

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

JAN / FEB 2015

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY 2015

Reflections on the season past and challenges ahead

- ❖ BTME Preview
- ❖ Business Monitor
- ❖ LAMMA Preview
- ❖ Training & Education

- ❖ New Product Update
- ❖ Industry News
- ❖ Events
- ❖ Jim Green



FACE TO FACE

WITH GARY MCWILLIAM MD,
HSC MIDLAND POWER



NEW
LI-ION CORDLESS

NEW COBRA MX4140 LAWNMOWER

SPECIFICATION

BATTERY:	1x 40V Lithium-Ion
BATTERY CAPACITY:	4.0Ah
CUTTING WIDTH:	41cm / 16"
DRIVE:	Hand Propelled
CUTTING HEIGHT:	25mm-75mm
FEATURES:	Single HOC / 50ltr Bag

PRICES FROM:

RRP INC VAT

£319.99

PRICES FROM:

RRP INC VAT

£459.99

NEW COBRA MX46S40V LAWNMOWER

SPECIFICATION

BATTERY:	2x 40V Lithium-Ion
BATTERY CAPACITY:	4.0Ah
CUTTING WIDTH:	46cm / 18"
DRIVE:	Self Propelled
CUTTING HEIGHT:	25mm-75mm
FEATURES:	Mulching / Side Discharge

COBRA 2015

Exclusive New Products From Cobra in 2015

The U.K's most comprehensive garden machinery range is getting even bigger

In 2015, Henton & Chattell are excited to be expanding their already successful Cobra Garden range of machinery with new lawnmowers, including a range of 16" rear roller models together with a 40v cordless range powered by Li-ion technology. Other new products include 4 petrol chainsaws, a blower / vac plus more exciting additions.

NEW COBRA BV26C - BLOWER/VAC

Expertly Powered By

COBRA

PRICES FROM:

RRP INC VAT

£129.99



SPECIFICATION

ENGINE:	Cobra
DISPLACEMENT:	26cc
ENGINE TYPE:	2-Stroke
MULCHING:	10:1 Ratio
WEIGHT:	Lightweight 5Kg
FEATURES:	Converts from Blow to Vac

NEW COBRA CS420-14 CHAINSAW



PRICES FROM:

RRP INC VAT

£149.99



SPECIFICATION

ENGINE:	42cc Cobra
ENGINE TYPE:	Air Cooled, 2-Stroke
BAR LENGTH:	35cm / 14"
BAR:	Oregon
CHAIN:	Oregon
CHAINSAW BAG:	Included

NEW COBRA RM40C LAWNMOWER

Expertly Powered By

COBRA

NEW
16" REAR ROLLER

PRICES FROM:

RRP INC VAT

£279.99



SPECIFICATION

ENGINE:	Cobra OHV DG450
CUTTING WIDTH:	40cm / 16"
DRIVE:	Hand Propelled
GRASS BAG:	60ltr
CUTTING HEIGHT:	17mm-75mm
FEATURES:	Rear Roller / Single HOC

WEB: WWW.HCUK.CO

EMAIL: INFO@HENTONANDCHATELL.CO.UK

TELEPHONE: 0115 986 6646

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His regular view from the edge

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

A Happy New Year! A year ahead which will be dominated for the first few months by an election that everyone agrees will be one of the most unpredictable for years.

Will that have an impact on consumer spending? Unlikely, the variable factor remains the weather which will transcend any economic concerns in the Spring.

2015 sees a new era for shows as SALTEX moves inside for the first time in its long history. Popular opinion on the move is mixed with the obvious advantage of negating the weather factor (although snow is not unknown in November!) – against the traditional format of being able to feel the grass under our feet at an outdoor show.

'Tis the time for New Year resolutions, and apart from the obvious personal goals, the message coming through from dealers is for a much stronger relationship between suppliers – and their loyal band of stocking dealers. That's going to be a tough one, with manufacturers constantly under pressure to sell more and meet shareholder demands. Above all however, the specialist dealer needs to be true to his identity, develop and communicate his strengths in the face of all the retail-babble going on around him.

Chris Biddle, Editor



OUR PEOPLE

www.servicedealer.co.uk

EDITOR

CHRIS BIDDLE

@ chris@servicedealer.co.uk

DEPUTY EDITOR

STEVE GIBBS

@ steve@servicedealer.co.uk

PRODUCED BY

THE AD PLAIN LTD

Pipe House, Lupton Road,
Wallingford Oxfordshire,
OX10 9BT, UK

☎ 01491 837 117

🌐 www.theadplain.com

Service Dealer is produced by
The Ad Plain on behalf of Land Power
Publications LLP

MANAGING DIRECTOR

DUNCAN MURRAY-CLARKE

DESIGN & LAYOUT

PHIL LAY

ADVERTISING SALES

ALISON SHERLOCK

@ alison@theadplain.com

☎ 01491 837 117

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RECRUITMENT

INDUSTRY IS A 'TICKING TIME BOMB'

Due to lack of engineers



A severe lack of engineers today due to too few coming into the industry 10 years ago, not enough people promoting the industry at school level and too many companies not employing apprentices, are just some of the findings of a survey carried out by the Land-based Engineering Training and Education Committee (LE-TEC), which comprises AEA (the Agricultural Engineers Association), BAGMA (the British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association) and IAgRE (the Institution of Agricultural Engineers).

The survey, sent to agricultural machinery dealers, was designed to gain understanding of the

challenges facing the land-based engineering industry such as: funding of technical education, apprenticeships, up-skilling the work force to meet the demands of modern business practices, attracting new recruits of the right calibre and raising the awareness of the industry and the career opportunities available.

Focus

"The survey has revealed very clear themes across the country, which will allow the committee to focus and prioritise appropriate action plans," said David Kirschner, Land-based Technicians Training Accreditation Coordinator.

"The industry is starved of both fully and semi-skilled technicians either wanting to work on land-based equipment or having the relevant industry specific experience to support both today's and tomorrow's technologically advanced equipment," he added.

"There really is a challenge to lift the profile of land-based engineering in the eyes of many young people. We have to engage with young people, schools,

colleges and those advising about careers. We must inspire people considering career options about what an exciting and rewarding career land-based engineering can be," said Alastair Taylor, CEO of the Institution of Agricultural Engineers.

Attracting the best

Roger Lane-Nott, CEO of the AEA, commented: "We need well trained technicians to deal with the ever increasing technical complexities of machinery and farm equipment. We want to be in a position to attract the very best young people to our industry and have recently started designing a new website to help promote careers for those people with an interest in land-based engineering."

"LETEC is working on a variety of initiatives to promote the fantastic opportunities that are available in this sector. We are in the process of organising a series of road shows and events to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to machinery dealers and young people thinking about a career in land-based engineering," said Keith Christian, CEO of BAGMA.

APPOINTMENTS

HYUNDAI APPOINTS NEW SALES HEAD

Paul Williams joins

Paul Williams has become Head of Sales at Genpower/Hyundai Power Equipment following the departure of John Rushby.

Paul has worked for Norbert Dentressangle for the past 10 years and before that was with

TNT. With a background in the logistics sector he says he is eager to put his experience and knowledge into action to help Genpower and Hyundai Power Equipment's growth continue throughout the UK.

Paul says he is relishing the chance to work with a global brand. "I'm delighted to join Genpower when it's at such an exciting point of growth with a fantastic range of products.

"The opportunity to bring Hyundai Power Equipment to so many different markets is a

fantastic challenge."

John Rushby, who has an equestrian background, has left the company to work in that sector.



Paul Williams

HERITAGE

BUDDING, BEER AND BLUE PLAQUE

Service Dealer commemorates birthplace of the mower

At the Heritage Awards to mark the 25th Anniversary of *Service Dealer* which was staged at IOG SALTEX at Royal Windsor Racecourse in September 2013, editor Chris Biddle unveiled a special commemorative Blue Plaque,

commissioned to mark the life and achievement of Edwin Budding, inventor of the lawnmower.

He said: "I was struck by a remark on a US lawn and garden website that, given the importance of his invention, it was strange that there was no reminder of his achievement in his home town of Stroud.

"Although there is no longer a formal Blue Plaque scheme, I thought this the best way to remember someone whose contribution to our social, sporting and cultural life has been immense. It's clear that Edwin Beard Budding should be recognised as a pioneer to rank alongside Edison or Bell."

Edwin Budding is also recognised by the US-based International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association (IGCEMA) through an annual Edwin Budding Award sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen.

The plaque was handed over to Stroud District Council and Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council, the location of the Phoenix Textile Mill where the young engineer came up with his idea for the world's first lawnmower.

Stroud Brewery

The Phoenix Textile Mill is no longer standing, but on the same site are a number of specialist businesses, including the Award-winning Stroud Brewery – and with thanks to Stroud DC, the Parish Council and to Greg Pilley, founder of Stroud Brewery Company, the plaque was mounted on the outside of the brewery in October 2014. It is located just yards from the mill where in 1830 Edwin Budding would have been burning the midnight oil to fine-tune his invention. He and his partner, John Ferrabee, made a quantity, supplying one of the early machines to Regents Park Zoo before selling the first manufacturing licence to Ransomes in 1832.

Stroud Brewery brewed its first beer in 2006, the Budding Ale, and has since gone on to win many awards, and has a very strong community following. A formal unveiling of the Budding plaque at Stroud Brewery is being planned.



APPOINTMENTS

NEW PRODUCT SPECIALIST JOINS CAMPEYS

Taking over from 'Poggy'

Campey Turf Care Systems has appointed Steve Hunt as Area Product Specialist for the South-West region of the UK.

Steve takes over from the irrepressible Ian Pogson who will be stepping back from front line selling in 2015, taking on a more ambassadorial role. He will be promoting the benefits and advantages of natural turf in sport, through seminars and open days.

Poggy, as he is affectionately known within the trade, is currently showing Steve the ropes. He will be introducing him to many of the regions dealers and customers who already have strong relationships with Campeys.

Steve, aged 45, lives in Wincanton, Somerset with his partner Jo and two children. Until recently he worked in sales for leading Dutch firm BOSTA, selling components to the water industry.

Richard Campey is pleased Steve is joining the team. "It's important to keep our sales team at full capacity," he said. "Steve is enthusiastic and has a genuine interest in the industry as well as a good, solid sales background.

"No doubt, with a little instruction from Poggy, one of the finest characters in the business, he will soon be making his mark."



Steve Hunt

Ian 'Poggy' Pogson



APPOINTMENTS

CHANGES AT COUNTAX

John Horn heads up Europe as David Sturges resigns

David Sturges, md of Countax Ltd, vice-president of Ariens international and the current President of the AEA resigned his post on 19 November 2014 and left the company.

At the same time, Ariens issued a statement outlining plans to merge Ariens UK (Countax Ltd) and the Ariens Scandinavia business into a single operating unit, Ariens Europe. They also added that the reorganisation will result in more direct integration with the Ariens team based in Brillion, US.

David Sturges joined Countax as managing director in January 2011, having spent 20 years at Hayter where he became sales director. It is understood that his President role at the AEA will be unaffected by this move.

Commenting through the AEA he said, "I will miss working with the great team of people at Great Haseley. Their commitment and dedication to the business, coupled with great products and an excellent dealer network places them in a strong position for the future."

New team

John Horn has been appointed 'Vice President of Global Sales' and will assume responsibility for the European sales team. John was previously interim Managing Director of Countax in 2010. During this time, John built strong relationships with the UK dealer network and developed an understanding of the UK

garden machinery market.

A 'Brit', John Horn studied

Manufacturing Engineering at Brighton College of Technology before moving to North America where he gained an MBA in Business Management at the University of Toronto. He then worked at Atlas Copco, Chicago Pneumatic Tools and Snap-On tools before joining Ariens in 2010.

Lasse Jonassen has been appointed Managing Director of Ariens Europe. Lasse will assume responsibility for the sales, customer service, distribution and marketing communications for Ariens UK (Countax Ltd). Lasse will also take over the day-to-day management of Ariens UK and continue the management of Ariens Scandinavia. Lasse will report to John Horn.

Lasse was managing director of family-owned distributor, Sovde based at Rygge, Norway when the company was acquired by Ariens in 2011. Previously, Sovde had been the Ariens distributor in Norway and subsequently expanded into Sweden.

Francisco Henriquez will continue as Director of Countax Operations and will work together with Lasse Jonassen and the local management team to drive product innovation and further efficiencies in manufacturing and engineering.



DEALERS

GIANNI FERRARI APPOINTS

New dealer for SW Scotland

Gianni Ferrari has appointed Auchengate Ltd as a new dealer for the South-West coast of Scotland.

Auchengate is based in Irvine, Ayrshire. A relatively new company, it is rapidly becoming established as a successful supplier of landscape and amenity products and services.

UK Manager for Gianni Ferrari, Patrick Ripley, is delighted with the development. "We're very proactive in the UK," said Patrick. "We want dynamic, self-driven companies to come on board and promote our professional range of turf care and open space maintenance equipment."

Ian Brough, General Manager for Auchengate, said: "To be associated with such a well-respected brand within the industry at such an early stage of the Auchengate project bodes well for our growth plan.

"We see this as merely the beginning of a long and mutually beneficial partnership."



Ian Brough, General Manager of Auchengate, with owner Alastair Hill

MACHINERY

BARRUS SAYS TANKS TO THEIR DEALERS

Launch new zero-turn with a steering wheel

Martin Wasley introduces the Tank SZ60 to the dealers



The Tank coped well with the slopes



Dealers take a closer look at the Tank SZ60

Barrus chose The Great Barn at Aynho, near Banbury, recently to introduce the Cub Cadet TANK SZ60, a zero-turn lawn tractor with a steering wheel, to its commercial dealers.

Martin Wasley presented the new machine to the assembled dealers saying the company felt the machine, which has proved popular in the States, would be ideal for large estates and for professional contractors. He was keen to point out that the unit is especially good working on banks. It offers stability and precision control with four-wheel steering delivering a quality cut even at 20 degree inclines.

Martin said: "It's so stable, you can go across the bank, round the tree, and then carry on."

Also of interest, the mower boasts an electronically-applied dual layer of e-coat and powder which provides superior protection against harsh weather

and ensures that all parts are evenly coated. Martin pointed out that this process delivers automotive-grade corrosion resistance.

Stability

A smooth ride is achieved via the high-back elasticity vibration control (EVC) comfort seat with arm rests. And the soft grip steering wheel can be positioned to suit the operator using the quickly adjustable steering column.

The dealers then got their chance to get hands-on with the new machine, taking advantage of the undulating terrain and quite thick brush within the grounds of The Old Barn. The TANK SZ60 coped admirably, impressing with its manoeuvrability on the sloping landscape and with its handling of the long grass.

APPOINTMENTS

HUSQVARNA APPOINT NEW CHAIRMAN

Tom Johnstone, who will leave his post as chief executive officer of the world's largest bearings maker SKF AB, has been appointed chairman of chainsaw and gardening-equipment maker Husqvarna AB.

Johnstone, 59, who has been a member of Husqvarna's board since 2006, is also a board member of Investor AB, the holding company of Sweden's Wallenberg family and Husqvarna's largest owner.

Scottish-born Johnstone is becoming chairman as Husqvarna seeks to expand its operating margin to 10 percent next year, from 5 per cent in 2013. A key task ahead is improving the profitability of its new consumer-brands division, which markets lawn mowers and chainsaws under brand names like PoulanPro, McCulloch and Flymo.

Husqvarna's new board will be elected at the company's annual general meeting in Joenkoepping, Sweden on April 21, 2015.



BUSINESS

BRIGGS & STRATTON Q1

High inventories impact, but Allmand acquisition working

Briggs & Stratton has reported a slight drop in revenues for the first quarter of 2014-2015 fiscal year, ended 28th September, 2014, posting consolidated net sales of US\$ 292.6 million (£145 million), down 7.8% year-on-year.

The company said this was mainly due to lower sales of engines because of high inventories in North America and lower sales of engines for snow thrower OEM customers in Europe.

But it said the decrease in net sales was partially offset by higher sales of pressure washers, snow throwers, lawn and garden equipment, and the Allmand acquisition.

Briggs & Stratton acquired Allmand Bros, a designer and manufacturer of portable lighting towers, industrial heaters and solar LED arrow boards, in August last year for US\$62 million (£39 million).

It said its first quarter consolidated net loss, which included restructuring expenses and acquisition related charges, was US\$ 15.3 million (£9.8 million), compared with US\$19.3 million (£12.5million) for the first quarter 2013-2014 fiscal year.



Todd Teske

Action taken

Todd Teske, Briggs & Stratton Chairman, President and CEO, said: "Coming into the new trading year, we anticipated that higher channel inventories of lawn and garden equipment would impact our first quarter engine sales compared with last year, which benefited from lower channel inventories and strong late season retail sales of equipment.

"Our OEM customers and retailers have taken action to reduce inventories which impacted our engine sales.

"Despite the sales decrease, we are pleased with the improved margins in both the engines and products businesses, reflecting the cost-cutting action and our focus on higher margin products, including the acquisition of Allmand."

APPOINTMENTS

CLAIRE MORRIS JOINS BARRUS

As Garden Division Area Sales Manager

EP Barrus has strengthened its Garden Division sales team with the appointment of Claire Morris as Area Sales Manager.

Claire has been working in the garden industry for over 10 years and brings a wealth of sales and sector experience to her new role at Barrus. She will be the main contact for dealers within a number of counties, including Berkshire, Northamptonshire and North Wales, and will provide support and advice on a range of Barrus brands, predominantly Cub Cadet and Lawnflite, as well as a fleet of other brands including Agrifab.

"This is a great opportunity to join such an established player within the lawn and garden industry and I'm looking forward to working closely with the dealers to help them get the most from our products and expertise," said Claire.

SALES AND SERVICE ROLES AT UNI-POWER

Universal Engine Power has recently added two new staff members to its team.

Alec McBride has joined the Sales Department as Stock Controller/Order Processor, while Adrian Hainsworth has joined the Service Department as Service Technician.

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STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Reflections on the season past and challenges ahead

2014 saw a virtual 'perfect storm' for much of the industry. Weather conditions were favourable and the economy continued its recovery.

For many dealers and their suppliers this was one of the best seasons for many a year.

And yet, it is generally agreed that we have an image problem. Consumers are not getting the message and we struggle to find qualified staff.

Specialist dealers offer a unique service, but it will take a concerted effort to ensure they get noticed – and appreciated.

WILL ANYONE GRASP THE NETTLE?

In this personal essay, editor Chris Biddle reflects on the 'moments' that shape the industry, and asks 'who is going to promote our dealers?'

You know how one year tends to merge into another? And yet certain events, certain sayings, certain conversations, certain 'moments' have an evergreen nature to them. They never go away. They resonate throughout the years. They are as fresh today as they were in the past – and for me some date back more than 25 years.

When trying to put 2014 into some kind of context, I kept on coming back to three of those 'moments' which I believe guide our business.

MY REPLY ALWAYS IS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN 40 DIFFERENT SEASONS...

I shall name names for the first two. First, reflecting on his 40-year plus career as a garden machinery dealer (is it a career, vocation or fate?), Winchester GM's Robin Nettle said that customers often remark that those 40 years must have provided him with a considerable experience of the garden machinery business. "My reply always is that they have been 40 different seasons, none of them the same, all providing separate challenges."

Every year our fortunes sit perched on the twin pillars of weather and the economy. In 2014, both provided immense support, possibly the most ideal conditions that anyone can remember for many a year.

Of the two, weather remains our

strongest ally, or greatest enemy. It defines the season like no other factor. The economy itself doesn't always translate into a rush through the door, what it does is instill confidence, both in the consumer and for the business owner. Lack of confidence can be debilitating, it means putting plans on hold. When confidence returns, it's like taking off the hand-brake.

Economic data issued by the Government points to an improving economy (but with a number of caveats). You hear that the improvement is not feeding

through into people's pockets, and yet look around: people are buying, they are eating out, theatres are booked, flights are full, the roads and the trains are crowded.

UK plc does not give the impression of being 'under the cosh'.

We hear much about 'the rich'. We hear much about the 'poor underclass'. Yet, what we have is a huge middle ground, millions of people who are not rich, nor poor – and they get virtually ignored by the media because they are getting on with their lives (and thus there is no story).

The weather in 2014, has been extraordinarily conducive to our industry. Downpour after downpour in the winter months filled the underground reservoirs and

resulted in floods across parts of the UK. There was water, water everywhere. An early, warm spring, and glory be, a terrific Easter weatherwise saw people out in their gardens early.

That was followed by warm and temperate summer – and an autumn that went on and on. Halloween on 31st October was greeted with temperatures of over 21°C (70F) in many parts of the country – and writing this piece on 1st December, it has been 15-16°C in some parts of the UK over the past couple of days (that is tempting fate for a magazine published in January!).

So in the UK, mowers have been commonly seen and heard right through November. But it is not only warm conditions that shape our industry. In the US, early season snow storms swept across much of the mid-West during November, which provided a real kick-start for those manufacturers who gear their season around snow equipment. For them that was a welcome boost after a succession of 'green' winters.

For the second of my 'moments', I will be very brief and succinct.

It was an oft-quoted saying by former Berkshire dealer, BAGMA President and Arsenal supporter, Gerry Cohen. I think Gerry picked it up from somewhere but he quoted it often as his mantra for running a specialist garden machinery dealership. He said: "I like to sell machines that don't come back, to people who do." Think about it. What better saying to hang above your desk?

Sell quality kit. But in doing so, sell yourself.

The third 'moment' concerns one of the very first dealer features I ▶



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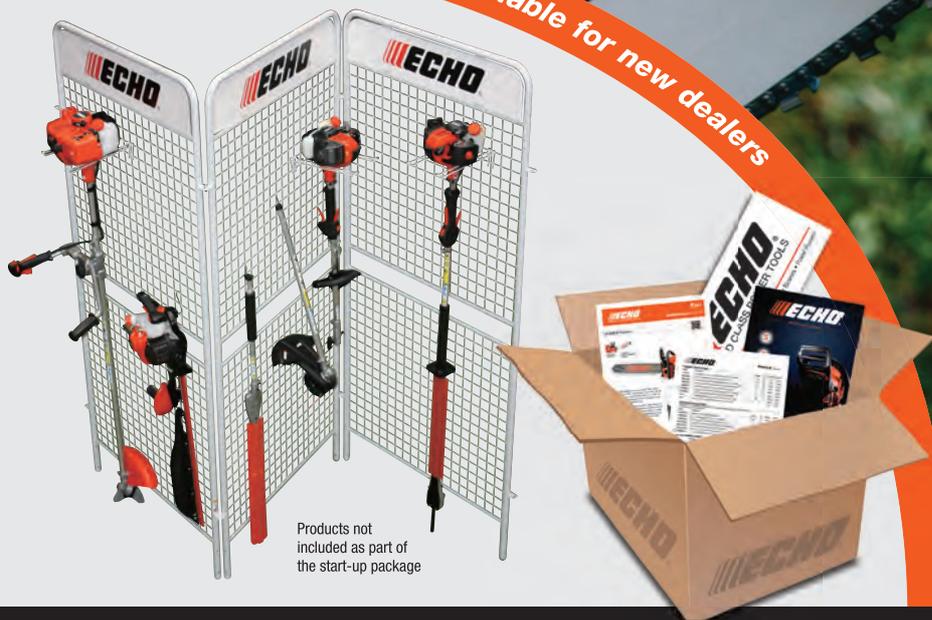
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I LIKE TO SELL MACHINES THAT DON'T COME BACK, TO PEOPLE WHO DO

ever wrote for this magazine back in 1988. I was invited to go and visit a husband and wife who ran a garden machinery dealership in a Cumbrian market town. Now, with respect to Cumbria, there are probably more sheep than people in that fair county, and yet, they had set up a very nice little business, and had been particularly successful selling lawn tractors. So much so, that the supplier of their main tractor brand noticed the growing number of pins on the map in the company sales office. "That's an area of growing potential," they said, "we need another dealer in the area".

So one was appointed 10 miles away, on the back of all the hard work put in by the enthusiastic couple who immediately rang the supplier, and said (in printable language): "All your stock will be outside our door tonight, come and take it away."

Recounting the story, the dealer said to me: "You know, Chris, it's more important who I deal with, than what I sell." Another telling phrase to dwell on.

Dealer – Supplier relationship

Over quarter of a century on, the relationship between dealer and supplier is just as important. Judging by comments from dealers to our regular Business Monitor survey, many believe that the bond between dealer and supplier should be stronger in order to protect and enhance margins – and there is no doubt this could be the case.

But (and there is always a but). That would need considerable give

and take from both sides. It could mean manufacturers abandoning a 'scatter-gun' approach to dealer appointments in favour of more commitment from those they do appoint. For the dealers it would mean 'signing up' to an unequivocal partnership which some might see as contrary to their independence.

This is further 'muddied' by the increasing dominance of the key distributors who have taken over the role of the manufacturers in recent years – and I haven't even got started on the impact of internet sales.

My personal feeling remains that the garden machinery industry is still too fragmented, unrecognised and unknown. Apart from the loyal following that individual dealers generate through personal service and their local personality and presence, awareness of a national network of garden machinery specialists falls well below the public's radar.

Suppliers do their best, but complain of inconsistency among outlets. BAGMA could, and should, do more to raise awareness of its membership and dealers in general. But it is neutered by not having a strong and effective identity, with little or no industry-specific communication emerging via its

BIRA-parent (I can't remember when I last got a news release from BAGMA).

BAGMA, the AEA and other trade bodies are great at committee-room talk, which is often essential in this EU regulation-driven age.

But who is promoting the industry to the outside world? Who is creating the platform from which individual dealers can promote their skills, their participation, their advantages?

We've been down the buying group, marketing group route several times in the past which has only had short-term impact. The European electrical buying group, Euronics, has managed to gain consumer awareness and its independent dealers largely operate with their own family name above the door.

For something similar to work with us would need an unlikely alliance of key manufacturers and the major distributors working together to create a single symbol that could identify the existence and benefits of buying from a national network of specialist garden machinery dealers.

Much else could be done on the back of that to incorporate advertising campaigns, merchandising, social media, and...

Oh dear, I must have overslept. At least you can dream! ●



IMAGES 2014



Retiring AEA Chief Executive Roger Lane-Nott receives a copy of 1964 *Wisden*, in which he featured in schoolboy cricket, from Chris Biddle



Handy's Simon Belcher prepares for the season's finale of the British Touring Car Championship at Brands Hatch



Austin Jarrett and Roy Allett on their stand at the final IOG Saltex to be held at Windsor Racecourse, with the newly launched stadium mower



Rochford Garden Machinery took its AL-KO dealers to Obdach, Austria to visit the manufacturing facility and check out new machinery



Ian Small of Briggs & Stratton presents a cheque to the players and staff of South Newton and Wishford FC, who won the Pitch To Win competition for Britain's worst football surface



Gathering of the Glen family for the opening of the new warehouse at the E P Barrus headquarters at Bicester



WEATHERWISE

Wet and warm: the perfect recipe

This issue of *Service Dealer* went to press in early December with a cold snap forecast, but on 3rd December the Met Office announced that the UK's mean temperature from 1st January to 25th November was 1.6°C above the long-term (1961-1990) average, which means that 2014 was likely to be the warmest since its data started in 1910.

Interestingly, while all months this year, except August, saw above average temperatures in the UK, no single month had seen a temperature record. Instead the year had been consistently warm.

A wet year for the UK, but not a record

2014 was also set to be a notably wet year for the UK, with 1,162mm of rain between 1st January and 25th November and is likely to rank as the 4th wettest year in the UK records dating back to 1910.

'Freezing' August, balmy October and November

The traditional sizzling summer month of August had a real bite to it. For several days in mid-month, the temperature struggled to reach 9°C in parts of Cumbria, snow was forecast for parts of Scotland, while in 'sunny' Bournemouth on the South coast, the temperature dropped to 2.7°C one night at the end of August.

By contrast, Halloween on 31st October saw temperatures reach 23.9°C in Kent. One of the winter season ice-rinks installed at the Natural History Museum in London melted and turned to slush as temperatures rose to over 20°C.

Weather forecast

In November, the *Daily Express* reported that forecasters had warned of heavy and persistent snow, freezing gales and sub-zero temperatures during the remaining winter months into 2015. It said: "January is currently showing signs of temperatures hitting 'record-breaking' lows meaning parts of the country could see the mercury plunge to -27°C (-17°F)."

How does your grass grow?

Research by North Carolina State University gives the ideal soil temperatures (at 4cm depth) for grass growth:

- 32°C Shoot growth ceases.
- 25°C Root growth ceases.
- 21°C Maximum temperature for root growth of any consequence.
- 15°C- 23°C Optimum temperature for shoot growth.
- 10°C- 18°C Optimum temperature for root growth.
- 4.5°C Shoot growth ceases.
- 0.5°C Root growth ceases.
- -6°C Low temperature kill possible if temperature subsequently drops rapidly below -6°C.

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INNOVATION INSIGHT

EASIEST AND SMARTEST ENGINE STARTING EVER

Briggs & Stratton INSTART system hits the market

Briggs & Stratton has launched its next generation of engine starting with INSTART.

The company believes that the instant starting system is set to revolutionise the petrol powered garden products market. Powered by a Lithium-Ion battery, the system is simple to recharge and can give more than 50 starts from one hour's charge.

DOV Engine

INSTART will be available on the brand new Briggs & Stratton 775iS DOV engine. This comes as an expansion to the company's Direct Overhead Valve (DOV) range which was launched in 2006. DOV engines feature a range of technological features to give a heightened performance that gives easier starting, smoother running and advanced cutting performance.



Consumer demand

Ian Small, UK Sales and Marketing Manager at Briggs & Stratton, commented: "Demand for easier starting of petrol engines has been increasing over recent years. Our research found that consumers consider easy starting to be the biggest decision-making factor when purchasing a new lawn mower. We also found out that 84% of electric mower users would consider switching to a petrol engine if starting was easier."

Vital statistics

- Charges fully in one hour, delivering 75 starts
- Twenty minutes of rapid recharging provides 10 starts
- Batteries last 3X longer than lead acid batteries
- Easy push button battery with ReadyStart Starting System
- Petrol powered engine delivers the power and range to cut tall grass

RESEARCH TO DEVELOP LIGHTWEIGHT AGRICULTURAL ROBOTS

Harper Adams lecturer presents findings at Science Museum



A robotics lecturer from Harper Adams University spoke about technology advancements in agriculture to an audience of science fans in London, recently.

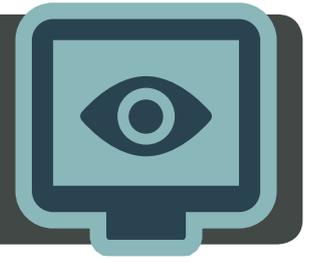
Sam Wane gave his presentation, *Designing systems for the farm of tomorrow*, at the Science Museum's LATES event – an initiative aimed at attracting an adult audience to the museum to hear about the latest innovations in the scientific world.

In particular, Sam discussed the changing size of the tractor, and how the research taking place at Harper Adams hopes to develop lightweight agricultural robots to seed, weed, scout and harvest. He also spoke about new technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), laser weeding and selective harvesting.

Sam said: "The event gave me the opportunity to share our agricultural engineering work with an urban audience right in the heart of London." ●

BUSINESS MONITOR

IN ASSOCIATION WITH IBCOS COMPUTERS



FULL YEAR 2014

Summary

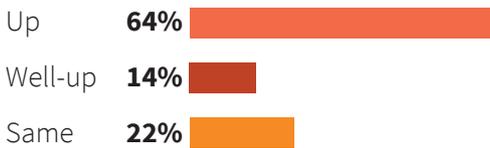
The final Business Monitor survey for the 12 months of 2014 shows that 78% of dealers reported turnover Up or Well Up, and none of the dealers surveyed reported a drop in sales compared with 2013.

Whole good sales have been the main driver of this increase. A third of dealers increased their staffing, but 18% said their staff actually decreased; however, 69%

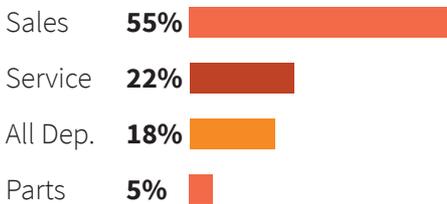
of those who took on new staff reported real difficulty in doing so.

Competition from online sellers remains the main issue for dealers. Nonetheless, 67% of dealers say they are Confident or Very Confident about business in 2015, but that still leaves 24% who said they were unsure, and 9% expressed themselves to be 'worried' about the coming year.

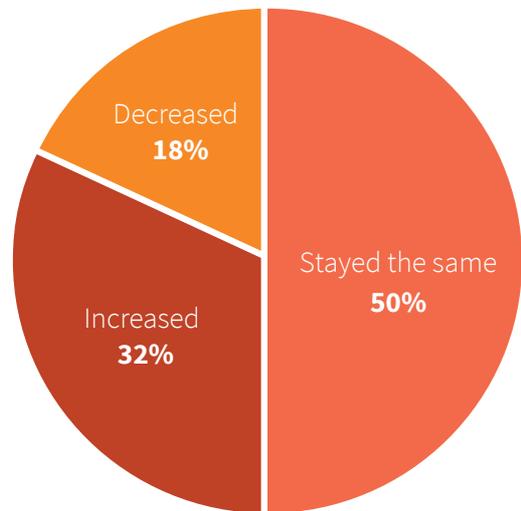
How did your overall turnover in 2014 compare with 2013?



Which part of your business performed best?



How did your staffing alter in 2014?

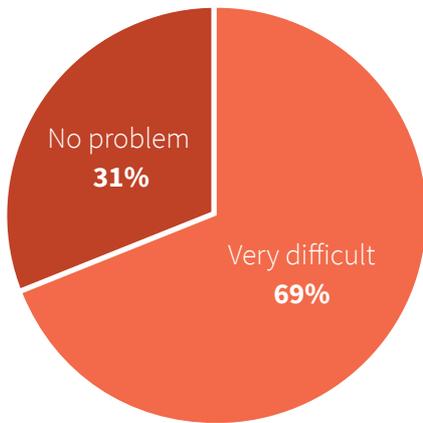


How do you monitor the Pulse of your Business? by **FACT** or **GUESSWORK**?

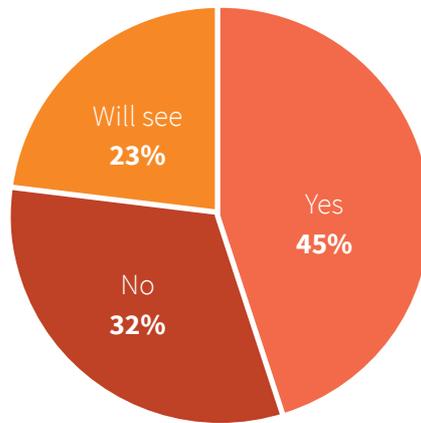
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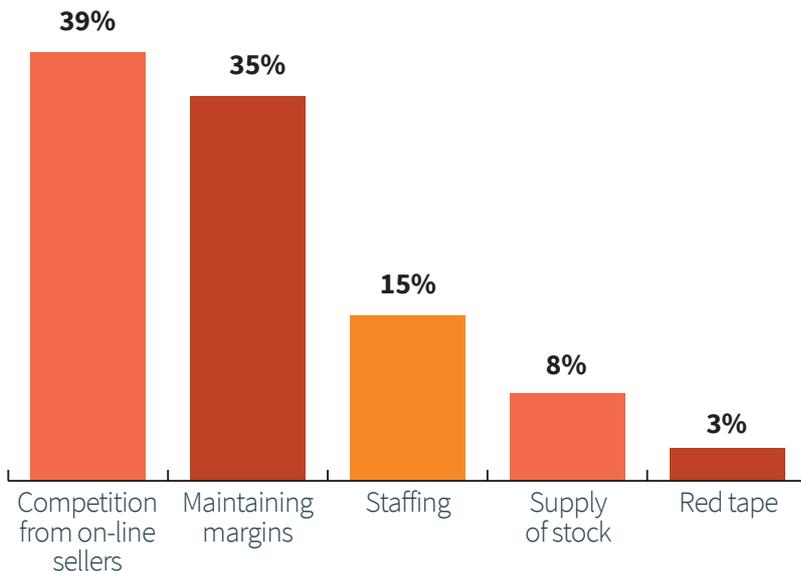
What was your experience of hiring new staff?



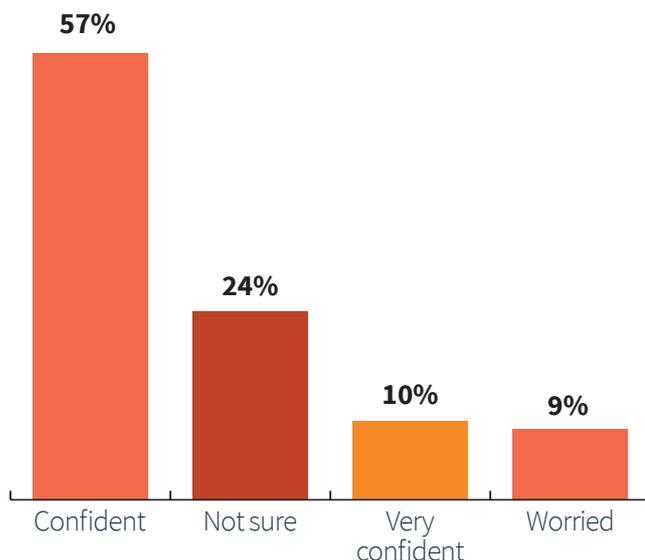
Are you planning to hire new staff for 2015?



What do you see as your major business issues?



How confident are you about prospects for your business in 2015?



YOUR SAY



Here are some of the comments that accompanied the survey returns, most of which centred around the dealer/suppliers business relationship:

“Dealers need to be confident in the products they sell and the service they offer, and forget the ‘stack it high, sell it cheap’ culture”

“A number of suppliers need to take notice and learn lessons from the one or two manufacturers who are able to control pricing on-line and protect the margins of their dealers. To find that so-called premium lines are being offered at 20% or 25% discounts makes it impossible for specialists to compete and still provide a service”

“I like to think that there is a bright future for specialists over the years ahead”

“Manufacturers have to protect their loyal stocking dealers better to ensure they are able to retain acceptable margins. If they don’t, their future is bleak as dealers will not put up with diminishing returns. We should be loyal ambassadors for their brand, not box pushers!”



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VERDICT, GOOD BUT CAN DO BETTER

Roger Lane-Nott, CEO of the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) retired in December and will be succeeded by Ruth Bailey. He talks to *Service Dealer* editor Chris Biddle about his successes, frustrations and the future for the industry

CHRIS BIDDLE: So Roger, after eight years at the helm of the AEA, can you sum up where the AEA is today?

ROGER LANE-NOTT: Trying to encapsulate those years is rather like my days in the Navy where, when you leave your command and lower your Admiral's Flag, it's usual to write up a 'Haul Down' report.

So top of my report must be bringing the AEA into the 21st Century having moved to modern offices in Peterborough. We own the freehold of the site, the building and the land next to it. We have no borrowing, no pension fund black hole, and there's money in the bank, so the AEA is in good shape.

CB: What about practical achievements during the past eight years?

RLN: Notable successes have got to be the launch of AEA Training for Business, resurrection of the Milking Equipment Association, the Parlour Safe Accreditation Scheme, improvements and reforms to EGMF (European Garden Machinery Federation) and CEMA (European Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers), the Land based Training and Education Committee [LETEC] and a change in staff culture at the AEA which saw delegation with responsibility.

NSTS (National Sprayer Testing Service) has been a real success story and we are not finished yet. We are at least five years ahead of what's going on in the rest of Europe and our annual tests have made a real difference in the major reduction in pesticide residue in water catchment areas.

AGRICULTURE IN EVERY RESPECT IS AN ADVANCED INDUSTRY

CB: As an association representing companies from across the land-based industry, how do you reflect their individual views?

RLN: One of the pleasures of being CEO of the AEA has been the extraordinary contribution from member companies and their people. Despite their competitiveness, they have always looked to the common good. Every debate in meetings has always been argued with passion and logic – but with a clear view on the overall prosperity of the industry. Their innovative ideas and support for all that I have proposed have been excellent and the fact that the membership has remained consistent throughout the recession indicates that we listened also.

I thank them for their faith in what we were trying to do in Europe, with the UK Government, with standards and many other areas. Thank you also to the staff at the AEA who have been extremely loyal, knowledgeable and hardworking. I am confident that the AEA, under Ruth Bailey's stewardship, will continue to serve the industry well into the future. ▶

CB: I'm sure, however, there are issues that still cause concern?

RLN: Yes, it is that agricultural engineering and agriculture as a whole has an image problem!

The perception in the UK is that agriculture is a dirty industry with unsocial hours, poor pay and a place for under achievers. That's not true and apart from having a vital role in the country's economy, agriculture in every respect is an advanced industry and we need the Government and the public to understand that.

CB: So how do we, as part of the agricultural sector, address this?

RLN: We simply have to promote the industry more and we need a joined-up campaign by all the key influencers, trade associations, professional bodies, the education sector and others to make sure that the message gets out there to schools, universities and the general public. I think we should collectively consider an Industry Presentation Team that is properly funded by the industry to market to teachers and young people that we do offer a worthwhile, satisfying and rewarding career.

I have been astonished and disappointed by the indifference to our industry by UK Government departments. All the focus seems to be on plant biology and support of university research and yet they don't seem to understand that you can't grow anything without a machine to plant the seed and a machine to harvest it. Our message continues to fall on deaf ears despite countless meetings where I have put forward our case.

The Agri-Tech Strategy was a good idea but sadly is now a damp squib. The role of farm equipment and agricultural engineering in general continues to be ignored.

Despite trying to set up a bid for a Centre of Agricultural Engineering Innovation there was insufficient support from industry to put in a viable bid. That probably reflects the mergers and acquisitions over the past 20 years which have reduced mainstream UK manufacturers dramatically. The AEA is now more of an association of importers and we have adapted to that. But it does mean that most R & D is done outside the UK.

CB: Let's turn to the turfcare and outdoor power equipment sector. The AEA has its OPEC (Outdoor Power Equipment Council), what do you feel about the prospects for this sector?

RLN: Whether its sports pitches, lawns and gardens, golf courses, forestry, or the amenity sector, we need to continue to promote the industry. The range and quality of products is outstanding but I do have an issue.

The majority of garden machinery dealers do not advertise effectively, thus the public don't really know who they are, where they are and what they offer. Where I live in Milton Keynes there are three free newspapers and a population of 260,000 mostly in modern homes with gardens. And yet no one advertises their services and consequently the average person buys from the sheds. The internet is where people now go to decide on purchases, so we have to embrace new opportunities. Being a dealer is a tough business, so we need to ensure the business model for the future reflects or influences what consumers want.





CB: Obviously training and education is a key area for the AEA. What are the major challenges here?

RLN: It's disappointing that only Harper Adams University offers an agricultural engineering degree and there is nothing specific for outdoor power. We need to find a way of persuading other universities to offer degree courses. Understandably the annual throughput is a key economic factor, but I'm hopeful that the Trailblazer Apprenticeships, due to start in 2016, will provide a good route for students from any background to be attracted to a rewarding career in both FE and OPE.

CB: AEA is a key partner in the LTA (Land Based Technicians Accreditation scheme). What is your view on its progress?

RLN: This was launched before I joined the AEA as a measure to help dealerships retain their technicians. It was originally a John Deere and CLAAS initiative and they have now been joined by AGCO, with others in the pipeline. The OPE Council recently voted to consider a scheme for the turfcare and amenity sector.

Progress has slowed down in the past couple of years and all the stakeholders are trying to promote it with more vigour. A recent survey conducted for the Land Based Training and Education Committee [LE-TEC] by David Kirschner raised some serious issues for the future and everyone needs to work out how we are going to tackle them. However, the main problem is one of funding. LTA is for the benefit of dealers but there has been little enthusiasm to fund the training of technicians towards accreditation. The industry needs to ramp this up, but we all need to buy into it first.

PROGRESS HAS SLOWED DOWN IN THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS

CB: If you had one major frustration in your term, what would it be?

RLN: No doubt. To me it is crazy that self-propelled agricultural vehicles are allowed on the road and yet there is neither a voluntary or statutory annual test to ensure that they are fit for the highway. I've failed to get the issue of self-propelled agricultural machinery annual testing properly debated or even considered by the NFU, NFU Mutual and the Department for Transport. The industry has a duty to address this. When I received a blank response in the UK I took this issue to the European Commission and it seems likely that this will appear as a European directive soon.

CB: And the future for the AEA?

RLN: Attracting smaller companies into AEA Membership has proved difficult, despite active canvassing and promotion. It seems they are reluctant to pay even a small subscription. But really they are missing out on the many services that would really help them.

As an association, we keep fully abreast of regulation being prepared in the European Commission to ensure that we are involved in any debate from the start, and that we are in on the ground floor when it comes to standards, whether they are British, European or International.

What many do not realise is that most EU regulation is executed by changes to standards and everyone must keep a close eye on and engage with those that affect their products.

CB: So now you hand over the reins to Ruth Bailey, what are your final reflections?

RLN: They are certainly of some frustrations – but I step down in the knowledge that it has been a successful period for the AEA. I hope that some of these issues will be solved by the time my successor retires! Thank you to all the friends I have made in the industry and I wish you all every good fortune in the future.

CB: Roger, thank you very much. ●

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**Pallet Deal Price



Gary McWilliam

HIRE CROSSOVER

We talk to Gary McWilliam, MD of Nottingham-based Hire Supply Company following his acquisition of Midland Power

THE MIDLAND POWER NAME IS KNOWN AND RECOGNISED THROUGHOUT THE INDUSTRY



John McGhee

As a small and specialist industry, we can be very insular. We recruit from within, our dealerships are born out of family ties and tradition. We have our own industry-speak. Which is why I have always found it refreshing to quiz ‘outsiders’ about their view on who we are, what we do and how we do it.

You would not call Gary McWilliam a true ‘outsider’ because he has built a successful business from scratch which included elements of the outdoor power ‘biz’, but which is nonetheless different enough to label him as an ‘outsider’.

All that changed in February 2014, when his Nottingham-based company, The Hire Supply Company (HSC,) bought the Midland Power Distribution business from the administrators.

Midland Power Distributors had been part of the garden machinery supply industry since 1972 when it was formed by Ian Fidoe and Barry Goode offering a wide portfolio of machines and accessories with brands such as Rover, Sarp and Power-Mec.

When Ian and Barry decided to take a back-seat in March 2009, the business was taken on by the owner of a dealership – but suffered a severe set-back in December 2009, when a huge fire swept through the Midland Power premises in the largely residential area

of Worcester. This resulted in the evacuation of local residents and was finally brought under control by a fleet of 12 fire engines.

The company was then faced with the huge task of rebuilding the business. However, the economic downturn at the time hit MPD hard and the company went into administration in February 2014.

Testing times

For Gary McWilliam at Hire Supply Company, the period during and after 2008 was also one of testing times. The company had been set up in 2001 when he and his colleagues had an opportunity to establish a new company merging with the UK distributor of the US-made Barreto range of tillers and trenchers.

“Barreto machines were ideal for the hire trade due to their rugged reliability,” says Gary. So HSC was born as a specialist supplier to hire companies. It hired nothing itself, but simply acted as a distributor with an ever-increasing portfolio.

As the company grew, so specialism started to emerge, particularly in the provision of heating, cooling and lighting units. Today, the company is the biggest UK distributor of the Master brand of portable heating equipment, and supplies a range of portable lighting ▶

systems, industrial vacuums, extractors, dehumidifiers and a range of horticultural equipment from brands such as Barreto, Benassi, and Efco.

Which is where the connection to the garden machinery business – and to Midland Power, began.

“We kept on bumping into the Midland Power guys at shows, particularly with some cross-over with Efco products,” says Gary, “and we became aware that they were running into some difficulties.

“However, we could not justify making a move until the company had gone into administration.”

Once that happened, things moved fast and after just a few weeks of negotiation, HSC emerged as the new owner of Midland Power last March. The past few months has resulted in a real shake-down of the business. Staffing levels were reestablished, and more importantly, lines of business were reopened with suppliers who had become understandably jittery during the latter days of the old company.

Gary McWilliam says that in hindsight the ‘difficult’ times around 2008 when the economy fell and flat-lined was a period that made his company stronger and wiser. “Like many other industries, the hire companies retrenched as their customers, particularly in construction, were hit hard.

“But we cut our cloth accordingly, and came out of the recession earlier than many. Today, our business

levels are up to – and beyond – pre 2008 levels”.

HSC employs 22 staff operating out of two branches, one in Nottingham, the other at Staples Corner on the North Circular in London.

As the recession receded, so Gary and his colleagues looked around for an add-on complementary business – and Midland Power fitted the bill.

“There is a synergy between the hire sector and those in the garden machinery sales and service business,” says Gary. “For a start, virtually every hire shop has a mechanic; they service equipment and most sell equipment as well. So there is a very narrow line between the two.

“The one thing that has struck me since we became involved with Midland Power is the versatility and wealth of knowledge among garden machinery dealers – it’s quite phenomenal.

“There were a number of reasons why Midland Power was just right for us,” he adds. “First, seasonality. We’re a very seasonal business. Heating is huge for us, so winter is our peak time, opposite to the spring/summer peak for Midland Power.

“Next, we recognised that Midland Power had a heritage, a name, a reputation in the garden machinery industry. Despite a few difficult years, the name is known and recognised throughout the industry.

“Then, and probably most important, the people.

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Professional hire

HSC Midland Power has been established as a stand-alone independent operation based at its long-time headquarters at Orchard Street, Worcester.

HSC provides the ‘back-office’ – and the financial underpinning – but otherwise, the team sets the agenda and runs the business much as before.

“We don’t intend to meddle with it,” says Gary.

“They know their business, and their customers, better than us”.

He does, however, believe that HSC can provide valuable help and advice to dealers who wish to set up a dedicated hire department within their dealership.

“Hiring equipment has to be done professionally

and with the required documentation,” says Gary, “particularly with regard to health and safety and liability. We are a member of Hire Association Europe, we know the hire business and can be of great help to dealers in advising on the best items for hire from the HSC Midland Power range.”

The portfolio of machine brands had diminished in recent years, so to compliment the established and ever expanding range of spare parts and consumables various new machinery ranges are being introduced for 2015 with some old favourites already successfully reintroduced. But Gary believes that Midland Power Distribution will be able to bolster the product lines step by step over the coming months and years.

“In its heyday, Midland Power’s sales were around £6 million, and while we are starting at a lower base today, early signs are highly encouraging and our plan is to restore Midland Power to its once prominent position in the industry.” ●

BIG NAMES RETURN TO BTME

Harrogate to welcome Ransomes Jacobsen, John Deere and Toro

The four halls of the Harrogate International Centre are preparing to feature hundreds of exhibitors for BIGGA's BTME exhibition which opens on Tuesday 20th January 2015.

Europe's biggest turf management exhibition has also been boosted by the announcement that Jacobsen, John Deere and Toro have decided to exhibit. In a move which organisers say acknowledges the importance of BTME in the turf management calendar, the three brands are set to take small-scale stands at the event and have committed to return in 2016 with a full-scale presence.

They join over 100 other exhibitors from across the industry covering course design, club management, drainage, fertilisers, machinery, landscaping, spraying and much more.

This also confirms that the thousands of expected visitors will be able to tour four halls with two main entrances when the exhibition opens.

Buzzing

BIGGA CEO Jim Croxton says: "With our largest ever Continue to Learn programme already attracting hundreds of bookings and 3,000 delegates expected, I'm very confident the halls will again be buzzing with decision makers from every corner of the industry.

"We are therefore delighted to welcome Jacobsen, John Deere and Toro to the exhibition. We believe strongly that the annual



gathering of turf management professionals in the unique environment of Harrogate is a not to be missed event, and it's great that these companies have made the decision to support the event in this way. While their presence at the event will be low key, it's fantastic that they will be in attendance and have also committed to exhibiting in full force in 2016."

Gina Putnam, Director, Marketing & Communications International, Ransomes

Jacobsen Ltd, said: "With the tough economic conditions being experienced throughout the UK golf industry, we at Jacobsen have recently reviewed our marketing strategy and taken the decision to support BTME in 2015. Our policy going forward will alternate between small and large stands, so for 2015 we will have a limited presence, but will return in 2016 with a more significant stand. This shift of policy clearly demonstrates our continuing support for BIGGA and the industry in general." ●



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- **Two, One and Half-Day Workshops**
- **'Focus On' Sessions**
- **Seminars**
- **Partner Events**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is central to all of the Learning and Development offerings from BIGGA. This has been kept firmly in mind when putting together this programme, ensuring that education is available for all, from greenkeepers and assistants, to deputies and course managers.

Young greenkeepers

BIGGA stresses that this year the education programme is not just for established greenkeepers – there will be a special emphasis on young people who want to progress in the industry.

The offering covers everything assistant greenkeepers need to progress in their career including mechanics, budgeting, people management, managing conflict and grass identification.

Tom Freeman, First Assistant Greenkeeper at Kingsdown Golf Club, is already looking forward to attending his first Turf Managers' Conference, which will feature topics as diverse as soil properties, customer service awareness, change resilience, organic matter management

and water conservation.

He says: "Seeing presentations from speakers who are right at the top of the industry can only help my career. Ultimately I want to work my way up to be a Course Manager one day and I think attending these sort of educational events gives me a head start.

"You can use any aspect of the Continue To Learn programme to your advantage. There were so many I was interested in attending, from ecology to grass composition, but I've decided to go to the Mathematics for Modern Greenkeepers Workshop. This is an area that I know I need to work on so it's ideal for me to develop my skills."

Many seminars are completely free to attend. Find out which ones on the website.



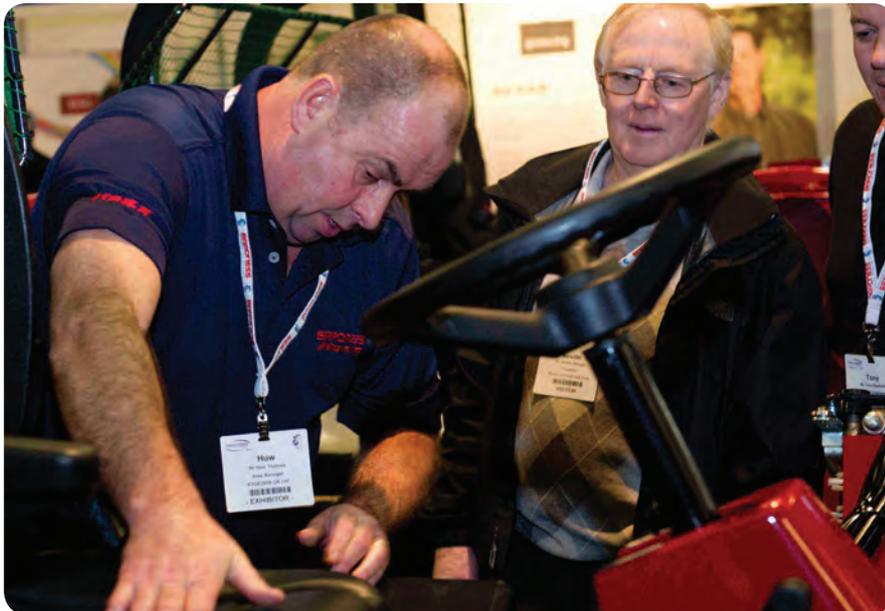
There will be an emphasis on education for young people at Continue To Learn this year

WHAT'S GOING ON AT BTME 2015?

A world of new ideas

Showcased at BTME you will find exhibitors conveniently brought together, including leading international names, for you to browse and buy from for the coming growing season.

New products, new technology, new materials, you'll find it all at Harrogate International Centre from 20th-22nd January 2015.



- Discover the latest trends
- Meet current suppliers and make valuable new contacts
- Get inspiration from the largest indoor turf management and grounds care exhibition in Europe
- Serious exhibitors mean serious business for you
- Four halls of exhibition – showcasing 150 exhibitors
- Gain the competitive advantage by being the first to view exclusive new products launching at the show
- 10 rooms of education theatres – delivering 150 hours of education.
- Knowledgeable trainers – improving your professional education
- Learn from the industry experts with a free seminar schedule.

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MACHINERY EXHIBITORS

Who's at Harrogate?

Specialist machinery dealers should all find a visit to these stands of interest:

Company	Hall	Stand
Aitkens Sportsturf Ltd	A	A55
Baroness Mowers	B	B78
Blec Global Ltd	A	A16
BMS	C	C21
Campey Turf Care Systems	B	B58
Charterhouse Turf Machinery Ltd	B	B48
DENNIS & SISIS	A	A5
Double A / Tru-Turf	C	C56
EnviroMonitors	A	A54
Gambetti UK	A	A61
Garfitts International Ltd	B	B42
Global Turf Equipment UK Ltd	C	C42
Grillo Agrigarden Ltd	B	B1
Groundsman Industries Ltd	A	A56
John Deere	M	M20
KUHN Farm Machinery	C	C53
Lastec UK	C	C55
Lloyds / Hunters	B	B56
Ransomes Jacobsen	M	M9
Sheltons Sportsturf Drainage Solutions	B	B11
Sports Metals Ltd	M	M17
The Grass Group	A	A35
Tines Direct	B	B32
Toro Commercial – Lely (UK) Limited	M	M16
Trimax Mowing Systems	B	B59
True Surface by Turflite	C	C41
Wessex International	C	C61
Wiedenmann UK Ltd	C	C58

* Correct time of going to press



Opening times

Tuesday 20th January 9am - 5pm
 Wednesday 21st January 9am - 5pm
 Thursday 22nd January 9am - 4pm

Directions

King's Road, Harrogate, HG1 5LA

From the North and South on A1M, exit A59 to Harrogate (five miles from town centre).

From M1: To Leeds – 15 miles from Harrogate (A61).

From Manchester: M62: To Leeds – 15 miles from Harrogate (A61).
 The Park and Ride service will not be running during BTME 2015.

Harrogate

Harrogate International Centre itself sits right in the heart of Harrogate, within easy walking distance of around 4,000 bed spaces and more than 100 restaurants and bars.

There are 300 car parking spaces at the Harrogate International Centre alone, and a further 1,200 nearby.

Website

<http://btme.org.uk/>

AGRIBANK RETURNS AS HEADLINE SPONSOR

The organisers of LAMMA have announced that AgriBank is returning as headline sponsor for the second year running.

The bank set up in 2012 provides agricultural asset finance. It is headed by Frank Sekula and Matthew Smart, who are also involved in farming.

Mr Sekula said: "We are delighted to have been given the opportunity to sponsor LAMMA for the second consecutive year. Being headline sponsor at LAMMA 2014 proved to be the ideal platform to promote the only bank run by farmers for farmers in the UK, a great opportunity to showcase our lending services, and to talk with many farmers about how we could help them to diversify or expand their operations.

"We know how important it is to develop long-term relationships and LAMMA gives us the ideal opportunity to do this as well as meet many new farmers keen to have our help in growing their businesses."

Rupert Levy, Director of *Farmers Guardian's* parent company Briefing Media, which owns LAMMA, said:

"We are delighted that AgriBank has agreed to sponsor LAMMA for the second year running and we look forward to working with it again." ●



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FREE AND EASY

LAMMA remains a friendly show for farmers despite its move and size increase

LAMMA, the UK's largest farm machinery, equipment and agricultural services show, takes place at the Peterborough Arena on 21st-22nd January and is free to attend with no requirement to register before the event.

The show takes place whatever the weather, with its staff working extremely hard to bring visitors the biggest and best show, year upon year.

Not only is it free to attend, there is also free car parking on site for up to 10,000 cars. Farmers are encouraged to bring their employees and contractors.

LAMMA is a 'dry' show but there are plenty of catering outlets from which to purchase food, tea and coffee, and other refreshments.

Peterborough

2014 saw the show move from its traditional home in Lincolnshire to its new location at the East of England Showground, Peterborough.

Having celebrated its 33rd anniversary in 2014, LAMMA has emerged from humble beginnings as a local show with some 50 exhibitors and 2,500 visitors to become the UK's largest farm machinery, equipment and agricultural services show in the UK.

Cliff Preston, LAMMA Event Director said: "LAMMA prides itself on being the UK's leading farm



machinery equipment and services show and we are dedicated to offering a show that can continue to develop and provide both exhibitors and visitors with the best possible experience. After a lot of discussion and consultation with the market, we decided to make the move to do exactly that.

"This new location is ideal as it allows both for the show's growth and helps us to overcome many of the challenges visitors and exhibitors highlighted in the past – specifically by making access easier for both exhibitors and visitors. Despite the continued success and growth, the show will be staying true to its roots.

"Although the location changed, the fundamentals of the show most definitely did not," said Cliff.

"We are committed to preserve the unique heritage and the friendly and informal atmosphere of the LAMMA show.

"It remains, at its heart, an easy and free to attend event for farmers to see the latest agricultural machinery, equipment and services from around the world." ●

FIRST PORTABLE TWIN UNIT HEATER

Can be seen at Peterborough

Master Climate Solutions, a manufacturer of high quality mobile space heaters and dehumidifiers, will be showing a new 88kW direct oil heater with twin construction.

Master B 300 CED is the first portable heater made of twin units. The device is equipped with one fuel tank and one control panel, with two heating units of 44kW each. The twin construction enables it to use two levels of power and airflow. All electronic components are well protected ensuring very high reliability.

The heater has also a long heating autonomy due to a big fuel tank (105 l) – up to 24 hours when working at 44kW power. The connection to room thermostat is also an option that allows easy temperature control when needed.

The new unit is intended for heating and drying facilities in agricultural and construction sectors. ●



IMPROVEMENTS TO PETERBOROUGH SHOWGROUND



Over the past few months, improvement works have been undertaken at the Peterborough Showground to make your visit to the show even easier and more enjoyable. The programme of works has been:

October 2014

- **Grass Seed:** Over seeding of the internal areas paying close attention to exposed areas and infilling with fresh soil took place after 12th October when the Autumn Show finished – this was the last large outdoor show of 2014.
- **French Drains:** Drains were dug and filled with stone along road edges – 40mm gravel was used.
- **Flushing of Land Drains:** Three days of onsite flushing of land drains took place in October with a digger on site to dig up drains that required repair.

November 2014

- **French Drains:** Installation of roadside French drains continued.
- **Repair/Replacement of Tarmac Roads:** Repair and replacement of tarmac roadways with new tarmac was applied to the Dunblane Drive entrance and East Arena Roadway.
- **New Roads:** Installation of two new gravel-style roadways in the West Car Park above and below the ditch.

December 2014

- Conclusion of works above.

General works

- Slitting and spiking of all grass areas occurred in October and December.
- Installation of new power connection to Gate 5A toilets including connections for exhibition areas.

VITAL INFO

Planning your visit to LAMMA 2015



Official Opening Hours

Weds 21st Jan: 7:30am - 5.00pm
Thurs 22nd Jan: 7:30am - 4.30pm

The car parks will be open early on both show days.

For early risers, why not beat the traffic and enjoy an early bird breakfast available from 6.30am to 8.00am.

If you miss the early bird breakfast, don't worry, the LAMMA all-day breakfast will be available from 8.00am.



Location

LAMMA 2015 will be held at the East of England showground:
East of England Showground,
Oundle Rd,
Alwalton,
Peterborough,
PE2 6XE.



By Car

From Peterborough City Centre: take the Nene Parkway/A1260, follow directions to Oundle Road/A605 and turn right onto this road which will lead you directly to the venue. The brown highway signs indicating East of England Showground will help to guide you. *The journey is approximately 16 minutes from the centre of Peterborough.*

From the A1(M) South: continue along the A1(M), passing the Peterborough Services Area (Extra MSA); continue forward onto the A1 and then take the next turn left, signposted East of England Showground. At the junction with the A605, turn left and travel half a mile. At the roundabout, turn right, and you have arrived at Peterborough Showground.

From the A1(M) North: ignore the very first signpost for Peterborough and continue travelling along the A1 picking up the brown highways signposts indicating East of England Showground. Follow these signs and leave the A1 at Alwalton, taking you through the village and onto the A605 Oundle Road junction. Turn left at this junction and at the very next roundabout, turn right here and you've arrived at Peterborough Showground. Follow the yellow AA road signs for entrances to the LAMMA site.



Free Shuttle Bus Service

A free shuttle bus service will run between Peterborough railway station and the East of England Showground. The service starts at 7am on both days, with the final bus leaving the showground at 6pm to return to the station.

There will be two 53-seater buses running throughout the day, so make your journey an easy one with LAMMA.



By Public Transport

Peterborough City Centre has a number of taxi ranks, as well as a coach park and bus station located within the Queensgate Centre. The Stagecoach bus service runs an hourly service during the week and two-hourly Sunday service, stopping just outside Peterborough Showground. The bus numbers to look for are x4, 23 and 24 leaving Bay 15 at Peterborough Queensgate.

Once you have arrived at the drop-off point it is just a short walk to the main entrance at Gate 3 within Peterborough Showground.



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- Birmingham Airport 75.5 miles.
- Heathrow Airport 90.2 miles.



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AGCO JOINS LTA SCHEME

Will apply across Massey-Ferguson, Valtra, Fendt and Challenger brands

AGCO has announced that technicians employed by dealerships handling one or more of its four principal machinery brands within the United Kingdom and Ireland will be able to register on the nationally recognised technician accreditation scheme developed and backed by the AEA and IAgRE, with support from BAGMA.

Known as the Landbased Technician Accreditation scheme (LTA), the programme has become available to all AGCO dealer technicians following independent assessment and accreditation of the training and facilities provided by AGCO to technicians supporting its Challenger, Fendt, Massey Ferguson and Valtra farm machinery brands.



National recognition

The move to have AGCO's training programmes recognised at a national level, accredited to the same standards as other leading farm machinery manufacturers and suppliers was spearheaded by Freddie Pullan, Manager, Technical Training UK and Ireland for AGCO Ltd.

"The LTA Scheme provides a clear and accepted means of benchmarking, monitoring and assessing the competence of technicians employed nationwide within the landbased sector," comments Mr Pullan.

"AGCO was keen to ensure that the training it provides to technicians employed by Challenger, Fendt, Massey Ferguson and Valtra dealers matched this standard, providing a clear and documented career path for AGCO apprentices and technicians wishing to progress within the agricultural engineering industry."

In consultation with scheme administrator, IAgRE, AGCO's training programmes were scrutinised and finely-tuned to ensure that they satisfied the accreditation criteria laid down by the LTA scheme. Independent assessment was carried out on behalf of IAgRE by consultant, David Kirshner, with accreditation centre approval being granted to AGCO, taking effect in September 2014.

Career progression

Agricultural engineers employed by AGCO dealers are now able to follow a nationally recognised four-tier progression from apprentice (LTA1) through to master technician (LTA4), passing through technician (LTA2) and advanced technician (LTA3) tiers as they progress.

Upward movement from one tier to the next involves satisfactory completion of a range of general and product-specific training courses across a number of different categories, as laid down by the LTA scheme. All technicians attaining LTA3 standard become eligible for IAgRE membership and Engineering Technician (Eng Tech) registration, on payment of an annual fee.

"AGCO is committed to supporting an initiative which provides encouragement and recognition for dealers and technicians who voluntarily commit to continual professional development," says Mr Pullan.

"We believe that the Landbased Technician Accreditation scheme will bring sustained improved efficiencies within dealers' service departments and further boost customers' perceptions and confidence in technicians working on their tractors and other farm machines."

Customer benefit

"We are delighted that AGCO has joined the LTA scheme," comments Alastair Taylor, Chief Executive of the Institution of Agricultural Engineers (IAgRE).

"We very much look forward to welcoming AGCO's first LTA3 technicians as members of IAgRE as well as handling their registration as Engineering Technicians with the Engineering Council.

"We believe that AGCO customers will reap the benefit of having their farm machinery serviced by technicians who are at the top of their game." ●

BUSY 'COPING WITH SLOPES' EVENT

Educational day organised by BALI and NCF

BALI and NCF held a Coping with Slopes educational event at the end of October that was hosted by Severn Trent Water, which granted access to the embankments at Draycote Water, one of the largest reservoirs in the Midlands.

The sold-out event was a health and safety led day,

investigating the risks and different methods involved in vegetated embankment management.

Machinery demos

Following an informative presentation from the HSE and HSL the 150-plus attendees were given the opportunity to speak to the 12 exhibitors who each brought a number of machines designed specifically to maintain embankments.

One of the exhibitors, Simon Richard, said: "We

were kept busy all day fielding questions on the benefits of the 28hp Shibaura SG280 slope mower and 36hp Shibaura CM374 compact tractor, rated to 30 and 20 degrees respectively. We also demonstrated the 50hp Hydrostatic drive Metrac H5X Bank tractor, safe at up to 45 degrees.

"In addition to addressing operator health and safety issues, these machines also offer contractors and local authorities year-round functionality."

Etesia was also in attendance, demonstrating its slope safe machines including the Attila A180.

BALI and NCF said they are looking forward to arranging more Coping with Slopes events. ●



Simon Richard's SG280 rated to 30 degrees

Simon Richard takes questions

RAPPING AG STUDENTS

And exploding tractors!

Easton & Otley College has produced an innovative promotional music video aimed at encouraging young people into the agricultural profession, featuring rapping farmers and an exploding tractor.

The video had over 15,000 views during its first week online, and received coverage on the BBC and was Tweeted about by Stephen Fry.

Clare Dyble, Director of Marketing and Enterprise at the college, told the BBC: "Farming and agriculture is facing a bit of a skills shortage at the moment and we really want to encourage young people into farming, agriculture and land-based courses." ●

● Watch the video at www.tinyurl.com/nwbpaab



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AMENITY

GREAT REACH AND CLEANER CUT

The Gianni Ferrari two-side reach arm hedge cutter offers an alternative to the common flail models. It brings with it an environmentally friendly approach to controlling hedgerows.

Sickle bar

A sickle bar replaces the controversial flail action which is so often blamed for the dramatic ripping apart of hedges. The effect is an efficient, clean and far less drastic cut which reduces disturbance of the resident wildlife to an absolute minimum.

The cutting system uses a sickle bar with reciprocating blades to produce a scissor-like sharp, neat cut. The “SCH Schumacher” teeth produce a low impact but efficient, clean cut on branches up to 3cm diameter while protecting small tiny branches by slicing through them rather than tearing them apart.

Greater visibility

The hedge cutter is fully integrated on the front of a Gianni Ferrari Turbo Loader traction unit. It offers greater visibility, comfort and safety with the advantage of the operator always looking forward.

An extended reach will cut up to 710 cm using the vertical bar and 588 cm with the horizontal bar.

Fitted as standard, the articulated reach arm allows the hedge trimmer to work on both sides of a hedge, cutting both right and left sides with ease.



DOMESTIC

COBRA RANGE EXPANDS

Henton and Chattell adds new 16” rear roller

A range of high quality and affordable lawnmowers and other powered garden products is distributed by Henton & Chattell.

Cobra is the largest single range of domestic lawnmowers and powered garden equipment to be announced in recent times. The entire range of over 70 products has been specifically designed to meet British lawn and garden conditions and is deliberately priced to provide an economic but hard working solution for UK gardeners without compromising on quality.



New model

To add to this product mix, Cobra has now launched a brand new 16” petrol rear roller mower that is available in four options including a self-propelled model with a 125cc Briggs & Stratton 450E Series engine, or as an electric start model with a retail price of just £399.99.

The 16” model boasts a 50-litre capacity grass bag as well as Cobra’s unique seven-step height adjustment that lets the user increase the cut-height in 10mm intervals from 25mm to 75mm, to provide the perfect finish. Not only this, but its rear roller allows mowing right up to flowerbeds and borders.

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UK ARRIVAL OF METRAC H8X

Imminent says agent Simon Richard

Reform has announced the imminent arrival in the UK of its 81.5hp turbo engined compact Metrac H8X bank tractor.

UK agent Simon Richard, says: "The new model meets both environmental standards and customer expectations for more power.

"The engine achieves emission level 3B and operator comfort features include air conditioning and a new instrument cluster.

"Like all Metracs, the H8X is rated to 45 degrees and while addressing operator health and safety issues it is also a year-round performer as a part of the ground care fleet."





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COMMERCIAL

LIGHT YEARS AHEAD

STIHL's new pro MS 661 C-M chainsaw

The new STIHL MS 661 C-M chainsaw is claimed to be the world's lightest 90cc class 5.4kW rated chainsaw available.

Power and efficiency

Compared with its predecessor, the new MS 661 C-M delivers more power and torque across its working speed range. The advanced 2-MIX engine and self-tuning M-Tronic technology ensure optimised performance, with emissions cut by up to 70% and fuel consumption by up to 20%. The improved fuel efficiency plus increased fuel and oil tank capacities, mean work can continue for longer without interruption.

It is not just power that counts when a chainsaw is harvesting big

timber, but also ease of handling and every gram of weight.

Components such as a stainless steel muffler minimise weight without compromising the quality standard. The result is the chainsaw's low 7.4 kg weight, which when combined with its increased power output, offers a perceptibly improved power-to-weight ratio.

Handling and vibration

The new chainsaw's M-Tronic technology distinguishes between a warm or cold start, so users simply switch on, pull start and go. A new anti-vibration system retains crucial guiding rigidity, while vibrations are significantly reduced to 5.5 m/s². New double bumper spikes ensure cutting precision

during bucking and felling, and raised guides on the fan housing assist in directional control during plunge cutting jobs.

Maintenance

Easy to use and to maintain, the new model's M-Tronic technology makes manual carburettor adjustments a thing of the past; the engine is self-tuning and thus saves time. Also minimising everyday maintenance, STIHL's long-life air filter system is very efficient and the hermetically sealed HD2 filter is easy to clean and has up to 20% longer filter life. The carburettor box cover is removed quickly without needing tools, giving easy access to the air filter, spark plug and winter slide.



COMMERCIAL

TWO IN ONE FROM WESSEX

The Wessex FRX-150 flail mower offers users in one machine the facility to cut long grass on verges and achieve a premium finish on short turf.

This out-front mower has been specifically developed in conjunction with Stiga & Ransomes Jacobsen exclusively for their hydraulic power units, but there are also PTO-driven versions available to suit most leading brands of power unit. The design brief was to create a mower that is quiet, smooth and highly manoeuvrable.

Fine cutting comes with the aerodynamic design of the flails producing maximum power efficiency while the 1.5m working width of the deck covers the ground quickly and efficiently.

Adjusting the cutting height is a simple arrangement of repositioning the front wheels and rear roller to the same height either side using a lever mechanism. Mounting the FRX-150 on its own wheels and full width roller also enables the mower to effectively follow ground contours.

Under the skin there is a heavy-duty 305mm rotor shaft and the roller is fitted with integral bearings for a long life. It also features replaceable end caps and spigot shafts for reduced servicing costs.



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We launched the 1430 84cm garden tractor, it rapidly became a bestseller.

This year we are delighted to launch a new range of 16" roller mowers, and mulching lawn riders...soon to be in demand by customers near you!

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For more information contact Ron Miller on 07771 818953 or email ron.miller@ggpuk.com

Mountfield

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FEATURES TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2015

MAR/APR FEATURES

- > PROFIT FROM PARTS
- > SUCCESSFUL MERCHANDISING

MAY/JUN FEATURES

- > WORKSHOP MANAGEMENT
- > MARKETING SERVICE

JUL/AUG FEATURES

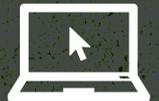
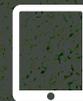
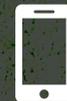
- > HIRE FOR PROFIT
- > ON THE MOVE: TRANSPORT OPTIONS

SEP/OCT FEATURES

- > ATV/QUAD MARKET
- > GLEE SHOW PREVIEW

NOV/DEC FEATURES

- > FORESTRY EQUIPMENT REVIEW
- > IOG SHOW PREVIEW



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EVENTS FOR 2015

JANUARY 2015

- 6-8 Oxford Farming Conference
www.ofc.org.uk
- 20-22 BTME 2015, Harrogate International Centre
www.btme.org.uk
- 21-22 LAMMA 2015, East of England Showground
www.lammashow.co.uk

FEBRUARY 2015

- 1-5 Spring Fair 2015, Birmingham NEC
www.springfair.com
- 3-5 Doe Show, Utling
www.ernestdoe.com
- 10-12 World Ag Expo, Tulare, California
www.worldagexpo.com
- 11-12 Executive Hire Show, Ricoh Arena, Coventry
www.executivehireshow.co.uk
- 15-17 Totally Tools, Ricoh Arena, Coventry
<http://2014.totallydiy.co.uk>
- 17-19 Salon du Végétal, Angers, France
www.salonduvegetal.com
- 21-26 Golf Industry Show, San Antonio, Texas
www.golfindustryshow.com

MARCH 2015

- 4 Precision Farming Event, East of England Showground
www.farm-smart.co.uk/precision
- 18-22 Country Living Magazine's Spring Fair, Business Design Centre, Islington
www.countrylivingfair.com/spring
- 20 - 6/4 Ideal Home Exhibition, Earls Court, London
www.idealhomeshow.co.uk
- 21-22 West County Game Fair, Shepton Mallet
www.westcountrygamefair.co.uk

APRIL 2015

- 9 CountryTastic, Three Counties Showground, Malvern
www.threecounties.co.uk/countrytastic
- 11-12 BASC Gamekeepers Fair
www.bascgamekeepersfair.co.uk
- 14-16 The Commercial Vehicle Show, Birmingham NEC
www.cvshow.com
- 23-26 Harrogate Spring Flower Show
www.flowershow.org.uk/spring-show-2015

MAY 2015

- 3-4 South of England Spring Garden & Leisure Show, South of England Centre
www.seas.org.uk/spring-show
- 4 North Somerset Show
www.nsas.org.uk
- 7 Grassland UK
www.bathandwest.com/grassland-uk/194/
- 9-10 Nottinghamshire County Show
www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com
- 13-15 Balmoral Show, Belfast
www.balmoralshow.co.uk
- 16-17 Royal Welsh Spring Festival
www.rwas.co.uk/spring-festival
- 19-23 Chelsea Flower Show
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events
- 21-23 Devon County Show
www.devoncountyshow.co.uk
- 23 Shropshire Show
www.shropshirecountyshow.com
- 23 Fife Show
www.fifeshow.com
- 23-24 Herts County Show
www.hertsshow.com
- 25 Surrey County Show
www.surreycountyshow.co.uk
- 27-28 Staffordshire County Show
www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show
- 27-28 Suffolk County Show
www.suffolkshow.co.uk
- 27-30 Royal Bath & West Show
www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-west/97/
- 29-31 Gardening Scotland, Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh
www.gardeningscotland.com
- 31 Rutland Show
www.rutlandcountyshow.com

JUNE 2015

- 4-6 Royal Cornwall Show
www.royalcornwallshow.org
- 6 Cumberland Show
www.cumberlandshow.co.uk
- 10-11 Cereals 2015, Boothby Graffoe, Nr Lincoln, Lincolnshire
www.cereals2015.co.uk
- 11-13 South of England Show
www.seas.org.uk/shows.asp?ID=2
- 11-14 BBC Gardeners' World Live, Birmingham NEC
www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com

- 12-14 Three Counties Show, Malvern
www.threecounties.co.uk/threecounties
- 13 Aberystwyth & Ceredigion County Show
www.aberystwythshow.com
- 18-21 Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh
www.royalhighlandshow.org
- 21 Cranleigh Show
www.cranleighshow.co.uk
- 23-24 Cheshire County Show
www.cheshirecountyshow.org.uk
- 24 Lincolnshire Show
www.lincolnshireshowground.co.uk
- 27 Royal Isle of Wight County Show
www.riwias.org.uk
- 28 Derbyshire County Show
www.derbyshirecountyshow.org.uk
- 30-5/7 Hampton Court Flower Show
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events

JULY 2015

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



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JIM GREEN



INDUSTRY STUNG!

DON'T MOW TO SAVE BEES

Says Environment Secretary

The Environment Secretary Liz Truss recently advised the British public to mow their lawns less often in an attempt to save the dwindling bee population.

“People can help pollinators in their garden at home or the local park or school space,” she said to an audience at the Policy Exchange think tank.

“Oxeye daisies, lavender, primroses, cyclamen – they’re just a few of the common flowers that are bee-friendly.

“I have to confess that not

mowing your lawn so often is one piece of advice that I have no problem following.”

She also stressed insects’ importance in agriculture where they play a vital role in pollinating crops. “Without those insects, not only would our parks, gardens and countryside be much more drab places, our food could well become less varied and some of it more expensive.”

Bees were also compared with Premiership footballers by Ms Truss. She said: “Their work is



valued at around £430 million – four times the salaries of the top 10 players in the Premier League. Like the football players, they require excellent accommodation, training and the best diet and nutrition to make them world-beating. That’s why I’m ensuring across all land uses there are strong incentives to provide pollinators with habitat, forage and space.”

JUSTICE PREVAILS

THE STRONG ARM OF THE LAWN

Woman jailed for not cutting grass



A Tennessee woman who failed to keep her lawn cut and garden tidy has been jailed for not complying with city regulations.

Karen Holloway of Lenoir City in East Tennessee agreed that her lawn was in dire need of attention but that pressing family issues meant that she did not have to time to cut it.

However, she received a summons from the Lenoir City Council saying that she had broken the law under Section 302.1 of the City of Lenoir Property Code – meaning that she would face a jail sentence.

Appearing before the court and admitting the offence, Judge Terry Vann initially sentenced Ms Holloway to a five-day jail sentence, before amending it to six hours behind bars.

Ms Holloway said afterwards that she had offered to do five days of community service, but the Judge refused her offer and said she should serve time behind bars.

Judge Vann set up a follow-up hearing to check on the progress of the lawn care, suggesting that additional jail time may be added “if we are not satisfied with your lawn”.

ENDURANCE TEST

JOURNEY IS SNOW JOKE

Adventurer aims for South Pole in a tractor

Dutch adventurer Manon “Tractor Girl” Ossevoort has undertaken a new challenge of driving a Massey Ferguson tractor to the South Pole.

Starting off from the edge of Antarctica at Russia’s Novo base covering a 4,500-kilometre (2,800-mile) round trip, to the South Pole and back, the journey ventured across the largest single mass of ice on earth.

Before she set off she said: “Ten kilometres an hour would be good. Fifteen would be nice, 20 lovely.”

Ms Ossevoort expected to complete the round trip in four to six weeks by covering 100 to 200 kilometres a day.

“I think I’ll love the experience, travelling the last leg in relative silence over this vast and white continent. It’s a beautiful last phase in a long pilgrimage,” she said.

Ms Ossevoort has been accompanied by French mechanic Nicolas Bachelet in Antarctica, who is sharing the



driving because the tractor needs to be moving through day and night.

Also accompanying her are a seven-member team who have been filming her adventure for a documentary.

A former theatre actress, Ms Ossevoort has been writing a book and works as a motivational speaker on the side.

“The tractor for me symbolises this very down to earth fact that if you want to do something, maybe you will not be so fast, but if you keep going and keep your sense of humour you will get there,” she commented.

CORRECTION

Apologies to New Holland. An article in this column last issue inadvertently carried a strapline over from the issue before that, which read ‘Custom tractor built by Valtra’.

This is of course not the case. The tractor which took part in the Notting Hill Carnival was, as the body copy stated, very much British-built by New Holland.

Again apologies for any confusion caused.



EMISSIONS TESTS

MOWING DOWN COMMON SENSE

UKIP launches into Brussels over possible emission tests

Following the ban on certain models of high-powered vacuum cleaners, vehicle-style exhaust tests for petrol-driven lawnmowers and other ‘non-road mobile machinery’ are believed to be on the Brussels agenda and have been branded as ‘nonsense’ by UKIP Deputy Leader and Euro-MP Paul Nuttall.

Garden machinery, along with similarly-powered chainsaws, are among equipment being lined up by the European Commission for tough emissions tests to tackle global warming.

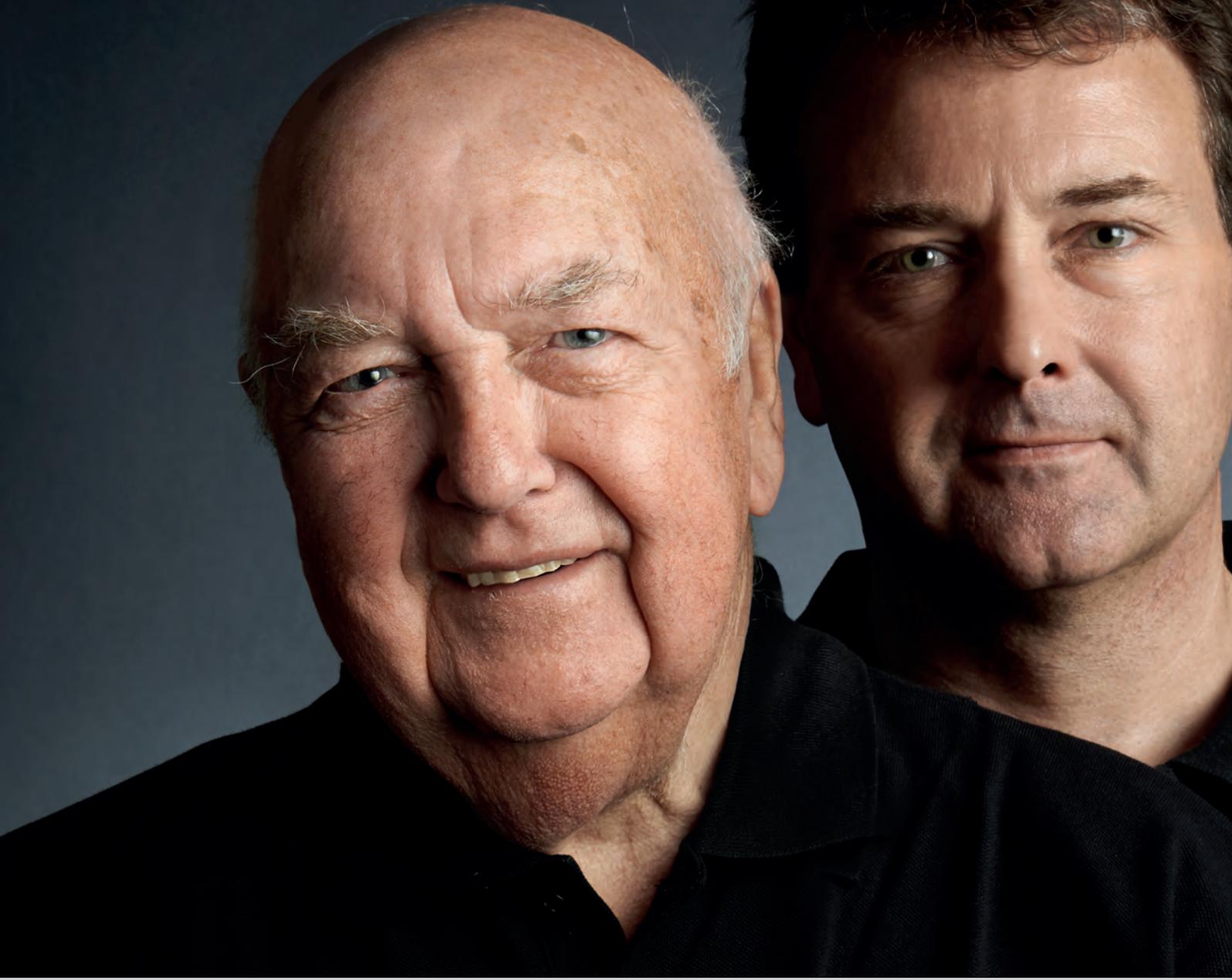


Mr Nuttall said: “This is another round of nonsense emanating from the European Union.

“These Eurocrats are fanatics. They are so blind to their own failings that they do not even realise the contempt which their hyperactivity breeds in the voting public.

“Targeting petrol-driven lawnmowers is just another example of them mowing down common sense. It is likely to have unintended consequences, such as some manufacturers abandoning the European Union for more profitable markets and product owners being unable to get replacement parts.”

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