at low speeds. This and the use of the demand-dependent Dynamic Cooling boosts pushing power for the same low fuel consumption, says Claas, which claims the three-range transmission's sensitivity remains unaffected, thanks to both axial piston pumps being connected in series for maximum traction in driving ranges I and II. For road travel in driving range III, only one pump is used, while engine speed is lowered via the Smart Rooding feature. On the Torion 1611P, this means 40km/h can be reached at 1,600 rpm.



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# SALTEX '22 has a lot to live up to

Following last year's first-back-after-Covid event that gained plaudits across the board, 2022's show – coming during a recruitment and cost-of-living crisis – has its work cut out to deliver once again, says *Service Dealer* editor STEVE GIBBS



For 2021's edition of SALTEX, the first one back following the Covid-enforced absence, *Service Dealer* described the event as “the show the industry needed”.

There was a palpable busy, buzzy and upbeat feel to the exhibition, with a sense around the halls that everyone just wanted to get on with business. I recall many stand-holders and visitors remarking that it might have been the best SALTEX they'd ever attended. A bold claim, but one that was hard to refute.

With this November's event, the expectation bar has been set high. And the show certainly has its work cut out to attract an audience, coming as it does in the midst of a recruitment and cost-of-living crisis. But hopefully there will be enough good will there from the success of last year – along with some returning exhibitors who might have felt they missed out previously – to draw and satisfy the crowd.

*Service Dealer* will be in attendance for both days once again. This time we're on **STAND H010**, along with our sister title for commercial end-users, *TurfPro* – so if any of our dealer readers find themselves passing, please do stop by to say hello.

It's difficult to predict how many dealers will make the trip to the NEC

this year. Early autumn saw many individual manufacturer's conferences and dealer roadshows take place around the country. So perhaps the network already feels it's had plenty of time away from the business, meeting reps and viewing new products? However, I do genuinely believe that for those who can spare the time, SALTEX is a valuable trip for dealers of commercial turfcare machinery – or those who are thinking of diversifying into the sector. There are countless networking opportunities available across the two days, and many manufacturers do hold back their new product launches specifically for the exhibition.

## Trends towards battery power

Last year the show clearly reflected the industry's increasing interest in battery-powered equipment – and I'm sure we'll see this expanded on in November.

As anyone who attended the show last year will attest, this technology was everywhere. There were several manufacturers who aren't known as being battery-only producers, who didn't have a single petrol-powered piece on their stand – Husqvarna and Allett, for example.

So, to reflect this growing trend, SALTEX will once again play host to the Eco Village. Talking about this element

of the show on the SALTEX website, Geoff Webb, CEO of show owners the Grounds Management Association (GMA), says, “The whole concept of the Eco Village is to consider sustainable and environmentally friendly practices in grounds care, and consider what is a sustainable piece of machinery – what's the impact on the environment and how does it help achieve neutrality?”

“The Eco Village features a programme of daily demonstrations of cutting-edge sustainable technology, offering visitors an opportunity of seeing several products in action. Plus, industry experts will offer advice on green technology and how it could benefit current working practices.”

The GMA says to keep an eye on its site to see what the line-up will be for the 2022 Eco Village and book your place at your sessions of interest.

## Other attractions

There are of course other reasons to attend SALTEX. There is a full seminar programme of educational opportunities (the full details of which can be found in the LearningLIVE section of [www.saltex.org.uk](http://www.saltex.org.uk)).

Whilst the main draw for dealers will of course be to browse the stands of the exhibition itself. SALTEX says this year there will be over 400 brands showcasing products in three halls

across the two days.

Geoff Webb addresses how he sees the future for exhibitions like SALTEX on its website, in the light of the ‘virtual’ shows that were forced to spring up during Covid.

“Having SALTEX shut down for a year and seeing the response in 2021 after an enforced two-year break proved beyond all doubt that human interaction trumps digital,” he is quoted.

“We know we can survive for 76 years and a global pandemic. We know senior decision-makers attend SALTEX and purchase what they see there, we know dealers come on the lookout for new professional franchises to stock in their stores and are impressed with the new machinery options on display. In our opinion it's the strongest show for the sector. It has huge support and a massive list of loyal and repeat visitors and exhibitors.

“We know everyone is busy and that's why we make SALTEX worth everyone's while by making sure there's lots to see, lots to learn about, and plenty of business and networking opportunities to benefit from.”

**SALTEX 2022 takes place at the Birmingham NEC from November 2-3. Doors open at 9am and close at 5pm on Wednesday, and 4pm on Thursday. Visit [www.saltex.org.uk](http://www.saltex.org.uk) for full details.**



## My SALTEX

To find out what your commercial customers want from the show, we spoke to Daniel Lewis, landscape contract manager at Manchester City Football Club

**Service Dealer:** Are you a regular SALTEX attendee?

**Daniel Lewis:** Yes. I've been going now for 15 years.

**SD:** What keeps you coming back?

**DL:** I like to discover new innovations and see old friends.

**SD:** Does who is exhibiting influence your decision whether to attend each year?

**DL:** Not really. Sometimes it's fear of missing out.

**SD:** Were you keen to get back to in-person shows post-Covid?

**DL:** Yes, the virtual side didn't work for me. I found it too impersonal, and I like to see the whites of the eyes of who I'm talking to.

**SD:** What are your thoughts on the NEC as a venue?

**DL:** I think it's great for hosting the event but not so great for transport and hotels, or for the evening activities. They could possibly move the venue or the place for the awards dinner, but I can imagine this not suiting all.

**SD:** What product areas are you interested in exploring this year?

**DL:** Battery and robotic machinery, in particular. Also, I like to listen to industry speakers.

**SD:** Do you arrange on-site demonstrations whilst at SALTEX?

**DL:** I have done in the past. Green Machine and Ariens are two that spring to mind.

**SD:** Do you think SALTEX should remain independent or team-up with other industry events?

**DL:** Independent. I don't think we should dilute what we already have.

**SD:** Is there anything you'd like to see changed about the current version of the show?

**DL:** As already mentioned, maybe move locations for a few years at a time? I think the outdoor demo area always feels detached from the indoor showfloor.

**SD:** Thank you.

# Machinery on show

A brief look at some of the new machinery options that will be on display at November's SALTEX



**Henton & Chattell** will showcase four of its leading ranges – Cobra, Woodbay Turf Technologies, Billy Goat and Hansa Products.

Their exhibit will span two large stands. Cobra boasts the largest powered lawnmower brand in the UK; Wood Bay Turf Technologies is one of the company's newest brands and included pro turf products such as the greensIRON 3900 and greensIRON 6200 turf rollers; the fds9200 multipurpose turf dethatcher and the famous tungsten carbide tipped vertical cutting blade, dynaBLADE; Hansa Products specialises in the design and manufacture of high-quality wood chippers; whilst Billy Goat offers a complete line-up of product solutions for commercial, residential and municipal needs

**STANDS G090 & G070**



**Dennis and SISIS** will be showcasing a wide-range of pedestrian battery-powered products. New machinery will include the ES-860. This 34" battery powered turf management system features a range of 13 interchangeable cassette options. The battery system ensures the machine is capable of cutting at least 3-4 pitches on a single charge or verticutting a full pitch. Furthermore, current G860 cassettes will also fit the ES-860.

**STAND E070**



**Etesia UK** will be launching the Electric Bahia M2EL lithium and will be announcing a new feature of the ET Lander electric utility vehicle. The new Lander will be fully N1 homologation compliant meaning that it will be fully road legal along with being able to be used off road. The new models will also feature

lithium-ion batteries, which ensures that the range will extend to 100km and have a charger system compatible with a standard type 2EV car charger. The new Bahia M2E, the 100% electric professional ride-on-mower with grass collection, is now powered by a 48V, 100Ah lithium battery. This enables users to get up to four hours and 30 mins of action before it needs recharging.

**STAND E072**



**GKB Machines** will be showcasing a new solution to the problem of large-area leaf clearance. In a single pass, the flails on the Leaf Reducer collect the leaves before a turbine provides both initial fragmentation and the airflow needed to pull the material into the machine where it is further milled into a fine mulch. The fine 'porridge-like' material is then returned to the surface via a rear ejector which can be adjusted to a desired direction depending on the location.

**STAND H051**



**ATT** will be showcasing their Infinicut and TMSYSTEM. The new Infinicut features include the extension of the range of batteries offered to include a new 105AH Lithium variant; refinement of the electrical architecture with design emphasis on simplification and fewer contact points; and the mowers can now accommodate adjustable/removable weight kits for situations where increased down pressure is required.

**STAND H075**



**Kubota** will be displaying a trio of new machines across the RTV and compact tractor ranges. The new LXe-261 electric compact tractor overcomes the major challenge of range, powered by a large-capacity battery that provides rapid one-hour charging and a continuous operational run-time of three to four hours. Also new in the tractor portfolio will be the EK1-261 which is powered by a 24.4hp diesel engine, features 9F+3R manual transmission and provides a rear linkage lift capacity of 750kg. And making its show debut will be the RTV 520 that features a variable hydrostatic transmission (VHT) with one-pedal operation for smooth acceleration and dynamic braking.

**STAND C070**



**Pellenc UK** will be launching two new products. The C35 / C45 pruning shears feature a new cutting head that offers a pruning capacity of 35mm (model C35) or 45mm (model C45). They are powered by the ULiB 150, 150P or 250 battery, guaranteeing a day of minimum autonomy. The new Cultivion Alpha meanwhile, can be used for hoeing, soil aeration, or weeding, and is suitable for all types of soil, both on the surface and below.

**STAND E072**



**Redexim** will showcase the latest version of the Verti-Drain, the 2519. Featuring a 1.9m working width and an ability to accept a wide range of tine options, the 2519 can cover almost 9000 sq.m per hour thanks to its PTO speed of up to 540rpm.

**STAND M075**



**Price Turfcare** the UK and Ireland distributor of the Ventrac multi-terrain compact tractor, will showcase the new Ventrac 4520. The company says there's a whole series of improvements under the bonnet resulting in 30% more available power, giving the best mix of machine performance, operator experience and durability.

**STAND B124**



**Reesink UK** will be represented by new launches from all four of its divisions (Reesink Turfcare, Reesink e-Vehicles, Reesink Agriculture and Reesink Hydro-Scapes). Included will be two Toro product launches from Reesink Turfcare. The new Toro ProCore 648s and Toro Workman UTX 4x4. There are more than 10 new patents and some brand-new enhancements to the 648s. Revised controls improve ergonomics and allow single handed operation, and hole spacing and true tine depth are now set and saved in the InfoCentre. The Workman UTX 4x4 four-wheel drive, full-sized utility vehicle meanwhile has 25 percent more cargo capacity than others in its class, says the company.

**STAND K080**



# BUSINESS MONITOR

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

## Dealers reporting little change in 2022

Survey respondents say it's mostly as you were for the year

**T**he results of our Autumn 2022 dealer survey indicated that despite well-documented problems with supply, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis for consumers, not too much has changed adversely for businesses this past year.

To the key question of how your overall business has fared compared with 2021, it was extremely close between saying it had stayed the same or it was down on last year (42% and 41%). This might not be too bad a result when you consider that the previous year, half the respondents were telling us their overall business was up.

In terms of sales of whole goods, where supply has still seen disruptions, unfortunately 47% of respondents say they had seen a decrease on 2021.

Shortfalls in sales may have been made up in the dealership elsewhere though, with respondents telling us that both their parts and accessories sales, as well as their workshop business, had managed to stay roughly the same.

Perhaps unsurprising considering how difficult many dealers are finding the recruitment process currently. Most that answered the survey (63%) said their staffing levels hadn't changed this year.

**How has your overall business compared to 2021?**



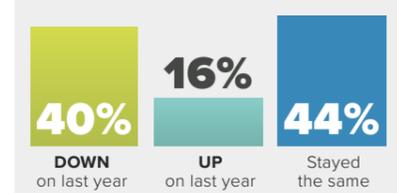
**How have your machine sales (whole goods) performed this year against 2021?**



**How have your parts and accessories sales performed this year compared with 2021?**



**How has your service department/workshop performed this year compared with 2021?**



**How have your staffing levels been this year compared to 2021?**



## “Your say”

We asked that with all the well-documented obstacles dealers have faced recently, how have they kept their dealership successful?

- We have been prepared to purchase from the margins, where our main suppliers have been unable to supply. Also, we have compared year-on-years (in the plural), rather than the last year's bumper results, to maintain perspective!
- Making sure we do estimates for machines in for service to ensure all time spent is charged or offering a new machine instead of spending a lot on old ones. Not spending unless it's essential. Although we have had to buy more stock. It's difficult!
- We have sold off unused equipment within the business. We were planning on updating one of our vehicles this year but ended up cancelling the order. One of our staff members we let go as they weren't pulling their weight. We also had to pay a substantial out-of-court settlement, which really didn't help. This meant we had paid suppliers late, which was something that I was really unhappy about. Some manufacturers have had events that I haven't attended due to the cost of diesel and time away from the business. Personally, I haven't gone on holiday and have limited my spending to bare essentials until the suppliers are up to date. I am pleased to say we are now back on track and out of the woods. I am grateful to the manufacturers for their understanding and their help this year. The way things are going looks really positive and we are planning our own events for next year.
- Not sure it will continue, as late arrival of machinery and poor parts availability have made it the worst year since we started 40 years ago.
- By sheer hard work, longer hours and using better suppliers.
- The year started well and we anticipated an increase in year on year sales until June. With the heatwave combined with a lack of stock, sales dropped significantly from June to September. Although spring sales were up, lack of stock did mean we could have been at least another 10 per cent more! Winter stock ordered last year is coming in now, unfortunately the season is now ending so we will be stuck with stock for six months before it starts to move again. Service work was busy, but with the heatwave it slowed down as customers were not really using their machines. Hopefully the next few months should see this pick up.
- We have over-ordered stock this year due to the uncertainty, and have gone from record low stock at the end of 2021 to record high stock now. On a brighter note we have just about caught up with staff shortages over the last two years.
- I wouldn't say we are successful. It's down to luck that we are still here.

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Staff retention

## Use stay interviews to understand employees

There's a shortage of labour across many business sectors. Partly due to changing demographics and the changing nature of many industries, partly a function of what has been coined 'the big quit', where many re-evaluated their lives post-Covid and decided, where they could, to enjoy what time they had left, writes *Adam Bernstein*, *SME Digest* editor.



**This leaves employers in a double bind. On the one hand they can struggle to recruit, but on the other, they need to prevent good employees from leaving. It's a salient point. Estimates vary, but Glassdoor reckons it costs at least £3000 to recruit an employee, while the CIPD's Resourcing And Talent Planning Survey 2020 thinks that for some employers it can be as high as £5000 (median).**

It makes sense, then, for employers to retain good employees, and one tool to do this is to run what is called a 'stay interview'.

### The stay interview defined

The polar opposite of an exit interview, where employers ask why an employee is leaving, the stay interview seeks to understand what would make an employee stay put – what are their motivations, what could be made better

for them, how they envisage their careers developing and how the employer can facilitate this.

The stay interview should be an informal conversation that aims to relax and reassure employees that the employer wants to understand and help with career progression. Further, it should be held in a form to encourage an employee to speak freely, without fear of retribution, and where they can give feedback on what is wrong in the organisation and where they would like to see improvements.

Stay interviews are not a one-time deal where an employer goes through the motions but neither responds to what has been divulged or regularly repeats the process to maintain an on-going understanding. Similarly, stay interviews should not be tied to performance or pay reviews.

However, they may uncover issues that are easily fixed, such as low or unequal remuneration (which could be discriminatory, and therefore illegal), a general lack of employee development, or an inconsistent or unpleasant workplace culture.

Beyond that, an organisation that runs, and is known to run, stay interviews may find itself becoming an employer of choice. Like any other employer, it will suffer natural losses as employees move away or retire, but it will find it easier – and therefore faster and less expensive – to recruit replacements.

### The interview

The whole point of a stay interview is for the manager to be able to understand exactly what it is that the employee does, down to the nth degree, every day. The interview needs to uncover how employees visualise their work, how they feel their contribution is perceived, and where they see themselves within the organisation.

A stay interview should not seek information on work or project status and nor should it be a one-way conversation. And it often helps if an interviewee is told beforehand what the meeting is about and sent a few 'starter' questions to help them formulate their thoughts.

To begin with, the interviewer ought to open the process with words such as "I want to discuss with you the reasons why you want to stay with us and what we can do to make it better" or alternatively, "I want to talk informally about your work and how the management can support you."

As for questions, many should be obvious but could include: What is it that makes you get out of bed to come to work? What are the best and worst things about working here? Why do you stay? If you could make a change, what would it be? Do you feel recognised? What are your motivations when you're here? What demotivates you? What can we do to support you better? And importantly, what might cause you to want to leave?

The key is to let the employee feel that they can talk freely and openly so that the manager can learn and then direct appropriate resources where possible.

Interviews need to be closed properly with the interviewer summarising what the employee has

said – both the reasons to stay and the reasons for a departure. It wouldn't hurt, if, for example, the manager ended by saying something akin to, "Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me; I'll do whatever I can to make this a place where you want to stay and work."

And it's important that employees can see, post interview, that their comments have been taken on board and change has been actioned where possible. A process that operates on the basis of lip-service is a futile waste of time that will invariably do the exact opposite of what was intended – it'll cause employees to distrust management and seek to leave.

### In summary

**In today's market, where employees are in short supply and the web has made both salaries and new job prospects very transparent, management that doesn't seek to understand how employees feel are destined to lose experienced staff and pay to make good the losses.**

Accidents in the workplace

## Handling a Health and Safety Investigation

Accidents happen. But what organisations do once an incident occurs will have repercussions on how an investigation proceeds, says *James Lowe*, regulatory partner in the commercial litigation department at *Wright Hassall*

### The law

The primary legislation used to enforce health and safety in England and Wales is the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the lead regulator, but local authorities also have responsibility under the Act in relation to lower risk settings like retail, leisure, and office premises.

Penalties following conviction for breaches of the Act can be significant, and fines are now based on the sentencing guidelines in the Health and Safety Offences, Corporate Manslaughter and Food Safety and Hygiene Offences, Definitive Guideline. The obligation to formally report a health and safety incident itself is governed by the Reporting of Injuries,

Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, 2013 – known as RIDDOR. This places an obligation on employers and those responsible for work premises to report deaths, certain types of injury, diseases, and dangerous occurrences to the regulator. It is a criminal offence to breach the notification requirements of RIDDOR.

### An incident occurs

When a health and safety incident occurs, a check should be undertaken to determine whether the incident is notifiable to the regulator under RIDDOR. If it is, a RIDDOR report must be submitted within 10 days of the incident unless the accident results in a more than seven-day incapacitation of a worker, which itself must be notified within 15 days of the incident.

Once a RIDDOR report has been submitted, the HSE is likely to conduct a site inspection and may commence a formal investigation. If there has been a workplace fatality, the Work-Related Deaths Protocol gives the police primacy over the investigation whilst they consider whether to investigate offences of corporate manslaughter and/or gross negligence manslaughter. In circumstances where no manslaughter investigation is to take place, or in cases where there is no fatality, the HSE or local authorities will lead the investigation.

### The investigation

HSE inspectors have wide investigatory powers by virtue of section 20 of the Act.

The Act allows inspectors to be onsite to conduct investigations. It also gives them the power to require the production of documents and authorises them to take and retain copies of these documents. HSE inspectors are not entitled to obtain documents that are legally privileged; it is therefore advisable for a solicitor to review any documents before they are handed to the HSE.

Inspectors can compel any person who they believe has relevant information to answer their questions; this can be extremely onerous, and it is an offence to obstruct an inspector in the course of their investigation by failing to answer such questions. Generally, the HSE prefers to take statements from witnesses using voluntary statements under section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1967. Interviewees should ensure that such statements are

entirely accurate and based only on fact before signing the statement.

It is vitally important that companies retain as much control over the process as possible. In particular, they should keep a list of all documents handed over to the HSE as this will normally indicate the type of issues that are being considered by the inspector which will assist with the preparation of the defence later in the case.

### Cost recovery

A Notification of Contravention, which identifies laws that the HSE believe have been broken, is normally sent as a letter by the HSE inspector who is responsible for the investigation. They identify the health and safety laws that the inspector believes have been breached; the reasons for their opinion;



and specify that a Fee For Intervention (FFI) is payable to the HSE. It will normally also set out the steps required to achieve compliance.

Service of the Notification of Contravention is essentially the vehicle that enables the HSE to recover its costs of carrying out its regulatory functions from those found to be in material breach of health and safety laws through FFI.

The FFI is based on the time spent by inspectors at hourly rates determined by statutory instruments. The hourly rate for 2021/2022 is currently £160 per hour and is generally invoiced quarterly throughout the life of an investigation up to the enforcement decision.

HSE's invoices can be significant and can exceed £100,000 over the course of a fatal accident investigation; any failure to pay is chased as a debt through the civil courts.

### More notices

Health and safety inspectors have the power to serve Improvement Notices or Prohibition Notices. These are burdensome and it is an offence not to comply with them; the penalties for a breach can be significant.

Improvement notices can be served where an inspector is of the opinion that the recipient is or has previously contravened health and safety law in circumstances that make it likely that the contravention will be continued or repeated. The purpose of the notice is to require the recipient to take steps to remedy the breach in a specified time period.

Prohibition Notices can be issued where the Health and Safety Inspector is of the opinion that an activity takes place or is likely to take place and involves a risk of serious personal injury. It requires the activity to cease until remedial measures are taken to deal with the risk of injury and the breach of the specific laws.

Lastly, Accident Investigation Reports are an important tool to help a

company understand why an accident has occurred and the causes and root causes. They are vitally important in preventing future incidents of a similar nature. However, inspectors can compel a company to provide its accident investigation report if it is not legally privileged. In effect, this will lead to the company's own document being used against it in any subsequent proceedings.

### In summary

**HSE investigations can be lengthy, time consuming, complex, and can have significant implications for organisations and should be treated with the utmost seriousness.**

# “It’s easier if I just do it myself!”



Sara Hey, vice president of operations and development at Bob Clements Inc, the dealership development company based in Missouri, shares the insights she offers U.S. dealers with Service Dealer's UK readership every issue

## THIS ISSUE: The importance of strategic delegation

**If you are anything like me, this is a common phrase that comes to mind, multiple times a day. People make things complicated, and I know I will like the end result if no one else is involved**

While in theory it would be wonderful if there were a thousand of me running around, it may not be as effective as I think it would be.

I recently read a book about growing your business, and it said that if you want to grow your business by 20%, then you have to delegate 20% more of what you are currently doing. That means we, as owners or managers, have to trust someone with 20% more of our baby (aka: our business). It's not easy.

So, how do we pry our fingers out of every aspect of our companies and trust our employees to do what we have hired them to do?

There are a few things, but none of them are easy and none of them are quick. But, when you take time and do it right, they will allow you to grow your enterprise.

### Hire people you can trust

We talk about hiring right all the time at Bob Clements International. This is because if you don't start with people who are competent and who you can trust, you will find yourself micromanaging them, and when that's the case there is no way that you can step away and grow your business.

### Core Values

Establish your core values, but make them actionable. At BCI, our

core values are Excellence, Integrity and Performance. While those are nice, they don't really mean anything until you put action behind them. For us, we define Excellence as doing your absolute best. Our desire is that nothing is sent out that is less than the best we can deliver with the resources we have available. For us, integrity is defined as "if we say it, we will do it." And third, when we talk about performance as a core value we challenge our team to be looking for ways that not only up the game of our organisation, but for the dealerships we work with as well. When we establish core values and put action to them it motivates our team and gives them clear direction on where they can go and what they can do.

### Have scheduled time to check in with your team

At least once a week, we sit down with our entire team at BCI. We make this a priority. While we have people all over the country at any given time, everyone

stops what they are doing for an hour and checks in. During this time, we are able to make sure that everyone is on course for our objectives and goals. We are able to answer any questions that might have come up as a group. It also allows us to help clear up the "mental checklist" we have going on, wondering if everything is handled how we would want it handled.

We keep these meetings to one hour, maximum. We did the maths and found exactly what a one-hour meeting costs us in terms of lost time for our team. By keeping the numbers in mind, it is easier to keep everyone on track and our meetings on-point! Because in our business, just like yours, time is money.

As you begin to think about where the next year will take you, be strategic in how you delegate your responsibilities and find things that only you can do, and do them well. But, also identify things that you don't have to touch and delegate them into the capable hands of your employees.



# The supplier balance



In his final diary entry, Anthony Deacon of MKM Agriculture considers how many is too many when it comes to suppliers

## Here we all are at the end of another eventful year and my final Diary Of A Season entry!

My intention for this year's diary was to report on my journey of constructing a new dealership building. But like many good intentions, they do not all come to fruition as quickly as we may like. Planning permission has still not yet been approved. However, we are moving in the right direction and the ecological reports requested by the planning authority have now been produced and are ready for submission.

In the last issue I told you how we had taken on two new apprentices and how lucky we felt to have found two enthusiastic young people interested in our industry. Well, it was too good to be true. These young men both decided for different reasons that the industry was not for them and they moved on to pursue different careers. So we are back on the hunt for at least one apprentice.

Finding staff continues to present small challenges, and we now have four positions to fill, which would make up 20% of our workforce. We remain confident that we will find the right people to join our team. Another factor of the last few months for me has been dealing with suppliers. I'm sure you will all share with me how much more time is being absorbed by supplier's demands - either with issues, stock, training,

seminars, webinars or new products. And the more suppliers you have, the more time this takes up.

I do, of course, understand the importance of the relationship, but I feel as a dealer we need to ensure we maintain the correct customer/supplier time balance.

It has also made me ask myself, how many more suppliers and products do I need? You don't want all your eggs in one basket, but at the same time, too many cooks can spoil the broth. So I have been concentrating on selecting the best suppliers for our business and the ever-changing climate that outdoor power equipment dealers find ourselves so quickly moving into.

For example, I found out recently at a supplier event that outdoor power equipment, powered by internal combustion engines, will be banned from sale in California

from 2024. That's just over 12 months away! I understand the current time scale for the same ban in Europe is 2035, but this could easily change. So it's important to understand both our supplier and partners' directions.

I would like to thank Service Dealer for the opportunity to write this year's diary. I'm sure when our new dealership is built there will be another opportunity for me to share the progress. I hope you all finish the year positively and next year brings success. Ant.

**“You don't want all your eggs in one basket”**



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## Juwel in Lemken's crown

Completes plough range

With the Juwel 6, Lemken is now introducing the little brother of the Juwel 7, 8 and 10 mounted reversible ploughs. From next year, this low-draught model will replace the EurOpal and VariOpal 5 and 6 ranges.

The new Juwel 6 with a 110 mm frame box section and an underframe clearance of 80 cm is available in versions with three to five furrows. The M version offers four different working widths per body which can be adjusted mechanically. The Juwel 6 M V features an infinitely variable hydraulic working width adjustment and hydraulic frame swivelling is available as an optional extra. When combined with the iQblue Connect electronics kit, the implement can be transformed into a smart plough with ISOBUS control and connected to a farm management system.

The basic equipment includes the Dural bodies. Made

from specially hardened steel, DuraMaxx bodies are also available and meet maximum requirements in terms of durability. Mechanical non-stop overload protection is recommended for stony soils. The Optiquick adjustment system for side draught-free work is already on board.

Lemken says all its mounted ploughs are equipped with the new pendulum wheel, the height of which can be adjusted without tools via a series of holes. For material protection and greater working comfort, hydraulic suspension is also fitted to the depth wheel. A conversion kit is available to upgrade to a Uni wheel for road transport.

The Juwel 6 is suitable for tractors from 70 to 130 hp and will be available from specialist agricultural machinery dealers from March 2023.

COMMERCIAL



Kubota LXe-261 electric tractor

## Electric release from Kubota

LXe-261 compact tractor to be seen in coming months

Kubota's new LXe-261, which the company says has been designed to meet current environmental standards, will be available for rental and showcased at several events around Europe over the coming months.

In line with the company's Environmental Vision published in 2021 to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, they have been researching, developing and trialling electric tractors.

Kubota says the new LXe-261 is equipped with a large-capacity battery that can provide rapid one-hour charging and three to four hours of continuous run-time.

It also includes key features for mowing, hauling, and other green space management tasks, such as an independent PTO, a comfortable HST transmission and multiple hydraulic outlets. The specification of the LXe-261 is contained in a compact size.

The model will soon be displayed at several shows in Europe, including Salon Vert in France, EIMA in Italy and SALTEX in November. It will then be available for rental in the UK from April 2023. After its release, customer feedback will be sought in order to shape the future developments and expansions to Kubota's eco-friendly product line-up.

Kubota Corporation is the first Japanese manufacturer to release a limited number of LXe-261 compact electric tractors in Europe, with the company actively striving towards carbon neutrality. For that reason, Kubota says it's been transitioning to electric, hybrid, and fuel-cell drives in an effort to decarbonise power sources and reduce CO2 emissions.

COMMERCIAL



Stihl MSA 220 T III

## Top of STIHL's tops

MSA 220 T and MSA 220 TC-O for tree care professionals

STIHL has launched the MSA 220 T and MSA 220 TC-O, their most powerful and durable cordless top handled chainsaws to date, designed for tree care professionals to remove larger branches or perform crown maintenance with ease.

Recommended with a lightweight 14" guide bar, both MSA 220 T models use a PS3 full-chisel saw chain to achieve a fast, high-quality cut. The recommended AP 300 S battery delivers 2.1 kW of electrical power, providing up to 29 minutes of working time and power for cutting larger sized branches.

Both models have an adjustable oil pump, an ergonomic trigger system and a 180° LED display, ensuring the operator always has a clear overview of key information such as the operating status of the saw and the chain brake position. In addition to these features, the MSA 220 TC-O also has an oil sensor that will notify the user when the chain oil tank is empty, helping to reduce potential downtime, premature wear to the cutting attachment and the risk of overheating.

Maintenance of the machine is kept simple via the MSA 220 T's modular design, allowing housing parts to be removed and replaced quickly and simply.

Other features include side-mounted chain tensioning, captive nut on the sprocket cover and tool-free oil tank cap as standard. In addition, the MSA 220 T boasts an easy-to-clean air filter for long service life and optimum motor cooling.

DOMESTIC

# Webb self-propel new mower into market

40V unit with a rear roller



Webb 40V cordless lawnmower

Webb has launched a new cordless 40V self-propelled lawnmower with a rear roller.

Supplied with two 4Ah 40V Lithium-Ion batteries, the unit delivers 40V of cutting power. It features a 43 cm (17") wide cut, ABS deck, six cutting heights ranging from 26-80mm, and self-propelled drive system with a fixed forward speed of 3.9 KM/H.

The company says each battery can provide up to 20 minutes of life per charge. The battery charger features a

fast-charging 4Ah slot, so each 4Ah battery takes 80 minutes to charge.

Grass clippings are gathered into a 60-litre easy-fit fabric collection bag. Alternatively, the clippings can be discharged to the rear or mulched.

Weighing 28 kg, lightweight, the Webb 40V Cordless Self-Propelled Lawnmower is covered with a two-year warranty.

DOMESTIC/ COMMERCIAL

# Blown away by EGO

Company describe LB7650E as "industry's most powerful blower"



EGO LB7650E

EGO Power Plus, has expanded its range of blowers with what it describes as the "industry's most powerful handheld blower to date". The LB7650E enables a maximum propulsive force of 26n and a max airspeed of 195mph.

Offering a run time of up to six hours on a single charge, the blower joins the EGO Professional range for those working on large and demanding gardens.

The company says the unit is engineered to outperform petrol power when in Boost Mode with a maximum volume intake of 1,300m<sup>3</sup>/h, and equipped with a variable thumb selector.

EGO say the redesigned variable speed trigger, boost switch and speed dial simplify useability and give the

operator complete control of the power they need.

The blower comes with large blowing tubes included as accessories, its round nozzle is suitable for moving leaves and other debris in large volumes, and the flat nozzle can be used to move wet leaves, stones and other hard-to-shift objects.

Vince Brauns, group product manager at EGO Power Plus said, "With the LB7650E, we're not just expanding our Professional range, we're also providing a battery-powered leaf blower that outperforms the power of petrol, poses no risk to the environment, and has a lower impact on its operator's health."

The blower can be equipped with any EGO 56V Arc Lithium battery, coupled with a high-efficiency brushless motor.

COMMERCIAL

# Battery backpack blower eases fatigue

Makita's UB002C launched

Makita has launched the UB002C 36V Battery Backpack Blower.

The unit features a simple variable speed control and produces a blowing force of 22 newtons, a maximum air volume of up to 19.0 m<sup>3</sup> /min and an air velocity of up to 76.0 m/sec. The 36V power is supplied by the Makita PDC1200 portable backpack battery, which can be used with a range of compatible Makita cordless machines.

The PDC1200 includes a 33Ah solid state battery and with the UB002C provides approximately a 45-minute continuous run-time at maximum power.

The company says one of the key advantages of the backpack configuration is that it reduces user fatigue, especially when used for longer periods of time. With the weight of the machine and battery transferred to the user's back, rather than supported by their arm, it can be operated more comfortably for longer. The design of the harness, with padding in key areas, also makes it comfortable to wear.

For ease of use, the UB002C has a cruise control feature, an adjustable control grip position and LED battery gauge indicator for simple power monitoring. It is also IPX4 rated



Makita\_UB002C blower

meaning it is showerproof and can therefore be used in changeable weather conditions.

The UB002C is available as a body only (UB002CZ) option or supplied with the PDC1200A02 portable battery pack (UB002CX3).

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AGRICULTURAL



Horsch Fortis

# Life begins at Fortis

## Universal cultivator from Horsch

**The new Fortis AS is a cultivator from Horsch developed to take advantage of increased tractor power up to 600hp and provide more flexibility in working depth and adjustment options.**

Fortis 6 and 7 AS, with 6m and 7m working widths, can operate with a working depth between 4cm and 30cm, suitable for a deep loosening and primary tillage. Depending on the conditions, the operator can decide to manoeuvre on the packer or on the chassis, and the changeover is carried out simply by means of a 3-way valve.

The design of the packer focuses on

flexibility. The customer can not only select the type of packer but can also decide if the packer is to be connected rigidly to the frame or pretensioned hydraulically. In the pretensioned option, the weight of the front packer roller can be transferred to the rear roller preventing sinking on light soils.

To ensure a consistent levelling quality in this wide working range, the fourth bar was placed further backwards so there is always enough loose earth in front of the levelling discs to get a result. The 27cm tine spacing on the 4-bar design is ideal for shallow tillage and an all-over cutting in all conditions, but also

meets the requirements for a lower horsepower tractor performing deep primary tillage.

The option of single or double front support wheels offers precise soil adaption, ranging from a simple depth control to supporting the machine in case of high working depths. The depth adjustment can either be carried out by the clip system or fully hydraulically from the cabin. The Fortis is equipped with an integrated traction reinforcement system which transfers up to 1.2 tons to the rear axle of the tractor to help prevent slippage.

COMMERCIAL

# Campey's blade is fixed

## BM50 verti-cutter

**The BM50 verti-cutter from Campey Turf Care is available in 1.56 m and 1.8 m working widths and the depth 0 - 40mm, adjustable in 0.5mm increments.**

Working at 0.0 mm means there is no contact with the soil with just thatch being removed, whilst working at the greatest depth will scarify deeper, removing huge amounts of debris. This makes the machine suitable for use during the season to provide light thatch and debris clearance, and for when a thorough deeper layer of organic matter needs to be removed.



Due to the fixed blade system, the company says it does not require the complete disassembly of the transmission and rotor, but only of the worn blades. The high-performance rotor guarantees excellent work in all circumstances, even when the blade's cutting edge is not in optimal condition. In the standard version, the blades are made of HARDOX material with a thickness of 3mm and spaced 30mm apart. Optional 2 mm and 3 mm tungsten tipped blades are also available.

AGRICULTURAL



krone BiG\_X\_980

# Krone go Big

## New high-end forage harvesters

**Krone has launched two new high-end forage harvesters, the BiG X 980 and BiG X 1080, in direct response to an increasing global demand in the 900hp to 1100hp segment. Only the BiG X 980 will be available for the 2022/23 season in the UK.**

Like the 1156hp BiG X 1180 in the range, the two new models will also be powered by a Liebherr V12 engine, boasting an extended 1000-hour oil change and service intervals for filters and valves. All models in the range are

naturally compliant with Stage V and Tier 4f standards (the latter requiring only SCR emission treatment).

Both models feature a modified PowerSplit that allows the operator to customise engine power to current requirements at the touch of a button. They have the option of economical Eco-Power mode, and in situations requiring full engine output, the operator selects X-Power. The advantage of this technology is to boost efficiency and give greater fuel economy.

Other developments that make the high-end BiG X unique in the forage harvester market is the crop flow assembly that consists of six pre-compression rollers, a massive chopping drum and the OptiMaxx 305 and CornConditioner. Its huge conditioning surface area ensures intensive grain and stalk processing.

VariStream, which consists of a spring-loaded floor beneath the chopping cylinder and a spring-loaded plate behind the crop accelerator, is also included to minimise blockages and ensure smooth crop flow.

Another unique versatility improvement is VariLOC – a gearbox inside the pulley that drives the chopping drum – that enables the drum speed to be reduced from 1250 to 800rpm, while increasing cut length by up to 50%.

Krone Lift-Cab and the unique XtraPower system add to the new BiG X features. The latter is an online feature that offers operators the opportunity to book additional engine power into the machine for a limited period of time. There is XtraPower 100 for the BiG X 980 and the BiG X1080 and XtraPower 200 for the BiG X 1180.

# “Plus ça change...”



As he celebrates his 80th birthday, CHRIS BIDDLE looks back on an industry that has changed so much, but still stays the same

**In 1962, I was a young trainee with Ford Tractors, and a member of a four-man team dispatched on a six-month demonstration tour of Spain.**

We visited most major cities and regions, putting on ‘shows’ virtually every weekend. It was the closest I’ll ever get to working in a circus as we loaded and unloaded an extraordinary amount of kit, including floodlights, a cinema tent, signage and information booths from our Thames Trader trucks.

Our star attraction was a driverless Fordson Super Dexta equipped with a mounted three-furrow reversible plough.

Yes, it was radio-controlled, and sometimes malfunctioned when the signal dropped out or the fierce Spanish sun messed up the control box. But it ploughed the field, lifted the plough, reversed and dropped into the soil for the next pass, all without someone on the seat. Shades of the future.

I have recently celebrated my 80th birthday, and 60 years in this always fascinating, increasingly complex, highly enjoyable, sometimes frustrating but immensely satisfying industry of ours.

At such a time, it is always tempting to contemplate the changes that have taken place over all those years. And my view is that, despite the array of technological and scientific advances, particularly since the millennium, the basics of our industry remain firmly in place.

French writer, Jean-Baptist Alphonse Karr nailed it in 1849 when he wrote “*Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*”, which literally translates as: “*The more things change, the more they stay the same.*”

Harry Ferguson’s iconic TE20 tractor, the Little Grey Fergie, is still the blueprint for the design of today’s high horsepower, gizmo-packed models.

Look at the pictures of Edwin Budding’s original lawnmower invented in the 1830s, and the cylinder and method of cutting grass is still in common use today.

It’s been evolution rather than revolution in the way we till the soil, plant seed and harvest crops. And the way we tend the lawns, open spaces and sports grounds across the land.

## User acceptance

I’m no luddite, I love seeing the exciting changes that alter the way our industry is evolving. But change is never easy. Our gifted designers and engineers are constantly working on new enhancements, but they are often well ahead of user acceptance.

We work in a very traditional industry, but one which has

proved time and time again that it can respond to change without losing sight of its core values. Change is thrust upon us whether we like it or not.

Surely the biggest change of recent years, certainly in my lifetime, has been the advent of electronic communications, the internet. The first tentative steps were taken in the 1960s but it wasn’t until 1988 that it started to become a reality. That means that I worked for over 25 years without email, Google, social media, streaming and every other by-product of the internet.

## New challenges

Today, another challenge, adherence to ever more stringent environmental controls. For years, we’ve relied on diesel power for our tractors, petrol for our vehicles, and gas for our central heating and cooking.

We will adapt, that’s for sure. Farming is using artificial intelligence to identify and spray single weeds to save on chemicals, tractors and machinery using alternative fuels such as hydrogen and methane are being developed. Driverless tractors are not yet common, but automatic guidance systems mean that operator presence is largely secondary.

The garden and turfcare business is well ahead on the technological front. Battery power has been around for years but was hampered by size and limited run-time. That has been sorted and today battery is becoming the accepted power source as a replacement for fossil-fuel powered mowers. I first saw a robotic, solar powered mower working at a dealership on a trip to Holland in the early 1990s. Whilst not yet, ‘ten-a-penny’, robot mowers for the garden and open spaces are today becoming mainstream.

Lastly, all this has impacted on the support provided for machines and equipment. Dealers have either had to adapt - or fold. Their ‘modus-operandi’ has changed. They have had to learn new skills and new terminology. But they still have to maintain a service for the thousands of machines that pre-date new technology.

I’m reminded of the old story about the fitter (sorry technician!) solving a machine problem in 5 minutes by hitting it once with a hammer, His bill then read “*Adjusting with basic tool, £10. Knowing where to adjust, £40.*”

It doesn’t matter whether it’s a hammer, or the latest diagnostic software, customers will continue to rely on those who have the training, the skills and ‘know-how’ to look after kit, new or old (like me!).

# What’s on?

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

## NOVEMBER 2022

<b>GMA Saltex 2022, Birmingham NEC</b> www.gmasaltex.co.uk	<b>2-3</b>
<b>Newark Vintage Tractor &amp; Heritage Show, Newark Showground</b> www.newarkvintagetractorshow.com	<b>5-6</b>
<b>SIMA, Paris Nord Villepinte, France</b> www.en.simaonline.com	<b>6-10</b>
<b>EIMA International, Bologna</b> www.eima.it/en	<b>9-13</b>
<b>AgriScot 2022, The Royal Highland Centre</b> www.agriscot.co.uk	<b>16</b>
<b>Midlands Machinery Show</b> www.midlandsmachineryshow.com	<b>16-17</b>
<b>CropTec 2022, East of England Showground</b> www.croptecshow.com	<b>23-24</b>
<b>Service Dealer Conference &amp; Awards</b> www.servicedealer.co.uk	<b>24</b>
<b>Royal Welsh Winter Fair</b> www.rwas.wales/winter-fair	<b>28-29</b>
<b>JANUARY 2023</b>	
<b>Oxford Farming Conference</b> www.ofc.org.uk	<b>4-6</b>
<b>LAMMA 2023, Birmingham NEC</b> www.lammashow.com	<b>10-11</b>
<b>BTME 2023, Harrogate International Centre</b> www.btme.org.uk	<b>21-23</b>

## FEBRUARY 2023

<b>Dairy-Tech, Stoneleigh Park</b> www.dairy-tech.uk	<b>1</b>
<b>Spring Fair 2023, Birmingham NEC</b> www.springfair.com	<b>5-8</b>
<b>Golf Industry Show, Orlando</b> www.golfindustryshow.com	<b>6-9</b>
<b>Doe Show 2023, Ulting</b> www.ernestdoe.com	<b>7-9</b>
<b>Yorkshire Agricultural Machinery Show (YAMS), York Auction Centre</b> www.yams.uk.com	<b>8</b>
<b>Executive Hire Show, Ricoh Arena, Coventry</b> www.executivehireshow.co.uk	<b>8-9</b>

## MARCH 2023

<b>Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia, London</b> www.idealhomeshow.co.uk	<b>17/2-2/3</b>
<b>AEA Conference 2023, One Great George Street, London</b> www.aea.uk.com	<b>28</b>

## APRIL 2023

<b>Harrogate Spring Flower Show</b> www.flowershow.org.uk	<b>20-23</b>
<b>East Anglian Game &amp; Country Fair, Euston Estate, Thetford</b> www.ukgamefair.co.uk	<b>22-23</b>



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# Retirement ready?

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## Successful successions

**A**nother of our industry's – how to put it delicately – more mature members is stepping down from their post.

It's one of those happy/sad moments this issue hearing from Keith Christian as he leaves his post at BAGMA. Happy for Keith, of course, because presumably it'll give him more time to flatten guys more than 40 years his junior on the rugby pitch – as I know is his want. But for the rest of us remaining in the industry who won't be able to call on him to fight our corner or offer some sage advice quite as easily anymore, it's a moment of sadness. However, like that other bastion of the industry, our good friend Chris Biddle, I'm sure this won't be the last we hear from Keith...

What Keith's retirement does, to put it lightly, is give BAGMA and their owner/partner/best buddy the AEA a right headache! How does the Association replace someone like Keith?! I for one certainly don't envy them their task of filling his still-warm seat. Who knows, perhaps by the time you read this, an announcement will have been made, and an injection of fresh, thrusting new blood will be in situ at Samuelson House. But, I can just as easily see a scenario where the search might take some considerable time.

It's a situation not entirely unlike that faced by many dealerships when a key person at the top of the business decides to call it a day. "What happens next?" Everyone shouts. Of course, BAGMA isn't at risk of closing its doors and walking off into the sunset – but that's a very real possibility for dealerships without a succession plan.

So, with my corporate hat firmly atop my balding head, may I take a moment to suggest that anyone reading this who is worried about what happens to the dealership when that time comes to ease off the gas, makes sure they attend the Service Dealer Conference this month. Elsewhere in this issue you will have read about the straight-talking Heather Wildman, who will be speaking to our dealer delegates on November 24th on this ever-tricky topic.

We know this is one of those areas that worries many of our readers. It's one of those awkward conversations that can get pushed to one side and ignored for far too long – until it becomes more of a problem than it needs to be. And that's completely understandable as it's a discussion that often encompasses difficult ground – like family ties, money and, increasingly for old gaffers like me, death!

Ugh! Just writing those words gives me the heebie-jeebies! But I know it shouldn't. They are areas best addressed matter-of-factly, out in the open and, frankly, sooner rather than later. Or else we're looking at that snowball effect of a problem growing larger than it should.

So hopefully at the Oxford Belfry later this month, we'll all get to hear some level-headed, practical advice that can set us all on a sound path to succession.

You never know, consequently this old-fashioned column from out of the past, can soon be replaced by a Gen Z doing one of those Tick Tocks on the internet that I've heard so much about.



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